

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
You will be torn between work and family as both try to grab your attention. You may reserve the evening for having fun. You crave to become famous and are likely to accomplish your ambition shortly. You have Ganesha's blessings to support you.

TAURUS
Ganesha is pleased to see that you have a bright day ahead. Your efforts are due to give the results you expect. If you are in a mood to achieve something more than usual, this is the day for it. You are not likely to be disappointed. You will be getting increasingly popular socially as well as professionally, and gaining the trust and support of one and all.

GEMINI
An auspicious day awaits you. You will pay more attention to your family than to your career or at the work-front. This will mean the resolution of some long pending issues and projects at home. An enjoyable time with your family and children awaits you, says Ganesha.

CANCER
The Archer will be quite sharp at work and equally penetrating in matters of the heart. Though you may temporarily lose focus, your mind will bring you back to the real world. You will work at break-neck speed only to be able to spend as much time as possible with your sweetheart.

LEO
Pack your bags, and don't forget the sunscreen and the shades. Look at the stars today – Ganesha foresees for you a strong prospect of going on a tour. If not an individual backpacking adventure, then an elaborate family holiday, but travel you shall.

VIRGO
Today, find yourself rummaging through the vast recesses of your inner self. You will make fabulous money to spend on your loved ones. Face up to work pressures by indulging in corporeal pleasures. You may warrant the company of someone special to think out loud all that is inside you, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you need to be more careful in your work field as your enemies or your competitors will try to pull you down today. You will have to be very careful in making business agreements or negotiations regarding give and take in the business.

SCORPIO
You shall also work like a donkey and yet be smart as hell in what you do today. It is favourable if you engage in household activities – gardening, cooking, cleaning and the likes. Work pressure will be displaced by family pleasure, predicts Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Your ways to deal with your team mates and colleagues will be strict and disciplined. However, your perfect ways at work will leave them awestruck. Your personal equations will be least affected by your stern ways, says Ganesha. Do not let success go to your head.

CAPRICORN
Impulsiveness, which is not really your trait, will be very evident in whatever work you do today, say Ganesha. Money matters will keep you preoccupied for major part of the day, but ironically, your otherwise methodical approach to everything will go for a toss. You will splurge in the second half of the day, and it will be more than what your means can afford.

AQUARIUS
You are ambitious, and quite unapologetic about the way you pursue your goals! You will work hard and push your way through if you have to. Not just that, you will see to it that you have all the skills and competency required to make it big. Success is never served on a plate, and you know it, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Well begun is half done. With this in mind, you will set out to actively seek the cooperation of your colleagues and the sanction of your seniors to tackle some important projects, says Ganesha. The evening should find you heading out to watch a movie or doing something creative, like painting.



HURST TO HEADLINE GOD OF WAR SERIES

Actor Ryan Hurst has been cast as Kratos in *God of War*, the live-action adaptation of PlayStation's blockbuster video game franchise. The mythology-themed action-adventure series, being developed by Sony Pictures Television and Amazon MGM Studios for Prime Video, has received a two-season order, with pre-production underway in

MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY TO PATENT HIS IMAGE, VOICE

Matthew McConaughey has filed recordings of his image and voice with US patent authorities to protect them from unauthorised usage by artificial intelligence platforms. Several video clips and audio recordings were registered by the commercial arm of the 'just keep livin Foundation', a non-profit created by Matthew and his wife Camila



Secret behind Suhana's growth

Mumbai: As Suhana Khan continues to find her footing in the world of cinema, she remains enthusiastic about the many possibilities that lie ahead. While she is open to exploring new opportunities and taking creative risks, the young actor says a few key opinions will always shape her career decisions, those of her parents, Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan.

In a recent interview, Suhana spoke candidly about her personal growth and evolving outlook. She shared that growing confidence has encouraged her to step out of her comfort zone and trust her instincts, though logic and a fair amount of overthinking often accompany her choices. When uncertainty sets in, she turns to her parents for guidance. "I have to ask my parents. They get the final say," she said, highlighting the role they play in her life.



Suhana described how both parents offer contrasting yet complementary advice. While her father's guidance is reflective and poetic, helping her view situations from different perspectives, her mother's advice is direct and practical, cutting through confusion. Together, their inputs help keep her grounded.

Suhana made her acting debut with Zoya Akhtar's *The Archies* in 2023, which received mixed reviews. She will next make her theatrical debut with *King*, directed by Siddharth Anand, where she stars alongside Shah Rukh Khan.

AGENCIES



Sam wants women to question

Mumbai: Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently spoke about facing intense online trolling after she began questioning established narratives around healthcare. She addressed the issue during a panel discussion at the 1 Billion Followers Summit 2026 in Dubai, where she highlighted how women often hesitate to question doctors

or seek second opinions. "Why are women still afraid to question their doctors?" Samantha asked. She spoke about the power imbalance prevalent in medical spaces, which often leads women to choose silence over clarity. Emphasising the need for empowerment, she said every woman should feel enabled to ask questions and demand equality from healthcare providers. Reflecting on her personal journey, Samantha recalled being diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, a phase that deeply impacted her life. "I started because of my autoimmune disease and eventually quit my job

for two years to process all this fragmented knowledge," she shared, adding that she struggled with guilt when she first began asking questions through her podcast.

Samantha also addressed the backlash she faced in 2024 after mentioning hydrogen peroxide nebulization as an option for viral infections. While medical expert Dr. Cyriac Abby Philips criticised her for spreading misinformation and later apologised for his remarks, Samantha clarified that she was not advocating the treatment, but merely sharing an experience suggested by a qualified doctor. AGENCIES

Yami honours armed forces

Mumbai: On the occasion of Army Day Thursday, Bollywood actress Yami Gautam took a moment to honour the nation's armed forces.

Yami took to X, where she re-shared a post by a music label featuring various scenes from the 2024 political thriller film *Article 370*.

She wrote: Happy Army Day. Today & everyday. Jai Hind."

Army Day is celebrated 15 January every year in India, in recognition of Lieutenant General Kodandera M. Cariappa's taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Francis Roy Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, 15 January 1949.

Army Day marks a day to salute the valiant soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect the country and its citizens.

Meanwhile, talking about *Article 370* is directed by Aditya Suhas Jambhale. The film stars Yami and Priyamani, alongside Skand Thakur, Ashwini Kaul, Vaibhav Tatwa-

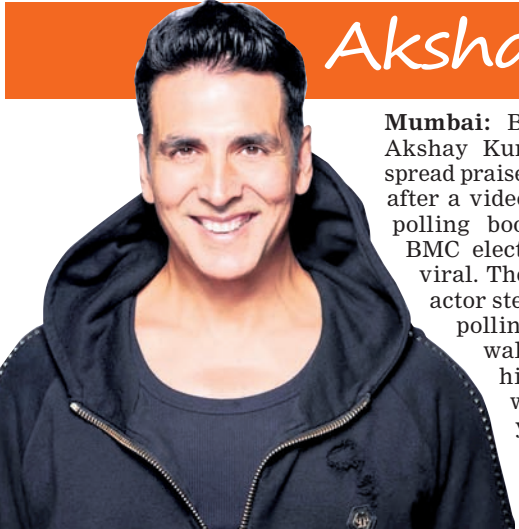
wadi, Arun Govil, and Kiran Karmarkar.

The film is based on the 2019 revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir regarding Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

Yami was recently seen in *Haq*, a courtroom drama film directed by Suparn Verma. It also stars Emraan Hashmi and Sheeba Chaddha in a pivotal role. IANS



Akshay's noble gesture



Mumbai: Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar won widespread praise on social media after a video of him from a polling booth during the BMC elections 2026 went viral. The clip shows the actor stepping out of the polling station and walking towards his car when he was stopped by a young girl seeking help.

Dressed casually in a shirt

and baggy pants, Akshay was approached by the girl, who reportedly told him that her family was in debt and requested assistance. She even offered to show him documents to support her claim. Remaining calm and composed, the actor gently held her shoulder and introduced her to a member of his security team, asking her to share her details and contact information so the matter could be looked into. As Akshay moved towards his car, the girl bent

down to touch his feet, a moment that struck a chord with many online.

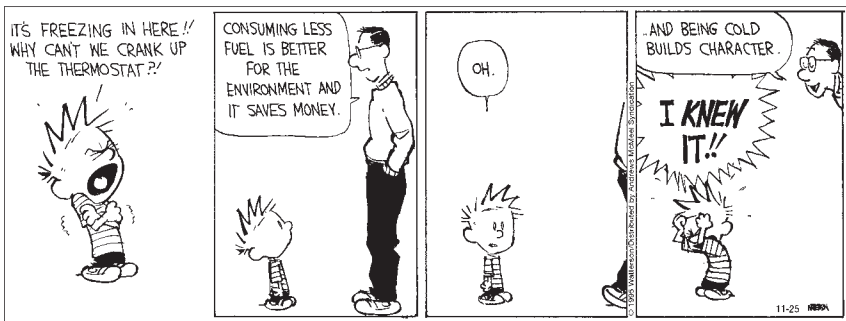
Akshay has long been known for his philanthropic efforts, from supporting people during the Covid-19 pandemic to helping stunt performers and army personnel, often extending help quietly and without publicity.

Earlier in the day, Akshay was among the first celebrities to arrive at the polling booth to cast his vote. AGENCIES

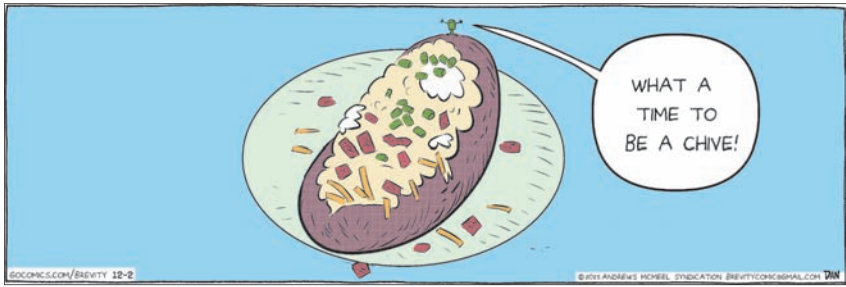
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

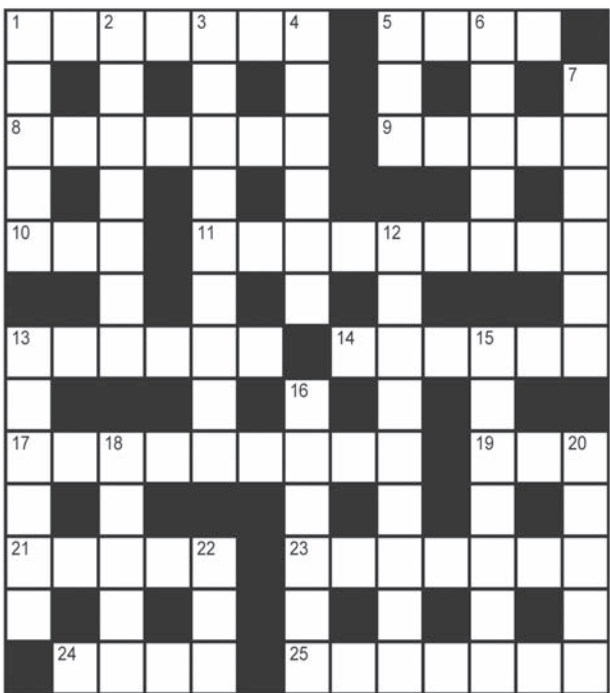


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- Steak choice
 - Flat floater
 - Speech defect
 - Breakfast bread
 - Chapel vow
 - Like some twins
 - Skin problems
 - Kind of test
 - Contented
 - Caustic chemical
 - Early warning system
 - Understand
 - Wildcat
 - Theatre gear
 - Jitters
 - Decay
 - Swiss capital
 - Coral reefs
 - Inferior (5-4)
 - Vacation spot
 - Listlessness
 - Yarn starters
 - Raw fish dish
 - Strident
 - Aliens
- Down**
- 1 Raw fish dish
 - 2 Strident
 - 3 Aliens

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

D	A	L	S	C	B
B	B	B	L	E	
D	H	A	A	O	E
O	S	L	O	F	I
R	L	F	S	K	
P	A	R	S	L	E
R	T	B			
C	O	R	N	E	
M	E	M	F	E	
S	A	W	E	D	
T	D	T	A	I	E
P	I	G	L	E	T
C	E	O	O	E	S

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Farmers’ outfit stages protest over PUCC fines



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The Naba Nirman Krushak Sangathan (NNKS), a farmers’ outfit, Thursday staged a massive protest in Bhubaneswar against the alleged imposition of hefty fines and harassment of common people by the state Transport department in the name of Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUC).

During the agitation, members of the outfit clashed with police while attempting to gherao the residences of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena.

The agitation triggered chaos in the area as several protesters attempted to breach police barricades near the Chief Minister’s residence.

Tension escalated when NNKS activists scuffled with police during the protest. To bring the situation under control, police later detained several activists.

NNKS leaders said the agitation would continue until the government reviews and rolls back what they termed ‘harsh and irrational’ PUC-related penalties

The outfit demanded an end to alleged harassment in the name of pollution control and sought withdrawal of hefty fines on vehicle owners without PUC certificates

Meanwhile, NNKS leaders said that their agitation would continue until the government reviews and rolls back what they termed as “harsh and irrational” penalties related to PUC enforcement.

The outfit demanded the government to stop harassment of common people in the name of pollution control and revoke the decision to impose hefty fines on vehicle owners failing to obtain a PUC certificate, calling the move ‘an-

ti-people’ and ‘unjust’. Speaking to IANS, NNKS National Coordinator Akshay Kumar strongly criticised the government’s policy and said, “The law related to PUC fines is anti-public in nature and has been imposed without considering the financial condition of common citizens.”

“This is a completely anti-people law. If such unjust rules are not withdrawn, we will intensify our movement and take it to every household across Odisha. The government will not be able to stop this agitation,” Kumar warned.

He further questioned the rationale behind imposing steep fines without adequate public awareness or accessible systems for compliance. “If people are being penalised without proper facilities or clarity, what is the purpose of such a law? Ultimately, it is the common man who will suffer,” he added.

Notably, in December last year, the state government announced strict enforcement of PUC norms during the Road Safety Month (January 1 to January 31, 2026) and instructed oil companies not to sell fuel to vehicles without valid PUC certificates.

However, the decision was later postponed to February 1 due to difficulties faced by vehicle owners in obtaining certificates. In the latest development, the state government has further extended relaxation for checking PUC until April 1.



ILLUMINATED: Road leading to Sisir Saras fair at Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar decked up with decorative lights

PICT BIKASH NAYAK

Mission Shakti, THSC sign MoU to empower women

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: In a major push for women’s economic empowerment, the Mission Shakti department Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC). The agreement was formalised at Mission Shakti Bhawan in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida.

The agreement was formally signed by Mission Shakti Director Monica Priyadarshini and THSC CEO Rajan Bahadur.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy CM Parida praised the initiative to bring women self-help groups (SHGs) into the



tourism and hospitality sector. She said the programme would play a crucial role in creating more “Lakhpati Didis” across the state.

Emphasising skill development and entrepreneurship, she described the initiative as another milestone in the journey of women’s empowerment.

Mission Shakti Commissioner-cum-Secretary Girish SN delivered the welcome address and provided a detailed overview of the objectives and vision of the MoU. Under the agreement, women SHGs will be trained in entrepreneurship related to tent rental services and catering management. The training

will cover sustainable business operations, professional skill enhancement, FSSAI certification, preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), procurement of equipment, and strategies for business expansion. As part of the programme, 4,000 women members from 1,000 SHGs will receive training in food supply services, event management, and tent and catering operations. An allocation of ₹9.3 crore has been earmarked for the successful implementation of the initiative.

The programme is expected to open new livelihood opportunities for women, strengthen SHG enterprises, and further accelerate women-led economic growth in Odisha.

Motorcycle rider arrested for killing elderly woman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Infocity police Thursday arrested a motorcycle rider for fatally hitting an elderly woman at Shikharachandi bus stoppage January 11.



According to a complaint by her son, Amayakant Mohapatra, Banita Barik was standing near Shikharachandi bus stoppage when Abhisek Swain (27) of Cuttack allegedly rode his motorcycle at high speed and in a rash, negligent manner, striking her with great force.

The impact threw Banita onto the road, leaving her critically injured. Local residents rushed her to a hospital, but she succumbed to her injuries around 3pm the same day.

Following the complaint, police registered a case and launched an investigation. During the probe, Abhisek was arrested and forwarded to court, with further investigation ongoing.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Junagarh, dated 06.01.2026, I Krupasindhu Bag, S/o - Nilamani Bag, R/o. At - Dumerbahal, PO - Meriabandhali, PS - Junagarh, Dist. - Kalahandi (Odisha) declare that Krupasindhu Domb, S/o - Nilamani Domb and Krupasindhu Bag, S/o - Nilamani Bag is the one and same person.

Governor visits Mangalajodi, lauds community-led eco-tourism model

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, accompanied by First Lady Jayashree Kambhampati, visited Mangalajodi Wetland in Khurda Thursday.

On arrival, he was received by senior district officials, including Collector Amrit Ruturaj.

Located on the banks of Chilika Lake, the eco-tourism destination is renowned for its breathtaking scenic beauty and rich biodiversity, particularly its vast wetlands that serve as a habitat for thousands of migratory birds arriving annually from far-flung regions of the world. During the visit, Kambhampati undertook a boat ride through the wetlands to watch migratory birds and gain firsthand insight into the community-managed eco-tourism activities. He also interacted with



local residents and members of community groups actively involved in conservation and eco-tourism initiatives, and observed the measures undertaken to protect the fragile wetland ecosystem.

The Governor appreciated the collective efforts of villagers in preserving biodiversity while simultaneously generating sustainable livelihoods through eco-tourism.

Sharing his experience, Kambhampati said, “The serene beauty of Mangalajodi and the sight of

migratory birds in their natural habitats are truly inspiring. It is heartening to see how local communities have become guardians of nature through eco-tourism.” “Mangalajodi stands as a shining example of how community participation can successfully protect nature while improving the socio-economic condition of local people,” he further added, emphasising the need to replicate similar community-driven conservation models across other ecologically significant and fragile ecosystems of the state.

BMC's non-veg waste disposal norms



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Thursday issued directions to fish, meat and poultry shops, vendors and slaughter units in the City to ensure scientific handling and disposal of non-vegetarian waste, citing serious concerns over public health, environmental sanitation and aviation safety.

According to the civic body, improper disposal of organic waste in several non-vegetarian markets and commercial establishments has led to foul odour, insanitary conditions and large-scale congregation of birds. Such conditions pose a significant risk of bird-hit incidents to aircraft operations at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) and endanger the safety and hygiene of sanitation workers.

The civic body stated that as

per Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, municipal bye-laws, and guidelines issued by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Airports Authority of India (AAI), accumulation of bird-attracting waste near airport zones is strictly prohibited. The issue has also been repeatedly discussed in meetings of the Airport Environment Management Committee (AEMC), which emphasised reducing bird attractants across the City to ensure aviation safety.

Under the new directives, all non-vegetarian waste must be stored only in biodegradable bags of a minimum thickness of 120 microns, using medium or large sizes. The use of thin plastic carry bags or non-biodegradable materials has been strictly banned. Every establishment must also provide large, leak-proof bins with tight-fitting lids

within shop premises. Open containers, uncovered bins or spilling of waste onto roads, drains or public spaces will not be tolerated.

It has further prohibited disposal of fish, meat and poultry waste in roads, drains, open areas, water bodies or vacant land. Waste must be handed over exclusively to authorised BMC ‘Safai Gadi’ or LCV vehicles for scientific disposal, and storage beyond scheduled collection time or exposure of waste in open condition is not permitted.

All concerned establishments have been asked to comply with the directions by February 1, 2026, failing which strict enforcement action will be taken. Penalties may include suspension or cancellation of trade licences, sealing of establishments and legal action under relevant municipal, food safety and aviation safety laws.

BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana has directed zonal commissioners, health officers, sanitary inspectors and enforcement teams to ensure strict monitoring and wide publicity of the order at the market level, with special focus on Unit I, Unit IV and other major non-vegetarian markets in the City.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Birla Global University (BGU), in association with the Google Developer Group (GDG), recently hosted the ‘Next Mind 12’ GenAI Hackathon on its campus, bringing together student innovators from universities and institutes across Odisha.

The 12-hour innovation marathon focused on building AI-powered solutions for EdTech and FinTech using advanced Google technologies, including Gemini and Google Cloud.

A total of 20 teams participated, showcasing scalable, real-world applications aimed at enhancing personalised learning, streamlining financial processes, and improving accessibility and efficiency. The event underscored the growing impact of generative AI in transforming education and financial services.

The hackathon was evaluated by an industry jury com-



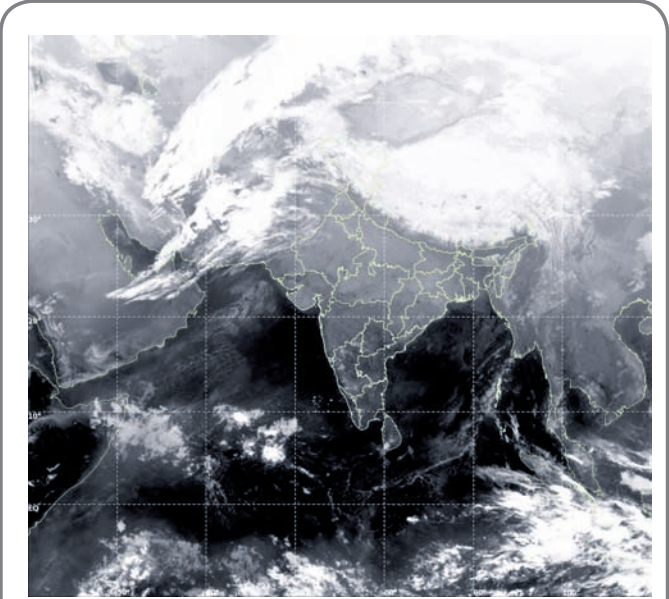
prising Arya Vedabrata, CEO, ByteIQ Analytics; Subham Acharya, Director, FxUAV; Akash Jaiswal, CEO, Wooble; and Smruti Ranjan Dhal, Senior Consultant, TCS.

Congratulating the participants, Kulbhushan Balooni, Vice-Chancellor, BGU, said, “Experiential learning is critical in preparing young innovators for an AI-driven future. Platforms like the ‘Next Mind 12’ GenAI Hackathon nurture future-ready technologists and entrepreneurs who can contribute meaningfully to India’s digital economy.”

Sanjay Kuanar, Dean, School of Engineering & Technology, BGU, added, “The hackathon bridges classroom learning with real-world application, fostering collaboration and innovation while enabling students to translate ideas into impactful solutions.”

The IIIT-Bhubaneswar team won the competition, receiving a trophy and ₹25,000. Teams from CV Raman Global University and Birla Global University secured the first and second runner-up positions, winning ₹15,000 and ₹10,000, respectively.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.30 ▲ 0.05	SENSEX	83382.71 ▼ 244.98	GOLD	₹142,882 ▼ ₹269
EURO	104.88 ▼ 0.21	NIFTY	25665.60 ▼ 66.70	SILVER	₹285,493 ▼ ₹2518



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	28.4°	25.6°	Fog or mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later
Min Temp	11.8°	10.4°	
Humidity	71%	79%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

No. C-2086: Executive Officer on behalf of Kendrapara Municipality, Dist. Kendrapara inviting Request for Proposal from companies/Individuals/any other agency having relevant certificates and past experience for the following work.

"SELECTION OF AGENCY FOR PROCESSING AND DISPOSAL OF BIO-REMEDIATION OF LEGACY WASTE FOR RECLAMATION OF LAND AT KENDRAPARA MUNICIPALITY SITE SITUATED AT HAJARI BAGICHA SITE IN SCIENTIFIC APPROACH."

The RFP should furnish the rate for the work as mentioned above. Preference shall be given to the companies and agencies who have already rendered similar type of services to various ULBs of Govt. of Odisha. The sealed envelope indicating offer rate or RFP including paper cost Rs. 6000/- (need to be purchased from office) & EMD: 100000/(DD) & offer rate of the RFP should reach to Municipality office by Reg. post or Speed Post or by hand on or before dated: 22/01/2026 upto 2 PM and same will be opened on the same day at 4 PM in the presence of the quotatoners or their authorized representatives.

The quotation received beyond the schedule date and time will not be considered.

Note: Bid Evaluation process:

Bid will be evaluated through Technical & Financial evaluation. A technical evaluation will be conducted in form presentation to verify the bidders capabilities for executing the project. The Financial bid will be opened for the technically qualified bidders.

Exemption in EMD for Micro & Small Enterprises registered with NSIC/MSME.

The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all of the EOI proposal without assigning any reason therefor.

OIPR-

Sd/- Executive Officer
Kendrapara Municipality

Magh Mela: Over 72L devotees take dip on Makar Sankranti



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, Jan 15: More than 72 lakh devotees took a holy dip in the Ganga and the Sangam at the ongoing Magh Mela here Thursday on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, officials said.

As the auspicious period for Makar Sankranti continues throughout the day, the number of pilgrims is expected to cross one crore by the evening, a Magh Mela administration official added.

Pilgrims were urged here to complete the ritual bath and move on without spending unnecessary time at the ghats and refrain from using oil and soap.

Speaking to PTI Videos, District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma said devotees began bathing early in the morning, and the process continued smoothly throughout the day at the Sangam as well as sector-wise ghats.

He said public announce-

ments and police personnel were regularly informing pilgrims to take the dip in an orderly manner and proceed towards their destinations so that incoming devotees do not face inconvenience.

“We have also appealed to devotees not to use oil and soap at the ghats so that incoming pilgrims do not face any difficulty or inconvenience,” Verma said.

He added that water police, along with NDRF and SDRF teams, remained deployed, and no contingency plan had to be invoked so far despite the heavy rush.

The Magh Mela administration official said bathing began from midnight and by 12 noon, over 72 lakh people had performed the ritual bath.

Local resident Gauri Ojha said she considered herself fortunate as she has been able to take a dip at the Sangam every year.

“As a resident of Prayagraj, I feel blessed that I can bathe at the Sangam during the Magh Mela. The significance of today’s bath is enhanced by the Sun’s transition into Uttarayan,” she said.

Ojha added that she had brought a special vessel of water from Varanasi and had also collected Sangam water, which she would later offer to Lord Shiva.

She noted that facilities for women had improved considerably.

“Changing rooms are now available at the ghats, which were not there a few years ago. Earlier, women and girls faced difficulties, but the arrangements are much better now,” she said, adding that pilgrims should also ensure proper disposal of used clothes and materials at the ghats.

Explaining the religious significance of the day, local priest Ravishankar Mishra said Makar Sankranti marks the beginning of the Sun’s northward journey, known as Uttarayan.

Divisional Commissioner Soumya Agrawal said the Magh Mela is spread over 800 hectares across seven sectors, with over 25,000 toilets set up and more than 3,500 sanitation workers deployed.

Superintendent of Police (Magh Mela) Neeraj Pandey said over 10,000 police personnel have been deployed across the fair area, while 42 temporary parking facilities with a capacity of over one lakh vehicles have been created to ensure smooth crowd and traffic management.

'Assam targets 3,500 MW solar power by 2030'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 15: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Thursday said the state has set a target of generating 3,500 MW solar power by 2030.

Inaugurating a 70 MW solar power plant at Khudigaon in Dhubri district’s Bilasipara area, Sarma said the state government would implement development projects on government land cleared of encroachments, which would help generate employment and boost the local economy.

“Today, our solar capacity has reached 680 MW and by April we will touch 750 MW, steadily advancing towards a sustainable, clean energy future,” Sarma said in a post on X after inaugurating the solar park.

“Assam’s solar energy target is 3,500 MW by 2030!” he added.

The new project has been



jointly developed by SJVN Green Energy Limited (SGEL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Navranta CPSE SJVN Ltd, and Assam Power Development Corporation Ltd (APDCL).

The chief minister’s office, in a post on social media, said the project has been built at a cost of over ₹350 crore and will generate 141 million units of electricity annually, while reducing near-

ly 1.15 lakh tonnes of carbon emissions.

Speaking to reporters after the inauguration, Sarma said the project will boost the state’s journey towards achieving self-sufficiency in power generation.

Stressing the state government’s focus on solar power, he said, “At one point of time, we had no solar power projects. Today, we are generating 680

MW of solar power. Another 50 MW project being implemented by SJVN at Borsolla in Sonitpur district will be completed by April, and we will reach 730 MW then.”

The chief minister further said the government will be implementing development projects on land cleared of encroachments. “Our aim is to clear government land of encroachments and implement projects in those lands. This will generate employment and uplift the local economy,” he said.

He added that eviction drives would be undertaken whenever projects are planned, as vacant cleared land could otherwise be encroached upon again.

“If we leave the evicted land without any activity, there is a chance that encroachment will happen again. So, we will clear government land as and when projects come,” Sarma said.

SGPGI develops SOP on ‘End-of-Life Care’

AGENCIES

Lucknow, Jan 15: The department of Critical Care Medicine at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) Lucknow has prepared a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on ‘End-of-Life Care’.

An awareness workshop will be organised January 16 to share this SOP with health experts across the state. The workshop will be held in a hybrid mode (online and offline).

According to SGPGI, some patients admitted to the ICU suffer from incurable diseases. In such cases, doctors face the question of whether continuing life-sustaining treatment is increasing the patient’s suffering,

or whether only palliative care should be considered. The issue of whether it is legally permissible to stop or withdraw life-sustaining treatment is also crucial.

Institute officials say that in 2011, the Supreme Court issued guidelines to legalise passive euthanasia. Later, in 2018, the right to a dignified death was recognised as a fundamental right, but at that time, the process of obtaining judicial approval to stop life-sustaining treatment was complex, making it practically difficult.

According to officials, in January 2023, the Supreme Court simplified the process by giving legal recognition to Advance Medical Directives and the withdrawal and

cessation of life-sustaining treatment. Following this, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare constituted a technical resource group to draft guidelines, which were published on the website for public opinion in mid 2024.

Under the new process, at the primary level, a medical board of doctors will certify the futility of treatment, and then the family’s consent will be obtained.

Subsequently, a secondary medical board, which will include a member nominated by the CMO’s office, will provide final confirmation. After the necessary documentation and informing the judicial magistrate, life-sustaining treatment can be stopped.

Actor Bishnu Kharghoria to receive GAFF lifetime achievement honour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 15: Veteran actor Bishnu Kharghoria, known for his performances in films such as ‘Xagoroloi Bohudoor’, ‘Firingoti’ and ‘Kollol’, will be conferred the ‘Lifetime Achievement Honour’ by the Guwahati Asian Film Festival (GAFF) 2026 in recognition of his contribution to Indian cinema, the organisers said.

“Kharghoria’s contribution to Indian cinema, especially to Assamese films, is profound and timeless. His performances reflect rare integrity, emotional depth and an unwavering commitment to the craft. We are honoured to celebrate a life dedicated to cinema,” festival director Monita Borgohain said Thursday.

Instituted as an annual honour, the award celebrates artists whose body of work has significantly shaped cinematic culture and inspired generations.

It will be presented during the second edition of GAFF 2026, which will be held here from January 22 to 25.

The festival is being organised by Trending Now Media, with support from the National Film Development Corporation and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

A towering presence in Indian and particularly Assamese cinema, Kharghoria is widely regarded as one of the most accomplished actors of his generation. He began his film career with ‘Bristi’ in 1974 and went on to build an illustrious career spanning several decades.

He delivered numerous memorable performances in landmark films such as ‘Kollol’ (1978), ‘Firingoti’ (1992), ‘Xagoroloi Bohudoor’ (1995) and ‘Pokhi’ (1998), among many others. His received the National Film Award (Special Mention) for ‘Xagoroloi Bohudoor’ and again for ‘Baandhon’ in 2012.

Kharghoria also won the Best Actor Award at the Singapore International Film Festival in 1996 for ‘Xagoroloi Bohudoor’.

Satellite sports centre in Guwahati soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 15: Assam will get a high-performance satellite sports centre in Guwahati soon, as the state government has partnered with a private entity for setting it up, marking a major step towards building a structured elite sports ecosystem in Assam and the North East region as a whole.

The centre will anchor high-performance initiatives across seven priority sports – athletics, archery, taekwondo, table tennis, lawn tennis, chess and swimming, with focused emphasis on athlete identification, coaching development and long-term performance pathways aligned with India’s Olympic ambitions, a release said Thursday.

The state government’s Directorate of Sports and Youth Welfare has partnered with the JSW Group-founded Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) to set up the centre.

The programmes are designed not only to identify promising athletes but also build a strong, self-sustaining coaching ecosystem within the state, the release added.

Speaking on the initiative, Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Nandita Gorlosa said, “Assam has no shortage of talent, particularly in rural and tribal regions. Through this partnership with the Inspire Institute of Sport, we are bringing global coaching expertise and high-performance systems into the state, while strengthening our own infrastructure and outreach.”

“This collaboration will create clear, structured pathways for athletes and coaches to progress to national and international competitions, and

position Assam as a high-performance sports hub in the North-East, contributing to India’s Olympic journey,” she added.

The athletics programme will begin with a structured Assam State Coaches Orientation and Development initiative, combining on-ground and hybrid learning formats to upskill district-level coaches under internationally recognised World Athletics frameworks, supported by senior IIS experts.

This will be followed by a focused talent identification programme aimed at identifying and developing young athletic talent across the state.

Taekwondo and Archery programmes at the Guwahati centre will further strengthen Assam’s high-performance ecosystem, with talent identification camps and advanced masterclasses bringing together athletes and coaches from across the North-East under global and Olympic-level expertise, the release said.

Manisha Malhotra, president of IIS, said, “At the Inspire Institute of Sport, our focus is on advancing excellence through structured, high-performance systems. In collaboration with DSYW Assam, we are bringing Olympic-level coaching expertise, cutting-edge sports science and proven development frameworks into the state.”

With programmes being implemented across Guwahati and other locations in Assam over the coming months, the satellite centre is expected to play a pivotal role in elevating the state’s sporting identity, strengthening regional talent pipelines and contributing meaningfully to India’s Olympic future.



A pair of buffaloes lock horns during a traditional bull fight as part of the ‘Magh Bihu’ festivities, in Nagaon, Assam, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

DECISIVE STEP TOWARDS GREEN TRANSPORTATION

UP takes strong leap in EV charging infra

AGENCIES

Lucknow, Jan 15: Amidst the development and expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the country, Uttar Pradesh (UP) is making its strong presence felt with establishment of 2,316 electric vehicle charging stations in the state in the last five years, thus consistently taking concrete steps towards clean energy and green transportation.

This achievement reflects the state’s growing urbanisation and industrial development, and is also clear evidence of the Yogi government’s far-sighted policies.

Sandeep Yadav, CEO of Yahi Group, says here today that Uttar Pradesh is rapidly moving forward in establishing electric vehicle charging stations. Yahi Group has established EV charging stations (for trucks)

in Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh.

UP has made a significant contribution to the total of 29,151 electric vehicle charging stations established across the country. The 2,316 charging stations established in the state include 540 fast chargers and 1,776 slow chargers. This clearly shows that the state government has developed a balanced charging network, keeping in mind the needs of both urban and semi-urban areas. The scope of EV charging facilities is continuously being expanded in major cities like Lucknow, Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Kanpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, and Agra.

Establishing Uttar Pradesh as a leading state in the field of electric mobility is among the government’s priorities. With this objective, an investment-friendly environment



has been created in the state. Private companies and investors are continuously being encouraged to set up electric vehicle charging stations.

The Yogi government’s focus is on development along with

environmental protection. The expansion of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure will reduce carbon emissions and strengthen pollution control. In a large and densely populated state like Uttar Pradesh,

this initiative is proving crucial in improving air quality. Furthermore, reduced dependence on petrol and diesel will provide long-term economic benefits.

Under the central government’s FAME-1 and FAME-2 schemes, 9,576 EV charging stations have been established across the country, and Uttar Pradesh has also benefited from this. In addition, a provision of ₹2,000 crore has been made for the expansion of EV charging infrastructure under the PM e-Drive scheme.

According to experts, the number of electric vehicles in Uttar Pradesh will increase rapidly in the coming years. Keeping this in mind, the Yogi government is working on a strategy to develop charging stations along expressways, in industrial areas, bus terminals, railway stations, and tourist destinations.



of the day

quote

The casino-related matters in the coastal state are presently being regulated under provisions of the Goa Public Gambling Act, 1976, as the rules under the Act are in the final stage of vetting by the law department

PRAMOD SAWANT | CHIEF MINISTER, GOA

The Indian Army stands as the steadfast shield of our nation, protecting our borders across the most formidable terrains, strengthening stability during internal security challenges, and extending unflinching support during natural calamities

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS CHIEF

While emerging technology has increased efficiency, its misuse has also presented serious challenges such as misinformation, cybercrimes and social disharmony caused by it

OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

POST

OF THE DAY

Until now, the minimum qualifying criterion for PG medical seats for SC, ST, and OBC candidates was the 40th percentile, about 235 marks out of 800. As per an order of the Ministry of Health, this has been reduced to the 0th percentile, meaning even a score of -40 out of 800 is now eligible, subject to seat availability. The one profession that directly deals with life and death, where competence should be sacred and non-negotiable, has been dragged down to this level. Perhaps this is the only country in the world where such a dangerous dilution of standards is not just tolerated, but actively encouraged.

@theskindoctor13

SHORT TAKES

3 children among 6 killed in fire in house

Nahan (HP): Six people of a family, including three children, were charred to death and another sustained burn injuries in a fire that broke out in a village in Nauradhar area of Himachal Pradesh's Sirmaur district, officials said Thursday. Preliminary probe suggests that the fire broke out in the 'chula' -- traditional Indian stove -- of a house in Talangna village around 3 am, sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Sangrah told the PTI over the phone. However, eyewitnesses said they heard a blast after fire erupted in the kitchen. The fire quickly spread to adjoining houses, damaging three other houses. All six deaths were reported from the house of one Indira Devi. Two of her daughters, their husbands and children were in the house for "Boda Tyohar" when fire erupted.

Drones sighted along Indo-Pak border

Poonch/Jammu: Pakistani drones were spotted hovering along the Indo-Pak border in the twin districts of Poonch and Samba in Jammu and Kashmir, prompting security forces to activate their anti-unmanned aerial system to respond effectively Thursday night. The drones were seen hovering along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch and the Ramgarh sector of Samba district, according to sources. A drone was seen near posts along the LoC in Poonch, leading the forces to implement their anti-UAS measures. Similarly, another drone was sighted along the International Border in the Ramgarh sector, sources added.



We are trying to make films in Jammu and Kashmir again. We are trying to restore the film industry in J&K

OMAR ABDULLAH | CHIEF MINISTER, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

COLD WAVE GRIPS DELHI

Cold wave conditions tightened their grip on the national capital for the fifth consecutive day Thursday as temperatures fell sharply across the city, with the chill expected to persist at least into Friday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The minimum temperature there plunged to 2.9 degrees Celsius, a steep five degrees below normal



Corruption and irregularities under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), implemented nearly two decades ago, has provided a statutory guarantee of livelihood security to rural households. However, over time, implementation experience has revealed a series of persistent and deep-rooted structural weaknesses that have affected the efficiency, transparency, and credibility of the programme.

In order to obtain a realistic assessment of ground-level conditions and strengthen implementation systems, special monitoring visits were undertaken across 55 districts in 25 States and Union Territories during FY 2025-26. More than one thousand worksites were inspected. These visits brought to light serious irregularities, including works that did not exist on the ground despite reported expenditure, execution of non-permissible works, financial irregularities, diversion of funds, and splitting of works into smaller components to obtain approvals from lower levels. In several instances, execution was found to be carried out through contractors or third parties, contrary to the

clear prohibition on contractor involvement under the Act. Procurement processes were often weak, with single-vendor and single-tender situations increasingly prevalent, undermining transparency and competition. Work files frequently lacked documentation on royalty payments and GST compliance, pointing to weak financial controls and potential leakage.

These lapses were compounded by governance and oversight deficiencies. Cases of fake and inactive job cards, inflated muster rolls, incomplete and poor-quality works, and assets misaligned with local needs were repeatedly observed. The cumulative impact of these weaknesses has been misappropriation of public resources on the one hand, and dilution of the programme's asset-creation objective on the other. Repeated advisories, capacity-building initiatives and corrective instructions issued by the Ministry have helped address some issues, but the persistence of irregularities demonstrates that the problem is systemic rather than episodic.

Social audits, which serve as an instrument for commu-

nity-based oversight, have also highlighted widespread irregularities. A total of 11,04,627 cases involving financial misappropriation were reported, with recoverable amounts estimated at ₹302.45 crore. However, only ₹293.47 crore has actually been recovered. This detection and recoverable amounts clearly demonstrates weaknesses in enforcement, reluctance to fix responsibility, and inadequate follow-up. Similarly, although ombudspersons recommended recoveries amounting to ₹17.14 crore, barely ₹71.61 lakh has been realised. Monitoring visits during FY 2025-26 recommended further recoveries of nearly ₹32 crore, yet Action Taken Reports show extremely low actual recoveries, highlighting the fragile state of accountability systems.

Internal audit findings further reinforce these concerns. As on 1 December 2025, there were 1,512 outstanding audit paragraphs arising from the Internal Audit Wing of the CCA Division. Of these, 145 paras specifically relate to financial misconduct, including misappropriation of funds, dubious and unsupported payments, irregular sanctioning

and execution of works, diversion of funds to non-permissible purposes, and falsification of accounts through non-reconciliation and incorrect booking of expenditure. The total estimated financial implication of these paras is approximately ₹278.32 crore, reflecting serious inadequacies in financial discipline and accountability mechanisms.

In certain states, irregularities have been particularly serious. Inspections in West Bengal revealed non-existent works, non-permissible activities, financial manipulation, and artificial splitting of works to bypass scrutiny. The absence of effective corrective action by the State Government resulted in temporary suspension of fund releases by the Central Government, underlining deficiencies in the monitoring architecture and lack of administrative accountability at the state level.

Beyond corruption-specific findings, broader structural weaknesses have also become evident. In several economically stronger states with comparatively lower rural poverty, utilisation of MGNREGA

funds is disproportionately high, while poorer states with higher rural poverty ratios fail to utilise available allocations, creating inequities in access and outcomes. Over time, the programme has also shifted from its intended demand-driven character to a target-driven approach in many states, where works are selected to meet targets rather than reflect Gram Sabha priorities. This has weakened community participation and diluted the "right to demand work" principle.

Another emerging pattern relates to the high participation of elderly workers, including those above 60 and in some cases above 80 years, which adversely affects productivity and asset quality. Because wages are fully funded by the Central Government, states often prioritise labour-intensive works while under-investing in materials, resulting in technically weak and short-lived assets. With nearly 90 percent of expenditure borne by the Centre, limited financial participation of states has also weakened ownership, seriousness toward monitoring, and discipline in wage and material payments.

Taken together, these trends clearly indicate that despite the programme's social relevance, weaknesses in transparency, monitoring, financial management, governance, and accountability have become systemic. Therefore, in order to address these structural challenges while strengthening livelihood security, improving governance, and enhancing asset quality, it became necessary to revamp the framework of rural employment. At the same time, it was essential to align rural development efforts with the broader vision of Viksit Bharat, ensuring that employment opportunities increase, livelihood security becomes stronger, and durable, planned, and convergent assets are created at saturation levels.

In this context, the Viksit Bharat — Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025 has been enacted, with the objective of addressing systemic deficiencies, restoring accountability, and ensuring that public expenditure genuinely contributes to sustainable livelihoods and quality rural infrastructure.

P18

AI flight engine sucks in baggage container

The incident occurred when Flight AI101, which returned to the national capital shortly after take-off after Iran unexpectedly closed its airspace, was taxiing to its parking bay in dense fog



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Air India's newest Airbus A350, operating a Delhi-New York flight with over 250 passengers on board, sustained engine damage after ingesting an improperly secured baggage container while taxiing to its parking bay at Delhi airport, sources said.

The incident occurred when Flight AI101, which returned to the national capital shortly after take-off after Iran unexpectedly closed its airspace, was taxiing to its parking bay in dense fog.

No one was injured in the incident. Engine ingestion refers to an incident in which a jet engine draws in a foreign object - such as baggage containers, tools, debris or birds - instead of clean air.

Unverified videos and pictures showed damage to the aircraft's right-side engine.

The aircraft has been grounded for repairs, adding to Air India's widebody aircraft shortage, with one of its six A350s currently out of service.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has launched a probe into the incident to ascertain how a foreign object got lodged inside the engine.

"Air India confirms that Flight AI101, operating from Delhi to New York (JFK), was forced to return to Delhi shortly after takeoff due to the unexpected closure of Iranian airspace, which impacted its planned route. Upon landing in Delhi, the aircraft encountered a foreign object while taxiing in dense fog, resulting in damage to the right engine," the airline said in a statement.

It, however, did not identify the "foreign object". Sources said the foreign object was an improperly secured baggage container.

"The aircraft was safely positioned at the designated parking stand, ensuring the safety of all passengers and

crew on board," the airline said in a statement.

A civil aviation ministry spokesperson said the aircraft landed safely at Runway 28 and while taxiing to the apron area, at taxiway N/N4 junction, the right engine ingested a cargo container, causing substantial damage to the engine.

"The incident occurred around 05:25 IST. As per the information, the visibility at the time of the incident was marginal. The preliminary investigation has revealed that a BWFS tug transporting a few containers to the Baggage Makeup Area of Terminal 3 crossed this intersection while on the vehicular lane. During crossing, one of the containers toppled onto the taxiway intersection. This container got ingested in the No. 2 engine of Air India A350 aircraft," the spokesperson said.

After clearing metal pieces, the spokesperson said, the aircraft was parked on stand 244.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is probing the incident.

Providing more details based on the preliminary probe, a DGCA official said the area near bay 242 was designated for Air Mauritius GSE parking. When the BWFS (Bird Worldwide Flight Services) tug was transporting a few containers to this area, one of the wheels of the container dolly came off, and a container toppled onto the taxiway. The equipment operator noticed Air India aircraft taxiing in, and the equipment operator vacated the spot with the remaining dollies and containers. However, the container which fell was left behind, and it got ingested in the aircraft engine, the official said.

Air India said the aircraft has been grounded for a thorough investigation, and there could be potential disruptions on select routes operated with the A350 aircraft.

ED RAIDS ROW

SC terms allegation of obstruction in central probe in WB 'serious'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The Supreme Court Thursday termed the ED's allegation of obstruction by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in its probe and search operation at the office of political consultancy firm I-PAC as "serious" and agreed to examine if law enforcement agencies of a state can interfere with a central agency's investigation into any serious offence.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Vipul Pantcholi issued notices to Banerjee, the West Bengal government, DGP Rajeev Kumar and top cops on the ED's petitions seeking a CBI probe against them for allegedly obstructing raids at I-PAC premises. The matter was posted for further hearing February 3.

While the BJP in its reaction said Banerjee has received a "solid jolt" from the apex court, the TMC maintained that the ED action was "politically motivated" and timed with the approaching assem-



bly polls in West Bengal.

The ED has alleged interference and obstruction by the West Bengal government, including by the TMC supremo, in its probe and search operation at the office of Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) and the premises of its director Pratik Jain, in connection with an alleged coal-pilferage scam. The top court also directed the state police to protect the CCTV footage of the raids.

"We are of the prima facie opinion that the present petition has raised a serious issue relating to the investigation by the ED or other central agencies and its interference by State agencies. According



to us, for furtherance of rule of law in the country, and to allow each organ to function independently, it is necessary to examine the issue so that the offenders are not allowed to be protected under the shield of the law enforcement agencies of a particular state.

"Larger questions are involved in the present manner, which if allowed to remain undecided, would further worsen the situation and there will be a situation of lawlessness prevailing in one or the other state, considering that different outfits are governing different places," the bench said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, told

52 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bijapur (Chhattisgarh), Jan 15: As many as 52 Naxalites, 49 of them carrying a collective bounty of over Rs 1.41 crore, surrendered before the police in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Thursday, a senior official said.

The surrendered cadres, including 21 women, were active in Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DSZC), Andhra-Odisha Border Division and Bhamragarh area committee (Maharashtra) of Maoists, they said.

They turned themselves in before senior police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officials here under the "Poonam" Margem (from rehabilitation to social reintegration) initiative, Bijapur Superintendent of

Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav said. According to the official, the cadres also said that they were impressed by the state government's surrender and rehabilitation policy.

Of them, Lakshu Karam, alias Anil (32), a divisional committee member, and platoon party committee members Laxmi Madvi (28) and Chinni Sodhi, alias Shanti (28), carried a reward of Rs 8 lakh each, he said. Thirteen other cadres carried a bounty of Rs 5 lakh each, 19 cadres Rs 2 lakh each and 14 cadres Rs 1 lakh each, he said, adding that 49 of the 52 surrendered Naxalites carried a collective reward of Rs 1.41 crore.

All the surrendered Naxalites will be provided an immediate assistance of Rs

50,000 each and rehabilitated as per the government's policy, he added.

Two members of the banned CPI (Maoist) from Chhattisgarh, surrendered before police in Mulugu district of Telangana Thursday, police said.

The Maoists surrendered before Eturunagaram ASP Manan Bhat, an official release said.

After learning about the rehabilitation measures being offered to the surrendered Maoists by the Telangana state government and the police department, the two members of the outlawed outfit, decided to leave the path of naxalism and join the mainstream, it said.

29 naxalites surrendered in the neighbouring Sukma district Wednesday. Earlier, 63 Naxalites surrendered in the neighbouring Dantewada district January 8, while 26 cadres shunned violence and joined the mainstream in Sukma January 7. More than 1,500 Naxalites surrendered in the state in 2025. The Centre has resolved to eliminate Naxalism from the country by March 31 this year.

The Centre has resolved to eliminate Naxalism from the country by March 31 this year.

Patanjali University hosts seminar on smart healthcare



AGENCIES

Haridwar, Jan 15: A three-day international seminar on "Integration of Smart Technologies in Healthcare Services and Management" was organized from January 15 to 17 at the auditorium, under the aegis of Patanjali University (UoP) and the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IITR), in collaboration with the American Institute of Management and Technology (AIMT). The seminar was jointly initiated by the Global Knowledge Foundation (GKF), the Dehradun office of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), and the Department of Business, Management and Accounting, University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), USA, with the support of Patanjali Research Foundation and Patanjali University.

The seminar aimed to promote technology-driven, sustainable healthcare management through the integration of smart technologies and to encourage improvements in public health at a global level. Revered Acharya Balkrishna welcomed the guests by presenting bouquets, ceremonial shawls and mementos.

of the day

quote

I'm determined to make it harder for people to work illegally in this country, and that's why there will be checks, they will be digital, and they will be mandatory



KEIR STARMER | PM, UK

We're heartened by the leadership of President Xi Jinping and the speed with which our relationship has progressed



MARK CARNEY | PM, CANADA

Just as in land-based agriculture, we are continuing the important partnership with India in water agriculture as well. Israel and India see eye to eye on a true vision for sustainable food security



AVI DICHTER | ISRAELI MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

SHORT TAKES

Ex-lawmaker convicted in child abuse scandal

Columbia: A former Republican lawmaker in South Carolina was sentenced Wednesday to 17 1/2 years in prison for sending hundreds of videos of children being sexually abused to people across the country on social media around the same time he was advocating for laws meant to protect kids. "He claimed to be their advocate by sponsoring bills in the legislature, but he was their abuser with videos that will live on forever," the judge said. RJ May had sought a shorter sentence, saying he was addicted to pornography and screens. He apologized briefly to the victims in a 15-minute statement to the court. He said he began watching adult pornography when testosterone treatments increased his sex drive, and then sought out more extreme videos when he was lonely at night. "I was talking about moral decency by day and succumbed to moral indecency by night," May said.

Singapore PM sacks Indian-origin LoP

Singapore: Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong has removed Indian-origin Workers' Party chief Pritam Singh as Leader of the Opposition (LoP), and asked the opposition party to nominate another Member of Parliament (MP) to fill the position. In a statement Thursday, Wong said: "Having considered the matter carefully, I have decided that Singh's criminal convictions, taken together with Parliament's considered view of his unsuitability, make it no longer tenable for him to continue as the LoP." His decision will take into place with immediate effect, reported The Straits Times. Wong added his decision is necessary to uphold the rule of law, as well as the dignity and integrity of Parliament. This means that Singh will no longer be given the privileges of the position which include the right of first reply during parliamentary debates, more time for his speeches and twice the allowance of an elected MP.

US overdose deaths see decline in 2025

New York: US overdose deaths fell through most of last year, suggesting a lasting improvement in an epidemic that had been worsening for decades. Federal data released Wednesday showed that overdose deaths have been falling for more than two years - the longest drop in decades - but also that the decline was slowing. Deaths peaked nearly 110,000 in 2022, fell a little in 2023 and then plummeted 27 per cent in 2024, to around 80,000.



China opposes imposing its will on other countries, and opposes a return to the law of the jungle

WANG YI | FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

5MN TEEN ACCOUNTS AXED

Social media companies have collectively deactivated nearly five million accounts belonging to Australian teenagers just a month after a world-first ban on under-16s took effect, the country's internet regulator said, a sign the measure has had a swift and sweeping impact. The eSafety Commissioner said platforms had so far removed about 4.7 million accounts held by under-16s to comply with a law that went live December 10



WEEKLONG CRACKDOWN, INTERNET OUTAGE

Iran protests lose steam

US president Trump adopts wait-and-see posture after threatening intervention earlier

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Jan 15: The nationwide protests challenging Iran's theocracy appeared increasingly smothered Thursday, a week on from authorities shutting the country off from the world and escalating a bloody crackdown that activists say killed at least 2,615 people.

In Iran's capital, Tehran, witnesses say recent mornings saw no new signs of bonfires lit the night before or debris in the streets. The sound of gunfire, which had been intense for several nights, has faded.

Meanwhile, Iranian state media announces wave after wave of arrests by authorities, targeting those it calls "terrorists" and also apparently looking for Starlink satellite internet dishes, the only way to get videos and images out to the internet.

"Since January 8, we saw a full-fledged war and anybody who was in the gathering since then is a criminal," said Justice Minister Amin Hossein Rahimi, according to a report Wednesday from the judiciary's Mizan news agency.

But as Iran tries to assert control at home, it faces challenges abroad. The Islamic Republic shut down its airspace for hours early Thursday morning without explanation, something it has done in previous rounds of attacks between it and Israel, as well as during the 12-day war in June.

The US also took steps to



move some personnel from Qatar's Al Udeid Air Base while also warning diplomats in Kuwait to stay away from military bases with American troops stationed there.

TRUMP DIALS DOWN TENSIONS

US President Donald Trump made a series of vague statements Wednesday that left unclear what American action, if any, would take place against Iran.

In comments to reporters, Trump said he had been told that plans for executions in Iran have stopped, without providing many details. The shift comes a day after Trump told protesters in Iran that "help is on the way" and that his administration would "act accordingly" to respond to the Islamic Republic's deadly crackdown.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also sought to tone down the rhetoric, urging the US to find a solution through negotiation.

Asked by Fox News what he would say to Trump, Araghchi said: "My message is: Between war and diplomacy, diplomacy is a better way, although we don't have any positive experience from the United States.

The security forces' crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,615

But still diplomacy is much better than war."

The change in tone by the US and Iran came hours after the chief of the Iranian judiciary said the government must act quickly to punish the thousands who have been detained.

Activists warned that hanging of detainees could come soon. The security forces' crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,615, the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency reported, warning it likely would rise even higher. The death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

AIRSPACE SHUT

The closure ran for over four hours, according to pilot guidance issued by Iran, which lies on a key East-West flight route. International carriers diverted

north and south around Iran, but after one extension, the closure appeared to have expired and several domestic flights were in the air just after 7 am.

Around midday, Iranian state television carried a statement from the country's Civil Aviation Authority saying that the nation's "skies are hosting incoming and outgoing flights, and airports are providing services to passengers." It did not acknowledge the closure.

Iran previously shut its airspace during the 12-day war against Israel in June and when it exchanged fire with Israel during the Israel-Hamas war. However, there were no signs of current hostilities though the closure immediately rippled through global aviation.

"Several airlines have already reduced or suspended services, and most carriers are avoiding Iranian airspace," said the website SafeAirspace, which provides information on conflict areas and air travel. "The situation may signal further security or military activity, including the risk of missile launches or heightened air defence, increasing the risk of misidentification of civil traffic."

Iran in the past has misidentified a commercial aircraft as a hostile target. In 2020, Iranian air defence shot down Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 with two surface-to-air missiles, killing all 176 people on board.

Iran for days adamantly dismissed allegations of downing the plane as Western propaganda before finally acknowledging it.

Videos of demonstrations broadly have stopped coming out of Iran, likely signalling the slowdown of their pace under the heavy security force presence in major cities.

Russia throws out British diplomat over spy claims

REUTERS

Moscow, Jan 15: Russia Thursday expelled a British diplomat it said was an undeclared spy, but London said such "malicious and baseless" accusations undermined the basic conditions needed for embassies to operate and said it was considering a response.

The FSB, the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB, named the British diplomat as Gareth Samuel Davies, a second secretary at the Moscow embassy, and said he was working undercover for Britain's intelligence service.

Russian media carried pictures of the diplomat. Russia said he has been given two weeks to leave Russia.

Russia's foreign ministry summoned Britain's charge d'affaires in Russia, Danae Dholakia, to issue a formal protest about the situation.

RUSSIAN WARNING

"It was again stressed that Moscow would not tolerate the activities of undeclared British intelligence officers in Russia," the foreign ministry said in a statement. "A warning was also issued that if London escalates the situation, the Russian side will give a decisive 'mirror' response," it said.

Protesters at the foreign ministry chanted anti-British slogans in front of the British diplomatic car carrying the charge d'affaires.

Britain's Foreign Office said it was not the first time such "malicious and baseless accusations" had been made against British diplomats in Russia.

"Their targeting of British diplomats comes out of desperation and actions like this undermine the basic conditions required for diplomatic missions to operate," it said. "We are carefully considering our op-



- Kremlin warns Britain not to escalate
- Claims are 'malicious, baseless': Britain

tions in response."

Amid the war in Ukraine, Russia and the West have repeatedly accused each other of unfurling espionage campaigns of an intensity not seen since the depths of the Cold War.

RUSSIA'S ENEMY NUMBER ONE IS BRITAIN

As the US under Donald Trump seeks to reset ties with Moscow and broker peace between Russia and Ukraine, Britain has been granted the status of Russia's public enemy number one.

On Russian state television, "Perfidious Albion" is cast as a scheming global intelligence power that is meddling behind the scenes from Washington to Iran in a duplicitous bid to undermine Russian interests across the world.

Russia has imposed Soviet-style restrictions on British diplomats requiring them to give notice of any plans to travel beyond a 120-km (75-mile) radius.

Diplomatic postings to Moscow are now considered among the most difficult in the world by Western countries. The US State Department ranks Moscow alongside Freetown, Mogadishu, Damascus and Kabul in hardship terms.

Western diplomats in Moscow say intrusive surveillance and harassment are frequent. Russia has long complained that its own diplomats are routinely harassed in major Western capitals.

Anti-ICE protests: Trump threatens to use military



Rob Potylo, aka Robby Roadsteamer, wearing a giraffe costume he calls the "Jeffrey Epstein Giraffe", is arrested by police from the homeland security rapid protection force, during a protest outside of the Bishop Whipple Federal Building

PTI PHOO

Minnesota: US President Donald Trump threatened Thursday to invoke the Insurrection Act to deploy military forces in Minnesota after days of angry protests over a surge in immigration agents on the streets of Minneapolis. Trump, a Republican, has been deriding the state's Democratic leaders and has called the Somali community in the area "garbage." "If the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don't obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job, I will institute the INSURRECTION ACT," Trump wrote on social media. He has already sent nearly 3,000 federal officers into the Minneapolis area, who have carried guns through the city's icy streets, wearing military-style camouflage gear and masks that hide their faces. Anger has deepened after an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent fatally shot Renee Good, a US citizen, in a car eight days ago and protests have spread to other cities.

Indian-origin woman arrested, charged with murder of 2 sons



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Jan 15: US authorities have arrested and charged a 35-year old Indian-origin woman in New Jersey with murdering her two young children.

Investigation has revealed that Priyatharsini Natarajan of Hillsborough, New Jersey, caused the death of her two children Tuesday.

Somerset County Prosecutor John McDonald said in a statement Wednesday that January 13 at approximately 6:45 pm, an individual, believed to be the children's father, made a 911 call to law enforcement.

The caller said that after arriving home from work, he found his two boys, aged 5 and

7, unconscious and that "his wife did something to them." After arriving at the scene, police officers found the male caller along with the wife, identified as Natarajan.

Officers located the two deceased children within a bedroom inside the residence. Responding officers along with medical personnel initiated life saving measures which yielded negative results.

The two children were pronounced deceased at the scene. Authorities have not released the identities of the two children pending positive identification by the Medical Examiner's Office. Natarajan was arrested and charged with two counts of first-degree murder, and one count of third-degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose.

A postmortem examination is scheduled to be performed by the Northern Regional Medical Examiner's Office to positively identify the victims and determine the cause and manner of death, the statement said.

European military heads to Greenland as Trump's ambitions undeterred

Prominent EU countries have backed Denmark with many leaders warning a US military seizure of the island could in effect spell the end of NATO

REUTERS

Nuuk, Jan 15: Military personnel from France and Germany headed to Greenland Thursday as Denmark and its allies prepared for exercises to try to assure US President Donald Trump over its security as he pushes to acquire the island.

A meeting of officials from the United States, Denmark and Greenland Wednesday avoided

the public humiliation meted out to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy last year, but also produced no quick fix for the dispute.

Trump has said the strategically located and mineral-rich island is vital to US security and the United States must own it to prevent Russia or China occupying it. He has said all options are on the table for securing the territory, which is an autonomous territory of Denmark. He says Denmark is not capable of warding off Russian and Chinese influence in the Arctic region.

BEEFING UP ARCTIC DEFENCE

Greenland and Denmark say the island is not for sale, that threats of force are reckless and security concerns should be resolved among allies.

Ahead of the meeting,



Greenland and Denmark said they had begun to increase their military presence in and around Greenland in close cooperation with NATO allies, as part of their promise to beef up Arctic defence.

European allies including Germany, France, Sweden and Norway have said they are sending military staff to Green-

land to begin preparations for larger drills later this year.

"The Danish Armed Forces, together with a number of Arctic and European allies, will explore in the coming weeks how an increased presence and exercise activity in the Arctic can be implemented in practice," the Danish Ministry of Defence said.

Trump says the island is vital to US security

German and French military personnel arriving

Exercises to show increased presence in the Arctic

So far the scale of the planned military build up has not been made public, but the initial deployments appeared to be small. The German Armed Forces were deploying a reconnaissance team of 13 personnel to Nuuk on Thursday morning aboard an Airbus A400M transport aircraft, the German Defence Ministry said.

Nonetheless, the European military increase to Greenland was a message to the US administration, Marc Jacobsen, an associate professor at the Royal Danish Defence College, told

Reuters.

TALKS AGREE TO WORKING GROUP

After the talks at the White House with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President JD Vance, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt said the US and Denmark would form a working group to discuss a broad array of concerns regarding the island.

But they also acknowledged that Washington had not budged on its position that it must acquire Greenland, an outcome they said would represent an unacceptable breach of sovereignty.

Late Wednesday, a Danish Air Force plane landed at Nuuk airport and personnel in military fatigues disembarked for the exercises, footage showed.

of the day

quote

The government is working to make roads safer for two-wheelers. It has made the anti-lock braking system (ABS) mandatory for all two-wheelers, including less than 125 cc, manufactured after January 1, 2026

NITIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

GST on EVs and chargers remains at 5 per cent, but critical components such as power electronic components, magnetic cores, etc. are still taxed at 18 per cent, creating a clear cost imbalance for domestic manufacturers

NAVNEET DAGA | CO-FOUNDER & CEO, ZENERGIZE

AI startups are no longer experimenting at the edges, they are turning their capability into products that people use, trust and pay for. This is the point at which models turn into businesses

PREETI LOBANA | COUNTRY MANAGER FOR INDIA, GOOGLE

RESULTS CORNER

Sony India FY25 revenue up 2.4%

New Delhi: Consumer electronics maker Sony India's revenue from operations increased 2.44 per cent to ₹7,851.08 crore in FY25; however, its total profit for the financial year decreased by nearly 6 per cent to ₹157.03 crore, according to a regulatory filing from the company. Its total income, which includes other income, rose 2.45 per cent to ₹7,917.54 crore for the financial year ended on March 31, 2025, according to financial data accessed through the business intelligence platform Tofler. Sony India, a wholly owned subsidiary of Japan's tech major Sony Corporation, had a net profit of ₹166.99 crore, and its revenue from operations stood at 7,663.74 crore in the year-ago period. India is currently the fourth largest market for Sony after the US, China, and Japan.

Nuvoco Vistas Q3 profit at ₹49.37cr

New Delhi: Nuvoco Vistas Corp, the building materials division of the Nirma Group, Thursday reported a consolidated profit of ₹49.37 crore in the quarter ended December 31, 2025. The company had a net loss of ₹61.37 crore in the corresponding period last year, Nuvoco Vistas Corp said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations was up 12.11 per cent to ₹2,701.27 crore in the quarter under review. It was at ₹2,409.36 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. Total expenses of Nuvoco Vistas were at ₹2,639.49 crore, up 5.82 per cent in the December quarter of FY'26. Its total income, including other income, stood at ₹2,704.03 crore, up 12.22 per cent in Q3/ FY'26.

Jio Financial Services net profit drops 9%

New Delhi: Jio Financial Services Ltd Thursday reported a 9 per cent drop in consolidated profit at ₹269 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2025. The company had earned a consolidated net profit of ₹295 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal, Jio Financial Services said in a regulatory filing. However, the company's consolidated net profit stood at ₹695 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal. Total income nearly doubled to ₹901 crore, from ₹449 crore in the third quarter of the previous fiscal. Total expenses also witnessed a significant year-on-year increase, rising to ₹566 crore from ₹131 crore in the same quarter a year ago.



India's labour market is undergoing a critical transformation. We are seeing a clear shift where employers are prioritising skills, reliability and job readiness over formal degrees

NILESH DUNGARWAL | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, WORKINDIA

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE RISES marginally

Unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above rose marginally to 4.8 per cent in December 2025 compared to 4.7 per cent in the preceding month. The unemployment rate (UR) or joblessness, among persons of age 15 years and above, remained largely stable in December 2025, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation



Trade deficit edges up

US president's decision to double tariffs to 50% on certain Indian goods from late August has hit shipments of products such as textiles, chemicals and some food items, though overall exports have since stabilised

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The country's exports grew 1.87 per cent to \$38.5 billion in December last year due to global economic uncertainties, while an increase in imports led to a marginal widening of the trade deficit to \$25 billion.

The country's exports in November 2025 was up by about 20 per cent.

Imports rose by 8.7 per cent to \$63.55 billion during the month under review, according to government data released Thursday.

Trade deficit, difference between imports and exports, stood at \$25.04 billion in December 2025 as against \$24.53 billion in November last year and \$22 billion in December 2024.

The major sectors which witnessed deceleration in exports include petroleum products, gems and jewellery, rice, plastics, and leather products.

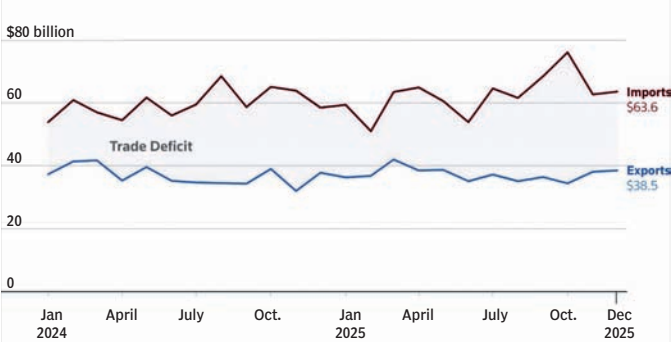
The global trade has been disrupted due to tariffs imposed by the US. On India, the Trump administration has levied a steep 50 per cent tariffs from August. This is impacting the country's outbound shipments from the labour-intensive sectors such as apparel.

However cumulatively, during April-December this fiscal, the country's merchandise exports rose 2.44 per cent to \$330.29 billion.

Imports grew by 5.9 per cent to \$578.61 billion, leaving a

GLOBAL HEADWINDS

India trade deficit at \$25 billion in December



Note: Trade numbers till Dec 2025
Source: LSEG Workspace, Reserve Bank of India, Reuters

trade deficit of \$248.32 billion during the nine-month period of 2025-26.

Briefing the media on the latest data, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said that despite global uncertainties, India's exports are recording growth.

Going by the trend, "we expect that the total exports (goods and services) are likely to cross \$850 billion (\$450 billion goods and \$400 billion services) this fiscal".

"I think, services will be touching \$400 billion first time this year," he added.

The main sectors that led to an increase in shipments included engineering, electronics, marine, and pharmaceuticals.

He added that measures such as finalisation of free trade agreements, export promotion

mission and diversification into new markets are helping the exporting community deal with the high US duties.

The exports are recording healthy growth in regions including China, Russia, the Middle East.

On imports front, oil imports rose by about 6 per cent to \$14.4 billion in December 2025. Silver imports too increased by about 80 per cent to \$758 million.

However, gold imports dipped by 12 per cent to \$4.13 billion.

As per the commerce ministry data, services export are estimated to have declined to \$35.50 billion in December as compared to \$36.97 billion in December 2024. Imports too dipped marginally to \$17.38 billion as against \$17.80 billion in December 2024.

Indriya launches bridal campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Indriya, Aditya Birla Jewellery, has unveiled its new bridal campaign, positioning the brand as a trusted partner in every bride's journey to becoming the bride she has always envisioned.

The campaign draws from the insight that a bride's dream is shaped over years by culture, family and personal aspirations, long before the wedding day arrives. It showcases Indriya's expansive bridal jewellery collection, featuring over 28,000 handcrafted designs in gold, polki and diamond. From statement necklaces and maang tikkas to bangles, earrings and matha pattis, the collection blends Indian cultural heritage with contemporary aesthetics for today's discerning bride.

At the centre of the collection is Saptapadma, Indriya's signature bridal necklace inspired by the seven sacred vows of marriage and the lotus, symbolising purity and new begin-



nings. Crafted in 22kt yellow gold, the necklace features layered lotus petals embossed with each of the seven vows.

Commenting on the campaign, Sandeep Kohli, CEO, Indriya, said, "Every bride envisions herself long before her wedding day. At Indriya, we walk alongside her on that journey, offering jewellery that reflects her personal story, heritage and aspirations."

Shantiswarup Panda, Head of Marketing & Visual Merchandising, added, "This campaign celebrates a bride's deep emotional connection with her bridal jewellery, portraying Indriya as her trusted ally on one of life's most meaningful milestones."

Taneira unveils new store with season sale

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Taneira, the ethnic wear brand from TATA product, has announced the launch of its season sale at its newest store here Thursday, offering customers an opportunity to explore India's finest handcrafted sarees and ensembles at special seasonal values.

As part of the sale, customers can enjoy flat 40 per cent off on a wide range of sarees, kurtas, and kurta sets, making it an ideal time to invest in timeless weaves for every day, festive, and special occasions.

Adding to its presence in the city, Taneira's Chandrasekharpur store is the newest addition to Bhubaneswar, bringing the best of Indian ethnic wear under one roof. Designed to cater to diverse consumer needs, the store offers thoughtfully curated collections across weddings, festivals and pujas, workwear, and everyday comfort. The store also features a dedicated wedding zone, showcasing exquisite sarees and ensembles crafted



for bridal trousseaus and wedding celebrations.

As part of the Season Sale, customers can explore select styles across these categories at special seasonal values, making it an ideal opportunity to add timeless sarees and ensembles to their wardrobe.

Committed to the highest quality standards, Taneira ensures that its pure silk sarees bear the Silk Mark and are supported by Zari Certification, reinforcing the brand's promise of authenticity and genuine craftsmanship.

Built on its five core pillars—trust, authenticity, purity, craftsmanship, and

Silver, gold continue record-breaking run

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Silver prices extended their record-breaking run, jumping ₹3,000 to hit a record of ₹2,89,000 per kg in the national capital Thursday, while gold advanced to a new peak of ₹1,47,300 per 10 grams amid sustained buying by stockists and jewellers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Extending gains for the fifth consecutive day, the white precious metal increased ₹3,000, or 1.05 per cent, to hit a fresh peak of ₹2,89,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at ₹2,86,000 per kg on Wednesday.

With the latest rise, silver has jumped nearly 16 per cent, or ₹45,500, over the past five sessions, up from ₹2,43,500 per kg on January 8.

The white metal has continued to outpace gold for the second consecutive year, delivering 21 per cent returns so far and adding ₹50,000 from ₹2,39,000 per kg recorded December 31, 2025.

In addition, gold prices continued their upward march for the fifth straight day, rising ₹800 to a fresh record of ₹1,47,300 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Thursday. It had ended at ₹1,46,500 per 10 grams in the previous session.

The yellow metal has gained ₹9,600, or about 7 per cent, since the start of 2026.

Traders attributed the sustained rally in domestic bullion prices to persistent buying from jewellers, stockists, and



Investors must remain mindful that silver is inherently more volatile than gold, with sharper price swings driven by global growth expectations, dollar movements and speculative flows. It is best approached with disciplined allocation and a medium- to long-term perspective

RAJKUMAR SUBRAMANIAN | HEAD, PRODUCTS AND FAMILY OFFICES, PL WEALTH MANAGEMENT

retail consumers despite subdued trends in international markets.

Meanwhile, both gold and silver saw mild corrections in the international markets after retreating from their record highs.

Silver dropped \$1.98, or 2.13 per cent, to \$91.20 per ounce, after touching a record of \$93.52 per ounce Wednesday.

Spot gold also slipped \$12.22, or 0.26 per cent, to \$4,614.45 per ounce in the overseas trade. It had scaled a fresh record of \$4,643.06 per ounce in the previous session.

"Gold remains relatively resilient, hovering around the \$4,600 per ounce-mark after traders booked profits," Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn markets desk, said.

BoB celebrates World Hindi Day

Cuttack: Bank of Baroda, Cuttack Region, celebrated World Hindi Day 2026 by organising an official language seminar recently, highlighting the importance of Hindi as a cultural and unifying language. Professor Satyanarayan Panda, Principal of the Hindi Teachers Training Institute, Cuttack, and a noted scholar of Hindi and Odia languages, attended the programme as the chief guest. He was formally welcomed by bank executives with a shawl and a book. During the seminar, staff members delivered speeches on various aspects of the Hindi language. Addressing the gathering, Panda gave a detailed presentation on the theme 'Hindi Language: Our Cultural Identity,' emphasising the role of Hindi in preserving India's cultural heritage. Pradeep Kumar Behera,



Regional Head of the Cuttack Region, and Gautam Pal, Deputy Regional Head, also addressed the seminar and encouraged the effective use of Hindi in official work. Staff members who delivered outstanding presentations were felicitated by the chief guest and senior officials on the occasion.

Wikipedia@25: Founder Jimmy says platform grew against all odds

The foundation shared that 'the online resource, which has benefitted scholars, researchers and readers alike is viewed nearly 15 billion times every month and contains over 65 million articles across over 300 languages'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Wikipedia, billed to be the world's largest online information platform, whose millions of open source articles are powered by an army of "volunteer editors", turned 25 Thursday, as it launched a year-long campaign to mark its silver jubilee.

The online resource, which has benefitted scholars, researchers and general readers alike, was launched January 15, 2001 by Jimmy Wales.

"Wikipedia 25 - 25 years of the free encyclopedia", reads the website with a special logo

and a tagline.

A banner message on top of the landing page of the website read: "Wikipedia began as an impossible dream. Today, we celebrate 25 years of humanity at its best."

As the platform completed 25 years, the Wikimedia Foundation, a nonprofit organisation that operates Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects, launched a campaign and several other projects to mark the occasion.

"Today, the Wikimedia Foundation released for the first time a video 'docuseries,' sharing a behind-the-scenes look at



the lives and stories of Wikipedia volunteer editors around the world," the foundation said in a statement.

The Foundation also launched today a '25 Years of Wikipedia' time capsule, allowing Wikipedia admirers worldwide to delve into the past, present, and future of this treasured

global resource.

Users can listen to founder Wales share in his own words, memories from Wikipedia's origin story, including when he himself installed the site's very first servers.

The capsule also explores Wikipedia's role during major global events, such as when

its servers almost collapsed in 2009 from site visits following dance legend Michael Jackson's death. It showcases some of the most "weird and wonderful parts of Wikipedia", like an article on a prehistoric octopus named Paul, the statement said.

The foundation shared that "Wikipedia is viewed nearly 15 billion times every month" and it contains "over 65 million articles across more than 300 languages".

Also, "Wikipedia is edited 324 times per minute," it added.

"Wikipedia, the world's largest online information resource, turns 25 today, marking a quarter century of making

trustworthy, human-powered knowledge accessible worldwide," the statement said.

There are many ways that people around the world can get involved in the year-long 'Wikipedia 25' celebrations, it said.

"Against all odds, Wikipedia has grown to become the backbone of knowledge on the internet today. Wikipedia demonstrates 25 years of humanity at its best, proving that when people come together in the spirit of building trust and collaboration, they can make the impossible possible," said Wales, Wikipedia founder and Wikimedia Foundation trustee.

In 2001, Wikipedia started as a dream to share knowledge with everyone, everywhere. No one, including me, knew if it would succeed

JIMMY WALES | FOUNDER, WIKIPEDIA

India Open chaos takes centre stage



While concerns over playing conditions, air quality and extreme cold in the national capital have dominated early discussion, a range of venue-related issues including on-court lighting, have also come into focus at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, which is hosting the event for the first time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: It was intended to be a dress rehearsal for the BWF World Championships in August and the ongoing India Open Super 750 badminton tournament has managed to expose all possible operational gaps that need to be plugged before the marquee competition.

While concerns over playing conditions, air quality and extreme cold in the national capital have dominated early discussion, a range of venue-related issues including on-court lighting, have also come into focus at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex,

which is hosting the event for the first time.

"We were aware of the challenges and we will make it better during the World Championships. There are no major issues. Even the monkey incident (seen in the spectators' gallery on Wednesday), we take it as a lesson. We will be better prepared and put extra guards. The BWF also has confidence in us," Badminton Association of India (BAI) secretary general Sanjay Mishra told PTI.

Among the more visible shortcomings has been the positioning of the commentary tribune, located at a considerable height, making it difficult for commentators to closely track on-court action.

"We would have liked to be a little closer to the action. Right now, we are watching more on the screen while commentating. It is also quite dark, making it difficult to see the action properly. Even basic facilities are an issue as the toilet is too far and we have to go all the way down to access it," said a commentator on conditions of anonymity.

Lighting has also drawn scrutiny.

French shuttler Christo Popov, after his first-round win over Wang Tzu-wei, said the lighting was adequate but

India will host the World Championships for the first time since 2009, with the event seen as a key test of the country's ability to deliver large-scale international tournaments as it eyes the 2036 Olympics

added that overall playing conditions could improve. During PV Sindhu's match, the lights briefly dimmed during rallies, an incident officials later attributed to human error.

"If you look closely, the lighting is patchy and uneven. Even basic power and technical systems were not fully ready when we arrived. For an event of this level, everything needs to be in place at least a day in advance, not just before the first match," said a venue technician.

Access within the stadium complex has emerged as another challenge.

The intersection near the mixed zone, accessed by players, officials, technical staff, broadcasters and journalists, has seen heavy overlap, leading to congestion.

Several players were seen jogging through the mixed zone as part of warm-up routines, while others appeared to struggle to locate basic facilities such as toilets.

Officials said the issues were

being identified and reviewed on a daily basis.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has been conducting regular venue inspections, assessing functional areas including the field of

Bird droppings interrupt Prannoy-Loh match

Bird droppings forced two stoppages during the men's singles second-round match between H S Prannoy and Singapore's Loh Kean Yew at the India Open Super 750 Thursday, compounding a growing list of organisational concerns at the tournament. The unusual interruptions occurred on the third day of the event at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, already under scrutiny following complaints related to playing conditions, air quality, extreme cold and a monkey being spotted in the stands earlier this week. Prannoy's match against former world champion Loh was first halted when the Indian was leading 16-14 in the opening game. It was stopped again early in the decider, with Prannoy ahead 1-0. On both occasions, tournament officials entered Court 1, the main television court, to clean the playing surface after what appeared to be bird droppings fell from the ceiling. "It was bird shit that kind of halted the game," Prannoy said in the mixed zone after his 21-18, 19-21, 14-21 loss. Loh, the 2021 world champion, did not speak about the interruptions but spoke about pollution being an issue. "Everyone's stamina just dropped like two levels. The weather is not good. My health dropped quite a bit. I breathe less. I wear my mask when I can. I stay indoors as much as possible, but that's the only thing that I can do," he said.

Bangladesh crisis: Players' revolt puts BPL in limbo

The furore started after Najmul, while reiterating Bangladesh's refusal to travel to India for next month's T20 World Cup on account of "security worries", rejected concerns surrounding players' remuneration should the country withdraw

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 15: The crisis-ridden Bangladesh Cricket Board stared at the prospect of its flagship T20 league coming to a halt after senior national players revolted against it for not sacking director Najmul Islam for his disparaging comments against them even though the BCB removed him as head of its finance committee.

Despite the removal of Najmul from the key BCB post,

two matches of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) scheduled on the day were postponed and the tournament itself looked in disarray due to the players' firm stance.

The cricketers taking part in the BPL were unified in their demand for immediate removal of Najmul as BCB director.

BCB removed Najmul as chairman of the board's finance committee but he remains a Board director, a position that can be taken from him on disciplinary grounds.

"...Following a review of recent developments and in the best interest of the organisation, the BCB President has decided to release Mr. Najmul Islam from his responsibilities as Chairman of the Finance Committee with immediate effect. Until further notice, the BCB President will assume the role of Acting Chairman of the Finance Committee. The BCB reiterates that the interests of the cricketers remain its highest priority," said the BCB in a statement.

It then pleaded with the play-

COPA DEL REY UPSET

2nd-tier Albacete add to Madrid's nightmare

In a thrilling 3-2 showdown, Albacete's Betancor scores twice to send the Los Blancos home in the top 16 on Arbeloa's debut



REUTERS

Albacete (Spain), Jan 15: Substitute Jefe Betancor scored twice as second-tier Albacete pulled off a dramatic 3-2 victory over Spanish giants Real Madrid Wednesday, eliminating them from the Copa del Rey at the round-of-16 stage on Alvaro Arbeloa's managerial debut.

On a misty night at the Carlos Belmonte stadium, the energetic 17,000-strong crowd created an electric atmosphere as Albacete stunned the European powerhouses, who had sacked manager Xabi Alonso earlier in the week.

Former Real defender Arbeloa, who was handed the reins in the wake of Alonso's dismissal, selected a largely second-string side and they struggled to impose themselves on their lowly opponents, while dense fog that shrouded large portions of the match added to the drama.

Kylian Mbappe, Jude Bellingham and Modygo were among the absentees, alongside Thibaut Courtois and Aurelien Tchouameni.

Arbeloa promoted right back David Jimenez and midfielder Jorge Cestero from the club's Castilla reserve set-up, while fielding Vinicius Jr. as the focal point of the attack.

The night was marred before kickoff, however, with fans outside the stadium targeting Vinicius with racist chants.

Once the match began, the Brazilian was booed throughout and struggled to influence proceedings as Albacete double- and

We've hit rock bottom; we've been knocked out by a second division team. You have to face up to it when you lose, and that's what we have to do now. We, the players, are the ones ultimately responsible. There's little else I can say

DANI CARVAJAL | CAPTAIN, REAL MADRID

triple-marked him on the left wing. The hosts took the lead in the 42nd minute after a spell of pressure. A dangerous corner from Jose Lazo found Javier Villar at the near post sending the crowd into raptures.

However, their joy was short-lived, as Real's Franco Mastantuono pounced on a corner rebound and smashed it home to level the score.

The home side remained a constant threat on the counter-attack. However, Albacete regained the lead in the 82nd minute after an unmarked Betancor found the net with a venomous strike at the far post.

Real Madrid thought they had rescued the tie in stoppage time when Guler's cross was met by Gonzalo, whose towering header beat Lizoain to make it 2-2.

Four minutes into added time, Betancor broke free on the counter-attack. His initial effort was blocked by Dani Carvajal, but the forward kept his composure, collected the rebound, and unleashed a sublime right-footed strike into the top corner to seal a shock victory for the hosts.

SHORT TAKES

AFC recognition for ISL, Super Cup champions

New Delhi: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) Thursday said the sport's continental body AFC has accorded recognition to the truncated 2025-26 Indian Super League with winners of the country's top two divisions getting indirect slots to Asian Champions League 2 through zonal qualifiers. Due to a delayed start to the season, the clubs will not be able to play the mandatory 24 matches in the season -- including top division league and domestic cup -- to be eligible to feature in the AFC Champions League 2. Most clubs are expected to play a total of sixteen (16) matches during the season, including a minimum of three (3) games in the AIFF Super Cup and 13 in ISL. The 2025-26 season of the ISL is scheduled to begin February 14, with all 14 teams confirming their participation Tuesday.

Arsenal take narrow SF lead over Chelsea

London: Arsenal scored two goals off errors by goalkeeper Robert Sanchez to set up a 3-2 win at Chelsea in the first leg of the English League Cup semifinals Wednesday. A corner sailed over Sanchez in the seventh minute, allowing Ben White to head into an unguarded net, before the Spanish keeper let a low cross squirm through his grasp to gift Viktor Gyokeres a tap-in in the 49th. Substitute Alejandro Garnacho pulled a goal back but Martin Zubimendi restored Arsenal's two-goal cushion by slotting home a finish in the 70th. Garnacho's second goal - in the 83rd - gave Chelsea a lifeline ahead of the second leg on Feb. 3 at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium. Still, Mikel Arteta's team is the favorite to advance to the March 22 final at Wembley Stadium in what is shaping up to be a banner season for the Gunners, who lead the Premier League by six points and top the Champions League standings. Liam Rosenior, taking charge of his first home match as Chelsea's new coach, refused to criticize Sanchez for his mistakes.

U-19 WORLD CUP

Henil grabs fifer as India beat USA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), Jan 15: Henil Patel led a ruthless bowling display with an excellent five-wicket haul, setting up India's six-wicket victory over USA in their rain-hit ICC Under-19 World Cup opener here Thursday.

The right-arm seamer finished with figures of 5/16 from seven overs with one maiden, ripping through the USA middle-order after India opted to bowl under overcast conditions. The USA were bundled out for a meagre 107 in 35.2 overs.

India's target was revised to 96 in 37 overs after rain interrupted proceedings with the total reading 21 for one in four overs.

Abhigyan Kundu (42 not out



off 41 balls) then saw the team home with 118 balls to spare under the DLS method.

India's chase was delayed by rain but when play resumed, 14-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi (2) fell cheaply as he was bowled by Ritvik Appidi (2/24 in 5 overs) in the third over.

Brief Scores:

USA 107 in 35.2 overs (Nitish Sudini 36; Henil Patel 5/16) lost to **India:** 99/4 in 17.2 overs (Abhigyan Kundu 42 not out; Ritvik Appidi 2/24) by 6 wickets

'Sincaraz' rivalry set to dominate Australian Open men's draw

REUTERS

Melbourne, Jan 15: Defending champion Jannik Sinner is the bookmakers' favourite to win a third successive Australian Open crown as another title showdown looms with world number one Carlos Alcaraz.

The "Sincaraz" duopoly swept all four Grand Slam titles in 2025 and their dominance is expected to continue at Melbourne Park where few in the men's draw appear equipped to challenge, let alone beat them.

A Sinner victory would mean a fifth Grand Slam title for the 24-year-old Italian and make him the first to lift the Australian Open trophy three years running since Novak Djokovic in 2019-21.

For 22-year-old Alcaraz, a

first Australian Open triumph would mean a seventh major trophy and the distinction of being the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam, eclipsing Don Budge's long-standing record.

Sinner and Alcaraz have operated in a different stratosphere to hog the sport's biggest trophies, and even their travel arrangements to Melbourne were a class apart.

As lower-ranked players toiled through stifling heat at warm-up tournaments in Australia, the duo flew in on a private jet from a no-pressure exhibition match in Seoul, arriving fresh and unruffled for the tournament starting Sunday.

While Alcaraz finished a career-best season in 2025 with



the world's top ranking, Sinner capped his own terrific year by successfully defending his ATP Finals title, beating the Spaniard in the decider in front of adoring home fans in Turin.

The Italian, who faces France's Hugo Gaston in the

first round, has worked to add greater unpredictability, particularly on serve, into his game to keep pace with Alcaraz, the sport's most explosive talent.

Alcaraz is determined to hit back in Melbourne, though, saying he would rather hoist

Sinner favourite to win third Australian Open in succession

Alcaraz looking to become youngest man to complete career Grand Slam

Djokovic still a threat despite age and fitness concerns

the trophy than claim back-to-back titles at the U.S. and French Open this year.

This year he arrives following a surprise split with long-time coach Juan Carlos Ferrero, who guided him from prodigy to multiple major champion.

Whether Alcaraz, who meets Australian battler Adam Walton in the first round, can continue to thrive without Ferrero will be one of the tournament's major plotlines.

Beyond the two young standard-bearers, Djokovic may still be their greatest threat -- even at 38. The Serb is chasing a record-extending 11th Australian Open title and a record 25th Grand Slam title overall to move one clear of Margaret Court on the all-time list.

Further back, the gap between the top two and the chasing pack appears stark. World number three Zverev reached last year's final only to be overwhelmed by Sinner and ended 2025 with just one title.

If Sinner succeeds, his Australian Open dominance will be reminiscent of Djokovic's dynasty. If Alcaraz breaks through, he will conquer his final frontier and open the door to a calendar Grand Slam.