



Sam's observation

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu highlights how women often hesitate to question physicians on critical health issues

LEISURE | P2



Mission Greenland

Military personnel from France & Germany head to Greenland Thursday as Denmark and its allies prepare for exercises

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Trade deficit widens

India's merchandise trade deficit widens slightly to \$25.04 billion in December as imports rise

BUSINESS | P11



Real's biggest upset

Arbeloa debuts with loss as second-division club Albacete knock Real Madrid out of Copa del Rey

SPORTS | P12

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SPECTACLE: Youths take part in the traditional bull-taming sport, or Jallikattu, the first among three major events of the Pongal 2026 harvest festival season, at Avaniapuram in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

TIGER GLOBAL LIABLE TO PAY TAX: SC ON 2018 FLIPKART DEAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The Supreme Court Thursday upheld the decision of the Indian revenue authorities that capital gains arising from US-based investor firm Tiger Global's exit from Flipkart in 2018 are taxable in India.

A bench of Justices JB Parikh and R Mahadevan set aside the Delhi High Court's August 2024 judgment that had quashed the tax demand and ruled in favour of Tiger Global.

Premier law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas said the SC's verdict will impact all current and prior mergers and acquisitions (M&A) deals where tax treaty benefits have been claimed.

"Private equity players and FPIs (Foreign Portfolio Investors) need to look at their investment structures and rethink returns. Tax litigation around tax treaty claims may increase and impact the tax insurance market," it said.

"Fine print of the SC's decision will give a better sense of the factual nuances in the holding company structure that were relied upon to rule against Tiger. But big takeaways are dilution of tax residency certificate and use of GAAR. This is a key landmark in the evolution of India's tax treaty jurisprudence," it added.

IRREGULAR by MANJU



I have full faith in the Election Commission. They'll elect the best candidate—so I decided not to vote

Sundargarh: Group clash leaves 12 injured

SECTION 163 OF BNS CLAMPED; INTERNET SUSPENDED

PNN & AGENCIES



Bhubaneswar/Rourkela, Jan 15: A violent clash between two groups over the alleged sale of beef left at least 12 people, including some police personnel, injured in Sundargarh Thursday, prompting the administration to impose prohibitory orders and suspend internet services in the town for 24 hours.

The incident took place in Regent Market area around 2.30pm, a police officer said, adding that the clash erupted over an argument between two youths related to alleged sale of beef.

"Both groups allegedly used sharp weapons against each other and also pelted stones. Police used mild force to disperse them and brought the situation under control," the officer said.

Following the incident, the administration imposed Section 163 of BNS in the area to prevent further escalation and keep law and order under control.

"The situation is now under

control. Prohibitory order under Section 163 of BNS has been clamped in the town. We have also suspended the internet services for 24 hours from 6pm," Sundargarh Collector Subhan Mohapatra said.

He added that any kind of gatherings, rallies and protests have been banned in the town.

All schools, colleges and other educational institutions in Sundargarh municipality area will remain closed Friday as a safety measure, he said, adding, "We'll hold a meeting of the peace committee soon."

All shops and commercial

establishments, excluding medical stores, milk vans, and other emergency services, in the town will remain closed, said Sundargarh (Sadar) sub-collector Tejaswini Behera.

DIG (Western Range) Brijesh Rai, Sundargarh SP Amrit Pal Kaur and senior officials were present at the spot and appealed to the residents to maintain peace.

"Ten platoons (300 personnel) police force have been deployed and prohibitory order under Section 163 of BNS has been imposed," Rai said, adding that among the injured police personnel, one has been admitted to hospital.

Sources in the CMO said Majhi will join the investors' meet Friday and Saturday. The CM will be accompanied by Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, they said. "The Industries Secretary and I will also

BJD suspends Sanatan, Arvind

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Thursday suspended two of its MLAs, Sanatan Mahakud and Arvind Mohapatra, for 'anti-party activities'.

The party, however, did not specify the nature of 'anti-party activities' by Sanatan, who represents Champua constituency in Keonjhar, and Arvind, MLA from Patkura in Kendrapara.

An office order signed by BJD president Naveen Patnaik said the two were suspended from the party with immedi-



ate effect. The suspension order was also forwarded to the Assembly Speaker.

In a statement, BJD spokesman Lenin Mohanty said Patnaik 'never tolerates corrupt traitors' and that both MLAs had breached the party's constitution and guidelines.

Odisha investors' meet in Kolkata

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi is scheduled to take part in an investors' meet in Kolkata Friday and Saturday, as part of Odisha's efforts to attract investments and accelerate industrial growth, a top official said.

Sources in the CMO said Majhi will join the investors' meet Friday and Saturday. The CM will be accompanied by Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, they said. "The Industries Secretary and I will also

join the investors' meet," Chief Secretary Anu Garg said.

The state will also organise a roadshow and the CM may hold one-on-one discussions with leading investors who want to set up industries in Odisha, Industries department officials said.

The CMO Thursday highlighted the state's growing focus on tourism-led investments.

On December 19, Majhi had joined a similar investors' meet in Hyderabad and the state received investment intentions worth over ₹67,000 crore, with a potential of creating around 56,000 jobs.

Sanatan, one of the wealthiest legislators in Odisha, said he was not surprised by the move. Elected as an Independent in 2014, he later joined BJD and won the 2024 Assembly election.

Arvind, son of Bijoy Mohapatra and a first-time MLA who joined BJD ahead of the 2024 Assembly elections, expressed surprise over the suspension. He said he learnt about the decision through social media and was yet to understand the allegations against him.

The BJD currently has 50 MLAs in the 147-member Assembly.

ED's I-PAC raid: SC notice to WB CM, govt

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 15: The Supreme Court Thursday termed the ED's allegation of obstruction by West Bengal (WB) 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.

As it observed that larger questions are involved in the plea of the ED which, if left undecided, will lead to 'lawlessness' in one or the other state, the SC also stayed the FIRs against the ED officials, who raided I-PAC in Kolkata January 8 sparking a tense standoff with Banerjee.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Vipul Pandit issued notices to Banerjee, the WB 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 Assembly polls in WB. **PP**

Astronauts return early in NASA's 1st medical evac

ASSOCIATED PRESS



Cape Canaveral, Jan 15: An ailing astronaut returned to Earth with three others Thursday, ending their space station mission more than a month early in NASA's first medical evacuation.

SpaceX guided the capsule to a middle-of-the-night splashdown in the Pacific near San Diego, less than 11 hours after the astronauts exited the International Space Station. Their first stop was a hospital for an overnight stay.

"Obviously, we took this action (earlier return) because it was a serious medical condition," NASA's new administrator Jared Isaacman said follow-

ing splashdown. "The astronaut in question is fine right now, in good spirits and going through the proper medical checks."

It was an unexpected finish to a mission that began in August and left the orbiting lab with only one American and

two Russians on board. NASA and SpaceX said they would try to move up the launch of a fresh crew of four; liftoff is currently targeted for mid-February.

NASA's Zena Cardman and Mike Fincke were joined on the return by Japan's Kimiya Yui

waving to the cameras.

Isaacman monitored the action from Mission Control in Houston, along with the crew's families.

NASA decided a few days ago to take the entire crew straight to a San Diego-area hospital following splashdown and even practiced helicopter runs there from the recovery ship. The astronaut in question will receive in-depth medical checks before flying with the rest of the crew back to Houston Friday, assuming everyone is well enough. Platonov's return to Moscow was unclear.

It was the first time NASA cut short a spaceflight for medical reasons. The Russians had done so decades ago.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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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, says Ganesha. Money matters will keep you preoccupied for 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.



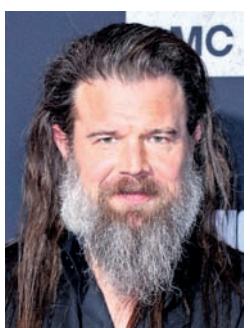
AQUARIUS

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 in-

stincts, 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.

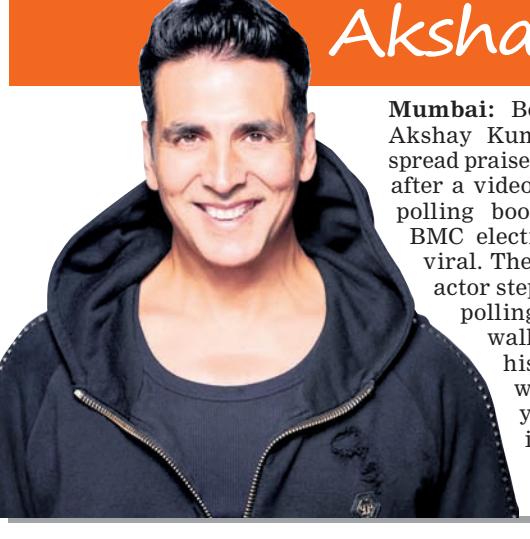
Suhana described how both parents offer contrasting yet complementary advice. While her father's guidance is reflective and poetic, helping her view situations from different perspectives, her mother's advice is direct and practical, cutting through confusion. Together, their inputs help keep her grounded.

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



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.

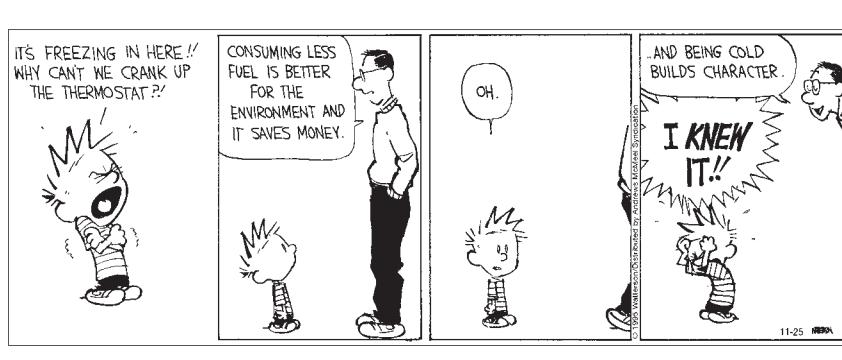
Earlier in the day, Akshay was among the first celebrities to arrive at the polling booth to cast his vote.

AGENCIES

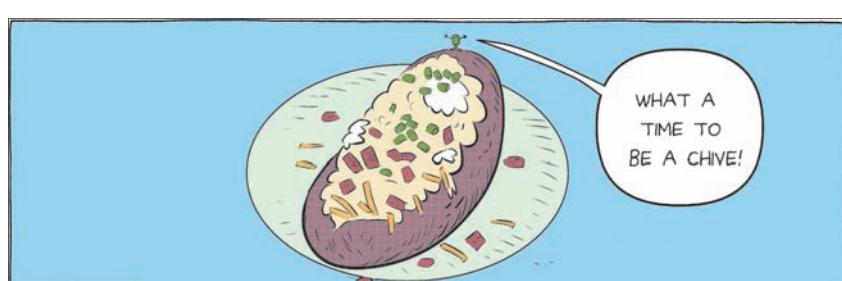
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



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

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 took to X, where she reshared 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 Tatw

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FUN POST

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downtown

CHIEF SECY CHAIRS REVIEW MEET

Fast-track drinking water projects: CS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Emphasising the basic need of every household to have access to clean drinking water supply, Chief Secretary Anu Garg Thursday urged secretaries of the respective departments to identify reasons, propose solutions, and ensure timely completion of piped water supply projects in every village during their monthly field visits.

Garg was chairing a high-level meeting of secretaries at Kharavela Bhavan Thursday, attended by additional chief secretaries Deo Ranjan Kumar Singh, Surendra Kumar and Hemant Sharma, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Saswat Mishra, and all other departmental principal secretaries, commissioners, and secretaries.

Garg emphasised the importance of monthly field visits by secretaries to districts, with a particular focus on reviewing the progress of drinking water

FISCAL SCENARIO

- Overall departmental expenditure up by 10 per cent as compared to the previous year
- Programme expenditure rises by 15 per cent
- Revenue collection from various sources grows by 7.82 per cent

projects. She noted that many projects are facing delays and urged secretaries to identify the reasons, propose solutions, and ensure timely completion.

The meeting also reviewed implementation of 15-point programme directed by CM, with secretaries providing updates on departmental actions. The state's financial performance for financial year 2025-26 was reviewed, including expenditure and revenue collection.

Overall departmental expenditure increased by 10 per cent as compared to the previous year, programme expenditure rose by 15 per cent, revenue

collection from various sources grew by 7.82 per cent over the last financial year, attendees informed Garg.

Secretaries were instructed to achieve revenue targets and explore new proposals for the upcoming Budget. The Chief Secretary also directed a special review of central grant fund utilisation to ensure effective deployment.

On administrative reforms, the Law department presented proposals to review and repeal outdated laws. Monthly development reviews with District Collectors will be held January 22 due to prior government commitments. Additionally, state-level meetings of the Single Window Clearance Authority and MOU project progress reviews will continue on the third Tuesday of every month.

Garg concluded the meeting with guidance to departmental secretaries to complete work as per targets, monitor expenditure closely, and achieve set revenue collection goals.

Cuttack murder: Accused held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: In a major breakthrough, the Cuttack police Thursday, arrested the man who bludgeoned a fish vendor to death in City's Khanagar area during the early hours of Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Ashok Samal (65), a resident of Jobra in the City. Ashok works at a petrol pump.

According to police reports, the accused and the deceased (Prakash Das) met January 10 and both were reportedly drunk. After they consumed alcohol, Prakash dropped Ashok near a bridge and left for his home.

When Ashok gained consciousness he suspected that ₹4,000 was stolen from his pocket and went to Prakash to enquire about the money.

Ashok met Prakash at Khanagar ring road area and confronted him about the lost money. An altercation took place between the two. In a fit of anger, Ashok hit Prakash on his head with a stone resulting in the latter's death on the spot. Ashok fled the spot after committing the crime.

The police, after verifying multiple CCTV footages, tracked Ashok and arrested him.

"We had formed a special team to nab the culprit behind the incident. We went through multiple CCTV footages and traced the accused," said Cuttack DCP Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo.

Further investigation into the matter is underway.

IN LORD'S ABODE

Film star Shilpa Shetty comes out of Srimandir in Puri after paying obeisance to the sibling deities, Thursday



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



MANJUL

BPIA handles record 51.5L passengers

Ranks 13th among the country's airports in passenger traffic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here handled a record 51.5 lakh passengers in 2025 – ranking 13th among the country's airports in passenger traffic, officials said Thursday.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said, "Bhubaneswar Airport has set a new all-time record, with 5.15

million (51.5 lakh) passengers traveling in 2025 and now ranks 13th in India for passenger movement. A strong sign of #Odisha's growing connectivity and aviation growth."

It also noted that the achievement reflects smooth and strategic coordination between the state government's B-MAAN (Building and management of aviation assets and network) scheme, a visionary initiative to modernise aviation infrastructure across Odisha, and the central government's UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme to boost regional air connectivity.

"Together, these efforts are positioning Odisha as the aviation hub of Eastern India, enhancing access, fostering economic growth, and opening new opportunities in trade, tourism, and investment," the CMO said.

BPIA director Prasanna Pradhan said handling an estimated number of 5.15 million passengers through the airport during 2025, is the highest since operation of the airport.

The airport director said Delhi airport continues to lead with passenger traffic of around 70 million, maintaining its top position among Indian airports at the national level.

Officials said the Bhubaneswar airport presently operates flights to a total of 28 destinations.

Bio-Gas plant to be operational soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Promising to ease out the waste burden in the Capital City, the Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plant under the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to become operational soon, with construction and implementation work progressing at a rapid pace.

Principal Secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department, Usha Padhee, conducted a field inspection of the CBG plant site recently. During her visit, she reviewed various sections of the plant and examined the design layouts and planning aspects.

The MoU was signed between the Department of Science & Technology and Birla Industrial & Technology Museum (BITM), Kolkata, a unit of National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) under Ministry of Culture today at Lok Seva Bhawan.

This was signed between the Director, Pathani Samanta Planetarium and the Director, BITM in the presence of Deoraj Kumar Singh, Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary and Chithra Arumugam, Additional Chief Secretary of Science and Technology Department.

Pathani Samanta Planetarium, Bhubaneswar under the Department of Science and Technology plays a pivotal role for popularizing science, and representatives of the plant construction agency were present during the inspection.

Padhee emphasized the importance of environmental protection and the creation of green buffer zones around the plant. She also reviewed arrangements related to vehicle movement, unloading of wet waste, storage, and processing mechanisms. The Principal Secretary directed Oil India officials to expedite the remaining work to ensure early commissioning of the project.

Officials from Oil India briefed her on the process through which biogas and high-quality organic manure will be produced from wet and biodegradable waste.

It is worth noting that an agreement was earlier signed between the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and Oil India in the presence of the Housing and Urban Development Minister Dr. Krishna Chandra Mahapatra for the production of biogas from wet waste. As per the agreement, Oil India will process 300 metric tonnes of wet waste daily to generate biogas and premium-quality organic fertilizer.

MoU signed for modernisation of Pathani Samanta Planetarium

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed for the major upgradation and modernization of the Pathani Samanta Planetarium in Bhubaneswar Thursday. This aims to create a world-class facility with enhanced astronomy education and new science centers across Odisha benefiting the Students and the public.

The MoU was signed between the Department of Science & Technology and Birla Industrial & Technology Museum (BITM), Kolkata, a unit of National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) under Ministry of Culture today at Lok Seva Bhawan.

This was signed between the Director, Pathani Samanta Planetarium and the Director, BITM in the presence of Deoraj Kumar Singh, Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary and Chithra Arumugam, Additional Chief Secretary of Science and Technology Department.

Pathani Samanta Planetarium, Bhubaneswar under the Department of Science and Technology plays a pivotal role for popularizing science, and representatives of the plant construction agency were present during the inspection.

Padhee emphasized the importance of environmental protection and the creation of green buffer zones around the plant. She also reviewed arrangements related to vehicle movement, unloading of wet waste, storage, and processing mechanisms. The Principal Secretary directed Oil India officials to expedite the remaining work to ensure early commissioning of the project.

Officials from Oil India briefed her on the process through which biogas and high-quality organic manure will be produced from wet and biodegradable waste.

It is worth noting that an agreement was earlier signed between the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and Oil India in the presence of the Housing and Urban Development Minister Dr. Krishna Chandra Mahapatra for the production of biogas from wet waste. As per the agreement, Oil India will process 300 metric tonnes of wet waste daily to generate biogas and premium-quality organic fertilizer.

Community radios urged to promote natural farming

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Community radios across the state were urged to play a proactive role in promoting natural farming and agro-ecological practices during a two-day state-level workshop organised recently by National Coalition for Natural Farming (NCNF Odisha) in collaboration with Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) and Young India.

The workshop brought together representatives from around 30 community radio stations from different parts of the state. The participants were trained on the importance of natural farming, sustainable agriculture, and the role of community media in facilitating a transition from conventional chemical-based farming to environmentally friendly practices.

Renowned natural farming experts Ekadashi Nandi, Sabhapati Khadanga, Sridhar Behera and Subash Sahu addressed the broadcasters and shared practical insights on natural farming methods and how radio programmes can support farmers during the transition phase. They highlighted the need for locally relevant content to build confidence among farming communities.

State head of PRADAN Ajit Naik discussed ethno-veterinary practices that can help farmers manage livestock health using traditional knowledge systems.

Expert Dolagobinda Panda highlighted sustainable aquaculture and natural fish farming methods, and explained how community radios can design informative programmes for Panchayati Raj Institutions to promote natural farming.

Community media expert NA Shah Ansari spoke on creation of indigenous and community-owned content to upscale natural farming practices at the grassroots level.



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Farmer and conservationist, Padma Shri Sabarmatee addressed the valedictory session and cautioned against the growing incidence of lifestyle and chronic diseases

ing incidences of lifestyle and chronic diseases such as cancer, kidney and liver ailments, heart disease and paralysis. She stressed that excessive use of agrochemicals poses serious risks to public health and the environment, and asserted that adopting natural farming is essential to safeguard future generations.

President of Community Radio Association, Odisha Abdul Sufi urged broadcasters to actively disseminate village-level knowledge and success stories to generate greater interest in natural farming among rural communities.

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Pollution, changing lifestyle cause autoimmune diseases in women

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 15: The prevalence of autoimmune diseases is increasing, especially in women, and the ongoing winter season, along with high pollution, may be worsening the symptoms, said an expert from the All India Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi.

The ratio may be 9:1 to begin with during adolescence and young age and later turn 1:1 when women turn 70 or more than 60.

"Women are often neglected due to social misconceptions that these diseases are hereditary or contagious, which is incorrect. As a result, many women suffer silently, leading to significant mental health issues," Kumar said.

The expert noted that symptoms often worsen in winter "due to cold temperatures, reduced atmospheric pressure, increased joint stiffness, reduced sunlight, vitamin D deficiency, weight gain, low mood,

pollution, and higher rates of viral infections".

Air pollution is a significant trigger. Studies have shown increased inflammatory markers, oxidative stress, and even auto-antibodies in healthy individuals exposed to high pollution levels, especially those living close to busy roads. This provides strong evidence linking

air pollution to autoimmune disease risk.

Chronic mental stress and poor sleep also increase inflammation and worsen disease activity. Night-shift workers are at higher risk. Post-COVID, there has been a noticeable rise in autoimmune and inflammatory conditions, further supporting the role of environmental and lifestyle factors.

Lifestyle changes also play a major role. Unhealthy food habits, smoking, tobacco use, and obesity all contribute. Obesity itself is a chronic inflammatory state that increases the risk of autoimmunity.

Another reason is improved diagnostic facilities and greater awareness among doctors, patients, and the public.

Since awareness initiatives began more than a decade ago, recognition of these diseases has increased.

Further, Kumar said that autoimmune diseases are treatable but usually require lifelong management, similar

to diabetes or hypertension.

"There is no single symptom or test that can diagnose these conditions. Symptoms vary widely and may include fatigue, fever, joint pain, skin rashes, hair loss, dryness of eyes or mouth, kidney involvement, neurological symptoms, or recurrent pregnancy loss. Because autoantibodies may also be present in healthy individuals, testing without medical guidance can be misleading," she said.

The expert warned against taking steroids and painkillers without medical supervision, as they are not required for all autoimmune diseases.

"Lifestyle modification is essential. Adequate sleep, stress control, regular physical activity, smoking cessation, and weight management help prevent flares," said Kumar, while also noting the benefit of yoga in reducing inflammation and improving sleep among autoimmune disease patients.



These diseases can occur at any age but are more common in women of reproductive age. Female hormones and immune-related genes on the X chromosome play a role

UMA KUMAR |

PROFESSOR AND HEAD

OF DEPARTMENT OF

RHEUMATOLOGY, AIIMS

downtown

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 (PUCC).

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 Bibhu 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' PUCC-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 PUCC 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 PUCC 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 said.

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 PUCC 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 PUCC until April 1.



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

PIC: 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.

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.

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 first-hand 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.

BGU hosts GenAI hackathon

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 Vedabratra, CEO, ByteIQ Analytics; Subham Acharya, Director, FxUV; Akash Jaiswal, CEO, Wooble; and Smriti Ranjan Dhal, Senior Consultant, TCS.

Congratulating the participants, Kulbhushan Baloomi, 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."

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.

BJEM School celebrates 53rd Foundation Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Biju Jagabandhu English Medium School (BJEM) celebrated its 53rd Foundation Day 'Inception-2026' here Thursday.

Addressing the gathering, Biju Jagabandhu Education Society (BJES) president Raghunath Mishra urged students to remain grateful to their alma mater. "Students must always be thankful and respectful to the institution that shapes their future. May the almighty guide us in our continued efforts for the school's growth," he said.

Welcoming the guests, school principal Sandhya Jena stressed the importance of character building, advising students to uphold moral values. Vice principal Pallabi Mohapatra reminded students to preserve the school's reputation amid changing times.

School manager PK Jena paid homage to the founders—late KK Nayak, late Radhamohan Mohanty, and the first principal Late O Littlewood—acknowledging their visionary efforts. He also highlighted the role of the Lions Club in establishing the school and called for a cooperative work culture. The celebrations featured vibrant cultural performances by students, followed by prize distribution.

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-borne 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

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

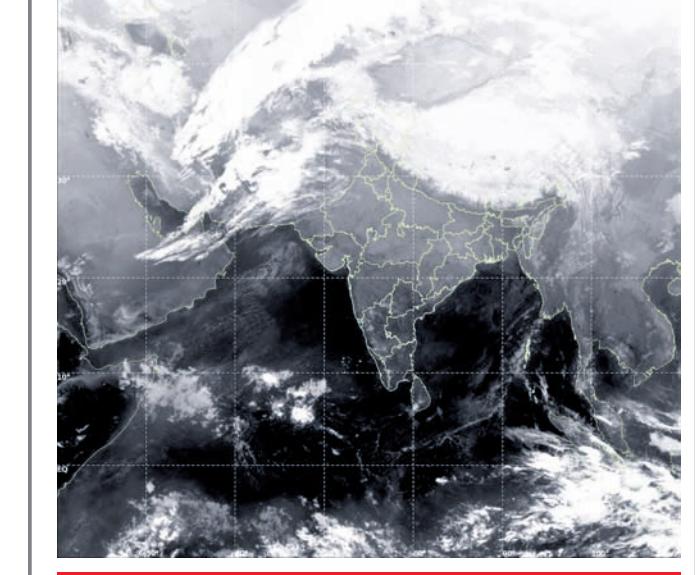
It has further prohibited disposal of fish, meat and poultry waste in roads, drains, open areas, water bodies or vacant land. Waste must be handed over exclusively to authorised BMC 'Safai Gadi' or LCV vehicles for scientific disposal, and storage beyond scheduled collection time or exposure of waste 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 Chanthal 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.

| MARKET WATCH | |
|--|---|
| INDEX | VARIATION |
| DOLLAR 90.30 ▲ 0.05 | SENSEX 83382.71 ▼ 244.98 |
| EURO 104.88 ▼ 0.21 | NIFTY 25665.60 ▼ 66.70 |

| COMMODITIES | |
|--|---|
| INDEX | VARIATION |
| GOLD ₹142,882 ▼ 269 | SILVER ₹285,493 ▼ 2518 |



| WEATHER | |
|----------|-------|
| Max Temp | 28.4° |
| Min Temp | 11.8° |
| Humidity | 71% |
| Rainfall | Nil |

FORECAST
Fog or mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later

Youth found hanging outside lover's house

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajgangpur, Jan 15: The body of a 25-year-old man was found hanging from a tree outside his girlfriend's house in Rajgangpur block of Sundargarh district Thursday, police said.

The deceased was identified as Bikash Mahanandia of Ranibandh Talapada area. Rajgangpur police registered a case of unnatural death and launched an investigation.

According to police, Bikash had been in a relationship with a woman for about four years and expressed his desire to marry her. The woman reportedly rejected his proposal. Despite her refusal, Bikash continued to insist on marriage.

Bikash went to the woman's house Wednesday night and allegedly committed suicide in front of the house by hanging himself from a tree using a scarf, police said.

Local residents noticed the body Thursday morning and informed the police. Police officials reached the spot, recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. The body was handed over to the family members after the post-mortem. Police said further investigation is underway to ascertain the circumstances leading to the death.

Plumber held 45 days after woman's murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Jan 15: Forty-five days after the murder of a woman inside Nalco township quarters here, police arrested the accused, a plumber by profession, Thursday.

Angul Superintendent of Police Rahul Jain said the accused, Tapan Kumar Sahu of Barsingha village, strangled 37-year-old Madhusmita Pradhan with her scarf December 1 after she rejected his advances and threatened to inform her husband and the police.

Madhusmita lived in Quarter No B-2001 with her husband, Nalco employee Kartik Chandra Pradhan. Sahu was engaged as a contract plumber in the Nalco colony and had earlier visited the house for plumbing work. Police said he later developed one-sided feelings for the woman.

On the day of the incident, when Kartik was on duty, Sahu went to the house and made an advance. When she resisted and threatened to raise an alarm, he allegedly strangled her to death. He later took her mangalsutra and earrings to make the murder appear as a case of theft.

Police analysed CCTV footage and mobile phone records, and formed four special teams under 'Operation Silent Cobra' to trace the accused. He was arrested and produced before a court. The stolen gold ornaments were recovered.

Resentment brews as Daringbadi beans branded as Koraput Coffee

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, Jan 15: Coffee grown in Daringbadi is losing its distinct identity as it is being marketed under the Koraput brand, triggering concern and discontent among locals and experts.

Despite the need for a separate brand for coffee grown in Daringbadi, the government has allegedly failed to give it due importance. The administration has not yet developed a dedicated branding or promotion strategy for Daringbadi coffee. As a result, the beans are harvested and processed in the traditional manner and then handed over to Koraput, which sells it under its own brand, projecting it as a local product.

This practice has sparked debate, with many arguing that Koraput Coffee is effectively "consolidating" the future of Daringbadi coffee by erasing its identity.

The Kandhamal district administration has also



drawn criticism for its lack of focus on the issue. Coffee cultivation in Daringbadi began in the 1970s under the Soil Conservation department. While the exact year remains unclear, the cash crop was initially cultivated on about 45 hectares. Due to poor maintenance, plantations now survive on around 25 hectares only.

Shade-providing acacia and silver oak trees, which protect coffee plants, were damaged during the cyclonic storms Phailin and Hudhud. However, those have not been replanted to date. Locals allege that coffee plantations have suffered

from neglect since their inception, threatening productivity and quality.

The state Chief Secretary has reportedly assured that discussions will be held with experts to address the issue, but tangible steps towards branding and conservation are yet to be seen.

Fresh plantation work at the Daringbadi coffee estates is being neglected, even as questions persist over management and security lapses.

Earlier, the Soil Conservation department had leased the project to a private agency, but after allegations of financial irregularities, Koraput Coffee was given the lease for one year. For the past two years, coffee procurement and primary processing have been handled under the TDCCS of the Baliguda ITDA, with the produce supplied to Koraput Coffee.

Black pepper is also being cultivated within the coffee gardens. However, the absence of a boundary wall has reportedly led to

attention was drawn to the need to remove aging coffee plants and undertake fresh plantation. Garg assured that the matter would be discussed with experts and appropriate steps would be taken, residents said.

The injured constables were treated at the Nayagarh district headquar-

ters hospital and later discharged. Police have detained one person in connection with the incident and are questioning him, officials said.

Nayagarh Excise department IIC Suresh Chandra Tandi said the raid was conducted after receiving information that a man identified as Jagabandhu Sandha was selling country liquor in the village. He said the team seized 10 litres of country liquor and arrested Jagabandhu, but was attacked while escorting him to the vehicle.

Tandi said Jagabandhu's brother, Gopi Sandha, initially objected to the arrest, after which their nephew, Bapuni Sandha, and four to five others joined and assaulted the team. He added that police assistance was not taken as the site was

Mob attacks Excise team

Three constables injured, arrested accused freed and seized liquor snatched away

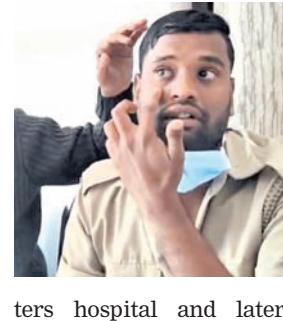
POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Jan 15: A special team of the Excise department was attacked by a mob during a raid in Bodapada village under Nayagarh Sadar police station Thursday, leaving three constables injured.

The attackers also freed an arrested suspect along with the seized liquor, officials said.

An Excise team had gone to Bodapada village to conduct a raid following a tip-off about illegal country liquor sales. During the operation, constables Kailalya Swain, Debi Prasad Pani and Nila Lohit Mallik sustained injuries in a mob attack. Family members of the accused allegedly overpowered the team and escaped with the seized liquor and the arrested man.

The injured constables were treated at the Nayagarh district headquar-



near a roadside junction about 2-3 km from Nayagarh town.

The raiding team included three constables, one woman constable, the IIC and the driver, Tandi said.

Nayagarh Sadar police station IIC Sarat Chandra Sethi said a case (13/26) has been registered against five persons, based on the Excise department's complaint. One suspect has been detained and raids are under way to arrest the others.

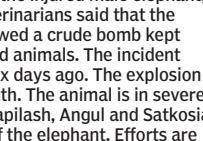
Meanwhile, some villagers, speaking on condition of anonymity, alleged that Jagabandhu was returning after bathing in a pond in the morning when Excise personnel stopped and questioned him on suspicion of selling liquor. They claimed that when his brother asked why Jagabandhu was being detained and beaten, he was also assaulted.

As news of the incident spread, tension gripped the village. Villagers questioned why the Excise department was harassing innocent residents without valid reasons; allegations that authorities have denied.

Elephant critical after chewing bomb

Angul: An elephant was found in a critical condition after it reportedly chewed a crude bomb in Bantala area of Angul district, sources said Thursday. The incident took place near Patharagada Sahi of Balukata village under the Bantala Range of Angul Forest Division.

After getting information from locals, Forest department officials have started treatment of the injured male elephant, stated to be around six to seven years old. Veterinarians said that the elephant is suspected to have accidentally chewed a crude bomb kept illegally in the forest apparently for hunting wild animals. The incident was believed to have occurred around five to six days ago. The explosion caused deep wounds inside the elephant's mouth. The animal is in severe pain and unable to eat properly. Teams from Kapilash, Angul and Satkosia have reached the spot and started treatment of the elephant. Efforts are underway to stabilise the animal and prevent infection.



Woman bludgeoned to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Jan 15: An elderly tribal woman was allegedly bludgeoned to death in Shankar Goudpada area under Sundargarh Town police station limits Thursday.

The deceased has been identified as Gurubari Majhi, 65, of Goudpada village.

According to sources,

local residents noticed a blood-soaked body of a woman lying near the village pond Thursday morning and immediately informed the Town police station. Acting on the alert, police reached the spot along with a scientific team and launched an investigation. A blood-stained stone was recovered near the body and

seized by police. Preliminary investigation suggests that the woman was killed after being struck on the head with the stone.

Police took custody of the body and sent it to the district headquarters hospital for post-mortem examination. The motive behind the murder and the identity of the accused are yet to be ascertained.

Villagers protest during survey for NALCO mine

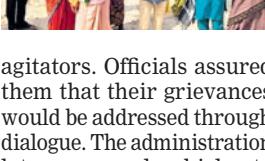
POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhendipada, Jan 15: Tension prevailed at Gopiballavpur village under Barapada panchayat in Chhendipada block of Angul district after affected villagers staged a strong protest against survey work for NALCO's proposed Utkal-E coal mine.

Displaced and partially affected residents blocked the road connecting the village to the coal mining area holding placards and demonstrated against the ongoing survey Thursday.

The protesters alleged that despite land acquisition being carried out since 2011 for the Utkal D and E coal blocks, they have not received promised rehabilitation, employment, compensation or other benefits.

According to the villagers, NALCO and its contractors have resumed survey work for coal extraction at Utkal-E block despite



agitators. Officials assured them that their grievances would be addressed through dialogue. The administration later arranged vehicles to drop the protesters back near their village, officials said.

However, the agitators expressed dissatisfaction, alleging that the administration was not giving due attention to their demands.

They further accused the police of abandoning them midway while escorting them back, a claim disputed by officials.

According to the villagers, protesters maintained that without concrete action, their agitation would continue.

pending issues related to rehabilitation and resettlement. The protesters said their three-point charter of demands — permanent employment, adequate compensation and proper rehabilitation — remains unfulfilled, prompting over a hundred men and women to stage a sit-in on the road.

In the evening, Chhendipada Tehsildar Manas Ray, Sub-Collector Mayadhar Behera, SDPO Ramakanta Mahalick and Nisha police station IIC Bibeckananda Mohanty visited the site and held talks with the protesters. Officials reiterated that efforts were underway to construct a rehabilitation and resettlement colony and temporary employment through mine developer and operator arrangements would be discussed.

However, the cause behind the fire, which was doused around 7am, is yet to be determined.

Further, protesters maintained that without concrete action, their agitation would continue.

There were no reports of any injury or fatality in the incident, the official said. "The dryer section of the factory has been completely gutted, and assessment is underway to determine the extent of damage to the other wings," he said.

The blaze erupted around 11.35pm Wednesday in the dryer section of the factory in Panamra area, he said.

There were no reports of any injury or fatality in the incident, the official said. "The dryer section of the factory has been completely gutted, and assessment is underway to determine the extent of damage to the other wings," he said.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.irops.gov.in

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.

Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/Proj/

PR-229/Cf/25-26 Bhubaneswar

Ethanol factory charred in blaze

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Jan 15: An ethanol manufacturing factory in Subarnapur district suffered extensive damage after a fire broke out at the unit, an official said Thursday.

The blaze erupted around 11.35pm Wednesday in the dryer section of the factory in Panamra area, he said.

There were no reports of any injury or fatality in the incident, the official said. "The dryer section of the factory has been completely gutted, and assessment is underway to determine the extent of damage to the other wings," he said.

The cause behind the fire, which was doused around 7am, is yet to be determined.

Further, protesters maintained that without concrete action, their agitation would continue.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

e-Tender Notice No. SNTPBSSIG-01 2026-MSDAC, Date : 09.01.2026

NAME OF WORK : PROVISION OF

MSDAC TO INCREASE RELIABILITY IN ABS SECTION FROM MACHAPURU TO KHURDA ROAD AND AT RAJATHGARH, JORANDA ROAD, SADASHIBPUR, DHENKANAL, HINDOL ROAD & TALCHER ROAD STATIONS OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY WITH ALTERATION OF EIS OF MIS HITACHI RAIL STS INDIA PVT. LTD. MAKE AT BHUBANESWAR, MEDHA SERVO DRIVES MAKE AT HINDOL ROAD, BHUBANESWAR NEW, MANCHESWAR & TALCHER ROAD, M/S SIEMENS RAIL AUTOMATION (P) LTD. WESTRACE MK-II MAKE AT RAJATHGARH, SADASHIBPUR, DHENKANAL, MACHAPURU, GURUDHJATIA, CHARBATIA, SALAGAON, NERGUNDI & CUTTACK; WESTRACE MK-I MAKE AT BARANG & RETANG, KYOSAN MAKE AT JORANDA ROAD STATION.

Approximate Advertised Value :

₹143,36,81,896.39, EMD : ₹73,18,400/- Completion Period : 18 Months.

Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 Hrs. of 11.01.2026.

No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.irops.gov.in

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.

Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/Proj/

PR-229/Cf/25-26 Bhubaneswar

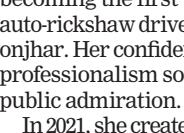
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Sd./ Executive Officer, Paradeep Municipality

FROM ADVERSITY TO DRIVER'S SEAT

Santoshi Deo's journey of empowerment

PNN & AGENCIES



gender norms in 2015 by becoming the first woman auto-rickshaw driver in Keonjhar. Her confidence and professionalism soon won public admiration.

In 2021, she created history once again by becoming Odisha's first woman Mo Bus driver in Bhubaneswar, motivating countless women across the state to explore non-traditional careers in the transport sector.

Continuing to defy stereotypes, Santoshi trained to operate heavy machinery and went on to drive a 40-metric-tonne Volvo truck at the Guali site in Keonjhar district with Triveni Private Limited—a field traditionally dominated by men. Her work reaffirmed that skill, competence, and commitment

transcend gender. Her journey is marked by extraordinary determination. Santoshi drove her auto-rickshaw nearly 1,600 kilometres to New Delhi to pursue justice in her personal legal battles and to voice her concerns before national leaders.

She later undertook another remarkable journey from Keonjhar to Ayodhya to attend the Ram Mandir inauguration, earning admiration across several states for her endurance and spirit.

Her inspiring life story was celebrated during the National Road Safety Month event in January 2026, where Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi hailed her as the "Daughter of Keonjhar" and a proud symbol of Odia courage, perseverance, and self-belief.

Santoshi Deo is also a beneficiary of the AMA SuVahak scheme, a flagship initiative of the Commerce and Transport department, Government of

Odisha, aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs in the transport sector. The scheme offers interest-free loans of up to Rs 10 lakh, along with additional subsidies for electric vehicles and comprehensive institutional support to promote sustainable livelihoods.

With the support of AMA SuVahak, Santoshi today

FOCUS DIPLOMACY

FOREIGN POLICY FIASCO



A hero fears nothing,
complains of nothing and
never gives away.

THE MOTHER

Gangster Imperialism

There is a method behind the apparent madness of US President Donald Trump's transactional, spheres-of-influence approach to geopolitics and the global economy. Nowhere has this logic been clearer than in his administration's illegal abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and its ongoing efforts to secure control of the country's oil reserves by installing a client regime.

At the core of Trump's revival of the Monroe Doctrine – or the "Dongre Doctrine," as he has rebranded it – lies the belief that the United States can act with impunity within its self-defined "backyard," and that other major powers, particularly China, can do the same in theirs. At the same time, the US reserves the right to advance its strategic interests wherever it sees fit, including Greenland.

This approach – aptly described by Indian economist Prabhat Patnaik as "gangster imperialism" – harks back to capitalism's colonial roots, when overt hierarchies among peoples and polities were based on relative power.

Setting aside the profound moral and legal issues raised by Trump's strategy, can it actually work? Can carving up the world among major powers deliver a more stable and dynamic capitalism at a time when the global economy appears increasingly volatile and rudderless?

If history is any guide, the answer is no. Over the past two centuries, capitalism has oscillated between periods of intense conflict among competing states and phases in which a single dominant superpower acted as both rule maker and enforcer. In the 19th century, that role was played by the United Kingdom, which built a colonial empire larger than those of its European rivals. Since the mid-20th century, the US has largely occupied this position.

While hegemony never meant an absence of war, it did limit large-scale inter-imperialist conflicts of the kind that preceded World War I, famously described by Vladimir Lenin as wars in which state-backed private capital fought for control over economic territory. Relative stability, such as it was, rested on a combination of overwhelming military power and a framework of global rules and institutions designed to keep geopolitical rivalries in check.

Today, however, America's imperial reach is both overextended and waning. Trump's foreign-policy agenda is premised on the view that while US-led globalization once served the interests of American capital – especially finance – its returns have diminished with the rise of emerging powers like China. His proposed remedy is to rely on military dominance and residual economic power to secure direct control over resources and markets in regions he views as being within America's exclusive sphere of influence. This means abandoning even the pretence of a rules-based international order, removing the fig leaf of promoting democracy and human rights, and shamelessly exhibiting a hoary doctrine of might-makes-right resource grabs.

Even on its own terms, this strategy is unlikely to succeed. While it is clearly disastrous for US workers and smaller firms, it also fuels instability and undermines the long-term interests of large American corporations. Economic resources are not neatly contained within distinct spheres of control, and markets, by their very nature, overlap. Disputes over access, borders, and control are therefore inevitable when one power attempts to assert dominance on every front, raising the likelihood of major wars.

To be sure, some segments of corporate America stand to benefit. The military-industrial complex, for example, has reaped enormous profits from the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. But other powerful interests will lose out. Multinational corporations that depend on vertically disintegrated and geographically dispersed supply chains will be disrupted; financial institutions accustomed to relatively unrestricted cross-border capital flows will see their opportunities narrow; and Big Tech firms, which rely on access to data from around the world, will find themselves shut out of key foreign markets.

The Trump administration has sought to manage these contradictions through a patchwork of coercive demands imposed on various trading partners. But while Trump's bullying may produce some short-term concessions, it is deeply counterproductive. Many countries, including longstanding allies, are already seeking to reduce their dependence on the US by forming new coalitions around specific concerns.

These problems are compounded by Trump's broader economic agenda, which continues to prioritize fossil fuels over emerging technologies like renewables, electric vehicles, and battery storage. As a result, US firms lack the dynamic economies of scale needed for long-term competitiveness. Speculative bubbles fuelled by overhyped AI models and cryptocurrencies are poor substitutes for sustained investment and technological leadership.

Beyond its economic flaws, treating Latin America as America's "backyard" is likely to provoke popular resistance. The US has a long history of trying to dominate the region through military intervention, support for military dictatorships, and sanctions. Those efforts didn't age well, and with inequality and economic insecurity rising across much of Latin America, conditions are already ripe for social and political upheaval.

The consequences will be felt in the US as well, but the rest of the world cannot afford to wait for Trump – or a future administration – to change course. The caution shown by some European leaders is not the answer; nor is reactive aggression or a retreat into inward-looking isolationism.

Given the scale and urgency of today's global challenges, it is clear that confronting Trump's brand of gangster imperialism requires international cooperation that does not hinge on US consent. Collective action is no longer optional. To counter the threat posed by a rogue America, it is the only viable path.

The writer, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is a member of the Club of Rome's Transformational Economics Commission.

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WISDOM CORNER

We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated.

MAYA ANGELOU

The ego is nothing other than the focus of conscious attention.

ALAN WATTS

Be brave. Take risks. Nothing can substitute experience.

PAULO COELHO

So who is in charge of India's foreign policy? On the face of it, that would seem a pretty obvious answer. Dr S Jaishankar as EAM has been the highly visible public face of the Modi government, a peripatetic and seasoned diplomat who has often made headlines for his sharp and pointed sound bites. And yet, there have been enough moments when even the media-savvy minister must wonder just who is calling the shots in South Block. The latest instance of diplomatic confusion is exemplified by the handling of relations with Bangladesh.

Consider this. On 31 October, Jaishankar travelled to Dhaka to attend the funeral of former Bangladesh PM Khaleda Zia, handing over a personal letter of condolence from PM Modi to her son and heir apparent Tariq Rahman. The image of the minister shaking hands with the man most likely to be Bangladesh's next PM suggested a thaw in ties after months of frosty relations. Yet, just two days later, the BCCI issued a directive to the IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) asking it to withdraw the Bangladesh star player, Mustafizur Rahman from its list of contracted players. The private franchise complied without demur, sparking off an angry reaction from Bangladesh government and cricket board which has now declared that it will not play the World T20 matches in India next month as a mark of protest.

So here is the question: what changed in 48 hours between a significant high-level diplomatic engagement and a sudden inexplicable decision to target an individual cricketer? The only apparent shift is the high-decibel campaign launched by so-called 'fringe' Hindutva elements calling on the Modi government to get tough with Dhaka against the backdrop of cases of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. BJP UP MLA, Sangeet Som specifically targeted KKR owner Shahrukh Khan, accusing him of being a 'gaddar' for having signed up Mustafizur. Som got



In normal times, a rational, level-headed government would have ignored the rants of the 'fringe' but in 'new' India, the Hindutva fringe is now 'mainstream'

seen as an urgent firman from the political leadership.

Which brings one back to the original question: who is deciding Indian foreign policy? India's practised diplomatic corps or the home minister and the BJP's sangha parivar brotherhood in saffron? The former have to often walk a delicate tightrope, patiently balancing national interests within a larger framework of achieving credible strategic goals in the neighbourhood. By contrast, the netas and their supporters have no such constraints. There is an election in Assam and West Bengal just months away and ratcheting up anti-Bangladesh sentiment is seen as a useful weapon to win votes. Where a nuanced diplomatic policy would strongly protest the attacks on Bangladeshi Hindus without making it a prime time spectacle, the political leadership and their cheerleaders prefer riding a wave of emotion that they hope will grab headlines and earn them electoral dividend. Consequently, rather than building bridges with Dhaka, we have only created a wall of mistrust and anger that could only exacerbate an already fraught situation, further emboldening Islamic fanatics in that country. Imagine the embarrassment now if Bangladesh doesn't come to play in India or prefers neighbouring Sri Lanka as a 'safer' country.

This isn't about making the usual trite argument about the need to separate sports and politics. Such distinctions are impossible to make at a time when sports, especially cricket in the sub-continent context, is a graphic demonstration of Indian 'soft power' to the wider world. The BCCI exercises hegemonic dominance over the cricket world with Home Minister Amit Shah's son, Jay Shah the president of the International Cricket Council and easily the most powerful man in the sport. Then be it refusing to shake hands with Pakistani players at the Asia Cup or now ostracising a Bangladesh player, Indian cricket calls the shots. That 'superpower' status is now being used, rather misused, to play big bully on behalf of the government. Indeed, the decision to remove Mustafizur wasn't even taken after consulting the IPL Governing Council but instead

policy choices being driven by sentiment rather than common sense. In 2024, there was an entirely avoidable spat with tiny Maldives sparked off by incendiary tweets on both sides. It eventually required diplomatic finesse to slowly paper over the cracks. Last year, in the immediate aftermath of Op Sindoora, the Modi government revoked the security clearances for Turkish airport ground handling firm, Celebi, citing national security concerns. It was again a sudden decision taken against the backdrop of Turkey being accused of siding with Islamabad in the war against India. Here again, a more refined foreign policy would have avoided an instant confrontation with Ankara but the impatient social media warriors have no time for any complex, well-considered messaging.

Perhaps the most obvious example of just how an inconsistent foreign policy matrix is influenced by rabble-rousers is provided by New Delhi's initial response to Beijing in the aftermath of the Galwan clashes in 2020. From banning Tik-Tok to calls for boycotting Chinese goods, the right wing internet's perpetually angry brigade determinedly sought to escalate the conflict by taking measures that were frankly no deterrent to an expansionist regime. Five years later, the BJP-RSS leadership is hosting a visiting Chinese Communist Party delegation, treating the engagement as routine politics. When the Congress engaged with Beijing's political class, their leadership was accused of betraying national interests. Now, it's business as usual. The hypocrisy is staggering.

Post-script: At the mall a few days ago, I saw a group of young men lining up to buy sweaters at highly discounted prices. As they furiously shopped, I noticed that the sweaters carried a 'Made in Bangladesh' tag. So much easier to target a cricketer than a textile manufacturer.

The writer is senior journalist and author.

WHEN SOCIAL MEDIA OUTRAGE BEGINS TO INFLUENCE SENSITIVE FOREIGN POLICY CHOICES, THEN IT ENTERS A VERY DANGEROUS TERRAIN

Rajdeep Sardesai

Over the past two centuries, capitalism has oscillated between periods of intense conflict among competing states and phases in which a single dominant superpower acted as both rule maker and enforcer

Over the past two centuries, capitalism has oscillated between periods of intense conflict among competing states and phases in which a single dominant superpower acted as both rule maker and enforcer

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

India's development dilemma



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

DESPITE SUSTAINED HEADLINE GROWTH, INDIA'S PER CAPITA INCOME REMAINS FAR BELOW THE THRESHOLD FOR UPPER MIDDLE INCOME STATUS

India's aspiration to emerge as a developed economy remains more rhetorical than real. Although the country moved from low-income to lower-middle-income status in 2007, it has remained trapped in this category for nearly two decades. Despite sustained headline growth, India's per capita income – hovering between \$2,400 and \$2,700 in recent years – remains far below the threshold for upper-middle-income status (\$4,466-13,845) and even further from high-income classification (above \$13,845). This prolonged stagnation reflects deep-rooted structural weaknesses rather than a temporary slowdown.

As repeatedly emphasised by the World Bank, countries that fail to transition from investment- or consumption-led growth to innovation- and productivity-driven development risk falling into the middle-income trap. India exhibits many of these warning signs: jobless growth, weak manufacturing performance, stagnant real wages, skill mismatches, low innovation intensity, and widening inequality. The failure of manufacturing is particularly consequential. Historically, manufacturing has been the engine of productivity growth and large-

scale employment in successful late-industrialising economies. In India, however, the absence of high-value manufacturing, limited technological upgrading, and weak integration into global value chains have constrained the creation of quality jobs.

External sector developments raise further concerns. While gross foreign direct investment inflows remained strong reaching about \$81 billion in FY25, net FDI collapsed dramatically. Net inflows fell by nearly 96% in FY25 to around \$0.4 billion, primarily due to higher profit repatriation by foreign firms and a sharp surge in outward investment by Indian companies.

Financial markets reflect similar stress. Foreign Portfolio Investors recorded unprecedented equity outflows in 2025, amounting to about Rs 1.58 lakh crore – the highest annual outflow on record.

This trend persisted into early 2026. Although domestic institutional investors partially offset these withdrawals, foreign investor confidence remained fragile. Currency markets mirrored these pressures. The rupee, which averaged around 85.80 per US dollar at the beginning of 2025, crossed the psychologically significant

90-mark in December 2025 for the first time. Over the year, the rupee depreciated by nearly 6%, making it among the worst performing currencies in Asia.

Household finances represent another critical vulnerability. Indian households are increasingly relying on borrowing to sustain consumption, signaling a shift away from traditional saving behaviour. RBI data show that between 2019 and 2025, household liabilities increased by 102%, while assets rose by only 48%. Household debt climbed to 41.3% of GDP, well above its five-year average of 38.3%, with consumption-related loans accounting for the bulk of this increase. Net household financial savings declined from 11.5% of GDP in FY21 to 5.1% in FY23.

Of particular concern is the growing divergence between rapid bank credit expansion and much slower deposit growth, even as private investment remains subdued. Fiscal indicators further compound these challenges. Despite claims of robust economic growth, tax revenues have failed to rise proportionately. The central tax-to-GDP ratio (before devolution to states) declined from 11.7% in FY24 to 11.5% in FY25

and is projected to fall further to 10.8% in FY26, even after substantial dividend transfers from RBI. This highlights a fundamental weakness: economic growth is not translating into enhanced fiscal capacity, which is essential for sustainable development. Central government debt is estimated at 56.1% of GDP in FY26, far exceeding the 40% target envisaged under FRBM framework.

Although India continues to project itself as the fastest-growing major economy, this growth has not translated into improvements in human well-being. Gains remain disproportionately concentrated among higher-income groups, leading to rising inequality.

Escaping this development impasse requires a decisive shift towards innovation-led and productivity-driven growth, a stronger and more technologically advanced manufacturing base, improved governance, and sustained public investment in education, health, and social security. Without such a transformation, India's ambition of becoming a developed economy will continue to remain elusive.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist & columnist.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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OrissaPOST

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Digital safety for women

Sir, Over the years, there has been an increased incidence of online image-based sexual abuse cases in India. Usually digitally altered sexually explicit images are uploaded on social media platforms and shared with impunity. Consequently, the victims are put to shame and it is hard to overcome the stigma attached to it. By the time any action is taken, the posted content will have reached thousands of people. Lukewarm attitude of the police makes survivors quiet and they show a stoic resignation to their fate. The Information Technology Amendment Rules require platforms to remove the content within 24 hours but it may take a long time to do so. Once such content is online, it is online. Usually the offender is punished symbolically whereas the survivor is left to deal with the consequences. Severe punishments are not given to the offenders. In contrast, countries like Canada and Germany provide tougher safeguards to women. Platform accountability is an illusion. India must learn lessons from other countries and provide digital safety to women.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

Iran in a strategic trap

Sir, Iran's security-first response to domestic unrest exposes a deepening rupture between the state and the society. While coercive tools such as communication shutdowns and public intimidation may deliver short-term control, they steadily erode the regime's legitimacy and lock it into a strategic trap: any concession is framed as weakness, yet relentless repression only radicalises dissent. The economic fallout compounds this crisis, accelerating capital flight and brain drain, worsening inflation and currency depreciation, and alienating younger generations especially women, thereby turning episodic protests into a lasting, structural challenge to state authority. Despite the intensity of the turmoil, an imminent collapse remains unlikely given the regime's historical resilience, elite cohesion, and the central role of the Revolutionary Guards. The more probable path is authoritarian hardening, greater militarisation of governance and the burial of reformist impulses. This, however, risks producing a "brittle state": outwardly strong but hollowed out internally.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH (JHARKHAND)

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-

"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.

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.

He said public announce-

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

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.

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 'Kollo', 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 artistes 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 'Kollo' (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'.

'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

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.

"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.

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

DECISIVE STEP TOWARDS GREEN TRANSPORTATION

UP takes strong leap in EV charging infra

AGENCIES

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, Kannur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, and Agra.

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



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.

national

of the
day quote

When the BJP becomes weak, it turns more communal. The BJP leaders are 'aarop-jeevi' (living on allegations). Their only job is to level allegations against the Samajwadi Party

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

ORGAN TRANSPORTED ON COMMERCIAL FLIGHT

Authorities in Kerala used a commercial airline for the first time Thursday, flying a kidney from Kannur to Thiruvananthapuram, officials said here. The kidney of Ayona Monson (17), who died after falling from a school building in Payyavoor in Kannur district, was transported to Thiruvananthapuram Medical College on an IndiGo Airlines flight. The kidney will be transplanted to a 27-year-old woman from Parasala



2023 Parliament security breach Dec 13 can't be coincidence: Delhi HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The Delhi High Court Thursday said the 2023 Parliament security breach happening December 13, the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, could not be a coincidence.

"Bilateral ties have expanded and deepened across a wide range of areas, particularly following the historic visit of EU College of Commissioners to India in February 2025," the MEA said in a statement.

agenda at the summit.

India and the European Union have been strategic partners since 2004. The 15th India-EU Summit was held virtually in July, 2020.

"Bilateral ties have expanded and deepened across a wide range of areas, particularly following the historic visit of EU College of Commissioners to India in February 2025," the MEA said in a statement.

"The participation of EU leaders as Chief Guests at the 77th Republic Day and the 16th India-EU Summit will further deepen the India-EU Strategic Partnership and advance collaboration in priority areas of mutual interest," the ministry said.

The new strategic agenda, likely to be adopted at the summit, identifies five areas of shared interest that include security and defence, connectivity and global issues, prosperity, sustainability, and technology and innovation.

Through Operation Sindoor, India has not only demonstrated its military strength but also its national character

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

international



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



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 DICTHER | 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.

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.

Activists warned that hangings 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.

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 hangings 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 harassment are frequent. Russia has long complained that its own diplomats are routinely harassed in major Western capitals.



■ 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



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.

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

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 Greenland and

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.

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

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.

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.



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



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 FY26. Its total income, including other income, stood at ₹2,704.03 crore, up 12.22 per cent in Q3/FY26.

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.

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.

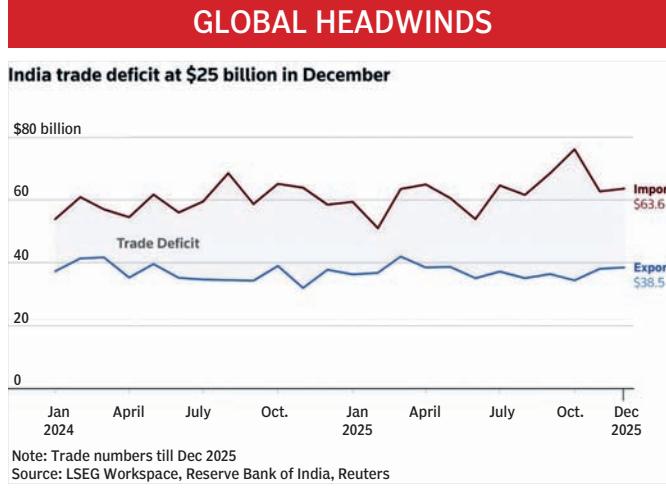
Trade deficit, difference between imports and exports, stood at ₹25.04 billion in December 2025 as against ₹24.53 billion in November last year and ₹22 billion in December 2024.

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



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.

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.

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.

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DECEMBER TRADE

- Imports rose by 8.7% to \$63.55bn
- Exports grew 1.87% to \$38.5bn
- Trade deficit stood at \$25.04bn

Commenting on the data, Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Chairman A Sakthivel said the December 2025 export performance showing a modest growth of 2.89 per cent for the RMG (ready-made garments) sector reflects both the resilience and adaptability of the industry in a challenging global environment.

"While demand in key international markets such as the US has been uneven due to inflationary pressures and geopolitical uncertainties, Indian apparel exporters have managed to hold ground through product diversification, improved compliance, and a stronger focus on value-added segments," Sakthivel said.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President SC Ralhan said the continued expansion of exports is a clear testament to the resilience, agility and growing global competitiveness of Indian exporters.

"Exporters have not only weathered global uncertainties but have also capitalized on emerging opportunities through market diversification, value addition and product competitiveness, aided by a supportive policy ecosystem," Ralhan added.

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 ₹28,89,000 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 Saraf 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 Lemmon 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,



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

a diverse showcase of Indian weaves—Taneira continues to honour the hands behind the loom while offering customers meaningful access to India's textile heritage.

Speaking on the offers, Sudhir Ghosh, Business Manager, Taneira, said, "At Taneira, our focus has always been on celebrating India's rich weaving traditions through authentic, handcrafted creations.

Through the Season Sale, we invite customers in Bhubaneswar to explore a curated selection of the finest Indian sarees and ensembles, rooted in authenticity and craftsmanship.

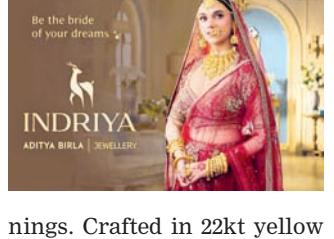
Built on its five core pillars—trust, authenticity, purity, craftsmanship, and

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.

Indriya launches bridal campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK



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."

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.

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 puja, workwear, and everyday comfort. The store also features a dedicated wedding zone, showcasing exquisite sarees and ensembles crafted

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

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 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

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India Open chaos takes centre stage



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 commenting. 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

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.

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

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

play, warm-up courts and media zones as part of an ongoing review process.

"We acknowledge the concerns raised by several players and teams regarding venue conditions at the YONEX-SUNRISE India Open 2026, held at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex in New Delhi," the BWF said in a statement.

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The grander showpiece in August, however, will pose a different challenge, with high temperatures and humidity expected during the summer months.

While pollution levels are typically lower during that period, sustained heat and humidity could place additional demands on athletes, officials and operational systems.

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.

"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.

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