

HERE . NOW

orissa POST



Mithila's philosophy

Actor Mithila Palkar says she likes to fully surrender to the director's vision

LEISURE | P2



Sunita Williams retires

After 27 years, 3 missions, 608 days in space, NASA astronaut Sunita Williams calls it quits

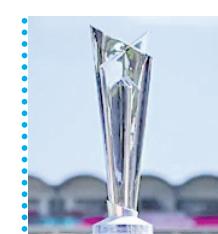
INTERNATIONAL | P10



Deepinder resigns

Eternal, the parent entity of Blinkit and Zomato, says Deepinder Goyal will step down as its Group CEO and MD

BUSINESS | P11



ICC-BCB row

The ICC rejects the request from the BCB to shift its team's T20 World Cup fixtures to Sri Lanka

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JANUARY 22, 2026

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

₹ TOUCHES NEW NADIR OF 91.64/\$

Mumbai: The rupee plunged 67 paise to close at an all-time low of 91.64 (provisional) against the American currency Wednesday, pressured by persistent foreign fund outflow amid heightened uncertainty and risk-off sentiment in global markets. The rupee recorded its previous all-time low of 91.14 December 16, 2025, forex traders said, adding that the depreciation can be attributed to heightened geopolitical uncertainty. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 91.05 and lost ground to touch an intraday low of 91.74 against the greenback. **P11**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



WET LANDING: Indian Air Force personnel inspect a microlight training aircraft after it crashed into a pond during a training exercise, in Prayagraj, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

SUV rams into trailer; 3 dead

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Jan 21: A major road accident on National Highway 16 between Gangapada and Pitapalli on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar Wednesday evening claimed the lives of three persons on the spot and left one critically injured. According to initial reports, a speeding SUV collided with a slow-moving trailer truck from the rear in

the stretch between Gangapada and Pitapalli. The impact was so intense that three of the SUV occupants died instantly on the spot. The fourth person, who sustained serious injuries, was rushed to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar for emergency treatment and is currently in critical condition. Police rushed to the spot, cleared the debris, and diverted traffic as the highway saw temporary disruptions. The bodies

of the deceased were shifted to Khurda hospital for post-mortem examination.

Though the exact identities of the deceased are yet to be ascertained, police said they all belong to Kaimatia area under Infovalley police limits. Police said they have registered a case and recovered the mangled SUV. Investigations are underway to determine the cause of the crash, they added.

'Will not use force to gain Greenland'

REUTERS

Davos (Switzerland), Jan 21: US President Donald Trump ruled out the use of force in his bid to control Greenland Wednesday, but said in a speech in Davos that no other country can secure the Danish territory.

"People thought I would use force, but I don't have to use force," Trump said at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Switzerland. "I don't want to use force. I won't use force."

Trump took a hectoring tone, chastising the United States' European allies for their insolence, disloyalty and policy missteps in areas ranging from wind power and the environment to immigration and geopolitics.

Trump's increasing threats to Europe over Greenland have frayed transatlantic ties and worried Europeans, overshadowing a speech that was intended to focus primarily on the US economy.

Calling Denmark "ungrateful," the Republican US president played down the issue as a



"small ask" over a "piece of ice" and that an acquisition would be no threat to the NATO alliance, which includes Denmark and the United States.

"No nation or group of nations is in any position to be able to secure Greenland other than the United States," Trump said, adding: "I'm seeking immediate negotiations to once again discuss the acquisition of Greenland by the United States."

On several occasions during a speech which lasted more than an hour, Trump mistakenly referred to Greenland as Iceland. Trump, who marked the end of a turbulent first year in office Tuesday, is set to overshadow the agenda of the WEF, where global elites chew over economic and political trends.

Sign pledge vowing to keep peace: J&K Police to journalists

AGENCIES

Srinagar, Jan 21: At least two journalists from mainstream English dailies were summoned by Jammu and Kashmir Police and asked to sign a pledge vowing not to disturb peace in the region over their reports on the profiling of mosques and their management committees. The move led to a massive debate with the Editors Guild with several political parties expressing their outrage.

The Indian Express and the Hindustan Times Wednesday carried stories on their correspondents being summoned by the police's cyber cell last week.

There is also speculation that some other journalists were called to the Cyber Police Station but that could not be immediately confirmed. Senior police officials did not comment on the matter.

Reacting sharply to the reports, the Editors Guild of India (EGI) said in a statement that it noted with grave concern the continued repression of legitimate journalistic activity by the authorities in Kashmir.

It also called on police and other authorities to desist from actions restricting free speech.

DSPL-487



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ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ



ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ
ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାତ୍ରୀ
କରକମଳରେ



ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାତ୍ରୀ
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୧୪୭୭

Insurer ordered to pay ₹56.9L relief to policyholder's family

Cuttack District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission also directed the insurer to pay 6% annual interest on the amount from the date of the policyholder's death till payment, along with ₹10,000 towards litigation costs



POST NEWS NETWORK

THE COMMISSION HELD THAT REJECTION OF THE CLAIM DUE TO NON-PAYMENT OF A SINGLE MONTH'S PREMIUM, WHEN THE POLICYHOLDER WAS INCAPACITATED BY ILLNESS, AMOUNTED TO DEFICIENCY IN SERVICE

LEGAL OBSERVERS TERMED THE ORDER SIGNIFICANT, AS IT IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST SUCH RULING IN ODISHA GRANTING COMPENSATION DESPITE NON-PAYMENT OF ONE MONTH'S INSURANCE PREMIUM UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES

month's premium, when the policyholder was incapacitated due to illness, amounted to deficiency in service. Legal observers said the order is significant, as it is believed to be the first such ruling in Odisha granting compensation despite non-payment of a one-month insurance premium under similar circumstances.

According to case records, the applicant's son, the late Sa-

tyam Kumar Das, purchased a life insurance policy September 18, 2022, and paid the monthly premiums regularly until March 14, 2023.

On March 20, 2023, Das fell seriously ill and became bed-ridden. Despite undergoing treatment at several hospitals, his condition did not improve. He was later admitted to the ICU of a private hospital in Bhubaneswar, where he died on May 10, 2023.

Following his death, the family applied to the insurance company for settlement of the policy claim. However, as Das was critically ill, he was unable to pay one month's premium. Citing the non-payment, the insurance company rejected the claim.

Challenging the decision, the family approached the Cuttack District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. In its order, Commission President Sibana Mohanty and member Subhalaxmi Tripathy observed that the insured was not in a condition to pay the premium due to serious illness and paralysis, and that the lapse was not wilful.

The commission further noted that the insurance company failed to produce any evidence to show that it had issued a notice to the family regarding termination of the policy. In the interest of fairness and justice, it held that the family was entitled to receive the insurance amount.

Cuttack, Jan 21: The Cuttack District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has directed an insurance company to pay ₹56.9 lakh as compensation to the family of a policyholder who died after failing to pay a premium while bed-ridden due to illness.

The commission also ordered the insurer to pay the amount with 6 per cent annual interest from the date of the policyholder's death till payment, along with ₹10,000 towards litigation costs.

The commission said the order must be complied with within 30 days of receipt of the judgment. The ruling came on a complaint filed by Geetanjali Dash of Nuasahi in Cuttack's Bidanasi area, represented by advocate Ramashish Acharya.

The commission held that denial of the claim on the ground of non-payment of a single

BGU invites applications for MBA in Communication Mgmt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: Birla Global University (BGU) has invited applications for the first (2026-28) batch of its MBA in Communication Management programme.

The programme is designed to meet growing industry demand for skilled communication managers across corporate, media, consulting and public policy sectors.

Speaking on the launch, Birla School of Communication, (BGU) Dean Shiv Shankar Das said the MBA in Communication Management reflects the university's commitment to addressing the evolving needs of organisations where communication plays a strategic role in leadership, governance and brand building.

University VC Prof. Kulbhushan Balooni said that carrying forward the Birla Group's legacy through Birla Global University, the institution is committed to shaping future-ready leaders capable of thriving in a data-driven and digitally connected world.

The project aims to integrate traditional agricultural knowledge with modern data science

Puri hosts dist-level meet on climate-resilient agriculture



POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Jan 21: A district-level consultation on the project "Localising Data Science for Climate Change Adaptation" was held Wednesday at the ADO Conference Hall in Puri, bringing together district officials, line departments, technical institutions and development partners to strengthen coordinated efforts towards climate-resilient agriculture.

The consultation was organised under a national initiative jointly supported by UNDP India and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

The project aims to integrate traditional agricultural knowledge with modern data science

tools to develop context-specific, climate-resilient farming practices.

Beyond field-level adaptation, the initiative is designed to inform climate-resilient agricultural planning and policy at state and national levels, while providing strategic support to the Climate Resilience Cell of the Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, Odisha.

Humara Bachpan Trust (HBT), the implementing agency for the project in Gop Block, opened the meeting and outlined the on-ground implementation strategy. HBT highlighted ongoing interventions in two pilot Gram Panchayats—Banakhandi and Simili—where Climate Smart Village models are being demonstrated through participatory planning, community engagement and convergence with government schemes.

Odisha's agricultural sector has been experiencing significant growth and transformation, driven by strategic policy initiatives, technological adoption, climate-resilient agriculture practices, digitization, and a focus on sustainability. Agriculture sector continues to be the lifeline for the food and nutrition security of a large portion of the state population.

Now, this sector is undergoing a dynamic shift, characterised by a focus on climate-resilient practices, technological modernization, and policy inclusivity, and building a resilient agriculture future by climate adaptation, preserving heritage, and empowering marginal groups and policy inclusivity.

Let me confess to the present scenario of the state's agriculture and its transformation despite challenges and realities that this sector witnessed from a state of sustenance to a surplus and from margin to mainstream.

A myriad of science-driven and evidence-based initiatives for driving economic growth & livelihoods, social inclusion & empowerment through empowering marginal groups and policy inclusivity, and building a resilient agriculture future by climate adaptation, preserving heritage, technological modernization, inclusive recognition, and policy dialogue have been the cardinal principles for the overall growth of this sector.

CM-KISAN is a farmers' welfare scheme aimed at promoting agricultural prosperity and empowering farmers in the State. It is progressive and inclusive, supporting both small & marginal farmers and landless agricultural households.

PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) is a flagship income-support scheme of the Government of India aimed at providing assured financial assistance to farmers for meeting agricultural

terized by record production, strategic investments, and a shift towards an inclusive pathway. The state has significantly increased its budget allocations, innovative schemes, and a focus on an inclusive and whole-of-society approach in the agriculture sector. Odisha has pioneered a revolution in digital agriculture that can be used as a blueprint for similar statewide transformation. Nearly 49 per cent of the workforce is directly engaged in Agriculture and the allied sector.

Over time, the food grain production has increased at a rate higher than previous years (Odisha Economic Survey-2024-25). Odisha has over 61.80 lakh hectares of cultivable land and a population of about 4.5 crore, with a sizable and dynamic youth working force who are being helped out to become agripreneurs under Mukhyamantri Krushi Udyog Yojana (MKUY), generating employment and boosting the rural economy.

The present government is shouldering and focusing on the growth of this livelihood sector by involving all the stakeholders to bring a transformative change in the agriculture scenario of the state. Some forward-looking pragmatic decisions and visionary schematic initiatives have been spearheaded by the present government for an inclusive and sustainable agriculture future in the state to make agriculture more profitable and generate employment for our youth.

The state government had taken a landmark initiative to provide better price to the paddy growing farmers of the State and to bring the farmers into the financial mainstream of the society.

Government is procuring paddy from the farmers at ₹3100/ per quintal, providing input assistance over and above the Minimum Support Price from the Kharif Marketing Season 2025.

Shree Anna Abhiyan aims to promote sustainable agriculture and nutritional security by reviving climate-resilient and nutritious millets in farms and on plates. These climate-resilient crops are suitable for the dryland ecosystem of the hinterland districts and have been main driver of the economic wellbeing of the marginalized farmers.

Digital Crop Survey has been conducted for collecting the correct and real-time data through a mobile App. Through this survey, the actual crop sown area shall be estimated which will help in better dissemination of customized agro advisory services and other related information. This single step will capture the farmer database towards a transparent, crop-specific, and real-time delivery of government assistance for a transformative agriculture in the state.

Special emphasis is being given for popularization of different farm machineries, equipment for reducing cost of cultivation, timely completion

tural input costs. Under Krushi Vidhya Nidhi Yojana, scholarship is being given to the children of CM-KISAN beneficiaries to pursue higher studies in premier institutes of the state as well as National level. For 2025-26, more than 70,000 students have registered under KVNY, showing significant growth and outreach.

The Pradhan Mantri Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana is a groundbreaking government initiative launched to revolutionize Indian agriculture by making it more productive, sustainable, and financially rewarding for farmers.

By providing irrigation, storage, loans, training, and modern technology support, PMDDKY seeks to boost farmer incomes, ensure food security, and advance Atmanirbhar Bharat that is self-reliant India. Under this, Odisha needs to be self-reliant in pulses and oil seeds.

Comprehensive Project on Rice Fallow Management (CRFM) is a flagship initiative being implemented as a regenerative agricultural practice and aims to convert vast rice fallow lands into productive areas with growing of short-duration pulses and oilseeds during the Rabi season.

This year, its importance is heightened by focusing on the theme "Building Resilience through Inclusive Agriculture". The theme is self-explanatory and aims to converge all stakeholders for a common cause to bring prosperity and welfare for the farming community by strategizing and developing a robust and equitable farming ecosystem in the state, which is inclusive, gender and nutrition sensitive, and forward-looking for preserving the rich agricultural heritage and biodiversity conservation.

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The outcome of these three days, KRUSHI ODISHA, will pave the way forward for future agricultural innovation, research, and extension to realise the dreams of the barefoot scientists living across the state and help design a more robust and future-forward resilient agriculture pathway for the people of Odisha.

of agricultural activities, and drudgery reduction for farm women and labour. Regional and Sub-Divisional melas are being organized to make available farm machinery to solve the labour force shortage during the cropping seasons.

The State has introduced a new Cold Storage Policy to strengthen cold storage facilities and infrastructure and to establish at least one cold storage in each of the 58 sub-divisions of the State. This will help enhance the income of farmers by providing better market opportunities, value-addition and processing of agriculture, horticulture and allied sector commodities, to reduce post-harvest losses, and to prevent distress sale of harvested crops.

As a significant initiative, the government has taken steps to export fresh fruits and vegetables from Odisha to ten different countries like UAE, Qatar, Italy, Poland, Ireland, England, France, Germany, Sweden and Belgium.

With the involvement of 33 FPOs across 13 districts, a range of produce—including Amrapali and Dasher mangoes, dragon fruit, apple ber, okra, pointed gourd, ivy gourd, long beans, bitter gourd, banana, green papaya and drumsticks—has been exported.

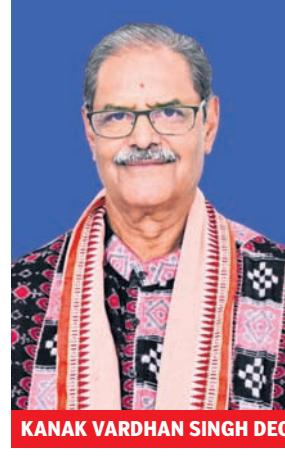
This three-day event will showcase the present status of agriculture in Odisha through 12 thematic sessions, which reflect the Vision Odisha @ 2036 and Viksit Bharat @ 2047, with different subject-specific discussions, debates, and discourses to chart out a resilient food system pathway in the state.

More than 15,000 farmers' footfall; about 60 eminent scientists of national and international repute as speakers; display of modern farm machineries and live demonstration; felicitation to lead farmers of agriculture, horticulture, soil conservation, fisheries, animal husbandry, Women Self-help Groups (SHGs), and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO); AI-enabled information dissemination and farmers' facilitation centres; quiz, debate, storytelling and skit have been arranged to make these events more meaningful and attractive for the people of the state.

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The author is Odisha's Deputy CM and Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, & Energy

Krushi Odisha: Showcasing state's agricultural progress



KANAK VARDHAN SINGH DEO

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THEATRE TREAT: A scene from Odia play Janani Janmabhumi presented by artistes of Dynamic Platform, Bhubaneswar presented Odia play Janani Janmabhumi at Rabindra Mandap Wednesday, on the third evening of Manana's 47th Foundation Day Drama festival. Written by Nabin Parida, the play was designed and directed by Debabrata Pattanayak.

Cuttack mishap leaves man critically injured

CUTTACK: A road accident on Cuttack's busy Badambadi Street left Block Technology Manager (BTM) Amalendu Satapathy grievously injured Wednesday morning. He is a resident of CDA, Cuttack. According to reports, Satapathy, currently posted at the Boudh District Agriculture Office, was returning home by bus and reached Badambadi bus stand early Wednesday morning. While disembarking, he was reportedly struck by a speeding bus on the adjacent lane, which fled the scene after the collision. The impact threw Satapathy onto the road, causing a head injury. Passersby, along with his family members, rushed him to a private hospital in the city, where he remains in critical condition.

Six held for brown sugar trade in City

BHUBANESWAR: Six persons have been arrested for selling 10 grams of brown sugar during a raid near the Sabar Sati water tank area under Laxmisagar police station, police said Wednesday. The accused have been identified as Abhishek Banerjee (30), Archisman Abhishek (30), Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra (30), Nitin Halwasia (31), Amara Prasad Rout (28) and Sidharth Pattaik (30). Acting on reliable intelligence, a special police team conducted the raid, seizing 10 grams of brown sugar, three mobile phones and two motorcycles from the accused. During interrogation, they reportedly confessed to long-term involvement in the illegal brown sugar trade.

BMC, UNICEF ink MoU for child-friendly spaces

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: In a move towards child-centric urban development, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNICEF to create child-friendly public spaces across the City.

The MoU was signed at the BMC office by Commissioner Chanchal Rana and UNICEF Odisha Field Office Chief Prasanta Dash, in the presence of Mayor Sulochana Das.

Mayor Das said the initiative would promote healthy social development among children. "This will accelerate social interaction among children. They are the future of our City, and their social development will help build a more disciplined and harmonious Bhubaneswar," she said, appealing to citizens to support the initiative.

BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana said the project would



be implemented at minimal cost with a focus on sustainability. "Along with strengthening tree plantation drives through public participation, these child-friendly spaces will contribute to a greener and more liveable city," he said.

Highlighting the importance of play, Dash said, "Play is not a luxury—it is a child's right. Such spaces encourage children to learn through play, connect with nature and develop a sense of belonging within their communities. UNICEF is proud to support BMC in building a truly child-friendly City."

Listed 'dead' in Aadhaar, farmer fails to sell paddy

POST NEWS NETWORK



TANKADHAR GIRI

The farmer's status was marked "deceased," rendering his Aadhaar inactive and preventing biometric authentication at the paddy procurement centre

Bargarh, Jan 21: In a bizarre and a striking incident of Aadhaar goof-up, a farmer from Bijepur area in this district was deprived of selling his harvested paddy as his Aadhaar record erroneously showed him as 'dead'.

According to reports, the incident involves Tankadhar Giri of Pipilipali village under Bijepur block. Due to a serious error in Aadhaar database, Giri's status was marked "deceased," rendering his Aadhaar inactive and preventing biometric authentication at the procurement centre, they said.

According to officials and the farmer, Giri had brought 28.86 quintals of paddy to Bargarh mandi against his token (296160). However, the transaction failed during the iris scan when the system flagged an Aadhaar-related error, making procurement impossible.

Giri said he is alive and has all valid documents, but the Aadhaar database continues to show his name with a deceased status. As a result, he has been pushed into acute financial and mental distress. Giri alleged that no alternative arrangement was provided to enable

him to sell his produce, even as the validity of the token expired January 3.

The case has sparked concern over data integrity in welfare-linked digital systems and their impact on farmers during procurement season.

After verification at Bijepur Aadhaar centre, officials informed the farmer that his Aadhaar had been deactivated due to a "deceased status" entry and advised him to visit Bhubaneswar. The farmer submitted all required documents to the District Collector and the Aadhaar centre in Bhubaneswar. However, as the issue was not resolved within the stipulated time, he alleged that he was ultimately forced

to take his paddy back home from the mandi.

"The incident has exposed technical flaws in the paddy procurement system, raising questions about who is responsible for the financial losses suffered by farmers," said Ramesh Mohapatra, adviser to the Sanjukta Krushak Sangathan.

He added that many other farmers are facing similar issues, with their paddy procurement tokens getting stuck due to the government's faulty centralized system. Mohapatra warned that if the administration does not take immediate corrective steps, farmers will be compelled to launch an agitation.

Man paraded with footwear garland in Dhenkanal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: A man was allegedly assaulted and paraded with a footwear garland through a village in Dhenkanal district, charging him with converting people to another religion, prompting the police to register a case, an officer said Wednesday.

Though the incident occurred January 4 in a village

under Parjapati police station limits, it came to light recently after the victim's wife lodged a police complaint, following which the police initiated an investigation.

According to the complaint, a group of 15 to 20 people armed with bamboo sticks attacked the victim, a Christian, in his house around 11 am when he was praying.

The mob allegedly beat the

man, forcibly smeared him with vermillion, garlanded him with footwear and paraded him in the streets of the village. He was also compelled to bow before a temple, according to the complaint.

Dhenkanal SP Abhinav Sonkar said, "The police have registered a case under various sections of the BNS. Legal actions are likely to be taken against seven people after gathering prima facie evidence."



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Jan 21: A 60-year-old man was beaten to death by his nephew following a domestic dispute at Tulsinagar under Town police limits here Tuesday night, police said.

The deceased was identified as Jadumani Bagarti and the accused Aju Bishi, who has been arrested.

Police said Aju returned home in an intoxicated condition and began arguing with his wife. During the

altercation, he allegedly assaulted his minor child. Meanwhile, Jadumani, uncle and foster father of the accused, intervened and asked the woman and child to leave the house to avoid further violence.

When Jadumani tried to pacify him, the accused allegedly lost his temper and attacked his uncle with a spade handle. A profusely bleeding Jadumani collapsed outside the house. On being informed, Town Police rushed to the spot and

The accused was produced before court.

Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Saroj Kumar Upadhyay said preliminary investigation suggests the murder was triggered by a family dispute and aggravated by alcohol consumption. The body was sent for postmortem and later handed over to the family.

The accused was produced before court.

Following the incident, police detained and later arrested Aju.

A case has been registered on the basis of a complaint lodged by the deceased's nephew, Jyotiprakash Bagarti.

A scientific team visited the crime scene Wednesday and collected forensic evidence. Police seized the instrument used in the assault and other materials from the spot.

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Police said Aju returned home in an intoxicated condition and began arguing with his wife. During the

MARKET WATCH

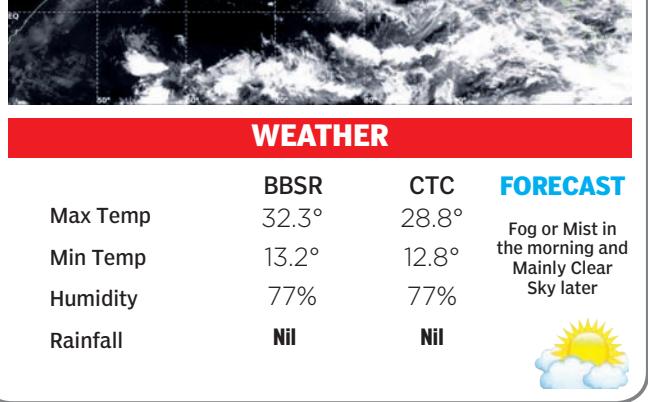
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	GOLD	VARIATION
DOLLAR 91.67 <small>▲ 0.67</small>		SENSEX 81909.63 <small>▼ 270.84</small>		₹154,620 <small>▲ ₹4055</small>	
EURO 107.3850 <small>▲ 0.64</small>		NIFTY 25157.50 <small>▼ 75</small>		₹319,555 <small>▼ ₹4117</small>	

Youth inflicts self injuries

Keonjhar: A 21-year-old youth allegedly inflicted self injuries outside his girlfriend's house in Sanamasinabila village under Dhenkote police limits in this district Wednesday afternoon after the girl reportedly ignored him, police said. The youth, identified as Akash Kumar Barik of Joda area, was critically injured and admitted to Ghatagaon hospital. Akash and the woman had been in a relationship for the past four years after coming in contact in Koida area, where the woman was staying at her aunt's house. Recently, the woman returned to her native village, following which her family allegedly restricted her movements and communication. He arrived at the girl's village Wednesday to meet the girl. When he was unable to do so, he allegedly injured himself using a sharp object in front of her house. A case (27/26) has been registered against Akash for stalking the woman, and investigation is underway.

Motorcycle crash kills 2

Malkangiri: Two persons, reportedly friends, were killed when their motorcycle rammed into a tree near Kamarguda village under Padia block in Malkangiri district Tuesday, police said. The deceased were identified as Sameer Hantal, 29, son of Brundaban Hantal, and Deepak Kumar Lima, 28, son of Dilip Lima, both residents of Padia village. According to police, the two were travelling on a motorcycle (AP 31 CM 1222) Monday to Kalimela for some work. While returning to their village Tuesday, the rider reportedly lost control of the vehicle on Padia-Kalimela main road near Kamarguda village, causing the motorcycle to crash into a tree. Local residents rushed to the spot and attempted to rescue the victims, but both were found dead at the scene.



WEATHER

Max Temp	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
32.3°	28.8°		Fog or Mist in the morning and Mainly Clear Sky later
13.2°	12.8°		
77%	77%		
Nil	Nil		

5,050 bottles of cough syrup seized in Bargarh

Woman, juveniles involved in the illegal trade

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Jan 21: Acting on a tip-off, Town Police in Bargarh seized 5,050 bottles of cough syrup and arrested six persons, including a woman, during a raid at an under-construction building near Bargarh-Katapali Road Wednesday. Two juveniles were also detained for their involvement in the offence, police said.

The accused were identified as Azad Banchhor, 21, of Bhadigaon village under Bhatli police limits; Naimish Behera, 43, of Mulbar village; Umakantha Sahu, 40, of Kanbar village; Sasmata Behera, 27, of Nilibandhapatna under Bargarh Town police limits; Achyutananda



Dora, 47, of Ghulipali; and Sunil Kumar Padhi, 39, of Golaknagar (Godbhaga) under Burla police limits in Sambalpur district.

Cash worth ₹76,700 and several vehicles allegedly used in the operation, including two motorcycles (a TVS Rider and an Avenger), a Bullet motorcycle, an auto-rickshaw, a scooter,

a Hero Super Splendor motorcycle, an electric scooter, and seven mobile phones were seized from their possession.

A case (48/26) has been registered with Bargarh Town Police and further investigation is underway, police said.

Addressing a presser at Bargarh Town PS, Superintendent of Police PS Meena said police received a tip-off that large quantities of cough syrups were being stored at the under-construction house on Bargarh-Katapali road.

Acting on the inputs, a police team conducted a raid around 10:30am and seized at least 5,050 bottles, packed in sacks.

Following the seizure, police arrested the accused linked to the racket and seized the cash, vehicle used in the operation and mobile phones, Meena said.

He said the involvement of two minors was also detected, and they have been detained. Police are investigating the source of the cough syrup and its intended destination. Further inquiries are underway to determine whether others are involved in the operation, Meena said.

Cong leader shoots himself dead

Postmortem and forensic reports are awaited to determine the circumstances leading to the death, said the police



RAJESH KUMAR MISHRA
the suicide remains unclear. While family discord is being examined, officers said no conclusion has been reached so far.

Following a complaint by the deceased's father, Binod Bihari Mishra, Sonepur police registered a case of unnatural death. A scientific team examined the spot Wednesday, and the firearm was sent for forensic examination to State Forensic Science Laboratory in Bhubaneswar.

Police said they are awaiting the postmortem and forensic reports to determine the circumstances leading to the death.

After the postmortem, the body was handed over to the family. The last rites were performed at Rameswar crematorium Wednesday evening.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No.: 57-KUR-TRD-OT-2025-26

Name of the Work: PROVISION OF SAFETY ITEMS FOR MAINTENANCE DEPOTS AND STATIONS IN KHURDA ROAD (KUR) DIVISION.

Advertised Value : ₹ 12,59,642.88, EMD: ₹ 25,200/-, Period of Completion: 180 days.

Bidding start date: 23.01.2026, Tender closing date & time: at 1300 hrs. of 06.02.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Completed details & tender documents will be available at website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), PR-1037/Q/25-26, Khurda Road

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. ST-OT-LPS-KUR-536, Dt: 15.01.2026

Name of the Work: PROVISION OF LIGHTENING AND SURGE PROTECTION DEVICE WITH EARTHING FOR SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT AT ANGUL, BUDHAPANK, RAJATHGARH, KEREJANGA, TANGIRIPAL, TOMKA, SAGADAPATA, KHALLIKOT, KAIPADAR ROAD, DHAMMANDAL AND NIRAKARPUR STATION UNDER THE PROJECT "SOLUTION FOR SURGE AND LIGHTENING PROTECTION FOR SIGNAL EQUIPMENT INSTALLED AT".

Tender Value: ₹ 4,08,75,227.50, EMD: ₹ 3,54,400/-

Bidding Start Date: 23.01.2026, Date & Time of closing of Tender: at 1100 hrs. of 06.02.2026.

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

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

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

Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), PR-1036/Q/25-26, Khurda Road

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Auction Catalogue No. SBP-CATG-T-9-26

SI. No.1: ASSETS DESCRIPTION: PROVISION OF TEA STALL (GMU) AT MAHASAMUND STATION "D" CATEGORY (MSMD) PLATFORM-01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.

SI. No.2: ASSETS DESCRIPTION: PROVISION OF TEA STALL (GMU) AT NAWAPARA STATION "D" CATEGORY (NPMD) PLATFORM-01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.

SI. No.3: ASSETS DESCRIPTION: PROVISION OF TEA STALL (GMU) AT JHARSUGUDA ROAD STATION "E" CATEGORY (JSGR) / PLATFORM-02 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.

SI. No.4: ASSETS DESCRIPTION: PROVISION OF TEA STALL (GMU) AT SAMBALPUR CITY STATION "D" CATEGORY (SBP END) RAILWAY STATION / PLATFORM-2,3, SAMBALPUR CITY END FOR 05 YEARS.

SI. No.5: ASSETS DESCRIPTION: PROVISION OF TEA STALL (SMU-MINORITY) AT JUNAGARH ROAD STATION "D" CATEGORY (JNRD) PLATFORM-01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.

SI. No.6: ASSETS DESCRIPTION: PROVISION OF TEA STALL (SMU-WOMEN) AT RAIRAKHOL STATION "D" CATEGORY (RAIR) /PLATFORM-01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.

SI. No.7: ASSETS DESCRIPTION: PROVISION OF TEA STALL (SMU-ST) AT HARI SHANKAR ROAD STATION "D" CATEGORY (HSK) /PLATFORM-01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.

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There is no greater courage
than that of recognizing
one's own mistakes.

THE MOTHER

When Paid Work Goes

What we typically refer to as "artificial intelligence" is, in practice, a set of data-based systems (DS). These technologies are already transforming nearly every aspect of human life, giving rise to innovative business models and reordering entire economies. Over time, they promise to create new jobs, boost productivity, and provide tools that extend cognitive capabilities, ultimately redefining the meaning of work itself.

But alongside these undeniable benefits, the digital revolution and rapid spread of DS are disrupting labour markets, education, and professional training. The consequences are increasingly evident: precarious working conditions determined by algorithm-driven platforms, sustained downward pressure on wages, and a structural mismatch between what economies need and what workers are trained to do.

This raises a critical question: Will the growing use of DS render paid professional work obsolete? Every technological leap, we are often reminded, has sparked fears of mass unemployment, and each time those fears have proven unfounded. But the historical pattern may no longer hold.

Past transformative technologies were largely designed to make human labour more efficient or less physically demanding. DS, by contrast, are often built explicitly to remove humans from the value chain altogether. And unlike earlier technological revolutions, these systems are not confined to routine or low-skilled work. They are moving into areas once viewed as exclusive to humans: medical diagnosis and surgery, legal analysis, and cultural production.

The breadth and speed of today's DS call into question the familiar reassurance that technological innovation has always created more jobs than it destroyed. In reality, no historical law guarantees that technological change must always generate more paid work for humans. On the contrary, the emerging evidence suggests that data-based systems (DS) are eliminating entire professions faster than new ones can emerge.

To be sure, fewer working hours and more free time are not necessarily a bad thing. A society liberated from excessive labour could, in fact, be more humane. The danger lies not in the loss of work itself, but in what disappears along with it: wages, the tax base that supports public goods, and the non-economic roles that paid employment plays in people's lives, such as providing a source of purpose, identity, and camaraderie.

With fewer and fewer people needed to generate economic value, policymakers must acknowledge the labour-market impact of DS. At stake is nothing less than countries' longstanding commitment to maximizing employment. Urging workers to retrain and upskill for a job market that may no longer exist holds individuals responsible for changes they cannot control, when what is needed is a policy framework that matches the scale of the disruption.

In a new book, I propose a concrete framework for realizing the ethical opportunities of the current technological transformation while limiting its risks. At its core, the Society-, Entrepreneurship-, and Research-Time (SERT) model seeks to decouple income from work without making that separation unconditional.

The SERT model rests on five pillars. The first is a basic income financed by taxes, designed to meet the requirements of physical survival while preserving a dignified life and respect for human rights.

The second pillar is a conditional decoupling of income from work. In exchange for a basic income, each person would contribute a set amount of "society time" or socially valuable work. Much like the Swiss Civilian Service, which has operated successfully for nearly three decades as an alternative to military service, individuals would be free to choose from a wide range of activities. The administration of SERT would be largely digital, drawing on DS and, where appropriate, blockchain technology, to document each person's engagement in society time.

Third, during their society time, individuals must be able to experience some or all of the non-economic functions provided by paid work, such as social recognition, daily structure, and a sense of purpose.

Fourth, the SERT model creates strong incentives for education, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Commitments in these areas would reduce the required amount of society time or, in some cases, exempt individuals from it altogether.

Lastly, as value creation becomes more efficient and produces growing wealth, the central issue becomes how those gains are shared. Securing dignity for all depends not on overcoming scarcity, but on distributing resources fairly. This would require coordinated global taxation that shifts the burden from labour to capital by taxing data flows, data volume, and the use of DS.

Allowing DS to displace human workers without a collective response would exacerbate inequality and entrench injustice, risking political unrest and undermining social cohesion. SERT, if adopted, offers a path toward shared prosperity and a more stable, peaceful future.

The writer, Professor of Ethics and Director of the Institute of Social Ethics ISE at the University of Lucerne, is a visiting professor at ETH Zurich.

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WISDOM CORNER

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INDIA AT A CROSSROADS



Multilateralism is weakening, protectionism is resurging, and economic interdependence is being deliberately dismantled. For an emerging economy like India this shift is profoundly destabilising



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

UNLIKE TRADITIONAL ARMED CONFLICT, GEOECONOMIC WARFARE DOES NOT RESPECT BORDERS

Past transformative technologies were largely designed to make human labour more efficient or less physically demanding. Data-based systems, by contrast, are often built explicitly to remove humans from the value chain altogether

The Global Risks Report 2026, the 21st edition of the World Economic Forum's flagship publication, arrives in the middle of what is shaping up to be one of the most volatile decades of the modern era. Its message is unmistakably sobering. The world is no longer facing isolated threats that can be managed independently; instead, it is grappling with a tightly interwoven web of economic, geopolitical, technological and social risks. For India, the report serves not merely as an academic assessment but as a strategic warning.

The report underscores a fundamental shift in the nature of global instability. Economic weapons now inflict deeper damage than conventional arms, digital vulnerabilities disrupt societies faster than bombs, and inequality corrodes nations more steadily than recessions. Uncertainty has become the defining feature of the global outlook. For India, this uncertainty manifests as a complex convergence of external shocks and internal fragilities. The country finds itself at a decisive juncture where policy choices made today will shape its resilience—or vulnerability—in years to come.

Drawing on insights from more than 1,300 experts worldwide through the Global Risks Perception Survey, the report evaluates threats across three-time horizons: the immediate term in 2026, the short to medium term up to 2028, and the longer-term outlook to 2036. A pervasive pessimism runs through the findings. Nearly half of respondents expect a turbulent global environment over the next two years, a figure that rises to 57% over the coming decade. This melancholy outlook reflects the erosion of multilateral institutions, declining trust in global governance, and intensifying rivalry among major powers.

Trade barriers, sanctions, technology controls, supply-chain disruptions and financial coercion are no longer exceptional responses to crises; they have become routine instruments of statecraft. Multilateralism is weakening, protectionism is resurging, and economic interdependence is being deliberately dismantled. For an emerging economy like India this shift is profoundly destabilising.

Unlike traditional armed conflict, geoeconomic warfare does not respect borders. Inflation, currency volatility, capital flight and growth shocks transmit instantly across economies. Financial markets now react more swiftly and decisively than battlefields. While India may benefit from supply-chain diversification, geopolitical realignments and the search for reliable economic partners, heightened rivalry also threatens its export competitiveness, access to critical technologies and investment inflows. Navigating this environment while sustaining high growth will demand careful economic diplomacy, policy agility and strategic autonomy.

Yet the report makes clear that India's most immediate and dangerous vulnerability does not lie along its borders, but within its digital architecture. Cyber insecurity is identified as India's single most critical risk in 2026. This reflects the paradox of India's extraordinary digital transformation. In less than a decade, the country has built one of the world's most ambitious digital public infrastructures, encompassing Aadhaar-based governance, UPI-driven payments, fintech ecosystems and platform-based public service delivery. This transformation has dramatically improved efficiency and inclusion—but it has also created systemic exposure.

In 2025 alone, India reportedly experienced hundreds of millions of malware incidents, including Trojans, infectors, mobile malware and adware. Cybercrime has evolved from amateur hacking into a sophisticated, commercialised and geopolitically motivated enterprise.

Closely linked to digital vulnerability is the persistent challenge of income and wealth inequality. For the second consecutive year, the report identifies inequality as the most interconnected global risk. While official metrics may portray India as relatively egalitarian, structural realities reveal a more troubling picture. Wealth and income concentration is rising, with a small elite capturing a disproportionate share of economic gains. Large segments of society remain excluded from the ben-

efits of growth. High inequality amplifies the impact of economic shocks, weakens social cohesion and fuels political polarisation.

India's vulnerability is further compounded by gaps in public services and social protection. Despite progress, public health expenditure remains modest by global standards. Social security, pensions, urban infrastructure and welfare systems lag behind the needs of a rapidly urbanising and ageing population. These deficiencies reduce shock-absorption capacity, allowing external disruptions to escalate quickly into domestic governance challenges.

Economic uncertainty adds yet another layer of risk. Globally, concerns about economic downturns, inflation, debt sustainability and asset bubbles have climbed sharply in the rankings. Although India's macroeconomic outlook remains relatively strong, it is far from insulated from global headwinds. Volatile capital flows, tightening financial conditions and slowdowns in advanced economies ripple through exports, investment and employment.

While environmental risks appear less prominent in the report's short-term outlook, their long-term severity is unmistakable. For India, climate change is not a distant threat; it is already reshaping agriculture, water availability, public health and livelihoods. The danger lies in postponing environmental action under pressure from immediate economic or geopolitical concerns, thereby magnifying future vulnerabilities.

Taken together, the Global Risks Report 2026 paints a stark picture of a fractured and volatile global order. For India, the message is clear. The country stands at a decisive moment. The crossroads is real, and the direction chosen will shape India's trajectory for decades to come.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

SPECTRUM PUBLIC HEALTH

If water is poisoned, development is eye wash



Charudutta Panigrahi

THE GOVERNMENT MUST ACT DECISIVELY: REGULATE INDUSTRIES, CLEAN WATER SOURCES, AND PROTECT PEOPLE

Odisha today stands at a dangerous crossroads. While policymakers and investors celebrate rising GDP figures and the promise of "smart cities," a silent epidemic is eroding the very foundation of the state's future: Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). The numbers are stark, the causes are preventable, and the consequences—if ignored—will be catastrophic.

Recent government data reveal the scale of the crisis: 15,752 CKD patients and 4,648 deaths in Odisha in just three years. The epidemic is not evenly spread; it clusters in hotspots where contaminated water and industrial negligence converge. i) Samalpur: 3,114 cases, 744 deaths – fluoride and heavy metals in groundwater; ii) Cuttack: 2,657 cases, 778 deaths – urban waste mismanagement compounding contamination; iii) Koraput: 918 cases, 266 deaths – tribal communities disproportionately affected; iv) Bolangir, Bargarh, Angul: Rising cases linked to mining effluents and poor regulation.

These are not isolated tragedies. They represent a systemic failure to protect the most basic human right: safe drinking wa-

ter. CKDs are not just a health crisis—they are an economic time bomb. Dialysis costs Rs 12,000-Rs 20,000 per month, while transplants exceed Rs 5-7 lakh. For rural families earning less than Rs 10,000 a month, CKDs mean catastrophic health expenditure and lifelong debt.

A working-age patient loses 3-4 workdays weekly to dialysis. The elderly, too, are incapacitated, draining household resources. Odisha risks losing billions in productivity and healthcare costs, undermining every claim of growth. Economic growth without healthy citizens is a hollow victory. If water is poisoned, development is an illusion.

The government's recent move to establish a CKD registry is praiseworthy. It promises to bring transparency, track incidence, and strengthen referrals. A registry can ensure that patients detected at the periphery are quickly referred to higher centres, reducing delays in treatment. It can also help doctors in rural and tribal areas become more sensitised to early warning signs, ensuring CKDs are not dismissed as vague fatigue or weakness.

But a registry is only as strong as the action that follows. Who will be responsible for answering on CKD prevalence? How will the registry translate into accountability for contaminated water sources? Without clear ownership—from the health department to local governance—the registry risks becoming another statistic-gathering exercise rather than a life-saving intervention.

The evidence is clear: CKD hotspots overlap with areas of fluoride, heavy metal, and waste contamination in groundwater. Mining, real estate, and construction industries are primary culprits, while rapid urbanisation has broken down waste management systems. Investment in clean water infrastructure, strict regulation of mining effluents, and urban waste management will save thousands of lives and billions in healthcare costs.

Odisha is not alone in facing this crisis—but others have acted. In Andhra Pradesh, safe drinking water schemes reduced CKD prevalence. In Sri Lanka, government interventions in water purification slowed CKD hotspots linked to agrochemicals. Bangladesh tackled arsenic contamination through community water filters and strict monitoring, sav-

ing millions. Odisha must learn that economic growth without clean water is a mirage.

There are policy imperatives such as i) mining regulation—enforce strict groundwater protection norms and penalize violators; ii) real estate & construction—mandate waste treatment and groundwater recharge systems; iii) urban waste management – smart cities must prioritize sewage treatment and landfill regulation before boasting of "smartness"; iv) water purification – statewide installation of fluoride and heavy-metal removal plants; and v) CKD registry action plan – use registry data to strengthen referrals, train peripheral doctors, and hold officials accountable for prevalence figures.

Odisha cannot afford to celebrate GDP growth while its people die of preventable kidney diseases. If water is poisoned, development is an eye wash. The government must act decisively: regulate industries, clean water sources, and protect people. Otherwise, every promise of "smart cities" and "investment corridors" is nothing but a cruel joke.

The writer is an author and a social advocate.

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 their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate,
Bhubaneswar-751010

Divided NATO

Sir, Former NATO leaders have warned that global peace is at greater risk due to the unpredictability and unilateral style of US President Donald Trump's approach to alliances. The danger is not immediate war, but the weakening of trust within NATO, which is key to collective security. Questioning alliance commitments publicly undermines deterrence, as rivals judge both military strength and political will. This uncertainty benefits countries like Russia, which can exploit divisions to pursue their goals without direct conflict. A hesitant or divided NATO makes it easier for adversaries to use cyberattacks, pressure tactics, and regional influence. Globally, this weakens the rules-based order and encourages power-driven diplomacy over cooperation. For India, this highlights the need for strategic autonomy. While a fragmented West may offer diplomatic opportunities, it also increases instability in trade, energy, and global governance, making diversified partnerships essential.

RS Narula, PATIALA

New Delhi wary

Sir, US President Trump's proposal for a "Board of Peace," unveiled at Davos, may be framed as an innovative platform for global conflict resolution, but from an Indian perspective, it invites careful scrutiny rather than enthusiasm. Initially conceived to oversee Gaza's post-war reconstruction, the initiative reflects Washington's preference for flexible, leader-driven coalitions outside established multilateral systems. Yet the lack of clarity on authority, mandate, and enforcement raises doubts about whether the board is designed to deliver peace or merely manage perception. For India, participation is not a procedural decision but a strategic calculation. New Delhi has traditionally supported peacebuilding through the United Nations and development diplomacy, while maintaining distance from externally engineered conflict frameworks. India's caution deepens with reports that Pakistan has also been invited to join the proposed body. Given Islamabad's long record of leveraging international platforms to deflect scrutiny from its own role in cross-border terrorism, New Delhi remains wary of any forum that risks moral equivalence between victims and perpetrators of violence.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

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<

NEW EQUATION

5 MNS corporators back Shinde Sena in KDMC

The MNS corporators' decision could be viewed as a setback to Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) as the two parties fought the keenly-watched January 15 elections to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) together



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

said the new equation appears to be part of an understanding at the local level.

In the 122-member Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC), the Shiv Sena has emerged as the single largest party by winning 53 seats, while ally BJP stands second with 50 seats. With the support of five MNS corporators, there are now 108 members in the alliance.

Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and NCP (SP) have won eleven, two and one seats respectively.

The lottery for the mayoral posts in Mumbai and 28 other civic bodies are scheduled to be held January 22. The lottery determines the category for which the mayor's post will be reserved, such as general, women, SC, ST, and OBC categories. Once the category is announced, eligible candidates file their nominations.

The Sena (UBT) corporators may also support the Mahayuti. Whoever extends support for development, they will be taken along. For good work that we do, anyone can support, according to him.

"If all come together to form power, there will be no hurdle in the development. There will be stability. Everything will function smoothly," the Lok Sabha MP from Kalyan said.

Replies to a question, he said, "Five corporators of

the MNS, who have formed their group, declared their support to the Shiv Sena. But this is only between Shiv Sena and MNS, and not with any other party."

When asked why the Shiv Sena needs support of any other party when it contested the election with the BJP, he said the mayor will belong to the Mahayuti combine only.

"Whichever party supports the Shiv Sena is welcome," he said, adding that the MNS has supported the party for stability and development.

"The party (MNS) might be of the view that in development, all of us should be together. Hence, they have supported the Mahayuti. (Local MNS leader and former MLA) Raju Patil is my friend," Shinde added.

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He said there has not been any discussion on the posts of mayor, deputy mayor or chairperson of any civic committee so far.

"The authority of taking these decisions lies with Eknath Shinde and BJP's state president Ravindra Chavan. Both of them may meet today to discuss the issue. All the modalities regarding these posts will be decided during that meeting," he said.

In KDMC, the Shiv Sena, BJP and MNS will elect the mayor as a Mahayuti candidate, while in neighbouring Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation, the Shiv Sena, BJP, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), Secular Alliance of India (SAI) and independents will elect the mayor, he said.

When asked if Shiv Sena will get the mayor's post in Mumbai, he said anybody will be happy if that happens.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said he spoke to Raj Thackeray about the political development in Kalyan Dombivli civic body.

"Raj Thackeray is distraught over this development. He said some people at the local level have taken this decision and it is not the decision of the MNS party," the Rajya Sabha member claimed.

Former MNS MLA Bala Nandgaonkar said the development seems to be an understanding at the local level initiated by a local MNS leader, who is a former legislator.

Local MNS leader and former MLA Raju Patil said the decision was taken for the sake of political stability.

"MNS has decided to support the Mahayuti to maintain stability... The decision was not taken for any personal interest. It was taken after party chief Raj Thackeray gave permission," he told reporters.

A hung house would have led to chaos in various committees and functioning of the municipal corporation, Patil added.

Census-linked house listing op to begin in J&K from June 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 21: House Listing Operations (HLO) will be conducted across Jammu and Kashmir from June 1 to 30 as part of the upcoming census exercise, with self-enumeration commencing 15 days prior, officials said Wednesday.

The schedule was decided by the Union Territory Level Census Coordination Committee, which met here Tuesday under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, they said, adding that the government will issue the requisite notification by January 31.

To facilitate smooth self-enumeration, the services of technical assistants and charge officials will be utilised to guide the public during the 15 days preceding the field operations, officials said.

During the meeting, Director Census Operations, J&K and Ladakh, Amit Sharma, made a detailed presentation outlining the framework and key features of Census 2027, which will be India's first fully digital census, they said.

The presentation highlighted major innovations such as the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS), provision for self-enumeration by citizens, and caste enumeration, which are being introduced, officials mentioned further.

The sequence of census activities, including training, self-enumeration, house listing and population enumeration, along with detailed timelines, was also elaborated, they added.

Emphasising the importance of robust field-level implementation, the meeting approved expeditious hiring of manpower for census 2027 at the UT, district and charge levels, officials said.

Deputy commissioners were directed to constitute District Level Census Cells and nominate officers for coordination, training and supervision, while instructions were issued for the timely identification of master trainers, supervisors and enumerators, they added.

Addressing the meeting, the chief secretary underscored the need for close coordination between the administration and the census directorate.

ARTILLERY FIREPOWER

Guns roar, drones dominate battlefield show



with drones participated in the annual event.

Troopers from the Indian Army's Parachute Regiment, along with paramotors and hang-gliders, showcased their abilities during the exercise.

This mega event was organised under the leadership of Lieutenant General Navneet Singh Sarna, Commandant, School of Artillery, and Colonel Commandant of Regiment of Artillery. The chief guest of the event was Lieutenant General Manish Erry, Commandant, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.

"The exercise served as a powerful testament to the professionalism and operational excellence of the Indian Artillery. It underscores operational preparedness, technological advancement, and the emphasis on indigenous defence manufacturing, reflecting India's focus on self-reliance and modernisation," Sarna said.

"All the equipment which is there with the Indian Artillery, including the surveillance equipment and the guns and the rockets, were showcased and took part in exercise Topchi," the officer said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PODAGADA DAM DIVISION, AT/PO-KHATIGUDA
DIST-NABARANGPUR, PIN-764085

Email I.D.- eepodagadadam@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. EEPDD-06(03)/2025-26,

Dated 17.01.2026

No.A-1296: Bid Documents consisting of work, Estimated Cost of bid document, time of completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. Website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

1.Name of the Work	Civil Works
2.No.of Works	Three Numbers
3.Estimated Cost	Rs 84.88 Lakhs (TCN SL.NO.1), Rs.78.88 Lakhs (TCN SL.NO.2), Rs.51.26 Lakhs (TCN SL.NO.3)
4.Eligibility of the bidders	'B' Class contractors (Odisha P.W.D. or equivalent class of other licensing authority) as per Detail Tender Call Notice.
5.Period of Completion	Three Calendar Months (TCN SI No.01) Three Calendar Months (TCN SI No.02) Three Calendar Months (TCN SI No.03)
6. Date of Clarification	27.01.2026 to 29.01.2026 Only During Officer Hour
7. Time for Receipt of bid in the portal	From 27.01.2026 11.00 AM to 10.02.2026 (upto 5.00 PM)
8. Date & Place of opening of the bids on-line	11.02.2026 (11.30 A.M.) O/o the E.E., Podagada Dam Division, UIDC Khatiguda
9. Name and address of the Tender Inviting Authority (TIA)	Executive Engineer, Podagada Dam Division, At/PO- Khatiguda, District: Nabarangpur

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

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Podagada Dam Division, Khatiguda

OIPR-

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, LOWER INTRA CANAL DIVISION NO-III, BANGOMUNDA At/Po-Borabahal, Dist : Balangir, Odisha, Pin : 767040		e-Procurement Notice No. SELICD-01/2025-26, Dt.17.01.2026 (online)		
		E-mail ID : selicd@bangomunda@gmail.com		
No.A-1296: Bid Documents consisting of work, Estimated Cost of bid document, time of completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. Website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in .		Date : 17.01.2026		
1.Type/Nature of work : Civil Works. 2. Total No. of works : 05 (Five) Nos. 3. Approx. value of works : Rs.31.43 Lakh to Rs.49.27 Lakh (Excluding GST). 4. Period of completion : 02 (Two) Months. 5. Classification of bidders : 'C' & 'B' Class Contractors only.		Other details as follows :		
		Procurement Officer e-Procurement Notice No. Availability & Submission of bids in online From To		
1		2 SELICD-01/2025-26, Dt.17.01.2026 (online) for 05 (Five) No. of works		
		22.01.2026 At 10.00 A.M. 01.02.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.		
		3 4 5		
		SELICD-01/2025-26, Dt.17.01.2026 (online) for 05 (Five) No. of works		
		22.01.2026 At 10.00 A.M. 01.02.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.		
		4 5		
		22.01.2026 At 10.00 A.M. 01.02.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.		
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		22.01.2026 At 10.00 A.M. 01.02.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.		
		5		
		22.01.2026 At 10.00 A.M. 01.02.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.		

national

of the day quote

Today India has an organ-ised 'Vikas' and 'Virasat', that is development with heritage, so that we progress materially while remaining spiritually anchored



C P RADHAKRISHNAN | VICE PRESIDENT

I want to alert you to fake videos circulating online that falsely use my image and voice to promote financial schemes and investments. These are deepfakes created without my knowledge or consent



SUDHA MURTY | RAJA SABHA MEMBER, AUTHOR & PHILANTHROPIST

Institutions lacking educational standards should be closed and strict action would be taken if any college or institution is found to have been granted university-level recognition without proper authorization



HARIBHAU BAGDE | RAJASTHAN GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

Search ops intensified ahead of R-Day in J&K

Jammu: As Republic Day is nearing, safety protocols are being significantly tightened across Jammu, with security forces Wednesday conducting house to house searches in a locality with a large concentration of Rohingya Muslims, officials said. They said additional Army troops were inducted in the higher reaches of Kishtwar district on day four of the ongoing search operation to flush out terrorists, who have escaped into deep forest after an encounter Sunday.

Collision between 2 motorcycles; 4 killed

Buxar (Bihar): Four persons were killed, and one was injured in a collision between two motorcycles in Bihar's Buxar district Wednesday, police said. The accident occurred near Nikris village on the Chausa-Ramgarh road under the Rajpur Police Station limits when the two-wheeler collided head-on, a senior officer said. Talking to PTI, Rajpur Station House Officer (SHO) Niwas Kumar said, "Two bikes collided around 12:30 pm Wednesday. Two persons were on a motorcycle and three on the other."

Nitin holds meeting with party workers

New Delhi: A day after taking over new responsibilities, BJP national president Nitin Nabi Wednesday held his first strategy meeting with office bearers of the party and reviewed preparations for the upcoming assembly elections in five states, including West Bengal. At the day-long meeting, Nabi also asked the party functionaries to further strengthen the organisation at the grassroots level and instructed them to counter the Congress "negative campaign" against the VB-G Ram G Bill by intensifying efforts to apprise the people about the benefits of the new rural employment guarantee scheme, sources said.

Reddy announces new padayatra

Amaravati: YSRCP supremo Jagan Mohan Reddy Wednesday announced that he would launch another padayatra (political walkathon) in about one-and-a-half years, alleging that institutions in the state had been "severely weakened" under the NDA coalition government.



The NDA alliance will provide good leadership and good governance for our sisters and daughters of Tamil Nadu; Good opportunities and a bright future for the youth of Tamil Nadu

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

DELHI POLICE SOLVES OVER 95% MURDER CASES IN '25

A UPSC aspirant killed in a cylinder explosion in his flat, a dairy owner shot 69 times, and a woman bludgeoned to death in her house -- these were among several "perfect murders" in the city last year. However, technology-driven policing and sharper forensic analysis helped the police crack these cases and many others, with a remarkable success rate of more than 95%



TECHIE DEATH CASE

Builder sent to judicial custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, Jan 21: A builder arrested in connection with the death of the 27-year-old software engineer in Greater Noida was Wednesday sent to judicial custody for two weeks, as a Special Investigation Team (SIT) stepped up its probe into the incident, questioning officials of the Noida Authority that is facing allegations of negligence.

"Abhay Kumar, one of the accused builders who is the director of MZ Wiztown Planners, was presented before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court in Surajpur. He has been sent to 14 days' judicial custody," Assistant Commissioner of Police (Greater Noida) Hemant Upadhyaya told PTI.

Upadhyaya said that efforts were on to arrest the other builder -- of real estate developer Lotus Greens -- named in the FIR.

The three-member SIT, constituted by the Uttar Pradesh government, spent several hours at the Noida Authority headquarters in Sector 6, questioning senior officials as well as junior-level staff, particularly those linked to the traffic cell, officials said.

The SIT, led by Additional Director General of Police (Meerut Zone) Bhanu Bhaskar and comprising the Meerut divisional commissioner and the chief engineer of the Public Works Department, had arrived in Noida Tuesday.

IAF training aircraft crashes into pond

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Prayagraj, Jan 21: A two-seater microlite aircraft of the Indian Air Force was Wednesday "force landed" in an uninhabited area in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj after it experienced a technical malfunction, the IAF said.

Both the pilots who were onboard the aircraft are safe, officials said. In a post on X, the IAF also said a Court of Inquiry has been ordered by it to ascertain the cause of the incident.

A microlite aircraft is a small aircraft generally used for training, bird recce and survey purposes.

Both the pilots who were onboard the aircraft are safe

In a post on X, the IAF said a Court of Inquiry has been ordered by it to ascertain the cause of the incident



Both the pilots who were onboard the aircraft are safe

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tain the cause," it added.

Authorities in Prayagraj have cordoned off the area, and an investigation into the incident is underway, officials said.

In Prayagraj, Deputy Commissioner of Police (City) Manish Shandilya said the aircraft was on a sortie towards Phaphamau and the Sangam area when its engine developed a technical snag.

He said there were two pilots onboard and they executed a controlled and safe landing in a pond near K P College in the George Town police area.

With the help of police, fire brigade personnel and local residents, the pilots were rescued safely, Shandilya said, adding that divers played a crucial role in the rescue operation. There were no reports of any casualties or damage, he said.



Indian Army soldiers operate a M777 Ultra Light Howitzer artillery gun during 'Exercise Topchi 2026', at Deolali in Nashik

PTI PHOTO

SC stresses on need for additional special courts



Devide policy for media briefing by police: Top court

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday said setting up of additional trial courts will make the judicial system "robust" as the accused will not be needed to come to the apex court for reliefs like bail or expeditious hearing in criminal cases.

The top court January 6 had asked the Centre and the Delhi government to consider setting up a special court to conduct a day-to-day trial in a 2021 case probed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) related to the ISIS links of a person.

On Wednesday, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, about the progress made in setting up of a special court in the national capital.

"The idea is how do you make a robust mechanism that none of them are required to come to the courts? And that will happen when additional courts are set up," the CJI said.

The bench asked the law officer to apprise it by February 10 of the development in setting up of a special court here. The matter will be now taken up on that day.

The bench was hearing the bail plea of Md Heydaiullah, who allegedly used Telegram groups to propagate the ideology of the terrorist group in India and recruit other persons.

The CJI earlier said that inordinate delay in trial gives legitimate submissions on behalf of the accused that he

cannot be kept in custody for a longer period of time, that too without the trial.

The bench had asked Bhati to apprise it within a week about the setting up of the special court here to conduct a day-to-day trial in the case in which 125 witnesses are to be examined.

In the ISIS-related case, the Delhi High Court had refused to grant bail to Heydaiullah, an alleged member of the terrorist outfit, in the case related to radicalisation of youths using cyberspace.

The accused had challenged a trial court order declining any relief on the ground that mere association or support to a terrorist organisation would not constitute an offence under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

The high court had rejected the contention, and said Heydaiullah, a qualified MBA graduate working at an IT company in Gurugram, was not a "passive" supporter as material showed that he advocated "Jihad in order to establish Khilafat" even through violent means.

The prosecution alleged that he disseminated the ISIS ideology through the cyber space and spread hatred against the government by promoting enmity against Hindus on social media.

It was further alleged that he had transferred funds for the cause of ISIS from his bank account and various materials, including the oath of allegiance, methods for preparation of explosive material, etc. were recovered from him during the investigation.

Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is admittedly a well-known leader of ISIS and as per the chargesheet had declared formation of 'caliphate' in June 2014," the high court had said.

"ISIS had been declared to be a terrorist organisation and judicial notice can be taken of the fact that the world at large knows about the activities of ISIS. Appellant is an educated person and was well aware of the nature of activities of ISIS," it added.

Dismissing the plea, the high court said the bar on grant of bail under the UAPA was clearly applicable in the case. Following an FIR registered in 2021, the NIA arrested the accused October 22, 2022.

The prosecution alleged that he disseminated the ISIS ideology through the cyber space and spread hatred against the government by promoting enmity against Hindus on social media.

It was further alleged that he had transferred funds for the cause of ISIS from his bank account and various materials, including the oath of allegiance, methods for preparation of explosive material, etc. were recovered from him during the investigation.

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As per the complainant, 100 dogs were killed, but based on preliminary investigation and

relevant sections of BNS and Prevention of Cruelty of Animals Act against the sarpanch, secretary and ward member of Yacharam gram panchayat Tuesday, a police official said.

As per the complainant, 100 dogs were killed, but based on preliminary investigation and

after verifying with villagers around 50 dogs were found to be killed, though further probe is on in this regard, the official said.

An investigation is also underway to find out the carcasses of the dogs, he said.

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national



“The world order is clearly undergoing a profound change. It is more imperative than ever before for nations to collaborate on shared challenges

S. JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

PEACE MEETING HELD IN VIOLENCE-HIT KOKRAJHAR

Army conducted a flag march and a peace meeting was held in the presence of two Assam ministers Wednesday to ensure that the situation returned to normal in violence-hit Kokrajhar district, where two persons were killed in mob violence, leading to arson and clashes between Bodos and Adivasis, officials said



of the day quote

Those were the years when Kashmiri Pandits had to face displacement - a tragedy that tore apart a social fabric built over centuries. Yet it was always said quietly but firmly that Kashmiri's plural soul was wounded, not lost, and that it would one day find its way back to itself

MIRWAJ UMAR FAROOQ | MODERATE KASHMIRI SEPARATIST LEADER

Six drains from Haryana account for 33 per cent of the total contaminated water in Nafagargh, while four major drains from Uttar Pradesh discharge into the Shahdara Drain, accounting for approximately 40 per cent of the total contaminated water

REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

The BJP is breaking these traditions. Seers and shankaracharyas are being deliberately insulted. The BJP government has misbehaved with Shankaracharyas and seers through its officials

AKHILESH YADAV | SP SUPREMO

POST OF THE DAY

Everyone is buying gold, except for the US. Why? The US already has roughly 8133 tonnes of Gold on its reserve. For context this is >> gold reserves held by India, Russia, China, Italy combined. Why isn't the US buying more? They are very well hedged. The other countries are in the process of hedging their risks. US would now focus on:-

1) Re-industrializing their economy; manufacturing.
2) Grabbing more resources like Oil, Rare Earth.
3) Winning the AI race.
4) Giving weak currency guys an option to save in USD (digital version of USD).
5) Building a payment layer for partners. And, allowing them access to the US market.

Aggregating gold gives an alternate payment system. Stronger economy would be built by: creating useful end products that can be bought with gold/digital gold/USD/USDT/BTC.

@Akshat_World

SHORT TAKES

Student dies after taking borax

Madurai (Tamil Nadu): A first-year college student has died after taking a substance called 'venkaaram' (borax) bought from a local shop, as suggested by a social media video, police said. Slightly overweight, she was often on the lookout for weight loss tips. Last week, she watched a video on the YouTube channel titled 'Venkaaram to melt fat and slim body', and January 16, she bought the substance from a native medicine shop near Therumtti, Kezhamasi Street, according to police.

Water contamination: Rickshaw driver dies

Indore: A 50-year-old e-rickshaw driver has died in Indore, with his family blaming it on the outbreak of diarrhoea caused by contaminated drinking water in the Bhagirathpura area. While local residents have claimed that the outbreak has claimed 25 lives so far, a status report submitted by the Madhya Pradesh government to the Indore bench of the High Court January 15 mentioned seven deaths, including that of a five-month-old boy. As the funeral procession of 50-year-old Hemant Gaikwad left his house in Bhagirathpura Wednesday morning, the mourners struggled to console his mother, wife, and four daughters.

Face 'corrupt power' with courage: Rahul



Addressing the District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents from the two states (Haryana and Uttarakhand), Rahul said, "You have been entrusted with the responsibility of the districts. You have to fulfil it fearlessly and with dedication. You are the warriors of the Congress and you must work like warriors"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kurukshetra (Hry), Jan 21: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi told the party's district unit chiefs from Haryana and Uttarakhand Wednesday that the "corrupt" regime in power presents major challenges, but they must face those fearlessly.

Addressing the District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents from the two states, Gandhi said, "You have been entrusted with the responsibility of the districts. You have to fulfil it fearlessly and with dedication. You are the warriors of the Congress and you must work like warriors."

He added that the "corrupt" regime in power poses major challenges, but the party workers must face those fearlessly and further strengthen the organisation. The leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha was on a daylong visit to Haryana's Kurukshetra to address a training camp for the DCC chiefs from the two states. A statement issued by the Haryana Congress said to boost the morale of the party workers, Gandhi said,

"No one can suppress your voice, because a strong organisation like the Congress stands with you."

He said the party will periodically evaluate their progress and provide necessary guidance and support. Congress general secretary in-charge for Haryana B K Hariprasad told PTI that Gandhi told the DCC chiefs to take the party's policies and programmes to people and also raise their issues. The former Congress chief also told them to go to people and explain to them what the Narendra Modi government has done to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre has replaced the MGNREGA with the Vikas Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, triggering protests from opposition parties. Gandhi asked the DCC chiefs to caution people about those who try to divide them on the basis of religion and caste. "We will have to uphold unity in diversity at the ground level.... Being Congress workers, everyone is equal to us, we should respect every religion and there is no disparity," Hariprasad quoted as saying.

Gandhi addressed the training camp in a hall inside the Punjabi Dharamshala, where entry was strictly restricted to those authorised to attend the event.

Police had made tight security arrangements around the venue. Barricades were erected at three places on the approach road to the Punjabi Dharamshala. Gandhi landed in Ambala in the morning and headed to Kurukshetra by road.

is being held here from January 13 to 22 as part of the Congress's "Sangathan Srijan Abhiyan".

Haryana Congress president Rao Narendar Singh said Gandhi also told the district unit chiefs to strengthen the party at the grassroots level.

He explained in detail to all the district presidents about the history, ideology and future strategy of the Congress, sources said.

Gandhi urged the DCC chiefs to work with complete dedication, enthusiasm and passion to take the party forward.

He also held separate discussions with some of the top party leaders from Haryana and obtained detailed information about the political activities in the state.

On his arrival here, Gandhi interacted with the families of the DCC chiefs from Haryana and Uttarakhand, before attending the closed-door training sessions, the sources said.

Singh said Gandhi had lunch with the DCC presidents during which their families, the Congress Legislature Party leaders, party chiefs and general secretaries in-charge for Haryana and Uttarakhand were also present.

While Hariprasad is the party's in-charge for Haryana, Kumari Selja, the MP from Haryana's Sirsa, is the general secretary in-charge for Uttarakhand.

According to the sources, Gandhi addressed the training camp in a hall inside the Punjabi Dharamshala, where entry was strictly restricted to those authorised to attend the event.

Police had made tight security arrangements around the venue. Barricades were erected at three places on the approach road to the Punjabi Dharamshala. Gandhi landed in Ambala in the morning and headed to Kurukshetra by road.

Air India asked to pay ₹1.5L damages for poor services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: A father-daughter duo, who alleged that they faced horrible conditions on an Air India Delhi-New York flight in 2023 with broken seats, unhygienic washrooms and poor food service, have been awarded ₹1.5 lakh compensation for the mental agony and harassment.

The airline had claimed that the complainants had levelled unfounded allegations to illicitly obtain advantages from Air India. The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (New Delhi), comprising President Poonam Chaudhary and Judicial Member Shekhar Chandra, was hearing a complaint filed by Shailesh Bhatnagar and his daughter against Air India, alleging that the aircraft on which they were asked to travel was 'horrible' and 'obnoxious'.

In an order dated January 14, the forum said, "Keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the present case, this commission is of the view that the complainant will be entitled for compensation for causing mental agony and harassment for not providing the facilities for which a considerable amount was charged by opposite party 1, Air India." The complaint was filed by Shailesh Bhatnagar, who travelled with his daughter on Air India's Delhi-New York-Delhi flight in September 2023 on economy class tickets booked through an online platform. The complaint alleged broken seats, non-functional in-flight entertainment systems, unhygienic washrooms, poor food service and lack of response from the cabin crew.

The commission directed that the airline pay ₹1.5 lakh in compensation to the victim.

This commission, therefore, directs the opposite party 1 to pay ₹50,000 each to the complainant and his daughter as compensation and ₹50,000 as litigation expenses to the complainant, the forum said.

India yet to decide on joining Trump's Board of Peace



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 21: India is yet to take a call on United States President Donald Trump's invitation to be part of the 'Board of Peace' that will work towards bringing lasting peace to Gaza and possibly resolve global conflicts, people familiar with the matter said Wednesday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is among the numerous global leaders that the US President has invited to join the Board that was unveiled under the second phase of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Financial Times, quoting the 'charter' of the Board, said this week that it is 'an international organisation that seeks to promote stability, restore dependable and lawful governance, and secure enduring peace in areas affected or threatened by conflict'.

"Durable peace requires pragmatic judgment, common sense solutions, and the courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed."

The top level of the Board will consist 'exclusively' of heads of state under Trump's leadership, the newspaper quoted a White House official as saying.

The Trump administration has already announced that the 'Board of Peace' will play an essential role in fulfilling Trump's 20-point plan of providing strategic oversight, mobilising international resources and ensuring accountability as 'Gaza transitions from conflict to peace and development'.

The 20-point plan includes making Gaza a deradicalised terror-free zone that does not pose a threat to its neighbours and redeveloping it for the benefit of the people of the strip.

The White House last week announced forming a founding executive board to operationalise the Board of Peace's vision.

Originally, the new body was

SNIPPETS

Sabarimala gold loss: Accused jointly looted lord's property, says Kerala HC

Kochi: The Kerala High Court Wednesday dismissed the bail pleas of former TDB president A Padmakumar and two others in the Sabarimala gold loss cases, saying that the accused "jointly looted" Lord Ayyappa's property in the guise of protecting it. Justice A Badarudeen declined to grant the relief to Padmakumar, former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) administrative officer B Murari Babu and Roddam Pandurangaiah Naga Govardhan, a jeweller based in Ballari, Karnataka. The High Court said that the accused on the premise of protecting the property of the deity, jointly looted it and this was prima facie evident from the records of the prosecution.

Sanatana Dharma row: Madras HC quashes FIR against Amit Malviya

Madurai (Tamil Nadu): The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has quashed an FIR registered against BJP leader Amit Malviya for allegedly distorting the comments made by Deputy Chief Minister Udhayandhi Stalin on "Sanatana Dharma", wondering why those initiating "hate speech" were allowed to go scot-free while those reacting to it had to face the law. Allowing a criminal original petition filed by Malviya, the BJP's IT cell chief, seeking to quash the first information report, Justice S Srimathy said continuation of the case would amount to abuse of process of law. Hence, the impugned FIR filed by Tiruchirappalli city police is quashed.

Top court bats for expert committee on Aravallis

New Delhi: Observing that illegal mining can lead to irreversible damage, the Supreme Court Wednesday said it will constitute an expert committee comprising domain experts to undertake an exhaustive and holistic examination of mining and related issues in the Aravallis. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Jaymalya Bagchi and Dipak Misra directed Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, amicus curiae K Parameshwar, to suggest in four weeks the names of environmentalists and scientists who have expertise in mining so that an expert body can be constituted to look into the aspects.



Heavy rush of passengers inside a train at the Patna railway station, Bihar

PTI PHOTO

K'taka Guv refuses to address joint session of legislature Jan 22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Jan 21: Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has refused to address the joint sitting of the state legislature January 22, with the government deciding to reach out to him following his decision.

The grounds for the Governor's refusal are not clear. However, alleged references

to the Centre in the address is said to be the reason, according to sources. The development comes a day after controversies erupted over Governor's addresses to the Assemblies in neighbouring Kerala and Tamil Nadu, both non-BJP ruled states like Karnataka.

A high-level delegation led by Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil is set to meet the Governor at Lok Bhawan in this regard.

Lancet report sets citizen-centred healthcare guidelines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: A new Lancet Commission report outlines a path for a rights-based, citizen-centred health system for India involving innovative financing, regulation and community engagement that delivers accessible, equitable and high-quality care.

Aligning with the country's broader vision of 'Viksit Bharat', a developed and inclusive nation by 2047, the reforms described in the report promote community participation, transparency and equity – key principles of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) – aimed at ensuring high-quality, affordable care for all.

An international team of authors, including those from the US' Harvard Medical School and the Population Foundation



Improvements to the country's health system must go beyond technical fixes, which requires a strong political will and leadership to ensure accountability of services," the authors wrote.

Healthcare reforms driven by decentralisation, multi-stakeholder collaboration and continuous learning are required to cater to India's vast diversity, the team said.

"Our clarion call is for an integrated, citizen-centred healthcare delivery system that is publicly financed and publicly provided as the primary vehicle for UHC, while shaping the private sector to leverage its strengths," the authors wrote.

Established in December 2020, the Lancet Commission on a citizen-centred health system for India identifies reforms

The Lancet Commission's new report charts a rights-based, citizen-centred roadmap for Universal Health Coverage in India, aligning with Viksit Bharat 2047

It calls for innovative financing, stronger public healthcare and digital integration

needed to realise the vision.

A diverse range of expertise and existing and new research were drawn upon for arriving at recommendations, the team said.

The first reform action suggested involves a meaningful citizen engagement and people's participation, including an access to adequate and timely information about entitlements, health system's performance, how and where to seek care, the researchers said.

Citizens should also be made aware of available recourse when rights are denied, they added.

Shyamal Santra, associate director of healthcare and nutrition at Transform Rural India, a New Delhi-based non-profit, said, "The Lancet Commission's call for citizen-centred health system, rightly argues a reimagining of public health system in rural India."

Muttreja said, "Rebuilding trust and making sure public health genuinely benefits the public would not be possible without first hearing what people have to say."

Other reform actions recommended in the report included engaging the private sector to align with goals of UHC and investing in and scaling up diverse technologies to catalyse reforms needed for UHC.

international



“
The crazy thing is that we could find ourselves in a situation where we use the anti-coercion mechanism for the very first time against the United States
EMMANUEL MACRON |
PRESIDENT, FRANCE

TWIN PANDAS TO RETURN TO CHINA

Twin pandas loved by the Japanese public are due to be sent back to their Chinese habitat next week amid the Beijing-Tokyo diplomatic spat, even as China Wednesday hinted that it is unlikely to send replacements. Based on the agreement between China and Japan, giant pandas Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei, living in Ueno Zoo in Tokyo, will return to China as scheduled before February



Fukushima nuclear plant operator restarts reactor

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO, JAN 21: The world's largest nuclear power plant restarted Wednesday in north-central Japan for the first time since the 2011 Fukushima nuclear meltdown, as resource-poor Japan accelerates atomic power use to meet soaring electricity needs.

The first steps in energy production at the No 6 reactor of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant are important because the operator is Tokyo Electric Power Company Hold-

ings, the same utility that runs the ruined Fukushima Daiichi plant. TEPCO's past safety issues at Fukushima have led to public worries about operations at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant, which also sits in an isolated, quake-prone region.

TEPCO said staff at the No 6 reactor's control room turned on a button Wednesday evening to start a nuclear chain reaction toward achieving criticality - a stage when a reactor reaches a self-sustaining nuclear reaction. The move was delayed a day



due to a faulty alarm setting found over the weekend.

All seven reactors at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa have been

dormant for a year after the Fukushima Daiichi plant on Japan's northeastern coast was hit by a massive quake and tsunami in March 2011 and suffered meltdowns that contaminated the surrounding land with radioactive fallout so severe that some areas are still uninhabitable.

TEPCO is still trying to recover from the hit to its image, even as it works on a cleanup at Fukushima Daiichi that's estimated to cost 22 trillion yen (\$139 billion). Government and independent investigations

blamed the Fukushima debacle on TEPCO's bad safety culture and criticised it for collusion with safety authorities.

Fourteen other nuclear reactors have restarted across Japan since 2011, but this is the first TEPCO-run unit to resume production.

Residents near the plant welcome the potential economic and employment benefits but worry about nuclear safety and the feasibility of evacuation plans, especially after a major quake in the nearby Noto region two years ago.

Britain will not yield to pressure from Trump on Greenland: Starmer



REUTERS

‘FOOLHARDY’ TO RIP UP RELATIONSHIP WITH US

LONDON, JAN 21: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he would not yield to Donald Trump on his opposition to US demands to acquire Greenland, adding that the US president had reversed his prior support for a Chagos Islands deal to put pressure on Britain.

Starmer has called for “calm discussion” on Greenland and indicated Monday he did not wish to escalate a trade war, after Trump threatened tariffs on Britain and other European countries unless he was allowed to buy Greenland.

The next day Trump said Britain had been stupid and weak to agree a deal to cede sovereignty of the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean in order to secure the future of a US-UK air base there. When the deal was announced, Trump’s administration expressed support for it.

Starmer has sought close ties with Trump in order to preserve trade and security ties, but in some of his sharpest criticism of Trump, Starmer said he would not be bullied into changing his view that the future of Greenland should be decided by its people and by Denmark.

“I will not yield, Britain will not yield, on our principles and values about the future of Greenland under threats of tariffs, and that is my clear position,” Starmer told lawmakers, adding the Danish prime minister would visit London Thursday.

Starmer said that Trump’s criticism of the Chagos Islands deal with Mauritius was because “he wants me to yield on my position, and I’m not going to do so”.

“President Trump deployed words on Chagos yesterday that were different from his previous words of welcome and support,” Starmer said. “He deployed those words yesterday for the express purpose of putting pressure on me and Britain in relation to my values and principles on the future of Greenland.”

In response to questions from lawmakers urging Starmer to go further in standing against Trump, Starmer said it was still important to work with the US on issues such as Ukraine.

“That does not mean we agree with the US on everything,” he said. “But it is foolhardy to think that we should rip up our relationship with the US, abandon Ukraine and so many other things that are important to our defence, security and intelligence.”

Israeli fire kills 11 Palestinians in Gaza

REUTERS

CAIRO, JAN 21: Israeli fire killed 11 Palestinians including two boys and three journalists in separate incidents in Gaza Wednesday, local medics said, in the latest violence to undermine a three-month-old ceasefire in the war-shattered enclave.

Palestinian health officials said an Israeli airstrike killed three Palestinian journalists travelling in a car on assignment to film a displaced persons camp in central Gaza.

In another incident, medics said three people, including a 10-year-old boy, were killed by Israeli tank shelling in central Gaza. Two others, including a 13-year-old boy, were killed in two Israeli shooting incidents in Khan Younis in the south, medics said.

A further three Palestinians were killed in other Israeli attacks across Gaza, bringing the day’s death toll to at least 11, the Gaza health ministry said.

Commenting on the incident involving the journalists, Israel’s military said troops identified “several suspects who operated a drone affiliated with Hamas” in central Gaza.

Astronaut Sunita Williams retires

WILLIAMS, 60, A FORMER NAVY CAPTAIN, SPENT MORE THAN 27 YEARS AT NASA, LOGGING 608 DAYS IN SPACE OVER THREE STATION MISSIONS

ASSOCIATED PRESS



March with SpaceX.

Williams, 60, a former Navy captain, spent more than 27 years at NASA, logging 608 days in space over three station missions. She also set a record for the most spacewalking time by a woman: 62 hours during nine excursions.

NASA’s new administrator Jared Isaacman called her “a trailblazer in human spaceflight.” “Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement,” he said in a statement.

Boeing’s next Starliner mission will carry cargo - not people - to the space station. NASA wants to make sure all of the capsule’s thruster and other issues are solved before putting anyone on board.

Toll rises to 61 in Karachi fire

KARACHI: The death toll in the devastating fire at a shopping plaza in Pakistan’s financial capital Karachi increased to 61 Wednesday after 30 bodies were found in a single shop on the mezzanine floor of the building, officials said. The fire broke out in the basement of the Gul Shopping Plaza, a wholesale and retail market, and quickly spread to the rest of the building in the Saddar area on the night of January 17. The fire was brought under control only after nearly 36 hours. Karachi South Deputy Inspector General Asad Raza said that the remains of 30 bodies were recovered from a shop called “Dubai Crockery” located on the mezzanine floor, raising

the death toll to 61. “The shop was located on the mezzanine floor and apparently these unfortunate people, including shopkeepers and customers, tried to save themselves from the fire by closing the shutters of the shop,” he said.

4 EX-PMS IN FRAY FOR MAR 5 POLLS IN NEPAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



The general elections in Nepal were necessitated after Oli resigned as prime minister September 9, following violent protests by the youth-led Gen Z group.

“One of the main reasons why the Gen Z youths revolted in September last year was that over the last 15 years, the three top leaders, Deuba, Prachanda and Oli, grabbed the prime minister’s post turn by turn akin to a musical chair game,” said Pralhad Rijal, senior journalist and editor of Aarthik dainik.

“The Gen Z youth wanted change and also indicated that they are fed up with old leadership. Despite which, we have these four leaders who are all 70-plus,” Rijal added.

Oli is 74, Prachanda and Bhattarai both 71 and Madhav Kumar Nepal is 72.

Of the two former prime ministers who are not contesting this time, Khanal has voluntarily chosen to remain away from the race but Deuba was forced to remain out because of the rebellion of young leaders in his own party.

“Deuba had desired to contest polls for the eighth time from his Dadeldhura constituency but the newly elected president of the party Gagan Thapa finally convinced him to keep away from the polls keeping with the Gen Z sentiments,” said Dhananjaya Sharma, academician and political analyst.

Social media mobilises to find survivor dog Boro

ASSOCIATED PRESS

“
Madrid, Jan 21: Blanket draped over her shoulders and a bandage on her cheek, Ana Garcia issued a desperate plea: she needed help finding her dog, Boro.

Hours earlier, 26-year-old Garcia and her pregnant sister had been travelling by high-speed train from Malaga, their hometown in southern Spain, to the capital Madrid. The tail of their train car jumped the rails for reasons that remain unclear, then was smashed into by a train coming in the opposite direction, and that tumbled down an adjacent slope.

The Pitch Drop Experiment may be nearing its 100th anniversary, but in scientific terms, it has barely begun. It remains a powerful reminder that nature operates on its own schedule, and that sometimes, the most profound lessons come not in breakthroughs, but in drips.

At least 42 people died in the crash, and more than 150 were injured, including some right in front of Garcia. Rescue crews helped her and her sister out of the tilted train car.

Garcia saw Boro briefly, then he bolted. After receiving medical treatment, a limping Garcia told reporters she was going back to find him. “Please, if you can help, look for the animals,” she said, choking up and holding back tears. “We were coming back from a family weekend with the little dog, whose family, too.”

In the aftermath of one of Spain’s worst railway disasters, Spaniards on social media rallied to find Boro and major Spanish media outlets have reported on the search for the missing mutt.

Thousands amplified Garcia’s call, sharing video of her interview. Photos of Boro, a medium-sized black dog with white eyebrows and a tuft of white fur on his chest, went viral alongside phone numbers for Garcia and her family. The Associated Press was not able to reach anyone through these numbers.

Pitch drop experiment keeps the world waiting

DESPITE DECADES OF ANTICIPATION, NO HUMAN HAS EVER WITNESSED A DROP FALL IN REAL TIME

AGENCIES

A CENTURY IN SLOW MOTION



long years for the first drop to finally fall into the beaker below.

Since then, the pitch has continued its agonisingly slow descent, dripping roughly

once every eight years. The pace slowed even further after air conditioning was installed in the building in the 1980s. Nearly 96 years later, only nine drops have fallen. The most re-

cent appeared in 2014.

The next drop? Scientists be-

lieve it could happen any time in the 2020s—but no one is hold-

ing their breath.

Despite decades of anticipa-

tion, no human has ever witnessed a drop fall in real time. Cameras and live streams have been set up to capture the historic moment, but fate has intervened repeatedly. In 2000, a thunderstorm knocked out the live feed just as a drop fell. Earlier custodians missed their moments as well.

Parnell never saw a drop fall before his death. His successor, John Mainstone, watched over the experiment for 52 years, only to pass away months before the 2014 drop. Today, physicist Andrew White stands as the third custodian, patiently keeping watch for the elusive tenth drop.

The Pitch Drop Experiment may be nearing its 100th anniversary, but in scientific terms, it has barely begun. It remains a powerful reminder that nature operates on its own schedule, and that sometimes, the most profound lessons come not in breakthroughs, but in drips.

At least 42 people died in the crash, and more than 150 were injured, including some right in front of Garcia. Rescue crews helped her and her sister out of the tilted train car.

Garcia saw Boro briefly,



“The cost of power supply needs to become affordable ... We need to introspect and optimise our cost of supply

PANKAJ AGARWAL | POWER SECRETARY

TRAI PROBES TELCOS PRICING ROW

Regulator Trai is examining the pricing issue that telecom operators are facing for deploying network in and around Adani Group-backed Navi Mumbai International Airport, a top official said Wednesday. Trai Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said industry body COAI has approached it for intervention, and the regulator has sought more details around the price that telecom operators have paid in the past for setting up networks



of the day quote



As digitisation is increasing in India, the usage of these platforms will grow. Pesticide is a regulated industry, and the entire supply chain should follow the regulatory framework

ANKUR AGARWAL | CHAIRMAN, CROPLIFE



Consumers no longer want fragmented financial journeys. A loan from one provider, insurance from another, payments through a third, it's cumbersome

CHANDAN KAITAN | CEO, MUTHOOT FINCORP ONE



The 5-star safety ratings awarded to VF 6 and VF 7 by Bharat NCAP mark an important milestone, underscoring the quality and high safety standards of VinFast's electric vehicles in India, one of the world's largest automotive markets

TAPAN GHOSH | CEO, VINFAST INDIA

Q3 RESULTS**Bol profit rises 7.5%**

New Delhi: Bank of India (Bol) Wednesday reported a 7.5 per cent growth in net profit to ₹2,705 crore for the third quarter ended December 2025. The public sector bank had a standalone net profit of ₹2,517 crore in the October-December quarter of 2024-25. Its total income rose to ₹21,205 crore during the third quarter of the current fiscal against ₹19,957 crore in the same quarter of FY25. Its gross non-performing assets (NPA) of Bol improved to 2.26 per cent of gross loans in Q3 of FY26 from 3.69 per cent in the year-ago period.

JSL profit grows 26%

New Delhi: Jindal Stainless Wednesday posted 26 per cent year-on-year growth in consolidated net profit to ₹828 crore in December quarter FY26, driven by increased sales. In a statement, the company said it was able to maintain a steady momentum in the domestic market, underpinned by consistent demand from key sectors such as automotive, ornamental pipes and tubes, railways & metro, and white goods. Growing focus on infrastructure expansion, efficient vertical transportation, and strengthened transit networks contributed to the growth, Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL) said. Consolidated net revenue was at ₹10,518 crore, up 6.2 per cent year-on-year. EBITDA rose 16.6 per cent to ₹1,408 crore in the third quarter of FY26.

Tata Comm net up 55%

New Delhi: Tata Communications Wednesday posted 55 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at ₹365.28 crore for December quarter FY26, mainly on account of improvement in margin. The company had logged a profit of ₹235.96 crore, attributable to equity holders of the parent, in the same period a year ago. The company profit margin improved to 5.9 per cent from 4.4 per cent a year ago. Income from operations increased to ₹6,188.97 crore during the quarter from ₹5,798.07 crore a year ago.

Dr Reddy's net drops

New Delhi: Dr Reddy's Laboratories Wednesday said its consolidated profit after tax declined 14 per cent to ₹1,210 crore in the third quarter ended December 31, 2025, hit by lower sales in the US market. The Hyderabad-based drug major posted a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹1,413 crore a year ago. Revenue increased to ₹8,727 crore in the period under review from ₹8,357 crore a year ago, the company said in a statement.

Deepinder steps down as Eternal CEO, MD

Quick commerce arm Blinkit's Dhindsa to take over

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: Food delivery and quick commerce firm Eternal Wednesday said Deepinder Goyal will step down as Group CEO and Managing Director with Blinkit CEO Albinder Dhindsa set to succeed him as Group CEO from February 1.

In a letter to shareholders, Goyal said he is stepping down from his current position to pursue new ideas and transition to the role of Vice

Chairman.

Eternal, which owns the Zomato and Blinkit brands, informed exchanges that the appointment of Goyal as Vice Chairman & Director on the board will be effective upon shareholders' approval for a five-year term.

In the letter, Goyal explained the reason behind him stepping down as the Group CEO and MD.

"Of late, I have found myself drawn to a set of new ideas that involve significantly higher-risk exploration and experimentation. These are the kinds of ideas that are better pursued outside a public company like Eternal. If



these ideas belonged inside Eternal's strategic scope, I would have pursued them within the company. They do not. Eternal deserves to remain focused, and disciplined,

“Of late, I have found myself drawn to a set of new ideas that involve significantly higher-risk exploration and experimentation. These are the kinds of ideas that are better pursued outside a public company like Eternal

DEEPIINDER GOYAL | CEO, ETERNAL

while exploring new areas of growth that are relevant to its current line of business," Goyal stated.

He further said the transition allows Eternal to remain

sharply focused, while giving him the space to explore ideas that do not fit Eternal's risk profile.

"The centre of gravity for operating decisions moves to Albi. As Group CEO, he will own day-to-day execution, operating priorities, and business decisions. Blinkit's journey from acquisition to break-even happened under his leadership," Goyal said.

Eternal also reported 72.88 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹102 crore for December quarter FY26 Wednesday. In the year-ago period, the company logged a profit of ₹59 crore.

Stock markets fall for 3rd day on trot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 21: Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty recovered most of their losses to close lower in a volatile session Wednesday, continuing their weak momentum for the third consecutive day, as heightened geopolitical tensions kept investors away from riskier assets.

However, selective buying activity in some of the market heavyweights helped the indices restrict the losses, traders said.

Slipping below the 82,000 level, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 270.84 points, or 0.33 per cent, to 81,909.63. The benchmark tanked 1,056.02 points, or 1.28 per cent, to 81,124.45 during the day.

A total of 2,831 stocks declined while 1,437 advanced and 137 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 75 points or 0.30 per cent to 25,157.50.

Selling pressure in financial, banking, and consumption stocks amid the rupee diving to its lowest level against the US dollar also added to the pressure, according to traders.

From the 30-Sensex firms, ICICI Bank, Trent, Bharat Electronics, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro, State Bank of India and Maruti were among the biggest laggards. In contrast, Eternal, UltraTech Cement, InterGlobe Aviation and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,065.71 points, or 1.28 per cent, to settle at 82,180.47. The Nifty tanked 353 points or 1.38 per cent to end at 25,232.50.

Retail inflation for farm, rural workers rises slightly in Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 21: Retail inflation for farm and rural workers rose slightly by 0.04 per cent and 0.11 per cent, respectively, in December 2025 compared to the preceding month amid firming up of certain food items, showed government data released Wednesday.

The pace of increase in retail prices, measured in terms of Consumer Price Index-Agricultural Workers (CPI-AL) and Consumer Price Index-Rural Workers (CPI-RL), was negative at (-) 0.66 per cent and (-) 0.47, respectively, in November 2025, a labour ministry statement said.

Food inflation in December 2025 stood at (-) 1.80 per cent for farm workers and (-) 1.73 per cent for rural labourers.

In contrast, the two respective figures in November were at (-) 2.95 per cent and (-) 2.70 per cent, according to the data.

In December 2025, the All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers decreased by 0.28 points to 137.12, while the index for Rural Labourers decreased by 0.27 points, reaching 137.03.

₹ at new nadir

Rupee plunges to record low of 91.64 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

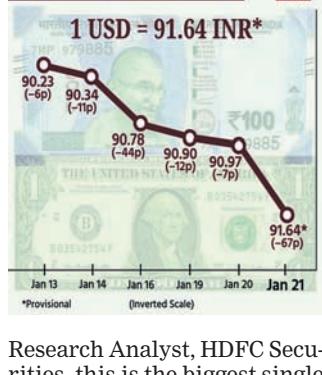
Mumbai, Jan 21: The rupee plunged 67 paise to close at an all-time low of 91.64 (provisional) against the American currency Wednesday, pressured by persistent foreign fund outflow amid heightened uncertainty and risk-off sentiment in global markets.

The rupee recorded its previous all-time low of 91.14 December 16, 2025, and so far this month, the local unit has fallen by 1.50 per cent, forex traders said, adding that the depreciation can be attributed to heightened geopolitical uncertainty.

Rising tensions in Europe over the Greenland issue and potential tariffs, along with a negative trend in the domestic market, further dented investor sentiment, they said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 91.05 and lost ground to touch an intraday low of 91.74 against the greenback. The domestic unit settled for the day at an all-time low of 91.64 (provisional), registering a decline of 67 paise from its previous close.

According to Dilip Parmar,



“The currency remains under severe pressure from heightening global geopolitical uncertainties. The pace of this depreciation has been so aggressive that intermittent central bank interventions have struggled to provide a meaningful floor

DILIP PARMAR | RESEARCH ANALYST, HDFC SECURITIES

sion could boost confidence and bilateral commerce.

"Also, until the geopolitical risk eases and the trade deal materialises, the rupee is likely to remain vulnerable to external shocks. However, given the strong forex reserves, the Reserve Bank of India can manage the situation as the depreciation has made INR relatively cheaper on REER basis, which shall help shore up exports," he said.

Besides, geopolitical tensions, including the Greenland dispute that has strained US-Europe relations (which is a risk of NATO breakdown) and also the control of Venezuela's oil reserves by the US, are creating ripple effects across the global trade, he said.

Bisen further noted that for India, the pending trade agreement with the US remains a key stabilising factor, as its conclu-

tion was

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.02 per cent lower at 98.61.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 1.88 per cent down at USD 63.70 per barrel in futures trade.

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth ₹2,938.33 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Spot silver was trading firm in the overseas trade, with prices up 0.33 per cent to ₹94.91 per ounce Wednesday, after touching a record of ₹95.89 per ounce in the previous session.

FRESH PEAKS

Global buying rush pushes gold, silver



Yellow metal soars near ₹1.60 lakh/10g

White metal hits record ₹3,34 lakh/kg

taxes) Wednesday. The metal closed ₹20,400 higher at ₹3,23,000 per kilogram in the previous market session.

According to trading platform FOREX.com, gold breached the \$4,800 per ounce level for the first time in the international markets, with spot prices appreciating by \$124.97, or 2.62 per cent, to \$4,888.46 per ounce.

Silver prices also continued their blistering jump for the ninth consecutive day and hit a fresh record in the local bullion market. The white metal skyrocketed by ₹11,300 to ₹33,430 per kilogram (inclusive of all

CMPDI SIGNS MOA WITH HLL MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

Ranchi: CMPDI signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with HLL Management Academy, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, for the implementation of the CSR project 'Anibhrit' in Ramgarh district of Jharkhand at its headquarters here. The project aims to promote healthy menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls in 85 government

schools in Ramgarh, ensure access to safe disposal methods. The MoA was signed by Shishir Dutta, General Manager (HRD/CSR), CMPDI, and Shannath Shamsudheen, Deputy Vice President, HLL Management Academy. Under the initiative, CMPDI will facilitate the installation of sanitary napkin vending machines and incinerators in the identified schools, distribute 1,71,824 sanitary napkin packs to approximately 21,478 students, and organise menstrual health awareness sessions. Training of school staff and students, along with regular monitoring, will also be ensured to enable effective and sustainable implementation of the project. Through the 'Anibhrit' initiative, CMPDI reiterates its commitment to community health, gender equality, and sustainable development in its operational areas.



The all-new Tata Sierra and Punch were launched at Lankeswari Motors, Sambalpur Wednesday. The unveiling ceremony was attended by Nauri Nayak, ex-MLA, Rengali as chief guest; Ramdas Tudu, RTO, Sambalpur and Swagatika Tripathy, singer were present as guests. Officials from Lankeswari Motors Saroj Kumar Sahu, Director; Ajoy Pasad, Vice President; Raj Suri, General Manager; Upendra Podha, Sales Manager and Ashish Kumar, Service Manager were also seen during the ceremony

Refiners shift oil strategy; trim Russian buys and turn to MidEast

India's Russian oil imports fell to their lowest in two years in Dec, while OPEC's share of imports hit an 11-month high

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 21: Indian refiners are redrawing crude import strategies to shift away from top supplier Russia and boost imports from the Middle East, a move that could help New Delhi clinch a trade deal with the United States to lower tariffs.

India became the top buyer of discounted Russian seaborne crude after the 2022 outbreak of war in Ukraine, but the trade drew backlash from Western nations targeting Russia's energy sector with sanctions, saying oil revenues help it fund the war.

The shift away from Russia comes as Middle East producers, armed with higher output

quotas from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, are keeping global markets well-supplied, softening the impact on prices.

INDIA REFINERS SCALE BACK RUSSIAN BUYS

Indian refiners have begun scaling back Russian oil purchases following discussions at a government meeting to help accelerate a US-India trade deal, three refining sources said.

The oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell is collecting weekly data on refiners' purchases of Russia and US crude, sources told Reuters this month.

In the latest change, state refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp



awarded one-year tenders to buy Iraqi Basra and Oman crude to trader Trafigura and is in the market to buy Murban oil from the United Arab Emirates under a separate tender, said the sources, who sought anonymity.

From April, Trafigura will supply four cargoes of Oman

crude every quarter at 75 cents a barrel below Dubai quotes and one parcel of Basra Medium at a discount of 40 cents a barrel to the grade's official selling price, said two traders.

BPCL and India's oil ministry did not respond to Reuters requests for comments.

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T20 WC: ICC rejects BCB's venue shift demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Jan 21: The International Cricket Council (ICC) Wednesday rejected the request from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to shift its team's T20 World Cup fixtures to Sri Lanka, saying the matches will proceed as scheduled since there was no credible threat to the safety of Bangladesh players, officials or fans at any of the tournament venues in India.

According to the ICC, the Board reviewed multiple security assessments, including independent evaluations, all of which concluded that there was no credible threat to Bangladesh players.

ICC sources told PTI that out of 16 members, 14 voted against BCB's relocation request. The ICC has given BCB one more day to reflect and take a final position.

"Of all the members, only BCB and Pakistan voted in fa-

relocating matches under the present circumstances could jeopardise the sanctity of ICC events and undermine the organisation's neutrality as a global governing body," the ICC said in a statement.

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■ BCB has been given one more day to inform its final stance on playing matches in India
■ Of all the members, only BCB and Pakistan voted in favour of the relocation request

Board to state their position," said the ICC source.

The ICC also said that making changes to the schedule at such a late stage was not feasible and that altering fixtures in the absence of a verified security risk could set an "undesirable precedent" for future global events.

The world governing body said its management had held a series of meetings and correspondences with the BCB in

recent weeks, sharing detailed information on the tournament's security arrangements.

These included venue-specific plans and assurances of layered protection involving federal and state law enforcement agencies.

The crisis was triggered by the removal of Bangladesh paceman Mustafizur Rahman from Kolkata Knight Riders' roster for this year's Indian Premier League on BCCI's instructions for unspecified "developments all around".

The ICC, however, expressed concern that the BCB continued to link its participation to what it described as a "single, isolated and unrelated development" involving one of its players' participation

in a domestic league, a matter the ICC said had no bearing on the tournament's security framework.

The Board reiterated that venue and scheduling decisions are guided by objective threat assessments, host guarantees and agreed participation terms, which apply uniformly to all 20 teams in the competition.

Bangladesh government's sports advisor Asif Nazrul Tuesday had reiterated that under no condition would the national team travel to India.

It is highly likely that if Bangladesh decide to pull out of the tournament, Scotland may replace Bangladesh as per current rankings.

INDONESIA MASTERS

Shuttlers advance to second round

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jakarta, Jan 21: Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the second round of their respective events at the Indonesia Masters badminton tournament here Wednesday.

Fifth seed Sindhu registered a hard-fought 22-20 21-18 win over Japan's Manami Suizu in a 53-minute women's singles first-round match.

Former world No 1 Srikanth, currently ranked 33rd in the world, endured a gruelling contest before outlasting world No. 22 Koki Watanabe of Japan 21-15 21-23 24-22 in one hour and 12 minutes. He will next face fourth seed Chou Tien Chen, who defeated Ireland's Nhat Nguyen 21-14 21-15.

Seventh seed Lakshya, the 2021 World Championships bronze medalist, opened his campaign with a 21-13 16-21 21-14 victory over Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei in the opening round. Seventh seed Lakshya, who won the Australia Open last year, will face Hong Kong's Jason Gunawan next.

Among other Indians, Anmol Kharb notched up a straight-game 21-16, 21-17 win over Pai Yu Po of Chinese Taipei to move into the second round.

However, Ayush Shetty, HS Prannoy and Kiran George exited in the opening round.

India's campaign in mixed doubles ended in the first round, with Rohan Kapoor and Ruthviika Gadde losing 9-21, 20-22 to fourth seeds Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue of France, while Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto were beaten 23-21, 20-22, 6-21 by Julien Maio and Lea Palermo of France.

TATA STEEL MASTERS

Gukesh holds Praggnanandhaa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Wijk Aan Zee (The Netherlands) Jan 21: World Champion D Gukesh drew his fourth game on the trot, signing peace with compatriot and defending champion R Praggnanandhaa while Arjun Erigaisi could not break the defence of Anish Giri and drew for the third day running in the Tata Steel Masters, here.

Praggnanandhaa was denied a victory for the fourth day running by Gukesh who played an unusual variation to counter the French defense.

Praggnanandhaa was able to dent white's pawn structure on the queen side but that did not prove to be enough in the end as the players reached a drawn queen and pawns endgame.

With just two draws and two significant losses in the first could of rounds, Praggnanandhaa is still the bottom of the tables with Giri. On a day when Aravindh Chithamabaram suffered his first defeat at the hands of American Hans Moke Niemann, Nodirbek Abdusattorov staked his claims to beat Thai Dai Van Nguyen of Czech Republic.

Abdusattorov and Niemann emerged as joint leaders on three points out of a possible four while Arjun Erigaisi is right behind them with Uzbek Javokhir Sindarov and Dutchman Jorden van Foreest.

Kiwis outplayed

Riding on Abhishek's sizzling 84 India take 1-0 lead in five match T20I series against NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Jan 21: Abhishek Sharma's pyrotechnics followed a now familiar script with India out-batting New Zealand by 48 runs in the opening T20 International here Wednesday.

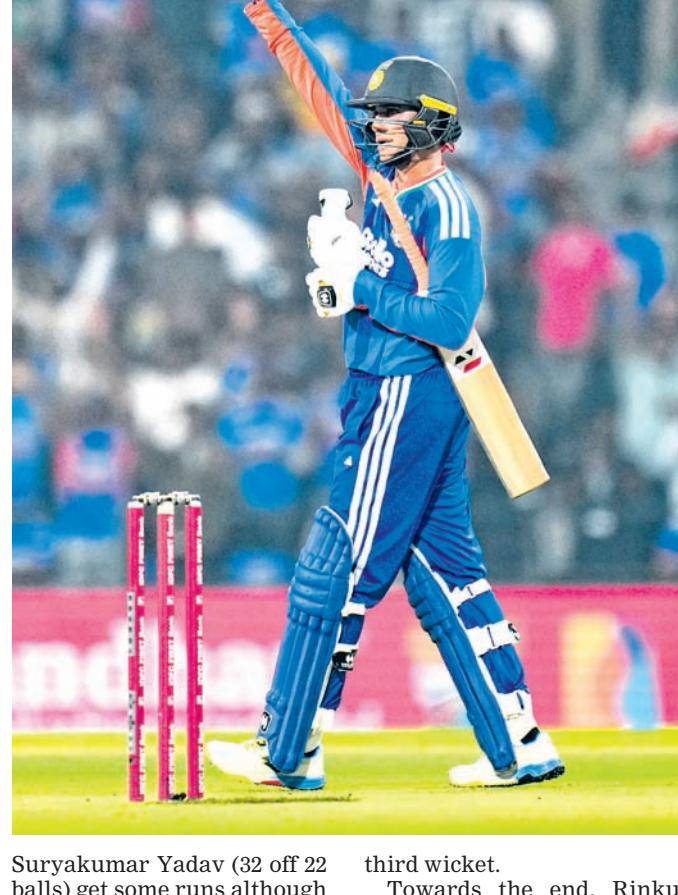
Abhishek, who has made it a habit of lighting up the evenings in stadiums across the cricketing globe with his array of monstrous hits, smashed 84 off just 35 balls and was complemented well by Rinku Singh (44 not out off 20 balls) who applied the finishing touches in India's commanding score of 238 for 7 on a Jamtha shirt-front.

In reply, Glenn Phillips (78 off 40 balls) did indulge in some scary hitting in company of Mark Chapman (39 off 24 balls) as they added 79 off just seven overs but scoreboard pressure was such that they were eventually buried under a deluge of runs.

In the past 12 months, one format where Indian team has looked unbeatable is the shortest one and the primary reason being the 25-year-old Abhishek, whose Key Responsibility Area (KRA) in the T20 national team is to leave the opposition bowlers scared as well as scarred.

On the day, the world's top ranked T20I batter showed no mercy while making the Black Cap fielders look like mere bystanders with eight towering sixes and five fours.

Abhishek's carefree hitting also helped his skipper



Suryakumar Yadav (32 off 22 balls) got some runs although he was far from his best. But the young opener's attack at all costs gave his skipper a chance to play himself in during a 99-run stand off 47 balls for the

third wicket.

Towards the end, Rinku Singh (44 not out off 20 balls) got to play an innings of substance after a long time with India ending their 20 overs in fantastic fashion.

For someone who nowadays can hardly put a foot wrong, it took Abhishek exactly five deliveries to set his eye in against Jacob Duffy (2/27 in 4 overs) before the first of his eight maximums came out of the closet. It was a lofted six into the sight screen.

In between, Sanju Samson (10) and Ishan Kishan (8) wasted opportunities and when Abhishek got his chance next time, there was no looking back.

Abhishek's USP is his tremendous bat-speed that he generates and New Zealand's attack didn't have any bowler of express pace to challenge the Punjab southpaw.

Undeterred, Abhishek carried on with his mayhem although he was out in the very next over when leg-spinner Ish Sodhi just shortened the length of his leg-break a tad bit and Jamieson gobbed it with his giant palms.

Towards the end, Rinku got to face enough deliveries to make an impact as he clobbered Daryl Mitchell's first and innings' last over for 21 runs to take the team to an improbable total.

BRIEF SCORES

India: 238 for 7 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 84, Rinku Singh 44 not out; Jacob Duffy 2/27) beat **New Zealand:** 190 for 7 in 20 overs (Glenn Phillips 78; Varun Chakaravarthy 2/37) by 48 runs

Odisha settle for silver



Bihar boys trump Odisha to title; Rajasthan secure bronze at 10th Sub-Junior National Rugby Sevens Championship

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: Bihar were crowned champions of the Boys' Under-15 category at the 10th Sub-Junior National Rugby Sevens Championship after defeating Odisha in the final at the Kalinga Stadium Wednesday.

The reigning champions overcame hosts Odisha, winning 25-5. Last year's runners-up Rajasthan finished the tournament on the podium with a dominant 38-7 victory over Maharashtra, bringing the two-day championship to a competitive close.

The decisive day began with the quarterfinals, where the top contenders stamped their authority. Rajasthan powered past Uttarakhand with a commanding 41-0 win, while hosts Odisha overcame Delhi 17-5 to keep their title hopes alive. Maharashtra edged West Bengal 17-5 in a controlled performance, and defending champions Bihar delivered a clinical display

to defeat Uttar Pradesh 46-7.

The semifinal encounters delivered contrasting narratives. Odisha produced one of the standout moments of the tournament, rallying from a 5-0 halftime deficit to defeat Rajasthan 12-5, sealing victory with a dramatic last-gasp score that sent the home crowd into celebration. In the other semifinal, Bihar showcased their composure and knockout pedigree, overcoming Maharashtra 15-7 to book their place in the final.

The final saw Bihar and Odisha face off under lights at the Kalinga Stadium, with Bihar proving decisive in the title clash. The defending champions held their nerve and executed their game plan to emerge victorious by a scoreline of 38-7, clinching the Boys' U15 title once again.

The 10th Sub-Junior National Rugby Sevens Championship was successfully hosted by the Government of Odisha in association with Rugby India and the Odisha Rugby Football Association, with Kalinga Stadium once again providing world-class infrastructure and seamless operations for a national-level event.

SHORT TAKES

Mitchell topples Kohli

Dubai: Indian superstar Virat Kohli was Wednesday displaced from the top spot by New Zealand swashbuckler Daryl Mitchell in the latest ICC ODI rankings for batters following the latter's stupendous run of form in the just-concluded series. New Zealand won the series 1-2, their first on Indian soil in the ODI format, to end a 37-year wait. Mitchell scored two hundreds during the rubber and the 34-year-old also became the fourth-fastest male to nine one-day international hundreds, in just his 54th innings, sitting behind only Imam-ul-Haq (48), Hashim Amla (52) and Quinton de Kock (53). The Hamilton product is in the form of his life, scoring 352 runs across the three-game series. His series total was the most ever by a New Zealander in a three-match ODI series and the third-most of all time, behind only Pakistan's Babar Azam (360 against the West Indies in 2016) and India's Shubman Gill (360 against New Zealand in 2023).

Praneeth returns as coach

New Delhi: Former World Championships medallist B Sai Praneeth has returned to the domestic fold in a coaching role at the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy, marking a shift from overseas assignments to hands-on involvement in India's high-performance system. The 33-year-old, who retired from international badminton in 2024, will also travel with the Indian team for the \$250,000 Thailand Masters Super 30 tournament, his first assignment with the national contingent since taking up coaching. Praneeth, a 2019 world championships bronze winner, had spent close to a year and a half in the United States as head coach at Triangle Badminton club after stepping away from competitive badminton.

Meanwhile, PSG have work to do to ensure direct qualification to the last 16 next week after substitute Khvicha Kvaratskhelia had equalised for PSG after 79 minutes. The French club dropped to fifth with a home date against

India eyes World Athletics Indoor C'ships 2028

World Athletics, AFI delegation tour Kalinga Stadium

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 21: A delegation from the World Athletics and Athletics Federation of India visited Kalinga Stadium Wednesday as India bids for the World Athletics Indoor Championships 2028. They inspected the Indoor Athletic Centre and the facilities within the complex.

The day culminated in a high-profile meeting chaired by Minister for Sports & Youth Services, Suryabanshi Suraj. Joining him were Commission-

er-cum-Secretary, Department of Sports & Youth Services (DSYS), Sachin R Jadhav; Vice President of World Athletics, Adille J Sumariwalla; Competition & Events Director, World Athletics, Marton Gyulai; Head of Bidding, World Athletics, Mark Hurst; Chairman of AFI's Technical Committee, Ravinder Chaudhary and AFI Bidding Expert, Vijay Kumar Verma.

"Odisha has the necessary and available facilities to host all levels of sporting events. We are backed and encouraged

by strong fan support. After successfully conducting the World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze last year, we will be hosting the silver meet this year. I hope we can collaborate with World Athletics and AFI and add this prestigious mile-

stone to our sporting journey," expressed Suraj.

"In line with the PM's vision, India is bidding for the World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028. The infrastructure, hospitality and sporting culture in Bhubaneswar are at

par with the global standards. For us it will be the ideal venue to host the World Indoor Championships," said Sumariwalla.

Odisha's Sports Secretary reinforced the state's credentials and said, "Odisha is one of the leading hubs of sports in the country. It has extensive experience hosting sports events. Today, some of India's finest sprinters are from Odisha. We are committed towards advancing Athletics and investing in block level stadium across 314 blocks. We are confident to host events on an even larger scale. We hope to collaborate with World Athletics and AFI to make this global event a historic success."

With just two draws and two significant losses in the first could of rounds, Praggnanandhaa is still the bottom of the tables with Giri. On a day when Aravindh Chithamabaram suffered his first defeat at the hands of American Hans Moke Niemann, Nodirbek Abdusattorov staked his claims to beat Thai Dai Van Nguyen of Czech Republic.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Alcaraz, Sabalenka pass tests to reach 3rd round

REUTERS

Melbourne, Jan 21: Carlos Alcaraz withstood a barrage of big hitting from a familiar foe in Yannick Hanfmann in the Australian Open second round Wednesday, with fellow top seed Aryna Sabalenka also enduring some shaky moments before sealing progress.

Alexander Zverev's advance was stalled by rain showers, an injury scare and feisty Frenchman Alexandre Muller in the evening session, but the men's third seed prevailed in four sets to safely reach the third round.

His equivalent in the women's draw, Coco Gauff, earlier made short work of Olga Danilovic,

while in-form seventh seed Jasmine Paolini and eighth seed Mirra Andreeva also romped through their contests.

After a comfortable win in the opening round, top seed Alcaraz was given more of a workout by Germany's world number 102 Hanfmann on a sunbathed Rod Laver Arena but rose to the challenge and moved on 7-6(4) 6-3 6-2.



half, sealing victory with a 90th-minute header after substitute Khvicha Kvaratskhelia had equalised for PSG after 79 minutes. The French club dropped to fifth with a home date against

Newcastle in their last group stage fixture.

While the top eight secure direct entry to the last 16, teams

placed ninth to 24th must navigate an additional two-legged

play-off to join them. Next week the league phase comes to a dramatic denouement with all 18 matches kicking off at the same time.

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