



## Dia's concern

Actor Dia Mirza says breathing clean air is not a privilege, it is a right

LEISURE | P2



## Trump's threats spark fury

Trump's Greenland ambitions and tariff threats alarm allies, risking NATO unity and rupture with Washington

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Gold breaches ₹1.5L

Gold prices jump ₹5,100 Tuesday to breach the crucial ₹1.5 lakh-per-10-gram milestone, driven by strong demand in domestic and int'l markets

BUSINESS | P11



## SKY's wishes

Suryakumar Yadav would want the attacking batter in him to front up in the five-match T20I series against NZ

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## Census: House listing in state begins April 16

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The state government Tuesday announced that a month-long house listing exercise for Census 2027 would begin April 16, a notification said.

The notification issued by the Revenue and Disaster Management department said that the house listing exercise will be carried out across the state from April 16 to May 15, 2026.

"During the period of 30 days with an option for self-enumeration, which shall be conducted in 15 days' time period between April 1, 2026 and April 15, 2026, just before the start of house-to-house listing operations," it said.

According to sources at the Census Directorate, under the provision of self-enumeration, residents willing to submit their details on their own can do so between April 1 and April 15, 2026.

They said the census will be conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the officials will focus on house listing, while the second phase, scheduled to

begin in February 2027, to involve a door-to-door population census or collecting individual demographic details.

Nearly one lakh people will be engaged in enumeration in Odisha, and each official will cover around 200 households. One supervisor will monitor the work of six enumerators. Enumerators will be paid an incentive of ₹25,000 for their services, they said.

The training for enumerators has been conducted for the last six months and pre-test surveys have already been conducted in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Nearly 90 per cent of the census data is likely to be collected through digital mode.

Significantly, the official 2021 Census data could not be released because the national census, planned for 2021, was postponed due to Covid-19 pandemic and has faced further delays, now rescheduled for completion by 2027. While some preliminary data or projections for 2021 population exist, the official census results from the national exercise are still pending.



### Nearly 90% of the census data is likely to be collected through digital mode

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### Nitin Nabin takes over as BJP nat'l president

**NEW DELHI:** Nitin Nabin was Tuesday formally declared as the BJP national president, succeeding JP Nadda and



beginning a new chapter for the party as it seeks to tighten its grip on politics in the country.

K Laxman, returning officer for BJP organisational polls, declared the results of the organisational elections and handed over the certificate of election to 45-year-old Nabin, the youngest ever to occupy the top party post. PM Narendra Modi, Nadda, senior ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, among others, were present.

P9

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



*Not only Central agencies, but also state police officers of certain ranks are competent to investigate and file chargesheet against Central government employees in cases relating to offences punishable under Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, the Supreme Court has clarified. Upholding a Rajasthan High Court order that had refused to quash a corruption case against a Central government employee, the top court also said that no prior permission from CBI is required for the purpose*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** The Supreme Court has ruled that state police authorities can investigate and file a chargesheet against Union government employees when it comes to the offences of bribery and corruption under Prevention of Corruption Act.

The court has also made it clear that no prior permission from the CBI is required before registering a case against a Central government employee by the state police.



A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Satish Chandra Sharma said Monday that offences under PC Act can be investigated by a state agency or a central agency or any police agency, as can be seen from Section 17 of the Act, with the qualification that the police officer shall be of a particular rank.

"Section 17 does not exclude or prevent the state police or a special agency of the state from registering a crime or investigating cases relating to bribery, corruption and misconduct against Central government employees," the court said.

"It is for convenience and to avoid duplication of work that the CBI -- a specialised investigating agency under the Special Police Establishment -- is en-

trusted with the task of investigation of the cases of corruption and bribery against the employees of the Central government and its undertakings and the Anti-Corruption Bureau -- a specialised investigating agency of the state -- is entrusted with the task of investigation of the cases of corruption and bribery against the employees of the state government and its undertakings," the bench ruled.

Offences under PC Act are cognisable and can, therefore, be investigated by the state police, it added. The SC order came while upholding a Rajasthan High Court order that had refused to quash a corruption case against a Central govt employee.

The Rajasthan High Court had ruled that the Rajasthan ACB had jurisdiction to register the criminal case under provisions of PC Act, despite the fact that the accused was a Central government employee.

"The High Court has taken the correct view while saying that it is incorrect to say that it is only the CBI who could have instituted the prosecution," the top court said.

## Karnataka DGP suspended over obscene video

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Jan 20:** Karnataka government has placed DGP (Civil Rights Enforcement) K Ramachandra Rao under suspension with immediate effect, citing conduct unbecoming of a government servant and causing embarrassment to the state administration.

News channels beamed video Monday purportedly showing Rao in compromising position with women while in uniform inside his official chamber.



The video went viral on the social media as well. Rao sought to reject the videos outright terming them "fabricated and false".

In an official order issued by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR) Monday, the government said videos and news reports widely circulated on television channels and digital media platforms showed the senior IPS officer acting in an "obscene manner", prompting the decision to initiate disciplinary action.

## WOMEN DRIVERS IN 'AMA BUS' SOON



**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** In a major step towards enhancing women's safety and promoting inclusive employment, the state government has placed special emphasis on inducting women drivers into the 'Ama Bus' Service.

Chairing a high-level review meeting on performance and operations of 'Ama Bus' Service, Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mohapatra announced that 20 women candidates from Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) will be sent to Pune January 31 for specialised training in e-bus driving.

He said a dedicated driver training institute will soon be set up at CRUT depot. The institute will focus on practical driving skills, behavioural training, traffic rules, lane discipline, and road safety.

Directing officials to strengthen public transport connectivity, Mohapatra asked them to expedite the ongoing expansion of 'Ama Bus' Services in Baripada, Keonjhar, and Angul.

The minister discussed several structural, safety, and service-improvement measures aimed at strengthening the public transport.

Emphasising passenger safety, Mohapatra said alcohol consumption remains one of the leading causes of road accidents. To address this, alcohol testing has been made mandatory for all 'Ama Bus' drivers. Over the past year, 1.97 lakh alcohol tests were conducted through pre- and post-trip checks as well as random inspections during operational hours. Of these, 19 drivers tested positive for alcohol consumption. The drivers were arrested, and their licences were suspended for three months. The cancelled licences were forwarded to the respective Regional Transport Officers.

Mohapatra further stated that CRUT, as a pioneering government-run public transport organisation, has extended immediate compassionate assistance to the families of accident victims and provided insurance coverage exceeding ₹4 crore to the families of those who lost their lives in road accidents.

## Trump makes Macron's private message public

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Paris, Jan 20:** While Europe is pushing back publicly against US President Donald Trump over Greenland, the language appears softer behind the scenes.

Trump published a text message Tuesday that he received from French President Emmanuel Macron, confirmed as genuine by Macron's office.

Starting with "My friend," Macron's tone was more deferential than the criticism that France and some of its European partner nations are openly voicing against Trump's push to wrest Greenland from NATO ally Denmark. Before broaching the Greenland dispute, Macron

opted in his message to first talk about other issues where he and Trump seem to be roughly on the same page. "We are totally in line on Syria. We can do great things on Iran. I do not understand what you are doing on Greenland," he wrote.

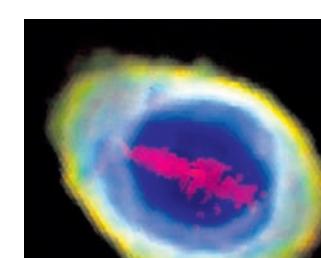
The researchers said it is possible the iron atoms, collectively comparable to the mass of Earth's molten iron core, are the remnants of a rocky planet that was vaporised when the star threw off its outer layers, though they cautioned that such an explanation is mere

## Mysterious 'iron bar' spotted in Ring Nebula

REUTERS

**Washington, Jan 20:** Researchers have spotted a large cloud of iron atoms in the shape of a bar stretching about 3.7 trillion miles (6 trillion km) long across the face of Ring Nebula, a stunning celestial structure residing in our neighborhood of Milky Way galaxy discovered by French astronomer Charles Messier in 1779.

The researchers said it is possible the iron atoms, collectively comparable to the mass of Earth's molten iron core, are the remnants of a rocky planet that was vaporised when the star threw off its outer layers, though they cautioned that such an explanation is mere



conjecture at the moment. The inner rocky planets of our solar system, potentially even Earth, could face the same fate when the sun goes through these same death throes billions of years from now.

The researchers made the obser-

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Cloud of iron atoms stretches across Ring Nebula's face
- It is possible that these atoms are remnants of vaporised rocky planet
- Nebula discovered in 1779 by French astronomer Messier

WHT Enhanced Area Velocity Explorer, on the William Herschel Telescope, located on the Atlantic Ocean island of La Palma in Spain's Canary Islands. "It is exciting to see that even a very familiar object - much studied over many decades - can throw up a new surprise when observed in a new way,"

said astronomer Roger Wesson of Cardiff University in Wales and University College London, lead author of the research published in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, opens new tab.

"It's a classic object for professional and amateur astronomers alike to observe," Wesson said. "Although it's too faint to see with the naked eye, it's quite easy to spot with binoculars. In a small telescope, you can see the ring-like appearance."

The Ring Nebula, also called Messier 57, is located about 2,600 light years from Earth in the constellation Lyra. A light-year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles

(9.5 trillion km). It is believed to have formed roughly 4,000 years ago, very recently in cosmic time.

"You'll find it in many astronomy textbooks," University College London astronomer and study co-author Janet Drew said.

That is why the iron bar is so intriguing.

"No other chemical element that we have detected seems to sit in this same bar. This is weird, frankly. Its importance lies in the simple fact that we have no ready explanation for it, yet," Drew said. "The origin of the iron might trace back to the vaporisation of a planet. But there could be another way to make the feature that doesn't involve a planet."

## leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

## ■ ARIES

Today, you may be stumped by some mysterious and wonderful event. That, or you may encounter an unexpected yet advantageous incident. It may not exactly be path-breaking, but it is sure to make you take stock of things. Also, you may find it difficult to meet deadlines today.

## ■ TAURUS

You are likely to be become too ambitious today and strive to outdo others. So says Ganesha. You will be over eager to do something big, lay your hands on something precious and valuable. Though you are quite likely to succeed to some extent you over enthusiasm may land you in serious problems that may affect your persona; and private life.

## ■ GEMINI

You will be busy organising some religious function today or in visiting a place of religious significance. You will encounter expenses in religious and charitable work. However, you should guard against ignoring your daily work in pursuit of all these matters, says Ganesha.

## ■ CANCER

You will labour more to finish pending tasks. You will give priority to career compared to personal chores. So you will be caught up in your career and business riddles. By evening, however, you will have cheerful moments as Ganesha sees you having cherishing time with your beloved.

## ■ LEO

You will be able to meet all challenges and obstacles successfully. Your ultimate goal is to come out victorious from any situations. There is a possibility that you will have to face severe competition in business or trade. Personal life will proceed without any hiccups though, says Ganesha.

## ■ VIRGO

Your renewed enthusiasm for life will bring about a radical change in you. Ganesha says today is a good time to let others see how important and how brilliant you can be. Your intelligence will become very evident as you demonstrate how things should be done.

## ■ LIBRA

Your renewed enthusiasm for life will bring about a radical change in you. Ganesha says today is a good time to let others see how important and how brilliant you can be. Your intelligence will become very evident as you demonstrate how things should be done.

## ■ SCORPIO

The ground beneath you seems a bit shaky; watch your steps. A time would come when your confidence would be shattered, however, don't let set-backs and failures affect you. Adapt the attitude of 'this too shall pass' and the rest would fall in place, says Ganesha.

## ■ SAGITTARIUS

A cheerful you, your energy level is on an all time high. Ganesha foresees that you will enrol you name for a correspondence or a part-time course. This will boost your confidence and brush up your memory as well. People who are in legal profession will have a rocking day ahead.

## ■ CAPRICORN

You are a die-hard romantic and with every plan to please your sweetheart, you are taking him/her closer to the cloud nine. But, don't live in fantasy world, warns Ganesha, as problems are going to follow you everywhere. If you are a businessman, your rival may give you a hard time. Take proper care of your health, advises Ganesha.

## ■ AQUARIUS

You will remember this day for the rest of life as today you will make some important decisions and give a new direction to your life. You are in for a windfall and cherry on the cake will be all the recognition and rewards you get for your sincerity and hard work, predicts Ganesha.

## ■ PISCES

You will finally realize the worth of your resources today. You will take a decision to increase your savings and clamp down on unnecessary expenses. Your expenses are likely to increase temporarily. It is a good idea to invest in debt schemes today, says Ganesha.

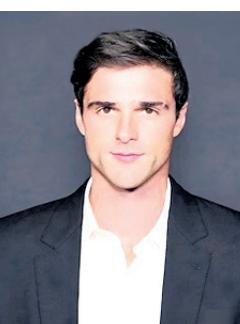


## BILLIE EILISH LAMBASTS TRUMP'S ICE VIOLENCE

American singer-songwriter Billie Eilish took aim at US President Donald Trump's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The 24-year-old was honoured with the MLK Jr. Beloved Community Environmental Justice Award in Atlanta but used her speech to denounce the ICE and Trump's hardline policies on the matter.

## JACOB ELORDI OBSESSED WITH MARGOT ROBBIE

Hollywood actor Jacob Elordi has shared that he has an 'obsession' with his *Wuthering Heights* co-star Margot Robbie. The 28-year-old star plays Heathcliff in Emerald Fennell's upcoming adaptation of Emily Bronte's novel and revealed that he was transfixed by his fellow Australian during the making of the movie, reports *Female First UK*.



## Breathing clean air is a right: Dia

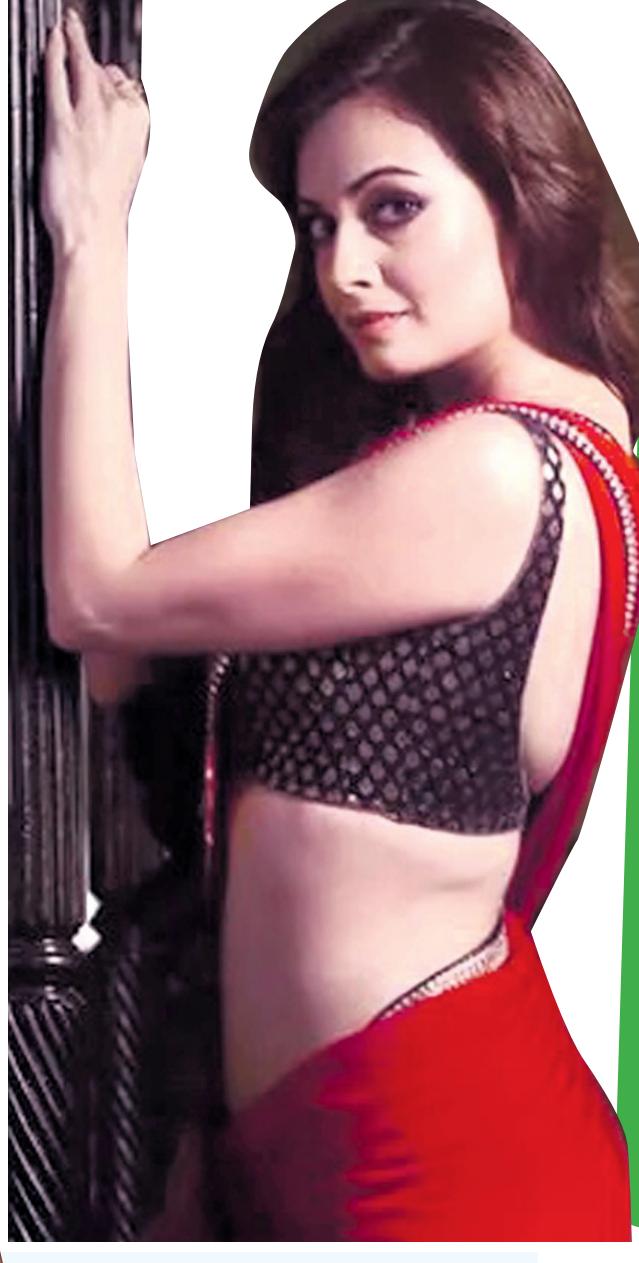
**Mumbai:** Air pollution in Indian cities is no longer a winter headline reserved for Delhi. From Mumbai to Hyderabad, hazardous AQI levels are becoming part of everyday life, turning what was once seen as a seasonal inconvenience into a nationwide public health emergency. In Hyderabad, where air quality recently spiked into dangerous territory, the crisis is now impossible to ignore. Actor and environmentalist Dia Mirza, who grew up in the city and has spent nearly a decade working on environmental advocacy, views this shift with alarm.

Speaking to a news portal, the actress said, "Clean air has always been central to my environmental activism. For nearly a decade,

we've been saying one thing: the right to life begins with the right to breathe, and the right to breathe begins with the right to breathe clean air."

Air pollution isn't always visible unless it becomes extremely dense, which is why people notice it more in winter. But data shows that air quality remains poor for long stretches through the year. When 21 of the world's most polluted cities are in India, we have to acknowledge this as a national health emergency, added Dia.

AGENCIES



## Rakul Preet's twist to 'Get Ready With Me'

**Mumbai:** Actress Rakul Preet Singh has decided to give her own unique twist to the 'Get Ready With Me' trend.

The GRWM trend, short for 'Get Ready With Me,' is a popular social media phenomenon where creators film themselves preparing for an event or daily activity, showcasing their makeup, hair, and outfit choices while chatting casually with their audience, fostering intimacy and authenticity on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. The actress took to her official Instagram handle and uploaded a video of her own version of 'Get Ready With Me.'

In the clip posted by her on social media, Rakul is seen dressed in casuals without makeup or hair, all set to take us through her transition into her high-glam avatar. However, to everyone's surprise, we suddenly come across an empty chair in the frame, with Rakul nowhere to be seen.

Next, she appears already dolled up in a stunning black dress with golden embellishments. She completed her look with a heavy golden choker necklace and complementary earrings, with her hair tied in a high ponytail.

She called the process 'Get Ready Without Me.'

IANS



## Bhavana defends Toxic's racy scenes

**Chennai:** The teaser of Yash starrer *Toxic*

was launched earlier this month. The intimate scenes from the glimpse made headlines and sparked heated debates throughout the country. Actor Bhavana Menon has recently weighed in on the debate.

Bhavana, who is currently on a promotional spree for her upcoming film *Anomie*, says, "I see all this as a cinema. We are all watching Hollywood films. That's not the kind of mindset people have now. We have a very open-minded audience, especially in Malayalam. Earlier, a lip-kiss scene (would have

shocked audiences). Now people have changed from all that."

Bhavana also added that the audience will embrace the film if it is good; otherwise, they won't. She also clarified that she does not know what the movie is

about, nor had a discussion about it with her friend Geetu Mohandas, the director of *Toxic*.

While the 'Anomie' actor expressed that there is nothing wrong with having opinions, she also added that the teaser has been discussed so much due to another incident from the past.

For the unversed, Bhavana refers to a previous incident where Geetu Mohandas urged Parvathy Thiruvothu to name the Mammootty movie *Kasaba* for the misogynistic dialogues.

AGENCIES



## AJIT's 3-day nat'l theatre fest from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar:** Theatre

lovers here are set for a vibrant cultural experience as the Abhinaya Jagruti Institute of Theatre (AJIT) prepares to stage the 14th edition of its national level theatre festival in the city. Organised as part of AJIT's 26th foundation day celebrations, the three-day event will be held at Bhanjakala Mandap from January 21, featuring a rich mix of Assamese and Odia stage productions along with the felicitation of eminent theatre personalities.

On the first evening, Guwahati-based theatre group Purbaranga will present Assamese play *Basavdutta*, helmed by Gunakar Dev Goswami. At the beginning, Ajit Natya Samman will be conferred upon actor Antaryami



Panda, while KK will receive the Ajit Yuva Samman.

On day 2, viewers will witness Odia play *Nisidha Kakhya*, staged by Rangashala, Puri. The play is directed by Bikram Sahoo. Renowned theatre personality Pitabas Senapati will be honoured with the Ajit Natya Samman.

The host organisation will present *Samakala*, directed

by Deepak Ranjan Pati, aka Aman, on the last evening. Eminent actor Premanjan Parida will receive Ajit Natya Samman for his contribution to theatre.

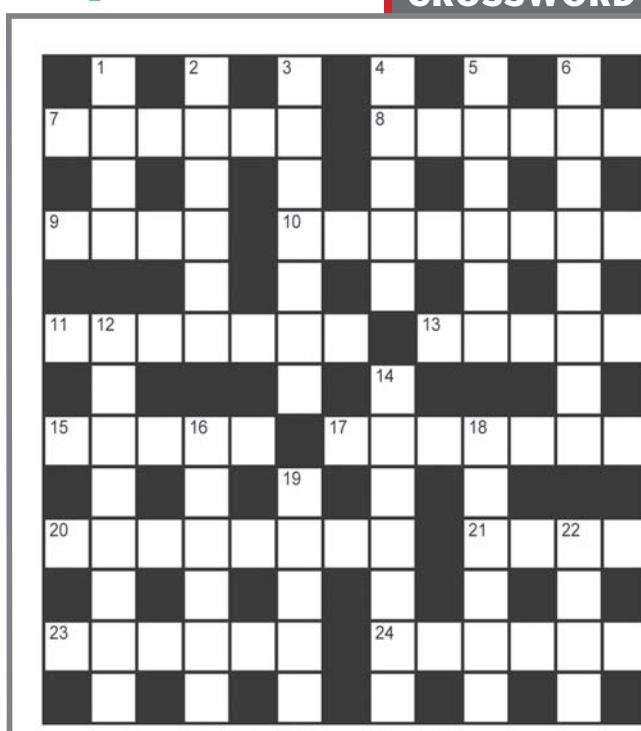
AJIT secretary Maya Das said entry to the festival is free and appealed to theatre enthusiasts to attend in large numbers to support and celebrate the rich tradition of Indian theatre.

## SUDOKU

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

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

## CROSSWORD



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## Across

- 7 Capital of the Bahamas
- 8 Modifier
- 9 Relinquish
- 10 Distaff
- 11 Last course
- 13 Award
- 15 Persian Gulf emirate
- 17 Job for a speech coach

## 20 Coalition

- 21 Porcelain clay
- 23 Vivacity
- 24 Force

## 5 Get even

- 6 Cut short
- 12 Make uniform
- 14 Exercise move
- 16 Bird sanctuary
- 18 Injury
- 19 Makes a sweater
- 22 Flower fanciers

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## CROSSWORD

T	W	A	D	D	L	E	C	H	I	N	A
A	F	E	F	A	M	P					
R	E	F	I	T	F	U	N	A	I	R	O
N	L	A	O	E	G	O					
R	I	P	C	O	R	D	J	E	P		
C	H	T	A	O							
P	O	T	T	E	N						
L	D	M	A	I							
E	N	V	C	O	S	T	U	M	E		
A	O	O	H	E	A						
S	E	C	U	L	A	R	E	M	A		
E	A	L	E	M	D						
D	E	L	T	A	D	E	D	E	E		
D	E	L	A	D	E	D	E	E	E		

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



# Cuttack police bust ₹88L sextortion racket; 5 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The Cuttack Cyber Crime unit and Economic Offences Wing (EOW) have busted a major sextortion and financial fraud racket involving ₹88 lakh, in which a 72-year-old retired state government employee was cheated and blackmailed, police said Tuesday. Five accused have been arrested, while the prime suspect remains absconding.

According to police, the case was registered January 19 following a complaint by the senior citizen. The main accused, Saroj Kumar Jena, along with his associates, initially contacted the victim via Facebook in January 2025 and gradually gained his trust through repeated meetings at hotels in Cuttack.

To gain the victim's confidence, Saroj borrowed ₹1.48 lakh in May 2025 for medical treatment and returned it within two months. Later, citing his daughter's treatment, he again sought money. When the victim refused, the accused hatched a plan, luring him into a WhatsApp video call with a nude woman, secretly



**Police seized ₹14.04 lakh in cash, gold and silver, and two vehicles, and froze over ₹5 lakh in bank accounts**

**Efforts continue to apprehend the prime accused and recover the remaining funds**

recorded the call, and used it to blackmail the victim by threatening to circulate the video on social media.

Under continuous threats, the victim was forced to transfer money multiple times, totaling ₹88 lakh, with some amounts sent via NEFT to accounts of Saroj's associates.

Under the supervision of the Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack, a special team led by ACP Satyajit Das conducted raids, arresting four accused from Jajpur district and one from Bhubaneswar.

Those arrested include Manoj Kumar Jena (27), Prafulla Kumar Biswal (65), Sangram Jena (22), Basudev Rout (25), and Manoranjan Routray (60).

Police seized ₹14.04 lakh in cash, gold and silver ornaments, two vehicles, and froze over ₹5 lakh in bank accounts. Efforts are ongoing to apprehend the prime accused and recover the remaining funds.

## ECoR to construct 96 ROBs in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Under the purview of Central government's Railway Policy-2024, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by East Coast Railway (ECoR) to construct 96 Railway Over Bridges (ROBs) entirely at its own cost in the state. By implementing such a large number of ROB projects under the new railway policy, Odisha has set a notable milestone at the national level.

ROBs play a vital role in strengthening the road network of the state. Replacement of railway level crossings with ROBs significantly reduces traffic congestion, saves travel time, and enhances safety of life and property.

A high-level review meeting between senior officials of the ECoR and the Works department was held here recently to assess the progress of 166 ROBs proposed on Works department roads at various locations across Odisha. The meeting was chaired by the department's Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh.

It was informed that progress of these ROB projects had remained slow over the past few years. Detailed discussions were held on land acquisition, quality of construction, timely completion of works, and strengthening coordination among various departments and district administrations to expedite project execution.

The fire broke out around 1:30am and over 13 fire tenders and 80 personnel took three hours to douse the inferno, they said, adding no casualty has been reported so far.

"Fire teams reached the spot immediately after receiving the alert and brought the blaze under control within an hour. We suspect the fire was caused by a short circuit," said Assistant Fire Officer (AFO) Manoranjan Rout.

Chief Fire Officer Ramesh Chandra Majhi said it was difficult to control the fire as the shops were located close to each other and there was no space for the movement of men and material.

Another fire officer said that two persons were sleeping in a shop at the time of the incident

# Major fire engulfs 70 shops in City

**ENTIRE UNIT-I MARKET REMAINED CLOSED FOR THE DAY FOR NECESSARY CLEANING OPERATIONS**



PNN &amp; AGENCIES

**BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana said the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) has recently sanctioned over ₹20 crore for special fire prevention measures at the market**

but they managed to escape unharmed.

Later in the morning, Bhubaneswar Mayor Sulochana Das and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Chanchal Rana visited the spot to assess the situation.

Das said that the fire spread rapidly as the shops were made up of plastic materials.

He said that many shops are erected in a small area in the market, leading to frequent fire incidents. He also stated that excess use of plastic to cover the shops led to such a massive fire incident at the market.

BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana said that the special relief commissioner (SRC) has recently sanctioned funds over ₹20 crore for making special fire prevention measures at the market. The DPR will be prepared in the next one month and then a tender will be awarded to execute the work, he said.

The BMC officers will continue an extensive enforcement drive to remove the encroachers from the market, Rana added.

Meanwhile, the entire Unit-I market was closed for the day to carry out necessary cleaning work in the area.

# Innovation shines at BJEM School's annual exhibition

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Buxi Jagabandhu English Medium (BJEM) School organised its annual exhibition here Tuesday with great enthusiasm, offering a vibrant platform for students to showcase creativity, innovation and practical learning.

The exhibition featured around 107 projects—both live demonstrations and models—prepared by 292 students from Classes III to IX. The projects were spread across multiple themes and subjects, in-



cluding 'Save Energy' and 'Green Power (EVS)', 'Our Planet, Our Story' (Social

and Real-World Applications' (Mathematics).

School Vice Chairman Kartik Chandra Dash graced the occasion as the chief guest. Addressing the gathering, he highlighted the importance of such exhibitions in the holistic development of students, adding that the event also brought back fond memories of his own school days.

School Manager PK Jena said the exhibition provided students with a valuable opportunity to apply classroom

learning in a meaningful and practical manner through models, charts, projects and creative displays.

The event was attended by Principal Sandhya Jena, Vice Principal Pallabi Mohapatra, administrative supervisors Naresh Kumar Rath and Padmalaya Paul, supervisors Pradeep Kumar Mallick and Sucharita Das, along with teachers and students.

The best three projects from each category will be honoured on Republic Day.

# Accountability key to earning public trust: Speaker Padhy



POST NEWS NETWORK

fidence in democratic institutions.

"As custodians of democratic institutions, we carry a significant responsibility," the Speaker said, adding that accountability is not just a procedural requirement but a moral and constitutional obligation. She highlighted that digital dissemination of legislative proceedings has strengthened engagement between the House and citizens, further reinforcing public trust in democratic processes.

The conference was inaugurated by Om Birla, while Satish Mahana delivered the welcome address. Harivansh also addressed the gathering. Anandiben Patel spoke to the delegates, and Leader of the Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey shared his views. The vote of thanks was proposed by Kuan Manvendra Singh.

# OIS probationers undergo one-day anti-corruption training prog

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** A one-day familiarisation training programme on transparency and anti-corruption laws for Odisha Information Service (OIS) probationers 2025 batch was conducted Tuesday at State Vigilance Academy here.

Eminent persons including retired IPS M Akhaya, former DGP Fire Services Satyajit Mohanty, former additional secretary GA and PG department Dhobei Charan Sahoo and others shared insights from their extensive experience and interacted with the participants.

The programme was inaugurated by Vigilance state director YK Jethwa, who underlined the importance of financial transparency and good governance as key priorities of the government. Addressing the probationers, Jethwa stressed that the state follows a policy of zero tolerance towards corruption and urged young officers to maintain high standards of probity in personal conduct, while ensuring transparent and corruption-free service delivery.

# FMU to host 5-day cultural fest 'Utsah 2026'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Fakir Mohan University (FMU), Balasore, is set to host the 39th Eastern Zone Inter-University Youth Festival, 'Utsah 26', organised under the aegis of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), New Delhi. The five-day national-level cultural extravaganza will be held from January 27 to 31 at the university's Vyasa Vihar campus, the officials announced here at the Press Club Tuesday.

A total of 20 universities from four eastern states—Odisha, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal—will participate

in the festival. Each university will be represented by around 60 students and team leaders, making the event a major cultural congregation of eastern India's youth.

The festival will feature 28 competitions across six major categories, including music, dance, theatre, literary arts, fine arts, and other creative disciplines.

The university has completed all preparations for the prestigious event, which celebrates youth enthusiasm, creativity, innovation, and the vibrant spirit of young talent. The festival aims to provide a national platform for university stu-

dents to showcase their cultural and artistic abilities, while also fostering cooperation, harmony, and national integration among universities.

The registration process for participating universities and students has already begun, receiving an enthusiastic response from across the eastern region.

University officials expressed

confidence that the festival will emerge as a memorable and historic celebration of youth power, cultural harmony, and creative excellence, further strengthening Fakir Mohan University's stature as an active centre of academic and cultural leadership at the national level.

The details were shared at the press conference by Vice-Chancellor Prof. Santosh Kumar Tripathy, in the presence of Registrar Kukumina Das, PG Council Chairman Prof. Bhaskar Behera, Festival Coordinator Dr. Nihar Ranjan Rout, and Organising Secretary Dr. Asim Amitabh Pradhan.

# HERITAGE LOVERS EXPLORE BUDDHIST VILLAGE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Jan 20:** Heritage enthusiasts under the aegis of Dhenkanal Heritage Walks (DHW) recently explored the lesser-known yet culturally vibrant Buddhist village of Sarakpatna, located in Bhupur block of Dhenkanal district along the Sapu river. Participants were astonished to find that the Buddhist way of life continues to be actively practised in the village even after centuries.

While Buddhism today survives largely as a way of life in select parts of India and across Southeast Asia, its deep roots in ancient Kalinga (Utkala) are often confined to historical texts. However, witnessing living Buddhist traditions in the region can be profoundly moving. Kalinga, after all, was a key transit point in the spread of Buddhism beyond India following the devastation of the Kalinga War.

Located about 15 km from the district headquarters, Sarakpatna is predominantly inhabited by the Tantubaya or Rangani weaving community, with looms found in almost every household and operated across generations—reflecting strong intergenerational skill transmission



without institutional support.

What sets the village apart is its religious composition: nearly 98 per cent of residents continue to follow the Buddhist way of life, making Sarakpatna a rare exception in Odisha, where Buddhism declined as a community religion after the early medieval period. The village's social fabric—from diet and rituals to birth and death ceremonies—is deeply rooted in Buddhist ethical principles.

A centrally located Buddhist temple with a stone image of the Buddha serves as the village's religious and communal hub, with the annual Buddha

Jayanti on Baisakh Purnima remaining its most significant collective observance.

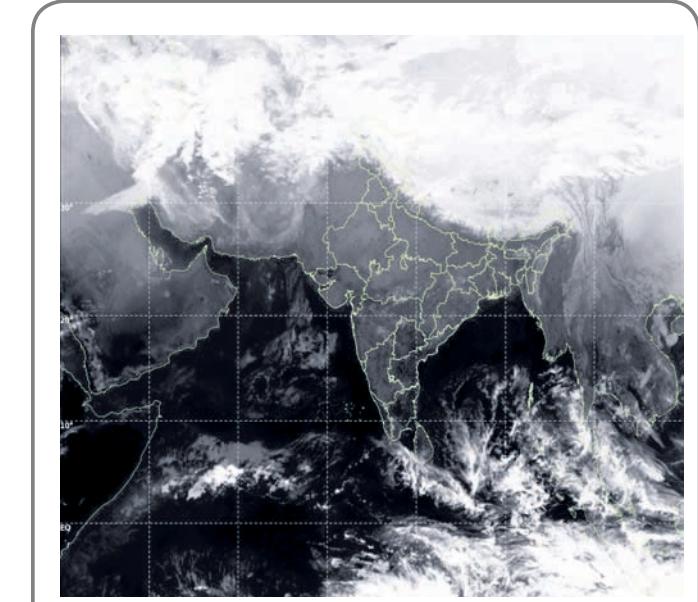
The village's name also offers historical insight. Sarakpatna is believed to derive from "Sarak," often seen as a linguistic variation of Shravaka—a Buddhist disciple or "hearer" of the Buddha's teachings. Scholarly studies on Sarak communities in eastern India trace them to ancient Buddhist populations that preserved vegetarianism and ethical codes long after Buddhism's institutional decline, a tradition Sarakpatna appears to have locally sustained.

Definitive historical records explaining the village's conversion to Buddhism are unavailable. However, oral traditions preserved by village elders recount visits by Buddhist monks from China, Japan, Tibet and Sri Lanka, suggesting earlier trans-regional links within Buddhist networks.

The 33rd Dhenkanal Heritage Walk, led by DHW convener Suresh Prasad Mishra, enabled direct engagement with over 50 weaving households. Discussions centred on weaving techniques, economic sustainability and the link between religious ethics and occupational life. Participation by researchers, retired administrators, heritage practitioners and college students underscored growing recognition of Sarakpatna—not as a relic, but as a living socio-cultural system.

A proposal emerging from the walk to establish a village library dedicated to Buddhist literature reflects a shift from heritage documentation to heritage transmission, especially for younger generations. Such initiatives align with contemporary heritage frameworks that prioritise community-centred knowledge preservation over symbolic representation.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	
DOLLAR	91.01 <span>▲ 0.03</span>	SENSEX	82180.47 <span>▼ 1,065.71</span>
EURO	106.75 <span>▲ 0.93</span>	NIFTY	25232.50 <span>▼ 353</span>
			SILVER ₹320,279 <span>▲ ₹10,004</span>



WEATHER	
Max Temp	31.6°
Min Temp	12.7°
Humidity	84%
Rainfall	Nil
CTC	28.6°
FORECAST	Fog or mist in the morning

# Absence of maize mandi in Koraput forces farmers into distress sale

NARENDRA RAUT, OP



**Koraput, Jan 20:** Maize farmers in Koraput district are facing severe hardship due to the continued absence of a dedicated maize mandi, forcing them to sell their produce at prices far lower than the currently prevailing market rate. Farmers from seven panchayats under Mahadeiput block have alleged that the lack of a regulated procurement centre has left them at the mercy of private traders and brokers from neighbouring states, resulting in significant financial losses.

According to the affected farmers, maize cultivation is one of the primary sources of livelihood in the region. However, despite good production this season, the absence of a government-supported mandi has disrupted fair price distribution. Traders are reportedly purchasing maize directly from villages at rates far below the expected market price. Farmers claim they are incurring losses of nearly Rs 5 per kilogram, a blow that has deepened their economic distress.

Local farmers say the situation has worsened in recent weeks as outside middlemen have become increasingly active across Koraput district.

The absence of a maize mandi is pushing farmers into distress sales and benefiting middle-men instead. Farmers are losing around five rupees per kilogram, which is unacceptable." He further demanded immediate intervention by the district administration and the state government to establish a maize mandi at the earliest."

The association also emphasized that a regulated mandi would not only ensure fair prices but also bring transparency in weighing, grading, and payments. It would help curb exploitation and encourage farmers to continue maize cultivation sustainably.

Farmers from Mahadeiput block have jointly appealed to the district collector and the state agriculture department to take urgent steps to open a maize mandi in Koraput. They warned that if the issue is not addressed promptly, farmers may be forced to reduce maize cultivation in the coming seasons, which could adversely impact both rural livelihoods and the local agricultural economy.

As the demand grows louder, all eyes are now on the administration to respond decisively and provide long-awaited relief to the maize farmers of Koraput district.

With no official procurement mechanism in place, farmers have little bargaining power and are compelled to sell their harvest immediately to meet urgent financial needs such as loan repayments, household expenses, and agricultural inputs.

Raising serious concern over the issue, the President of the Koraput Farmers' Association stated, "Koraput is a major maize-producing district, yet farmers are being denied basic marketing infrastruc-

## BIRD CENSUS - 2026

### 4.21 lakh migratory birds spotted in Hirakud reservoir



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sambalpur, Jan 20:** Over 4.21 lakh birds visited Hirakud reservoir in Sambalpur district this winter, registering a significant increase from last year, revealed the bird census.

During the bird census at the reservoir covering 5.72 sq km of the power channel area upto the Chhattisgarh border, a total of 4,21,763 birds belonging to 128 species, including five new ones, were recorded, Hirakud Wildlife Division's DFO Anshu Pragyan Das said Tuesday.

The three major bird species were Tufted Duck (71,273), Less-

er Whistling Duck (60,987) and Common Coot (51,665), she said.

The five new species sighted during the census were Ruddy Crake, Greater painted-snipe, Painted stork, Little Gull and Sanderling, Das said.

The Annual Mid-Winter Waterfowl Census-2026 in the Hirakud reservoir area was conducted by the Hirakud Wildlife Division January 18. A total of 93 participants, including birding experts, forest officials, NGOs and school students, participated in the survey, she said.

Every year, thousands of winged guests from the Caspian Sea, Baikal Lake, Aral Sea, Mongolia, Central and Southeast Asia and the Himalayas make Hirakud reservoir their home from November to March.

More than 3.77 lakh birds of 122 species thronged the reservoir last winter. Similarly, over 3.42 lakh birds of 113 species were sighted in 2024, officials said.

## Two youths killed in Boudh car crash

**Baghia pada (Boudh):** Two youths died after their car was rear-ended by an unidentified vehicle on Khurda-Bolangir National Highway-57 in Boudh district early Tuesday morning, police said.

The accident occurred around 4am near Telibanda in the district when the unknown vehicle hit the car from behind and dragged it for several metres, leaving it mangled. The vehicle fled the scene after causing the crash.

The victims were identified as Ashutosh Saha, 24, of Deuli, and Nitin Dwary, 24, of Gudhelia under Manamunda police station in Boudh district.

The two friends were living in Bolangir and were travelling to Bhubaneswar in a friend's car bearing registration number (OD 02 X 3921).

A team from Boudh police station and Jahnapank police outpost rushed to the spot after receiving information. The bodies were recovered and sent by an ambulance to Boudh hospital for postmortem.

A case-35/26 was registered in this connection, and an investigation is underway to identify the vehicle involved in the hit-and-run, Jahnapank outpost officer-in-charge Brahmananda Pradhan said.

## Joranda Mahima Peeth to have grand temple

PNN &amp; AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The state government has announced plans to construct a grand temple on the premises of Mahima shrine at Joranda in Dhenkanal district.

The Mahima Temple, also known as 'Shunya Mandira', is the principal seat of Mahima Dharma, a spiritual tradition that emphasises simple living, equality, and the welfare of humanity.

As part of the proposed development, the existing 'Shunya Mandira' will be preserved in its current form, while a new, majestic temple structure will be built over it.

Chairing a review meeting in this regard Tuesday, Chief Secretary Anu Garg said the project aims to enhance religious infrastructure while maintaining the sanctity and spiritual essence of the site.

The meeting also reviewed plans for development of associated facilities, including Akhanda Jyoti Temple, Bhajan Mandap, prayer hall, sacred pond, and overall beautification of the temple premises.

In addition, detailed discussions were held on constructing a kitchen, pilgrim accommodation, and adequate parking facilities. Works department Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh informed the Chief Secretary that the development blueprint has been prepared in accordance with the directions of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi.

## GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, DASPALA

1st Corrigendum on Tender Call Notice No.66 Dt.08.01.2026

Bid Identification No.NAC-Daspala-(SAN)- 2025-26

No.194, Dt.20.1.2026

No.C-2147:Corrigendum hereby issued for Tender Call Notice No.66/

Dt.08.01.2026 for Sanitation Work of Daspala NAC regarding extension of critical dates due to unavoidable circumstances.

- Last Date of availability of Bid in site: Dt.27.01.2026 at 17.00 PM
- Date & time of opening of Technical Bid: Dt.28.01.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
- Date & time of opening of Financial Bid: Dt.05.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

Bidders can access above notice in tender site ([tendersodisha.gov.in](http://tendersodisha.gov.in)).

\* All other terms & conditions remain unaltered.

Sd/- Executive Officer  
Notified Area Council, Daspala

OIPR-

Notice under Section 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 for Enforcement of Security Interest

The Bank has granted following various credit facilities to the under mentioned Borrower & the amount outstanding dues mentioned below has not been paid in time. Therefore Demand Notice under Sec.13 (2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 was issued by the Authorized Officer against the following Borrower/Guarantor of the **Bank of India, Puri Branch** but the same could not be served to the below mentioned parties. Therefore, the contents of the same including the amount outstanding, Loan amount and details of the secured assets are herein furnished below.

**PURI BRANCH / Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor**

**Nature / Limit**

**Date of NPA / Date of Demand Notice**

**Amount as per Notice under SARFAESI Act**

**Details of the mortgaged property**

**EQM of All that part and parcel of Land and Building situated over mutated Khata No.: 217/78, covered under Plot No.: 423/1340, Area: Ac. 0.34 Dec., corresponds to Sabik Settlement ROR Khata No.: 07, Plot No.: 423/1340, Area: Ac. 0.34 Dec. in homestead status in Mouza: Kasijagannathpur, PS: Puri Sadar, Puri, in the name of **Ashwini Mallick, Kumar Mallick, S/o: Baidyanath Mallick, At: Dasabidayadharpur, Bhitmpur, Puri - 752016, Odisha.****

As the above mentioned Borrower of the **Puri Branch** have defaulted in repayment of the principal loan/ facility in installments/interest/ both, the account has been classified as **NPA**, in accordance with the directions or guidelines issued by the RBI. In spite of our repeated demands you (borrower) have not paid any amount towards the amount outstanding in your account, you have not discharged your liabilities. Hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of Demand Notice, required u/s 13(2) of the said Act and Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, Incidental Expenses, Charges etc. within a period of **60 days** from the date of Notice, failing which we will take necessary action under the provisions of sec 13(4) of the said Act. against the secured assets including taking possession of your secured assets and sale them. If the dues are not fully recovered in the course of these actions against secured assets, then the Bank reserves the right to take action by filing recovery action against you before DRT/Court for recovery of the same. It may be noted that under the provisions of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, right of redemption is available to you, by paying the dues of the Bank together with all cost, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank at any time, till the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tender from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets. Please take note that as per sub section (13) of the aforesaid Act, after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise. **This notice is issued without prejudice to the rights of the Bank available under any other law.**

Place : Bhubaneswar, Date: 21.01.2026

Authorized Officer, Bank of India

# Class IX student 'assaulted', HM denies

DWARKA PRASAD PATNAIK, OP

**Chhatrapur, Jan 20:** In a shocking turn of events, a class 9 student of the Government SC & ST Development High School in Humma under Ganjam block has accused the headmaster Ashok Kumar Padhi and other teachers of physical assault in the school premises. The incident was reported to the ADM Sunil Kumar Kerkeeta here Monday by the student accompanied by her aunt Rajani Behera after she learnt about the incident.

According to the complainant 10th January, the boy, along with his friends were watching a dance video on a mobile phone which they were purportedly going to perform in their annual function.

## Odia labourer dies in Telangana

**LATHOR:** An Odia migrant labourer from Odisha died Monday night while working in Telangana, family members said. The deceased was identified as Dasarath Hans (45), of Bhalukunda village under Turekela police limits in Bolangir district. His body is being brought back to his native village, relatives said. According to information, Hans had gone to Telangana in November along with his wife Anjana Hans (38), their 14-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son. Both Dasarath and Anjana were working at a brick kiln there. The incident occurred when Hans reportedly complained of feeling unwell and informed his wife Monday night. Shortly afterward, he went outside to relieve himself and collapsed after returning home. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead.

During the operation, forest officials seized a country-made firearm, four deer antlers, sharp weapons including a machete and an axe, iron wires, snares, a cutting machine, weights, hunting lights and other equipment allegedly used for poaching wild animals.

All seized items were later brought to the Jarapada forest range office for further legal action, officials said.

Forest officials said the crackdown follows recent enforcement drive in the Jarapada forest range, where a sus-

pected poacher was arrested a few days ago and a hand bomb and a firearm were recovered.

The raid was conducted in the presence of Athamallik Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Sachidananda Sethi, Angul ACF Siddhartha Jain, Jarapada Ranger Madhab Nayak, Handapa ranger Narendra Kumar Gamang, along with Jarapada police and personnel from the Angul and Athamallik forest divisions.

Further investigation is underway to identify those involved in wildlife poaching activities in the area, officials said.



some of them using it during the school hours. I took the boys inside my chamber with an intention to warn them telling not to repeat the same in the future and also asked them to concentrate on their curriculum.

The allegations he brought up against me and the other teachers are not true and absolutely baseless', Padhi claimed.

This incident, however, has triggered safety issues in the school and hostel premises. Parents of other students and locals have demanded to ensure safety of the students. They have also condemned the brutality of the school authorities. They have further demanded a high level enquiry in the matter by the district administration and the education department.

## Forest dept sleuths seize firearms, snares, antlers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul/Chhendipada, Jan 20:** Forest personnel Tuesday seized firearms and materials used for wildlife poaching during a surprise raid at several houses in Katada Harijan Sahi under the Jarapada forest range of the Angul forest division.

Acting on a tip-off, joint teams from the Angul and Athamallik forest divisions carried out early morning raids at Katada Harijan Sahi and Antulua village as part of the department's Jibodaya mission, officials said.

During the operation, forest officials seized a country-made firearm, four deer antlers, sharp weapons including a machete and an axe, iron wires, snares, a cutting machine, weights, hunting lights and other equipment allegedly used for poaching wild animals.

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The cup has to be left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it.

SRI AUROBINDO

## Trump's Round Table

India is one of 60 countries the US has invited to join President Donald Trump's controversial "Board of Peace" initiative on Gaza. The contours of the board's aims and objectives are shrouded in mist, doubt and vagueness that seems to have put Indian diplomacy under stress. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is running short of vision in any case so this would prove very baffling to the officers. This timing also makes it all the more difficult for India to decide whether to respond or not to the invite. That is why the MEA has not yet said a word on the government's official position on the offer.

In fact, the proposal far extends beyond the borders of Gaza and as such it has sparked a global debate on the future of the post-World War II international order, particularly the relevance and authority of the UN Security Council (UNSC). Trump appears to be trying to hijack the UNSC and form a new comity of nations to intervene in international conflicts on his own terms. The whole plan appears to be designed to sideline the UN and establish what critics describe as a parallel international body with ambitions extending far beyond the Palestinian enclave. The initiative emerges from a group of Islamic countries-backed Trump's peace plan for Gaza and coincides with broader US efforts to restructure global governance outside traditional multilateral institutions, especially the UN.

The purpose is ostensibly to supervise Gaza's transitional governance, stabilisation, reconstruction and oversee a temporary technocratic, apolitical Palestinian administration. Its ambit also appears to manage funding for redevelopment until the Palestinian Authority (PA) completes institutional reforms. But, effectively Trump seeks to expand this Gaza-specific mechanism into a global conflict-resolution template.

The UNSC Resolution 2803 authorised a Board to supervise Gaza's transition until 2027. Russia and China abstained, but the countries of the Global South voted for it. Critics of the move say the Board of Peace undermines UN Charter principles, sovereign equality of states and collective decision-making. They view it as an attempt to sidestep the UNSC and concentrate authority in the US-led executive body. Their fears are strengthened by Trump's known aversion to multilateral intervention in international issues. The US under him has already withdrawn from UNESCO, WHO and over 60 other international organisations. If the plan succeeds, the UN would be divested of funds, legitimacy and importance as a global body tasked with maintaining peace and human welfare. The US has already indicated it will ask nations willing to get permanent membership of the body to contribute \$1 billion dollars each. The draft charter reveals that Trump would chair the board and hold authority over membership decisions and approvals.

Daniel Forti, who heads UN affairs at the International Crisis Group, sharply reacted to the US plan which, he says, is "a US shortcut in an attempt to wield its veto power on world affairs." European countries are also perturbed by the development, though so far only the French President Emmanuel Macron has categorically stated he would not be in it. This has evoked a stinging response from Trump who said Macron would cave in once the US imposes high tariffs on French champagne and perfumes.

If the UN is rendered irrelevant, India's long-term push for inclusion in the UNSC will receive a setback. Moreover, India's dilemma is how to stick to its stated position of a two-state solution to the vexed Palestine-Israel question once it is in the Trump-controlled board. It is a tall order for it to engage diplomatically without endorsing erosion of UN authority and maintain distinction between political oversight and military involvement. Because of its muddled foreign policy India is in an unenviable position to balance ties with the US while safeguarding its principled positions.

Trump appears to have deliberately taken a tough stand against France to force it to join the board and send out the message across countries hesitant to go with him that disapproval of his plan will bring in its train fresh raft of tariffs and other punitive actions. These are indications of the future of the US brokering for peace. Let no one think that these are Trump's personal game plans. When Trump's term ends after 4 years, the new PoTUS too probably would be compelled to walk along these same paths.

## WISDOM CORNER

**Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.**

BERTRAND RUSSELL

**Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.**

MICHAEL JORDAN

**When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.**

HENRY FORD

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1793:** Louis XVI, the last Bourbon king of France, was executed by guillotine in Paris during the French Revolution.

**1899:** Opel builds its first automobile. The company went on to become one of the world's largest car manufacturers. Opel has been a subsidiary of Stellantis since January 16, 2021.

**1905:** Fashion designer Christian Dior, whose label became an enduring worldwide success, was born in Granville, France.

**1911:** 23 cars take part in the first Rally Monte Carlo. Unlike today, the competitors set out from 11 different European locations, heading for the finish line in Monte Carlo.

**1924:** Vladimir Lenin, who led the Russian Revolution (1917) and later served as the first head (1917-24) of the Soviet state, died.

**1968:** The Battle of Khe Sanh begins. It is one of the most publicized battles of the Vietnam War.

**1976:** First commercial Concorde flight. Generating a sonic boom as it traveled through the atmosphere at supersonic speed, the Concorde, a commercial aircraft built with funding from the British and French governments, began regular service on this day in 1976.

**1998:** Pope John Paul II visits Cuba. It was the first time any Pope visited the country.



TO THE EDITOR

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# Assam archives 3 endangered languages

Lone Khamyang speaker battles extinction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, Jan 20:** An 84-year-old man is the last known barrier between one of Assam's indigenous languages and its complete extinction, as audio, video and textual records of three critically endangered tongues of the state have now been digitally preserved.

Bhogeswar Thomung, a resident of Assam's Tinsukia district, is believed to be the only person fully proficient in the Khamyang language - able to speak, read, write and comprehend it in its entirety.

The digital preservation has been carried out under the 'Endangered Language Programme' (ELP), aimed at preventing vulnerable languages from vanishing altogether, those associated with the project said here Tuesday.

"Language is a big asset. It brings people together and binds them like a family. We need to preserve languages that are fading away," Thomung said while speaking at the unveiling of the digitised archives.

Besides Khamyang, the first phase of the initiative has documented Tai Phake and Singpho - all belonging to the Tai linguistic family - under



'Digitising Assam', a community-driven digital archiving programme led by the Nanda Talukdar Foundation with institutional support from an Assam Jatiya Bidyalay-run trust.

**Bhogeswar Thomung, a resident of Assam's Tinsukia district, is believed to be the only person fully proficient in the Khamyang language - able to speak, read, write and comprehend it in its entirety**

for other languages after consultations with community leaders and stakeholders," AA-SU chief advisor Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharyya told a press conference.

AASU president Utpal Sarma said all three languages are vulnerable, with UNESCO listing Khamyang as 'Critically Endangered'.

"Khamyang is in the most precarious condition. Today, Thomung is the only person fully proficient in it," Sarma said.

He noted that while the Khamyang population is estimated at 1,000-1,400, Tai Phake at around 2,000 and Singpho at

nearly 9,000, functional use of these languages has declined sharply, particularly among the younger generation.

Chief advisor of the ELP and linguist Palash Kumar Nath said dwindling numbers of speakers inevitably lead to shrinking vocabularies. "It is essential to preserve these languages at the earliest," he said, citing the extinction of the Ruga language spoken by a section of the Garo tribe.

"I began working on Khamyang in 2014, when there were four proficient speakers. Now, only Bhogeswar Thomung remains," Nath added.

A Buddhist 'pathak' (priest) from Pawaimukh village near Margherita, Thomung said the language is not difficult to learn. "Two hours of study for three months is enough," he

said, expressing willingness to teach, but lamenting the lack of interest. He had once run a school where Khamyang was the medium of instruction.

Bhattacharyya said the ELP would go beyond documentation to explore ways of reviving the languages. "Keeping these languages alive and in use is also part of our mission," he added.

The eight-month-long programme combined field documentation with laboratory-based digitisation, and the archived material is now available on the website [assamarchive.org](http://assamarchive.org).

For Khamyang, 650 manuscript leaves have been digitised, along with 250 curated photographs capturing cultural practices, lifestyle and community memory. Audio documentation covers around 350 high-frequency words and phrases.

In Tai Phake, nearly 19,950 manuscript leaves were digitised, including classical texts such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, along with 350 curated photographs and audio records of over 675 core lexical units.

For Singpho, old books and printed literature were digitised as original manuscripts no longer exist. The archive also includes 450 curated photographs and over 350 recorded speech units encompassing vocabulary, narratives and contextual oral knowledge.

# India's first camel milk plant procures 4,754 litres daily



**The Bhuj-based dairy paid a total of ₹8.72 crore to over 350 camel farming families during the year**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

tial minerals, promotes overall health, and strengthens immunity, the release said, adding that Sarhad Dairy has India's first deodorising camel milk processing plant, functional since January 2019.

The dairy has also earned the primary organic certification for camel milk. Following the Amul model, camel milk is collected through four centres across Kutch district (Rapar, Nakhatrana, Gadhsisha and Kotda Athamana), the release said. The Dairy is the only facility in India producing camel milk Rajbhog-flavoured ice cream.

Inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi in February 2024, the ice cream plant has already launched 80 varieties and produced a total of 24.52 lakh litres of ice cream in 2024-25 with a peak dispatch of 58,000 litres, the release said. At the first-ever Regional Dairy Conference held by IDF (International Dairy Federation) in 2024 in Kochi, Sarhad Dairy General Manager Nirav Gusai presented a model for camel milk production in the Asia-Pacific region.

The dairy has also received several prestigious awards, including the FOKIA Awards in 2014 and 2024, the Rotary Club Vocational Excellence Award 2017 and the Green Workplace Award 2025 for sustainability, said the release. Under the 'Sahkar se Samriddhi' program launched by PM Modi and Union Home & Cooperative Minister Amit Shah, Sarhad Dairy has helped 900 milk societies and 31,067 animal husbandry farmers open accounts at the Kutch District Central Cooperative Bank (KDCC Bank), it said.

In 2024-25, daily camel milk procurement reached 4,754 litres, with an annual payment of ₹8,72,83,440 made to over 350 families," an official release said. The dairy collaborates with over 900 cooperative societies, procuring nearly 5.5 lakh litres of milk (including bovine as well as camel milk) per day from around 80,000 producers. It processes up to 4 lakh litres of milk per day, runs a 300-tonne cattle feed plant, and produces 50,000 litres of ice cream daily, with a peak production of 3.38 LLPD, it added.

It supports animal husbandry farmers by disbursing nearly ₹3 crore each day. In 2024-25, the dairy achieved a turnover of over ₹1,200 crore, reflecting a 9.09% growth from the previous year, the release added. Sarhad Dairy was established in 2009 when Narendra Modi was Gujarat chief minister.

Camel milk is rich in essen-

## AHMEDABAD PLANE CRASH

### Air India begins process to return victims' belongings



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Jan 20:** Seven months after the horrific Ahmedabad air crash that killed 260 persons, Air India has started the process of returning personal belongings to the affected families, a spokesperson for the airline said Monday.

He said information about these items has been shared with families through email and a dedicated website, and once families confirm the details, the belongings will be handed over physically in a manner that honours their grief and privacy.

For 'associated items', mails have been sent to the concerned families with the photograph and details of that recovered item. The family will have three options - either they opt not to take possession, or collect it in-person from a facilitation centre in Ahmedabad or ask Air India to send the item through courier, the spokesperson said.

The process has already begun from January 5 and it will continue till mid-February, he said, adding that several persons have already visited the facilitation centre and collected the items which belonged to their kin. The process has been carried out after taking appropriate regulatory clearances, he added.

"Air India is handling this process of returning personal belongings to the kin of the victims with utmost respect, dignity, and accuracy. Working closely with a qualified external partner, our teams have spent considerable time cataloguing and documenting recoverable and returnable items," the spokesperson said.



Assam Regiment personnel during rehearsals for the upcoming Republic Day Parade, in New Delhi, Tuesday PTI PHOTO

### General category demands 10% EWS quota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Jan 20:** Leaders of Patidar, Kshatriya and other unreserved or open category castes in Gujarat Tuesday demanded a 10 per cent quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in local body elections.

At a meeting in Gandhinagar, prominent leaders of these communities voiced their concerns about the recent implementation of 10 per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in local bodies, which they claimed resulted in discrimination and injustice.

Speaking afterwards, Bambhaniya said the Gujarat government should take a decision in this regard at the earliest.

"We demand that 10 per cent seats be reserved for EWS category candidates. It was unanimously resolved today that we

will put forward this demand before the state government as well as the Jhaveri Commission," he said.

"The state government should take a decision at the earliest and ensure 10 per cent reservation for EWS candidates in village panchayat, district panchayat, municipalities and other local bodies," he said.

In 2023, the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Gujarat announced 27 per cent reservation for OBCs in local bodies on the basis of Jhaveri Commission's report. Earlier, the OBC reservation was 10 per cent.

## 2 RHINOS TRANSLOCATED TO KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

**Chandra (5) and Kanai (4),** were rescued in August 2020 and August 2021, respectively, and they were undergoing treatment at the CWRC since then

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Guwahati, Jan 20:** Two male rhinos, injured and rescued during floods, were translocated Tuesday from the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) to Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, an official said.

Five-year-old Chandra and Kanai (4), were rescued in August 2020 and August 2021, respectively, and they were undergoing treatment at the CWRC since then.

The Park authorities followed the internationally accepted con-

supervised by a team of veterinarians led by CWRC Centre-in-charge Bhaskar Choudhury along with experienced animal keepers.

Officials of Kaziranga National Park -- Field Director Sonali Ghosh, DFO Arun Vignesh and range officers, subject matter experts Rathin Barman, Kaushik Barua and Anup Sarmah -- were present.

The rhino transfer is a testimony to the established rehabilitation protocols being followed in KNPR, where every wild animal, especially the one-horned rhinoceros, is given a chance to return to its natural home in the wild, even after experiencing severe stress due to calamities such as floods, the official said.

The CWRC was established in 2002 as a collaborative initiative between the Assam Forest Department, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

The translocation operation was

supervised by a team of veterinarians led by CWRC Centre-in-charge Bhaskar Choudhury along with experienced animal keepers.

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### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, BALASORE

No.185, Dt.19.01.2026

\*e' Procurement Notice

e-mail ID: [mibalasore@yahoo.co.in](mailto:mibalasore@yahoo.co.in)

The Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Balasore on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online percentage rate tender through "e" Procurement (Single Cover) for the works as detailed in the Annexure to this bid notice.

Name of the Work:	Construction of Check Dams in different Blocks of Balasore & Bhadrak District under MATY Scheme for the year 2025-26
No. of Works:	03 (Three) Nos. only
Estimated Cost:	Varies from Rs.41.46 lakh to Rs.49.22 lakh (Approximate)
Cost of Tender Paper:	Rs. 10,000/- (Non-Refundable)
Period of Completion:	As Mentioned against work
Availability of bid documents for sale and receipt through online:	From Dt.22.01.2026, 10.00 A.M. to dt.02.02.2026, upto 5.00 P.M.
Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal:	02.02.2026 (5.00 PM)
Date of Opening of Technical Bid:	On dt.03.02.2026 at 11.00 AM in the Office of the S.E., M.I. Division, Balasore
Mode of payment of Bid Cost:	Online
Digital Signature Certificate of Bidder:	The Bidder must possess compatible digital signature certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III
The detail tender call notice can also be seen in the DOWR website <a href="http://dowrissa.gov.in">http://dowrissa.gov.in</a>	
Name & Address of the OIT:	Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Balasore, At/Po-District-Balasore, Ph.No.-06762-224461, Email ID: <a href="mailto:mibalasore@yahoo.co.in">mibalasore@yahoo.co.in</a>
Further details can be seen from the e-market place website <a href="http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a>	
Note: Corrigendum/ Addendum/ Modifications/ Additions if any can be seen through online only.	

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Balasore

OIPR-

No.A-1304

### Dept. of Water Resources, Government of Odisha

No.A-1313

"e" Procurement Notice No. EE-DD-CTC-09/2025-26

1. Name of the Works: Total 02 (Two) Nos. Drainage work.

2. Estimated cost: Rs. 79.83 lakh. to 80.71 lakh.

3. Period of Completion: 09 (Nine) months.

4. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal: From 11.00 hours of 27.01.2026 to 18.00 hours of 10.02.2026.

5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal: 10.02.2026 of 18.00 hours.

6. Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid: Executive Engineer, Drainage Division, Gandarpur, Cuttack- 753003. e-mail Id: - [eeddcuttack@gmail.com](mailto:eeddcuttack@gmail.com).

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>"

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Drainage Division, Cuttack

OIPR-

No.-29

### GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, DRAINAGE DIVISION, JAGATSINGHPUR-754103

email Id: [edjdspur@gmail.com](mailto:edjdspur@gmail.com)

e-procurement Notice No. SEDD-JSPUR-07/2025-26

1 Name of Works

: Improvement, Construction of slope protection & Box Culvert

2 Total number of works

## national

of the day quote

There is no better investment destination than Andhra. The state will become the biggest market for industrialists



N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | AP CM

The BJP government has not been able to conduct a single major recruitment drive in one year, and in the few small recruitment drives that were conducted, more people from outside Haryana were recruited than from within the state



BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA | CONGRESS LEADER

Under the leadership of Nabin Ji, the BJP will become an invincible force! I had a cordial meeting with the newly elected National President of the world's largest political party, Nitin Nabin Ji, at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, and extended my best wishes to him



VISHNU DEO SAI | CH'GARH CM

## SHORT TAKES

## Youth dies after brutal assault

**Gurugram:** A 24-year-old man, who was critically injured after being beaten up allegedly by his friends in Farrukhnagar, died Tuesday, police said. The accused are yet to be arrested, and a search is underway, they said. The deceased, identified as Vineet, a resident of Khandewala village, was admitted in a serious condition after he was brutally assaulted by a group of young men from his village January 17, according to police. The situation in the village remains tense, and a police team has been deployed there as a precautionary measure, officials said.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

## Man arrested for killing parents, wife &amp; daughter

**Etah (UP):** Police Tuesday arrested man for allegedly killing his parents, wife and daughter at their house over financial stress and domestic discord ahead of his daughter's wedding scheduled for next month here. The accused, Kamal Singh, was taken into custody after four members of his family were found dead inside their two-storey house in the Kotwali Nagar police station area Monday. He has since been sent to jail, officials said.

## SIT questions BRS leader Harish Rao

**Hyderabad:** Telangana BRS MLA T Harish Rao was Tuesday questioned by the SIT in the case related to alleged phone tapping during the previous BRS regime. Harish Rao appeared before the SIT officials at the Jubilee Hills police station here at about 11:30 am and was questioned till 6 pm. Hyderabad Police Commissioner V C Sajjanar said in a release Tuesday night that Harish Rao was summoned before the Investigation Officer at Jubilee Hills Police Station and examined in detail.

## Bus gutted on highway

**Mumbai:** A private bus was gutted in a fire on the Western Express Highway in Mumbai's Malad area Tuesday morning, affecting traffic movement on the busy route for some time, officials said. There was no report of any casualty, they said. The fire brigade received information at around 10 am about the blaze in the Borivali-bound sleeper coach bus near a bridge in Malad (East).



India will never allow illegal immigrants to loot its people and the services that belong to the poor

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

## CAQM REVOVES GRAP-4 CURBS IN DELHI-NCR

The Centre's pollution watchdog Tuesday revoked curbs under Stage-4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR as the capital's air quality improved. In an order, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) said that actions under Stage-1, 2 and 3 of the revised GRAP will, however, remain in force



## HIGH DRAMA IN TN ASSEMBLY

## Governor walks out; alleges 'national anthem insulted'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Chennai, Jan 20:** In the fourth such instance, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi Tuesday walked out of the state Assembly without delivering his customary address to the House following an argument with Speaker M Appavu who requested him to stick to the state-prepared text. Chief Minister M K Stalin dubbed Ravi's action as an insult to the House and the people of the state.

Beginning in 2023, this was the fourth such consecutive walkout in a row by Ravi, who cited "unsubstantiated claims and misleading statements," for not reading out the policy statement.

The governor's office alleged national anthem was yet again "insulted" and the fundamental Constitutional duty of respecting it was disregarded. Several crucial issues troubling the people were ignored.

Chief Minister and DMK President MK Stalin said his party would make efforts to amend the Constitution to omit provisions mandating Governor's Address to the state legislature.

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CHIEF MINISTER AND DMK PRESIDENT MK STALIN SAID HIS PARTY WOULD MAKE EFFORTS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO OMIT PROVISIONS MANDATING GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE

the Centre to withdraw the recently passed VB-G RAM G Act and restore UPA-era rural employment scheme, MGNREGA.

While the Assembly, immediately after Ravi walked out of the House, adopted a resolution moved by Stalin stating that only the government prepared customary address would go on official record, the Lok Bhavan quickly released a statement claiming to give an explanation to what transpired inside the House. Alleging that the mic of the Governor was turned off

in Assembly, the Lok Bhavan listed 12 other points all of which was dismissed by the Tamil Nadu government as baseless and false.

While Ravi had been demanding that the national anthem be played at the commencement of the customary address, the government's stand is that the Tamil anthem is traditionally played at the beginning and the national anthem at the end.

Natural Resources Minister S Regupathy, reiterating this practice, said the governor was, however, insistent on the national anthem.

Regupathy rejected the governor's claim that his mic was turned off and termed it a "lie". Also, he gave a point by point rebuttal to all the allegations listed by the Lok Bhavan.

Regupathy said Ravi, who should have been the representative of the Central government appeared in the House as the representative of the BJP.

After the Governor left the House, Chief Minister Stalin slammed the Governor for "walking out yet again in violation of rules, traditions and ethos," and it was unbecoming of the high office Ravi holds.

Officials clarified that there was no intention whatsoever to undermine or disrespect Marathi, as the original notification prohibiting vehicular movement on the highway was issued in the language.

Speaking to reporters in Nagpur, Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar criticised the state government over the Gujarati notification.

"This is just the beginning. Gujarati is being imposed starting from Palghar. If the BJP gets the Mumbai mayor's post, it will be clear on whose instructions the city will run," he said.

## SC to close hate speech pleas pending since 2021



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Advocate Sharukh Alam, appearing for the cleric, however, doubted the UP government's version and said that the state was not willing to accept that it was a case of crime and the court must look into it.

On April 28, 2023, the top court extended the scope of its 2022 order beyond three states and directed all states and Union Territories (UT) to register cases against those making hate speeches, even if no complaint has been made.

It had termed hate speeches a "serious offence capable of affecting the secular fabric of the country". The top court had said its October 21, 2022 order shall be made applicable irrespective of religion and warned any delay in registering cases will be treated as contempt of the court.

Holding that the Constitution of India envisages a secular nation, the apex court had in 2022 directed UP, Uttarakhand and Delhi to promptly register criminal cases against the offenders without waiting for a complaint to be filed.

The apex court had warned that any delay on the part of the administration in taking action on this "very serious issue" will invite the court's contempt.



People from a tribal community take part in a 'kalash yatra' marking the centenary celebrations of the Gayatri Teerth Shantikunj, in Haridwar PTI PHOTO

## DELHI POLICE CRACK MURDER CASE WITH AI HELP

DURING INVESTIGATION, THE POLICE ANALYSED FOOTAGE FROM CCTV CAMERAS INSTALLED NEAR THE SCENE AND ON POSSIBLE ESCAPE ROUTES, BESIDES QUESTIONING PASSERSBY AND EXAMINING THE MOVEMENT OF RECENTLY RELEASED OFFENDERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** The Delhi Police has solved the daylight murder of a woman in Shalimar Bagh by using artificial intelligence tools to enhance blurred CCTV footage, leading to the identification and arrest of three men from Bihar, officials said Tuesday.

Among those arrested is a long-time fugitive who allegedly orchestrated the killing of a 44-year-old Rachna Yadav, a Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) president of her block. The police said the victim was set to testify against the men who murdered her husband in 2023.

Investigators initially struggled as available CCTV footage from the crime scene and nearby areas was of poor quality. "AI technology was used to improve the quality of the CCTV



footage. Multiple AI-based applications helped obtain clear images of the shooters, leading to the identification of one of the accused as Nikhil," a senior police officer said.

Rachna was shot dead near her house January 10. Police have been arrested Nikhil (22), and two others, identified as Sumit (23) and Bharat Yadav (33).

Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Ravindra Singh Yadav said a PCR call was received at around 11 am on the day of the incident. A team found the woman near a park in East Shalimar Bagh with a gunshot wound to her forehead. An empty cartridge and a bullet fragment were recovered from near the spot.

The deceased was wife of Bijender Yadav, who was also murdered in 2023.

Investigations revealed that

police analysed footage from CCTV cameras installed near the scene and on possible escape routes, besides questioning passersby and examining the movement of recently released offenders.

According to the Special CP, technical surveillance played a crucial role in the case. Call detail records, dump data and IPDRs (Internet Protocol Detail Records) were analysed, and investigators also examined property-related documents of the deceased family to establish the motive behind the murder.

Based on inputs and human intelligence, police conducted raids across Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Bihar. The police tracked Nikhil and Bharat Yadav to a hut in Bihar's Katihar. The duo was apprehended in a joint operation carried out by the Delhi

Police along with the Central Reserve Police Force and local Bihar police.

During questioning, Nikhil named Sumit as the person who drove the motorcycle during the crime. Sumit was subsequently arrested in Panipat.

The probe also revealed that Bharat Yadav had approached Nikhil a few days before the murder, fearing that Rachna's testimony would lead to his conviction in her husband's murder. "He allegedly conspired to eliminate her and sought Nikhil's help, who in turn roped in Sumit," the officer said.

Police said the accused used encrypted communication and frequently changed mobile numbers to evade electronic surveillance. The police have recovered the motorcycle used in the crime, which was stolen from the Subhash Place area.



# international



The United States plane landed, public servants got on that plane and they went (to the US) for training. Who authorised this? The Secretary of Defence

CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM | PRESIDENT, MEXICO

## TRUMP'S 'BOARD OF PEACE' INVITATION

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) accepted an invitation to join US President Donald Trump's newly proposed "Board of Peace," the UAE foreign ministry said Tuesday, placing Abu Dhabi among the first governments to publicly endorse the initiative



of the day quote



Our priority is to engage, not escalate. Sometimes the most responsible form of leadership is restraint

OLOF GILL | EUROPEAN COMMISSION SPOKESPERSON



As I have been clear, no option is off the table, including looking at what age children should be able to access social media and whether we need restrictions on things such as addictive features like infinite scrolling or streaks in apps

KEIR STARMER | PRIME MINISTER, UK



China has lodged urgent representations with Afghan authorities, urging it to make every possible effort to save and treat the injured, ensure the safety of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions, thoroughly investigate the attack and bring those responsible to justice at the earliest

### SHORT TAKES

#### China drives away Philippine aircraft

**Beijing:** The Chinese military said on Tuesday it had organised naval and air forces to warn and drive away a Philippine government aircraft which "illegally intruded" into the airspace over Scarborough Shoal, a disputed atoll in the South China Sea. "We urge the Philippine side to immediately stop infringing upon China's rights and cease provocations and irresponsible hype," a spokesperson for the military's Southern Theatre Command said in a statement. The Philippine Embassy in Beijing, the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine National Maritime Council did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

#### Pak, Chinese firms sign 79 MoUs

**Islamabad:** Pakistani and Chinese companies signed 79 MoUs worth \$4.5 billion, signalling confidence of Chinese investors in Pakistan's agriculture and food sectors, Food Security Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain said Tuesday. "These MoUs were signed during the recently concluded Pakistan-China Agri Investment Conference," Hussain was quoted as saying by the state-run Radio Pakistan. The minister highlighted that investment agreements were concluded across 10 high-impact agricultural and allied sub-sectors. These include: food processing and value addition, agri-technology, seeds and plant protection, livestock and dairy, meat and poultry, fruits and vegetables, fisheries and aquaculture, animal feed, post-harvest infrastructure, and agricultural inputs.

#### Prince Harry back in court

**London:** Prince Harry suffered a sustained campaign of attacks for standing up to Britain's powerful Daily Mail over intrusion into his private life, his lawyer told a court Tuesday where he and others are suing the paper's publisher. The Duke of Sussex, 41, and six other claimants including singer Elton John are suing the Mail's publisher Associated Newspapers at the High Court for violations of their privacy over more than two decades from the early 1990s. The claims include hacking voicemail messages, bugging landlines and obtaining private information by deception, known as "blagging". Associated calls the allegations smears, saying their journalists had legitimate sources for information, including the celebrities' gossipy social circles.

# Trump vows 'no going back' on Greenland

REUTERS



**Davos, Switzerland/Copenhagen, Jan 20:** US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday there was "no going back" on his goal to control Greenland, refusing to rule out taking the Arctic island by force and rounding on allies as European leaders struggled to respond.

Trump's ambition - spelled out in social media posts and mock-up AI images - to wrest sovereignty over Greenland from fellow NATO member Denmark has threatened to blow apart the alliance that has underpinned Western security for decades.

It has also threatened to re-ignite a trade war with Europe that rattled markets and companies for months last year, though Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent pushed back against what he called "hysteria" over Greenland.

"As I expressed to everyone, very plainly, Greenland is imperative for National and World Security. There can be no going back — On that, everyone agrees!" Trump said after speaking to NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte.

To drive home the message, Trump posted an AI image of himself in Greenland, holding a US flag. Another showed him speaking to leaders next to a map showing Canada and Greenland as part of the United States.

Separately, he leaked messages including from French President Emmanuel Macron, who questioned what Trump was "doing on Greenland". Trump, who has vowed to impose tariffs on countries that stood in his way, had earlier threatened to hammer French

#### Trump's Greenland ambition threatens NATO unity, trade ties

#### EU weighs tariffs and Anti-Coercion Instrument against US

#### Bessent pushes back against Greenland 'hysteria'

#### EU Commission chief pushes for new, 'independent' Europe

#### Russia questions Danish sovereignty over Greenland

wines and champagnes with a 200% tariff.

#### BESSENT PUSHES BACK AGAINST 'HYSTERIA'

The European Union has threatened to hit back with trade measures. One option is a package of tariffs on 93 billion euros (\$109 billion) of US imports that could automatically kick in February 6 after a six-month suspension.

Another option is the "Anti-Coercion Instrument" (ACI), which has never yet been used. It could limit access to public tenders, investments or banking activity, or restrict trade in services, the sector in which the US has a surplus with the bloc, including the lucrative digital services provided by US tech giants.

A steady flow of attendees

filled the halls and meeting rooms. With Donald Trump's presence looming large over the annual gathering of the global elite.

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told parliament in Copenhagen Tuesday that "the worst may still lie ahead".

"We can negotiate about everything political, including security, investments and the economy, but we cannot negotiate our most fundamental values: sovereignty, our country's identity, our borders, our democracy," Frederiksen said.

#### RUSSIA QUESTIONS DANISH SOVEREIGNTY OVER GREENLAND

Protesters marched in Zurich, Switzerland, late Monday, carrying a giant banner saying, "TRUMP NOT WELCOME. NO WEF! NO OLIGARCHY! NO IMPERIALIST WARS!", Swiss newspaper NZZ reported.

The foreign minister of Russia, which has been watching with glee as Trump's drive to acquire Greenland widens splits with Europe, said that "Greenland is not a natural part of Denmark" and also denied that Moscow had any designs on the island.

## US estimates 200 Islamic State fighters escaped Syrian prison

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Raqqa (Syria), Jan 20:** Syria's ministry of interior said Tuesday that 200 Islamic State members escaped from a prison in northeast Syria a day earlier, amid clashes between government forces and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, which guards the prison.

Security forces recaptured 81 of the escapees, "while intensive security efforts continue to pursue the remaining fugitives and take the necessary legal measures against them," the statement said.

The SDF and the government have traded blame over the escape at a prison in the town of Shaddadeh, amid the breakdown of a ceasefire deal between the two sides.

Also Tuesday, the SDF accused "Damascus-affiliated factions" of cutting off water supplies to the al-Aqta prison near the city of Raqqa, which it called a "blatant violation of humanitarian standards".

The SDF, the main US-backed force that fought IS in Syria, controls more than a dozen prisons in the northeast where some 9,000 IS members have been held for years without trial. Many of the detained extremists are believed to have carried out atrocities in Syria and Iraq after IS declared a caliphate in June 2014 over large parts of Syria and Iraq.

IS was defeated in Iraq in 2017 and in Syria two years later, but the group's sleeper cells still carry out deadly attacks in both countries.

Under a deal announced Sunday, government forces were to take over control of the prisons from the SDF, but the transfer did not go smoothly.

Despite security concerns, Britain's intelligence agencies, which were involved in the approval process, said any threat could be mitigated.

"China has, and will continue to pose threats to our national security," Dan Jarvis, Britain's security minister, told parliament. But following a detailed assessment of the risks from the new embassy, he was

# UK approves China plan for mega embassy in London



REUTERS

Embassy approval ends years of deadlock over plans

Some UK lawmakers say new embassy could increase spying Decision taken before expected visit to China by Starmer Spy agencies say security risks can be mitigated Local residents plan legal challenge against approval

assured "that the UK's national security is protected".

#### EMBASSY APPROVAL REVEALS UK'S CHINA DILEMMA

The Chinese government purchased Royal Mint Court in 2018 but its requests for a new embassy on the site were rejected by the local council in 2022. Chinese President Xi Jinping asked Starmer last year to intervene.

The government took control of the planning decision last year and an inquiry was held last February to hear arguments about whether the embassy should be approved.

Some politicians in Britain and the United States have said China should be barred from building on the site near London's historic financial district because it might enable Beijing to eavesdrop on fibre-optic cables used by finance firms which travel underneath the area.

## Syrian troops advance, Kurds vow to resist

REUTERS



Syria since Islamist fighters led by Sharaa toppled President Bashar al-Assad in 2014.

Amid reported clashes, three Syrian sources said the US-led coalition against Islamic State was negotiating for the government to take over an SDF-guarded camp housing thousands of civilians linked to the jihadist group near the town of al-Hol, close to the Iraqi border. The Syrian military said it was advancing on al-Hol.

The SDF had established control of a quarter or more of Syria during the 2011-2024 civil war, while fighting with the support of US troops against Islamic State.

Despite year-long recovery drives, as of late 2025 and early

## Looted arms raise fears of B'desh poll violence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**New Delhi/Dhaka, Jan 20:** As around 15 per cent of the firearms and nearly 30 per cent of the ammunition looted during the 2024 Bangladesh unrest remain unaccounted for, security experts have raised concerns over a potential surge in gun-related violence ahead of the national elections.

As many as 5,753 firearms and approximately 651,609 rounds of ammunition were looted from police stations, outposts, vehicles and detention facilities across Bangladesh following widespread attacks on law enforcement installations during the July-August 2024 uprising that led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

Despite year-long recovery drives, as of late 2025 and early

2026, at least 1,362 firearms and an estimated 250,000 rounds of ammunition remain missing, it said. The missing cache includes rifles, sub-machine guns, shotguns, pistols, tear gas launchers and other weapons.

According to security experts, a surge in politically

linked shootings, coupled with thousands of looted firearms still unaccounted for, ahead of the Feb 12 election, is a matter of grave concern.

"The missing weapons are indeed a serious and genuine concern as the country moves towards the elections. The

## Australia Parliament passes anti-hate speech, gun laws

REUTERS

### BONDI SHOOTING AFTERMATH



Burke said individuals with "hate in their hearts and guns in their hands" carried out the December 14 attack at the famed Bondi Beach that killed 15 people.

"The tragic events at Bondi demand a comprehensive response from government," Burke said. "As a government we must do everything we can to counter both the motivation and the method."

The father and son gunmen allegedly behind the attack on Jewish Hanukkah celebrations used powerful firearms that were legally obtained, despite the son being previously examined by Australia's spy agency.

#### PARLIAMENT RECALLED EARLY FOR SPECIAL SESSION

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese recalled parliament early from its summer break for this week's special two-day

session to toughen curbs after a shooting that shocked the nation and prompted calls for more action on gun control and antisemitism.

The proposed gun control measures enable the largest national buyback scheme since

Parliament approves bills for gun buyback, tougher checks

Tougher hate crime laws also approved

Fast-tracked reforms follow Bondi mass shooting that killed 15

states, making use of information from the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

Australia had a record 4.1 million firearms last year, the government said Sunday, with more than 1.1 million of those in New South Wales, its most populous state and the site of the Bondi attack.

"The sheer number of firearms currently circulating within the Australian community is unsustainable," Burke said.

The bill passed without the support of the opposition coalition, with a vote of 96-45 in the lower house, and 38-26 in the Senate.

#### HATE CRIME PENALTIES STEPPED UP

A second bill steps up penalties for hate crimes, such as jail terms up to 12 years when a religious official or preacher is involved, and allows bans on groups deemed to spread hate.

The bill, which also provides new powers to cancel or refuse visas for those who spread hate, passed the lower house by a 116-7 margin and the Senate 38-22.

It won support from Liberal party lawmakers after ruling Labor struck a deal to include changes such as a requirement the government consult the opposition leader on the listing and delisting of extremist organisations.

The Liberals' coalition partners abstained from the vote and the Greens opposed it, arguing it would have a "chilling effect" on political debate and protest.



Customs duty today contributes only 6 per cent of India's gross tax revenue and equals just 3.9 per cent of the value of imports, showing that tariffs have lost their relevance as a revenue instrument

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | GTRI FOUNDER

**\$3BN LNG DEAL**

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) has signed a USD 3 billion deal to buy liquefied natural gas from the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company Gas (ADNOC Gas), making it the UAE's top customer, the firm said. The two firms signed a Sales and Purchase Agreement (SPA) during a very brief two-hour visit to India by UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday



of the day quote



Food processing is a critical pillar for strengthening agri-value chains, expanding India's export footprint, and positioning the country as a trusted global supplier of high-quality, value-added and sustainable food products

CHIRAG PASWAN | UNION MINISTER



The trends are still not clear whether there is a real demand for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) or if the demand is shifting towards such models. But we still believe that as long as the customer requirement differs, we should prepare for the diverse powertrains and electrification

TADASHI ASAZUMA | TOYOTA KIRLOSKAR MOTOR DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR



Parivartan Startup Grants has evolved as a benchmark in the industry that works closely with institutions to support innovation addressing clearly identified social and environmental challenges

KAIZAD BHARUCHA | HDFC BANK DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR

**SHORT TAKES****RRB amalgamation: FinMin meeting Jan 30**

New Delhi: The finance ministry is scheduled to hold a meeting with heads of public sector banks and chairpersons of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) January 30 to review their performance after amalgamation. The meeting would be chaired by Department of Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju and likely to be attended by NABARD Chairman, SIDBI CMD and Executive Director concerned of Reserve Bank of India, sources said. This is going to be the first high-level meeting after the fourth round of consolidation of RRBs effective May 1. This consolidation has reduced the number of RRBs to 28 from 43. According to sources, the meeting would review financial performance of RRBs after the amalgamation. It would review progress of priority sector lending and various financial schemes undertaken by RRBs. On May 1, one state-owned RRB became a reality following the consolidation of 15 RRBs across 11 states to achieve better operational efficiency and cost rationalisation.

**PhonePe gets SEBI nod for IPO**

New Delhi: PhonePe has received SEBI approval for its IPO, and the company will be filing its Updated Draft Red Herring Prospectus (UDRHP) soon, setting the stage for India's most anticipated fintech IPO in the near horizon, as per sources familiar with the development. The IPO will be an Offer For Sale by existing shareholders. The company will not be raising any additional primary capital in the IPO, said the sources.

PhonePe leads India's digital payments market with over 45 per cent market share in UPI transactions. In December 2025, the company processed 9.8 billion transactions, according to NPCI data. The company had posted Rs 7,115 crore in revenue for FY24-25, marking a 40 per cent year-on-year increase. The company also turned free cash flow positive with operating cash flow of Rs 1,202 crore. Its adjusted PAT (excluding ESOP costs) more than tripled to Rs 630 crore. PhonePe's public listing will set a crucial benchmark for India's digital payments sector and could pave the way for other fintech unicorns eyeing public markets.

# Sensex sinks over 1,000 pts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 20: Equity benchmark index Sensex Tuesday plunged over 1,000 points to sink below the 83,000 level due to widespread sell-off tracking sluggish global markets amid escalating geopolitical tensions.

Besides, continued weakness in the rupee and persistent foreign fund outflows dented investors' sentiment, traders said.

Extending its previous day's decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,065.71 points, or 1.28 per cent, to settle at 82,180.47. During the day, it dropped 1,235.6 points, or 1.48 per cent, to end at 82,010.58.

A total of 3,503 stocks declined while 780 advanced and 119 remained unchanged on the BSE. The 50-share NSE Nifty tacked 353 points, or 1.38 per cent, to end at 25,232.50.

"Markets extended their weakness on Tuesday and ended lower amid broad-based selling and weak global cues. Market sentiment remained subdued due to mixed corporate earnings and renewed concerns surrounding geopolitical tensions and global trade developments. Persistent foreign institutional selling, along with a weaker currency environment, further weighed on investor confidence and kept risk appetite restrained



## Investors' wealth erodes by ₹9.86L-cr

New Delhi: Investors' wealth eroded by ₹9.86 lakh crore in a single day Tuesday as stock markets faced heavy drubbing, with the BSE Sensex tumbling 1,066 points, amid escalating geopolitical tensions and unabated foreign fund outflows. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by ₹9,86,093.96 crore to ₹4,55,82,683.29 crore (USD 5.01 trillion), mirroring a bearish trend in equities.

throughout the session," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Eternal declined by 4.02 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance (3.88 per cent), Sun Pharma, InterGlobe Aviation, Trent, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra and Bajaj Finserv.

HDFC Bank emerged as the only gainer from the pack.

The BSE smallcap gauge tumbled 2.74 per cent, and the midcap index dropped 2.52 per cent.

Realty dived 5.21 per cent, services tanked 2.89 per cent, capital goods (2.76 per cent), consumer discretionary (2.73 per cent), consumer durables (2.71 per cent), telecommunication (2.42 per cent), auto (2.36 per cent) and power (2.23 per cent).

"Investor sentiment was weighed down by escalating global trade tensions and continued foreign capital outflows. Concerns resurfaced after US President Donald Trump threatened fresh tariffs on several European nations, reviving fears of renewed global trade disruptions. At the same time, sustained selling by foreign portfolio investors added to the downside pressure in domestic equities. Heightened global uncertainty and falling equity markets prompted investors to shift towards safe-haven assets, with gold and silver trading at record highs," according to Ashika Institutional Equities.

"Fresh threats by US President Donald Trump to impose additional tariffs on European nations opposing the US move to take control of Greenland have triggered another bout of global equity selling, with Indian markets also witnessing broad-based pressure," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

The Indian equity market ended today's session on a decisively negative note, reflecting a combination of weak global cues, cautious investor positioning, and subdued risk appetite, he added.

mark in the national capital. According to forex.com, spot gold breached the USD 4,700 per ounce level for the first time in the international market. The yellow metal increased by USD 66.38, or 1.42 per cent, to USD 4,737.40 per ounce. Spot silver also climbed to hit a new record of USD 95.88 per ounce in the overseas trade.

The white metal had breached the Rs 3 lakh milestone for the first time on Monday, before closing at Rs 3,10,275 per kg. Over the last two trading sessions, silver has zoomed by Rs 32,187, or 11.18 per cent, from Rs 2,87,762 per kg recorded on January 16.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity traded at Rs 1,53,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) against the previous closing level of Rs 1,48,100 per 10 grams.

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## Gold breaches ₹1.5L-mark; silver surges to record ₹ 3.23L



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Gold prices jumped Rs 5,100 Tuesday to breach the crucial Rs 1.5 lakh-per-10-gram milestone in the national capital, driven by strong demand in domestic and international markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity traded at Rs 1,53,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) against the previous closing level of Rs 1,48,100 per 10 grams.

Silver prices also strengthened in the local bullion market and scaled a fresh peak. The white metal skyrocketed from Rs 20,400, or nearly 7 per cent, to Rs 3,23,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). On Monday, silver prices rallied Rs 10,000, surging past the Rs 3 lakh-per-kilogram

mark in the national capital. According to forex.com, spot gold breached the USD 4,700 per ounce level for the first time in the international market. The yellow metal increased by USD 66.38, or 1.42 per cent, to USD 4,737.40 per ounce. Spot silver also climbed to hit a new record of USD 95.88 per ounce in the overseas trade.

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# SKY aims to rediscover form

The Indian T20 outfit has been on autopilot mode during the last two years with an odd defeat here and there being small blemishes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nagpur, Jan 20:** Skipper Suryakumar Yadav would want the attacking batter in him to front up and bolster his leadership against New Zealand when the five-match T20I series gets underway here Wednesday, serving as a final dress rehearsal for India's World Cup title defence in less than three weeks' time.

Since Suryakumar took over as India's T20 skipper in 2024, the results have been stunningly good with a winning percentage of more than 72 per cent. It papered over the skipper's woeful form with the willow for quite a while but not anymore.

The Indian T20 outfit has been on autopilot mode during the last two years with an odd defeat here and there being small blemishes for a crack team made up of top quality IPL performers knowing their roles to the 'T'.

However, the pressure of playing at home amid expectations that India become the first ever team to defend its title will weigh heavily on Suryakumar's mind going into the New Zealand series.

New Zealand, in the past one year, has achieved many firsts, including a Test series whitewash and a first ever bilateral ODI series win in India.

But when it comes to T20Is, India under Suryakumar have been a different beast having won 18 out of 25 games, largely due to Abhishek Sharma's blazing starts and Varun Chakravarthy's bamboozling performances in middle overs of opposition innings.

New Zealand have won 13 out of their 21 T20Is post the 2024 T20 World Cup.

With Devon Conway, skipper Mitchell Santner, world's



premier T20I seamer Jacob Duffy and the duo of Daryl Mitchell and Glenn Phillips in their ranks, New Zealand are as strong an opposition as one can expect.

It also means that the defending champions will get to make perfect World Cup preparations.

In this backdrop, it is Indian skipper Suryakumar, whose poor form has been the weak link of a formidable team.

Unarguably, 2025 was his worst in India colours with only 218 runs from 19 games without a single fifty and a strike rate of 123 plus.

It made matters worse that he got himself down to No 4

## T20I

in order to allow Tilak Varma to get a longer run at No 3.

**Ishan to bat at number three**

In any other country, a player of Shreyas Iyer's calibre would have been an automatic choice in a T20I set up, having led three separate franchises to IPL finals and winning once.

The best player of spinners in this Indian set-up, Iyer's lucky break has come due to in-form Tilak Varma's abdominal surgery.

Ishan Kishan, currently in red hot form, will bat at number three which means that Surya Kumar will continue to bat at number four. The skipper him-

self confirmed this at the pre-match press conference.

Kishan is someone who won't be effective beyond No 3 as he is more of an enforcer within powerplay overs but for the skipper's own sake, he would do better batting at that slot.

It effectively means that Iyer may miss out on playing XI. Since Kishan is a part of the World Cup squad, it would not have been prudent to waste him. Iyer, since he is not in World Cup scheme, will miss out.

**Return of Hardik, Bumrah and Varun**

The T20 series also marks the return of all-rounder Hardik Pandya and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah after some well-earned rest during the ODI series.

Pandya brings in the balance to the T20 side with his skills and his presence means the team management can afford to play an extra specialist.

They will be joined by Varun Chakravarthy, the biggest "X" factor in this set up whom the New Zealanders haven't played much.

## Teams:

**India:** Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Ishan Kishan, Shreyas Iyer, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakravarthy, Rinku Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana.

**New Zealand:** Mitchell Santner (captain), Devon Conway, Bevon Jacobs, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Tim Robinson, Jimmy Neesham, Ish Sodhi, Zak Foulkes, Mark Chapman, Michael Bracewell, Rachin Ravindra, Kyle Jamieson, Matt Henry, Jacob Duffy, Kristian Clarke.

## Amelia joins Blue Tigresses as head coach



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** The All India Football Federation (AIFF) Tuesday announced the appointment of Costa Rica's Amelia Valverde as the head coach of the Indian senior women's team.

Valverde, 39, has joined the Indian camp in Antalya where the Blue Tigresses are preparing for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026, scheduled for March. She joins the existing coaching staff including Crispin Chettiri, Priya PV, and Mario Aguiar. A former player who began her coaching career in 2011, Valverde was the longest-serving coach in the history of the Costa Rican women's national team, leading Las Ticas from 2015 to 2023.

Under her tutelage, Costa Rica participated in the 2015 and 2023 FIFA Women's World Cups, their only two appearances in the showpiece event. She was the second-youngest head coach in the 2015 World Cup at just 28 years of age.

Valverde led the Costa Rican senior side to the gold medal at the 2017 Central American Games, silver medal at the 2018 Central American and Caribbean Games, and bronze medal at the 2019 Pan American Games. She was named the CONCACAF Female Coach of the Year in 2016.

After leaving the Costa Rica national team, Valverde was appointed as the coach of Mexican club side CF Monterrey in 2023, where she found immediate success, winning a historic Bicampeonato in 2024 after lifting the Liga MX Femenil Clausura title in July and the Apertura in November.

In the same year, Valverde was awarded the Mexican Balon de Oro for the best coach in the Liga MX Femenil by the Mexican Football Federation. As part of Valverde's support staff, goalkeeping coach Eli Avila and strength and conditioning coach Jose Sanchez will also join the Indian senior women's national team.

## SUB-JR NATIONAL RUGBY SEVENS CHAMPIONSHIP

## Odisha power into QFs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Defending champions Bihar, last year's runners-up Rajasthan, bronze medallists Maharashtra, and hosts Odisha delivered commanding performances on the opening day of the Boys' Under-15 competition at the 10th Sub-Junior National Rugby Sevens Championship, as the Kalinga Stadium witnessed a high-scoring start to the knockout journey.

The opening day saw over 1,200 points scored across a full slate of group-stage matches followed by the Pre-Quarterfinals, with the leading contenders asserting early dominance to book their places in the



last eight. Bihar were clinical throughout the day, Rajasthan showcased attacking firepower, Maharashtra combined structure with pace, while Odisha thrilled the home crowd with emphatic wins.

## T20 WORLD CUP

## B'desh government pushes back

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chittagong, Jan 20:** Asif Nazrul, the Sports Advisor for Bangladesh's government, stated Tuesday that Bangladesh has remained firm in its position and is opposed to travelling to India for their T20 World Cup matches.

Bangladesh are refusing to play their T20 World Cup matches in India, citing security concerns, and have asked the ICC to move their matches to co-hosting nation Sri Lanka, after the BCCI asked Kolkata Knight Riders to release their pacer Mustafizur Rahman for the upcoming IPL 2026 amid prevailing political tensions between the two countries.

Nazrul said that Bangladesh will not accept any unreason-



able conditions if the International Cricket Council (ICC) imposes them under pressure from India.

"If the International Cricket Council (ICC) bows to pressure from the Indian Cricket Board

**If the International Cricket Council (ICC) bows to pressure from the Indian Cricket Board and tries to impose any illogical condition on us, we will not accept**

**ASIF NAZRUL | SPORTS ADVISOR, BANGLADESH**

and tries to impose any illogical condition on us, we will not accept," Nazrul told reporters Tuesday.

"In the past there are examples where Pakistan said that they will not travel to India, and ICC changed the venue. We have asked to change the venue on logical grounds, and we cannot be pressurised to play in India by putting illogical pressure," he added.

It has been learnt that the ICC will make a final decision

on Bangladesh's request by January 21. Over the weekend, the ICC and the Bangladesh Cricket Board held a meeting, at which both parties maintained their respective positions.

Bangladesh had also suggested to the ICC that it consider moving its team to Group B, swapping places with Ireland, which plays its group matches in Sri Lanka. The ICC has reportedly assured Ireland that no such move will be made.

The ICC officials are irked by the BCB's stance, as they understand the BCB has assured them there is no security threat to Bangladesh. It has also impressed upon Bangladesh that if they withdraw, then they will nominate a replacement team, with Scotland currently next in line based on rankings.

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN

## Sinner advances as Gaston retires hurt

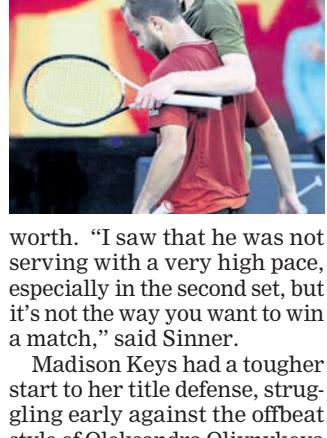
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Melbourne, Jan 20:** Jannik Sinner regained his winning streak at Melbourne Park Tuesday after Hugo Gaston retired unexpectedly once the Italian, a two-time defending Australian Open champion, took a commanding lead of two sets to love at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne.

The match ended abruptly after just over an hour when the injured French World No 93 retired despite receiving medical treatment. Jannik Sinner dominated early, leading 6-2, 6-1, and the French player left the court visibly devastated. Despite the short contest, Sinner reinforced his status as the leading title contender in Melbourne.

**Forced to go legal**

The rift has reportedly reached such a peak that Brooklyn has instructed his parents to communicate with him exclusively through legal representatives. He claimed this decision followed their repeated refusal to respect his personal boundaries.



worth. "I saw that he was not serving with a very high pace, especially in the second set, but it's not the way you want to win a match," said Sinner.

Madison Keys had a tougher start to her title defense, struggling early against the offbeat style of Oleksandra Oliynikova before advancing 7-6 (6)-6.

Ninth-seeded Keys, playing in her 50th Grand Slam tournament, trailed 4-0 before she rallied to force a tiebreaker against the Ukrainian.

"Obviously I was very nervous at the start," Keys said.

"As nervous as I was ... I'm really glad to be back, and that I got through that match."

## Brooklyn slams parents in 6-page statement

**David, Victoria's eldest son, Brooklyn Peltz Beckham, shared 6 Instagram stories, making serious allegations against his parents**

AGENCIES

**London, Jan 20:** In a blistering six-page social media statement, Brooklyn Peltz Beckham has finally broken months of silence regarding the widely reported rift within the Beckham family.

Substantiating claims of a broken relationship, the 26-year-old affirmed that his decision to choose a solitary path with his wife, Nicola Peltz Beckham, is permanent, stating that the severed bonds have "no scope of repair."

Through a series of raw Instagram Stories, Brooklyn addressed the timeline of events and the actions from his parents, David and Victoria, that forced his hand.

**"Brand Beckham" over family**



Brooklyn alleged that for his entire life, his parents have prioritised public relations and "performative" displays over genuine family connections. He claimed that within his household, love was measured by social media engagement or how quickly one appeared for a photo opportunity.

"For my entire life, my parents have controlled narratives in the press about our family," he wrote, adding that he has found "peace and relief" from lifelong anxiety since cutting ties.

**The "Name Bribe" allegation**

In perhaps the most shocking claim, Brooklyn alleged that the severed bonds have "no scope of repair."

**The first dance "Hijacking"**

Addressing long-standing rumours about his wedding day, Brooklyn claimed Victoria "hijacked" the couple's first

dance. He alleged that while a romantic song was scheduled

for him and Nicola, Victoria stepped in to dance with him instead, describing the moment as "inappropriate" and "humiliating" in front of their hundreds of guests.

**Alleged sabotage of Nicola Peltz**

Brooklyn highlighted the consistent mistreatment he claims Nicola has faced since they decided to marry. He confirmed that Victoria cancelled making Nicola's wedding dress at the "eleventh hour," forcing her to find a replacement and triggering "unnecessary panic."

He further claimed that on the night before the wedding, family members told him Nicola was "not blood" and therefore "not family." Brooklyn also alleged that Nicola never received the acceptance she deserved and was pointedly not invited to David's 50th birthday celebration in 2025.

**Forced to go legal**

The rift has reportedly reached such a peak that Brooklyn has instructed his parents to communicate with him exclusively through legal representatives. He claimed this decision followed their repeated refusal to respect his personal boundaries.

The second seed has won 15 straight matches at Melbourne Park and is chasing a historic third consecutive Australian Open title. A third win would make him only the second man in the Open era, after Novak Djokovic, to achieve this feat.

Sinner will next face either Dino Prizmic or James Duck-