



Double bonus

Actor Parul Gulati says it feels surreal to see her debut movie being celebrated twice in theatres

LEISURE | P2



Machado vows to return

Machado vows return, lauds Trump for ousting Maduro, says Opposition ready to win elections ahead

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Sensex tanks 376.28 pts

Sensex declines, tracking selling pressure in Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank amid renewed concerns about potential US tariff hikes

BUSINESS | P11



ISL comeback

After prolonged uncertainty, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced return of Indian Super League from Feb 14

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY | JANUARY 7, 2024

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FARMERS' CAUSE: Members of Navnirman Krushak Sangathan scuffle with police during a protest at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, to press for an end to 'arbitrary' deductions at paddy mandis, among other demands

PHOTO: MANORANJAN MISHRA

PM GREETS CM MAJHI ON BIRTHDAY



New Delhi:
Prime Minister Narendra Modi
Tuesday

greeted Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on his birthday, lauding his efforts to enhance the state's growth trajectory. "Birthday wishes to Odisha's hardworking Chief Minister Shri Mohan Charan Majhi Ji. He has made outstanding efforts to enhance Odisha's growth trajectory and empower the youth of the state," the PM said in a post on X. "Praying for his long and healthy life in service of the people," Modi said.

ESMA invoked as docs continue stir

Bhubaneswar: The state government Tuesday invoked Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), 1988, prohibiting strikes by doctors and other healthcare staffers, as agitating doctors carried on with their boycott of OPD services at state-run health facilities. Under the order, strikes in the form of cessation of work by doctors, nursing officers, pharmacists, paramedics, technicians and Class III and IV employees, including contractual staff, engaged in government hospitals and dispensaries have been banned for six months with effect from Tuesday.

P3

Ex-Union min Suresh Kalmadi dies at 81

Pune: Congress veteran and former Union minister Suresh Kalmadi, known for a multifaceted career that intertwined politics and sports administration, passed away in Pune early Tuesday at the age of 81, family sources said. Kalmadi breathed his last at around 3:30am. He had served as Union MoS for Railways and was a former president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Man gets death for minor rape-murder



Despite a slew of judgements concerning sexual assaults on minors in the state, the frequency of these crimes remains high. Recent trends indicate a disturbing surge in crimes against children, characterised by an escalation in sexual violence. Amidst this, two key developments juxtaposed to each other came to the fore, Tuesday. While a ruling came from a special POCO court in Bargarh, handing down death penalty to a man for raping and killing a six-year-old girl in November 2024, yet another incident of gangrape of a differently-abled minor girl in Rayagada has shocked the conscience of many

POST NEWS NETWORK

The court convicted the accused, Prashanta Bag alias Bariha, 20, under two sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The judge, Kiran Kumar Pradhan, also directed the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to provide ₹15 lakh compensation to the victim's family, public prosecutor Duyutish Acharya said.

The incident occurred November 15, 2024, when the accused, a farm labourer, took

three children to an isolated place on the pretext of catching fish. He then separated the victim from the group, raped her and smashed the girl's head with a rock. Her body was found in Soda forest under Paikmal police station area.

Investigating officer Mamta Naik, the then IIC of Padampur, said that the convict was known to the victim's family and initially reported that the child had gone missing. The chargesheet was filed in this case in 20 days

Acting on a complaint lodged by the survivor's mother, Gudari IIC Samarpita Swain registered a case (2/2026) and launched an investigation. The complainant said it was around 2pm when she told her daughter to car-

SPECIALLY-ABLED GIRL GANGRAPED

Rayagada/Gudari: An 18-year-old girl with mental illness was allegedly gangraped by three persons under Gudari police limits in Rayagada district, police said Tuesday.

The incident occurred around 4pm Monday when the accused trio picked up the girl on a motorcycle to a secluded spot, stripped her and took turns to rape her.

Acting on a complaint lodged by the survivor's mother, Gudari IIC Samarpita Swain registered a case (2/2026) and launched an investigation. The complainant said it was around 2pm when she told her daughter to car-

- December 5, 2024, and charges were framed January 20, 2025.

The public prosecutor said the court pronounced its verdict based on the statement of 37 witnesses and 55 documents.

Northern Range IG Himanshu Kumar Lal said that the judgement of the case will certainly become a deterrent against the heinous crimes against women and girls.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar: In a bid to curb rising air pollution in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, the state government has imposed a ban on all kinds of construction work from 6pm to 10am, Environment Minister Ganesh Ram Singhkuntia said Tuesday.

Collectors of Khurda and Cuttack have been asked to implement the order, the minister said. "All kinds of construction work, both in private and government sectors, have been

banned in the twin cities from 6pm to 10am. The NHAI and State Works department have been informed," he said.

Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) have also initiated steps to control air pollution in the state capital. "Builders and construction firms have been asked to transport materials with proper covering and sprinkle water continuously at their site," said BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana.

Another Hindu bizman killed in Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka: Jan 6: A 40-year-old Hindu man, Moni Chakraborty, a grocery shop owner, has been murdered after unidentified attackers struck him with a sharp weapon in Bangladesh's Narayanganj city, according to a local media report.

The incident took place late Monday night, hours after a Hindu businessman, who was also the acting editor of a newspaper, was fatally shot in the head by unidentified men in Jessore district of Bangladesh.

Moni was attacked and killed at Charsindhur Bazaar in Palash Upazila around 11pm Monday, bdnews24 news portal reported.

FIVE HINDUS KILLED SINCE DECEMBER 18

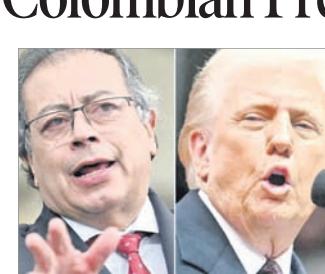
JAN 5	Moni Chakraborty
JAN 5	Rana Pratap Bairagi
JAN 3	Khokon Chandra Das
DEC 24	Amrit Mondal
DEC 18	Dipu Chandra Das

Palash Police Station chief (OC) Shahed Al Mamun said Moni was the son of Madan Thakur of Sadharchar Union in Shibpur Upazila.

Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) have also initiated steps to control air pollution in the state capital. "Builders and construction firms have been asked to transport materials with proper covering and sprinkle water continuously at their site," said BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana.

Police and local residents said Moni was returning home after closing his shop Monday night when unidentified attackers struck him with a sharp, locally-made weapon. He collapsed on the spot, the report added.

Come, get me: Colombian Prez dares Trump



for the homeland I will take up arms again."

The tensions between the two nations boiled over when, after the attack on Venezuela, Trump told reporters Sunday that Colombia is run by a man who is selling drugs to the US. "Colombia is very sick too, run by a sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the United States. And he's not going to be doing it very long, let me tell you," Trump said.

The Republican leader also said that launching an operation against Colombia "sounds good" to him.

"If they (the US) bombs, the campesinos will become thousands of guerrillas in the mountains. And if they detain the president which a large part of

India's 1st hydrogen train set to roll in Haryana

AGENCIES

Chandigarh: Jan 6: Haryana is set to witness the launch of India's first hydrogen-powered train as preparations in this regard have reached final stages, according to a Haryana government Tuesday.

The Northern Railway project will run between Jind and Sonipat, said sources, adding that a hydrogen plant in Jind is ready to fuel the train.

A stable and uninterrupted 11 kV power supply has been ensured for the hydrogen plant established



A stable and uninterrupted 11 kV power supply has been ensured for the hydrogen plant established in Jind, which will provide fuel for the train

strengthening alternative arrangements and rapid response mechanisms.

Last month, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, in a written statement in the Lok Sabha, had said that the Indian Railways has taken up a state-of-the-art project for running its first hydrogen train on a pilot basis.

Vaishnav had said the planned operation is according to specifications framed by the Research, Design & Standards Organisation (RDSO) to demonstrate the use of hydrogen-powered train technology.

"Manufacturing of the Hydrogen Train-set has been completed. For providing hydrogen for use in this train-set, a hydrogen plant has been conceived at Jind. In this plant, hydrogen is being produced using electrolysis process, which is a key element of green hydrogen generation," Vaishnav had said.

downtown

ESMA INVOKED AS DOCS CONTINUE STIR

Under the order, strikes in the form of cessation of work by doctors, nursing officers, pharmacists, paramedics, technicians and Class III and IV employees, including contractual staff, engaged in government hospitals and dispensaries have been banned for six months with effect from Tuesday

Doctors in government hospitals and health centres have been boycotting OPD services since December 26

The agitation, under the banner of the Odisha Medical Service Association (OMSA), has been ongoing over a 10-point charter of demands

OPD boycott. The government invoked ESMA after the OMSA rejected an appeal by Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling to resume duties, with an assurance that the demands would be considered sympathetically. The government has also constituted a high-level committee to examine the issues raised by the doctors.

The OMSA, however, rejected the government's appeal and committee proposal, insisting on a written assurance for the fulfilment of their demands.

According to the organisation, the state has a little over 6,000 government doctors against a sanctioned strength of 15,776, leaving more than 50 per cent of posts vacant.

"This is putting additional pressure on the existing doctors," the OMSA said.

Their other demands include parity in pay with Central government employees, proportional restructuring of cadres across all grades, additional financial incentives for super-specialists, specialists and diploma medical administrators, post-mortem allowance, and performance-based incentives.

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with effect from Tuesday, an official notification said.

Doctors in government hospitals and health centres have been boycotting OPD services since December 26, initially for one hour a day, which was extended to two hours from 9am to 11am starting January 5. Emergency services, inpatient care and surgeries, however, have continued uninterrupted.

The agitation, under the banner of the Odisha Medical Service Association (OMSA), has been ongoing over a 10-point charter of demands, including filling up of vacant posts. The doctors had earlier protested by wearing black badges before resorting to the

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REVIEW MEET: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi reviews various programmes of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department at Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. H&FW Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Chief Secretary Anu Garg, department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Aswathy S and Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Saswata Mishra are seen

OP PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: The state government Tuesday invoked Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), 1988, prohibiting strikes by doctors and other healthcare staffers, as agitating doctors carried on with their boycott of outpatient department (OPD) services across state-run health facilities.

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Traffic violations: IG tells SPs to adopt zero tolerance approach

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: In a strong push to institutionalise road safety and significantly reduce preventable road fatalities, Inspector General of Police (Central Range) Satyajit Naik has directed the Superintendents of Police (SPs) of all districts under his range to launch special enforcement drive against traffic violations and adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach against the violators.

The initiative, aligned with the ongoing National Road Safe-

ty Month, will focus primarily on high-occupancy passenger vehicles operating across the Central Range. With a sharp rise in commuter movement during the pilgrimage and picnic season, the drive will particularly target Ama Bus services, private stage carriers, and picnic buses travelling to Puri and other major locations.

"Our objective is to move beyond data collection to active, life-saving action. By coordinating with RTOs and adopting evidence-based planning, we aim to realise the 'Viksit

Odisha 2036' vision of making Odisha's roads the safest in the country," the IG stated.

The enforcement teams will rigorously check vehicle permits, fitness certificates, and insurance documents to ensure that only roadworthy vehicles remain in operation.

Authorities will also verify valid driving license and conduct on-the-spot checks to detect driver fatigue, intoxication, or health-related risks, the IG said. In addition, teams will also monitor registered passenger capacity and speed

limits, using interceptors and speed-detection technology to curb overspeeding.

Compliance with seatbelt usage and availability of mandatory safety equipment, including fire extinguishers and first-aid kits, will also be strictly enforced.

Naik said the drive would be backed by the Odisha Integrated Road Safety Dashboard, enabling police to use location intelligence and real-time data to focus on identified black spots and high-risk corridors for timely intervention.

Govt invites suggestions for Budget

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: The Finance department has invited suggestions from citizens and stakeholders for the preparation of the Annual Budget 2026-27, continuing its initiative to make the budgetary process more open, transparent and participatory.

As part of its pre-Budget consultations with a cross section of society, the department has been leveraging Information and Communication Technology (I&CT) in recent years to widen public engagement. Inputs for budget formulation have been collected through a dedicated Budget web portal, e-mail, WhatsApp and SMS, with all budget-related documents made available online.

For the upcoming Budget 2026-27, the department has opened a structured format on its official Budget portal, <https://budget.odisha.gov.in/>, for submission of suggestions. Members of the public can also send their inputs via e-mail at odisha.budget@gov.in.

In addition, suggestions are being accepted through WhatsApp at (+91) 9438161111 and through social media platforms including X (formerly Twitter) at @FdOdisha, Facebook at @FinanceOdisha, and Instagram at @fdodisha.

The facility for submitting suggestions will remain open till January 31, 2026.

The department has urged members of the public, civil society organisations, advocacy groups and other stakeholders to take advantage of this opportunity and actively participate in shaping the state's budget-making process.

Woman journo among 2 dead in Puri road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Two women, including a journalist, were killed after a bus hit their scooter from the rear near Mangalpur Square under Pipili police limits in Puri Tuesday.

According to sources, the two were moving towards Puri in the morning when their scooter reportedly slipped on sand scattered on the road, causing them to fall. A speeding private bus coming from the rear hit them.

While Sheela Patnaik, the female journalist associated with a private news channel, died on the spot, the other woman, who sustained critical injuries, was rushed to a nearby hospital, where she succumbed to her injuries.

People from various walks

of life, including Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik, expressed grief over the mishap.

"This is an irreplaceable loss for the world of journalism. I'm praying for the eternal peace of her soul at the feet of Lord Shri Jagannath. I convey my deepest condolences to the bereaved family members. Om Shanti," Majhi said in a post on X.

Taking to X, Patnaik said, "The untimely demise of young journalist Sheela Patnaik is heartbreaking. In this hour of deep grief, I convey my condolences to the bereaved family members while praying for the eternal peace of her departed soul."

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Vigilance sleuths Tuesday arrested a forester in Bolangir district while allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000 from a local farmer.

The accused, Ashok Kumar Nayak, posted as forester in Gulumji section under Muribahal range, was caught red-handed demanding and accepting the illegal gratification to grant permission for transporting wooden logs.

According to the Vigilance department, the farmer had recently felled one

teak and one sal tree on his private land. When he approached Nayak for transportation permission, the forester imposed a fine of Rs 2,000 for cutting the trees without prior approval, as required under government rules. The farmer, unaware of the mandatory permission requirement, agreed to pay the fine. However, Nayak allegedly demanded an additional Rs 10,000 as bribe to process the transportation permit. He also threatened the farmer with legal action if the bribe was not paid.

Harassed by the demands, the farmer lodged a complaint with the Odisha Vigilance.

Following this, a Vigilance team laid a trap and nabbed Nayak while he was accepting the bribe along with the Rs 2,000 fine from the complainant. The entire amount has been recovered and seized.

Simultaneous searches were conducted at two locations linked to Nayak to ascertain whether he has accumulated assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Hockey India League: Tickets for Bhubaneswar leg go on sale

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Artisans and producers from Odisha and 20 other states will come together at Sisir Saras 2026, a grand rural fair being organised by Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) under the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water (PR&DW) department at IDCO Exhibition Ground here, from January 10 to 18.

The annual fair aims to provide a direct marketing platform for rural producers, artisans, and women self-help groups (SHGs), while promot-

ing handicrafts, handloom products, and rural enterprises from across the country.

PR&DW Minister Rabi Narayan Naik said the venue would be transformed into a 'Mini India Market', featuring 375 stalls, including 35 for food.

Sisir Saras 2026 is a perfect opportunity to promote the spirit of 'Vocal for Local' and take a strong step towards building an 'Atmanirbhar Odisha', the minister said.

The fair will showcase Odisha's handicraft and heritage, including handloom textiles from Bargarh, Sambalpur, and Subarnapur, lac

products from Balasore, paper mache from Keonjhar, wood-

crafts from Kandhamal and Kalahandi, golden grass crafts

from Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur, terracotta from Bolangir, lemongrass and black rice from Koraput, and millet-based products from Sundargarh.

The fair will also feature Kalamkari from Andhra Pradesh, Kosa silk from Chhattisgarh, Tussar silk from Jharkhand, Chikankari from Uttar Pradesh, woollen garments from Jammu and Kashmir

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IT firms to operate from Baramunda bus terminal



POST NEWS NETWORK

The BDA has decided to allocate space on two floors of the state-of-the-art terminal for IT companies, integrating transport, technology and services under one roof

The initiative is expected to boost daily footfall, benefiting IT firms as well as small vendors operating within the terminal

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: The Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bus Terminal (BSABT) at Baramunda is set to emerge as a major transport and business hub, with IT companies likely to commence operations from the facility soon, officials said.

The move is expected to enhance the terminal's profile and expand its role beyond a conventional transit point. Housing and Urban Development Minister and Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) Chairman Krushna Chandra Mahapatra made the announcement Tuesday while addressing a special function at BSABT to hand over shop keys to beneficiaries.

The event was attended by BDA Vice Chairman Chanchal Rana, the local corporator and senior officials of the authority.

In his address, Minister Mahapatra emphasised that the inclusion of IT companies at BSABT would enhance the terminal's significance, boosting its business potential and

all under one roof. This move is expected to draw a surge in daily footfall, benefiting not just the IT companies, but also the small vendors operating within the terminal.

Rana also spoke about the positive impact of the new businesses on the local vendors. "Previously, many vendors had to set up their stalls outside the terminal. Now, they have been provided with air-conditioned shops, ensuring a more dignified and profitable livelihood," he said.

The BDA's initiative follows the successful allotment of 112 shops at BSABT in September, conducted through a lottery system. The shops, available on a monthly rental basis, are equipped with modern amenities, including uninterrupted power supply, water connections, and 24/7 security. The allotment process was carried out after a detailed survey by the Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC), and the previous manager of the old Baramunda bus terminal.

The new terminal, spread over 11 acres, is the largest of its-kind in Odisha, handling over 1,500 buses and serving nearly 20,000 passengers daily. As one of the state's most critical transport hubs, BSABT is set to become an even more essential centre for commerce, technology, and travel.

With the dual integration of IT companies and improved vendor spaces, BSABT looks to foster a dynamic and thriving business ecosystem that will benefit both the local economy and travelers alike.

footfall. He also highlighted the recent announcement by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi regarding the establishment of a global visa application center at the terminal, which will further cement its status as a multifaceted hub. "The integration of IT firms will inject new energy into the terminal, creating a vibrant atmosphere and offering small vendors the opportunity to thrive," he said.

The BDA has decided to allocate space across two floors of the state-of-the-art terminal for IT companies, creating a unique blend of transportation, technology, and services

Three held with 22g brown sugar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Khandagiri Police arrested three persons, including a woman and seized 22 grams of brown sugar during a raid near Ramamani Petrol Pump at Baramunda in the early hours of Tuesday.

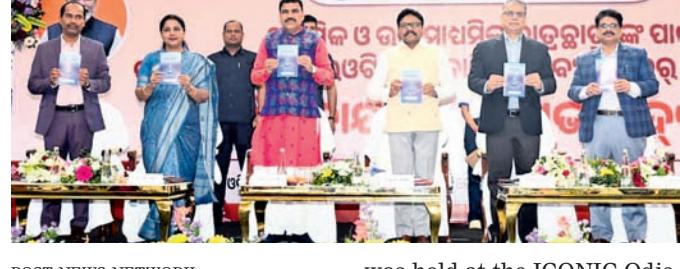
Acting on credible intelligence, police registered a case and launched an investigation. The information suggested that one woman identified as Rina Jena (42) and two men identified as (Deepak Sahoo and Balaram Sahoo) were waiting near the petrol pump to sell brown sugar.

A special police team conducted a raid at the spot. On noticing the police, the suspects attempted to flee but were chased and apprehended.

During personal search, police recovered brown sugar from their possession and also seized cash from Rina Jena. On weighing, 12 grams of brown sugar was recovered from Rina, 5 grams from Deepak and 5 grams from Balaram. A motorcycle used in the crime was also seized.

During preliminary investigation it was revealed that Rina was involved in three previous NDPS cases, Balaram has five previous criminal cases, while Deepak was involved in two earlier criminal cases.

As prima facie evidence under Section 21(b) of the NDPS Act was established, all three accused were arrested and produced before the court. Further investigation into the case is underway.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC), the technical directorate of the Electronics and Information Technology department Tuesday launched 'Emerging Technologies Training Camps' for secondary and higher secondary school students across the state in presence of Electronics and Information Technology Minister Mukesh Mahaling and School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond.

The state-level inauguration

was held at the ICONIC Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya (OAV), Andharua. In the first phase, the programme will be implemented in 100 government secondary and higher secondary schools, benefiting nearly 12,000 students. The initiative will be expanded in subsequent phases to cover all government schools, OAVs, government colleges and universities.

The training camps will offer hands-on exposure in AI, Internet of Things (IoT), Robotics and Cyber security awareness. The programme is sponsored by OCAC and implemented by

Odisha Knowledge Corporation Limited (OKCL) to ensure effective on-ground operation.

Addressing the gathering, Mahaling said, "Emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Robotics and Cyber Security are shaping the future workforce. Early exposure will empower students with innovation-driven skills essential for nation-building."

Joining as guest of honour, Gond encouraged students to adopt technology for building meaningful careers, while E&IT department Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev urged them to gain deeper understanding of advanced technologies to contribute to the future economy.

OCAC CEO Pradeep Kumar Raut motivated students to become job creators by leveraging emerging technologies. Live demonstrations of AI, IoT, Robotics and Cyber Security applications were presented by OKCL Managing Director Manoranjan Puthal.

108 Ambulance Service reaches 1.5cr in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Terming as a backbone of Odisha's emergency healthcare system, the 108 Ambulance Service has achieved a milestone of providing free and timely medical assistance to more than 1.5 crore people across the state since its launch in 2013.

Being operational for over 12 years, the service has significantly transformed emergency response in Odisha by ensuring rapid medical transportation, professional pre-hospital care, and reliable access to healthcare facilities—even in the most remote and hard-to-reach regions.

Highlighting the achievement, EMRI Green Health Services state head Sabyasachi Biswal said the service began with 280 ambulances and has since expanded into a robust fleet of 1,366 ambulances, now covering all 30 districts of Odisha. The expansion reflects the state's sustained commitment to strengthening emergency healthcare services for every citizen.

A key pillar of the 108 Ambulance Service is its 24x7



integrated call centre in the Capital city. The centre promptly receives emergency calls, accurately locates patients, and dispatches the nearest available ambulance, ensuring swift response during critical situations.

In 2025 alone, the service benefited 15,74,177 people, including 11,85,031 emergency patients and 3,88,622 pregnant women and infants. Additionally, the service extended emergency support to nearly one lakh road accident victims, playing a crucial role in saving lives and reducing response-time delays.

To ensure uninterrupted operations, the ambulance

operating agency EMRI Green Health Services places strong emphasis on vehicle readiness and reliability. Six in-house workshops staffed with skilled mechanics operate across the state for quick maintenance and repairs. Furthermore, 62 backup ambulances are strategically deployed to immediately replace any vehicle taken off-road, ensuring emergency services remain unaffected.

Addressing the challenges of riverine and cut-off areas, six 108 boat ambulances have been deployed in Malkangiri, Kendrapada, Kalahandi, and Koraput districts, extending lifesaving services to com-

ponents with limited road connectivity.

Odisha has also witnessed the extraordinary dedication of ambulance drivers, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), and helpers, who consistently go beyond their call of duty—donating blood during emergencies, returning lost valuables, and navigating treacherous terrain to reach patients. Their acts of compassion during floods, cyclones, and the Covid-19 pandemic have earned widespread public appreciation.

With strategically positioned ambulances, trained medical personnel, and a strong monitoring system, the 108 Ambulance Service ensures that every citizen—urban or rural—receives emergency care completely free of cost. From the first distress call to pre-hospital treatment and safe hospital transfer, the service remains accessible to all.

Having touched over 1.5 crore lives, the 108 Ambulance Service stands today as a symbol of trust, reliability, and compassion, continuing its mission to save lives and strengthen emergency healthcare delivery across Odisha.

Excise seizes 282L illicit liquor; 5 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: The Bhubaneswar Excise department, during a special drive, seized 282 litres of illicit distilled liquor (IDL) and five litres of country-made liquor in separate operations Tuesday and arrested five persons from the Mancheswar Line Sahi, Jaripatna, Nilachakra Nagar and IDCO slum areas here.

The identities of the arrested persons are yet to be ascertained by the Excise Department. According to excise sources, the department received reliable inputs about illegal liquor trade in the City, following which special teams were formed to conduct raids at various locations to dismantle the supply chain of illicit liquor.

During the raids, the excise teams seized 282 litres of illicit distilled liquor (IDL) and five litres of country-made liquor. They also confiscated two two-wheelers used for



smuggling the contraband.

"Acting on reliable tip-

offs, we nabbed the culprits. Through the special drive, we are targeting major locations and smugglers involved in the illegal liquor trade. The accused have been arrested and forwarded to court," said Bhubaneswar Excise DSP Raj Sekhar Swain.

It may be noted that January 3, the Excise department arrested three youths, including a law graduate, for allegedly smuggling drugs to high-profile professionals and students in the City.

'Safety First' in AMA bus operations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Re-affirming its commitment to road safety, the state government held a comprehensive AMA Bus Operators' Review Meeting Tuesday, chaired by Housing and Urban Development Principal Secretary Usha Padhee. The meeting focused on enhancing safety governance, enforcing operator discipline, and using technology to reduce accidents and ensure reliable public transport.

Padhee emphasised a strict "Safety First" approach, declaring passenger safety non-negotiable and warning that any lapse would invite immediate action.

Under the new Act, beneficiaries will be entitled to 125 days of work, compared to 100 days under MGNREGA, Majhi said, adding that allowances would be paid if work is not provided within 15 days of demand.

He said the scheme would

focus on four areas—water security, rural infrastructure, livelihood assets and climate resilience—and no work would be undertaken during a 60-day cultivation period.

Where driver fault was confirmed, stringent measures—such as termination, suspension, de-rostering, and sharing driving licence details with RTOs—have been enforced, underscoring a zero-tolerance stance on unsafe driving.

A key focus of the review was the adoption of technology-driven safety measures. The meeting highlighted plans to introduce Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) and Driver Fatigue Monitoring Systems (DFMS) for real-time monitoring, improving driver alertness and reducing collision risks.

Importantly, the NITI Aayog report notes that out of 2,362 foreign students studying in eastern India, nearly 2,000 are enrolled at KIIT.

Students from over 70 countries are currently pursuing education at the university. So far, about 5,000 international students have graduated from KIIT, while close to 2,000 are presently studying there.

Padhee also instructed operators to enforce strict compliance with traffic rules, lane discipline, and speed limits, while regulating duty hours to prevent fatigue-related risks.

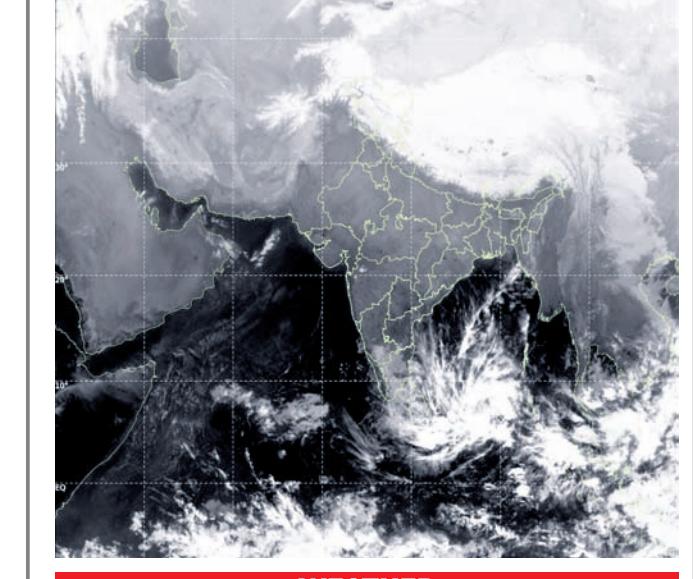
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MARKET WATCH	
CURRENCY	BORSES
INDEX 90.25 ▲ 0.15	SENSEX 85063.34 ▲ 376.28
EURO 105.82 ▲ 0.07	NIFTY 26178.70 ▲ 71.60

GOLD ₹138,792 ▲ ₹672

SILVER ₹254,847 ▲ ₹8692



WEATHER

Max Temp	CTC	FORECAST
23.8°	22.2°	Moderate fog
12.9°	10.0°	
76%	86%	
Nil	Nil	



Man dies after hearing of mother's death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, Jan 6: In a tragic incident, a man died of a suspected heart attack shortly after learning about his mother's death, leaving a neighborhood in shock as two funeral biers were carried out of the same house Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as S. Sahibani (80), and her son, S. Ravi Kumar, residents of Parichha Sahi in Jeypore town.

According to family members, Sahibani had been bedridden for a long time after suffering a paralytic stroke. Ravi, who was deeply devoted to his mother, took care of all her daily needs. Tuesday, after completing her routine care, he went out to inspect his agricultural land. When he returned, he found his mother dead.

Unable to cope with the shock, Ravi collapsed a short while later and died of a heart attack, family members said.

Relatives said Ravi remained unmarried to care for his ailing mother. His sister, S. Sukanti, who also lives with them, is also unmarried due to mental health issues. After the death of Sahibani's husband, the household mostly survived on pension money and income from their land.

Local residents gathered at the house as the bodies of the mother and son were taken out one after the other for last rites. The final rituals were performed with help from the neighbours.

Salaries of 5 teachers halted after fire injures 4 students

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: The Odisha government Tuesday halted the salaries of five teachers and issued show-cause notices to other staff members in connection with the incident," he said.

While three of the injured students are undergoing treatment at a hospital in Rayagada, one critically injured student has been shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

The school headmaster had lodged a complaint at Muniguda police station Monday. Police have recorded statements of the injured students, officials said.

According to preliminary findings, the incident occurred when a classmate of the injured students allegedly threw colour thinner, an inflammable substance, onto a fire that had been lit by the students on the school building's balcony.

As per reports, the students suffered burn injuries while playing around a fire during school hours.

"The department has stopped

the salaries of five teachers and issued show-cause notices to other staff members in connection with the incident," he said.

While three of the injured students are undergoing treatment at a hospital in Rayagada, one critically injured student has been shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

The school headmaster had

lodged a complaint at Muniguda police station Monday. Police have recorded statements of the

injured students, officials said.

According to preliminary

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ENERGY & THE AI RACE



The great are strongest when they stand alone, A God-given might of being is their force.

SRI AUROBINDO



New Axis Powers

A ppeasement or tacit approval of invasion and capture of foreign land helped the rise of Adolf Hitler and the formation of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis that wreaked havoc on the world before and during World War II. History appears to be repeating itself as US President Donald Trump's illegal action of seizing Venezuela's President and his wife and brazenly declaring the US "takes control" of the country is not being effectively resisted and condemned by either European countries, the United Nations or even Russia and China. Only pious platitudes are being mouthed against the US without any tangible, deterrent action to check the egregious aggrandizement and violation of international laws. The way Russia and China – the two countries that could have taken a lead in stopping Trump in his tracks – have raised only verbal protest and without any back up concrete actions it suggests a possible new Washington-Moscow-Beijing axis is being formed to usurp foreign land and resources and divide the booty among themselves. Russia has illegally captured and occupied vast tracts of agriculturally rich Ukraine, while China is eagerly waiting to take over Taiwan by force at any opportune time it thinks fit.

Significantly, the pre-Trump US arrangements to stop Russia and China from their land grab designs such as NATO membership proposal to Ukraine and QUAD bloc of USA, Australia, Japan and India to counter China have been thrown into virtual limbo since Trump occupied the White House for the second time. On the other hand, Trump has cosied up to Putin and Xi. In the past few months he has asserted that he had talks with Putin following which he hardened the US position against Ukraine and has since been trying to force Ukraine to agree to Russia's plan of permanently occupying a sizable part of the country. There is reason to suspect Trump and Putin had clinched a secret deal to let Russia illegally annex Ukraine's territory, while the US would grab land in Venezuela and other South and Central American countries. Xi must have been privy to the plan so that he would have his share in Taiwan and India and no nation will be in a position to protest.

What happened in the emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council on 5 January convened in the wake of the brazen attack on Venezuela by the US is nothing but expressions of impotent rage by some and equivocation by others. As if to placate Trump, many member states agreed with the US that Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro - had been an illegitimate and repressive leader. They forgot that it does not give the US or any other country the authority to decide who would rule the Venezuelans. Some of the countries did admit the US military action was a breach of international law and the UN Charter. Among US allies, France was by far the most outspoken. The deputy ambassador of France to the UN, Jay Dharmadhikari, said Maduro's taking by the US runs "counter to the principle of peaceful dispute resolution and the principle of the non-use of force."

He told the Council the proliferation of violations of the Charter of the UN and the violations of international law by states vested with responsibility as permanent members of the Security Council strikes at the very foundation of the international order and the principle of respect for independence and territorial integrity of states. Similarly, the deputy UN ambassador for Denmark, Sandra Jensen Landi said the developments constitute a dangerous precedent. The French and Danish criticism now places them alongside Spain whose Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez showed courage to say his government would not recognise an intervention that violates international law and pushes the region toward a horizon of uncertainty and belligerence. In contrast, both the UK and Greece did not condemn the US military operation at all.

What the diplomats from Russia and China said could best be termed as inanities. Russia's ambassador, Vassili Nebenzia, accused the US of "international banditry" and "neo-colonialism and imperialism." China's Chargé d'Affaires, Sun Lei, said Beijing was "deeply shocked and strongly condemned" the "unilateral, illegal and bullying acts of the US."

The UN Secretary General looked pathetic when he said he was deeply concerned that rules of international law have not been respected during the US action. His assertion that the power of the law must prevail is rather an admission that the UN is a toothless organization that has no power to rein in a superpower such as the USA.

Trump continues to threaten that he proposes to follow a similar strategy in the case of several other South American countries along with India, while predicting Cuba would fall on its own. He seems to be going ahead with his agenda of establishing a new world order controlled by autocrats in which the only principle that works is – might is right.

It is India which now seems to have fallen into a trap that seems to be encircling it from all sides. Indian diplomacy and political leadership is bound to face even harder challenges in the near future.

WISDOM CORNER

There is no charm equal to tenderness of heart.

JANE AUSTEN

If you expect nothing from anybody, you're never disappointed.

SYLVIA PLATH

Find ecstasy in life; the mere sense of living is joy enough.

EMILY DICKINSON

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1610: Galileo Galilei discovers the Galilean Moons. The Italian astronomer spotted the four largest moons of Jupiter that day: Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto.

1891: Zora Neale Hurston, an American folklorist and writer associated with the Harlem Renaissance who celebrated black culture of the rural South, was born.

1968: Uncrewed US space probe Surveyor 7 was launched and, a few days later, made a soft landing on the Moon.

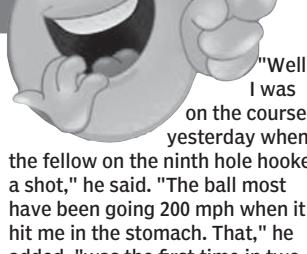
1979: Vietnamese forces took control of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, ousting the Khmer Rouge and its leader, Pol Pot.

1989: Akihito is sworn in as Emperor of Japan. His accession to the throne followed the death of his father, Emperor Hirohito, on the same day.

LOL

THE DENTIST

A couple of old guys were golfing when one said he was going to Dr. Taylor for a new set of dentures in the morning. His friend remarked that he had gone to the same dentist a few years before. "Is that so?" the first said. "Did he do a good job?"



"Well, I was on the course yesterday when the fellow on the ninth hole hooked a shot," he said. "The ball must have been going 200 mph when it hit me in the stomach. That," he added, "was the first time in two years my teeth didn't hurt."

Data-center investments hint at a coming shift in the AI race. Soon, if not already, reliable, affordable electricity will confer the decisive advantage in the sector.

As Albert O. Hirschman argued in *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*, an economy's true power lies in its ability to manage the choke points that affect its industries. In the AI ecosystem, the United States has been leveraging its dominance in chip design by strategically limiting exports to China, while China has exerted pressure on the US through its control of rare-earth materials needed to manufacture chips, magnets, and other components of advanced technology.

But as the scale of the AI industry and its reliance on computing power grows, the bottleneck will move from chips to electricity, because all the data centers in the world will not help you if they lack a continuous supply of affordable energy. The International Energy Agency estimates that roughly 20% of planned global data-center capacity will be at risk by 2030, owing to grid bottlenecks and interconnection queues. And as energy supplies are constrained, costs will rise, eventually trickling down to households and firms.

Which country will dominate this next leg of the race? China has certainly made a statement with its massive build-out of energy supply and distribution infrastructure, much of which focuses on renewables. According to the *Financial Times*, Chinese investments in clean energy cover everything from solar and hydropower to the hardware needed to move cheaper inland power to coastal demand centers, thus lowering costs and improving reliability. China has also invested massively in manufacturing, driving down the price of a solar panel by a factor of 20. All told, it is now capable of adding between 500 gigawatts and one terawatt of capacity per year.



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to move energy takes almost a decade.

Such time frames are woefully misaligned with the blistering pace of private capital expenditure. A Bloomberg analysis of tens of thousands of pricing nodes already shows signs of distress in US energy markets. Wholesale electricity in some US regions near large data-center hubs is up to 267% more expensive than it was five years ago. To keep its projected data-center build-out on track, the US will need a structural overhaul of its energy policy, its grids, and their interconnections.

The US effort is rather unimpressive by comparison. According to the *Financial Times*, "China installed 429 GW of new power generation capacity in 2024, more than six times the net capacity added in the US during that time." Even as America's locally planned grids face enormous around-the-clock demand from data centers, US industrial policy is failing to give electricity the attention it deserves.

For example, OpenAI and its partners are planning to build data centers that will require ten GW of capacity, which is on the order of New York City's summer peak load electricity usage. But, while data centers can be built in a couple of years, researchers at the Deloitte Research Center for Energy & Industrials point out that completing the transmission infrastructure needed

the most interconnected in the world. Europe's energy policy explicitly cites grids as a strategic asset for autonomy and security, and European factories making strategic net-zero technologies are to meet "at least 40% of [the EU's] annual deployment needs by 2030."

That said, European decarbonization has run into its own share of obstacles. With high energy costs threatening to hinder growth, energy generation and grid capacity must be ramped up. The European Network of Transmission Systems Operators for Electricity has advanced a useful proposal. But while the planning is carried out at the European level, the execution remains locally bound. As a result, the average grid project takes more than ten years to complete, half of which is spent on permitting. According to the European Parliamentary Research Service, current projected grid investments are a mere 10-15% of what's required, and more than 500 GW of offshore projects in the EU – capacity still waiting for grid connection assessment – is stuck in the queue.

The next leg of the race will be about energy. By fostering domestic chip production and consumption while improving electricity infrastructure, China's strategy addresses every dimension that matters. Meanwhile, the US is failing to look ahead, complacent in its current position as the designer of first-in-class chips and AI foundation models. And though Europe is uniquely positioned to make AI's energy demand cleaner and more secure, it may lack the institutions needed to accelerate progress. For Europe to be a challenger, it, too, must direct its energies toward energy.

The writer, a teaching assistant at Bocconi University, is the founder and editor of MOPS, a newsletter on macro-finance, technology, and policy.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

AS ENERGY SUPPLIES ARE CONSTRAINED, COSTS WILL RISE, EVENTUALLY TRICKLING DOWN TO HOUSEHOLDS AND FIRMS

Vittorio Quaglione

IN JEST THIS

Waiting for 'Biryani from the Sky'



Melvin Durai

IT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR TO ME THAT I SHOULD STILL BE WAITING FOR FOOD DELIVERY BY DRONE WHEN SOME PRISONERS ARE ALREADY ENJOYING THIS SERVICE

It has been more than a decade since companies started testing food delivery by drone, and yet I am still waiting for my first drone-delivered bucket of biryani. If you're wondering why I used the word "bucket," it's because a restaurant near my home, Hyderabad House, sells biryani by the bucket. It doesn't come in an actual bucket, but the quantity is enough to fill a bucket — or my stomach for a week. If you have never enjoyed a bucket of biryani, you really need to put it on your bucket list.

Hyderabad House is about two kilometers from my house, and I've often driven there to pick up biryani. But it would be really great if a drone could bring a bucket to my house. Unfortunately, the proprietors of the restaurant do not offer drone delivery, nor do they have any plans to do so, despite my offers to start a crowdfunding campaign to buy them a drone.

It has been more than eight years since Francesco's Pizzeria made India's first food delivery by drone in Mumbai, sending a pizza to a customer 1.5 km from the restaurant. The restaurant's chief executive was confident that such deliveries would be routine in a few years. Since then, other companies have tested food delivery by drone, but as far as I know, none has made it routine.

It doesn't seem fair to me that I should still be waiting for food delivery by drone when some prisoners are al-

ready enjoying this service. Perhaps you are asking yourself, "Why does he need biryani by drone? Why doesn't he just use a delivery service?"

Well, as I noted in a column a few years ago, various companies, as well as media outlets, have been teasing me with the whole concept of delivery by drone. "It's coming soon," they've been trumpeting, and I've been patiently waiting to experience it firsthand.

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ready enjoying this service.

As the *Associated Press* reported, three weeks before Christmas, guards at a prison in the US state of South Carolina found a drone-dropped package of food (raw steak, crab legs and Old Bay seasoning), marijuana and cigarettes in the prison yard.

"I'm guessing the inmates who were expecting the package are crabby," said prison spokeswoman Chrysti Shain, launching her stand-up comedy career.

According to the report, prison authorities also seized the drone that made the delivery, but have not yet seized the owner of the drone.

I don't think this is an isolated incident. Prisoners are getting food deliveries by drone — and I'm not. What's even more concerning is that prisoners are getting deliveries of raw food. Do they have a secret kitchen? Perhaps they bribe a guard with marijuana and cigarettes to get access to

the prison kitchen.

If criminals can find a way to get crab legs by drone, why is it so hard for me to get biryani by drone? Apparently, food companies have been unable to overcome the technical and safety challenges of getting a drone to deliver food to an individual home. And yet drones are being used in many other ways, including warfare. A military drone can drop a bomb with great precision on my house, but somehow no one is able to drop a bucket of biryani.

Drones are also being used to deliver medicine in many parts of the world. In India, a World Economic Forum initiative has made thousands of deliveries of medicine by drone to remote and mountainous regions. This important initiative, called "Medicine from the Sky," has helped keep many people healthy.

I'm still waiting, however, for the important initiative called "Biryani from the Sky."

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Civic failure

Sir, Indore, the jewel of Swachh Bharat, and which was voted as the "cleanest city" for eight consecutive years, has now grappled with a tragedy of at least nine deaths due to contamination in drinking water supply, a problem so basic and so preventable. The incident clearly exposes the dangerous gap between surface-level awards and crumbling public health infrastructure. A city which is hailed for its spotlessness for years is at a crossroads all at once, as beneath the streets, corroded pipes bleed sewage into drinking water lines. This is not just a civic failure; it is a profound betrayal of trust and a glaring indictment of a model of urban governance that prizes spectacle over substance, and awards over accountability. Indore's drinking water tragedy is a wake-up call for every urban area in India. It reminds us strikingly that the right to clean water is the most fundamental right of all, from which all others flow. Should a city chase shiny awards or should it have a robust infrastructure where a child does not die from a glass of water?

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Road safety

Sir, "Road safety is life safety" -- nothing can be more true. Road safety is not just about speed restriction, curbing drunken driving and ensuring maintenance of regulations. There are other facets to it hinging on overall supervision. It includes broader aspects like proper audits, state-of-the-art training and upkeep of technology. Fanning awareness and engaging citizens about crucial road rules are equally important. All these are the aims and objectives of the "National Road Safety Month" in January, in vogue since 2021. Road design and accident audits, driver training and licensing methods are particularly focused upon. Additionally, it aims to drive home the criticality of emergency services on roads apart from distinct identification of dark spots that cause mishaps. The United Nations (UN) hopes that by 2030, global road fatalities are reduced by half.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



TWO STATES



ANDHRA GAS WELL BLAZE

Comprehensive blowout control plan finalised

A massive jet fire of up to 20 metres height and 25 metres width erupted around 12:40 pm January 5 near Mori and Irusumanda villages after a gas leak at an Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)-owned well, Mori-5, whose intensity has been reduced now



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mori (Andhra Pradesh), Jan 6: ONGC senior management has assumed operational control of the yet to be extinguished gas well blaze here in Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema district and finalised a comprehensive blowout control plan Tuesday.

A massive jet fire of up to 20 metres height and 25 metres width erupted around 12:40 pm January 5 near Mori and Irusumanda villages after a gas leak at an Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)-owned well, Mori-5, whose intensity has been reduced now.

The gas well is not operated by the Maharatna company but by its Production Enhancement Contractor (PEC) Deep Industries Ltd, an Ahmedabad-based company.

The senior management of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) including Director (Technology & Field Services) from Delhi along with Crisis Management Team (CMT) experts, have assumed operational control of Well Mori-5. A comprehensive blowout control plan has been

finalised," said an official press release from the public sector major.

In the wake of continuous efforts, the ONGC team deployed at the inferno managed to reduce its intensity and size, which has been raging for more than a day already.

The firefighters completed the creation of a temporary canal from a nearby irrigation source to facilitate the deployment of high-capacity firewater pumps.

Fire pumps have reached the wellsite, and placement activities are in progress, said ONGC.

Besides reducing the flame's intensity and size, the firefighters have also managed to alter the flame to vertical direction.

Air quality, noise levels, and nearby water bodies are being continuously monitored to minimise environmental impact within a 600 metre radius," said the press release.

Further, it noted that the ONGC is in continuous coordination with all stakeholders to ensure transparency and an effective response.

All operations are being carried out with the highest standards of safety and envi-

ronmental care, it added.

ONGC expert teams have arrived from Mumbai and Delhi to douse blaze, an official said earlier Tuesday.

The intensity of the fire got reduced compared to Monday, said the official.

"They (firefighters) have created a water umbrella to make the temperature cool down, but the flames are still coming, so the expert teams will arrive and they will assess the situation, and accordingly they will take all measures to douse the flames," Konaseema joint collector T Nisanthi told PTI.

By sprinkling water, all the trees surrounding the fire jet are being cooled off, said Nisanthi, observing that the intensity of flames has reduced compared to Monday.

There were hopes the flames will be doused at the earliest, she said, noting that all efforts are being made in this connection. "They will assess the situation first, and only based on the assessment, they will be able to tell," she said when asked for a timeline to completely extinguish the blaze.

Revenue, Police and Fire department officials, along with ONGC, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and Red Cross personnel are toiling hard to extinguish the flames, she said.

As many as 600 people from three villages around the fire were evacuated Monday for safety.

Deep Industries Ltd had secured a Rs 1,402-crore contract in 2024 for production enhancement operations at ONGC's Rajahmundry Asset in Andhra Pradesh, according to reports.

The company has been operating the Mori-5 well for about a year, said an ONGC official.

Foreign tourists pose for a picture amid low visibility on a chilly winter morning at the Taj Mahal, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

Andhra CM Naidu approves ₹19,000 crore investments

SIPB UNVEILS IT PORTAL, PUSHES BEACH TOURISM PLANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Jan 6: Andhra Pradesh's 14th State Investment Promotion Board meeting, chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu Tuesday, approved investment proposals worth over Rs 19,000 crore with the potential to generate nearly 12,000 jobs.

Major proposals cleared at the meeting include Tata Power's Rs 6,675 crore investment in Nellore district, Shirdi Sai Electricals' Rs 5,571 crore project in Kadapa district, and Websol Renewable's Rs 3,538 crore investment, among others.

"The 14th SIPB meeting approved investments worth Rs 19,391 crore from 14 companies across sectors such as tourism, industry, food processing and fuel," a press release said.

During the meeting, Naidu



directed officials to prepare a comprehensive master plan for beach tourism development in the state.

Noting that Suryalanka Beach in Bapatla district is among the safest beaches, he called for branding the Suryalanka Beach Resorts and de-

veloping a 15-km-long clean beachfront.

He also suggested developing small islands near Sullurpetta under beach tourism, drawing parallels with island tourism in the Maldives.

The chief minister further stressed the need to attract more food processing units to the Tirupati region to benefit farmers and called for meetings with major food processing companies, asserting that Andhra Pradesh should emerge as a leader in the sector.

Naidu also unveiled the Andhra Pradesh IT infrastructure portal.

Observing that sustained efforts in 2025 had helped restore the state's brand image, which he claimed was eroded during the previous YSRCP government, the chief minister said these measures had

resulted in significant investment inflows.

He asked ministers and officials to take responsibility for ensuring there were no lapses in the investment facilitation process.

Referring to the power sector, Naidu said improved performance had enabled the government to reduce power tariffs by 13 paise per unit.

"We have decided not to pass on a Rs 4,500 crore true-up charge to the people, and the government will bear the burden. A framework has also been designed to reduce power purchase costs," he said.

The CM said the government aims to bring down the power purchase cost to Rs 3.7 per unit by 2029, adding that it was a matter of satisfaction that consumers were not being burdened with higher power charges.

Sambhal administration removes 'illegal' portions of 3 houses built on pond land

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambhal (UP), Jan 6: The district administration Tuesday carried out a demolition drive to remove illegal portions of three houses built on pond land in the Raya Buzurg area here, officials said.

The action comes after demolition of an illegal mosque on the same site January 4. Heavy police deployment was maintained in the area as a precautionary measure during the drive. Circle Officer (Asmauli) Kuldeep Singh said the administration is conducting a continuous campaign to remove illegal encroachments in Raya Buzurg.

An illegal mosque constructed on government land was removed earlier. Today, action was taken against portions of three houses built through encroachment. Notices had already been served to the occupants," Singh said.

The officer added that personnel from five police stations, the Rapid Response Force (RRF) and women police units were deployed in the area. The district police social media cell is also monitoring the situation while local units continue patrolling.

Tehsildar Dhirendra Pratap Singh said the occupants had initially claimed they would remove the illegal structures themselves. "After removing some portions, they later asked the administration to proceed with demolition using bulldozers," he said.

According to the Tehsildar, the land falls under Gata number 682 and measures approximately 880 square metres. It is officially recorded as pond land.

"The illegal constructions were made by Asrar, Abrar and Babu by encroaching upon the pond land. These people had earlier constructed a large mosque and a banquet hall on the reserved pond land," the Tehsildar said.

Resume Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation works: YSRCP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh), Jan 6: A group of YSRCP leaders Tuesday demanded Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to immediately resume the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project, asserting that it was his responsibility to secure environmental clearances.

Senior YSRCP leaders from the Rayalaseema region, including Nandyal district president K Rambhupal Reddy, Kurnool district president SV Mohan Reddy and former minister Sake Sailajanath alleged that the project works were being deliberately stalled to deny political credit to former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

A group of YSRCP leaders accused Naidu of failing to secure environmental clearances and demanded immediate resumption of the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project," said a press release from the opposition party.

These leaders visited the project site at Jupadu Bungala mandal in Kurnool district and spoke to reporters there.

They objected to Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's statement in the neighbouring state's Assembly that the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation

MAGH MELA Panchkosi Parikrama begins in Prayagraj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj (UP), Jan 6: The 'Panchkosi Parikrama', a five-day pilgrimage to prominent religious sites situated near the Sangam in Prayagraj, commenced at the Magh Mela Monday.

Celebrated as an enduring symbol of Prayag's cultural traditions, performing the 'Panchkosi Parikrama' is considered essential for devotees visiting Prayagraj, as it offers the spiritual merit of darshan of all sacred sites situated near the holy confluence of rivers, the Uttar Pradesh government said in a statement.

Led by the Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad and Shri Panch Dashmam Juna Akhara, the pilgrimage began with Ganga Puja at the Sangam Monday, and will conclude with a bhandara for saints and ascetics on the final day, the statement added.

The Magh Mela administration has been entrusted with managing traffic arrangements during the pilgrimage.

Following the Ganga Puja, the procession of saints visited the sacred Akshayavat and the Adi Shankar Vimana Mandapam temple, marking the completion of the first day's rituals.



Mahant Hari Giri, General Secretary, Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad, said the 'Panchkosi Parikrama' is an ancient and revered religious tradition of Prayag, one that is rooted in its traditional geographical expanse.

The region encompasses six riverbanks of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati, forming three sacred zones, Antarvedi, Madhyavedi, and Bahirvedi, the Mahant Hari Giri said, adding that numerous major and minor pilgrimage sites, temples, ashrams, and monas-

teries are located in this region, all of which are covered during the five-day pilgrimage.

Mahant Ravindra Puri, president of the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad, who also participated in the pilgrimage, said the 'Panchkosi Parikrama' was integral to the Magh Mela until it was discontinued 556 years ago during the Mughal period.

According to the statement, after centuries, following persistent demands from saints and ascetics, the tradition was revived in 2019

Young sadhu standing on one foot for '7 years' draws attention

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

mid rows of ash-smeared ascetics and chanting devotees at Magh Mela here, a 26-year-old sadhu is drawing quiet but steady attention for an unusual spiritual vow — he claims he has not sat or lain down for the past seven years. Known as Shankarpuri, the young ascetic from Bihar's Sitamarhi district has been spotted standing continuously on one foot at the ongoing Magh Mela, using a wooden support to rest his head even while sleeping. He says he performs all daily activities, from eating to any other ritual, while remaining upright.

"I belong to Naimisharanya, where it is believed that 88,000 sages reside. I was born there and also have an ashram established at that sacred site," Shankarpuri told PTI Videos.

"From that land, a thought came to my mind that I should keep standing. I have been a saint since the age of six." When asked whether he ever sits or lies down, the sadhu replied simply, "I have been standing for seven years." Explaining how he rests, he said he sleeps while standing by supporting his head on a wooden cradle-like structure. "Food, water and all daily routines are done in the same posture," he added.

through the efforts of the Yogi Adityanath government. Since then, the 'Panchkosi Parikrama' has continued uninterrupted, restoring the spiritual legacy of Prayagraj.

UP approves sops to attract semiconductor investments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 6: The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Tuesday approved incentives to attract semiconductor companies willing to invest Rs 3,000 crore or more in the state, aiming to boost high-end manufacturing and generate large-scale employment.

These include interest subsidy, employee cost reimbursement, GST exemptions for 10 years, and power tariff subsidy

of up to Rs 2 per unit for a decade. He added that 100 per cent reimbursement of EPF contributions for Uttar Pradesh-based professionals, capped at Rs 2,000 per month, along with concessions in water charges, would also be provided.

The objective is to attract major global players in the semiconductor sector and position Uttar Pradesh as a preferred investment destination," Khanna said, noting that the in-

dustry is currently dominated by the US, Europe, Japan and Taiwan.

Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta said the state was witnessing growing interest from multinational companies and that SOPs for Global Capability Centres (GCCs) were also approved.

He said 21 companies have already started investments in the current financial year, which would generate significant di-

rect and indirect employment.

Stamp and Revenue Minister Ravindra Jaiswal said the Cabinet expanded a 2022 decision that capped stamp duty at Rs 5,000 on family property transfers.

The facility, earlier limited to residential and agricultural properties, will now apply to commercial properties as well, in both rural and urban areas, when property is gifted within the family. Minister Khanna

also said that the cabinet also approved the establishment of a multi-super speciality hospital with 500 beds in Varanasi at the place of Shiv Prakash Gupta divisional district hospital.

He said the 500 multi-super speciality Hospital will require a cost of Rs 315 crore and will be completed in 4 years time.

60 per cent of the project's cost would be borne by the Centre and the remaining by the state, Khanna said.

national

of the day quote

Delhi's pollution is a serious issue and they should not evade discussion. Even now, they have an opportunity to apologise to the people of Delhi for failing for eleven years

MANJINDER SINGH SIRSA | DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

Leaders of BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP sit together in Mumbai, while a drama goes on of separate contests

ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM LEADER

It brings transformative reforms to MGNREGA by extending guaranteed employment to 125 days in comparison to the 100 days employment, prioritising durable rural infrastructure, and strengthening gram panchayat-led planning with clear accountability

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

SHORT TAKES

4, including minor, held with heroin

Chandigarh: In a major crackdown on cross-border smuggling, Punjab Police's Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) Tuesday apprehended four people, including a key operative and a minor, with nearly 20 kg of heroin in Amritsar, officials said. Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said preliminary investigation reveals that the key operative is linked to Pakistan-based handlers and was coordinating the delivery and distribution of drug consignments across the region.

Three devotees killed in road crash

Ujjain: A jeep ferrying devotees from Telangana to the Mahakaleshwar Temple in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain district collided with a trailer truck amid dense fog Tuesday morning, leaving three dead and four others injured, a police official said. The accident took place near Chandesra village on a bypass road in the district at around 5 am, said Nagjiri police station in-charge Kamal Nigwal. The jeep was packed with devotees from Telangana who were going to Ujjain for darshan of Lord Mahakal (Lord Shiva) when it crashed into the trailer truck loaded with metal items, he said.

Woman naxal surrenders

Dhamtari (Chhattisgarh): A 37-year-old Naxalite, involved in multiple encounters against security forces and carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh on her head, surrendered in Dhamtari district Tuesday, police said. Bhumika alias Somari was an active member of the Nagri Area Committee and served as 'commander' of the Gobra Local Organisation Squad (LOS) of Maoists, said Dhamtari Superintendent of Police SP Suraj Singh Parihar.

Ankita case: U'khand govt ready for probe

Dehradun: Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami Tuesday said the Uttarakhand government is prepared for any investigation into the Ankita Bhambhani murder case, adding that a final decision would be taken only after consulting her parents and following their wishes. Opposition parties have been holding protests, demanding a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the matter.



People pose for a photograph with a foreign tourist at Kovalam International Beach, in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

PTI PHOTO

GROK OBSCENE AI CONTENT

Govt gives X deadline till Jan 7 to submit report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



try had also asked the US-based social media firm to submit a detailed action taken report (ATR) within 72 hours of the directive (effectively by January 5).

The grant of extension came after X sought additional time from the IT Ministry, sources told PTI. On Sunday, X's 'Safety' handle said it will take action against illegal content on its platform, including Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), by removing it, permanently suspending accounts, and working with local governments and law enforcement as necessary. "Anyone using or prompting Grok to make illegal content will suffer the same consequences as if they upload illegal content," it had said, reiterating Musk's stance on illegal content.

Government sources said X had sought more time, and now it has been asked to submit its report by January 7. The Centre Friday pulled up X and directed it to immediately remove all vulgar, obscene and unlawful content, especially generated by Grok (X's built-in artificial intelligence interface) or face action under the law. The minis-

The University ordered an internal inquiry, as the BJP leaders, including

Union and Delhi ministers, expressed anger over the incident, alleging that the slogans reflected the "Urban Naxal mindset that is supported by Rahul Gandhi and the Congress"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 6: A protest at JNU sparked a controversy as objectionable slogans targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were allegedly raised over the denial of bail by the Supreme Court to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case, prompting the university administration to seek an FIR in the matter.

A letter written by the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) administration to the Delhi Police claimed that certain students raised "highly objectionable, provocative and inflammatory" slogans at an event Monday that were in direct contempt of the Supreme Court and reflect a "wilful disrespect for constitutional institutions and established norms of civil and democratic discourse".



The University also ordered an internal inquiry, as the BJP leaders, including Union and Delhi ministers, expressed anger over the incident, alleging that the slogans reflected the "Urban Naxal mindset that is supported by Rahul Gandhi and the Congress".

The event - "A Night of Resistance with Guerrilla Dhaba" - was organised at Sabarmati Dhaba to mark the anniversary of the January 5, 2020, violence in which a group of masked persons had entered the campus and unleashed mayhem by attacking students and teachers.

A purported video of the Monday protest showed students allegedly raising slogans against the prime minister and Union home minister after the Supreme Court refused to grant bail to Khalid, a former JNU student leader, and Imam in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case. The University has named several students, including current Jawaharlal Nehru University

Students' Union (JNUSU) president Aditi Mishra, and said they were identified during the programme and claimed that such slogans have the "potential to seriously disturb public order, campus harmony and the safety and security environment of the university and the nation". Senior officials, on the condition of anonymity, told PTI that the JNU administration held a meeting Tuesday and will take corrective action against the students found guilty. "JNU administration is setting up an internal inquiry on the matter. If students are found guilty of violating any rules or regulations, we will take disciplinary action against the students," an official said.

According to the letter addressed to the SHO of Vasant Kunj (North), the University's Security Department said the programme was organised around 10 pm by students linked to the JNUSU. The gathering initially appeared limited to commemorating the January 5, 2020, incident, with around 30 to 35 students present.

The letter said that the nature of the event changed following a judicial verdict on the bail pleas of Khalid and Imam, after which some participants allegedly raised slogans, which the University termed "inflammatory and objectionable".

The administration claimed the slogans amounted to contempt of the Supreme Court and violated the JNU Code of Conduct.

Noting that the raising of such slogans is "wholly inconsistent with democratic dissent and violates the JNU Code of Conduct", the statement said such slogans have the "potential to seriously disturb public order, campus harmony and the safety and security environment of the university and the nation". Senior officials, on the condition of anonymity, told PTI that the JNU administration held a meeting Tuesday and will take corrective action against the students found guilty. "JNU administration is setting up an internal inquiry on the matter. If students are found guilty of violating any rules or regulations, we will take disciplinary action against the students," an official said.

Delhi ministers Kapil Mishra, Manjinder Singh Sirda and Ashish Sood criticised the raising of controversial slogans at the JNU and accused the opposition parties of providing patronage to those involved in such activities.

SNIPPETS

CBI summons Vijay in Karur stampede case

New Delhi: The CBI has issued a notice to TVK president Vijay to appear for questioning January 12 at the agency headquarters here in connection with the Karur stampede case, officials said. The CBI has questioned several office bearers of the Tamilaga Vettir Kazhagam (TVK) in connection with the case, they said. The agency has now decided to call Vijay in connection with the case, following which it may take a call on filing a charge sheet in the matter, they said.

Sonia admitted to hosp; condition stable

New Delhi: Congress leader Sonia Gandhi has been admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here after she suffered respiratory discomfort, sources said Tuesday. At present, she is doing fine, and her condition is "absolutely stable", they said. The veteran Congress leader has been kept under observation by a chest physician. It is a routine admission, but she has this problem of chronic cough, and she keeps coming for check-ups, especially with this pollution in the city, a hospital source told PTI, adding that she was admitted Monday evening. Gandhi turned 79 in December 2025.

Delhi Assembly adjourned twice

New Delhi: The Delhi Assembly was adjourned twice on the second day of the Winter Session Tuesday, with the ruling BJP MLAs seeking an apology from the AAP members for "spreading lies" that directions were issued for the counting of stray dogs by government school teachers. Speaker Vijender Gupta had a hard time controlling the protesting legislators before adjourning the House for 30 minutes, soon after the sitting started around 11 am. After the House reconvened, the ruling party MLAs again raised slogans against the AAP members, including their national convener Arvind Kejriwal, seeking an apology. Gupta tried to bring the House under order as the opposition members too raised their voice in protest, before adjourning the House till 1 pm.

DMRC official, family killed in fire at flat in Delhi's Adarsh Nagar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 6: A Delhi Metro Rail Corporation official, his wife and their 10-year-old daughter were killed after a fire broke out in their residence in northwest Delhi's Adarsh Nagar in the early hours of Tuesday, officials said.

The incident occurred at Metro Apartments, a residential complex for Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) employ-

ees located opposite Majlis Park Metro Station in the Mukundpur area. Police received a PCR call at around 2.39 am regarding a major fire on the fifth floor of the building. Teams from the Delhi Police and Delhi Fire Services were sent to the spot.

Preliminary findings suggest the fire was triggered by an electrical short circuit involving a room heater inside the family's one-bedroom flat, the officials said.

Caught red-handed: Thief stuck in exhaust fan window

The homeowner, returning from a trip, spotted the trapped intruder in the glare of his scooter's headlight and alerted the police, who had to extricate the man before taking him into custody



ing him into custody.

According to the homeowner, Subhash Kumar Rawat, he and

his wife had gone to visit the Khatu Shyam temple in Sikar district on Saturday, and re-

turned late on Sunday night. As his wife unlocked the main gate and they were moving their scooter inside, Rawat noticed a man half-stuck in the window. He immediately raised an alarm and called the police.

Upon receiving information, a police team reached the spot and assisted in releasing the thief from the window frame.

A video of the incident went viral, showing the thief trapped in the exhaust fan window and police personnel struggling to pull him out safely. Officials said the accused

has been identified as Pawan, a resident of Digod village in Kota. His companion, however, managed to escape. Borekheda SHO Anil Tailor said Pawan was arrested on Monday evening following interrogation and produced before a court Tuesday.

During the search, police recovered car keys from the accused and seized a four-wheeler. The vehicle had a police sticker and white curtains, the SHO said. Efforts are underway to trace the other accused in the matter, he added.

national

of the day quote

Whatever is happening in Bangladesh, is a cause of concern for us. Torture on Hindus are increasing day by day. The situation is worrying and we may see its effect in Assam too

DEEPAK ROW

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

If Janardhana Reddy or Sriramulu (the BJP leader) had any objection to the banner, they could have contacted the municipal commissioner, police officers, MLAs or other leaders and said the banner should be removed. It would have been taken down

D K SHIVAKUMAR | KARNATAKA DY CM

I have not done politics to break any record; it is only a coincidence. I did not know how many years and days Devaraj Urs served as CM. Today because of the blessings of the people, I have got an opportunity to equal Devaraj Urs's record. Tomorrow it will be broken

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

X POST OF THE DAY

If you earn ₹30 lakh, you pay ₹5.7 lakh tax ₹24.3 lakh left Now you buy a car worth ₹20 lakh, you pay ₹5.6 lakh as GST & cess ₹4.3 lakh left Now you spend ₹1 lakh on fuel in a year, you pay ₹55,000 as tax You pay tax on things that are already taxed, using money that has already been taxed.

@NalinisKitchen

SHORT TAKES

Parl panel examines impact of US tariffs

New Delhi: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce is assessing the impact of enhanced tariffs by the United States on the entry of various Indian products and seeks to understand the challenges faced by various sectors. It also seeks to assess the various measures taken by financial institutions, central and state governments to mitigate the adverse effects of US tariffs. The committee members are currently on a study visit to Visakhapatnam, Chennai and Coimbatore from January 6-8 to evaluate India-US trade relations. The committee is chaired by Rajya Sabha MP Dola Sen.

5-yr-old falls into open drain, dies

Gandhinagar: A five-year-old boy died after falling into an open gutter while playing near GIFT City here Tuesday evening, police said. The incident occurred at around 5.10 pm in Labour Colony, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Shafiq Ahmad. Several construction projects are underway in the area and labourers working there live in nearby settlements. Harsh Rajkumar Ram, whose parents hail from Jharkhand, fell and drowned in the open drain, around 10 feet deep, while playing with his friends, the official said.

BJP MLA's son held in hit-and-run case

Raipur: Bawant Singh (33), son of BJP MLA and former Union minister Renuka Singh, was arrested in a hit-and-run case Tuesday after the car driven by him allegedly rammed a motorcycle, police said Tuesday. He was later released on a bail bond, said an official.



There is no threat to our alliance with the DMK. We will discuss with them in a dignified manner to get the number of seats we require

K SELVAPERUTHAGAI | TNCC PRESIDENT

DELHI RECORDS 1ST COLD DAY OF YEAR

The winter tightened its hold across North India Tuesday with snowfall in hilly states and lowering temperatures across northern India, including the national capital which recorded its first cold day of the year



HC upholds order allowing lighting of lamp on hilltop

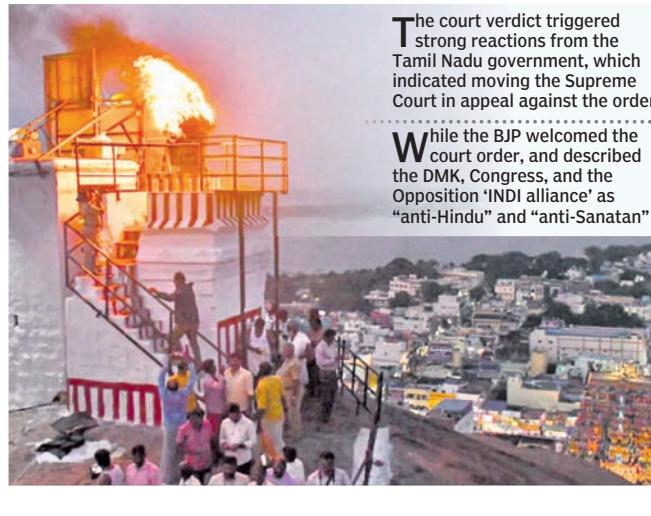
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai (Tamil Nadu), Jan 6: The Madras High Court's Madurai bench Tuesday upheld a single judge's order allowing the lighting of a lamp on the Thirupparankundram hill here, and slammed the DMK government, saying the apprehension about law and order due to this religious practice is nothing but an "imaginary ghost" created by them for the sake of their convenience.

The bench, comprising Justices G Jayachandran and K K Ramakrishnan, also made it clear that the spot on which the stone pillar (Deepa) is located belongs to the Sri Subramania Swamy Temple and that the Waqf Board, as of date, has no locus in this matter.

"It is ridiculous and hard to believe the fear of the mighty State that by allowing representatives of the Devasthanam to light the lamp at the stone pillar near the top of the hill located within its territory of Devasthanam land, on a particular day in a year, will cause disturbance to public peace."

"Of course, it may happen only if such a disturbance is



sponsored by the State itself. We pray no State should stoop to that level to achieve their political agenda," the bench said.

The case arose from a writ petition of one Rama Ravikumar and others seeking directions to light the sacred Deepam at the ancient stone pillar on Thirupparankundram hill during the annual Karthigai Deepam festival in November-December. On December 1, 2025, Justice G R Swaminathan allowed the petition and ordered that the ceremonial lamp be lit on the

法院 verdict triggered strong reactions from the Tamil Nadu government, which indicated moving the Supreme Court in appeal against the order

While the BJP welcomed the court order, and described the DMK, Congress, and the Opposition 'INDI alliance' as "anti-Hindu" and "anti-Sanatan"

the public peace is nothing but an imaginary ghost created by them for their convenience's sake and to put one community against another community under suspicion and constant mistrust," the bench said.

"By allowing a few persons from the Devasthanam to the pillar for lighting the lamp and keeping the devotees stay at the foothill and worship is not an unmanageable task, the court said.

"Projecting as if such congregation will cause disturbance to peace, stampede, disharmony among the community, etc, is either an exposure of their incapacity to maintain law and order, or are hesitant to bring harmony among the communities," it said.

The court verdict triggered strong reactions from the Tamil Nadu government, which indicated moving the Supreme Court in appeal against the order.

While the BJP welcomed the court order, and described the DMK, Congress, and the opposition 'INDI alliance' as "anti-Hindu" and "anti-Sanatan".

Tamil Nadu Minister for Natural Resources S Regupathy faulted the judgment and said the government has a right to appeal in the Supreme Court.



A vendor sells 'kangris' on a cold winter day at a market, in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

Teen detained for sharing info with Pak handlers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Chandigarh, Jan 6: A 15-year-old boy from Pathankot has been detained for allegedly sharing sensitive information with handlers in Pakistan, police said Tuesday. The teen belongs to Bari Brahmana area in Jammu and Kashmir close to Pathankot.

Police received intelligence inputs that the boy was in contact with and providing information concerning the country's security to Pakistan military officers, ISI and frontal organisations running terror modules in that country, said Pathankot Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Daljinder Singh Dhillon.

Punjab Police detained him Monday and his questioning is underway, the SSP told reporters in Pathankot. His mobile phone contains contact numbers of anti-national elements and terrorists based in Pakistan with the intent to spread unrest in India, officials said.

Sensitive information, photos, videos, and espionage-related material concerning Indian Army locations were stored in his phone and he was reportedly roaming in Punjab's Madhopur area after coming from Jammu and Kashmir.

Accordingly, a case under various sections of the Official Secrets Act was registered.

The SSP said the boy visited many social media platforms

and fell into the trap of Pakistani agencies. He had been in touch with them for the past one year.

Pakistani agents created a clone of the boy's mobile phone, Dhillon said, adding that the tech-savvy juvenile had video-graphed important locations and taken information.

The SSP said there was a possibility that Pakistani agencies and handlers took the information live while the teen was recording videos of strategic places as his phone had been compromised.

He is also alleged to have been in touch with gangsters running a terror module, Dhillon said.

"Had we not apprehended him, in future he could have carried out any kind of activity," he said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow/New Delhi, Jan 6: The draft electoral roll for Uttar Pradesh published Tuesday after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) excludes 2.89 crore voters but retains 12.55 crore, said Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Navdeep Rinwa.

The 2.89 crore voters, or 18.70 per cent, of the 15.44 crore listed earlier could not be included in the draft list due to deaths, permanent migration or multiple registrations, he said at a press conference. The final electoral list will be published March 6, Rinwa added.

The Opposition parties in UP have criticised the draft electoral roll after the SIR exercise. Talking to PTI Videos, UP Congress president Ajay Rai said the time allotted for the SIR exercise was short.

"This is a completely hasty decision. The way the SIR process was started by giving only one month in a large state like Uttar Pradesh is unreasonable."

"They gave one month even to a small state like Kerala. Uttar Pradesh should have been given at least five to six months, as was done earlier in 2002-03... Had it been done that way, the booth level officers (BLOs) would not have been under such pressure and suicides could have been avoided."

Samajwadi Party president



Shami summoned

Kolkata: Cricketer Mohammed Shami was asked to appear for the SIR verification hearing in Kolkata, officials said Tuesday. Shami was called for the hearing along with his brother Mohammed Kaif at a school in Jadavpur on Monday, but the cricketer could not appear as he is currently in Rajkot, representing Bengal in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, they said. He requested the Election Commission for new dates, and accordingly, his hearing has been rescheduled between January 9 and 11, they added. The pacer is a voter of Kolkata Municipal Corporation's ward 93, which is a part of the Rashbehari constituency.

WB: Two men die; families cite stress over SIR hearings

Kolkata: Two men in West Bengal died Tuesday, with families alleging that stress over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls contributed to their deaths. Malin Roy (55) from Boro Haldibari in Cooch Behar, suffered a stroke and died at Jalpaiguri Super Speciality Hospital, his family members said, adding that the deceased had been anxious since his SIR hearing December 31, after his name was found missing from the 2002 electoral list.

Akhilesh Yadav warned the Election Commission about the draft roll in Mainpuri, the Lok Sabha constituency of his wife Dimple Yadav. In a post on X, the Kannauj MP and former UP chief minister said, "Before the anger of the voters turns into agitation, the Election Commission should correct the voter list by taking cognisance of the

valid names cut from the SIR in Mainpuri."

Congress leader Gurdeep Singh Sappal Tuesday claimed that his name and that of his family members have been deleted from the draft SIR voter list of Uttar Pradesh despite their names being in the electoral roll of 2003 and them having deposited all required documents according to the guidelines.

Patanjali celebrates 32nd foundation day



AGENCIES

Haridwar, Jan 6: Haridwar witnessed vibrant gathering as Patanjali Yogpeeth celebrated its 32nd Foundation Day. The event brought together saints, scholars, students, yoga practitioners, senior leaders of Patanjali movement.

At heart of the celebrations were Swami Ramdev, Founder President of Patanjali Yogpeeth, and Acharya Balkrishna, its General Secretary. Both leaders used the occasion to reflect on Patanjali's journey.

Addressing the gathering, Swami Ramdev described Patanjali as one of the world's most sacred institutions working for humanity. He said Patanjali's spirit is deeply connected with Sanatan values, which are universal and timeless.

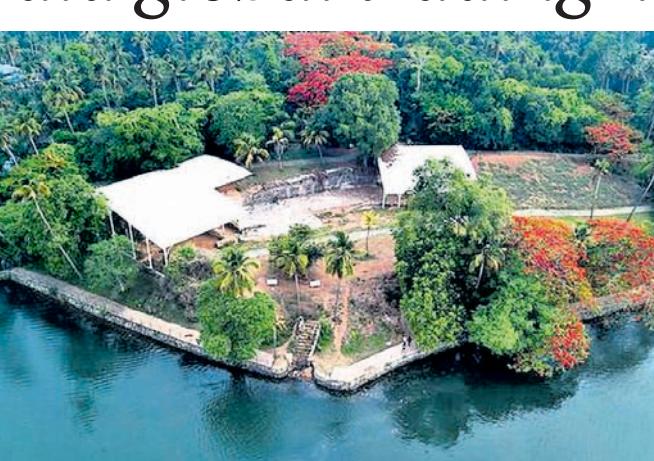
He urged students studying in Patanjali's gurukuls, universities, and educational institutions to feel proud of India's ancient wisdom. According to him, yoga, Ayurveda, Indian education, and a disciplined lifestyle can awaken limitless knowledge, devotion, inner strength.

One of the day's most powerful messages centered on education and India's place on the global stage. Swami Ramdev said that once Patanjali's gurukul system, universities, and the Indian Education Board reach full maturity, India's global image will be profoundly transformed.

Acharya Balkrishna said Patanjali faced resistance, criticism, and attempts to slow it down. However, he noted that for every obstacle, there were many more forces that supported the mission. Students from Patanjali's educational institutions showcased impressive performances during the event. Their presentations included yoga demonstrations, malkhamb, wrestling, martial arts, boxing, judo, karate. The performances reflected physical discipline, confidence, and the integration of traditional and modern sports. Several service-oriented individuals were also given organisational responsibilities.

Spice routes made Kerala global trading hub: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



the ancient Spice Route with contemporary global discourse.

Addressing the opening session, Kerala Tourism Director Sikha Surendran said that long before modern borders were drawn, these routes shaped the world through the exchange of goods, ideas and cultures.

Noting that Muziris stood at the centre of global movement, she said it was not merely a port but a space where civilisations met, negotiated and learned from one another.

"From this coast, spices carried the scent of Kerala to distant lands, while ideas returned, transforming societies, cultures and ways of life. In an age of rapid change and renewed global movement, they remind us that heritage is not static," she said.

Surendran said the conference was a call to reimagine the spice routes as living networks of culture, creativity and cooperation, rooted in communities,

guided by ethics and open to the world.

Elaborating on Kerala's historic spice trade, Michael Tharakan, former vice-chancellor of Kannur University, said the inter-portal trade convention of the 1920s between the British, the Madras Government and the Travancore and

Malabar reached Europe and North Africa through Arab trading networks.

He said pepper from Kerala was among the key commodities traded at Mediterranean and Atlantic ports as early as the 8th century.

Commenting on plantation labour politics, Chhaya Goswami, Head and Associate Professor at Somaiya Vidyavihar University, said financial instruments such as hundis (bills of exchange) and kinship-based credit networks enabled Indian capitalists to navigate and circumvent British restrictions on slavery.

She said these mechanisms ensured economic continuity even as formal abolition policies came into force. Participating online, Fahad Bishara of the Doha Institute, Qatar, said mobility was one of the defining features of Indian Ocean history, with enduring connections forged through commerce and trade.

international

of the day quote

REUTERS

The decree...
marks the start of an important period for democracy in which citizens will again decide on the future direction of our country

NATASA PIRC-MUSAR | PRESIDENT, SLOVENIA

I am deeply concerned about the possible intensification of instability in the country, the potential impact on the region, and the precedent it may set for how relations between and among states are conducted

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

As Secretary (of State) Marco Rubio has said, there is no war against Venezuela or its people. We are not occupying a country

MIKE WALTZ | US AMBASSADOR TO THE UN

SHORT TAKES

Hungarian director Bela Tarr dies at 70

Budapest: The celebrated Hungarian filmmaker Bela Tarr, director of such works as "Santanago" and "The Turin Horse" and the recipient of numerous awards for his long and often darkly comic films, has died at 70. During a career spanning decades, Tarr wrote and directed nine feature films, starting with his debut, "Family Nest," in 1979 and ending in 2011 with "The Turin Horse," which won the Silver Bear Jury Grand Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival that year. Tarr frequently collaborated with Hungarian author Laszlo Krasznahorkai, who last year won the Nobel Prize in literature. Tarr's films, some of which were adaptations of Krasznahorkai's novels ("Satantango" and "Werckmeister Harmonies"), have been awarded prizes at festivals around Europe and Asia, and he received honorary professorships at universities in China.

UK bans entry of Islamic preacher

London: Britain has banned the entry of an Islamic preacher over his defence of the extremist Hamas network in the wake of the October 7, 2023, attack in Israel, UK media reports claimed this week. According to "The Daily Telegraph," Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood revoked the travel authorisation of Dr Shadee Elmasry, a scholar from the US, days before he had been due to arrive for a series of talks in the UK. Elmasry was scheduled for talks organised by the Muslim charity Global Relief Trust (GRT) in Birmingham, Bolton and London from this weekend. While the UK Home Office declined to comment on individual cases, a spokesperson said there was no place in the UK for foreign nationals who "spread hate or push extremist ideas".

Flash floods in Indonesia kill 16

Manado (Indonesia): Flash floods triggered by torrential rain killed at least 16 people in Indonesia's North Sulawesi province, officials said Tuesday. Days of monsoon rain burst riverbanks early Monday, triggering fast-moving torrents of water mixed with mud, rocks and debris that swept away people and submerged villages in Siau Tagulandang Biaro District, said Abdul Muhari, a spokesperson for the National Disaster Management Agency. Emergency rescue personnel supported by police and the military deployed to four devastated villages on Siau, a tiny island about 130 kilometers (80 miles) off the northern tip of Sulawesi, Indonesia's fourth-largest island.



Around us, a distorted economy tries to profit from everything. After this year, will we be better able to recognise a pilgrim in the visitor, a seeker in the stranger, a neighbour in the foreigner?

POPE LEO | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

SLOVENIA GOES TO POLLS

Slovenia will hold parliamentary elections March 22 after President Natasa Pirc-Musar signed a decree Tuesday calling for a poll in the NATO and European Union member state, in what will likely be a closely-contested race



Venezuela's Machado vows to return



PRaise AND THANKS FOR TRUMP

Washington, Jan 6: Venezuela's main Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado has vowed to return home quickly, praising US President Donald Trump for toppling her enemy Nicolas Maduro and declaring her movement ready to win a free election.

Trump appears, however, to hope for now to work with interim President Delcy Rodriguez and other senior officials from Maduro's government, disappointing the opposition and contributing to nervousness around Venezuela.

"I'm planning to go back to Venezuela as soon as possible," said Machado, 58, an industrial engineer and mother of three who escaped from Venezuela in disguise in October to receive t, which she dedicated to Trump.

"We believe that this transition should move forward," she told Fox News in an interview. "We won an election (in 2024) by a landslide under fraudulent conditions. In free and fair elections, we will win over 90% of the votes."

Trump, however, has said the US needs to help address Venezuela's problems before an election, calling a 30-day timeline unrealistic. "We have to fix the country first. You can't have an election. There's no way the people could even vote," Trump told NBC.

SOCIALIST PARTY LOYALISTS STILL CONTROL VENEZUELA
In the interview late Monday, her first since Maduro was captured by the US, Machado did not give her location or any more details on repatriating

to Venezuela, where Socialist Party loyalists remain in power and she is under investigation for accusations of inciting the military.

To the dismay of the large diaspora - one in five Venezuelans left during an economic implosion - Trump has said Machado lacks support. The opposition, some international observers and many US allies say the Opposition was cheated of victory in the 2024 election, from which Machado was banned and an ally stood instead.

China bans exports to Japan of dual-use goods

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Jan 6: China Tuesday banned exports of dual-use goods that can serve military purposes to Japan, a move that comes at time of heightened tensions between the two countries over Taiwan, a self-ruled island Beijing claims as its sovereign territory.

The Chinese commerce ministry said in a statement that exports of such items, which can serve both civilian and military purposes, to Japanese military users and all other end-users that could help enhance Japanese military power are prohibited.

Any individual or organisation that violates the rule by transferring or providing these made-in-China products to Japanese groups and people would face legal consequences, regardless of where they are from, it said. The notice did not identify

or describe specific items, but some exports - particularly in the technology sector such as drones and navigation systems - could be adapted for military use. There was no immediate reaction from Japan.

Relations between Japan and China worsened late last year after Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said its military could get involved if China were to take action against Taiwan.

In December, Japan said Chinese military aircraft locked radar on its fighter jets even though there was a safe distance between them. Tokyo is barreling forward with efforts to significantly boost its military capabilities to stand up to China's growing threats by doubling annual arms spending.

Last week, China launched large-scale military drills around Taiwan for two days to warn against what it calls separatist and external forces.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka/New Delhi, Jan 6: Student leader Sharif Osman Hadi was killed due to "political vengeance" at the behest of the Awami League, Bangladesh police said Tuesday as it pressed formal charges against 17 people in connection with the murder.

"Through public rallies and social media, Hadi had strongly criticised the past activities of the now-banned Awami League and Chhatra League. Hadi's outspoken remarks angered leaders and activists of Chhatra League and its affiliated groups," Md Shafiqul Islam, Additional Commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's (DMP) Detective Branch, was quoted as saying by news portal tbsnews.net.

The Chhatra League is the student wing of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party.

Considering the political identities of the accused and the victim's previous political statements, the investigation has revealed that Hadi was shot dead due to political vengeance," Islam told a press briefing in Dhaka, after submitting the chargesheet in the Hadi murder case to the court.

The chargesheet was filed against 17 people, including prime suspect Faisal Karim Masud, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported, quoting Islam.

He said 12 of the 17 charge-sheeted accused have been arrested so far, while five remain at large.

Inqilab Moncho spokesperson Hadi, 32, rose to national prominence during the July-August 2024 mass protests that led to the fall of the Hasina-led government, was shot in

Maduro's government are the best bet to maintain stability, sources said.

One official, Diosdado Cabello, has been on the streets patrolling with security forces. "Always loyal, never traitors. Doubt is betrayal!" they chanted in one of various posts by the Venezuelan government overnight.

Authorities have ordered the arrest of anyone who collaborated with the seizure of Maduro and 14 media workers were briefly detained covering events in Caracas Monday.

Also, shots were fired Monday night into the sky in Caracas, which a Venezuelan official said came from police to deter unauthorized drones. "There was no confrontation, the entire country remains completely calm," vice minister of communications Simon Arrechider told reporters.

With nearly 900 political prisoners still behind bars according to a leading local rights group, Machado's Vente Venezuela movement demanded Monday that they be released immediately as a first step towards restoring democracy.

MADURO PLEADS NOT GUILTY

Maduro, 63, pleaded not guilty Monday to narcotics charges. He said he was a "decent man" and still president of Venezuela while standing in a Manhattan court shackled at the ankles and wearing orange and beige prison garb.

He has long denied cocaine-trafficking allegations, saying they were a mask for imperialist designs on oil.

Curfew lifted in Nepal's Birgunj

Life returns to normalcy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

the vandalism of a mosque in Dhanusha district Saturday.

Police said the mosque was vandalised by a group of youths in reaction to allegedly anti-Hindu messages circulated on social media by two Muslim youths, who were later taken into custody.

Paras Chief District Officer Bhola Dahal said the curfew was imposed Monday and was later extended till 6:00 pm local time Tuesday after protests over a video with alleged religious content on social media turned violent in Birgunj town of Paras district.

However, the Paras District Administration Office lifted the curfew from 3:30 pm after a consensus was reached at an all-party meeting, involving representatives of political parties and different communities, to halt demonstrations and restore normalcy, officials said.

A group of protesters on Sunday burnt tyres and vandalised a local police post in Birgunj, while demonstrating against

As part of the agreement, the meeting decided that any group planning a demonstration in future must first submit a written request to the CDO and proceed with the programme only after receiving permission.

Hadi killed due to political vendetta, chargesheet names 17: B'desh police



allegedly helped Masud and Alamgir Sheikh, another prime suspect, flee after the killing, was the president of Pallabi Thana Chhatra League and an Awami League-nominated ward councillor, he said.

Hadi was murdered on the instructions of Bappi, Islam said.

Home Affairs Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury had told reporters Monday, after a meeting of the Advisory Council on law and order at the Secretariat that the final chargesheet in the Hadi murder case would be submitted January 7.

However, police filed the chargesheet a day earlier amid protests in Dhaka by Inqilab Moncho, which has been demanding justice for the killing.

"The charge sheet was submitted as the allegations against the accused were proven during the investigation," Islam said.

Another accused, Taizul Islam Chowdhury Bappi, who

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ISL set to kick off after long hiatus

India's top football league to commence February 14, all teams to participate after the sport's darkest phase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 6: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Tuesday announced that the Indian Super League (ISL), which was on pause due to the lack of a commercial partner, will start February 14, ending a crisis that paralysed Indian football for close to six months.

The ISL, which used to start in September, will feature all 14 clubs, including Mohun Bagan and East Bengal, which were opposed to the financial model suggested by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

The second division I-League, which was also on pause for the same reason, will be held "around the same time" with all 11 clubs in participation.

"There was lot of speculation regarding ISL but today government, the football federation and all 14 clubs, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal included, had a meeting and we have decided that the ISL will start on February 14. All clubs will participate," Mandaviya announced in a brief statement flanked by CEOs of ISL clubs.

Also joining him at the long-awaited resolution table was under-fire All India Football Federation (AIF) President Kalyan Chaubey, who took over the explaining part after the Minister's announcement.

The top-tier ISL will feature 91 matches on home and away basis, the logistics of which are still being worked out.

"That part will be figured out by the clubs in the next

few weeks," Chaubey said. The I-League will be a truncated event with 55 matches.

"A Rs 25 crore central pool has been made for only the conduct of the ISL. 10 percent of this fund will come from AIFF, 30 percent was to come from a commercial partner but since we don't have one right now, the AIFF will pitch in with that contribution," Chaubey said.

"In all, the AIFF will give Rs 14 crore for ISL and about Rs 3.2 crore for I League till we find a commercial partner. The rest of the fund will come through the legacy participating clubs. Hopefully we will find a commercial partner soon," he added.

"In case, we face any difficulty, the government will also step in to assist us," he stated.

Chaubey said a Governing Council Board will be formed to manage the Leagues eventually and it will be "empowered to take all commercial decisions."

The ISL 2025-26 has



been in a limbo after the AIFF's commercial partner FSDL, owned by the Reliance Group, put it on hold in July due to uncertainty over the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) between the two parties.

The MRA ended December 8, 2025 as negotiations fell through.

Later, a tender was floated for the selection of a commercial rights partner under the supervision of a Supreme Court-appointed committee, but much to AIFF's embarrassment, there were no takers for it.

"All six leagues of Indian football, including I-League 2, 3 will commence along with the Indian Women's League (top division and second division)," Chaubey said.

The deadlock had left footballers in distress and on Friday leading names such as Sunil Chhetri, along with several foreign recruits of the ISL, called for world governing body FIFA's intervention.

With the 2025-26 ISL season yet to start, senior national team players such as Chhetri, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and Sandesh Jhingan voiced concern over the prolonged uncertainty, warning that Indian football would be slipping into a state of "permanent paralysis".

Despite the expected start of the ISL, it is certain that the clubs will not be able to play the mandatory 24 matches in the season -- including top division league and domestic cup -- to be eligible to feature in the AFC Champions League 2.

In that regard, the ISL clubs had urged the AIFF to request the Asian Football Confederation for a one-time relaxation in the minimum requirement of 24 matches to play in the ACL 2.

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VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY

Gujarat dominate Odisha by 233 runs



POST NEWS NETWORK

FINAL ASHES TEST

HEAD, SMITH TON PUT AUSTRALIA IN COMMAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Jan 6: Travis Head's third century of the series and Steve Smith's first guided Australia to a 134-run first-innings lead over England by stumps on the third day of the fifth and final Ashes test.

Head resumed Tuesday at 91 and was out for 163 from 166 balls, a masterful innings to follow his match-winning 123 in the second innings of the first test at Perth and his 170 in the second innings of the third test at Adelaide.

Smith was 129 not out at stumps, elevating a relatively disappointing series with the bat. His previous highest score in the series was 61 in the first innings at Adelaide.

The century was Smith's 13th in Ashes tests, the 37th of his career and his fifth at the Sydney Cricket Ground. With it, he moved up to sixth on the all-time list of most test centuries.

At stumps, Australia was 518-7 in reply to England's first innings of 384.

Beau Webster was unbeaten on 42 and had put on 81 runs with Smith for the eighth wicket, expanding Australia's lead.

"It was a really nice day today with a couple of nice partnerships," Smith said. "Hopefully, we can put a little partnership together, get up over a 200 lead and the wicket starts to play a few more tricks. I just love batting here, obviously it's my home deck. I know the ground really well and when I get in here I really like batting here," he added.

Khawaja saluted, while Head and Smith's centuries elicited huge cheers and Head's departure earned a standing ovation, the greatest cheers of the day were reserved for Usman Khawaja when he arrived at the crease



in his 88th and final test for Australia. Khawaja will retire at the end of the series.

He made 17 from 49

balls at the ground where he made his test debut 15 years ago, and he departed also to a standing ovation. Khawaja is an Australian fan favorite for his dogged nature and, as a Pakistani Muslim, for his courage to discuss issues of race and belonging.

Head became the first Australian opener since Matthew Hayden in 2002-03 to post three centuries in an Ashes series.

The 32-year-old left-hander reached the milestone with the 17th boundary of his innings.

His two previous centuries contributed heavily to Australia retaining the Ashes in 11 days of action. In Sydney, he's helped the home team rebound after England's drought-breaking win last week in the fourth test in Melbourne.

Head became the first Australian opener since Matthew Hayden in 2002-03 to post three centuries in an Ashes series

72ND SENIOR NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL C'SHIP

Odisha continue victorious run



POST NEWS NETWORK

dominated the match with strong teamwork, tactical maturity, and consistent attacking play to secure the win with set scores of 25-21, 25-22, 23-25, and 25-18.

Despite a brief resistance from Telangana in the third set, Odisha regrouped quickly and closed the match convincingly in the fourth set.

With two successive wins in the league stage, the Odisha Men's Volleyball Team has firmly established itself as a strong contender in the championship and will aim to carry forward this winning momentum in the days ahead.

Varanasi, Jan 6: Continuing their impressive run at the 72nd Senior National Volleyball Championship, the Odisha Men's Volleyball Team registered their second consecutive victory on the second day of the championship here Tuesday, further strengthening their campaign in the prestigious national event being held from January 4 to 11.

In their second league encounter, Odisha delivered another commanding performance, defeating Telangana by 3-1 sets. The Odisha side

NATIONAL BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

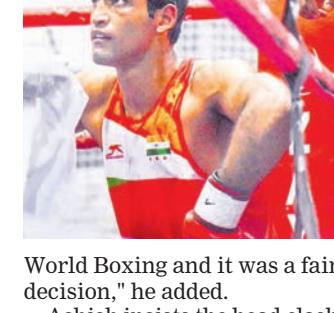
Greater Noida, Jan 6: The referee at the ongoing National Boxing Championships has come under scrutiny, prompting the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) to order a review after Olympian Ashish Chaudhary was disqualified from his opening-round bout.

Competing in the men's lightweight category (80kg), the 2019 Asian Championships silver medallist was disqualified less than two minutes into the contest Monday after it was ruled that he had intentionally clashed heads with Haryana's Rupesh, causing a bleeding.

The referee initially deemed the incident accidental and administered a standing count to Rupesh before calling for medical attention.

However, following con-

Chaudhary's disqualification triggers refereeing controversy



World Boxing and it was a fair decision," he added.

Ashish insists the head clash was accidental.

"Whoever is seeing the video is agreeing that it was in the moment I have not purposefully hit him with me head. I was moving out after leaning to hit him and his head made contact. Is this how you treat an Olympian?" Ashish asked.

The Himachal Pradesh Box-

ing Association (HPBA), however, has strongly objected to the ruling.

"We strongly condemn and protest this. If you see the video, the referee has signalled that it was accidental and not intentional," HPBA President and BFI Vice President Rajesh Bhandari said.

The BFI has been live streaming the Nationals but interestingly the video of the bout has been removed from the federation's YouTube page.

The episode has also led to questions within the boxing fraternity over the video of the bout and the technical official involved.

"Narendra Nirwan is not himself a qualified Technical Official. He should not be sitting there in the first place. How is he making these calls?" said an official on conditions of anonymity.

Ex-IOA prez Kalmadi passes away

Suresh Kalmadi, the face of CWG 2010, served as IOA president from 1996 to 2011 making him one of the longest-serving heads of the country's apex Olympic body

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

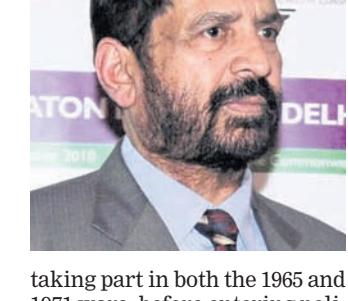
Pune, Jan 6: Former Indian Olympic Association president and veteran sports administrator Suresh Kalmadi died at a hospital here in the early hours of Tuesday. He was 81.

Kalmadi is survived by his wife, son and daughter-in-law, two married daughters and a son-in-law, as well as grandchildren.

Kalmadi, who had been unwell for some time, died around 3.30 am.

A towering figure in Indian sports administration for more than two decades, Kalmadi served as IOA president from 1996 to 2011, making him one of the longest-serving heads of the country's apex Olympic body.

Born in 1944, Kalmadi began his professional life as a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force,



taking part in both the 1965 and 1971 wars, before entering politics and sports administration.

He went on to represent Pune in the Lok Sabha multiple times as a Congress leader and also served as a Union minister, while steadily consolidating his position in Indian and international sports bodies.

As IOA president, Kalmadi had enormous influence during

a period when Indian sport was expanding its global footprint.

He also served as president of the Asian Athletics Association and was a member of the IAAF Council, making him one of India's most powerful sports administrators internationally.

Under his IOA tenure, India achieved a historic breakthrough at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when shooter Abhinav Bindra won the country's first-ever individual Olympic gold medal.

He was also the Chairman of the Organising Committee when Delhi hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2010.

Kalmadi was also closely associated with the growth of athletics and sports infrastructure in Pune, and played a key role in initiatives such as the Pune International Marathon, which became a regular fixture on the Indian road-running calendar.

As IOA president, Kalmadi had enormous influence during