



## Ideal life partner

Actor Tara Sutaria speaks about the qualities she looks for in her life partner

LEISURE | P2



## Trump warns Cuba

Cuba should negotiate with the US, says Donald Trump, warning that the island would not receive oil or aid from Venezuela

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## FPIs ditch India

Foreign portfolio investors have remained net sellers in the Indian stock market in five of the last seven sessions in January

BUSINESS | P11



## Kohli's milestone

Record books were rewritten once again Sunday as Virat Kohli climbed to the second spot on all-time list of run-scorers

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY | JANUARY 12, 2026



**OFF THE TRACK:** Three wagons of a coal-laden train derailed near Belpahar railway crossing on Howrah-Nagpur route in Jharsuguda district Sunday evening. No injury

OP PHOTO

## Iran vows to strike back if US attacks

AGENCIES

**Dubai/Jerusalem, Jan 11:** Tehran Sunday threatened to retaliate against Israel and US military bases in the event of US attacks on Iran, issuing the warning as Israeli sources said Israel is on high alert for the possibility of any US intervention.

Amidst this, the death toll in crackdown on nationwide protests in Iran spiked to at least 538 Sunday, activists said. Over 10,600 people have been detained, said the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency.

With Iran's clerical establishment facing the biggest anti-government protests since 2022, US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene in recent days, warning Iranian leaders against using force against demonstrators. Trump had said Saturday the US stands "ready to help". Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, speaking in parliament Sunday, warned against "a miscalculation".

P10

## MAN BLUDGEONED TO DEATH IN CUTTACK

**Cuttack:** A man was allegedly stoned to death in Khannagar area here Sunday. The deceased was identified as Papu Das, a resident of Hajari Lane. According to sources, Das, who worked in a fish shop, was allegedly attacked with heavy stones, leaving him with fatal head injuries. Some locals spotted the blood-stained body on Kathajodi riverbank under Badambadi police limits and informed the cops. Police reached the spot, seized the body and the stone used in crime. Later, a scientific team conducted further investigation. According to locals, Das had no past enmity while his family members alleged that he was living separately.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 11:** In what has set alarm bells ringing for crypto fraudsters, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of India has come out with stringent crypto norms, including mandatory 'penny drop' and 'live selfie' verifications – primarily to combat money laundering, terror financing, and other illicit activities in the virtual digital asset (VDA) market. A live selfie ensures that the person opening the account is physically present and is not using static photos or deepfakes to bypass identity verification, while the penny-drop method confirms that the registered bank account is active and truly belongs to the user whose credentials were provided during registration.

The updated guidelines, issued recently, classify crypto exchanges as Virtual Digital Asset (VDA) service providers who will now have to do more than just allow simple document uploads.

Under the new rules, users must take a 'live selfie' using



software that verifies their presence, typically through eye-blinking or head movement. Exchanges must record the exact latitude and longitude, date, timestamp, and IP address from which a user starts creating an account.

The 'penny-drop' method, which involves processing a nominal Re 1 transaction to confirm that the bank account is active and belongs to the registrant, is required.

In addition to a Permanent Account Number (PAN), users must provide a secondary ID such as a Passport, Aadhaar or a Voter ID, along with an

to register with the FIU as reporting entities and submit regular reports on suspicious transactions and maintain records of their clients (customers) to identify and combat money laundering, terror financing and proliferation financing risks associated with crypto assets, which India has not identified as a legal tender but are taxed under the Income-Tax law.

The RE (crypto exchange) shall also ensure that the client whose credentials are being furnished at the time of onboarding is the same individual who is actually accessing the application and personally initiating the account creation process, they stipulate. The authenticity of such access and personal presence shall be established by capturing a live photograph of the client and employing liveliness detection technology to verify the client's physical presence....," the guidelines say.

The exchanges have been asked to do a KYC update for "high-risk" clients every six months and for all others annually.

## 24X7 drinking water for Sambalpur city

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** With a view to providing 24-hour safe drinking water to the people of Sambalpur city, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday laid the foundation stone for a mega water supply project worth ₹451.24 crore.

Majhi laid the foundation stone in Sambalpur city in the presence of Panchayat Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabu Narayan Naik, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari and Sambalpur MLA Jayanarayan Mishra.

One intake well and two modern water treatment plants will be constructed, and a 340 km-long water pipeline will be laid in Sambalpur city for the project, officials said. The two water treatment plants will be set up at Sambalpur and neighbouring Burla, they said.

In a statement, the CM said a total of 100 million litres of drinking water will be made available through the project. About 5 lakh people of the 41 wards of Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) will benefit from the project.



## 89 TRAUMA CARE CENTRES ON CARDS

**C**M Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday inaugurated a trauma care centre and OPD building at Sambalpur district headquarters hospital (DHH) where he said that the government has decided to set up 89 modern trauma care centres across the state.

Majhi inaugurated the medical facilities set up at a total cost of ₹21.28 crore. He also inaugurated the Central Sterile Supply department (CSSD) building, constructed at a cost of ₹2.53 crore. Various medical supplies and equipment will be cleaned and sterilised at the department using modern systems, officials said.

During summer, Sambalpur city suffers from a water shortage of about 30 million litres per day. Drinking water problem in the western Odisha city will be resolved once the project is completed, and the city residents will be able to get 24-hour safe drinking water, he said.

## Obscene content: X admits mistake

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 11:** Microblogging platform X admitted its mistake and removed about 3,500 pieces of content, as well as deleted over 600 accounts, after the Union Information Technology (IT) Ministry raised concerns over obscene content linked to Elon Musk-backed AI chatbot Grok, government sources said Sunday.

X has assured the authorities that it would comply with Indian laws.

The action comes amid mounting pressure on Grok from governments worldwide, as regulators intensify scrutiny of the generative AI engine over content moderation, data safety and non-consensual sex-

ualy-explicit images that have flooded X over the last few days. Government sources said X has accepted its mistake and assured it will comply with Indian laws. Accordingly, it has blocked around 3,500 pieces of content, and over 600 accounts have been deleted.

Last Sunday, X's 'Safe' handle said it takes 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.

The IT Ministry had January 2 directed X to remove all vulgar, obscene and unlawful content generated by Grok or face action.

## Exam lists 'Ram' as dog's name; teacher suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Raipur, Jan 11:** The headmistress of a government school in Chhattisgarh has been suspended after a Class IV English question paper allegedly set by her triggered allegations of hurting religious sentiments, officials said Sunday.

Disciplinary proceedings have also been initiated to dismiss the paper moderator, a contractual woman teacher, from service, they said.

During the half-yearly examinations held recently in government schools across the Raipur division, an English paper included the question, "What is the name of Mona's dog?" with four options.

One of the options listed the name 'Ram', prompting objections as Lord Ram is a revered deity in Hinduism. The other options were 'Bala', 'Sheru' and 'No one is mentioned'.

R		Half Yearly Examination 2025 - 26	
		Subject - English	
		Class - 4th	
		M.M. - 40	
Time - 03:00 hrs			
Roll no. _____		(In Words) _____	
Name of Student _____			
Block _____		District _____	
Invigilator's Sign _____		Valuer's sign _____	
		M.M	Marks obt
		40	

Instruction - Attempt all questions -

Q. 1 Multiple choice questions -

1. What is the name of Mona's dog?

(a) Bala (b) No one is mentioned

(c) Sheru (d) Ram. Ans \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many frogs were involved in the story "In the Pond"?

The matter first came to light in Mahasamund district and subsequently in other districts of Raipur division, sparking a controversy and protests from right-wing outfits. Following complaints, a five-member inquiry committee was constituted to probe the matter. Based on its findings, the paper setter, Shikha Soni, headmistress of Government

In her written explanation, Soni admitted the mistake, stating that the word 'Ram' was inadvertently printed instead of 'Ramu' due to the omission of

the letter 'U'. The error occurred unknowingly during the preparation of the question paper and went unnoticed even during review, the statement said.

She maintained that she had no intention of hurting religious sentiments or insulting any religion or community, and expressed regret while seeking forgiveness.

Verma, in her explanation, said she was assigned to prepare one of the two sets of Class IV English question pa-

pers received from the district education office. Each question carried four multiple-choice options, which she retained as provided. She admitted that she failed to notice the word 'Ram' properly and said the lapse was unintentional. She also expressed regret and assured that such a mistake would not be repeated in the future.

The DEO has issued warning letters to the BEO, Tilda, for not selecting an experienced teacher, and to the principal of Shaheed Smarak Swami Atmanand Utkrisht School, Raipur, for failing to appoint an appropriate moderator for the paper, officials said.

The question had triggered protests by right-wing outfits outside the DEO's office in Mahasamund, with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad demanding the arrest and dismissal of those responsible for preparing the question paper.

## leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

## ■ ARIES

You will be the focus of everyone's attention today - for your visual appeal or for your abilities. Ganesh suggests that you should make the best of the opportunity and recharge yourself. You can accomplish quite a lot with the energy you gain.



## ■ TAURUS

This day, your heart is likely to rule your head. You will be driven by your moods, feelings and sentiments. Most of the decisions will be based on your emotions, instead of your reason and experience. Ganesh urges you not to allow your emotionality to enter your professional activities.



## ■ GEMINI

You will be in the mood to spend the day doing the things that you really love. You will consider helping people in need and will be in a generous mood. Your charitable bent of mind will bring you elevated social status and improved self-esteem, says Ganesh.



## ■ CANCER

Today, you will be trying new things in your style of work. You may come across as mad, but there will be a method in your madness. Your new strategy and innovative ideas will give a new lease of life to the projects you are working on. However, you need to take a break from work in the evening and go home to your loved ones to recharge your batteries, advises Ganesh.



## ■ LEO

Today, you will be trying new things in your style of work. You may come across as mad, but there will be a method in your madness. Your new strategy and innovative ideas will give a new lease of life to the projects you are working on.



## ■ VIRGO

Logic as well as emotions will hold sway in your relationships today. Emotionally you will feel a little confused and will swing between your feelings and what is actually expected of you. However, finally you will pay more heed to your inner voice rather than depending on the views of others.



## ■ LIBRA

Ganesh says that today will be a day where you will want to look good and feel good too. You will be able to attract people with your speech and your impressive personality today at social gatherings. Your social stature will also rise today.



## ■ SCORPIO

Your stars indicate splurging on money today. And this time, you do it for your near and dear ones. After all, what is money without friends and family? You may even go out of your way to make them happy by entertaining them with outings and celebrations.



## ■ SAGITTARIUS

You feel like going back to carefree, childhood days. You even practice that by taking an impromptu pleasure trip, in the outskirts of the city. And bumping into an old pal, reliving your past is like an icing on the cake. As Ganesh says, golden moments are best undescribed and you too, by the end of the day, are speechless for this wonderful day!



## ■ CAPRICORN

Normally, others, especially colleagues get jealous of one's success, but yours is a different case. They will not only motivate you, but also guide you while you take up new projects and assignments. Not everyone is blessed with such cooperative colleagues, says Ganesh. Those of you who wish to change their current job, better wait for a while as times are not favouring you, today.



## ■ AQUARIUS

God helps those who help themselves. You have experienced this plenty of times as your efforts have been paid off. While your colleagues at work may pass negative comments at your work, your boss will not have any complaints with you.



## ■ PISCES

You will come up trumps against your competition today. This will make you enthusiastic about your future prospects. You shy away from the spotlight usually, but today you will find yourself thrust into the role of a leader, as you take on new assignments. A progressive day awaits, says Ganesh.



## ELLE FANNING REVEALS HER GOALS FOR 2026

Elle Fanning revealed that she wants 2026 to be different from the past year by focusing on staying more present. Speaking at the Palm Springs International Film Festival Film Awards, the actress shared that while being a big dreamer is positive, she often overthinks the future and is now consciously trying to live in the moment.

## CROFT, MANHEIM TO STAR IN TANGLED

Walt Disney Pictures has found its Rapunzel and Flynn Rider in actors Teagan Croft and Milo Manheim, who will lead the live-action adaptation of the 2010 animated movie *Tangled*. Directed by Michael Gracey, the film will have big musical elements, according to the entertainment news outlet *The Hollywood Reporter*.



## Kriti beams with joy

**Mumbai:** Kriti Sanon couldn't hide her joy as she witnessed her younger sister Nupur Sanon marry singer Stebin Ben in a dreamy Christian ceremony in Udaipur. Playing the role of a bridesmaid, Kriti looked visibly elated, celebrating the union with warmth, laughter and infectious cheer. In one of the shared pictures, Kriti was seen in a light green gown, posing with fellow bridesmaids, flashing a bright smile and a playful peace sign, capturing her excitement.

The actress also took to Instagram Stories to reshare the newlyweds' wedding post and poured her heart out in a touching message. "My heart is full! Love, happiness, blessings. #StebyNupur," she wrote, reflecting the emotions of the entire Sanon family. Her reaction won hearts online, with fans praising her close bond with Nupur.

Ahead of the wedding, Kriti was equally involved in the pre-wedding festivities. During the sangeet ceremony, set against a lavish pink backdrop, she lit up the stage with energetic dance performances alongside family and friends. A particularly emotional moment saw Kriti dance with her mother to *Dil Tu Jaan Tu* for the couple.

According to reports, Tara and Veer began dating in 2025 and were spotted together on multiple occasions. They later walked the ramp together as showstoppers and made their relationship official during Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations. Neither has commented on the breakup rumours so far. AGENCIES

## Tara's ideal life partner

**Mumbai:** Tara Sutaria and Veer Pahariya have reportedly parted ways, just days after their viral appearance at AP Dhillon's Mumbai concert grabbed widespread attention online. Amid reports of their alleged breakup, an old interview of Tara has resurfaced in which she spoke candidly about what she looks for in a life partner.

At the time of the interview, Tara was only rumoured to be dating Veer, with the duo making their relationship official later. During a podcast appearance, Tara was asked whether she would consider marrying a foreigner. Responding honestly, she said she is "very desi" at heart and values desipana, simplicity and comfort. She explained that cultural familiarity, family values and a certain laid-back Indian way of life matter deeply to her, whether in food, relationships or daily living.

Tara also emphasised self-awareness as a non-negotiable trait in a partner. She said it is important for a person to know who they are, what they stand for, and what their core beliefs are, adding that self-worth and a strong sense of self help everything else fall into place.

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## Parineeti talks about handling postpartum



**Mumbai:** Parineeti Chopra has opened up about life after embracing motherhood, sharing that she has completed two months postpartum and is gradually finding her balance. In a recent video on her YouTube channel, the actress spoke candidly about prioritising calmness, mindfulness and mental health during this new phase. She believes that a positive mindset directly impacts physical well-being, saying that when the mind stays positive, the body naturally follows.

Parineeti also addressed daily habits

that affect mental peace, pointing out that starting the day by scrolling on the phone can be harmful. She feels it makes the mind numb and disrupts the entire day. Instead, she consciously avoids her phone after waking up and spends quiet time listening to music, sitting in nature or simply enjoying stillness, which helps her remain calm and centered.

Chanting plays an important role in her morning routine. She shared that she begins her day by chanting the *Hanuman Chalisa* or *Namami Shambhavi*, as it helps set a peaceful

tone. According to her, starting the day well allows one to better control reactions to both positive and negative situations.

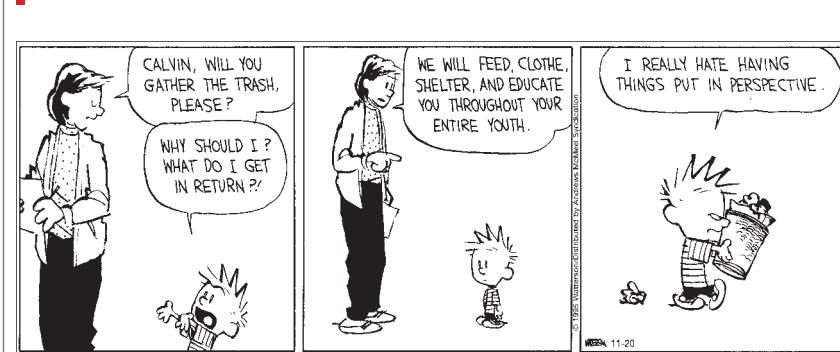
Parineeti said her perspective has evolved with age. She now believes mindset is everything and has learned to prioritise her health, fitness and mental well-being. AGENCIES



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBES

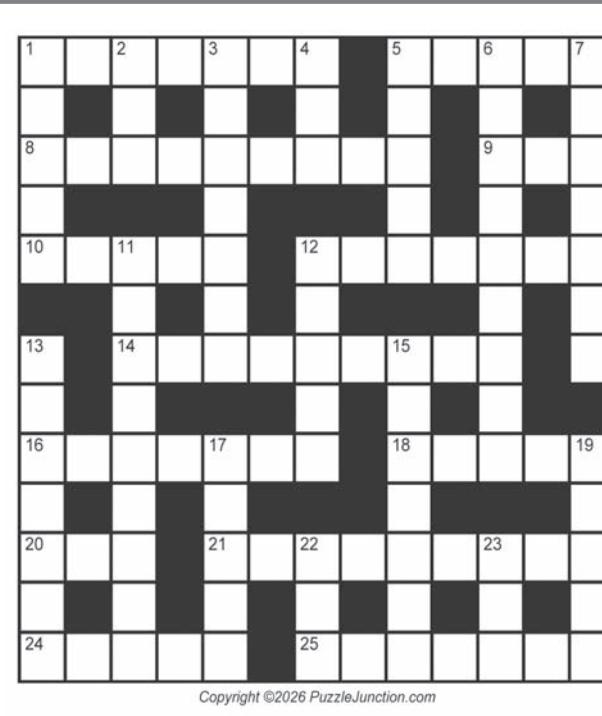


## BREVITY



FUN POST

## CROSSWORD



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## Across

- 1 Building custodian
- 5 Passover feast
- 8 Self-control
- 9 Fluid container
- 10 Anesthetic type
- 12 Advice to a sad sack (5,2)
- 14 Bramble bush
- 16 Island south of Martinique (2,5)
- 18 Analyze syntactically
- 20 Caviar
- 21 Shower starter?
- 24 Divans
- 25 Really bad

## Down

- 6 Warship
- 7 Chef's stash
- 11 Snorkeling locale (5,4)
- 12 Hooded snake
- 13 Soaks up
- 15 In a quick manner
- 17 Woes for toes
- 19 Supporter of the arts?
- 22 Cretan peak
- 23 Physics unit

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## SUDOKU

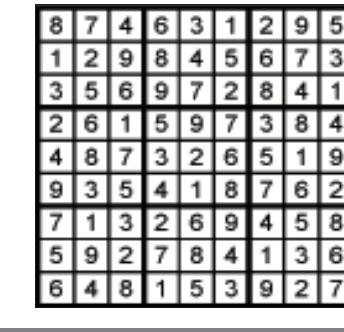
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



## SOLUTIONS



## CROSSWORD



## SUDOKU

# Cyber fraud gang busted; 12 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** In a major breakthrough, police busted a well-organised interstate cyber fraud gang and arrested 12 members involved in cheating people across the country, officials said Sunday.

Acting on credible intelligence, police conducted a raid at a house located at Tankapani Road under Badagada police limits, where the gang had been operating secretly for the last few months.

The gang, infamously known as the 'Katsarisarai Gang of Bihar', was running multiple cyber fraud rackets using fake identities, pre-activated SIM cards and mule bank accounts. Police seized a large cache of electronic devices and documents, including 30 keypads, 30 Android smartphones, two laptops, registers



containing victims' details, fake letters issued in the names of Meesho and Naaptol, scratch cards, SIM cards, postal stamps and vehicles including a black SUV and a two-wheeler.

Out of all the arrested accused, Bijay Kumar, Pintu Kumar, Sanjay Kumar Ray, Gunjan Kumar, Manish Kumar and Arjun Raj belong to Bihar, while Ajay Raj, Santhru V, Ajit M, and Sarah Sasi are the residents of Kerala. Debasish Tripathy, Pankaj Kumar and the house owner are residents of Odisha. Police said all accused were residing at the

Tankapani Road house at the time of the raid.

During interrogation, it was revealed that Debasish, Pankaj, Arjun and Bijay were the masterminds. Pankaj procured customer databases of e-commerce platforms like Naaptol and Meesho through agents in Bihar and arranged mule bank accounts for online money transfers.

The gang cheated victims through three main methods—gift voucher scams, fake loan offers and Kerala lottery frauds. Victims were lured through letters, Facebook advertisements

## House burglar with 78 cases arrested in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar:** Dhauli police arrested a notorious house burglar, Nirjanan Swain (49) alias Nanda, who has 78 cases registered against him at various police stations, along with his associate, in connection with a house break-in at Apsana Garden. Police recovered stolen gold and silver articles and burglary tools from their possession. As per the complaint, during the intervening night of January 7 and 8, 2026, the accused broke into the complainant's house by removing the iron grill of a bedroom window while she and her children were asleep and fled with valuables. The stolen items included Rs 20,000 cash, gold and silver ornaments, silver coins and ATM cards. During the investigation, police examined CCTV footage and arrested Nanda along with Munmun Pradhan (26).

and WhatsApp messages and were asked to pay registration fees, taxes or processing charges via UPI.

# Sand spillage grave threat to road safety: Transport Min



road-owning and road-maintaining agencies, including the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the Works department, Municipal Corporations, Municipalities and Notified Area Councils (NACs).

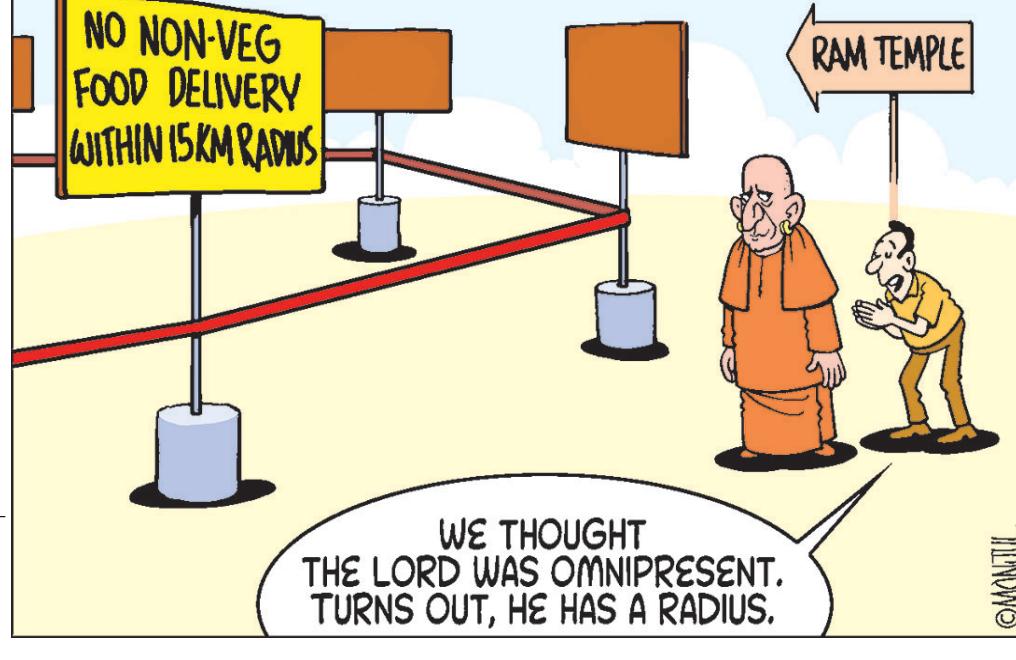
Calling the situation a serious threat to public safety, the Minister has directed authorities to take immediate corrective steps to prevent further mishaps and loss of lives.

Following the Minister's directive, the State Transport Authority (STA) has issued a detailed advisory to all

letter noted that loose sand and construction debris severely reduce tyre grip, significantly increasing the risk of skidding and fatal accidents, particularly for two-wheeler riders. While enforcement agencies continue to act against the unsafe transportation of construction materials, the STA underlined that accident prevention also hinges on the prompt removal of spillages from road surfaces by agencies entrusted with road maintenance.

The advisory also highlighted Section 198A of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, which fixes accountability for failure to comply with prescribed standards of road design, construction and maintenance, warning that any lapse in ensuring safe road conditions could invite legal action.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## AAIB begins probe into aircraft crash-landing near Rourkela

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** A three-member team of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) Sunday started its probe into the crash-landing of a small aircraft near Rourkela, a senior official said.

At least six people were injured when a nine-seater aircraft of India One made an emergency crash landing near Rourkela in Odisha Saturday afternoon.

The AAIB team has already undertaken the aerial view of the aircraft crash-landing incident in Rourkela, said Commerce and Transport department principal secretary Usha Padhee.

"They have taken pictures of the crash landing site from the air by using a chopper provided by the state government. Later, they will also inspect the place where the aircraft made a crash-landing," Padhee said.

The state government has made all arrangements for the smooth conduct of the investigation, she said, adding that the probe is being done as per the guidelines and SOP of the DGCA.

As per reports, IndiaOne Air Cessna Grand C208B aircraft had crash-landed near Rourkela in Odisha Saturday with

six persons, including two pilots and four passengers on board. The aircraft departed Bhubaneswar in the afternoon, and the crew declared a 'Mayday' to Rourkela ATC and made a forced landing at 1:20 pm in an open area near Kansor, the DGCA said.

Meanwhile, Odisha's Directorate of Aviation, in a statement, said that the health condition of all six people, including two women and two pilots injured in the crash landing of an aircraft in Rourkela, was "safe and stable".

As per the latest health bulletin, all passengers are safe and stable. One passenger remains under close and continuous medical observation.

Padhee, who reached Rourkela Sunday morning along with the AAIB team and two specialist doctors from Bhubaneswar, said a dedicated team of doctors is currently conducting medical evaluations, and all patients remain under strict medical observation.

The directorate said that the Odisha government has extended all the required support for ensuring the highest standards of safety, prompt medical care to the affected individuals and investigation by AAIB.

DSPL-472

Government of Odisha

ବସ୍ତିନିକା

ଦାରା ଆୟୋଜିତ

**ରାଜ୍ୟ ହରସ୍ତତନ୍ତ୍ର ମେଳା**

**STATE HANDLOOM EXPO**

ସ୍ଥାନ-ଛତ୍ର ପଢ଼ିଆ, ଶାଢ଼ିଯମ ସନିକଟ, ବାରିପଦା

ଶୁଭ ଭଦ୍ରାନ୍ତିରା

୧୨ ଜାନୁଆରୀ ୨୦୨୭

ମେଲା ୨.୦୦ ରୁ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ

ଦିନ ୧୧.୩୦ ରୁ ଭାତ୍ ୫.୩୦ ରୁ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ

ଏହି ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେବା କିମତେ ବିକ୍ରି ଅଭ୍ୟବେଧ ।

ପ୍ରାୟେକାବଳି :

ହରସ୍ତତ ଉନ୍ନୟତ ଆୟୋଜନ, ବସ୍ତିନିକ ବିକାଶ, ଭାବତ ସରକାର

ଆୟୋଜନ : ବସ୍ତିନିକା

ହରସ୍ତତ, ବସ୍ତିନିକ ବିକାଶ, ଭାବତ ସରକାର

## UNSAFE, POTHOLED DWARASHUNI GHAT

### PIL against toll collection at Jharpokharia

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Jan 11:** Toll collection at the Jharpokharia Toll Plaza on National Highway-49 in Mayurbhanj district was challenged through a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition at the Orissa High Court citing the dangerous and unsafe condition of an adjoining stretch of the highway.

The petition was filed by a lawyer, Advocate Akash Sharma, who sought court directions against what he described as unlawful toll collection on a highway stretch that remains incomplete and unsafe, particularly at the Dwarasuni Ghat section.

The petitioner alleged that

public transport services have been disrupted due to the poor condition of the road. It claimed that several operators have either suspended or drastically reduced services, isolating nearby villages and affecting livelihoods.

"The road has been described as a 'death trap' and 'collapsed highway', with frequent media coverage highlighting the urgent need for restoration," the petition added.

Sharma alleged that despite admitting that the road was incomplete, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has continued toll collection by treating the stretch as finished, while ignoring the unsafe and unfinished ghat section within the toll plaza's coverage zone.

The plea argued that users cannot be segregated from the unsafe sec-

tion while accessing the tolled corridor. The petitioner further argued that charging tolls under such conditions is arbitrary and unfair. "The imposition of financial burden upon citizens who are compelled to risk their lives on a dilapidated highway is manifestly arbitrary and shocks the conscience," said the petition.

Sharma further contended that safe travel is a core part of the right to life under Article 21 (right to life) of the Constitution, and that forcing people to pay tolls on an unsafe road infringes their right to life and dignity. The PIL also challenged the very nature of the toll as a 'user fee', arguing that collecting tolls without providing the promised road facilities defeats the basic quid pro quo required to justify such a charge.

"Toll is not a tax; it is a user fee. In absence of a motorable road, the legal basis for levying the fee collapses entirely," said the petition. On the basis of these allegations, the petition requested the Court to suspend toll collection or reduce the toll fee levied at the Jharpokharia Toll Plaza until the highway is fully completed.

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# Right to higher education can't be curtailed lightly: Delhi HC

The court was hearing a writ petition filed by a medical student who secured a seat at Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir, challenging cancellation of his MBBS admission amid alleged irregularities linked to the NEET-UG 2024 examination

## AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 11:** The Delhi High Court has observed that the right to pursue higher or professional education, though not explicitly listed as a fundamental right under the Constitution, imposes an affirmative obligation on governments and cannot be curtailed lightly.

Allowing a writ petition filed by a medical student whose MBBS admission was cancelled amid alleged irregularities linked to the NEET-UG 2024 examination, a single-judge Bench of Justice Jasmeet Singh observed that the government is duty-bound to protect a student's right to continue professional education in the absence of valid, genuine and compelling reasons.



"The right to pursue higher or professional education, even though not explicitly spelt out as a fundamental right in Part III of the Constitution of India, is an affirmative obligation on the part of the State to ensure this right and the same cannot be permitted to be curtailed lightly," the Delhi High Court said.

The petitioner secured admission to the MBBS course at Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir, after obtaining an All India Rank of 28,106 in NEET-UG 2024. However, his admission was subsequently cancelled after the NTA withdrew his result based on information shared by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

In the order, Justice Singh

observed that the petitioner had secured admission to the MBBS course on the basis of merit through an open entrance examination and that cancellation of such admission would inevitably disrupt his academic progress.

The judgment further took note of the submission made on behalf of the CBI that the petitioner was not arrayed as an accused in the chargesheet filed in connection with the alleged NEET-UG 2024 irregularities, but was cited only as a witness.

In such circumstances, Justice Singh held that there could be no *prima facie* finding of the petitioner's involvement in any malpractice warranting the extreme step of terminating his admission.

Allowing the petition, the Delhi High Court directed the authorities to permit the petitioner to continue attending his MBBS classes in accordance with the prescribed curriculum.

## Five-day KRP training on Balvatika concludes

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** Regional Institute of Education (RIE), NCERT here, in collaboration with State Institute of Education (SIE), Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has successfully concluded a five-day capacity-building programme for Key Resource Persons (KRPs) on the implementation of 'Balvatika' in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The programme was held at SIE, Sri Vijaya Puram.

The training aimed to strengthen professional capacity of KRPs to ensure effective and quality implementation of Balvatika, focusing on the holistic development of children in their foundational years. A total of 40 KRPs participated in the programme.

The intensive programme featured a blend of expert-led lectures, interactive discussions and hands-on sessions covering key areas such as the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) 2022, Balvatika norms and guidelines, socio-emotional development of children, pedagogy of language in multilingual classrooms, early identification of children with disabilities and inclusive classroom practices. Sessions were also conducted on learning assessment, the holistic progress card, play-based learning environments, language and numeracy activities, 'Jaadui Pitara' and 'e-Jaadui Pitara', and strengthening partnerships with families and communities, including smooth home-to-school transition. The valedictory session was graced by RIE Bhubaneswar principal Manasi Goswami, who joined virtually. Highlighting the pivotal role of KRPs, she underlined their responsibility in translating the vision of NEP 2020 into classroom practice.



# Safety concerns mount as 2nd e-bus fire incident hits City within 24hrs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** Panic gripped Chandrasekharpur area Sunday afternoon after smoke began billowing from an electric bus near a depot, marking second such safety scare for the City's public transport fleet within 24-hours.

At approximately 3:30pm Sunday, an e-bus belonging to Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) fleet returned to the Chandrasekharpur e-bus depot for intermediate charging after completing its daily route. Shortly after being plugged in, depot staff noticed thick smoke emanating from the vehicle's battery compartment.

Depot workers immediately deployed on-site fire extinguishers to contain the situation, while alerting emergency services. Two fire brigade teams



from the 112 service arrived shortly after, working alongside CRUT staff to douse the smoke. Fortunately, officials confirmed that the bus did not sustain significant structural damage, and no injuries were reported. This incident follows a severe fire which occurred early Saturday morning near Kalinga Studio Square, in which the bus was completely gutted down by flames. Nearly 26 passengers narrowly escaped the incident.

Back-to-back malfunctions have sparked significant concerns regarding the maintenance and safety protocols of the rapidly expanding electric bus fleet.

In response to the recurring battery issues, a high-level technical committee has been formed to investigate the 'unusual incidents'. The committee includes experts from TPCODL (power distribution), State Transport department, members from manufacturing company and CRUT technical officers.

"The committee will conduct a thorough examination to identify the exact cause, whether an electrical short-circuits issue or overheating during charging, and will submit a detailed report soon," a CRUT official stated.

State Transport Commissioner has also requested local Motor Vehicle Inspectors (MVI) to conduct fitness checks on the remaining fleet to ensure passenger safety remains uncompromised.

# State seeks ₹41,580cr support for development of roads, NHs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** The state government has demanded support from the Centre for development of roads and National Highways (NHs) projects in the state involving an investment of Rs 41,580 crore.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida raised this demand while attending the pre-budget consultation meeting of finance ministers of all states and union territories (UTs), chaired by Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman at New Delhi Saturday.

The meeting was convened to seek suggestions from states and UTs for the Union Budget 2026-27. On behalf of the state government, Parida submitted a written memorandum highlighting several key issues and proposals of importance to the Union Finance Minister for consideration in the forthcoming Union Budget for 2026-27.

During the meeting, Padhi also sought support from the Union government under the



visionary 'Purvodaya' initiative to create an enabling environment for critical infrastructure development towards achieving the goal of 'Viksit Bharat'.

She also sought for incentivisation of fiscally prudent states and enhancement of allocation under the scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASI) for the year 2026-27.

The state also demanded for revision of ration cost norms under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) and Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) to ensure uninterrupted supply of nutritious and quality food to beneficiaries.

To reduce fiscal pressure on state finances, Parida urged the

FM for enhancement of Central share under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), along with expanded beneficiary coverage under social pension schemes.

Further, the deputy chief minister demanded Central government support for development of major tourism places of Odisha into major tourism hubs at national and international levels.

Besides, the Odisha government has sought support from for paddy procurement, expansion of storage infrastructure, timely release of funds for completion of ongoing projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), and large-scale capital investment for urbanisation in the state.

# Union govt pursuing anti-youth policies: AIYF

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** Union government is pursuing anti-youth policies by systematically denying employment opportunities to youth, interfering in functioning of educational institutions and the consistent rise in atrocities against Dalits, tribals and minorities, alleged All India Youth Federation (AIYF) state president Satyaranjan Mohanty during the outfit's state council meeting here Sunday.

Mohanty also claimed that the government has failed to fulfil election promises made to unemployed youth, undermining democratic accountability.

Addressing the gathering, AIYF all India president Roshan Kumar spoke on the national



political situation, criticising the BJP-led government for what he described as divisive policies influenced by RSS ideology. He alleged the Union government of misusing constitutional bodies and manipulating electoral processes. Kumar claimed that special and intensive voter list revisions were

being used to exclude eligible voters in an attempt to retain political power.

The national president also condemned recent actions by the United States against Venezuela, describing it as an attack on the sovereignty of a democratic nation. Expressing solidarity with the Venezuelan

people, he reiterated the Indian youth movement's support for global struggles against imperialism.

Communist Party of India (CPI) Odisha state secretary Prashant Kumar Mishra congratulated the newly elected state council members and urged youth organisations to continue their struggle in order to protect democracy, Constitution, federal structure, and the rights of unemployed youth.

Later in the afternoon, AIYF held a protest at Master Canteen here, raising voice against environment pollution. Participants condemned government's 'anti-people, anti-youth and anti-environment' policies and demanded immediate measures to protect livelihoods and the environment.

# Odisha's coastal ecosystem must be prioritised: Experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11:** Experts and environmentalists have called for urgent and sustained efforts to safeguard Odisha's coastline, warning that unchecked development and climate change are placing immense stress on the region's fragile coastal ecosystems.

Experts expressed their concerns during a workshop on 'Odisha Coast: Problems and Mitigation Measures', organised by the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) at its conference hall here Sunday.

Odisha, with a 574.71-km-long coastline along the Bay of Bengal, stretches across six districts—Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam—and encompasses diverse landforms including coastal plains and portions of the Eastern Ghats.

The coast is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot, hosting two Ramsar wetland sites—Bhitarkanika mangrove for-



ests and Chilika lagoon—and supporting rich marine and terrestrial life such as olive ridley sea turtles, Irrawaddy dolphins, horseshoe crabs, diverse fish and shellfish species, and numerous resident and migratory birds.

Speakers noted that Odisha's coastline also plays a crucial role in the state's economy, with operational ports at Paradeep, Dhamara and Gopalpur, and more port projects in the pipeline, alongside tourism and fisheries. However, rapid industrialisation, population pressure and climate change impacts—such

as sea-level rise, frequent cyclones, storm surges and coastal erosion—are posing serious threats to both ecosystems and coastal communities.

Presiding over the workshop, OES working president Jayakrushna Panigrahi

stressed the importance of preserving the natural character of coastal ecosystems to ensure the continued flow of ecosystem goods and services. He underscored that conservation must go hand in hand with development.

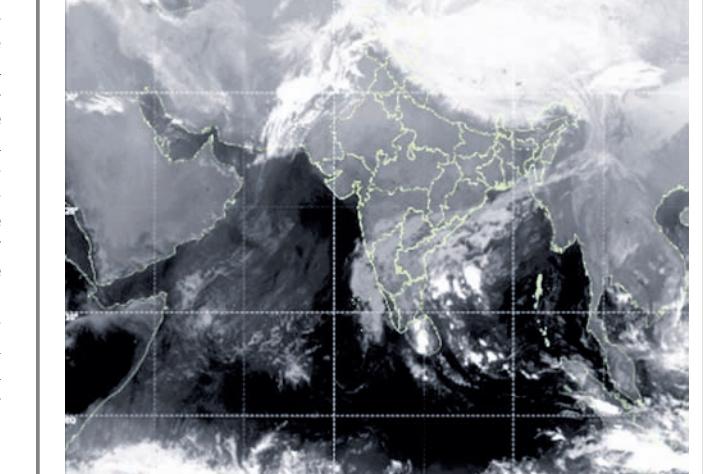
OES president Sundar Narayana Patro called for maintaining a delicate balance between developmental activities and environmental

conservation along the coast.

Earlier, OES Secretary Manoranjan Mishra welcomed the participants and announced that the deliberations and expert contributions from the workshop would be compiled and published as a book volume. OES vice-president Lalla A K Singh introduced the guests, while joint secretary Surabhi Jain proposed vote of thanks.

Several experts and academics, including Arun Kumar Rath, Subhranshu Bhushan Ray, Anil Kumar Mohapatra, Anjan Kumar Prusty, Amarendra Narayan Mishra, Sudhakar Kar, Muntaz Khan, Binod Choudhury and Bijay Ketan Patnaik actively participated in the discussions.

The workshop witnessed the presence of numerous OES members, scientists and nature enthusiasts, reflecting growing concern and collective resolve to protect Odisha's coastline for future generations.



## WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	27.7°	26.2°	Dry weather
Min Temp	15.7°	14.4°	
Humidity	47%	69%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



# 12 injured as BJP, BJD clash over road project



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Hatadihi/Baula, Jan 11:** Tension flared in Inchol village under Hatadihi block in Keonjhar district after workers of the ruling BJP and the opposition BJD clashed Sunday over a road construction project.

The violence erupted over the ongoing construction of a road from Bhutapada Chhak to Parmanandapur village. Workers from both parties allegedly engaged in a heated argument that escalated into a physical confrontation. More than 12 people from both sides were injured in the clash, police said.

Two of the injured persons are critical while more than 10 others suffered minor wounds. With tension running high in the village, police forces were deployed to maintain law and order and prevent further unrest.

According to sources, funds amounting to ₹9 lakh had been sanctioned for the road project. The approved estimate includes improvement of the road by laying murram and metal. The BJP workers claimed responsibility for the road construction work. However, BJD workers allegedly opposed the project Sunday, resulting in an altercation.

The verbal dispute soon turned violent, leading to attacks and counterattacks from both sides. Police personnel from Nandipada, Soso, Anandapur and Ghasipura intervened after receiving information about the clash and brought the situation under control.

An investigation is underway to ascertain the circumstances that led to the violence, officials said, adding that further action will be taken based on the findings.

Anandapur MLA Abhimanyu Sethi claimed the responsibility for the road work had been given to BJD workers. He alleged that BJP workers created unrest, leaving four to five members of his party injured.

However, BJP MLA candidate Alok Sethi claimed that the road work had been assigned to BJP workers. He alleged that BJD workers, acting at the MLA's behest, attacked BJP supporters, injuring at least 10 persons.

DSP Prasant Behera said discussions had been held with members of both the parties. He added that detailed information about the injured persons was yet to be received. Action would be taken after it is clarified who was officially assigned the road work by the block administration.

Block Development Officer Ranjan Parida said the road work responsibility had been given to Harekrushna Swain of Inchol panchayat.

Police Inspector Dharmendra Shanti said the situation was being closely monitored and no formal complaint had been lodged so far.

Hatadihi block MP's representative Harmohan Sashini alleged that the Anandapur MLA was instigating clashes and unrest for political gain.

## Crocodile count at Ghodahada dam rises to 95

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, Jan 11:** The annual crocodile census has concluded at Ghodahada dam in Digapahandi block of Ganjam district, with forest officials recording a total of 95 mugger crocodiles this year, officials said.

The census was conducted under the supervision of Berhampur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sunny Khokhar in the Ghodahada dam area under Khamari gram panchayat. According to officials, the count shows an increase from last year, when 87 crocodiles were recorded in the dam and adjoining water bodies.

The Forest department deployed 25 teams for the exercise. More than 25 forest personnel participated in the operation under the leadership of Digapahandi Range officer-in-charge Santosh Bishoyi Ratna.

Officials said the census covered 10 segments of the Ghodahada dam along with 16 nearby ponds. Of the total crocodiles identified, 63 were found in the dam, while the remaining 32 were recorded in the surrounding ponds.

Forest officials attributed the increase in numbers to improved protection measures and favourable habitat conditions in the area. They said regular monitoring would continue to ensure the safety of both the reptiles and local residents.

The crocodile census is conducted annually to assess population trends and plan conservation strategies in the region.

## 26 held as police raid gambling den

**₹9.24 lakh, 12 motorcycles and car seized**



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, Jan 11:** Acting on a tip-off, police busted a major gambling den operating in a forest near Jangama village under Digapahandi police limits of Ganjam district and arrested 26 persons, officials said Sunday.

The raid was carried out Saturday evening by a special squad led by Assistant Sub-Inspector Manoj Singh on the direction of Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M, police said.

When the team reached the spot, several gamblers allegedly attacked the police personnel and attempted to assault some constables with intent to kill.

On being informed, Chikiti SDPO Biswamitra Harpal and Di-

gapahandi IIC-cum-DSP Prasant Kumar Patra rushed to the site with additional force and brought the situation under control.

Cash worth ₹9.24 lakh, 32 mobile phones, 12 motorcycles, a car and 18 packets of playing cards were seized from the spot. Some gamblers managed to flee

into the forest under the cover of darkness.

Injured police personnel were given first aid at the Di-

gapahandi Community Health Centre.

Based on a complaint filed by ASI Manoj Singh, a case (12/26) was registered at Digapahandi police station. Investigating officer SI Raj Kishore Patra arrested the accused hailing from various villages like Di-

gapahandi, K. Nuagaon, Badaga, Bhanjanagar, Jagannath Prasad, Golanthara, Sheragada and Jarada police limits in the district, as well as from Puri district. They were produced before a court Sunday after-

noon.

After their bail pleas were

rejected, all 26 accused were

remanded to Digapahandi Sub-Jail.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the gambling den had been operating for a long time and was allegedly run by professional criminals from villages under Digapahandi and K. Nuagaon police jurisdictions, police said.

After examining CCTV footage, the police arrested the three persons Saturday.



**SPREADING THE WISDOM:** Buddhist monks at the second Dharmaguru Padmasambhava conference held at the famous Buddhist shrine of Udayagiri in Jajpur district, Sunday. Delegates from 17 countries attended the event organised by Light of Buddhadharma Foundation in collaboration with state Culture and Tourism department which will be held for six days

OP PHOTO

## Block chairperson accused of abusing BDO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Hatadihi, Jan 11:** Hatadihi Block Chairperson Savitri Sethi has been accused of verbally abusing the Block Development Officer (BDO).

Sources said, tension gripped the Hatadihi block office in Keonjhar district two days ago following allegations that a junior engineer had attempted to attack Anandapur BJD MLA Abhimanyu Sethi with an arrow. However, no evidence has so far emerged to support the claim.

According to officials, the allegation triggered a ruckus inside the block premises, where the MLA, accompanied by party workers, staged a protest and expressed anger at the BDO. The veracity of the allegation



is now under question, as neither documentary nor material evidence has been found.

BDO Ranjan Parida said the allegation made by the MLA was baseless. "There is no truth in the accusation. No evidence has been produced to substantiate the claim," Parida said, adding that the engineer concerned has also denied the allegation.

Parida further alleged that Savitri Sethi, the block chairperson and wife of the MLA, entered his office chamber and verbally abused him, pointing her finger and using derogatory language. He termed the behaviour "condemnable, unfortunate and unacceptable," and said the MLA was present during the incident.

The BDO said he has informed the District Collector about the matter. The Collector has assured that he will visit the block office to inquire into the incident.

Responding to the issue, MLA Abhimanyu Sethi said he had come to know about the alleged incident from party workers.

Evidence of the incident is available with the employees concerned. BJP state executive member and Anandapur BJD MLA candidate Alok Sethi, along with MP's representative Sunil Nayak, alleged that the BJD MLA, having failed in attempts to misappropriate government funds through party workers and facing a gradual weakening of the party's position, has orchestrated such drama to harass government officials.

They said the misbehaviour with the BDO is unacceptable, especially as the MLA's wife holds the post of block chairperson. The administration must immediately initiate action against the block chairperson and other persons involved, they demanded.

Meanwhile, a video purportedly showing the block chairperson misbehaving with the BDO has gone viral on social media. However, block chairperson Savitri Sethi has denied the allegations of misbehaviour.

## Picnicker drowns in Sana River



POST NEWS NETWORK

the moped, and launched an investigation. The bus driver is absconding, officials said.

In the second incident, three persons including the driver aboard a traveller van were injured after the vehicle rammed into a stationary truck early Sunday near Palukhala village on the main road at the Taptapani Ghat along the Ganjam-Gajapati border. They were en route from Bhubaneswar via Digapahandi to the Taptapani hot springs and a Buddhist monastery at Jirang in Gajapati district.

The vehicle, carrying about 25 passengers, collided with an iron rod-laden truck that had been parked on the roadside due to a technical snag. The driver and two passengers sustained injuries.

Local residents rushed the injured to the Digapahandi Community Health Centre, where they were treated and later discharged.

Dense fog in the area reportedly reduced visibility, and preliminary investigation suggests driver's negligence led to the crash. On receiving information, a team from Patapuri police station's Podamari outpost reached the spot, seized both vehicles and launched an investigation.

Members of another group picnicking nearby rushed to the spot and managed to pull the three out of the river. Mishra was found in critical condition and was taken to Gunupur sub-divisional hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Police said Mishra was the son of Prafulla Kumar Mishra, a well-known cement trader in the area. Gunupur police reached the spot and began an investigation.

## Man killed, 3 injured in separate road accidents

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, Jan 11:** A 35-year-old man was killed and three persons were injured in separate road accidents in Ganjam district Sunday.

In the first incident, D. Rohit Dora of Bajapalli village under Basudevpur panchayat was killed after being hit by a passenger bus on the main road near the Gokarnapur Shani-Char Temple in Digapahandi block Sunday morning. The incident triggered tension in the area.

Rohit was riding a moped from his village towards Gokarnapur around 7am Sunday. A speeding Bhubaneswar-bound passenger bus 'Bennapani' from B. Turubudi village allegedly rammed his moped from behind and fled. Rohit died on the spot, officials said.

After news spread, a large number of villagers and relatives reached the site and stopped the bus, leading to a brief standoff amid heightened tension. Digapahandi police rushed to the spot, brought the situation under control, seized the body and sent it to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for post-mortem.

Police also seized the bus and

the moped, and launched an investigation. The bus driver is absconding, officials said.

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## Pucca road eludes Dumuriguda village

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, Jan 11:** Tall claims of the government's rural focus falls flat when it comes to the road connectivity to Dumuriguda village under Gadiguda gram panchayat in Koraput Sadar block in the district, according to a report.

Villagers alleged that despite repeated memorandums to the district administration and local elected representatives, no concrete steps have been taken by the Rural Development (RD) department to connect the village with an all-weather road.

The reports said Dumuriguda does not have a pucca road, nor even a metal or morrum



and neglect, stating that the absence of a road has severely affected their daily lives. Access to healthcare, education, markets, and emergency services remains a major challenge.

During monsoon, the situation worsens as the muddy path becomes almost impassable, effectively isolating the

village from the outside world.

"This is not just about a road, it is about our right to basic infrastructure," said villagers, adding that development claims made on paper do not reflect ground realities. They questioned how government schemes meant for rural connectivity have bypassed their village for decades.

The situation in Dumuriguda raises serious questions about the effectiveness of rural development planning and monitoring. Villagers have demanded immediate intervention from the district administration and warned that continued neglect may force them to resort to protests.

**Koraput, Jan 11:** Following the recent crash of an India One aircraft in Rourkela, concerns over air travel safety have increased across Odisha. Advocate Ajit Patra Friday called for the government to introduce double-engine aircraft operations at Jeypore Airport to enhance safety and ensure more reliable air connectivity for the region.

Speaking in Koraput, Patra said the incident has instilled fear among passengers, raising doubts about the continuity of air services. He stressed that the residents of the undivided Koraput district rely heavily on India One flights from Jeypore Airport.

locals and travellers from Jeypore echoed similar concerns. Residents pointed out that Jeypore Airport serves as the primary air link for southern Odisha, and any disruption in services directly impacts patients, students, and business travellers. They called for stronger aviation infrastructure and the introduction of double-engine aircraft to mitigate future risks and ensure uninterrupted connectivity.

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Locals and travellers from Jeypore echoed similar



To stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it if necessary in the teeth of the worst opposition and to be ready to all you can for its sake, is the definition of heroism.

THE MOTHER

## Dhurandhar to Present

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has called for India to strengthen itself not only along its borders but across all domains to "avenging" what he described as a painful history of attacks and subjugation. Speaking as the guest of honour at the opening ceremony of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue in Delhi on 10 January, the former Intelligence Bureau chief said, "Our ancestors made great sacrifices. They endured great humiliation and experienced periods of profound helplessness... Our civilisation was destroyed. Our temples were looted, and we watched helplessly as mute spectators." This history, he said, poses a challenge that should ignite a "fire" among today's youth. While acknowledging that "revenge" may not be the right word, he said it could serve as a powerful motivating force to rebuild India across every sphere, from security to economic and social development.

It may be argued that for a National Security Adviser, whose words are read through a strategic lens, such phrasing raises concern about whether historical suffering is being recast as a justification for present-day policies. Given the country's current internal atmosphere of communal jingoism and internationally a humiliating helplessness, raking up historical wrongs endured by a particular community could worsen its fragile social fabric at home and impair the image globally.

Even if meant metaphorically, invoking a "painful history" risks the past being turned into a political tool where certain eras, rulers or communities are portrayed as villains, fuelling polarisation rather than shared national memory.

Also, framing the national purpose as "historical revenge" is probably meant to lock the country into a mindset of perpetual victimhood. This will effectively distract the people from present-day woes plaguing the country such as joblessness, inequality and rising cost of living.

It is also pertinent to note that language suggesting "avenging the past" coming from the nation's top security officer may unsettle neighbours or allies, especially at a time when India already faces tense borders and has bad relations with almost all countries in its neighbourhood with virtually no other nation that can be termed as ally. The fear such rhetoric may be misread as endorsing confrontation could be true. What might be acceptable as rhetoric from a political leader is seen as problematic coming from the country's top security official.

History, for its part, cannot be avenged. One can only learn from it and avoid making the same mistakes. Past injustices cannot be undone, the dead cannot be restored, and suffering cannot be erased. Treating history as something to be avenged can harden grievances into ideology, turning memory into resentment rather than lessons. History then ceases to be a guide and becomes a justification for harm. Every single society in the history of human race has been subjected to some form of atrocity. What is important is to learn from past mistakes and rebuild a society that ensures the well-being of all its people. Japan was bombed by two nuclear weapons and met a humiliating defeat in World War-II. But it transformed devastation and defeat into an economic resurgence. Rather than seeking revenge, it answered history by becoming a global industrial powerhouse. Germany too was wrecked during World War-II but instead of lamenting and hating, it has become the strongest economic power of Europe. The Jews constantly faced genocide, pogroms and humiliation through long periods of history but today Israel stands as a powerful nation capable of subduing the whole of the Middle East.

Present-day Indians are exposed to too much rhetoric and unnecessary chest-thumping by the country's leadership while their lives are beset by untold economic hardships. Externally, the country's foreign policy failures have left it alone with virtually no friends. In such trying times, our leaders and policymakers need to look into the future and adapt themselves and prepare the country to face a surprisingly new world order that has already started unfolding itself. America, China and Russia seem to have carved out their own spheres of influence for the future. India is still to decide where it wants to remain relevant. It can ill afford to waste time on history just for petty domestic political gains.

## WISDOM CORNER

I would rather live my life as if there is a God and die to find out there isn't, than live as if there isn't and to die to find out that there is.

BLAISE PASCAL

You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of.

JIM ROHN

If we only wanted to be happy, it would be easy; but we want to be happier than other people, and that is almost always difficult, since we think them happier than they are.

MONTESQUIEU

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1876:** Novelist Jack London, author of *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906), was born in San Francisco.

**1908:** The first long-distance radio message is broadcast from the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Scientist Lee de Forest's broadcast was heard by an audience of 50.

**1932:** Hattie Ophelia Caraway became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

**1959:** The music label that changed American music. Berry Gordy took a major step toward transforming American music on this day in 1959, when he launched Tamla Records. With Smokey Robinson and the Miracles signed as its first act, Tamla soon merged with Gordy's other label, Motown Records, to form one of the most influential music companies in American history.

**1991:** The U.S. Congress votes for war in Iraq. President George H. W. Bush was given the authority to use military force to expel Iraq from Kuwait.

**2010:** An earthquake kills 316,000 in Haiti. Most of the country's capital, Port-au-Prince, was destroyed during the disaster.

## FOCUS POLITICS

# TRIUMPH OF LIE



The killing of a 37-year-old Minneapolis mother by federal officials was certainly a tragedy and almost certainly a crime. But the administration's response is something else: a demonstration that, in Trump's America, regurgitating obvious lies is how his followers and enablers prove that they belong



Stephen Holmes

**FOR TRUMP, TRUTH-TELLING, LIKE LYING, IS SIMPLY A WEAPON OF WAR, AND HE HAS NO INTENTION OF UNILATERALLY DISARMING**

When US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem declared that a 37-year-old Minneapolis mother had been gunned down by federal officials because she was committing "an act of domestic terrorism," she was not making a factual claim. She was seeking a megalomaniac's approval. Her boss, US President Donald Trump, soon rewarded her zeal, posting on Truth Social that the victim "violently, willfully, and viciously ran over the ICE Officer." Vice President JD Vance then dutifully proclaimed that "the gaslighting is off the charts," dismissing all criticism as lies.

The irresistible allure of sycophancy had kicked in. To maintain the leader's favour, his underlings desperately competed to see who could most thoroughly abase themselves on TV. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, having watched multiple videos of the shooting captured by bystanders, called the administration's claims "bullshit." That epithet resonates, but it is not the whole story.

A distinguished philosopher once drew a sharp distinction between the liar and the bullshitter. The liar, he argued, is paradoxically oriented toward truth: to lie successfully, one must know what is true and deliberately say the opposite. The bullshitter, by contrast, is indifferent to whether his statements are true or false; what matters is only the effect on the audience. Because the liar still operates within a framework where truth matters, lying presupposes a grudging respect for the category it violates. Bullshit, by ignoring the distinction between truth and falsity altogether, is a more corrosive enemy of honest exchange and debate.

But Trump's relationship to the truth does not fall clearly into either category. His lies are not meant to deceive. They certainly don't fool his critics, who recognize them instantly, but nor do they fool many of his followers. His most prominent subordinates surely know what nonsense they are spouting. Nor

is he simply indifferent to the commonsense distinction between truth and falsehood. Instead, the purpose of Trump's chronic lying is twofold.

First, he wants to demonstrate the impotence of truth in political contestation. Paying no price for telling easily detectable untruths is an effective way to display power and impunity. For the lie to demonstrate power, the public must recognize it as a lie. The fact-checkers can exhaust themselves; it changes nothing.

Second, and more insidiously, these lies function as loyalty tests – rituals of submission that compel followers to demonstrate their willingness to be transformed into automatons. To repeat an obvious falsehood is to surrender independent judgment, to sever oneself from the reality-based community, and to prove that allegiance to the leader exceeds any attachment to truth. This is darker than bullshit: it is the deliberate destruction of the epistemic foundations of democratic life by someone who is instinctively demolishing a world that has always made him feel small.

Trump, Noem, and Vance are not politicians making premature judgments that they will later regret. They are reciting obvious falsehoods for the same reason their supporters repeat the Big Lie about the 2020 election: the mendacity is essential

to the function.

If a Trump loyalist wanted to express support for immigration enforcement, he could cite accurate statistics or repeat defensible claims about public safety. But anyone can agree with a true statement. The distinguishing mark of loyalty – the proof of submission – is the willingness to repeat something everyone knows is false. There is no motive for regurgitating an obvious lie except to demonstrate fealty.

That is why fact checking has no effect. MAGA enthusiasts do not believe these lies to be true in the ordinary sense. What they believe in is the potency of lying as a means of separating "true" Americans from false ones. Every statement of fact dissolves into a declaration of membership. The red hat signals tribal identity; the repeated lie confirms it.

To say that Renee Nicole Good committed "domestic terrorism" – when the videos show her trying to flee – is a test of allegiance. It represents a decision to burn all bridges connecting one to the world of people who still value accuracy over loyalty. For those who pass the test, the reward is a sense of belonging. They win admission into a community where shared falsehoods create the intimacy of shared secrets.

Moreover, Trump does not believe that his critics speak the truth out of devotion to veracity. Rather, he sees them deploying

truths – Barack Obama was born in Hawaii; Joe Biden won the 2020 election; Trump was Jeffrey Epstein's close friend – instrumentally, to hurt him and serve their partisan agenda. In his mind, the distinction between truth and falsehood is not moral but tactical. His enemies' accuracy reflects no integrity; their willingness to correct mistakes signals no virtue. For Trump, truth-telling, like lying, is simply a weapon of war, and he has no intention of unilaterally disarming.

Given this, why would this obsessively self-centered man consider truth-tellers his moral superiors when he "knows" that the only reason they speak truths is to harm him? When Vance accused journalists of "gaslighting" for describing what the videos plainly show, he was projecting. Gaslighting is when you make people doubt their own perceptions of reality, which is precisely what Vance was demanding. The accusation functions as enforcement, pressuring viewers to take sides against the "radical left lunatics" who are ruining the country.

For this administration, the gravest threat is not foreign. It is internal: critics, protesters, journalists, Democrats. These American citizens are now "the enemy within." And as Minneapolis grimly portends, bullets may not long be reserved for foreign adversaries alone. Are poorly trained Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and redeployed border guards likely to respond with professional discipline if angry protesters continue to flood the streets?

Good's killing was certainly a tragedy and almost certainly a crime. The administration's response is something else: a demonstration that, in Trump's America, regurgitating obvious lies is how high officials prove their worth. Survival in Trump's orbit requires a robotic renunciation of conscience and a performative lobotomization of the self.

The writer is Professor of Law at New York University School of Law. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

## SPECTRUM COMMERCE

# The re-politicisation of trade



Shivaji Sarkar

**TRADE IS NOW ABOUT SECURITY, RESILIENCE, AND INFLUENCE AS MUCH AS GROWTH**

The global economic order is being rewritten. Wars in Europe and West Asia, US-China rivalry, the return of tariffs, and the erosion of multilateral institutions have turned trade into an arena of power rather than rules. Trade is now about security, resilience, and influence as much as growth. For India, this presents both a strategic challenge and an opportunity.

Until a decade ago, global trade was anchored in gradual liberalisation under the WTO, with major economies tolerating asymmetries in the name of development. That consensus has collapsed. Protectionism and economic nationalism are back, and globalisation is now viewed with growing scepticism.

Would BRICS be a choice? It is thawed for now with US super-activism. Venezuela was struck for trying to get closer to BRICS as also trading its oil in yuan and rouble. And India conveniently put off the military drill by the BRICS partners off the South African coast. Amid this India's 7.4% growth is an achievement over so high growth during the period in the previous year. The country needs 8 plus per-

cent growth continuously. It also has to reduce its tax rates and work for faster growth. Rail fares were raised twice in a year. Taxes on several products increased to generate additional revenue for reducing deficit.

India's external trade profile has changed quietly but decisively. While trade still forms a modest share of GDP, its composition has shifted sharply toward higher value. India is no longer a low-end exporter: services such as IT, finance, design, and R&D are globally competitive, and goods exports now include pharma, engineering products, chemicals, and electronics components. The US and EU dominate India's export markets, reflecting deep integration with advanced economies.

India long used the multilateral system to protect policy space, claiming special treatment under GATT and the WTO while resisting deeper commitments. The strategy worked when multilateralism was functional. With the WTO stalled, trade has shifted to reciprocal bilateral and regional deals—an arena where India remains hesitant, with few FTAs and difficulty securing favourable terms.

The re-politicisation of trade has been most visibly symbolised by Trump-era tariffs, which shattered the assumption that advanced economies would indefinitely tolerate trade imbalances.

At the extreme end lies Venezuela, a cautionary tale of how sanctions, trade isolation, and overdependence on a narrow export base can devastate an economy. Venezuela's experience shows that trade and finance can be weaponised to the point of economic paralysis. For India, the lesson is clear: diversification of trade partners, payment systems, and supply chains is no longer optional—it is strategic insurance.

It is in this context that BRICS has gained renewed relevance. For India, BRICS offers possibilities. It can help diversify trade, secure energy and commodities, and provide diplomatic leverage. But BRICS is not a substitute for global integration. China's overwhelming economic weight, limited intra-BRICS trade complementarities, and divergent political systems constrain its potential. India cannot replace access to US and European markets with BRICS alone. Therefore, BRICS is a balancing instrument, not a

destination.

Against this backdrop, India faces three strategic choices: Trade Zero, Diet Trade, and Trade Regular. Trade Zero prioritises the domestic market, using trade mainly to manage surpluses while shielding producers. It limits political risk but offers weak growth and risks marginalising India in a world demanding reciprocity. Diet Trade is a middle path, deepening trade with trusted partners in high-value goods and services while protecting sensitive sectors. It may deliver incremental gains but falls short of India's ambitions. Trade Regular is the most ambitious option, positioning India as a hub linking major economies through deeper integration, upgraded agreements, and domestic reforms. It demands higher standards and reciprocity but offers the greatest rewards in markets, technology, and influence.

In a world where tariffs punish complacency, sanctions isolate the unprepared, and blocs like BRICS offer partial shelter, India must move from hesitation to strategy. Trade is no longer ideology. It is power—and India must learn to wield it deliberately.

INFA

## Undue harassment

Sir, Asking Nobel laureate Amartya Sen to appear before poll officials to prove his credentials as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) has raised many eyebrows. When a globally reputed person like him is subjected to such a process, what would be the condition of ordinary citizens? They are asked to prove their credentials by a process which they do not understand. A democratic government must be for the wellbeing of people. People take central position in a democracy. Before implementing such rules, people must be properly informed and educated about it. Right to vote and elect their leader is laid down in our Constitution. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that people are not deprived of their rights. Right to vote is a matter of pride and dignity for citizens. Any procedures to prove citizens' credentials must be hassle free and people friendly.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

## Young stakeholders

Sir, The concluding day of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2026, observed as National Youth Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, will mark the defining culmination of the national initiative. The participation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi will highlight the significance of the platform and reaffirm the Government of India's commitment to youth-led nation-building. The Prime Minister will interact directly with young leaders, providing them an opportunity to present their ideas and perspectives on India's development agenda at the highest level. The programme will feature a Grand Plenary Session chaired by the Prime Minister, including a Town Hall-style interaction with participants from across the country. Ten high-impact presentations aligned with national priority themes will be delivered before the Prime Minister and Union Ministers. Reflecting Swami Vivekananda's vision of empowered youth, the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2026 positions young Indians as central stakeholders in the country's development journey, strengthening collective efforts towards the goal of Viksit Bharat@2047.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

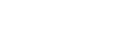
## Letters

### 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**

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# Mother's blanket of love drapes martyred soldier's statue

Locals say the mother visits the memorial and cleans the statue almost daily. Each visit follows the same quiet routine: wiping the glass, cleaning the base of the statue, and ensuring the memorial remains neat and dust-free

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Jan 11:** A winter blanket draped over the statue of BSF constable Gurnam Singh, who laid down his life fighting terrorists in 2016 at the age of 26, has become a symbol of a mother's eternal love for her child and touched hearts across the country.

The statue, enclosed in a glass frame at Shaheed Gurnam Chowk, stands as a symbol of courage and sacrifice in his hometown in the RS Pura sector of Jammu. But for Gurnam Singh's mother, Jaswant Kour, it is not a monument but her son -- one she continues to care for every day, cradling his photograph in her lap.

Locals say the mother visits the memorial and cleans

the statue almost daily. Each visit follows the same quiet routine: wiping the glass, cleaning the base of the statue, and ensuring the memorial remains neat and dust-free. Sometime back, she draped a blanket over the statue, as if protecting her son from the cold, the locals said, adding the act drew the attention of passers-by, many of whom were visibly moved.

"There were no speeches or ceremonies - only a mother's instinctive gesture that spoke of love, loss, and remembrance," Sher Singh, a local resident, said.

Images of the statue covered in the blanket shared on social media have evoked emotional messages. Many felt that while the nation honours its fallen



soldiers through official tributes, the devotion highlights the unseen sacrifices borne by the families of martyrs.

Kulbir Singh, father of the fallen soldier, said a mother's concern for her child never fades, whether he is alive or not.

"A mother remains a mother; sometimes she weeps silently and sometimes she gives up food," he told PTI. He said when winter sets in, they cover his statue with a warm blanket for four months, and then replace it with a lighter one.

Constable Gurnam Singh, a recipient of the President's police medal for gallantry, was fatally shot by terrorists from across the border, two days after he demonstrated exemplary courage and thwarted an infiltration bid by a group of six heavily armed terrorists in Hiranagar Sector of Kathua district.

The 26-year-old Singh shot dead one of the infiltrating terrorists while forcing others to flee back despite the terrorists using Rocket Propelled Grenades and heavy gunfire while attempting to sneak into this side during the intervening night of October 19 and 20, 2016.



A man paraglides during the three-day 'International Camel Festival', in Bikaner, Rajasthan

PTI PHOTO

**Bone chilling cold wave lingers in J&K; snowfall eludes Kashmir plains**



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

## Rajasthan renewables plagued by curtailment

Despite new transmission line, over 4 GW commissioned capacity at risk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Stakeholders warned that without swift corrective measures, continued curtailment in Rajasthan could slow renewable capacity additions, create stressed assets, and pose risks to India's target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030**

capacity continues to face peak-hour restrictions, with injection allowed only during non-peak periods in a staggered manner, they said. According to the Sustainable Projects Developers Association (SPDA), Grid India data indicates that the Khetri-Narela line has added only about 600 MW of effective transmission margin.

The association also pointed out that while connectivity has been granted for around 5.2 GW of projects, only about 4.4 GW is operational, with nearly 850 MW of connectivity revoked, suggesting that around 1.5 GW of margin should already be available in the system. The reasons for the current scale of curtailment remain unclear, SPDA said.

Grid India cited multiple technical constraints limiting renewable evacuation from Rajasthan, including voltage oscillations at renewable energy complexes, low short-circuit ratios at pooling stations, loading constraints on the Bhadla-Bikaner 400 kV corridor, and high loading on the 765 kV Bikaner-Khetri line. Developers warned that sustained curtailment poses a material risk to project viability, debt servicing, and investor confidence, particularly for projects still within their notified connectivity start dates but forced to operate under T-GNA due to delays in associated transmission systems.

Prolonged shutdowns also limit the operation of stabilising equipment such as static VAR generators and harmonic filters, potentially affecting grid stability.

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According to him, umpires check the size of the kites before the match. Each team has to fight nine 'pech' (string duels), with 15 minutes allotted for each. "If a player's kite is cut, he loses. If neither kite is cut within the time, both players are out," he said. Kite flyer Govind Jangid said Jaipur has around 70-80 kite clubs and hundreds of competi-

tive kite fighters. "A local-level tournament costs around ₹3-4 lakh to organise, while an all-India competition can cost up to ₹10 lakh," he said.

Despite bringing the city laurels, the sport and its players feel neglected, and blame it on cricket, which gets all the limelight, sponsorship, and funds.

No dedicated venue to hold matches also chafes them. Some kite club members said tournaments were earlier held at the Jal Mahal embankment and later at Mali Ki Kothi on Agra Road. "For several years, we have been requesting the state government to allot a place for competitions, but no one has paid attention ... Associations collect funds on their own to organise tournaments," said a member. The passion for kites runs deep in the city, with many enthusiasts preserving kites for decades, treating them as prized possessions.

### ARTISTIC HERITAGE

**CM Omar launches 2026 calendar on Kashmir handicrafts**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Once a source of pride and identity for the state capital, such aerial combats today live on passion alone, with no state patronage, lament the kite club members**

**Srinagar, Jan 11:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Sunday unveiled the Handicrafts and Handloom Department's Calendar for 2026, a visual tribute celebrating the timeless craft traditions of Kashmir.

The calendar beautifully encapsulates the essence of the valley's artistic heritage, highlighting the skill, dedication and commitment of the region's artisans, an official spokesperson said.

"This calendar is an ode to the artisans who weave, carve and colour Kashmir's soul," the chief minister said after launching the calendar here.

He said the artisans' hands carry forward centuries-old traditions, transforming raw material into masterpieces that reflect the spirit, resilience and rich cultural heritage of the valley.

"Our craftsmen are not just creators of art; they are the living ambassadors of Kashmir's timeless legacy," he added.

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The calendar showcases a range of traditional crafts, including Namda, Kani shawl, Papier mache, wood carving, Sozni embroidery, carpet weaving, Wagyu and copperware, with each frame narrating a story of skills passed down through generations.

## From women couriers to drones: Pak rewiring narco-terror pipeline

As a part of its long time strategy, the ISI is inducting more women into its terror playbook as they help evade detection and are better recruiters

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



### ALARMING TREND

- At least 1K cases registered under NDPS Act in 2025
- Police made around 1,400 arrests during the same year
- During the crackdown, 35 women arrested in Jammu alone
- There have been 791 drone incursions along western border

A majority of these were along the Punjab and Rajasthan borders, while just nine were in Jammu and Kashmir.

The India-Pakistan border in Jammu and Kashmir has become a fortress. Post Operation Sindoora, the border has become extremely difficult to operate, and this is why the infiltrations have gone down to almost nil. Using drones along the borders with Punjab and Rajasthan allows Pakistan to bypass traditional routes. Once the narcotics land in the country, then a majority of it is transported by road into Jammu and Kashmir.

Intelligence agencies say that this menace is likely to go up this year too. The Pakistanis are desperate for funds to fuel their terror networks, and hence, the sale of narcotics will be their mainstay. The agencies are on high alert as there is actionable intelligence which signals the increase in narcotics smuggling and the mushrooming of more all-women narco modules.

**New Delhi, Jan 11:** Investigating agencies are on their toes with the case relating to narcotics increasing in Jammu and Kashmir. Syndicates operating from Pakistan are the main suppliers of drugs into Jammu and Kashmir, officials say.

They have been exploiting some vulnerabilities along the border areas to push drugs into the Union Territory. In recent times, drugs have been smuggled into Punjab and then transported by road to J&K, investigations have found.

The year 2025 saw a major crackdown by the Jammu and Kashmir police. At least 1,000 cases were registered under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The police made around 1,400 arrests during the same year. These included major suppliers and peddlers.

Doctors say chest and heart-related diseases are again on the rise due to cold, dry weather. People with a history of chest and heart-related ailments have been advised extra care by the doctors, and such vulnerable people have been advised not to venture out of their homes in extreme cold wave conditions.

renewed strategy, officials say. In both cases, the detection becomes harder. In the case of couples, they get familial cover, and the detection is slower in such cases. Even in the case of the Faridabad module, the same trend was noticed. Dr Shaheed Saeed, who has been arrested, was key to the formation of the module. She is the one who made frequent trips to Jammu and Kashmir to meet with Maulvi Irfan Ahmed. These meetings are what led to the

setting up of the module. She was the one who was instrumental in taking instructions from Ahmed and radicalising the rest of the members. She got away each time because she avoided detection since she was a doctor and also a woman.

In the Jammu and Kashmir drugs case, it was found that the women found it easy to recruit. The same applies to terror-related cases as well. The youth often tend to listen to women more as they are easi-

ly convinced. This is something that the ISI has been exploiting and would continue to do so on a larger scale in the coming days.

An official said that in addition to dealing with these all-women modules, it is also important to stop the flow of drugs into the Union Territory from Pakistan. The use of drones has gone up multifold in recent years. There have been 791 drone incursions in 2025 along the western border.



## national

of the day quote

Surprisingly, after the assembly SIR, the total number of voters in the state dropped by 2.89 crore to 12.56 crore. On the other hand, after the panchayat SIR, the number of rural voters increased by 40 lakh to 12.69 crore

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

The BJP indulges in the politics of religion and hatred, which we are seeing in full flow again. The BJP has made an attempt to create an impression that Atishi used objectionable words against the guru, which actually she did not

BHAGWANT SINGH MANN | PUNJAB CM

For decades, Himachal Pradesh has been known as the 'fruit bowl' of the country, but as of today, it is charting a new course toward becoming a hub of blue economy

SUKHWINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL CM

## SHORT TAKES

## Woman drowns self with two daughters

Brahraich (UP): A 42-year-old woman drowned herself and her two minor daughters in a pond in the Kot Bazaar area here, allegedly over taunts from her in-laws over not bearing a son, police Sunday said. Payagpur Station House Officer Sanjal Singh said the victim, Nisha, had been married to Vishnu, a resident of Kot Bazaar, and the couple had three daughters aged two, seven and 10.

## BJP workers protest attack on Suvendu

Kolkata: BJP workers Sunday protested at various places in West Bengal, following the attack on Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari allegedly by Trinamool Congress supporters. The protesters demanded the immediate arrest of those involved, alleging a conspiracy to kill the BJP leader by setting his vehicle on fire. BJP supporters staged demonstrations in Medinipur city and Bankura's Sonamukhi, where they blocked roads and burnt tyres, demanding accountability for what they described as a serious security lapse. Slogans were raised against the state administration, with demands for exemplary punishment for those involved.

## Sonia discharged from hospital

New Delhi: Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, who was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here nearly a week ago for exacerbation of bronchial asthma due to chest infection, was discharged Sunday, hospital authorities said. She has responded well to treatment with a good recovery, they said. "The veteran Congress leader was discharged from the hospital today at 5 pm, with advice to continue further treatment at her residence," a senior official of the hospital said.

## Female home guard attacked on duty

Bangalore: Police Sunday said they arrested a woman for allegedly assaulting a female home guard on traffic duty. The incident occurred near K R Puram Railway Station January 9, and a video of the attack has since gone viral. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) said in a post on 'X' that the home guard, who was on traffic duty in the Ramamurthy Nagar police station limits, asked the woman not to stand on the road.



“

Our craftsmen are not just creators of art; they are the living ambassadors of Kashmir's timeless legacy

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&amp;K CM

## COUNTDOWN FOR LAUNCH OF PSLV-C62 ROCKET COMMENCES

ISRO Sunday commenced a 22.5-hour countdown for the launch of a PSLV rocket that will place an earth observation satellite along with 14 other co-passenger satellites into orbit, marking the space agency's first launch of the year



## Six years after law amended, Centre yet to constitute ACI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 11: As many as six years after the law was amended, the central government is yet to constitute the Arbitration Council of India (ACI) to regulate and promote institutional arbitration in the country.

Senior Union law ministry officials said it took years for corporates and public sector undertakings to shun ad-hoc arbitration and go for institutional arbitration to settle commercial disputes.

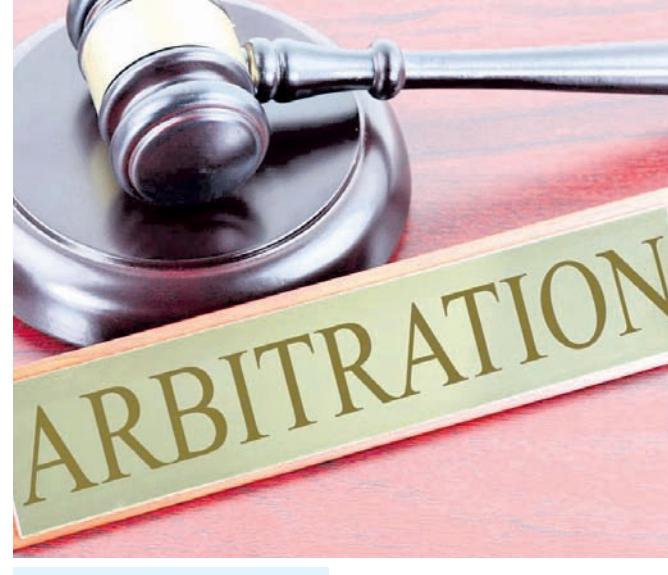
The proposed arbitration council is mandated to regulate institutional arbitration. "But when institutional arbitration has not taken shape in India, who would the arbitration council regulate? Now it has taken shape and within this year, the proposed council will be set up," an official said.

But a former Union law secretary had a contrary view.

"The provision for institutional mechanism by the arbitration council of India was made by amending the Arbitration Act way back in 2019. It has been more than six years now and the proposed council has not yet been constituted. It is adversely affecting making India as a hub of international arbitration," former Union law secretary P K Malhotra told PTI.

In case institutional mechanism is available, it will promote institutional arbitration. If the council is in existence, it will promote institutional arbitration, he said.

Malhotra noted that the ad-



In October last year, the law ministry has floated a draft bill to tweak the arbitration law

hoc arbitration prevalent in the country is creating more problem and that is why even some of the government departments are going out of the arbitration system and preferring mediation as another tool to settle disputes.

Union law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal has on multiple occasions lamented that while arbitration was part of Indian culture, the concept got "disturbed" somewhere and other countries became hub of international arbitration.

But so far, the amendments seem to have taken a back seat.

He hoped that India will soon emerge as the new hub of international arbitration.

In February last, an expert committee headed by former law secretary T K Vishwanathan had submitted its report on reforms in the arbitration sector to the law ministry.

The panel, which also had representatives of the law ministry as well as domain experts, had recommended an amendment to the Arbitration law to confer on the court the power to set aside or vary the arbitration award.

Industry representatives had dubbed the proposed changes in the law as a setback for arbitration reforms in the country.

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# national

of the day quote

Today, when we are introducing technology and transparency through G-RAM-G, they claim to find faults in it

GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | UNION MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM

We should learn to realise what we have. We actually try to focus on what we do not have. Respect what you have, make the best of it and success will keep coming back to you without even asking

SHUBHANSHU SHUKLA | ASTRONAUT

We have six postal training centres under the Department of Post, and every centre trains around 2,000 postal personnel annually. Today I am announcing the 7th National Postal Training Centre of ₹111 crore in Shivpuri

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION TELECOM MINISTER

POST OF THE DAY

India does not have a single University among the top 500 universities in the world! This is the reality of the claim of becoming Vishwaguru! In the Modi years, our universities have been systematically degraded by forcing them to have RSS VCs, who have destroyed critical thinking & scientific temper

@pbhushan1

## SHORT TAKES

**Farmer duped of ₹4 crore ends life**

**Haldwani:** A farmer allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself Sunday after being duped of ₹4 crore in a fake land deal in Uttarakhand's Kathgodam area, police said. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed deep condolences to the deceased farmer's family and ordered a magisterial inquiry into the matter.

**300 stray dogs killed; Case against 9 people**

**Hyderabad:** Police Sunday said a case was registered against nine people after around 300 stray dogs were allegedly killed in Hanamkonda. In a complaint filed January 9, animal welfare activists Adulapuram Goutham and Farzana Begum alleged that 300 stray dogs were killed in Shayampet and Arepally villages over three days from January 6.

**Panic over bag near minister's bungalow**

**Mumbai:** An abandoned bag found near a minister's bungalow in south Mumbai triggered panic on Sunday until police determined that it had been left by a US citizen who wanted to give away his clothes and shoes, officials said. The incident came to light around 9.30 am, when security personnel posted at minister Nitish Rane's bungalow at Marine Drive informed the police about a bag lying near the adjacent servant quarters, they said.

**J&K cops crack down on drug peddlers**

**Srinagar/Jammu:** Jammu and Kashmir Police has arrested and detained nine suspected drug peddlers in different parts of the Union territory and recovered contraband substances from their possession, officials said Sunday.



In the elections held last year, people lost, and the system won. These people (NDA leaders) have turned 'loktantra' (democracy) into 'dhan tantra' (rule of money) and 'machine tantra' (rule of government machinery)

TEJASHWI YADAV | RJD LEADER

## VOTER REVISION REUNITES MP MAN WITH MOTHER

A man who left his home in Madhya Pradesh's Mandsaur district 22 years ago after his family opposed his marriage was reunited with his mother because of the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, police said Saturday



# DMK snubs Congress power-share demand



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

## Nitin slams DMK regime

**Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu):** BJP national working president Nitin Nabi Sunday held discussions with party workers over the forthcoming Assembly elections in the state and said people of Tamil Nadu are "deeply dissatisfied" with the DMK government's administrative failures. The senior saffron party leader, who is on a two day visit to the textile town, interacted with the BJP office bearers and the karyakartas of the Singanallur Assembly constituency.

governments despite fighting polls in alliance with other parties. Following independence, when the first general election was held in the then composite Madras state in 1952, the Congress party failed to secure an absolute majority.

It was the only during the First Assembly's (1952-57) term that non-Congress leaders (including Manickavelu Naicker of the Commonwealth Party) were accommodated in the Congress-party led State Cabinet.

In 2006, though the DMK did not have an absolute majority, it ran the government for a full five years (2006-11) with support from allies, including the Congress and without sharing power with allies. Without any success, the TN Congress leaders had made the same "share power with us" demand during 2006-11 term of the DMK too.

These horses and their riders have been drawn from different parts of Gujarat. We belong to the Gujarat Police and rehearsed for it in the last 10 days. I feel proud to be part of this Shaurya Yatra," Bharat Kumar Jatabhai, a police constable in Patan district, told PTI, patting his horse 'Garud'.

Around 10 horses were from Patan district, he said as he pointed to another horse, 'Harsha', standing nearby.

In a post in Hindi on X, PM

Modi said, "I am deeply honoured to participate in the Shaurya Yatra of the Somnath Swabhiman Parv. On this occasion, I have the privilege of paying tribute to the countless brave sons of Mother India who sacrificed their lives to protect the temple. Their indomitable courage and valour will always inspire our countrymen."

The 'Shaurya Yatra', organised to honour the countless warriors who laid down their lives defending the Somnath Temple, began from the Shankh Circle, with the prime minister riding an open-top vehicle for the nearly one-km stretch. He also briefly played a 'damru' at the beginning of the procession.

A group of young priests - 'rushi kumars' - walked ahead of Modi's vehicle, playing 'damrus', an instrument associated with Lord Shiva, as a huge crowd lined the streets, showering flower petals and cheering the procession.

Elevated platforms were placed at regular intervals along the parade route where artistes performed different dance forms of India.

What stood out in the procession was the cavalcade of 108 horses and their riders



Members of an Uttarakhand organisation stage a protest demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into the Ankita Bhandari murder case, in Patiala, Punjab

PTI PHOTO

## PM Modi takes part in 'Shaurya Yatra' in Somnath



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

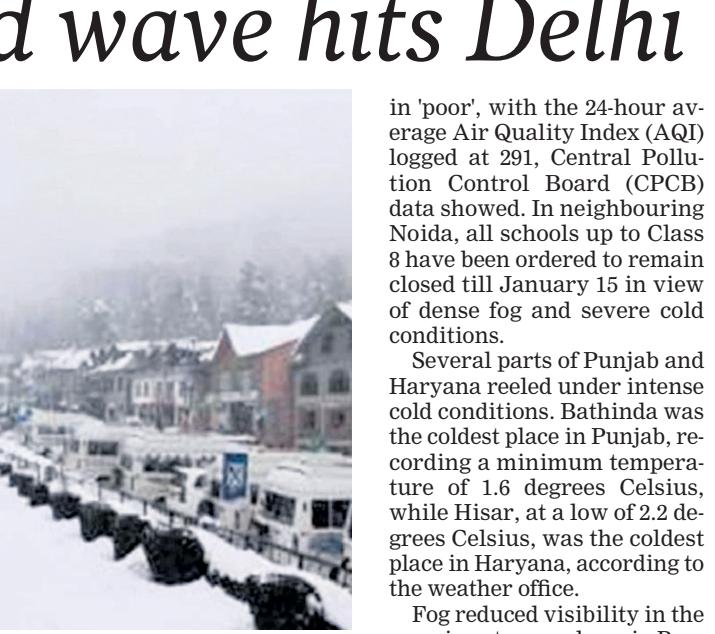
**Somnath (Gujarat), Jan 11:** Priests played 'damrus' and 108 horses slowly trotted towards the Veer Hamirji Gohil Circle that faced the Somnath temple complex here Sunday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi led a ceremonial procession to the ancient shrine amid traditional dance performances.

The 'Shaurya Yatra', organised to honour the countless warriors who laid down their lives defending the Somnath Temple, began from the Shankh Circle, with the prime minister riding an open-top vehicle for the nearly one-km stretch. He also briefly played a 'damru' at the beginning of the procession.

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in 'poor', with the 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) logged at 291, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data showed. In neighbouring Noida, all schools up to Class 8 have been ordered to remain closed till January 15 in view of dense fog and severe cold conditions.

Several parts of Punjab and Haryana reeled under intense cold conditions. Bathinda was the coldest place in Punjab, recording a minimum temperature of 1.6 degrees Celsius, while Hissar, at a low of 2.2 degrees Celsius, was the coldest place in Haryana, according to the weather office.

Fog reduced visibility in the morning at some places in Punjab and Haryana. The IMD has predicted in its daily bulletin released Sunday that cold wave to severe cold wave conditions are very likely to continue over Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on January 12-13.

The capital's air quality was

## Shutdown in Assam over rape of mentally-challenged woman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

### Dhurwa: Shutdown over disappearance of 2 kids

**Ranchi:** Normal life was partly affected due to a 12-hour shutdown in Ranchi's Dhurwa area Sunday over the disappearance of two children. The two siblings, aged 4 and 5, had gone to a grocery store near their house January 2, following which they went missing. Police have formed a special investigation team, comprising 40 personnel, to find them, but it has already been 10 days.

rumours, and warned of strict legal action against those indulging in rumour-mongering. People were asked to report misleading information to the district control room.

District Commissioner Panjaj Chakravarty and Senior Superintendent of Police Akshat Garg held a peace meeting with representatives of political parties, social organisations, student bodies, and noted citizens to ensure that the situation does not escalate.

Chakravarty said the district administration was closely monitoring the situation and had taken necessary measures to ensure public peace and tranquillity.

Another drone was noticed at Khabbar village in Teryat in Rajouri district at 6.35 pm. The flying object, with blinking light, came from the direction of Dharmasal village in Kalakote and moved further towards Bharak, officials said.

Elevated platforms were placed at regular intervals along the parade route where artistes performed different dance forms of India.

It was such a joy to perform for the Shaurya Yatra, which our prime minister led. The different dance forms added the colours of India to the event," she told PTI.

## Winter chill grips north India, cold wave hits Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the spell of extreme cold is likely to continue for the next few days, with

severe cold wave conditions expected in isolated parts of northern India.

Some places in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand also recorded temperatures below zero degrees Celsius and the mercury hovered close to the freezing point in Punjab and Haryana.

Cold to severe cold wave conditions were recorded at isolated places in parts of Rajasthan. The minimum temperature in Pratapgarh was at minus 2 degrees Celsius, while Barmar recorded a low of minus 1 degree Celsius, the local met office said.

Isolated places in eastern Rajasthan saw dense to very dense fog, while a few places in the western part of the state saw dense fog, it said.

The mercury remained below 10 degrees Celsius at most other places in the state. Jaipur recorded a low of 9.2 degrees Celsius.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the spell of extreme cold is likely to continue for the next few days, with



cold wave of the season, with temperatures falling below 3.0 degrees Celsius in some places.

Ayanagar was the coldest place in the city, with a low of 2.9 degrees Celsius, while Palam station recorded its lowest minimum temperature in 13 years

at 3.0 degrees Celsius.

The Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's principal weather station, recorded a minimum temperature of 4.8 degrees Celsius, 2.6 notches below the seasonal average, while the maximum temperature settled at 18.8 de-

grees Celsius, 1.1 notches below normal, IMD data showed.

Similar conditions are likely to prevail over the next two days, and a yellow alert has been issued in this regard, they added.

The capital's air quality was

# international

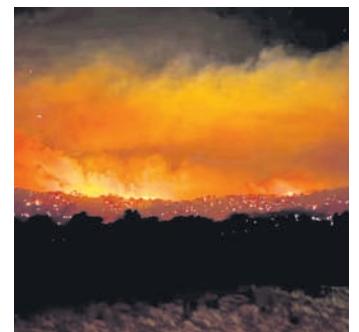


Let the national unity day inspire all of us to achieve prosperity and happiness while safeguarding national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country

RAMCHANDRA PAUDEL | NEPAL PRESIDENT

## HUMAN REMAINS FOUND AMID AUSTRALIA BUSHFIRES

Human remains were found in Australia's southeast where bushfires raging for days have razed buildings, cut power to thousands of homes and burned swathes of bushland, police said Sunday



## US launches new retaliatory strikes against ISIS in Syria

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Jan 11: The US has launched another round of retaliatory strikes against the Islamic State in Syria following last month's ambush that killed two US soldiers and one American civilian interpreter in the country.

The large-scale strikes, conducted by the US alongside partner forces, occurred around 12:30 pm ET, according to US Central Command. The strikes hit multiple Islamic State targets across Syria.

The Jordanian military later announced it had taken part in the strikes.

Saturday's strikes are part of a broader operation that is part of President Donald Trump's response to the deadly ISIS attack that killed Sgt. Edgar Brian Torres-Tovar, Sgt. William Nathaniel Howard, and Ayad Mansoor Sakat, the civilian interpreter, in Palmyra last month.

"Our message remains strong: if you harm our war-fighters, we will find you and kill you anywhere in the world, no matter how hard you try to evade justice," US Central Command said in a statement Saturday.

A day earlier, Syrian officials said their security forces had arrested the military leader of IS's operations in the Levant.

The US military said Saturday's strikes were carried out alongside partner forces without specifying which forces had taken part.

The Trump administration is calling the response to the Palmyra attacks Operation Hawkeye Strike. Both Torres-Tovar and Howard were members of the Iowa National Guard.

It launched December 19 with another large-scale strike that hit 70 targets across central Syria that had IS infrastructure and weapons.

## 'No more Venezuelan oil or money to go to Cuba'



REUTERS

• Cuba has the right to import fuel from any suppliers, foreign minister says

• Venezuela was Cuba's largest supplier last year with some 26,500 barrels per day of crude and fuel

• Mexico is emerging as alternative oil supplier to the island

no Rodriguez said in a post on X on Sunday that Cuba had the right to import fuel from any suppliers willing to export it. He also denied that Cuba had received financial or other "material" compensation in return for security services provided to any country.

Thirty-two members of Cuba's armed forces and intelligence services were killed during the US raid on Venezuela. Cuba said those killed were responsible for "security and defense" but did not provide details on the arrangement between the two long-time allies.

Cuba relies on imported crude and fuel, mainly provided by Venezuela, and Mexico in smaller volumes, purchased on the open market to keep its power generators and vehicles running.

As its operational refining capacity dwindled in recent years, Venezuela's supply of crude and fuel to Cuba has fallen. But the South American country is still the largest provider with some 26,500 barrels per day exported last year, according to ship tracking data and internal documents of state-run PDVSA, which covered roughly 50% of Cuba's oil deficit.

### PROTESTS IN IRAN

## Over 500 dead in crackdown



AGENCIES

**Dubai, Jan 11:** The death toll in the crackdown on nationwide protests in Iran spiked Sunday to at least 538 people, activists said.

Over 10,600 people have been detained, said the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. Of those killed, 490 are protesters and 48 are members of the security forces, it said, warning the toll is likely to go up.

With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult. The activist group, which relies on activists in Iran cross-checking information, has offered accurate tolls in previous rounds of unrest in the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian government has not offered any overall casualty figures for the demonstrations. The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the toll, given that internet and international phone calls are now being blocked in Iran.

Iran's parliament speaker warned Sunday that the US military and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if the US strikes the Islamic Republic over the ongoing protests roiling the country, as threatened by President Donald Trump.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf made the threat after nationwide protests challenging Iran's theocracy saw protesters flood the streets in the country's capital and its second-largest city into Sunday morning, crossing the two-week mark. At least 203 people have died in violence

- US-based group says 490 protesters, 48 security personnel dead
- Trump has threatened US intervention to help protesters
- Iran warns US against 'miscalculation', threatens retaliation
- Israeli sources say Israel on high alert for US intervention
- Analyst says protests unlikely to topple Iran's rulers

surrounding the demonstrations, activists said, with fears the death toll is far higher.

With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult. Those abroad fear the information blackout is emboldening hard-liners within Iran's security services to launch a bloody crackdown.

Trump offered support for the protesters, saying on social media that "Iran is looking at FREEDOM, perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!!!" The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, citing anonymous US officials, said Saturday night that Trump had been given military options for a strike on Iran, but hadn't made a final decision.

### Parliament rallies

Iranian state television broadcast the parliament session live. Qalibaf, a hard-liner who has run for the presidency in the past, gave a speech applauding police and Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, particularly its all-volunteer

Basij, for having "stood firm" during the protests.

He went on to directly threaten Israel, "the occupied territory" as he referred to it, and the US military, possibly with a preemptive strike.

The US military has said in the Mideast it is "postured with forces that span the full range of combat capability to defend our forces, our partners and allies and US interests." Iran targeted US forces at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar back in June, while the US Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet is stationed in the island kingdom of Bahrain.

Israel, meanwhile, is "watching closely" the situation between the US and Iran, said an Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to not being authorized to speak to journalists. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio overnight on topics including Iran, the official added.

The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which relies on activists in Iran cross-checking information, offered the new death toll of 203 Sunday, a large jump. Of those killed, 162 are protesters and 41 are members of the security forces, it said. The agency also acknowledged receiving claims of far more deaths that it was still assessing as over 3,280 others have been arrested.

The group has offered accurate tolls in previous rounds of unrest in the Islamic Republic. The Iranian government has not offered any overall casualty figures for the demonstrations.

### Protests in Tehran and Mashhad

Online videos sent out of Iran, likely using Starlink satellite transmitters, purportedly showed demonstrators gathering in northern Tehran's Puna neighbourhood. There, it appeared authorities shut off streets, with protesters waving their lit mobile phones.

### World Hindi Day

#### celebrated in Shanghai

**Beijing:** The Indian Consulate in Shanghai has celebrated Vishwa Hindi Divas with the participation of students and teachers of Hindi from top universities in China's eastern region. Addressing the gathering Saturday, the Consul General of India in Shanghai Pratik Mathur said that Hindi connects us beyond borders. Highlighting the dignity and glory of Hindi, he read out Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message to the nation. "Hindi is not merely a language, but a powerful link that carries India's sensitivity, values, and thought to the world," a post on X by the Consulate said.

### Pak: Eight killed in gas cylinder blast

**Islamabad:** A newlywed couple was among eight people who died in a gas cylinder explosion in Pakistan's capital Islamabad early Sunday, officials said. The incident occurred at a house located in Sector G-7/2 where a wedding was underway.

### Myanmar holds 2nd round of voting in 1st general poll

**Yangon (Myanmar):** Myanmar began a second round of voting Sunday in the country's first general election since a takeover that installed a military government five years ago. Voting expanded to additional townships, including some areas affected by the civil war between the military government and its armed opponents.

### 23-year-old Hindu farmer shot dead

**Karachi:** A 23-year-old Hindu farmer has been shot dead in Pakistan's Sindh province allegedly by his landlord for building a shelter on his land, leading to widespread protests by the Hindu community. The police arrested the landlord Sarfaraz Nizamani, and his facilitator, Zafarullah Khan, from Hyderabad Saturday night, SSP Badin Qamar Reza Jaskani said.

## Suspect held after fire damages historic Mississippi synagogue

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**New York, Jan 11:** One person was taken into custody after a fire ripped through a synagogue in Mississippi, heavily damaging the historic house of worship in what authorities say was an act of arson.

No congregants were injured in the blaze, which broke out at the Beth Israel Congregation in Jackson, Mississippi, shortly after 3 am Saturday, officials said.

Photos showed the charred remains of an administrative office and synagogue library, where several Torahs were destroyed or damaged.

Jackson Mayor John Horhn confirmed that a person was taken into custody following an investigation that also included the FBI and the Joint Terrorism Task Force. "Acts of antisemitism, racism, and religious hatred are attacks on Jackson as a whole and will be treated as

acts of terror against residents' safety and freedom to worship," Horhn said in a statement. He did not provide the name of the suspect or the charges that the person is facing.

The synagogue, the largest in Mississippi and the only one in Jackson, was the site of a Ku Klux Klan bombing in 1967—a response to the congregation's role in civil rights activities, according to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, which also houses its office in the building. "We are devastated but ready to rebuild, and we are so appreciative of the outreach from the community," said Michele Schipper, CEO of the Institute of Southern Jewish Life and past president of the congregation.

The synagogue will continue its regular worship programs and services for Shabbat, the weekly Jewish Sabbath, likely inside of one of the local churches that reached out.

Online videos sent out of Iran, likely using Starlink satellite transmitters, purportedly showed demonstrators gathering in northern Tehran's Puna neighbourhood. There, it appeared authorities shut off streets, with protesters waving their lit mobile phones.

**CUBA DEFENDS IMPORT RIGHTS**

Cuban Foreign Minister Bru-

Protesters march during a rally for Renee Good, who was fatally shot by an ICE officer earlier in the week, in Minneapolis

AP PHOTO



tative tradition more common in South Asian countries, and

from the conflict, trauma and politics dividing the nation.

Their journey began October 26, 2025 at a Vietnamese Buddhist temple in Texas, and is scheduled to end in mid-February in Washington, DC, where they will ask Congress to recognise Buddha's day of birth and enlightenment as a federal holiday. Beyond promoting peace, their highest priority is connecting with people along the way.

"My hope is, when this walk ends, the people we met will continue practicing mindfulness and find peace," said the Venerable Bhikkhu Pannakara, the group's soft-spoken leader who is making the trek barefoot. He teaches about mindfulness,

forgiveness and healing at every stop.

Preferring to sleep each night in tents pitched outdoors, the monks have been surprised to see their message transcend ideologies, drawing huge crowds into churchyards, city halls and town squares across six states.

Documenting their journey on social media, they describes herself as spiritual, but not religious. "I looked into their eyes and I saw peace. They're putting their bodies through such physical torture and yet they radiate peace."

Hailing from Theravada Buddhist monasteries across the globe, the 19 monks began their 3,700 kilometre trek at the Huong Dao Vipassana Bhavana Centre in Fort Worth.

Saluda, South Carolina, Audrie Pearce joined the crowd lining Main Street. She had driven four hours from her village of Little River, and teared up as Pannakara handed her a flower.

"There's something traumatic and heart-wrenching happening in our country every day," said Pearce, who describes herself as spiritual, but not religious. "I looked into their eyes and I saw peace. They're putting their bodies through such physical torture and yet they radiate peace."

Hailing from Theravada Buddhist monasteries across the globe, the 19 monks began their 3,700 kilometre trek at the Huong Dao Vipassana Bhavana Centre in Fort Worth.

of the  
day quote

There could be a risk of high-net-worth individuals leaving the country for low tax jurisdictions if surcharges are high or wealth tax is reintroduced

SURABHI MARWAH | TAX PARTNER, EY INDIA

**NEW X ALGORITHM FOR PUBLIC SOON**

Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has said that he will open the new X algorithm to the public in seven days. It will include all code for organic and advertising post recommendations. "We will publish the full algorithm in a week. Still much to improve. It's just trying to show you what you are most likely to find interesting. The goal is to maximise unregretted user-seconds," Musk said

**Gold, silver set to stay firm next week**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 11:** Gold and silver prices are expected to sustain positive momentum next week amid heightened geopolitical tensions and the uncertainty surrounding the US Supreme Court's impending decision on President Donald Trump's tariff policy, analysts said.

The release of inflation data from major economies, including the US, India, and Germany, along with trade and investment numbers from China and commentary from some Federal Reserve officials, will also be closely watched by the traders, they added.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures climbed by Rs 3,058, or 2.25 per cent, over the past week and settled at Rs 1,38,819 per 10 grams Friday.

Meanwhile, silver futures on the MCX also witnessed significant upside last week, with the white metal ending near record levels. The metal surged Rs 16,409, or 6.94 per cent. It had zoomed to a record high of Rs 2,59,692 per kg before closing at Rs 2,52,725 per kg Friday.

The white metal, over the past week, increased by \$8.32, or nearly 12 per cent, before closing at \$79.34 per ounce in the overseas trade.

Looking ahead, the silver's bullish structure could see prices testing the Rs 2,80,000-3,00,000 per kilogram.

**SECURITY OVERHAUL**

The plan is part of govt's efforts to boost security of user data as online fraud and data breaches increase in the world's second-largest smartphone market, with nearly 750mn phones

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Jan 11:** India proposes requiring smartphone makers to share source code with the government and make several software changes as part of a raft of security measures, prompting behind-the-scenes opposition from giants like Apple and Samsung.

The tech companies have countered that the package of 83 security standards, which would also include a requirement to alert the government to major software updates, lacks any global precedent and risks revealing proprietary details, according to four people familiar with the discussions and a Reuters review of confidential government and industry documents.

IT Secretary S Krishnan told Reuters that "any legitimate concerns of the industry will be addressed with an open mind", adding it was "premature to read more into it". A ministry spokesperson said it could not comment further due to ongoing

INDIA  
SMARTPHONE  
SECURITY  
PROPOSALS  
WORRY TECH  
COMPANIESSHARING  
SOURCE  
CODE A VERY  
CONTENTIOUS  
ISSUE,  
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GOVERNMENT  
SAYS IT WILL  
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BIG TECH

ing consultation with tech companies on the proposals.

**ONGOING TUG OF WAR OVER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Apple, South Korea's Samsung, Google, China's Xiaomi and MAIT, the Indian industry group that represents the firms, did not respond to requests for comment.

Indian government requirements have irritated technology firms before. Last month it revoked an order mandating a state-run cyber safety app on phones amid concerns over surveillance. But the government brushed aside lobbying last

year and required rigorous testing for security cameras over fears of Chinese spying.

Xiaomi and Samsung - whose phones use Google's Android operating system - hold 19% and 15%, respectively, of India's market share and Apple 5%. Counterpoint Research estimates.

Among the most sensitive requirements in the new Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirements is access to source code - the underlying programming instructions that make phones work. This would be analysed and possibly tested at designated Indian labs, the

documents show.

The Indian proposals also require companies to make software changes to allow pre-installed apps to be uninstalled and to block apps from using cameras and microphones in the background to "avoid malicious usage".

"Industry raised concerns that globally security requirement have not been mandated by any country," said a December IT ministry document detailing meetings that officials held with Apple, Samsung, Google and Xiaomi.

The security standards, drafted in 2023, are in the spotlight now as the government is considering imposing them legally. IT ministry and tech executives are due to meet on Tuesday for more discussions, sources said.

**COMPANIES SAY SOURCE CODE REVIEW, ANALYSIS 'NOT POSSIBLE'**

Smartphone makers closely guard their source code. Apple declined China's request for source code between 2014 and 2016, and US law enforcement has also tried and failed to get it.

India's proposals for "vulnerability analysis" and "source code review" would require smartphone makers to perform a "complete security assessment", after which test labs in India could check

their claims through source code review and analysis.

"This is not possible ... due to secrecy and privacy," MAIT said in a confidential document drafted in response to the government proposal, and seen by Reuters. "Major countries in the EU, North America, Australia and Africa do not mandate these requirements."

MAIT asked the ministry last week to drop the proposal, a source with direct knowledge said.

The Indian proposals would mandate automatic and periodic malware scanning on phones. Device makers would also have to inform the National Centre for Communication Security about major software updates and security patches before releasing them to users, and the centre would have the right to test them.

MAIT's document says regular malware scanning significantly drains a phone's battery and seeking government approval for software updates is "impractical" as they need to be issued promptly.

India also wants the phone's logs - digital records of its system activity - to be stored for at least 12 months on the device. "There is not enough room on device to store 1-year log events," MAIT said in the document.

It is important to note that our commitment to an all-electric future remains unchanged, and we view these figures as a steady baseline as we prepare for a more aggressive EV rollout in 2026

JYOTI MALHOTRA | MD, VOLVO CAR

The government is likely to achieve the fiscal deficit target of 4.4 per cent of the GDP in FY26, and it could even better it

RANEN BANERJEE | PARTNER AND ECONOMIC ADVISORY SERVICES LEADER, PWC

This week marks the start of the earnings season alongside a busy macroeconomic calendar. Investors will closely track India's CPI inflation, WPI inflation... Quarterly results from major companies across IT, banking, financial, and energy sectors will also be in focus

AJIT MISHRA | SVP, RESEARCH, RELIGARE BROKING

**SHORT TAKES****Mcap of 7 of top-10 valued firms erodes**

**New Delhi:** The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 3,63,412.18 crore last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest laggard, amid a bearish trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark declined by 2,185.77 points or 2.54 per cent. While Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro faced erosion from their valuation, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, and Hindustan Unilever were the gainers. The market valuation of Reliance Industries tumbled Rs 1,58,532.91 crore to Rs 19,96,445.69 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation eroded by Rs 96,153.61 crore to Rs 14,44,150.26 crore. The market valuation of Bharti Airtel declined by Rs 45,274.72 crore to Rs 11,55,987.81 crore, and that of Bajaj Finance plunged Rs 18,729.68 crore to Rs 5,97,700.75 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 6,097.19 crore to Rs 5,57,734.23 crore, and that of State Bank of India edged higher by Rs 599.99 crore to Rs 9,23,061.76 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Larsen & Toubro.

**IBA backs ₹10k-cr subsidy for biogas**

**New Delhi:** Indian Biogas Association (IBA) has recommended a Rs 10,000 crore fund to provide capital subsidy for the biogas industry in the forthcoming Budget. The association also urged the government to increase the subsidy by 50 per cent to Rs 6 crore per 4.8 TPD of compressed biogas (CBG) and suggested capping the upper cap at Rs 25 crore per project, according to an IBA statement issued Sunday. IBA will share the recommendations with the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy and the Ministry of Finance, it added. The industry body also raised the demand at various forums before the general Budget. IBA has proposed a minimum 5 per cent mandated FOM (fermented organic manure) blending in overall fertiliser application by 2028, and further ramped up in a phased manner to 10 per cent by 2030.

India's bilateral trade in goods with the EU was \$136.53 billion in 2024-25 (exports worth \$75.85 billion and imports worth \$60.68 billion), making it the largest trading partner for goods

With a 2.6 per cent share in India's total exports and a positive

share gain of 0.2 percentage points, Germany continues to provide stable demand for Indian products," an official said.

The country's shipments to Belgium edged up from \$4.2 billion to \$4.4 billion during April-November 2024-25.

Similarly, India's exports to Poland grew 7.6 per cent to \$1.82 billion during the period from \$1.69 billion in April-November 2024.

Taken together, these trends highlight a nuanced European strategy for India's exports.

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# Kohli's 93 steers India's win

**MEN IN BLUE SEAL NERVOUS FOUR-WICKET WIN IN 1ST ODI AGAINST NEW ZEALAND**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Vadodara, Jan 11:**

Virat Kohli once with and skipper Shubman Gill hit 56 but India huffed and puffed before completing a nervy four-wicket win against New Zealand in the opening ODI of the three-match series here Sunday.

In pursuit of 301, India were in complete control when Kohli departed in the 40th over but a flurry of wickets saw the home side going over the line with 306 for six in 49 overs.

Kohli fell a few runs short of what could have been his 54th ODI century when India needed 67 from 66 balls with seven wickets in hand. Ravindra Jadeja (4) and Shreyas Iyer (49) followed him soon in the dressing room, giving New Zealand a real chance to clinch the game.

However, KL Rahul (29 not out) put on 37 runs with Harshit Rana (29), and the remaining runs came in company of an injury-hit Washington Sundar (7 not out), aided by a few uncharacteristic dropped catches by the Kiwis towards the end.

It was Kyle Jamieson (4/41) who dragged New Zealand back in the game when all seemed lost, getting Kohli caught at mid-on to deny the India batting stalwart a deserving ton.

He also cleaned up Iyer with an off-cutter and got rid of Jadeja.

Even as he fell a few runs short of a century, Kohli became the quickest to reach 28,000 runs in international cricket and now only the second behind the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, going past Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara.

New Zealand had posed an at-par 300/8 but with Kohli in such imperious form, it never was enough especially with a depleted bowling attack.

If he didn't refrain from hitting over the top early on against South Africa, Kohli pulverised the Kiwis from the moment he arrived on the crease with a flurry of fours.

There was that trademark planted front foot for a majestic

**KOHLI CHRONICLES**

The batting stalwart Virat Kohli becomes fastest player to cross 28K-run mark, leaving only the legendary Sachin (34,357 runs) ahead of him in the history of the sport

## THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

### Poland beat Swiss to lift United Cup

Poles capture title after runner-up finishes in 2024 and 2025

REUTERS



"We've finally made it. Third time lucky," Swiatek said. "We worked hard ... I want to thank the team. This year it was such a team effort, I really felt the support. Even though my singles performances weren't perfect, you got my spirits up and you all believed until the end."

Victory capped a superb campaign for Poland, who beat last year's champions the United States in the semi-finals,

and set up Hurkacz to carry momentum into his singles campaign at the Australian Open that begins January 18.

Six-times Grand Slam champion Swiatek heads into the year's opening major at Melbourne Park with back-to-back defeats after losing to Bencic Sunday and Coco Gauff in the semi-finals, though she will remain among the top contenders.

Jeddah, Jan 11: Barcelona and Real Madrid are set to lock horns later Sunday in what will be the first El Clasico of 2026. It also happens to be the final of the Spanish Super Cup, with both sides vying for their first trophy of the season.

It is a high-stakes game particularly for Real Madrid. Having been dominated by Barcelona in the Hansi Flick era, the onus is on coach Xabi Alonso to deliver, failing which he might face the axe this week.

Barcelona, on the other hand, has shown superb form since losing the season's first El Clasico. They are leading the La Liga table and is looking like the favourites heading into this Super Cup final.

Real Madrid could unleash their biggest weapon in Sunday's Spanish Super Cup final against Barcelona, with coach Xabi Alonso saying they are considering taking a risk on Kylian Mbappe's fitness after he missed the semi-final.

Mbappe, who matched Cris-

## CHESS BLITZ

**Wesley takes throne; Nihal grabs runner-up**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 11: American Grandmaster Wesley So showed remarkable consistency to clinch the title in the Open category with a round to spare, while India's Nihal Sarin ended as runner-up in the Tata Steel Chess India Blitz chess tournament here Sunday.

The Women's section also ended with a thrilling playoff that saw another American Carissa Yip hold her nerve to lift the trophy. India's Vantika Agarwal finished runner-up.

The closing rounds of the tournament delivered relentless tension, late twists, and fitting champions in both sections.

In the Open event, Wesley So aggregated 12 points for the title while Sarin ended with 11 points. Another Indian, Arjun Erigaisi ended at third spot, also with 11 points.

Wesley So capitalised when Vedit Gujrathi blundered an entire rook in a double rook endgame. Wei Yi outplayed Viswanathan Anand, who ended at eighth with eight points, by calmly consolidating an extra exchange, while R Praggnanandhaa opened lines for his rook and established a powerful knight outpost to defeat Hans Niemann.

Sarin also struck with a key win over Anand, while Wesley held Wei Yi to maintain control of the standings.

As the finish line approached, Erigaisi scored a notable win by preventing Anand from castling, but Wesley stayed just ahead despite several tense endgames, including a draw where he blundered back an exchange against Aravindh Chithambaram.

The team clinches 3-1 win against HIL GC in the shootout

## HOCKEY INDIA LEAGUE

**Unbeaten Kalinga Lancers move to top of the table**



six circle entries. The Lancers held their shape, registering six circle entries of their own while playing on the counter attack.

They did earn the first real opportunity of the game with a penalty corner, but couldn't make it count in a goalless first quarter.

HIL GC took the lead from their first attempt on target in the second quarter. Captain Hardik Singh orchestrated the move from midfield, before Ajeet tapped in his effort from close range to break the deadlock.

The Lancers had a couple of shots on goal and six penalty corners in a span of a couple minutes.

They eventually found a way past HIL GC goalkeeper James Mazarelo courtesy a powerful dragflick from Hendrickx, levelling the scores at half time.

The Lancers continued to look dangerous and came close to taking the lead through Hendrickx before being denied by James Mazarelo at HIL GC goal.

Heading into the final quarter, the two teams remained relentless in their pursuit in search of a winner. HIL GC only registered three circle entries, while the Lancers managed to register two circle entries in the final quarter.

With neither side mustering an attempt on target, the game had to be decided through a shootout.

### Barcelona, Real Madrid to lock horns in first El Clasico of 2026

AGENCIES



tiano Ronaldo's club record of 59 goals in a calendar year during Real's 2-0 LaLiga win over Sevilla last month, is nursing a knee injury.

Real beat Barcelona 2-1 at the Bernabeu in October after losing the Spanish Super Cup final and the Copa del Rey final to their arch-rivals last season.

Barcelona lead LaLiga with 49 points from 19 matches, four ahead of second-placed Real.

Flick confirmed Lamine Yamal was ready to start, having come on as a substitute in Barcelona's 5-0 semi-final thrashing of Athletic Bilbao Wednesday.

With that result, the Lancers moved to the top of the table.

The Lancers didn't concede a single penalty corner throughout the contest.

HIL GC dictated terms in the opening exchanges but couldn't quite make any significant inroads despite the



home fans chanted "Silkmen! Silkmen!" — the club's nickname.

Macclesfield survived, their players adding their names to the competition's lore.

Fans sprinted onto the field at Moss Rose — Macclesfield's modest 5,900-capacity stadium — in celebration at the final whistle while Dawson and Duffy were carried aloft.

"I didn't think it was possible but there is that little bit of hope that anything can happen on the day," said Rooney, who started and ended his playing career as a midfielder with the club and is in only his first season coaching.

"I can't believe it. We were incredible from the first minute."

The last time Palace played in the FA Cup, it beat City in the final for its first ever trophy.

Palace's dismal afternoon was summed up when US defender Chris Richards did a foul throw in the final minute of stoppage time.

"I have no words for this performance," Palace manager Oliver Glasner said.

Palace captain Marc Guéhi spoke with the team's traveling fans after the defeat.

field, a tiny club from England's north west that was relaunched after its predecessor, Macclesfield Town, was liquidated in 2020 because of debts.

At the other extreme, Manchester City overwhelmed third-tier Exeter 10-1 in a match featuring a goal on debut by £87 million signing Antoine Semenyo.

City tying the record for its biggest ever win wasn't the story of the day in the third round, though.

That belonged to Maccles-

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It made for an emotionally draining afternoon for John Rooney, the younger sibling of England and Manchester United great Wayne Rooney, who was at the match working for the BBC.

"We finished the game and then I walk in the office and see Ethan's mum and dad in there, that's very special to me," John

Rooney said. "Just knowing they were here with us, and I'm sure Ethan was looking down on us today."

Macclesfield took the lead just before halftime through captain Paul Dawson, before Isaac Buckley-Ricketts made it 2-0 in the 60th following a scramble in the penalty area.

Jerome Pin's last-minute free kick for Palace left Macclesfield facing a nervous six minutes of stoppage time as

behind the dugouts at the Palace game and his family were in the stands to watch.

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## BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL

### Sabalenka defends crown



The teams were separated by 117 places in the English soccer pyramid but the Silkmen won 2-1 which, given the difference in league positions, goes down as the most unlikely result in the cup's 155-year history

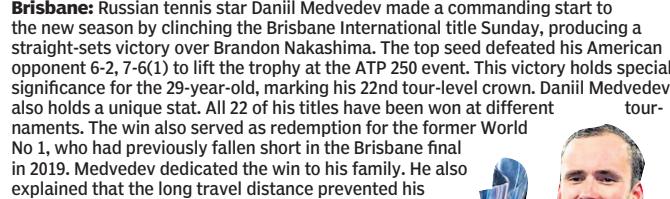
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 11: The FA Cup delivered another fairytale result Saturday when sixth-tier Macclesfield — managed by Wayne Rooney's brother — knocked out titleholder Crystal Palace in one of the competition's greatest upsets.

At the other extreme, Manchester City overwhelmed third-tier Exeter 10-1 in a match featuring a goal on debut by £87 million signing Antoine Semenyo.

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Redemption for Medvedev

Brisbane: Russian tennis star Daniil Medvedev made a commanding start to the new season by clinching the Brisbane International crown, defeating Marta Kostyuk 6-4, 6-3 in 1 hour and 18 minutes at Pat Rafter Arena Sunday. The Belarusian won the trophy without dropping a set all week. This was Sabalenka's fifth title in Australia and the 22nd overall of her career, pushing her past Victoria Azarenka for the third-most WTA Tour titles among active players, behind Venus Williams and Iga Swiatek. Sabalenka also became one of only three women to defend the season-opening WTA 500 title, joining Serena Williams and Karolina Pliskova on the tournament's illustrious honour roll. Moreover, she is ranked third among active players for most tournament victories among active players, trailing only Venus Williams (with 49) and Iga Swiatek (with 25), as per WTA stats. With her first title of 2026 secured, Sabalenka now turns her attention to the Australian Open, where she is the defending runner-up after falling to Keys in last year's final. She'll enter as the No 1 seed as she chases a third title in Melbourne.