



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

SPORTS | P12

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

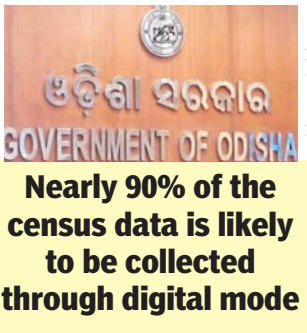
begin in February 2027, to involve a door-to-door population census or collecting individual demographic details.

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.

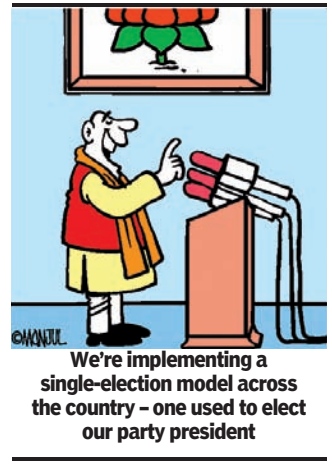


Nitin Nabin takes over as BJP nat’l president

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.



IRREGULAR by MANJUL



SC: State cops can probe Central govt employees

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 entrusted with the task of investigation of the cases of corruption and bribery against the employees of the Central 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

PNN & AGENCIES

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.

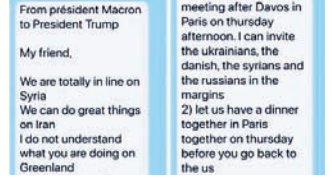
Mohapatra further stated that CRUT, as a pioneering government-run public transport organisation, has extended immediate compassionate assistance to the families of accident victims and provided insurance coverage exceeding ₹4 crore to the families of those who lost their lives in road accidents.

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,” the French leader wrote in English.

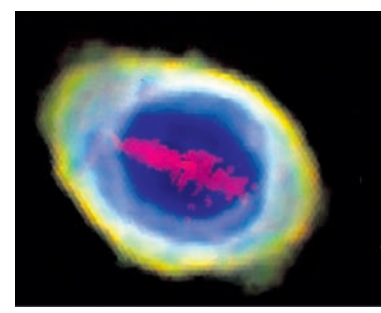
World leaders’ private messages to each other rarely make it verbatim into the public domain - enabling them to project one face publicly and another to each other.

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



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

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 observation using a new instrument called WEAWE, short for

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

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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 some thing 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 rivals may give you a hard time. Take proper care of your health, advises Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
You will remember this day for the rest of 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.

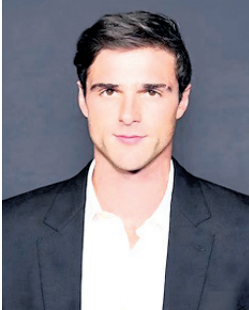


BILLIE ELISH LAMBASTS TRUMP'S ICE VIOLENCE

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.



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.'

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



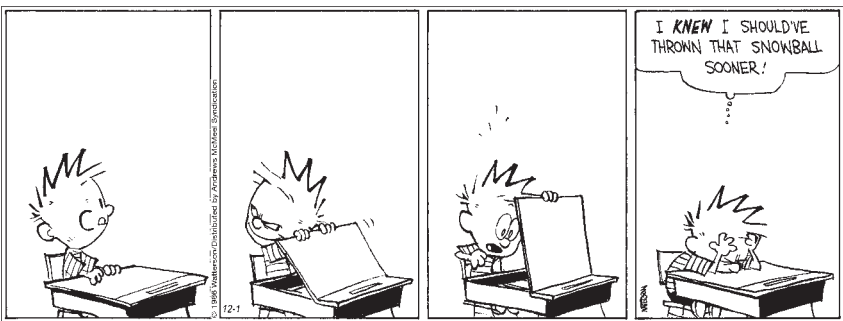
Panda, while KK will receive the Ajit Yuva Natya Samman. On day 2, viewers will witness Odia play *Nisidha Kakhya*, staged by Rangashala, Puri. The play is directed by Bikram Sahoo. Renowned theatre personality Pitabas Senapati will be honoured with the Ajit Natya Samman. The host organisation will present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

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

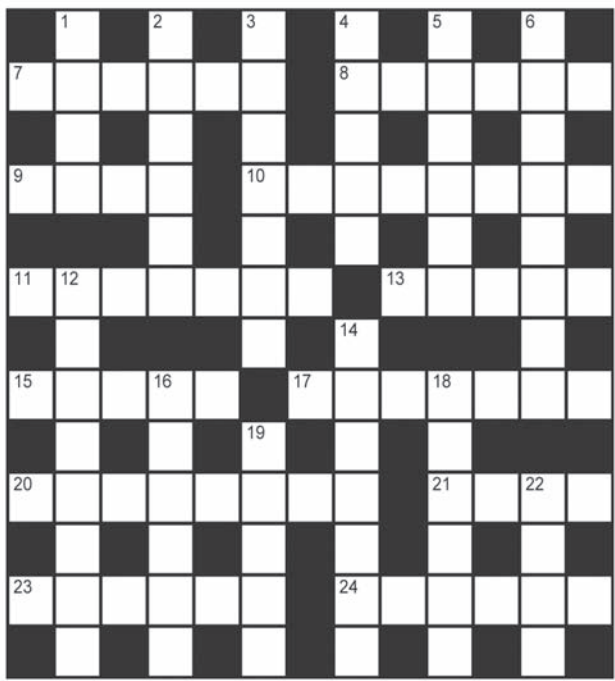


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- 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
 - Down**
 - 1 Have status
 - 2 Willow twigs
 - 3 Heard in a battle
 - 4 Coconut holders
 - 5 Get even
 - 6 Cut short
 - 12 Make uniform
 - 14 Exercise move
 - 16 Bird sanctuary
 - 18 Injury
 - 19 Makes a sweater
 - 22 Flower fanciers

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

SOLUTIONS

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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), Prafula Kumar Biswal (65), Sangram Jena (22), Basudev Rout (25), and Manaranjan 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 ROB's 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.

Major fire engulfs 70 shops in City

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



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Around 70 shops were gutted and goods worth lakhs of rupees were destroyed in a major fire at Unit-I market in Bhubaneswar Tuesday, police said.

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

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 unhurt. 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. She 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, including



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

Science), 'Imagination and Creativity' (Language and Literature) and 'Practical

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

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Accountability is the cornerstone of democratic governance, and it is through accountability that legislative assemblies can consistently earn and sustain the trust of the people, Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy said Tuesday.

Addressing a thematic discussion titled "Accountability of Legislatures to the People" at the 86th All-India Conference of Presiding Officers in Lucknow, Padhy underlined that legislatures are not merely law-making bodies but vital institutions for deliberation, debate and representation of public aspirations. She noted that transparency in public affairs and upholding the supremacy of the Constitution are integral to maintaining citizens' confidence 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 Kuwar 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.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit dtd. 19.01.2026 sworn before Executive Magistrate Bhadrak, I Anita Nayak, D/o - Praphoolakumar Nayak, Vill/PO - Langudi, PS -Bhadrak Rural, Dist - Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN - 756116 declare that I have changed my name from Anita Dhani to Anita Nayak. Henceforth I shall be known as Anita Nayak for all purposes.

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 Bhapur block of Dhenkanal district along the Sapua 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 Shrivaka—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					
CURRENCY			BOURSES		COMMODITIES
INDEX	VARIATION		INDEX	VARIATION	
DOLLAR	91.01	▲ 0.03	SENSEX	82180.47	▼ 1,065.71
EURO	106.75	▲ 0.93	NIFTY	25232.50	▼ 353
					GOLD ₹149,586 ▲ ₹3947
					SILVER ₹320,279 ▲ ₹10,004

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	31.6°	28.6°	Fog or mist in the morning
Min Temp	12.7°	11.8°	
Humidity	84%	82%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

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 would 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.

power post

FOCUS ECONOMY

THE GOLDILOCKS MIRAGE

On 1 February, the Finance Minister will present the Union Budget for the next fiscal year against a macroeconomic backdrop that would be the envy of the world. India’s growth forecasts have been revised upwards by major institutions like the IMF. The quarterly GDP numbers suggest upward momentum. And consumer inflation has drifted to strikingly low levels, even lower than the RBI’s comfort band. This combination of high growth and low inflation is a “sweet spot” called a Goldilocks economy. The temptation is to conclude that macroeconomic management is fine and that the task of policy is simply to preserve the trajectory.

However, a more careful reading is warranted. Not because the headline numbers are “wrong”, but because the forces producing them are uneven, potentially reversible, and not fully aligned with growth that leads to inclusive prosperity. The Budget should therefore treat the current configuration as a window to strengthen foundations, not as a reason to relax.

The first issue is to understand the current “low inflation.” In October 2025, the inflation was as low as 0.25%. A significant part of this disinflation is explained by food prices, which have moved from double-digit inflation in October 2024 to outright deflation a year later, turning negative 5%. Food has high weight in the CPI basket and that’s why the latter is low. This consumption reality still dominates food inflation. The “core” inflation outside of food and fuel has been stubbornly higher, close to 4%. This low CPI inflation tells us more about agricultural price cycles, supply conditions and weak underlying demand.

That is why the monetary policy debate has an unusual note of caution and not of jubilation. One member of the RBI’s Monetary Policy Committee argued that inflation that is “too low” may not be healthy for a developing country, because it can be symptomatic of weak demand. This warning deserves attention in fiscal policymaking too. Low inflation driven mainly because farm prices

Ajit Ranade

INDIA’S
CURRENT
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The Budget should treat the current configuration as a window to strengthen foundations, not as a reason to relax

have stagnated or fallen does not mean that it will last.

The second issue is of farm wages. Food deflation lowers the CPI, but it can also compress incomes for farmers. Low food inflation can therefore coexist with rural distress because food producers do not benefit as much. This becomes relevant for the Budget because the credibility of high growth depends on demand being broad-based. If rural incomes and wages stagnate, consumption remains fragile. If consumption is fragile, private investment has less reason to accelerate. The current moment, therefore, should be read not simply as “macro stability achieved,” but as a possible signal that the growth process is uneven — strong in some segments, weak in others.

An important warning sign, and perhaps the most consequential concern is the persistence of weak rural wage growth. Analyses of rural wage trends show that over multiple years, nominal rural wages have grown modestly, but real wages have been flat to negative for long stretches. When food prices were rising sharply as in 2023-24, they were eating up the modest growth in nominal wages, causing real wages to remain stagnant. The stagnation of real rural wages is over several years from before the COVID period.

This could be due to two factors. First, labour supply has expanded — including rising female labour force participation. This is as much due to rural distress, and the need to augment household income. It is worth noting that 57% of employment created under NREGA was taken up by women. Second, India’s

growth in recent years has been less labour-intensive. Output rise was due to vigorous growth in capital spending, mostly by the public sector. Output can rise without proportionate increases in employment and wage bargaining power. The Budget must treat rural earnings as a core macro variable.

A third concern is external: the rupee’s relative weakness and the latent risk of imported inflation. The rupee has depreciated even as CPI inflation remains near zero. The immediate question is why the pass-through has been muted.

Part of the answer is that food deflation — a domestic phenomenon — has dominated the CPI story, and crude oil prices have been relatively steady. But muted pass-through today does not guarantee muted pass-through tomorrow. Farm prices can turn quickly; and price pressures in metals and precious metals can seep into costs and inflation expectations. When food inflation drops from a high positive number to a negative one, next year’s comparisons become more likely to show a rebound, which is a base effect. In addition, the CPI basket is scheduled for revision. The Budget’s macro assumptions should not be built around the expectation that 0-2% inflation is a “new normal.”

Finally, there is nominal GDP growth. When inflation is exceptionally low, the gap between real and nominal GDP narrows sharply. This has immediate fiscal implications because tax collections track nominal, not real, aggregates. If nominal growth underperforms, revenue buoyancy disappoints, and expenditure pressures remain. In an environment of heightened welfare

expectations the fiscal deficit arithmetic becomes harder. And if deficits widen unexpectedly, they can become inflationary and currency-negative, reinforcing the very risks policymakers hoped to avoid. The Budget should hence be pragmatic and resilience building.

First, construct macro assumptions that anticipate normalisation. It is safer to assume inflation returns towards the 4% with upside risk. Second, treat rural earnings and employment-rich growth as central objectives. The Budget should emphasise interventions that raise earning capacity — rural infrastructure, irrigation and storage, value-chain development, rural non-farm clusters, and MSME credit ecosystems — rather than treating rural stress as a welfare-only issue. Third, public capex is still needed, but it should tilt toward job creation, for instance focusing on housing, logistics, urban public services, and decentralised energy. Fourth, recognise that currency stability is partly a fiscal credibility function. Fifth, be precise in public communication. Low inflation is not the same as low cost of living — a point often missed in political debates. If citizens feel their lived costs remain high and wages remain weak, they will distrust macro narratives, however technically correct the indices may be.

India’s current combination of strong real growth and very low measured inflation is unusual — and in parts, welcome. But it rests heavily on food price dynamics and favourable base effects, while the labour market — especially rural wages — continues to show strain. The rupee and commodity prices add external uncertainty. And low nominal GDP growth can complicate fiscal arithmetic. The Finance Minister’s challenge, therefore, is not to celebrate or to fear the moment, but to interpret it correctly. It is an opportunity to strengthen the conditions that make growth inclusive and durable — rising wages, broad-based consumption, steady investment, and credible fiscal assumptions, before the inflation cycle turns again.

The writer is a noted economist.
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IN JEST THIS

Give ‘proof of life’ to your loved ones

Melvin Durai

SENDING ‘PROOF OF LIFE’ TO LOVED ONES IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA, AS UNDERScoreD BY THE SURGING POPULARITY OF A CHINESE APP CALLED ‘ARE YOU DEAD?’

My wife and kids recently went abroad on a short vacation, leaving me at home to take care of our dog, Lulu. A few days later, my younger daughter Divya sent me a three-word text: “Proof of life.”

I knew what she wanted: a photo or video of Lulu to prove that I had not gotten so carried away with watching football that I had neglected Lulu – allowed her to wander outside and become a lost dog or forgotten to feed her and sent her prematurely to dog heaven.

Of course, Divya wasn’t being completely serious. She just wanted to see a photo or video of her friend. She knew that I would not neglect Lulu, especially since I was well-aware that if my wife returned home to find that Lulu was on the street somewhere, I’d be on the street too.

Sending “proof of life” to loved ones is always a good idea, as underscored by the

surging popularity of a Chinese app called “Are you dead?” The app is aimed at people who live alone, especially those living far away from their friends and relatives. After buying the app for 8 yuan (about 100 rupees), users can push a green circle on their phones each day and send proof of life to a loved one. It’s simpler, apparently, than sending a daily text that says: “I’m alive. What about you?”

According to an Associated Press report, the app is popular not just in China, but also India, America, Britain, Singapore and other countries. You might think that it’s aimed at old people who might die in their homes suddenly and not be found for weeks or months, but its young people who are mostly downloading it. Some have loved ones who are concerned about their safety, while others, like 38-year-old Yuan Sangsang of Shanghai, are actually worried about their bodies potentially decomposing

in their isolated homes.

“I just don’t want to die with no dignity, like the body gets rotten and smelly before it is found,” Sangsang told the AP. “That would be unfair for the ones who have to deal with it.”

Most young people don’t think much about death, but she’s thinking about the people who might have to remove her body. It’s a special kind of person who worries about that, the same kind of person who, just before being hit by a falling meteorite, thinks, “Oh no, someone’s going to have a mess to clean up.”

Many young people are just having fun with the app, listing their friends as emergency contacts. But for the elderly, the app could potentially be a life-saver. If they’re unconscious or debilitated and can’t push the green circle, a friend or relative will be able to check on them.

Some retirement communities have “proof of life” sensors in the

homes of the elderly. If the sensor does not detect movement for a significant period of time, a security officer is alerted. The officer promptly does a “door check.”

Officer (knocking on door): “Mr. Williams, are you alive?”

Elderly man: “I think so.”

Officer: “Do you have a pulse?”

Elderly man: “I think so. But I’ve fallen and I can’t get up.”

Officer: “Hang on. I’m going to call an ambulance for you.”

“Proof of life” is often associated with kidnappings. Before you pay a ransom, you want to make sure that the victim is alive and well. It could be a photo or video or voice recording, ideally something that indicates a date, such as a photo with the front cover of a newspaper.

When you’re concerned about the safety of a loved one, there is nothing better than “proof of life.”

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Retrograde step

Sir, The decision to revert to ballot papers for elections to the Greater Bengaluru Authority and other local bodies in Karnataka is a clear retrograde step. Karnataka is among India’s most progressive states, and Bengaluru, celebrated as the Silicon Valley of India, hosts a vibrant ecosystem of technology, artificial intelligence and startups. In such a context, abandoning electronic voting machines (EVMs) in favour of ballot papers sends a deeply discouraging signal. EVMs have consistently proven to be efficient, accurate and transparent, ensuring quicker results and minimising human intervention. They have undergone rigorous technological scrutiny and have repeatedly been upheld by the Supreme Court. Despite persistent allegations, the Congress has failed to substantiate claims of EVM tampering or vote theft. The shift appears politically motivated, aimed at appeasing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who has recently labelled India’s electoral process as “vote chori” without evidence. Ironically, the ballot paper system has a notorious past marked by booth capturing, high invalid votes, logistical delays and vulnerability to manipulation. Reintroducing such a flawed method undermines electoral integrity and contradicts Karnataka’s reputation for embracing modern, transparent and technology-driven governance.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Impressive performance

Sir, Several political equations were instrumental in the BJP’s impressive performance in the 29 Municipal Corporations across Maharashtra. In some strategic locations, the Mahayuti fought separately that actually tilted the scales in favour of the party. Marathwada is one region where the BJP leaders are all smiles because the party has cumulatively won 180 out of the 396 seats across Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, Nanded, Jalna, Parbhani and Latur. In both Nanded and Jalna, always considered Congress bastions, the BJP won a clear majority. Former Congress Chief Minister Ashok Chavan shifting sides and joining the BJP in 2024, appears to have helped the latter in Nanded. In Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar BJP and SS (Shinde) fighting on their own clicked for the former.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

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.

Sponsored by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the programme focuses on digitising manuscripts, vocabulary, oral traditions and visual records to preserve these languages for future generations.

"The ELP is a movement to safeguard languages facing extinction. Similar digitisation exercises will be undertaken

for other languages after consultations with community leaders and stakeholders," AASU 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 'pathek' (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.

For Khamyang, 650 manuscript leaves have been digitised, along with 250 curated photographs capturing cultural practices, lifestyle and community memory. Audio documentation covers around 540 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

Ahmedabad, Jan 20: India's first camel milk processing plant, set up by the Kutch District Co-operative Milk Producers Union, popularly known as Sarhad Dairy, procured 4,754 litres of camel milk daily in 2024-25.

The Bhuj-based dairy paid a total of ₹8.72 crore to over 350 camel farming families during the year, Gujarat government officials said Tuesday.

"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 2024a "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-

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, Gadshisha 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 Samridhi' 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.

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.

Air India flight AI 171, a Boeing 787-8 aircraft enroute to London Gatwick, crashed into a medical college hostel complex shortly after take off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport June 12 last year. The aircraft burst into flames, killing 241 out of 242 people onboard and 19 individuals on the ground.

"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.

Over 22,000 personal belongings have been preserved and listed on a dedicated portal with meticulous care, including nearly 8,000 'associated items', such as passports or any document that can be linked with a particular person, and 14,000 'un-associated items' that cannot be linked in this manner, the spokesperson added.

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.



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.

The meeting was attended by Patidar leaders such as Varun Patel and Dinesh Bambhaniya, Kshatriya leader Ramjuba Jadeja and Brahmin leader Hemang Raval, among others.

LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS

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-

servation translocation protocol in which after obtaining the requisite permissions from the Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam, under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, a site election committee was constituted to look for possible locations ideally suited for the pre-release enclosures.

The rhinos have been moved to a prerelase enclosure, where they will be habituated to living under wild conditions before their final release to roam freely in the park, the official said.

The translocation operation was

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 Anupam Sarmah -- were present.

The rhino transfer is a testimony to the established rehabilitation protocols being followed in KNPTR, where every wild animal, especially the oneà '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).

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, BALASORE

No.185, Dt.19.01.2026

'e' Procurement Notice

BID IDENTIFICATION No. SEMIDBL5-10/2025-26

e-mail ID: 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 (Approximately)
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 through online:	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 http://dowronissa.gov.in	
Name & Address of the OIT:	Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Balasore, At/Po/District-Balasore, Ph.No./Fax No.-06762-224461, Email ID: mibalasore@yahoo.co.in
Further details can be seen from the e-market place website www.tendersodisha.gov.in/District NIC Portal (baleswar.nic.in)	
Note: Corrigendum/ Addendum/ Modifications/ Additions if any can be seen through online only.	
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Balasore	
OIPR-	

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

email id : eeddjspur@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	: 02 (Two) nos. of Package
3	Bid Identification No.	: 1. SEDD-JSPUR/JSP-11/2025-26 2. SEDD-JSPUR/JSP-12/2025-26
4	Estimated Cost	: Rs.82.95 Lakhs & Rs.81.61 Lakhs
5	Period of completion	: 10 (Ten) Calendar months
6	Availability of Tender On-Line	: From 22.01.2026 at 16.30 Hours to 05.02.2026 upto 17.30 Hours
7	Date of Opening of Technical Bid	: 06.02.2026 at 11.30 Hours in the O/o the Superintending Engineer, Drainage Division, Jagatsinghpur
8	Class of Contractor	: "B" Class
9	EMD required	: As per DTCN
10	Cost of Tender paper	: Rs.10,000/-
11	Procurement Officer	: Superintending Engineer, Drainage Division, Jagatsinghpur-754103


*Tender will be accepted if registered in the CDMS Portal. Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation if any required will be published only in Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Drainage Division, Jagatsinghpur

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 Khandewla 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.

Man arrested for killing parents, wife & 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).

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.

As Speaker Appavu began reading out the Tamil version of the state-prepared governor's address after Ravi left abruptly, main Opposition AIADMK staged a walkout alleging law and order failure and other Opposition parties including the PMK followed suit.

In the governor's address read out by the Speaker, the Tamil Nadu government urged

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

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

Stray dogs matter: SC irked by Maneka Gandhi's criticism



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Supreme Court Tuesday came down heavily on former Union minister Maneka Gandhi for her remarks criticising apex court orders in the stray dog issue, saying she has committed contempt of court.

However, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria said it is not initiating contempt of court proceedings against Gandhi because of the court's magnanimity.

The bench said the former minister has made "all kinds of comments" against everyone without even thinking.

Questioning senior advocate Raju Ramachandran who appeared for Gandhi, the

bench said, "A little while ago you were telling the court we should be circumspect. Did you find out what kind of remarks your client has been making? Have you heard her podcast?" "She has made all kinds of remarks against everybody without even thinking. Have you seen her body language? What she says and how she says. Your client has committed contempt. We are not taking cognisance because of the court's magnanimity," it said.

Ramachandran replied that it was not a contempt matter and politicians do make different statements. He said he has even appeared on behalf of 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack convict Ajmal Kasab and that in the instant matter was only putting forth his client's plea.

Ramachandran was a Supreme Court-appointed amicus curiae to represent Kasab in his appeal against the death sentence. Justice Nath remarked, "Ajmal Kasab did not commit contempt of court but your client has."

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



the killing was linked to a dispute over a 250-square-yard plot on the Swaroop Nagar-Burari road. Bijendra and Bharat had issued threats to each other in the past over the dispute.

Bharat Yadav, one of the accused, was declared a pro-

Gujarati notification in Palghar sparks row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Palghar, Jan 20: A notification in Gujarati by the district administration in Maharashtra's Palghar has triggered a row, with the Congress claiming the language will soon be imposed in the state and Shiv Sena (UBT) dubbing it a serious issue.

The Palghar collector issued the order in view of a morchha organised by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the district January 19 and 20, during which vehicular movement on parts of the highway was prohibited as a precautionary measure.

The Palghar Police clarified Tuesday night that no separate traffic control notice in Gujarati was published by the local police, stating that the Valsad Police in Gujarat translated the original Marathi notification.

Accordingly, banners were installed along the Mumbai-Ahmedabad National Highway in Valsad district, and one such banner was also put up at Achchad on the Maharashtra-Gujarat border by the Valsad Police.

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.

CAQM REVOKES 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



SC to close hate speech pleas pending since 2021



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Supreme Court Tuesday said it will close most of the petitions related to hate speeches pending since 2021 and in which the court has asked police to suo motu register FIRs.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta reserved orders on a batch of writ petitions filed by several individuals after the Centre, Delhi Police and the Uttar Pradesh government submitted that substantial compliance with the directions of the court has been made.

The bench said the petitioners can pursue their remedies in accordance with the law.

However, the top court posted one matter related to a 2021 alleged hate crime committed against a Muslim cleric in Noida for hearing in February to ascertain the progress of the trial in the case. Advocate Ruchira Goel, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government, submitted that a chargesheet has been filed in the matter and during investigation, it was found that the case was not a hate crime but a gang of robbers, which used to dupe people by offering a lift in their car.

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

of the day

quote

We want to get back to the Moon, to sort of start the conversation about rules of engagement, and how we actually work on the Moon, how we work together with other countries on the Moon

SUNITA WILLIAMS | ASTRONAUT

IndiaSkills is not merely a competition, it is a celebration of excellence, discipline, and the dignity of work

JAYANT CHAUDHARY | UNION MINISTER

The Chief Minister of Maharashtra goes to Davos and signs a MoU with a company belonging to a minister in his Cabinet. Did he have to sign it in Switzerland or is there some hidden meaning in this bizarre event?

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY IN-CHARGE COMMUNICATIONS

XPOST

OF THE DAY

Virat Kohli has permanently moved to London and left India. He just comes to play cricket & then immediately leaves the country. 12 Years of Modi rule made this country 's aspirations so dead that people and even the biggest stars are leaving it. We were an aspirational country , we had so much potential, we were scientific in nature, we were evolving with time, then came Modi and India was pulled back 30 years. Sad to see the state of my country ?

@RoshanKrRaii

SHORT TAKES

SIR row sharpens in West Bengal

Dhubulia: Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday accused the ruling TMC of unleashing "statewide anarchy" to derail the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls and shield illegal infiltrators, as the exercise emerged as a major political flashpoint ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. Addressing a public meeting at Dhubulia in Nadia, a district bordering Bangladesh, Adhikari alleged that BJP offices were being attacked, party camps targeted and roads illegally blocked across the state to intimidate those supporting the revision process.

Punjab cops launch 'Operation Prahar'

Chandigarh: The Punjab government Tuesday launched 'Operation Prahar', a statewide drive to dismantle the entire ecosystem of organised crime, with over 2,000 police teams conducting raids across the state at locations linked to associates of 60 foreign-based gangsters. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said a crackdown against gangsters has been launched in the state.

Woman held for biting off husband's tongue

Ghaziabad: A woman allegedly bit off her husband's tongue over cooking egg curry here, police said Tuesday. The victim, identified as Vipin (27), was rushed to a hospital in Meerut, where he is currently undergoing treatment. According to police, the incident occurred late Monday night in Sanjay Nagar Colony in the Modinagar area. Isha told the police that she bit off her husband's tongue in a fit of rage, following an argument over cooking egg curry. Station House Officer (SHO) of Modinagar Anand Prakash said.



The Congress is running a nationwide movement to protect the MGNREGA. We stand with labourers and are committed to protecting their rights

RAHUL GANDHI | CONG LEADER

INDIGO TO DGCA: NO FLIGHT CANCELLATIONS AFTER FEB 10

IndiGo Airlines has told the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that it has adequate pilot strength to meet its projected operational requirements and has assured that there will be no flight cancellations after February 10, 2026, based on its current approved network and crew availability



Tension escalates in Assam: Ethnic clashes disrupt peace

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kokrajhar/Guwahati, Jan 20: Fresh clashes erupted allegedly between Bodos and Adivasis in Assam's Kokrajhar Tuesday, a day after mob violence left two persons dead, following which the Rapid Action Force (RAF) was deployed, internet/mobile data services were suspended in two districts and prohibitory orders imposed, officials said.

One of the four persons injured in the mob violence in Karigaon area succumbed to injuries at the Kokrajhar Medical College Tuesday.

The police have so far detained 18 people in connection with the mob violence and subsequent clashes.

Chief Himanta Biswa Sarma said that arrangements are in place to deploy the army, while the Rapid Action Force (RAF) is already on the ground to quell the unrest in Kokrajhar district.

On Monday night, a vehicle with three Bodos on board had hit two Adivasi persons at Mansingh Road under Karigaon outpost, a home department official said. The three Bodos were beaten up by neighbour-



ing Adivasi villagers, and the vehicle was torched. One person died then, while another succumbed to his injuries Tuesday.

The situation flared up Tuesday with both Bodo and Adivasi communities blocking the National Highway adjacent to Karigaon outpost, burning tyres and a few houses while setting ablaze a government office and attacking the Karigaon police outpost, he said.

The police baton-charged the protesters and fired tear gas shells to disperse the crowd, in which several people, including a few police personnel, were injured.

The RAF has been deployed to contain and prevent further deterioration of the law and order situation. An army column has already reached the district while another was on its way, a defence spokesperson said.

Jamia faculty staff held under SC/ST Act

New Delhi: The Delhi Police Tuesday booked an associate professor of Jamia Millia Islamia under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act after he was accused of verbal and physical assault by an employee of the varsity's polytechnic department. No allegation of conversion, however, has been made, as claimed on social media, it said. "An FIR on the complaint of Ramphool Meena (an UDC in JMI Polytechnic) against Associate Professor Riyazzuddin in Department of Civil engineering, a case under section 3(i) (r) SC/ST Act 1989 and 115(2) BNS has been registered in Jamia nagar Police Station and an investigation has been taken up," the Delhi Police said in a statement. The varsity, in a statement, dismissed the assault allegation and the social media video as "doctored."

NOIDA TECHIE DEATH

Developer held; SIT begins probe, report due in 5 days

Police had filed an FIR on culpable homicide not amounting to murder and other charges against two real estate developers -- MZ Wiztown Planners and Lotus Greens -- on a complaint by victim Yuvraj Mehta's father, Raj Kumar Mehta, who alleged negligence by local authorities and sought accountability.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, Jan 20: Police Tuesday arrested the director of a real estate firm in connection with the death of a 27-year-old software engineer, whose car had plunged into a water-filled pit at a construction site in Noida's Sector 150, even as a Special Investigation Team (SIT) visited the site as it began its probe into the incident, officials said.

"Abhay Kumar, the director of MZ Wiztown Planners and one of the accused in the case, has been arrested from Sector 150," Additional Commissioner of Police (Greater Noida) Hemant Upadhyay said.

Police had filed an FIR on culpable homicide not amounting to murder and other charges against two real estate developers -- MZ Wiztown Planners and Lotus Greens -- on a complaint by victim Yuvraj Mehta's father, Raj Kumar Mehta, who alleged negligence by local authorities and sought



Search operation underway

PTI PHOTO

accountability.

There was no official word on the action against the other accused firm. Yuvraj Mehta died on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday after his car skidded in dense fog, broke a drain boundary and fell into a deep, waterlogged pit dug for the basement of an under-construction commercial complex. According to eyewitnesses, he had frantically pleaded for help for around 90 minutes, but the police personnel and rescue workers who had reached the site were unable to save him.

His body was recovered Saturday after a prolonged search operation involving the fire department, police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

His car was retrieved from the pit Tuesday evening, three days after the accident. Gautam Buddh Nagar Chief Fire Officer Pradeep Kumar told PTI that the operation was challenging due to thick slush and the presence of iron reinforcements in the pit. Nearly two dozen personnel, including divers, participated

in the operation during which boats, cranes and large magnets were used.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (Greater Noida) Hemant Upadhyay said the car was retrieved from the pit at around 6.30 pm following a coordinated operation involving multiple agencies. Beginning its probe, the Special Investigation Team, headed by Additional Director General (ADG), Meerut Zone, Bhanu Bhaskar, visited the accident site Tuesday and held meetings with officials at the Noida Authority to examine the circumstances leading to the incident.

The three-member SIT comprises ADG Bhanu Bhaskar, Meerut Divisional Commissioner Bhanu Chandra Goswami and Public Works Department Chief Engineer Ajay Verma, and it has been asked to submit its report within five days. "We have been given five days to examine all aspects and provide an answer within that time frame, determining whose fault it was or what more we could have done to prevent this accident," Bhaskar told reporters after the meeting.

Nitin Nabin takes over as BJP's 12th president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Nitin Nabin Tuesday took over as the BJP's 12th national president, succeeding J P Nadda and beginning a new chapter for the party as it seeks to tighten its grip on the country's politics and further expand its influence in uncharted territories with a generational shift in the organisation.

Addressing a gathering at the BJP headquarters here on the occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said when it comes to party matters, he is a worker and "honourable Nitin Nabin ji" is his boss.

After a formal announcement of Nabin's name as the new BJP chief, Prime Minister Modi and other senior leaders took him to his new office at the party headquarters, where he officially assumed the charge of the party's national president.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, outgoing BJP presi-



dent Nadda and party general secretary B L Santhosh were present with Modi when Nabin took over the charge of his new responsibilities.

Along with them, Nabin's wife, children and other close family members were also present on the occasion.

Addressing a gathering at the party headquarters earlier, Modi described 45-year-old Nabin as a "millennial" with youthful

energy and vast experience in the organisation, and asserted that his qualities will prove to be of immense help for the party. In his 40-minute speech, the prime minister repeatedly referred to Nabin as 'mananiya' (honourable) and listed out the achievements of his government over the last 11 years, which he described as giving an account of his work to the party president.

FROM MAGGI TO LPG CYLINDERS

AGENCIES

Srinagar, Jan 20: Security forces have uncovered a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror hideout in the rugged, frozen mountains of Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar region. Located at an altitude of around 12,000 feet in the upper reaches of Kishtwar, the hideout was discovered during a joint cordon-and-search operation Sunday in Sonnar village, near Mandral-Singhpura in the Chatroo belt.

According to officials, the militants had built a fortified bunker, resembling those used during the Kargil War, with multiple entry points, allowing them to survive harsh winter conditions for extended periods. The search operation revealed a significant cache of supplies, including 50 packets

of Maggi noodles, tomatoes, potatoes, a variety of spices (about 15 types), 20 kg of high-quality basmati rice, pulses, cooking gas, and dry wood. These provisions were enough to sustain the militants for several months, indicating a well-prepared operation.

The bunker is believed to have been used by a JeM commander from Pakistan, identified as Saifullah, and his deputy Adil. Security agencies speculate that the construction of such a fortified structure and the transportation of large quantities of rations to this remote location would not have been possible without the assistance of local networks.

When security forces closed in on the hideout Sunday afternoon, the terrorists threw grenades, injuring seven soldiers.



One of the soldiers, Havildar Gajendra Singh, later succumbed to his injuries. In the aftermath of the attack, security forces launched "Operation Trashi-I" to track down the fleeing militants. Authorities believe that two to three JeM terrorists are still hiding in the area's high-altitude terrains. Multiple teams

from the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and CRPF, supported by drones and sniffer dogs, are conducting extensive searches through thick forests and steep slopes.

In a statement on social media, the White Knight Corps confirmed the ongoing operation in Chatroo, stating, "The cordon



People take a boat ride at Sangam during the ongoing Magh Mela 2026, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

The search operation revealed a significant cache of supplies, including 50 packets of Maggi noodles, tomatoes, potatoes, a variety of spices (about 15 types), 20 kg of high-quality basmati rice, pulses, cooking gas, and dry wood

These provisions were enough to sustain the militants for several months, indicating a well-prepared operation

has been further tightened with expanded search operations. Troops, along with police and CRPF, remain deployed to dominate the area."

The discovery of the hideout has also raised suspicions about a local overground support network. Four individuals have been detained for questioning

Sabarimala gold loss: ED raids 21 places in 3 states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi/New Delhi, Jan 20: The Enforcement Directorate Tuesday conducted searches in three states as part of its money laundering investigation into the Sabarimala gold loss case of Kerala, officials said.

Some land assets of prime accused Unnikrishnan Potti were frozen during the searches, they said.

About 21 locations across Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were raided under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The premises linked to Potti in Bangalore and former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) president A Padmakumar in Kerala apart from jewelers were covered by the federal probe agency as part of the action, said the officials.

Some plots linked to Potti have been frozen under the provisions of section 17(1A) of the anti-money laundering law during the searches. Documents and some 'Mahazars' (a document like panchnama) were also recovered, they said.

The ED filed a PMLA case January 9 taking cognisance of a clutch of Kerala police FIRs.

The politically sensitive case is already being investigated by a state Special Investigation Team (SIT) under the supervision of the Kerala High Court.

The probe is related to a series of irregularities, including official misconduct, administrative lapses and a criminal conspiracy to misappropriate the gold from the various artefacts of the Lord Ayyappa shrine. The charges also include the loss of gold from the gold-clad copper plates of the 'Dwarapalaka' (guardian deity) Idols and the door frames of the 'Sreekovil' (sanctum sanctorum) of the temple.

international

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

GUO JIAKUN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

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’ gossip social circles.

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



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-Aqtan 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.

Syrian government forces and SDF fighters clashed around two prisons housing members of the Islamic State group in Syria’s northeast Monday.

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 reignite 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.

BESSERT 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!”

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.

Syrian troops advance, Kurds vow to resist

REUTERS

Damascus, Jan 20: Syrian government troops thrust deeper into areas held by Kurdish forces in northeastern Syria Tuesday, Syrian military sources said, pressing rapid gains against Kurdish fighters who vowed to defend their remaining enclaves.

Government forces have this week taken swathes of northern and eastern Syria long held by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), once the main US ally in Syria, advancing President Ahmed al-Sharaa’s effort to bring all the country under centralised authority.

The swift reversal for the SDF along one of Syria’s main faultlines marks the biggest shift in territorial control in



Syria since Islamist fighters led by Sharaa toppled President Bashar al-Assad in 2024.

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.

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, news portal bsnews.net reported Tuesday.

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

UK approves China plan for mega embassy in London



REUTERS

London, Jan 20: Britain’s government gave approval Tuesday for China to build its largest embassy in Europe in London, hoping to improve ties with Beijing despite British and US politicians’ warnings that it could be used as a base for spying.

China’s plans to build a new embassy on the site of the two-century-old Royal Mint Court near the Tower of London have stalled for three years over opposition from local residents, lawmakers and Hong Kong pro-democracy campaigners in Britain.

The decision was announced before an expected visit to China by Prime Minister Keir Starmer this month, the first by a British leader since 2018.

Some British and Chinese officials said the trip was dependent on the embassy being approved.

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

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 planning permission to build 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.

overall security situation has yet to fully stabilise, and recent months have already witnessed a number of politically motivated murders involving firearms,” Muhammad Nurul Huda, former inspector general of Bangladesh Police, was quoted as saying by the news portal.

Echoing his views, Major General ANM Muniruzzaman (retd), president of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, said the operational capacity of law enforcement agencies remained weak despite more than a year having passed since the unrest.

A significant portion of the looted weapons is yet to be recovered. Combined with limited enforcement capacity, this has made the situation fragile and will pose a major challenge to maintaining the required level of law and order ahead of the election, he said.

BONDI SHOOTING AFTERMATH

Australia Parliament passes anti-hate speech, gun laws

REUTERS

Sydney, Jan 20: Australia has enacted new laws for a national gun buyback, tighter background checks for gun licences and a crackdown on hate crimes in response to the country’s worst mass shooting in decades at a Jewish festival last month.

Two bills for stricter gun control and anti-hate measures passed the House of Representatives and Senate late Tuesday during a special sitting of parliament.

The gun control laws passed with the support of the Greens party despite opposition from the opposition conservative Liberal-National coalition. The anti-hate laws passed with support from the Liberal party.

Introducing the gun reforms, Home Affairs Minister Tony

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

a similar campaign after a 1996 massacre in Tasmania’s Port Arthur, in which a lone gunman killed 35 people.

They also toughen firearm import laws as well as background checks for firearm licences issued by Australian

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.

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.



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



Sensex sinks over 1,000 pts

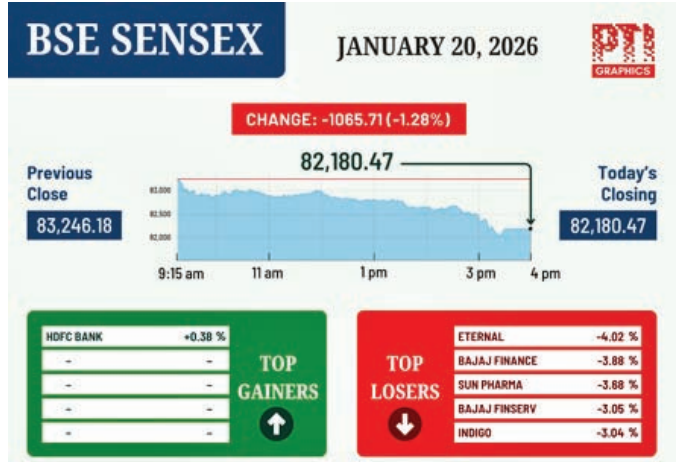
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 20: Equity benchmark index Sensex Tuesday plunged over 1,000 points to sink below the 83,000 level due to widespread selloff 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 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 tanked 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).

59th half-yearly meet of TOLIC (Bank) held



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: The 59th half-yearly meeting of the Town Official Language Implementation Committee (Bank), Bhubaneswar was held Monday at the State Bank of India's Local Head Office. The meeting was chaired by A D Ratna Teja, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Bhubaneswar.

The meeting was attended by Vichitrasesan Gupta, Deputy Director (Implementation), Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs; Sarada Prasanna Mohanty, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India; Sanjay Kumar Talukdar, Chief General Manager, NABARD; and Samden Dorji Lama, Vice Chairman, TOLIC (Bank), Bhubaneswar and Circle Development Officer, SBI. Regional and zonal heads of public sector banks and insurance companies, along with senior executives and Rajbhasha officers, were also present.

Welcoming the participants,

Samden Dorji Lama appreciated member institutions for their proactive role in implementing the Official Language. Reviewing the committee's performance, Vichitrasesan Gupta described TOLIC (Bank), Bhubaneswar as one of the best in the country and lauded its consistent achievement of the prestigious Rajbhasha Kirti Award at the national level.

In his address, A D Ratna Teja said the recognition among 67 TOLICs in the Eastern Region would further energise efforts towards effective implementation of Hindi. RBI Regional Director Sarada Prasanna Mohanty commended the committee's work and urged members to aim for the top national position, while NABARD CGM Sanjay Kumar Talukdar highlighted the use of Hindi and regional languages to promote financial literacy.

During the meeting, shields were awarded to best-performing member offices and winners of various Hindi competitions.

Core infra sectors record 4-month high growth at 3.7%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: India's eight key infrastructure sectors registered a four-month high growth rate of 3.7 per cent in December last year, driven by a jump in the output of fertiliser and cement, according to official data released Tuesday.

However, the performance of these eight sectors slowed on a year-on-year basis, the data showed. In December 2024, the sectors' output grew by 5.1 per cent. It was 2.1 per cent in November last year.

Crude oil, natural gas, and refinery products' production have recorded a negative growth during the month under review. Fertiliser and cement output grew by 4.1 per cent and 13.5 per cent, respectively.

The growth rate in the output of coal, steel, and electricity moderated to 3.6 per cent, 6.9 per cent, and 5.3 per cent in December 2025.

Power generation, however, recorded a sequential jump in output, as it had contracted by 1.5 per cent in November.

During the April-December period of this fiscal, the output of these sectors grew by 2.6 per cent against 4.5 per cent recorded during the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

The eight core industries comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA Ltd, said it expects the IIP growth to ease somewhat to about 4.5-5 per cent in December 2025 from 6.7 per cent in November 2025.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 20: The rupee depreciated 7 paise to close at a record low of 90.97 against the US dollar Tuesday, as strong dollar demand from metal importers and persistent foreign fund outflows dented investor sentiment.

Forex traders said rising geopolitical uncertainties, including renewed US expansionary signals, have increased risk aversion and kept emerging market currencies under pressure. Moreover, a sluggish domestic stock market triggered by an exodus of foreign capital further weighed on the local unit, they said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.91 and lost ground, touched an intraday low of 91.06, and finally ended the day at an all-time low of 90.97 against the American currency. On Monday, the rupee depreciated by 12 paise to close at 90.90 against the greenback. On December 16, 2025, the rupee reached its lowest intra-day level of 91.14 and its previous lowest closing level of 90.93 against the American currency.

"The Indian rupee traded with a negative bias and slipped below the 91-mark on risk aversion in global markets and persistent FII outflows. However, a weak dollar and intervention by the RBI prevented a sharp fall," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan. Choudhary further noted that the rupee is expected to trade with a negative bias on

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 by 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

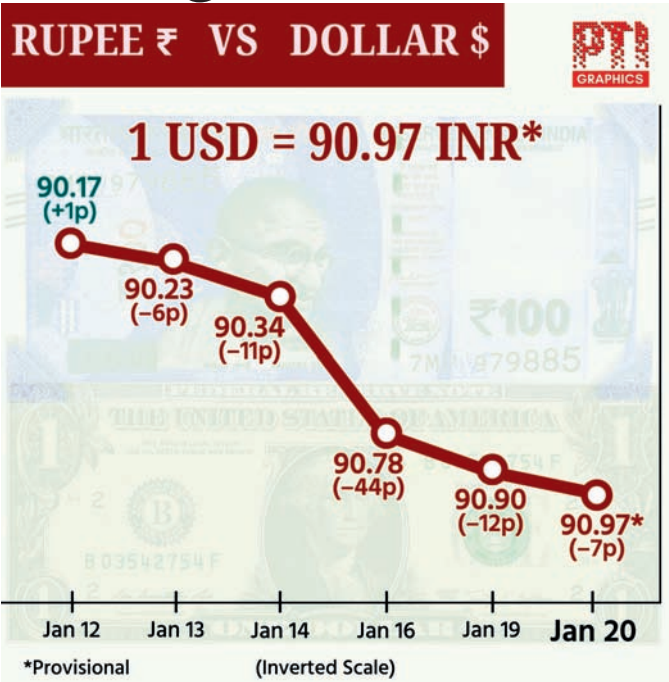
mark in the national capital.

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.

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.

Gold and silver had surged to fresh record highs Monday, driven by geopolitical tensions, and escalating tariff-related uncertainty after US President Donald Trump threatened to impose additional tariffs on several European countries.

Rupee falls 7 paise to record low of 90.97 against dollar



foreign fund outflows and risk aversion in global markets over the US stance on Greenland.

"Uncertainty over trade deal talks may also pressurise the rupee. However, a weak dollar and any RBI intervention may support the rupee at lower levels. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 90.70 to 91.25," he said.

According to Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, the rupee buckled under the weight of dwindling dollar inflows while stalled trade negotiations dampened investor appetite. "Despite the central bank's attempts to anchor the currency, the effort was

eclipsed by a relentless surge in corporates and importers greenback demand," Parmar said, adding, "In the near term, the USD-INR pair remains on an upward trajectory, poised to challenge its historic peak of 91.08 so long as the 90.37 support floor remains inviolate."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.91 per cent lower at 98.48.

The latest government data released Tuesday showed India's eight key infrastructure sectors registered a four-month high growth rate of 3.7 per cent in December last year.

EU, INDIA ON BRINK OF ‘MOTHER OF ALL DEALS’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Davos, Jan 20: India and the European Union are on the cusp of a 'historic trade agreement' that would create a market comprising two billion people accounting for almost a quarter of the global GDP, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Tuesday, days before her trip to New Delhi.

In an address at the World Economic Forum in Davos, von der Leyen elaborated on the current 'geopolitical shocks' and how the 27-nation bloc is responding to them, asserting: "It is time to seize this opportunity and build a new independent Europe." President of

the European Council Antonio Costa and von der Leyen will be in India from January 25 to 27 to grace the Republic Day celebrations as chief guests and hold summit talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two sides are set to announce the conclusion of negotiations on the much-awaited free trade agreement at the India-EU summit January 27.

In her remarks, von der Leyen said Europe wants to do business with the growth centres of today and the economic powerhouses of this century.

"I will travel to India. There is still work to do. But we are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement. Some call it the mother of all deals. One that



would create a market of 2 billion people, accounting for almost a quarter of global GDP," she said in a televised address. "And, crucially, that would

provide a first-mover advantage for Europe with one of the world's fastest growing and most dynamic continents. Europe wants to do business with

the growth centres of today and the economic powerhouses of this century," von der Leyen said.

"From Latin America to the Indo Pacific and far beyond, Europe will always choose the world. And the world is ready to choose Europe," she said.

The European Union is India's biggest trade partner with bilateral trade in goods recording USD 135 billion in the financial year 2023-24. The free trade agreement is expected to significantly enhance trade ties.

The proposed agreement is expected to bring a qualitative change in deepening the overall bilateral ties in a range of sectors as well at a time the world

is witnessing trade disruptions in view of Washington's tariff policy.

Besides firming up the free trade agreement, the two sides are likely to unveil a defence framework pact and a strategic agenda at the summit.

India and the European Union have been strategic partners since 2004.

The ambitious FTA is being firming up at a time amid increasing concerns over Washington's trade and tariff policies which have impacted both India and the 27-nation EU.

India and the EU are also expected to unveil a joint comprehensive strategic vision that will govern their relationship for the period 2026-2030.

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 white-wash 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 Chakravarthi'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

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-



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 Chettri, Priya PV, and Mario Aguilar. 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

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-

HOCKEY INDIA LEAGUE

JSW Soorma upset table toppers Kalinga Lancers

The home team faces their first defeat of the season

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: In Match 26 of the Men's Hero Hockey India League (HIL) 2025-26 season at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium, JSW Soorma Hockey Club delivered a stunning performance to beat league leaders Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 2-1 here Tuesday.

Playing in their final league match, the table-topping Lancers were unable to break down a resilient Soorma side, whose composure kept their slim play-off aspirations alive. Victor Wegnez was named Player of the Match for his magnificent work rate in both attack and defense.

The match began cautiously, with both teams prioritizing safety for the first five minutes. The Lancers created the first opening in the 6th minute through Henderson, but the Soorma defense stood firm. Although the Lancers controlled possession, Soorma looked dangerous on the counter, winning the first penalty corner in the 10th minute. However, Harmanpreet Singh's drag-flick fired wide of the target.

The second quarter saw both sides maintaining a disciplined structure. The breakthrough finally arrived in the 23rd minute

following a period of consistent passing. Nicolas Keenan made a surging run from the left flank; while goalkeeper Snowden saved his initial shot, Jeetpal pounced on the rebound to give Soorma a 1-0 lead.

Starting the second half with a man advantage, Soorma applied immediate pressure. They earned a penalty corner in the 35th minute, forcing a superb save from Krishan Pathak off a near-perfect Harmanpreet drag-flick.

Moments later, Soorma won a succession of penalty corners. In the 38th minute, they opted for a tactical variation; instead of a direct shot, the ball was slipped to Vivek Sagar Prasad, who slotted it into the net to make it 2-0. The Lancers responded with a heavy offensive surge, but Vanasch continued to keep them at bay.

The Lancers upheld the tempo in the final quarter and finally pulled one back in the 48th minute through a goal from Henderson. The final minutes were frantic as the Lancers threw everything at the Soorma defense. However, led by the tireless Victor Wegnez, Soorma absorbed the pressure and held on to secure three vital points.



PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

B'desh government pushes back

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



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

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 has 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.

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-



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 Oliynykova before advancing 7-6 (6), 6-1.

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."