



Fashion powerhouse

Elnaaz Norouzi praises Indian fashion's rich creativity as global luxury brands are increasingly drawing inspiration from India


LEISURE | **P2**



Russia-Ukraine war

Ukrainian and Russian negotiators set to tackle the vital issue of territory during two days of talks in Abu Dhabi

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



Markets in red

Sensex loses 769 points, or 0.94% to settle at 81,537, while Nifty declines 241 points, or 0.95%, to close at 25,048

BUSINESS | **P11**



Alcaraz Slam record

World No 1 Carlos Alcaraz improves to 87-13 at Slam level, tying Bjorn Borg for the best major record in 100 matches

SPORTS | **P12**

Mahanadi dispute: State postpones all-party meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The Odisha government Friday put on hold the proposed all-party meeting on the Mahanadi water dispute with Chhattisgarh, and asserted that it was committed to safeguard the river which is a 'heritage' for the people.

This was stated by Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, who chaired an inter-departmental meeting convened to discuss the Mahanadi water dispute matter here.

Singh Deo did not mention the reason behind postponing the all-party meeting on the Mahanadi water dispute.

He, however, said in an X post, "Joined my colleagues Shri Prithviraj Harichandan, Hon'ble Minister of Law, Works & Excise, and Shri Suresh Pujari, Hon'ble Minister of Revenue & Disaster Management at the Inter Ministerial Committee follow up on Mahanadi. Our deliberations were not just about a river, but about safeguarding Odisha's heritage, strengthening our agriculture, and securing resilience for tomorrow."

Describing Mahanadi as the state's lifeline and a heritage for the state, Harichandan said, "The agriculture sector of our state, along with the livelihoods of the state's residents, is also

dependent on the waters of the Mahanadi. In today's meeting, discussions were held regarding the security of all these."

Pujari claimed that the state's BJP government was putting its best effort to resolve the issue.

He said, "We (the BJP govt) inherited this (Mahanadi) problem from the previous BJD government which did not oppose the neighbouring Chhattisgarh when it built barrages on upstream of the river. The previous government took legal option only after the projects were completed."

Pujari noted that matters became difficult now because Chhattisgarh has placed a document in the Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal (MWDT) quoting the then Odisha's water resource minister saying in Assembly that barrages built by the neighbouring state will not impact the state. "This statement of the BJD minister has become a major hurdle for us in the tribunal," said Pujari, who is a lawyer by profession.

The state government, which has been trying to resolve the Mahanadi water dispute through negotiation, had convened the all-party meeting to build a common political stand of Odisha ahead of inter-state dialogue with Chhattisgarh on sharing of Mahanadi waters.



WINTER WONDERLAND: People walk in the snow-covered ridge, in Shimla, Friday. Forecasts predicting up to 28 cm of snow came true ending the region's dry spell under active western disturbances

PTI PHOTO

Nationwide outrage over assault on pastor in state

AGENCIES


Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The alleged assault and public humiliation of a Christian pastor in Dhenkanal district has triggered strong reactions from political leaders across the country, with chief ministers and senior leaders describing the incident as a serious blow to India's constitutional values, religious freedom and rule of law.

The pastor was reportedly attacked by a mob January 4 on suspicion of religious conversion. According to allegations, he was assaulted, paraded with a garland of footwear and forced to consume cow dung, sparking widespread condemnation.

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan termed the incident a "deeply inhuman act" and warned that it was not an isolated crime but part of a broader, systematic assault on India's secular fabric.

Echoing similar concerns, AICC general secretary KC Venugopal demanded the immediate arrest of all those involved. In letters to Union Home Minister and Odisha Chief Minister, Venugopal alleged that nearly 40 Bajrang Dal activists led the attack, describing it as a direct assault on religious freedom.

Adding to the chorus of concern, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma wrote to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, expressing distress over the incident. "Acts of extremism risk creating fear and mistrust among communities," he said, expressing confidence that the Odisha government would uphold justice and the rule of law.



IRREGULAR by **MANJUL**

Hope you're bringing enough people to welcome me, pose for photos, and sign MoUs

Rupee hits 92/\$

The Indian rupee plunged to a fresh all-time low Friday, as demand for the dollar from corporates and importers compounded existing pressure on the currency. With this, the rupee has posted its steepest weekly decline in six months, weighed by sustained foreign fund outflows from India's equity markets and hedging by importers. This rupee's underperformance this week was all the more significant considering the fact that most Asian peers managed to post a modest advance against a weakening dollar index amid US President Donald Trump issuing threats over Greenland and later walking them back

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 23: The rupee hit a historic low of 92-a-dollar Friday and gained marginally to settle at 91.90 against the American currency, amid selling pressure from foreign funds and risk-off sentiment in global markets.

Forex traders said the Indian rupee gave up early gains and hit a record low of 92 per US dollar in intraday trade



due to weak domestic markets and persistent foreign fund outflows. Moreover, gains in crude oil prices and a surge in US treasury yields weighed on the rupee.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 91.45 and then gained ground to touch an intraday high of 91.41 against the greenback. It fell to an all-time intraday low of 92.00 before settling for the day at a record closing low of 91.90, down 32 paise from its previous closing level.

On Thursday, the rupee rebounded from its all-time low levels and ended with a gain of 7 paise at 91.58 against the US dollar.

The previous all-time low was recorded January 21, when the rupee plunged 68 paise to close at 91.65 against the American currency.

The rupee has slumped by 202 paise, or over 2 per cent, so far this month. In 2025, the domestic unit had plunged 5 per cent on unabated foreign fund outflows and dollar strength.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias due to selling pressure from FIIs and risk-off sentiments in the global markets. Dollar demand from hedgers and imports may further pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

However, a weak dollar and any intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 91.60 to 92.30, Choudhary added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.01 per cent higher at 98.36.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 1.03 per cent higher at USD 64.72 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex tanked 769.67 points to settle at 81,537.70, while the Nifty dived 241.25 points to 25,048.65.

V-P: Honour all those who fought for freedom



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Jan 23: Vice President CP Radhakrishnan Friday paid tributes to Subhas Chandra Bose on his 129th birth anniversary, and said all those who fought for the country's Independence must be honoured by every Indian.

Highlighting Bose's fearless leadership, indomitable spirit and unwavering commitment to the freedom struggle, Radhakrishnan said his life embodied the true essence of 'Parakram' (valour), and it continues to inspire generations to uphold courage, sacrifice and national unity.

Radhakrishnan, who arrived in Bhubaneswar earlier in the day on his maiden Odisha visit, attended the 'Parakram Diwas' celebrations at the birthplace of Bose in Cuttack.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video message played out at the event here at Odia Bazaar, the Vice President said the PM ensured due honour to Bose by declaring his birth anniversary as 'Parakram Diwas' (Day of Valour) in 2021.

"There may be difference of opinion, different ways of fighting for independence... But, the great sacrifices should be recognised and honoured by every Indian," the V-P said. **P3**

Koraput dist admin bans non-veg food sale on Republic Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput/Nandapur, Jan 23: The Koraput district administration has issued an order prohibiting the sale of non-vegetarian food items across the district on the occasion of Republic Day.

The directive was issued through an official notification (Letter No. 93 dated January 23, 2026) by the office of District Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan (General Miscellaneous section).

As per the order, all tehsildars, block development officers and urban local body officials have been instructed to ensure that the sale of fish meat and eggs is completely banned within their respective jurisdictions January 26.

The officials have also been directed to take strict action against violators who fail to comply with the order.

The ban has been imposed as part of measures to maintain decorum and discipline during Republic Day celebrations across the district.

NATIONWIDE BANK STRIKE ON JAN 27

NEW DELHI: Bank employee unions have decided to go on a nationwide strike January 27 to press for a long-pending demand for a five-day work week. If the strike proceeds, it will disrupt public sector banking operations for three consecutive days, with January 25 and 26 being holidays. Most of the public sector banks have already informed their customers about the disruption in banking services if the strike materialises. In response to the strike notice served by the UFBU, the Chief Labour Commissioner held a conciliation meeting on Wednesday and Thursday, the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), an umbrella organisation of nine unions of officers and employees, said in a statement.

Ancient Ecuadorian forest last refuge for hummingbird

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quito, Jan 23: Deep in the Ecuadorian Andes, an ancient forest stands as a final sanctuary against the encroachment of human activity. This is the Yanacocha Reserve, the last refuge for the black-breasted puffleg (*Eriocnemis nigrivestis*), a tiny hummingbird teetering on the edge of extinction.

Measuring just 9 centimetres (3.5 inches), this emblematic bird of Quito is one of the most threatened species on the planet. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, its global population has dwindled to between 150 and 200 birds.

Founded 25 years ago by the Jocotoco Foundation, the Yanacocha Reserve has be-



come a centerpiece for Andean biodiversity. "We realised we were conserving an entire ecosystem, not just one species,"

conservationist Paola Villalba told The Associated Press.

The bird is easily identified by the striking white "trou-

sers" of feathers around its legs, which contrast sharply with its deep, metallic black chest and bronze-green wings. Despite its

ON EDGE OF EXTINCTION

Measuring just 9 cm, the black-breasted puffleg is one of the most threatened species on the planet

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, its global population has dwindled to between 150 and 200 birds

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may be alone, but not necessarily lonely. You may want to listen to your inner voice, and express your true self creatively. Spend the evening with a loved one who can hear the music in your silence too, suggests Ganesha.

TAURUS
Fortune favours the brave and you will wake up feeling gutsy. Your performance will peak today and you will reap the benefits of real estate and construction business. Your peers and boss will extend all the support you need. All in all, a day to bask in the glory of advantages and awards.

GEMINI
You need to bear in mind that you need to concentrate on your own image and standing in society rather than worry about the actions of others. Those in the retail business will see an unprecedented spurt in their profits today, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will try to improve ties with beloved ones. Your devotion and dedication will reap benefits for the future. You will have physical and mental happiness. You will keep your future in mind. This will boost your self-confidence. Ganesha's blessings are with you.

LEO
You will be confused with issues relating to the workplace today. You need to accept your present circumstances for what they are, and work towards resolving your immediates concerns to find your way ahead in life. This period of doubt will pass very soon, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Your beloved will not only give you a surprise today but also demand one, says Ganesha. There may be some good news on the business front. Ganesha says own up to your old mistakes so that you don't repeat them, and chalk out the plans for the future. There is no need to shy from taking the advice of a loved one, as it will only benefit you, and later in the day, you may spend some good time together.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will get the answers to all your questions. You will tend to worry about small things and issues. You will be able to earn from different sources today. Ganeshi assures that if you keep your mind balanced you will achieve amazing results in your work.

SCORPIO
You may bump into people with different tastes and temperaments, says Ganesha. Some may surprise you, while some may just shock you. Sometimes, it is difficult to understand when people react indifferently to your success. Handle it with smartness and diplomacy.

SAGITTARIUS
Today will be a day for introspection, says Ganesha, as you try and find the root causes of your problems. But the job is only half-done: the rest will depend on the initiatives you may take to implement possible solutions to your problems. Overall, a day spent pondering. But act fast, advises Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Today, you'll like to hold a cup of hot coffee in one hand, relax and go down the memory lane to cherish some golden moments. You may want to give another chance to your romantic relationship as you develop likings for your ex-boyfriend/girlfriend. Ganesha finds you to be busy in a lot social gatherings today.

AQUARIUS
You speed up your pace and try to do everything in order to complete your targets, but you won't be able to complete the tasks on time. Don't lose hope as tomorrow will be a different day, says Ganesha. Give yourself some time to relax and unwind. You have worked very hard and Ganesha assures that your efforts will not go unnoticed.

PISCES
You need to concentrate more on your personal life, and seriously think about the changes you need to make. You are guided more by your heart in these matters. However, there is nothing to worry about, as this is a golden period for you. Today should be a progressive day that will bring a lot of positive changes in your life, says Ganesha.



SINNERS BREAKS ALL TIME OSCAR NOMINATION RECORD

Ryan Coogler has made Oscar history. His film *Sinners* smashed the Academy Awards' all-time nomination record Thursday, securing 16 nods, surpassing the previous record of 14 nominations held by *All About Eve* (1950), *Titanic* (1997), and *La La Land* (2016)

SYDNEY SWEENEY TO STAR IN CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

Sydney Sweeney is set to star in and produce the film adaptation of *The Custom of the Country*. Written and directed by Josie Rourke, the project will see Sweeney portray Undine Spragg, an ambitious Midwestern woman navigating turn-of-the-century New York as she strives to climb the city's rigid social hierarchy



Ananya's grand wedding plans

Mumbai: Ananya Pandey's wedding plans have already become a topic of curiosity, with both the actress and her family offering fun insights into how she envisions her big day. Recently, her parents Chunky Pandey and Bhavana Pandey appeared on a cooking show, where they revealed their dream menu for Ananya's wedding. Bhavana shared that the celebrations would be grand, featuring an elaborate spread of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. From mutton curry and garlic pickle to Indian-style tiramisu and purple parathas, the menu reflected the family's playful and festive taste, leaving the audience amused.

Ananya herself has earlier spoken about her ideal wedding in an interview. The actress revealed that she hopes to have two separate wedding ceremonies. One would be a lavish celebration in Udaipur, inspired by the wedding sequence of *Kalki Koedlin* in *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, complete with friends, family and members of the film industry. This would be followed by a smaller, more intimate ceremony at a beach destination such as the Maldives or the Bahamas, held about a week later.



AGENCIES

Elnaaz in awe of Indian fashion

Pune: Citing the example of Italian global luxury fashion house Prada's use of Kolhapuri chappal designs, Iranian-German actor and international model Elnaaz Norouzi has said there is immense creativity in Indian fashion, and the world is increasingly emulating India.

"The Indian fashion industry is very big, and Indian fashion is increasingly being embraced in the West. People in the West are inspired not just by our fashion, but by our creativity as a whole. I come from the West, I grew up in Germany, and I can see how much is happening in India," she said.

Norouzi was speaking on the sidelines of the fashion show 'Runway Raaga' in Pune, hosted by Shruti Bengre, where she turned showstopper for celebrity designer Ken Fern's Silverblood collection.

"Indian people are incredibly creative. There is so much innovation here, and whatever we do in fashion, the world ends up copying it. Take, for example, Prada using Kolhapuri chappal designs," said Norouzi.

After the use of Kolhapuri chappals in a collection led to controversy, Italian luxury fashion brand Prada acknowledged the connection, saying the design was "inspired" by the Indian handcrafted footwear.

The fashion house also signed a memorandum of understanding with two government organisations to source sandals, inspired by Kolhapuri Chappals.

PTI

Ghatak's Meghe Dhaka Tara takes centre stage

Bhubaneswar: The second day at 15th Indian Film Festival of Bhubaneswar (IFFB) showcased a vibrant mix of compelling film screenings, insightful discussions, and enthusiastic audience participation.

The day started with three short films— *Two Sinners* by Samir Zaidi – a dark revenge drama set in a forest, where a man is coerced into executing the perpetrator of his sister's assault, *The Unknown Filmmaker* by Hemant Gaba—a story based on a woman's journey from India to Busan in search of a filmmaker friend leading to unsettling revelations and *Sam-vega-Pasada* by Elroy Pinto—story of a former sex worker in a Mumbai chawl whose spiritual awakening collides with social

15TH IFFB – DAY II

A screenshot from *Meghe Dhaka Tara*



and political resistance.

As part of the retrospective on Adoor Gopalakrishnan, two of his acclaimed films *Elippathayam* and *Kathapurushan* were screened. A major highlight of the second day was Pradipta Bhattacharya's *Nadharer Bhela*—official selection to Rotterdam Film Festival. Nadhar, a man deemed dysfunctional for his extremely sluggish

movements, becomes part of a travelling circus, where his condition turns into spectacle. The film is an expansive meditation on human nature, slowness, and being profoundly out of step with the world. The 4k restored print of Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* was also screened as part of Ghatak's birth centenary celebration by the society. Needless to say, the movie was the centre of attraction during the day.

Speaking about the festival, Debashish Jena who is volunteering at the festival said, "FSB aims to cater the growing interest for thoughtful and independent cinema among the young cinephiles in City. The festival has curated and handpicked films that narrate stories about less looked upon themes."

PNN

MANANA'S 5-DAY DRAMA FEST CONCLUDES



A scene from Odia play *Nija Nijara Akash*, presented by artistes of Serious Zone, Nayagarh at Rabindra Mandap, Friday, on the fifth and last evening of the event. Host troupe's *Tinga Budha* (designed and directed by Manoj Patnaik), *Girafby* Prayas of Rourkela (written and directed by Nibedita Jena), *Janani Jannabhumishcha* by Dynamic Platform, Bhubaneswar (directed by Debabrata Pattanayak) and *Baris* by Kaarund Kalamanch of Bhawanipatana (written and directed by Pradip D Majhi) were performed earlier during the festival.

Border 2: A patriotic spectacle with mixed results



lending sincerity to select moments.

The story begins in 1969 at the National War Academy, following the friendship of Nirmaljeet Singh Sekhon (Diljit Dosanjh), Major Hoshiar Singh Dahiya (Varun Dhawan) and Lieutenant Commander Joseph Noronha (Ahan Shetty). Lieutenant Fateh Singh Kelar (Sunny Deol) serves as their mentor and hero. The first half focuses heavily on their personal lives, exploring family bonds, marriages and sacrifices made by soldiers and their loved ones. These emotional beats work



well and recall the soul of the original *Border*.

The second half shifts to a conflict with Pakistan, featuring air, land and naval operations led by Diljit, Varun and Ahan respectively. While the action sequences are engaging, Sunny's trademark roar feels less impactful this time. Re-

Director: Anurag Singh

Cast: Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, Ahan Shetty, Mona Singh and others

petitive dialogues and an unconvincing narrative turn, particularly involving the martyrdom of Deol's on-screen son, expose major flaws in the screenplay.

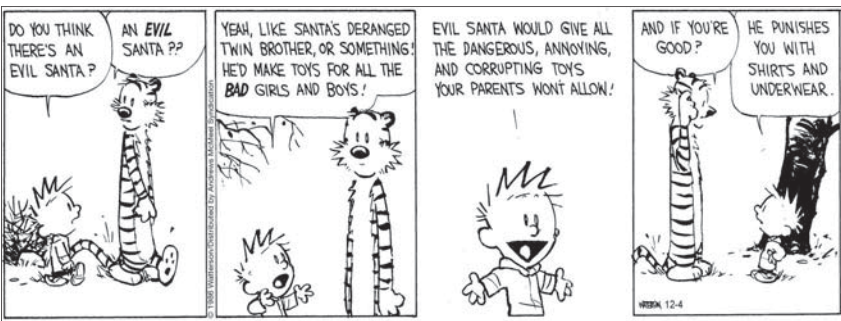
Performance-wise, Sunny carries the film, while Varun disappoints with repetitive action beats. Paramvir stands out, and Mona delivers a tear-jerking moment. The music is largely forgettable, with only one song making an impact. Ultimately, *Border 2* offers flashes of emotion and spectacle but struggles to sustain its patriotic core.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

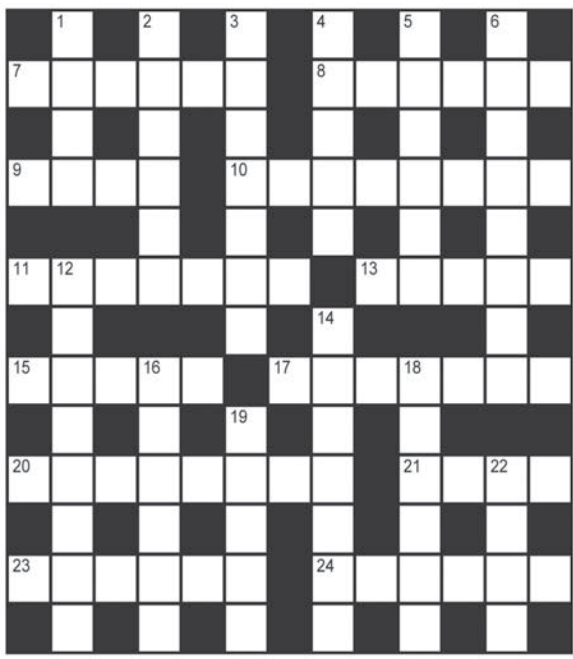


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



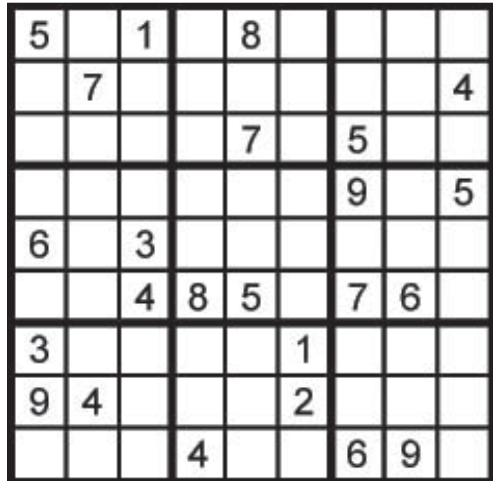
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- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Across | 20 Processed, like food | 4 Where the heart is |
| 7 Show up | 21 Soybean paste | 5 Loud speaker |
| 8 Film genre | 23 Run of luck | 6 Mexican chapeau |
| 9 Pond duck | 24 Contribute (4,2) | 12 High status |
| 10 Laboratory item (4,4) | | 14 Racehorse place |
| 11 Remembrance inscription | Down | 16 Winner's cry |
| 13 Salad oil holder | 1 Genuine | 18 Pinnacle |
| 15 Floor covering | 2 Cereal grass | 19 Slow down |
| 17 Fervency | 3 Bureaucratic stuff (3,4) | 22 Go yachting |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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

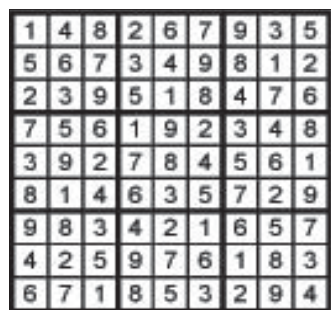


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Prez's 6-day Odisha visit begins Feb 2



ITINERARY	
Feb 2:	Courtesy meetings at Lok Bhawan
Feb 3:	Biraja Temple, Navi Gaya, FM University, Puri Srimandir
Feb 4:	Mahuldiha, Baidpur, Rairangpur
Feb 5:	Rairangpur & Simlipal
Feb 6:	Interactive event in Mayurbhanj & Black Swan Summit in Bhubaneswar
Feb 7:	To depart for Chhattisgarh

Meanwhile, a preparatory meeting was held Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Anu Garg to ensure the smooth conduct of all activities related to the President's visit.

The Chief Secretary directed all departmental secretaries, district collectors, and super-

intendents of police to personally monitor arrangements to ensure an error-free visit.

Detailed discussions were held on airport reception and farewell arrangements, temporary halts, security measures, fire safety at programme venues, uninterrupted power supply.

ply, stage arrangements, and barricading. A control room will be operated by the Home Department for coordination.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Several programmes were held across the state Friday to mark the birth anniversaries of freedom fighters Subhas Chandra Bose and Surendra Sai.

Governor Hari Babu Kam-
bampati, Chief Minister Mo-
han Charan Majhi, and Leader
of Opposition Naveen Patnaik
were among the leaders who
paid their tributes to the two
“sons of the soil”.

Bose was born in Cuttack in 1897, while Sai was born in Sambalpur's Khinda village in 1809. President Droupadi Murmu, in a post on X, said Sai kept the great uprising of 1857 alive for many days, in an example of indomitable courage, bravery and valour.

“His sacrifice and offering will forever remain memorable for the people of the country,” she said. Chief Minister Majhi took part in the Parakram Diwas programme in Cuttack, alongside Vice President CP Radhakrishnan and the governor.



Vice President CP Radhakrishnan inaugurates Philatelic Gallery at Netaji Birthplace Museum in Cuttack, Friday, as Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Cuttack Mayor Subhash Chandra Singh and others look on

“Born in this sacred soil of Cuttack, Netaji's indomitable courage, patriotism, and the mantra ‘Jai Hind’ continue to fill the heart of every Indian with a fervour for the service of the nation. For building a prosperous and developed Odisha, his ideals will forever remain a

perennial source of inspiration for us,” he said in a post on X.

People from different walks of life thronged the Netaji Museum in Cuttack to pay respect to the icon. Political parties also organised various programmes to mark the day.

The Sambalpur district

administration organised a programme at Jail Chowk to celebrate the birth anniversary of Sai. People offered floral tributes to the statue of the freedom fighter. A 'Tiranga Padayatra' or tricolour march was held at Sai's birthplace, Khinda village.



Chief Minister
Mohan Charan
Majhi inaugu-
rates Mukteswar
Dance Festival
at Mukteswar
Temple in
Bhubaneswar
Friday, as
Language,
Literature and
Culture
Minister
Suryabanshi
Suraj,
Bhubaneswar-
Ekamra MLA
Babu Singh, and
others look on

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Odisha Crime Branch has arrested a cybercriminal who deceived a gullible investor to the tune of Rs 2.01 crore in an online investment fraud.

Unidentified cyber fraudsters initially contacted the victim through social media and later added him to a WhatsApp group. The fraudsters induced the victim to invest in different digital applications promis-



ing high and assured returns, said CID officials.

Taken for a ride by the false as-

surances, the victim transferred a total amount of Rs 2,01,50,000 to various bank accounts linked to the fraudsters.

The investigating team after analyzing the transaction details and working on other digital evidences identified one of the perpetrators as from Bhubaneswar.

The accused identified as Manoranjan Rout, 42, a native Khurda district, was arrested and remanded to judicial custody under relevant sections of BNS and Information Technology Act, CID added.

The concluding day of Matsya-Pranee Sammavesh Odisha (MPSO)–2026 witnessed an electrifying response from spectators as a vibrant 'Dog Show' grabbed the eyeballs at Janata Maidan here Friday. Dogs of various breeds amazed the audience by showcasing their unique skills and intelligence. While some demonstrated calm, disciplined movements, others impressed the audience with speed, agility, and advanced techniques. From crime-detection simulations and sniffing abilities to high jumps and hurdle races, the canines left the crowd spellbound. The extraordinary sense of smell and obedience displayed by dogs—often regarded as humans' most loyal companions—drew loud applause from onlookers. A total of 65 dogs representing 17 breeds - including German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, Labradors, Huskies, Poodles, Miniature Pinschers, Cane Corso, Pomeranians, Caravan Hounds, Great Danes, Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Beagles, Akita Inu, Spitz, and French Bulldogs - participated in the show. Their discipline, tracking skills, and distinctive behavioural traits fascinated animal lovers and visitors alike.

tri Kamdhenu Yojana, Mukhya-mantri Matsyajibi Kalyan Yojana, Prani Sampad Samrudhi Yojana and national schemes including Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana and Rashtriya Gokul Mission, which have improved incomes and promoted scientific practices.

The Governor said Odisha has great potential in fisheries and animal husbandry because of its long coastline, abundant water resources, and hardworking farmers.

He congratulated outstanding farmers felicitated at the event for their dedication and innovation, and praised the FARD department for successfully organising the Samavesh. No Limit on scheme benefits: Minister

FARD Minister Gokulananda Mallik Friday said there is no cap on the number of beneficiaries under the schemes meant for fishermen and livestock farmers of the state, while encouraging the farmers to

take full advantage of the schemes.

Speaking at the "Ask the Minister" session during the concluding day of MPSO, Mallik urged farmers to immediately report any issues they face at the grassroots level. "Our aim is to ensure that the benefits of all schemes reach every eligible farmer," he said.

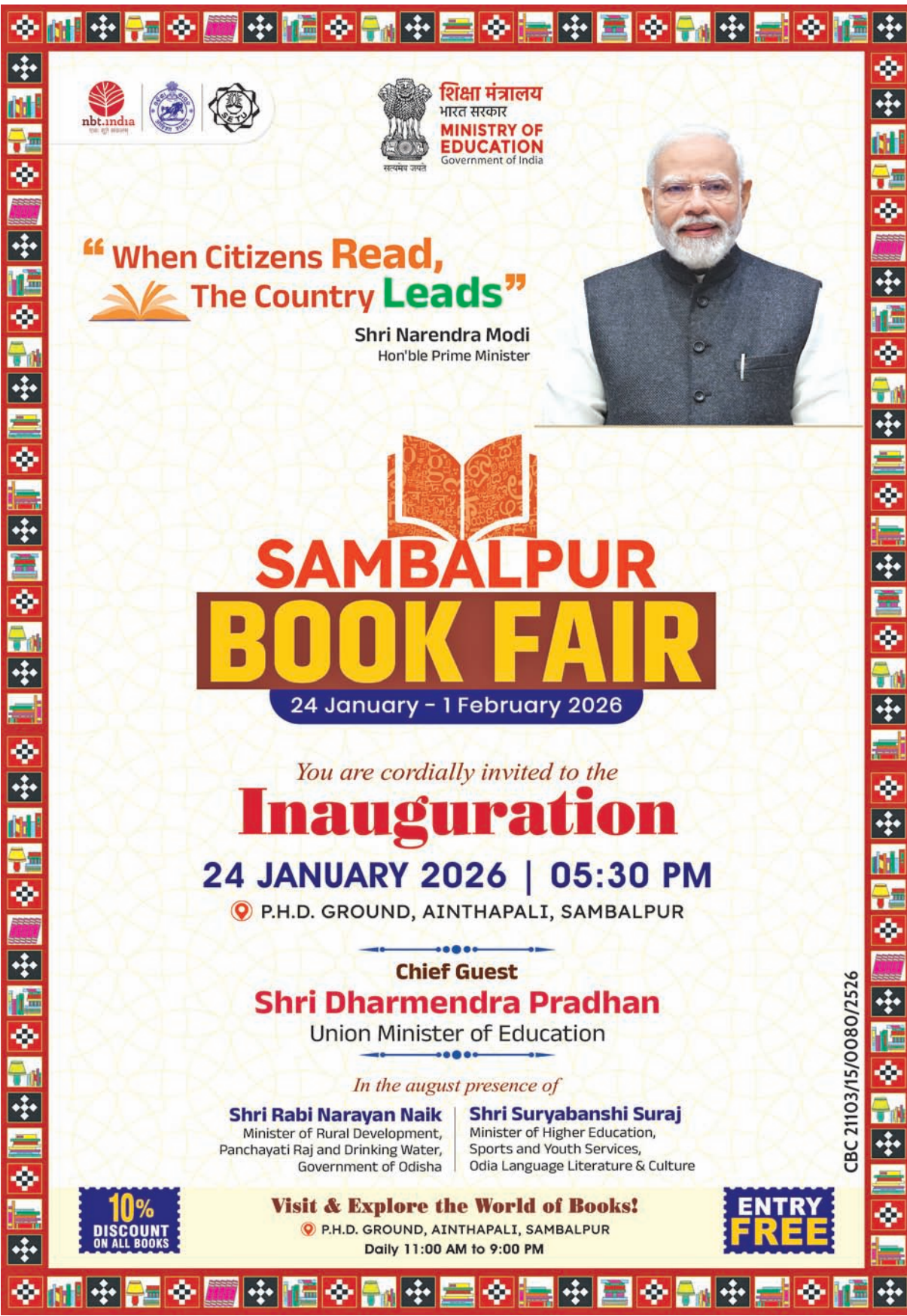
Farmers raised questions about block-level targets, loan assistance, and timely fund releases. They also suggested increasing project costs and revising guidelines for the Matsya Pokhari Yojana, as well as providing free medicines at veterinary hospitals. The minister directed officials at block, district, and state levels to address these concerns promptly.

He also encouraged the farmers to actively participate in all government initiatives, emphasising that the department's schemes are designed for maximum reach and impact.

Grade	Subject	Qualification	Experience	Age
PGT	Biology/Mathematics & Applied Mathematics	M.Sc. with B.Ed.	5 years teaching experience in +2 level CBSE Schools	*Not more than 40 years
PGT	Physical Education	M.P.Ed.	5 years teaching experience in +2 level CBSE Schools	*Not more than 40 years
TGT	Physics/Chemistry/Odia/ Economics/English	M.A./M.Sc. with B.Ed.	3 years teaching experience in English Medium School	*Not more than 35 years
PRT	Odia / Mathematics	M.A./B.A., M.Sc./B.Sc. with B.Ed.	3 years teaching experience in English Medium School	*Not more than 30 years

ON CONSOLIDATED SALARY				
Mother Teacher	For all subjects	B.A./B.Sc. with B.Ed.	Teaching experience in English Medium School	Not more than 30 years
Dance	Contemporary style	Relevant Degree	2-3 years of experience in English Medium School	Not more than 35 years
Coach	Cricket	Relevant Degree District/State level Player	3-5 years of experience in at School level	Not more than 35 years

- *Relaxable for deserving candidates.
- Preference will be given to candidates with good academic record, communication skills, computer knowledge and CTET qualified for PRT & TGT.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview.
- Salary and perks as per DPS Society rules.
- Resume with all credentials and email ID/Mobile Number should reach **"PRINCIPAL - DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL KALINGA, Adhala, PO- Phulnakhara, Dist - Cuttack, Pin- 754 001"** on or before **31.01.2026** with a **DD of ₹1000/-** drawn in favour of **DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL KALINGA** payable at **Bhubaneswar**.



Min: PM SVANidhi promotes dignity, confidence among street vendors



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The ambitious Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme is a landmark initiative that strengthens livelihoods and promotes dignity, confidence, and financial inclusion among street vendors, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said Friday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the PM SVANidhi credit card – a UPI-linked, interest-free revolving credit facility from Kerala. On the occasion, Modi also disbursed loan amounts and credit cards to several beneficiaries under the scheme.

In Odisha, Mahapatra led the state-level event in Bhubaneswar, distributing loans and credit cards and felicitating three successful beneficiaries – including two women – who have become self-reliant through the scheme.

Parallel programmes were conducted across Urban Local Bodies in the state, marking a significant milestone in promoting financial inclusion and self-reliance among urban

PM SVANidhi offers collateral-free working capital loans starting at ₹15,000, with the option to scale up to ₹25,000 and ₹50,000 based on timely repayment and positive credit behavior

Across Odisha, over 1.10 lakh such loans have already been disbursed, directly benefiting street vendor families

The newly introduced PM SVANidhi credit card will allow beneficiaries to access flexible, revolving credit, enhancing business continuity and financial resilience

informal sector workers.

Addressing the gathering, Mahapatra highlighted the transformative impact of PM SVANidhi on the lives of street vendors, emphasising that they form the backbone of the urban informal economy by providing affordable goods and services while generating widespread self-employment.

“PM SVANidhi scheme is a landmark initiative that strengthens livelihoods and promotes dignity, confidence, and financial inclusion among street vendors,” the H&UD Minister said.

The scheme offers collateral-free working capital loans starting at ₹15,000, with the option to scale up to ₹25,000 and ₹50,000 based on timely repayment and positive credit behavior.

The newly introduced PM SVANidhi credit card will allow beneficiaries to access flexible, revolving credit, enhancing business continuity and financial resilience.

Across Odisha, over 1.10 lakh PM SVANidhi loans have already been disbursed, directly benefiting street vendor families. In alignment with Centre's directives, the scheme is being

implemented in convergence with eight social welfare and security schemes across five ministries/departments.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), 12,391 beneficiaries have been provided accidental insurance coverage of ₹2 lakh, while 6,421 beneficiaries are covered under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) with life insurance of ₹2 lakh.

Additionally, 1,387 zero balance accounts have been opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), and beneficiaries have been linked to 'One Nation' One Ration Card' (ONORC), Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana (PMSYMY), BoCWBB, and maternal benefit schemes JSY and PMMVY.

A special drive is also underway to ensure 100 per cent coverage under PMAY for PM SVANidhi beneficiaries.

Mahapatra reiterated Odisha's commitment to last-mile delivery, digital onboarding, Aadhaar seeding, and beneficiary awareness, ensuring no eligible street vendor or family member is left out of the social security net.



AT LORD'S SERVICE: Logs for construction of three majestic chariots of the sibling deities being consecrated near Shree Jagannath Temple Administration office in Puri, Friday

Pvt bus owners' body calls off agitation plan

Bhubaneswar: The private bus owners' association Friday announced its decision to withdraw the plan to launch a statewide strike from January 24. The strike plan was withdrawn after the association leaders held discussions with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena and senior officials of the state government during the day. “It has been decided to withdraw the plan to go on strike across the state from tomorrow (January 24) following detailed talks with the Chief Minister, Transport Minister and senior officials,” association's secretary Debendra Sahu said. The association had earlier announced that it would launch the statewide strike from January 24 to protest the state government's Mukhyamantri Bus Service (MBS), which operates buses between blocks and district headquarters.

CITY AIIMS TOPS INDIA'S HEALTH RECORD LINKAGE



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)-Bhubaneswar has been honoured as the No. 1 government facility in the country in terms of health record linkage under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), official sources said Friday.

AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas, along with IT Committee Chairman Manoj Kumar Mohanty, received the prestigious award from Chief Secretary Anu Garg during the 'Chintan Shivir', organised by the National Health Authority (NHA) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), in Bhubaneswar January 19-20.

This recognition highlights AIIMS-Bhubaneswar's leadership, dedication, and excellence in advancing digital health initiatives for seamless, citizen-centric healthcare delivery, Biswas said.

AIIMS-Bhubaneswar has recorded remarkable progress

This recognition highlights AIIMS-Bhubaneswar's leadership, dedication, and excellence in advancing digital health initiatives for seamless, citizen-centric healthcare delivery

ASHUTOSH BISWAS | AIIMS-BHUBANESWAR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

in ABDM implementation, including 42 lakh health record linkages, generation of 19 lakh ABHA tokens. Successful implementation of 'Scan & Pay' facility also helped streamlining billing, reduce patient queues, and enhance hospital efficiency, an official said.

These initiatives have significantly improved patient convenience, ensured paperless workflows, and strengthened continuity of care, added Biswas.

Health record linking in ABHA involves securely connecting a patient's digital medical records, including OPD visits, laboratory reports, prescriptions, and discharge summaries to their ABHA ID, with patient consent. This en-

ables individuals to access and share their health records anytime, supports interoperability across healthcare institutions, and ensures continuity of care nationwide, according to AIIMS sources.

The two-day Chintan Shivir brought together senior policymakers and health administrators from across the country to review progress and chart the future roadmap of digital health initiatives under ABDM. Representatives from 27 states and seven Union Territories participated in the deliberations.

Distinguished dignitaries who attended the mega event included NHA CEO Sunil Kumar Barnwal, Rajasthan's Health department Principal Secretary Gayatri Rathore, Meghalaya's Health department Principal Secretary Sampath Kumar, Odisha's Health & Family Welfare department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Aswathy S, State Health Assurance Society CEO Brundha D and senior officials from NHA and state Health departments.

Arvind's supporters protest before Sankha Bhawan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Hundreds of supporters of Patkura MLA Arvind Mohapatra, who was suspended from BJD January 15 on the charge of 'anti-party activities', Friday demonstrated before the party headquarters (HQ) here and demanded withdrawal of suspension of their legislator.

Mohapatra's supporters came to the state capital from Kendrapara by hiring buses and staged a demonstration before Sankha Bhawan. They demanded immediate rollback of the decision and alleged that BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik was misled by a group of people opposed to the leader.



Notably, Patnaik Wednesday accused Mohapatra of creating hurdles before the development of Patkura.

After some time, a few of them were invited for a discussion. “They submitted a memorandum requesting the party chief to reconsider the suspension order,” a party spokesperson said.

The agitators, mostly BJD workers, met party's senior vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra and vice-president (headquarters) Pratap Jena and urged them to convince Patnaik to withdraw the suspension order.

“Both Mishra and Jena have assured them that their petition

will be handed over to the BJD president, and it is his prerogative to take a decision in this regard,” BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said.

Meanwhile, security was tightened around Naveen Niwas, the residence of the BJD president, and also Sankha Bhawan amid apprehensions that Mohapatra's supporters may go to the party chief's house. Additional forces were deployed to maintain order and prevent any untoward incident, police said.

Mohapatra reiterated his statement and said that allegations against him were false and fabricated. On January 15, BJD had also suspended Champua MLA Sanatan Mahakud on the charge of 'anti-party activities'.

CLASSIFIED

LOST

I, Sudhansu Sekhar Mohapatra, S/o. Narasingh Mohapatra, have lost my Sale Deed (No. 1282, Dtd.28.05.2007, Mouza: Lahanga, Khata No. 518/28, Plot No. 168, Area: Ac.0.225 decimal, purchased from Kanchanbala Mishra) in-between Godipada Chhaka on 09.11.2025 evening when I was going to market. In spite of all my efforts I couldn't trace it out.

AFFIDAVIT

I Pravati Rani Giri, wife of Late Gopendra Nandan Bhanja, residing at Haripur-1, PO - Gunaibasana, PS - Bhograi, Dist - Balasore, Odisha, PIN - 756036 have changed my name to Pravati Rani Bhanja for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 20-01-2026 sworn before Executive Magistrate at Bhograi.



R-DAY AHEAD: Odisha tableau rolls ahead during the rain-affected full-dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade, in New Delhi, Friday

ECoR ACHIEVES RECORD IN 294 DAYS

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has achieved its fastest-ever originating freight earnings of ₹23,000 crore, further reaffirming status as one of the top-performing zones of Indian Railways in freight operations.

ECoR achieved this in a record 294 days during the current financial year 2025-26, January 19—27 days earlier than in the previous financial year 2024-25, when the same

milestone was achieved in 321 days. The achievement reflects ECOR's sustained growth, operational efficiency, and robust freight performance.

ECOR's total originating

FREIGHT EARNINGS

earnings rose from ₹21,543 crore in 2024-25 to ₹23,959 crore in 2025-26, registering an impressive overall growth of 11.21 per cent.

Passenger earnings in-

creased from ₹1,764.32 crore to ₹1,835.91 crore, while goods (freight) earnings witnessed a significant jump from ₹19,482.63 crore to ₹21,749.38 crore, underscoring the zone's strong freight base.

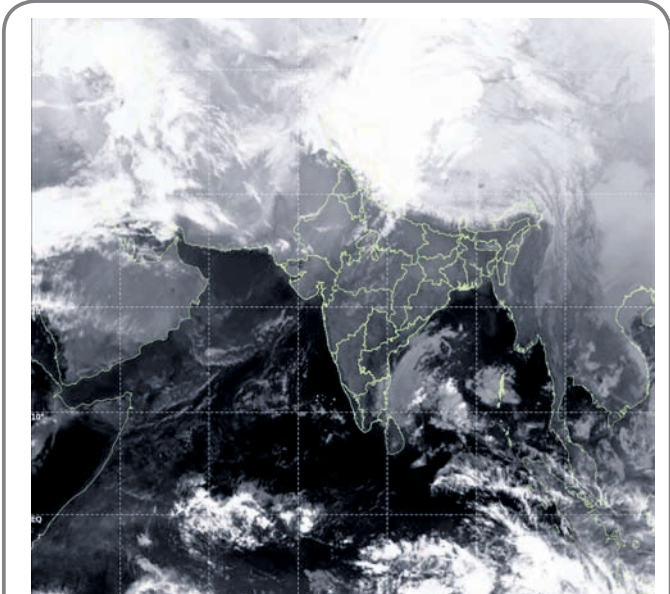
Sundry earnings also showed notable improvement, rising from ₹155.95 crore to ₹239.15 crore, indicating diversification and strengthening of ancillary revenue streams.

This consistent growth across all segments highlights ECOR's significant contribution

Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra's birth centenary in UK

Bhubaneswar: London-based socio-cultural organisation 'Kala The Arts' is set to celebrate the birth centenary of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra this year in Odisha and other parts of the country, as well as in United Kingdom (UK). This was informed here Friday by London-based international award-winning Odissi dancer and 'Kala The Arts' CEO Sushmita Pati. Addressing the media, Pati, who has been performing and teaching Odissi dance in the UK since 1996, said, “We will celebrate the birth centenary of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra in Odisha and other parts of the country, along with the UK, this year.” She added that her group will visit India to promote Odissi dance and Jagannath culture.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	91.86 ▲ 0.22	SENSEX	81,537.70 ▼ 769.67	GOLD	₹156,763 ▲ ₹422
EURO	107.84 ▲ 0.63	NIFTY	25,048.65 ▼ 241.25	SILVER	₹334,450 ▲ ₹7,161



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	30.6°	27.2°	Fog or mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later
Min Temp	13.7°	15.9°	
Humidity	86%	88%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Poor marketing, low prices hit Koraput ginger farmers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nandapur, Jan 23: Ginger growers in Koraput district have alleged that weak marketing arrangements are denying them fair prices despite large-scale production of the spice, which has received recognition as a single-crop specialty of the district.

The district Horticulture department has set a production target of 58,121 tonne during 2025-26 Rabi season as ginger was cultivated on 4,223 hectares in 14 blocks of the district. However, farmers claim that after setting aside about 20 per cent of the produce for seed, there is no clear mechanism in place to decide where and at what price the remaining stock should be sold.

In the absence of official procurement or price support, farmers say they are being forced to sell ginger in local markets at ₹20 to ₹22 per kg. They allege the price is insufficient to recover cultivation and harvesting costs. Farmers and local intellectuals have urged the district administration, the horticulture department and the state government to intervene and ensure better marketing support.

According to district deputy director of Horticulture Sudam Biswal, ginger cultivation during 2025-26 Kharif season covered 875 hectares in Nandapur block, 368 hectares in Lamtaput, 887 hectares in Semiliguda, 1,185 hectares in Pottangi, 20 hectares in Narayanpatna, 110 hectares in Laxmipur, 215 hectares in Dasmantpur, 27 hectares in Band-

A few FPCs are operating for procurement of ginger in Koraput district while several others are struggling due to a lack of working capital, triggering resentment among farmers

hugaon, 150 hectares in Koraput, 78 hectares in Borigumma, 84 hectares in Kotpad, 82 hectares in Kundura, 69 hectares in Boipariguda and 71 hectares in Jeypore block.

He said the overall harvest has been good and reiterated that total production is expected to reach 58,121 tonne. Farmers, however, remain apprehensive that prevailing market rates of ₹20 to ₹22 per kg will not cover their production costs.

As many as 54 Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) are operating across 10 blocks of the district to facilitate the purchase and sale of various agricultural produce. Of them, 24 are engaged specifically for ginger trade.

Among these, Narishakti FPC is taking the lead role in ginger procurement and marketing in the district with support from NABARD. The Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS), functioning under the Panchayati Raj department, is also involved in agricultural marketing activities. Several

voluntary outfits, including Pragati and PRADAN, are extending support to farmers in marketing their produce.

This year, Narishakti FPC has set a target to procure 500 tonne ginger and has so far purchased about 180 tonnee. Pragati, which had set a target of 60 tonnee, has reportedly completed its procurement. Similarly, ITC has set a target of procuring 200 metric tons of ginger and has already purchased around 100 tonne.

However, several other FPCs are struggling due to a lack of working capital, resulting in sluggish procurement. This has led to growing dissatisfaction among farmers, who remain uncertain about where and at what price they should sell their remaining ginger.

Taking advantage of the district's weak marketing system, traders from neighbouring states are reportedly approaching farmers to lift ginger at throwaway rates. Many distressed farmers say they are being forced to sell their ginger at low prices due to a lack of alternatives.

According to experts, weak agricultural marketing system not only incurs losses to farmers but also leads to a decline in government revenue generated. Although more than 25,000 women's self-help groups operate under Mission Shakti programme in the district, only four department-run ginger processing centres are currently functional—in Nandapur, Lamtaput, Semiliguda and Pottangi blocks.

Experts said ginger processing units should be established in every block to support farmers and add value to their produce. They also stressed the need to ensure that functioning farmer-producer companies (FPCs) do not face a shortage of funds to procure and market ginger and other agricultural produce from the district.

They further called on researchers to focus on improving the quality of ginger produced in Koraput so that it meets international standards.

2 held for murder over past enmity

Patnagarh: Police Friday arrested two men in connection with the murder of a youth whose blood-soaked body was recovered near Kadopani Chhak under Larambha police station limits in Bolangir district. The arrested accused were identified as Sudam Bariha and Arjun Bariha. Police produced them before a court, which rejected their bail pleas and remanded them to judicial custody. According to police, the murder was committed due to past enmity. As part of the investigation, the accused were taken to the spot for crime scene re-creation, during which they demonstrated how the killing was carried out. The body of the victim, identified as Shiba, had been found Thursday afternoon near Kadopani Chhak. He had been reported missing since Wednesday evening after leaving home on a bicycle and failing to return till late night. Family members searched for him but could not know his whereabouts. Local residents spotted the body at around 3.30pm Thursday and alerted the police and ambulance services. Police reached the spot, conducted a preliminary investigation and sent the body to Patnagarh hospital for post-mortem.

Man tries to set daughter-in-law on fire for giving birth to girl child

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pattamundai, Jan 23: A woman and her toddler daughter narrowly escaped an alleged attempt by her father-in-law to burn them alive for giving birth to a girl child in Kendrapara district, police said Friday.

The incident took place late Thursday night in Damarapur village under Pattamundai rural police station limits. Police registered a case and detained the accused father-in-law for questioning.

According to the complaint, the accused Prafulla Ray, allegedly poured petrol on his daughter-in-law Sasmita Das and her toddler daughter while they were sleeping and set the bed on fire. The flames spread rapidly, forcing the woman to flee the house with her daughter and spend the night outside. Villagers later doused the fire, but household belongings were reduced to ashes.



Sasmita, accompanied by her relatives, lodged a written complaint at Pattamundai rural police station Friday. Police registered a case and began an investigation.

Police said Sasmita was married eight years ago to Susanta Ray of Damarapur village. She alleged that she had been subjected to prolonged physical and mental harassment by her husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law due to the birth of a girl child instead of a son.

The woman further claimed that she had earlier been left alone in hospital for nearly two months following childbirth

She further claimed that hostility intensified after the delivery, and that she had earlier been left alone in hospital for nearly two months following childbirth. On the night of the incident, she said she managed to escape in darkness and confusion, but was assaulted when she attempted to re-enter the house to rescue her baby.

Pattamundai rural police station IIC Srikanta Barik said the accused has been detained and all aspects of the case are being investigated. "Appropriate legal action will be taken after completion of the inquiry," he said.

The accused family members have denied the allegations. Further investigation is underway.



SCHOLASTIC START: A priest initiates a child into learning during the traditional 'Khadichhuan' ceremony on the occasion of Saraswati Puja at a school in Bargarh, Friday

3 wagons of goods train derail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore, Jan 23: Three wagons of a goods train derailed in Balasore district Friday, officials said.

There was no report of any injury in the goods train derailment at Rupsa station in the Bhadrak-Kharagpur section of South Eastern Railway (SER), they said.

The incident occurred at around 10am while the goods train was departing the Rupsa station after unloading cement

and fertilisers. The three wagons jumped off the track while the train was heading towards Kharagpur, they said.

The derailment impacted rail services for trains passing through Rupsa station near Jaleswar in Balasore district.

However, train services resumed after restoration work. The derailed wagons were brought to the track, they said.

The Kharagpur division of South Eastern Railway has launched an investigation.

Youth held, minor detained for raping 10-yr-old

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ranapur, Jan 23: A 23-year-old youth was sent to judicial custody and a minor detained for questioning in connection with the alleged rape of a minor girl in Nayagarh district, police said Friday.

The incident was reported from Ranapur police station limits Thursday. Acting on a complaint lodged by the victim's family, police registered a case (26/26) under provisions of the Protection of Children from

Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

According to police, the 10-year-old girl, a resident of Ward No. 12 under Ranapur Notified Area Council (NAC), was allegedly lured away while playing outside her house. She was taken to a nearby bush, where the accused youth, identified as Prashant Nayak, allegedly committed the offence along with a minor.

Family members found the child at the spot and raised an alarm, prompting the accused to flee, police said. The victim

was rescued and provided medical assistance.

Police arrested Nayak Friday and produced him in the Ranapur court. He was remanded to judicial custody after his bail plea was rejected. The minor allegedly involved in the case was detained at the police station and being questioned as per juvenile justice procedures.

A scientific team and police personnel visited the spot to collect evidence. Further investigation is underway, officials said.

Operation Anweshan: 46 missing women, kids rescued in 2 days

Chhatrapur: Ganjam police have launched Operation Anweshan to trace missing women and children across the district and rescued 46 persons within two days of the drive. According to police, the operation has so far led to the rescue of 35 women and 11 minors, including girls and boys. On the first day of the operation Thursday, police rescued 11 women and five minors. This was followed by the recovery of 24 women and six minors Friday. After being rescued, all the individuals were safely handed over to their respective families, police said. Ganjam Superintendent of Police Suvendhu Kumar Patra said the special operation would continue till the end of the month to trace missing persons and reunite them with their families. During the second day of the drive, Chhatrapur police rescued four missing women. Police stations in Khalkote, Purushottampur, Kabisuryanagar, Kodala, Begunlapada and Jagannathprasad rescued two women each. One woman each was rescued by police teams from Polasara, Dharakote, Hirjili, Sheragada, Sorada, Bhanjanagar, Bellagantha and Tarsing. Similarly, one missing minor boy was rescued by Khalkote police, while one missing minor girl each was rescued by police from Purushottampur, Bhanjanagar, Buguda, Tarsing and Gangapur police stations. All the minors were later reunited with their families. Police said coordinated efforts by multiple police stations contributed to the successful outcome of the operation.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Jan 23: Forest officials arrested three persons and seized a leopard hide during a late-night operation in the Kodinga forest range of Nabarangpur district, officials said.

The accused were identified as Dasaru Harijan, Balam Das and Dhansingh Das, all residents of Deulakana under Jharigaon block. They have been detained for further interrogation to ascertain the source of the wildlife trafficking and possible links to a larger network.

Acting on specific intelligence about the illegal sale of a leopard hide, a special team of forest personnel conducted a late-night operation near Nunpani under Kodinga forest range Wednesday. The accused were intercepted while travelling on a motorcycle from Jharigaon.

Apart from the hide, the officials seized the motorcycle used



for transportation. A case was registered under provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, officials said.

Reiterating their commitments to cracking down on wildlife crimes, forest officials urged the public to report any information related to illegal wildlife trade.

2 held for circulating woman's obscene pics

Bargaon: Police in Sundargarh district arrested two men for allegedly circulating obscene photographs and videos of a young woman on social media, officials said Friday. The accused were identified as Pramod Kumar Dip, 38, and Kshirod Kumar Gandha, 32, both residents of Jarangloi village under Bargaon police station limits. According to the police, one of the accused had stored obscene photographs and videos of his girlfriend on his mobile phone. His friend allegedly accessed the content and shared it on social media platforms without the woman's consent, causing the material to go viral. After learning about the circulation of the images and videos, the woman lodged a complaint at Bargaon police station, following which police registered case and launched an investigation. The two accused were subsequently arrested and produced in a court Friday, police said.

Elephant calf trapped in fishing net rescued

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pallahara, Jan 23: An elephant calf was rescued by forest officials after it got trapped in fishing net in Rengali river near Hariipur village in Pallahara, Angul district.

The calf became entangled in the net while crossing the river Thursday evening, authorities said. Following a strenuous effort, the forest department safely freed the elephant from the net and returned it to its mother.

According to officials, the 11-month-old calf had been causing damage to crops in several villages of Pallahara, including Chasaguruja and Pabitrapur panchayats. Local residents alerted the forest de-



partment immediately after noticing the elephant calf trapped in the net.

Forest personnel arrived at the scene Friday morning and successfully rescued the elephant. The calf was reunited with its mother, who was nearby. "The calf is safe and has been reunited with its mother. The mother is also calm," a forest department official said.

MKCG docs perform rare spine surgery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 23: Doctors at the MKCG Medical College and Hospital here have successfully performed a rare surgery to remove a tumor from the spine of an 18-year-old girl student, hospital authorities said.

The patient, Manisha Jena of Dengapadar village under Kukudakhandi block in Ganjam district, had been experiencing severe pain for more than a month due to the spinal tumor. Despite treatment at private hospitals and later at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, she did not get any relief.

The surgery was performed by a team led by Dr Sudhir Mohapatra, head of the Orthopaedics Department at the hospital. Doctors said the tumor was successfully removed through



a complex surgical procedure.

Jena, a student of Digapahandi Degree College, had been experiencing persistent leg pain leading to frequent falls while walking. As her condition worsened, her family took her to a private hospital in Berhampur about eight months ago, where she underwent surgery. Although she showed

improvement initially, the pain soon returned, her father Muna Jena said.

On the advice of relatives, the family later approached Dr Mohapatra at MKCG Medical College and Hospital, where detailed diagnostics confirmed the presence of a tumor in the spinal bone. She was subsequently referred to AIIMS,

Bhubaneswar for surgery, but the procedure could not be carried out there due to unknown factors.

After returning to MKCG Medical College and Hospital last month, doctors performed a corpectomy to remove the tumor. The patient is currently in the intensive care unit and her condition is stable, hospital sources said.

The surgery was carried out with support from Dr Sarada Prasanna Sahu, head of the Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery Department, and anesthesiologist Dr Bishnu Mohapatra, along with the orthopedic team. Earlier this month, MKCG doctors had successfully removed a brain tumor from another patient, highlighting a series of complex surgical achievements at the institution.

In each world, in each being, in each thing, in each atom is the Divine Presence, and it is man's mission to manifest it.

Delhi Disenchantment

Not long ago, a central deputation was the IPS equivalent of a promotion without paperwork. A stint in the CBI, IB or a central armed police force meant prestige, influence, and a ringside view of national power. Today, that attraction is visibly wearing thin. Despite expanding sanctioned strength, hundreds of IPS posts at the Centre remain vacant. Sources have informed DKB that this isn't a pipeline problem; it's a motivation problem. Apparently, officers are available, but they're just not interested.

One reason is brutally simple: the cost-benefit equation does not add up. Central deputation increasingly means hard field postings, limited autonomy, and a bureaucratic ecosystem where accountability is high, but authority is diluted. Add uncertain career dividends, and the shine fades fast.

Then came policy overreach. The tenure rules that penalise officers for refusing deputation, including restrictions on future central or foreign postings, were meant to nudge compliance. Instead, they triggered resistance. Coercion rarely produces commitment; it usually produces caution.

There's also a structural shift underway. With courts pushing for reduced IPS dominance in central armed police forces, senior deputation opportunities are becoming increasingly scarce. Officers can read the writing on the wall. Why relocate careers for diminishing returns?

More quietly, this reflects a generational change in policing ambition. Many younger officers see greater impact and visibility in state postings than in Delhi's layered hierarchies. The prestige economy has changed; Delhi is no longer the only power centre.

The problem is bigger than individual choice. If the central deputation is to regain credibility, it needs better incentives and clearer career value. Right now, Delhi isn't being rejected. It's being weighed. And found wanting.

IPR ultimatum for the IAS

The government's latest advisory to IAS officers on filing their Immovable Property Returns (IPRs) may look routine, but its message is unmistakably firm. Miss the January 31 deadline, the Department of Personnel & Training warns, and the consequences could include disciplinary action and stalled promotions. In bureaucratic language, failure to file is now a "good and sufficient reason" for action, which is about as close to a red flag as officialdom gets.

To be clear, this is not a new obligation. IAS officers have always been required to declare their immovable assets annually. Transparency is part of the job description. What is new is the sharpened enforcement. For years, delayed filings were treated with a fair bit of indulgence — reminders issued, explanations accepted, deadlines stretched. That phase appears to be over.

Technology has removed most excuses. Since 2017, officers have been able to file IPRs through the SPARROW online portal. Returns can be submitted electronically or uploaded as scanned forms. For the 2025 calendar year, the system will automatically close after January 31, 2026. No extensions, no manual overrides — the software doesn't negotiate.

The real pressure point, however, is the link between IPR compliance and career progression. Officers who fail to file on time will not be considered for appointment to the next level of the pay matrix. That's a serious lever in a system where promotions matter more than almost anything else. Transparency, in effect, has been turned into a career gatekeeper.

Critics may argue that this approach is rigid and unforgiving. But that defence wears thin when applied to senior officers entrusted with complex administrations and public funds. Filing a once-a-year property return is hardly an unreasonable demand.

Love wins, but do other cadres lose?

On the face of it, marriage-based inter-cadre transfers appear to be a harmless, even humane reform. After all, the civil services shouldn't force officers to choose between public service and private life. Fair enough. But when dozens of such transfers start clustering around a handful of "desirable" cadres, it's time to pause and start asking uncomfortable questions.

The recent spurt of IAS and IPS officers gravitating towards Haryana and Punjab through marriage-based transfers isn't just a coincidence. These cadres offer proximity to Delhi, higher visibility, and better long-term career optics. Love may be blind, but officers are not.

The rules framed by the Department of Personnel and Training (DopT) do permit such transfers, and with good reason. Dual-career marriages are now the norm, not the exception. The problem isn't the rule; it's the pattern. When too many officers land in the same cadres, other states quietly lose out on talent, diversity of experience, and institutional depth.

What also gets whispered about, though rarely on record, is fairness. Babus who spend years in tough or remote cadres often see colleagues leapfrog into cushier geographies through perfectly legal but selectively advantageous routes. The optics aren't great, even if the paperwork is spotless.

None of this argues for scrapping marriage-based transfers. But it does make the case for tighter caps, greater transparency, and a periodic audit of how these transfers reshape the administrative ecosystem. Otherwise, we risk turning cadre management into a system where matrimonial alliances quietly double as career accelerators.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts.

BERTRAND RUSSELL
- There is no greatness where there is no simplicity, goodness and truth.

LEO TOLSTOY
- One is never afraid of the unknown; one is afraid of the known coming to an end.

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1848:

On this day in 1848, James Marshall spotted gold nuggets glistening in a California stream while constructing a sawmill for John Sutter, the Swiss-born founder of what would become the state's capital city. Although the pair initially kept the nuggets a secret, Sutter eventually reported their finding to the government, setting off the California Gold Rush, which enticed hundreds of thousands of settlers west to try their luck.
- 1908:

The first Boy Scout troop was organized by Lieutenant General Robert Baden-Powell in England.
- 1940:

The Grapes of Wrath, the acclaimed film adaptation of John Steinbeck's classic novel, had its world premiere; the character Tom Joad's soliloquy on the poor, reflecting his empathy for their plight, remains one of the most famous scenes in film history.

FOCUS

GEOPOLITICS

NEW GLOBAL DISORDER

The world is desperately feeling the absence of global statesmen like Woodrow Wilson, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abraham Lincoln, Dag Hammarskjöld, Sukarno, Olof Palme, Gro Brundtland, Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and many more

With a leadership vacuum, world governance is in severe crisis. Under the UN watch, the US attacked, captured and abducted the Venezuelan President on the pretext of a drug trial in the US. If that's not a blatant violation of the so-called rule-based order, the US intended, by military or otherwise to annex Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark, a NATO member. Consequently, NATO members in the EU have deployed their troops to defend the largest island against the President's ambition. Beyond these erratic and whimsical actions, the US has withdrawn from 66 international organisations (IOs), conventions, and treaties, including the India- and France-led International Solar Alliance (ISA). In a nutshell, the US, singularly, through its legitimately elected President, can hang the world upside down.

Is this the so-called liberal order that handful of Western countries have been defending tooth and nail or pretending to do so? Or is this rule-based order an arrangement by the Western world, for the benefit of the Western world, but imposed upon the non-Western countries since the post-World War II era? Interestingly, the Kaisers (leaders) of highly ambitious emerging power centres of a multipolar world are keeping mum or maintaining their silence to avoid the wrath of a verbal illegal tariff hike from the US.

It is no exaggeration that the most powerful country in the world, the US, uses social media, especially 'Truth Social', to conduct its grand foreign policy. Most of the countries, allies or non-allies, are compelled to hook up to Truth Social with bated breath to know their assignments and missions with respect to the world affairs depending on the posting

cy to send frequent shock waves like the prevailing scenario. We must acknowledge the fact that greater connectedness has a relative trauma, as the Pandemic taught us recently. The present collective arrangement, which is highly dependent on both sides of the Atlantic, needs to be rearranged now through drastic changes by equal regional representations, irrespective of its economic strength.

Meanwhile, in Davos, the venue for the annual business jamboree- World Economic Forum- becomes the venue for the signing of the 'Board of Peace' on Gaza, initiated by the US President for the reconstruction and rebuilding of the Palestinian resettlement. The Board of Peace (BOP) is touted by the proponent, while bypassing the UN, as the alternative to the UN. Can this BOP replace the UN Peacebuilding Commission, a multilateral (31 members) advisory agency established in 2005 by the General Assembly and Security Council to collectively arrange resources and advise on integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery?

Very unlikely. Many invited members are sceptical of the intent and purpose of this ad-hoc

unilateral initiative of BOP. With the invitation letter to the world leaders to join the BOP, the draft Charter of the BOP is being shared as an attachment shows its seriousness. None of the leaders who are joining the group or who are considering joining have either participated in drafting the Charter or deliberated its purpose and objectives. If one closely examines, this BOP for Gaza was part of the US-initiated and UN Security Council approved Resolution in November 2025 that limits its function to Gaza and terminates by 2027. However, the draft Charter is considering the function of BOP in all conflict zones and beyond 2027. India, being an integral part of the UN Peacebuilding Commission for its contribution to peacekeeping, must not be coerced into joining this unilateral and ambiguous BOP.

Unquestionable unipolarity has a tremendous negative impact on global governance. The relevance of non-alignment or its hybrid format of multi-alignment or mini-alignment as an option for countries can't be outrightly discarded. Meanwhile, the world is desperately feeling the absence of global statesmen like Woodrow Wilson, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abraham Lincoln, Dag Hammarskjöld, Sukarno, Olof Palme, Gro Brundtland, Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and many more. At present, none seems to be qualified as a world statesman. Arguably, the rise of inward parochial nationalism brings the death of internationalism. At the end, leaders' triumphalism may bring short-term dividends at home, but it has the potential in weakening collective action- in addressing global, regional and local problems.

The writer is International advisor on climate change risk and transboundary rivers

SPECTRUM

ECONOMY

Trade trends encouraging

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's recent visit to India resulted in promising economic discussions. He assured Prime Minister Modi of progress on the European Union trade deal, while Germany formalized 19 defence and technology agreements. Eight other announcements seek to boost cooperation in areas like people-to-people contact, Indo-Pacific ties, green development, and visa-free transit for Indian passport holders through Germany.

A key outcome was the joint declaration of intent to strengthen bilateral cooperation, with Prime Minister Modi indicating that both parties will collaborate on a strategic roadmap aimed at enhancing defence industry partnerships and fostering new development opportunities.

At same time, Spain, Germany, Belgium, and Poland are becoming reliable export markets for India in the EU, according to commerce ministry data. Spain saw a 56% increase in Indian exports, reaching \$4.7 billion between April and November, while exports to Germany rose 9.3% to \$7.5 billion. These figures show that India is diversifying its export strategy across Europe, achieving rapid growth in Spain, steady gains

in Germany, and stability in Belgium, reflecting a balanced export profile combining market diversification from tradition markets, according to government officials.

There are also reports that in various other areas, exports are showing a healthy trend. Mention may be made regarding apparel exports to the U.K., Russia and Germany as Bangladesh is in a turbulent situation presently. If the trade deal with the EU is signed early, India may greatly make up for some loss that has happened as regards the US market.

Coming to China, New Delhi has rightly decided to open up the Indian economy. This would signify the consolidation of the bilateral relationship that had witnessed seismic shocks in the light of Chinese incursions on the Indian border. However, new shoots of calm have been sprouting for a while as last year both New Delhi and Beijing agreed upon a series of mechanisms to improve relations. It makes sense for India to develop closer trade relations with China and the EU.

As is generally agreed, an economic engagement with China is thus very much desirable. However, India's trade gap with China is expected to exceed

\$100 billion in 2025 with exports estimated to improve last year but imports surged much faster from \$87.7 billion in 2021 to \$109.6 billion in 2024, according to data from the Global Trade Research Initiative. If the trade deficit must be checked, India should give special focus on electronics and critical minerals to reduce dependence on China.

In recent years, electronics manufacturing, including mobile phones, increased in the country but imports haven't come down as the manufacturers rely on components produced in other countries, especially China. This should not happen and manufacturers should see and use Indian products and prove their worth.

Apart from China, India's economic relations with the UK, Australia, Germany, France, Israel, Brazil and some African countries are on strong foundation and expected to be enhanced. The Indo-Japan strategic dialogue held a few days back agreed to boost cooperation in AI and critical minerals while seeking enhanced engagement on issues related to South Asia, West Asia and Africa.

At same time, with India taking up the leadership role in BRICS, it would help engage with all other and new mem-

bers, specially, Egypt, Ethiopia and the UAE. India is also giving a thrust to increase trade with the African world, and this may help boost up exports.

Regarding attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), it is tragic that over the next decade, India dropped in the rankings for net FDI/GDP from 12th to 19th among the 25 largest emerging countries. While the net numbers have been depressed recently by foreigners repatriating past profits, gross profits are low too with India ranking below most emerging markets last year.

In the past year, the government has introduced major reforms to reduce bureaucracy by streamlining labour codes, simplifying bankruptcy rules, and digitizing many public services. These changes are expected to encourage greater investment and stimulate economic growth. While foreign direct investment (FDI) plays a role, it is also important for domestic private investment—especially in manufacturing—to become more active, supported by favourable reforms. Promoting innovation and increasing both domestic and foreign investment are essential for boosting exports, driving broad-based growth, and creating new jobs.

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

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Sunita's legacy

Sir, Sunita Williams who retired from NASA after 27 years of meritorious service leaves behind a spaceflight legacy. Sunita spent more than 600 days in space and took part in nine spacewalks. She also became the first person to run a marathon in space. When she was stranded in space it was a test of her patience and fortitude. She will continue to be an inspiration for millions of people across the world. She encourages space exploration by inspiring youngsters to pursue careers in space sector. She is excited about the rapid growth and innovations in India's space missions. She is an advocate for the collaboration between India and the USA in space missions. She sees a lot of opportunities in the commercialization of space. Sunita's life and career serve as a source of inspiration for our youth who are passionate about science and technology. Let our education system take cue from her career and give importance to scientific applications and explorations in the education system. The achievements of such great people help educationists and policy makers to redesign our education system for the evolvement of future scientists and space explorers.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Delayed justice

Sir, Sajjan Kumar, a former Congress leader, was acquitted in one specific case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots because the court found insufficient legally reliable evidence to prove his role beyond reasonable doubt. There was no concrete proof placing him at the crime scene in that case. Under criminal law, each charge must be established independently, regardless of historical allegations or public opinion. However, this acquittal does not clear him of all responsibility. Sajjan Kumar is already serving life imprisonment in other 1984 riots cases where courts accepted evidence of his involvement in mob violence. Public response has been largely negative, with survivors and Sikh organizations expressing disappointment and anger. Legal remedies remain available through appeals in higher courts, while his existing convictions continue to stand. Justice delayed loses its impact with time.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Animal terror drives migration from hilly regions

People living near forests have often been victims of attacks by tigers and leopards, while wild boars, monkeys, and langurs have damaged their crops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Jan 23: The escalating human-wildlife conflict in Uttarakhand has become one of the major factors driving migration from hilly regions, with residents forced to guard their family members with firearms even during routine chores.

Former Army Subedar Mohan Singh, who returned to his ancestral village of Kanalgarh in Bageshwar district after retirement, described a harrowing existence.

“The terror of wild animals in our village is such that when one member of the family goes to the toilet at night, another stands guard outside with a gun,” Singh, in a social media post shared by Congress leader Harish Rawat, said.

Expressing concern over the situation, Rawat said that he wonders how those who do not know how to handle a gun are coping with such a situation.

On the advice of the Rawat, Singh started farming in his village a decade ago, planted lemon and malta trees, and also bought cows for dairy farming. For some time, his life was happy, but in the last seven to eight years, the terror of leopards, wild boars, and bears has reached his village.

Singh said that one of his cows died recently after being injured in a leopard attack.

The story of Balbir Singh Bisht, who retired from his job in Dehradun in 2023, is no different. In Chauran village of Pauri district, Bisht had renovated his ancestral house with the hope of settling there, but the menace of leopards, bears, wild boars, monkeys and langurs forced him to change his mind.

Bisht said, “What will we do by staying in the village?”

“The terror of leopards and bears, followed by the rampage of wild boars, monkeys, and langurs, has made life unbearable,” he added.

UTTARAKHAND HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT



able,” he added.

A song describing these conditions is also becoming quite popular on social media. Its lyrics, referring to the terror of animals, say “Gaaon-Gali mai dar hai chhaya, fasal chaupat-sab hai teri maya” (Fear has spread in every village and street, crops are ruined-it’s all your doing).

This song was reportedly written addressing Satpal Maharaj, the MLA from the Chaudhattal area of Pauri district

and a minister in the state government. Human-wildlife conflict has been a serious problem in the state for a long time. People living near forests have often been victims of attacks by tigers and leopards, while wild boars, monkeys, and langurs have damaged their crops.

However, this problem has worsened in the last few years. In 2025, nearly 30 people died in Uttarakhand due to attacks by leopards, tigers, and bears. Referring to the hardships

faced by people living in the hilly regions, Rawat said that the terror of wild animals has increased three to four times since 2010, and this has led to increased difficulties, resulting in 7 to 10 per cent migration in the last 12 to 14 years.

The Rural Development and Migration Prevention Commission has also acknowledged that there has been some increase in migration cases in recent years due to the increasing menace of wild animals in populated areas.

The Commission’s chairman, SS Negi, said that the main reason for migration from the state is the search for employment. However, he also admitted that “the terror of wild animals is also a reason for migration, and about 7 to 8 per cent of people have cited it as the reason for their migration.”

State Forest Minister Subodh Uniyal said that the government has ordered a study by experts on human-wildlife conflict in the state to find a permanent solution to this problem.

Rain, hail, strong winds lash Rajasthan

Yellow and orange alerts issued



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Jan 23: Weather conditions changed across Rajasthan over the last 24 hours as rainfall accompanied by lightning, thunder and strong winds was reported at several places in the state. The highest rainfall of 13.0 mm was recorded in Pushkar (Ajmer).

Light to moderate fog was also observed in parts of the state. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued orange and yellow alerts for thunderstorms, strong winds, rainfall and hailstorms in various districts. An orange alert is in force for 14 districts today, while 11 districts are under a yellow alert.

A warning for dense fog and cold wave conditions has also been issued from January 25. Jaipur witnessed the first winter rain of the season early Friday morning. Intermittent drizzle began around 5 am, intensifying into heavy rain by 6.30 am, accompanied by strong winds and thunder.

The rainfall led to a drop of 2-3 degrees Celsius in temperature, bringing back a strong winter chill. Heavy rain also disrupted traffic in parts of the city, including Tonk Road, Malviya Nagar, Jagatpura, JLN Marg and surrounding

areas. Power supply was affected briefly in some localities. Hailstorms were reported from several areas of Sikar district, including Kotri, Simarla and Sargoth, where hailstones the size of chickpeas fell for 10-15 minutes.

Similar weather conditions prevailed in districts such as Tonk, Nagaur, Alwar and Jaipur, where intermittent rain and strong winds intensified the cold. Meanwhile, the lowest temperature was recorded in Jaisalmer in the last 24 hours, which was 6.2 degrees C, while the highest temperature was recorded in Jawai Bandh (Pali) at 29.4 degrees Celsius.

Earlier on Thursday, light rain was recorded in border districts including Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Barmer, Ganganagar and Jodhpur, while dense fog was observed in northeastern districts such as Ganganagar and Hanumangarh.

The IMD has warned that after the current rainy spell subsides, dense fog is likely to affect several districts, including Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Dausa, Nagaur, Sikar, Jhunjhunu, and Hanumangarh. Residents have been advised to remain cautious, especially during early morning and late-night hours.

Sharma announces Foreign Language Communication Skills School in Jaipur



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

The Chief Minister said the state government is implementing several initiatives for youth education, skill development, employment and self-employment. More than one lakh appointments have already been made, recruitment is underway for 1.43 lakh posts, and a recruitment examination calendar has been released for one lakh government posts. Around 2.5 lakh youth have gained employment in the private sector.

He highlighted major initiatives such as the establishment of 71 new government colleges, Youth Partner Centres at the divisional level, and organisation of the Khelo India University Games.

Policies and schemes like the Rajasthan Youth Policy, Chief Minister’s Youth Self-Employment Scheme, skill training programmes, internships, 65 i-Startup Launchpad Nests and financial assistance of approximately Rs 22.5 crore to 658 startups are promoting holistic youth development.

The Chief Minister said the government is continuously introducing new policies, schemes and innovations to improve the education sector.

The Mega PTM will provide a new direction to education in Rajasthan and strengthen trust and cooperation among teachers, parents and students, he said. He said that Krishna Bhog was organised in all government schools, fostering collective participation and a positive environment.

Under the Nipun Rajasthan Programme, the reading, writing and arithmetic skills of students from Classes 1 to 5 are being enhanced through activity-based learning.

CM Sharma said daughters are excelling in every field today. The state government is supporting girls from birth through education to ensure a dignified, safe and independent life.



Children play in the snow amid snowfall, in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, Friday

PTI PHOTO

1 YEAR OF UCC

Uttarakhand registers 5L marriages

‘Devbhoomi’ became the first state in the country to implement UCC January 27, 2025, a law aimed at streamlining various personal laws, relating to marriage, succession, divorce and inheritance

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



Dehradun, Jan 23: The Uniform Civil Code (UCC), implemented in Uttarakhand a year ago, has achieved considerable success particularly in the registration of marriages under the new law.

Nearly five lakh marriages have been registered in the hill state in one year alone, highlighting the successful launch of one nation, one law’ scheme and also its penetration among the people.

Online procedure is seen as the key reason behind ‘astro-

nomical’ figures in marriage registrations in the state, with in one year as it not only simplified the administrative process but also exempted the married couples from compulsory presence at the Sub-Registrar for marriage registration.

It was January 27, 2025 that the ‘Devbhoomi’ became the first state in the country to implement UCC, a law aimed at streamlining various personal laws, relating to marriage, succession, divorce and inheritance.

As the state prepares to observe first anniversary of UCC rollout soon, women empowerment, protection of children’s rights and equality in civil rights have emerged as the most significant achievements under the new law.

The simplification of administrative procedures has achieved positive results in multiple domains.

According to government’s own estimates, 4,74,447 marriages have been registered under the UCC, within less than

one year of its implementation.

Previously, the married couples had to be physically present at the Sub-Registrar’s office on a fixed date along with two witnesses, for registering their marriages but the online services lowered restrictions and facilitated faster registrations.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami congratulated people on the UCC achieving a landmark and also hoped that this becomes a model for other states.

“By implementing the Uniform Civil Code, Uttarakhand has shown the way to other states. The transparent and simple manner in which the provisions of the UCC have been implemented over the past one year has increased public trust in the entire process.”

“This is the reason why a large number of people are now opting for registration under the UCC. In every sense, the Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code has emerged as a model law,” Chief Minister Dhami added.

Life-term convicts to marry after ‘live-in’ at Jaipur open jail

Priya Seth (34) is in jail for trapping a guy on a dating app and later strangling him and stuffing his body into a suitcase.

Hanuman Prasad (29) conspired with a woman he was in a relationship with and killed her husband and her kids

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Jan 23: In the austere confines of Jaipur’s open-air prison, two high-profile murder convicts serving life sentences developed a relationship, which will now culminate in a wedding Friday.

Priya Seth (34) is in jail for trapping a guy on a dating app and later strangling him and stuffing his body into a suitcase. Hanuman Prasad (29) conspired with a woman he was in a relationship with and killed her husband and her kids.

Placed in Sanganer open jail, they fell in love and have decided to get married. Their union, forged within prison walls, follows the grant of a 15-day parole to both convicts earlier this week.

The parole was granted after the Rajasthan High Court January 7 directed the parole committee to decide on their applications within seven days, their counsel Vishram Prajapat said.

“Acting on the court’s order, the committee cleared their release, allowing the pair to step out of prison

LOVE STORY BEHIND BARS



Wednesday,” he said.

The wedding is scheduled to take place in Barodameo in Alwar district, Prasad’s native town. Sources said the two had

grown close over the past year while living at the open-air prison, a facility governed by the Rajasthan Prisoners Open Air Camp Rules, 1972, where

EAST COAST RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM NO. 02 to Tender Notice No. ETCECONIIBBS2025060, Dtd.: 23.12.2025

The following modification has been made against above tender notice which may please be noted.

Tender closing date & time: As published - at 1200 hrs. of 23.01.2026. **Now to be read as at 1200 hrs. of 30.01.2026.**

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

For details the intending tenderer(s) are advised to visit the website www.irps.gov.in

Chief Administrative Officer (Cony) Bhubaneswar

PR-238/CI/25-26

Gates of Badrinath Dham to reopen for devotees April 23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Jan 23: The gates of the Badrinath temple in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand will reopen for devotees April 23 this year after a six-month winter closure, temple officials announced Friday.

Hemant Dwivedi, chairman of the Shri Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee, said that the auspicious date and time for the reopening were determined after traditional prayers and rituals at the Tehri Royal Palace in Narendra Nagar, Tehri district, on the occasion of Basant Panchami.

During the religious ceremony, Maharaja Manujendra Shah, royal priest Acharya Krishna Prasad Uniyal, and other dignitaries consulted the almanack and the Maharaja’s horoscope to announce that the temple’s gates would open at 6:15 AM April 23, Dwidevi said. The Maharani of Tehri and Lok Sabha member from Tehri Garhwal, Mala Rajya Lakshmi Shah, Badrinath temple priest Rawal Amarnath Namboodiri, temple committee officials, and many pilgrimage priests were also present during the ceremony.

The gates of the other two shrines included in the Char Dham of Garhwal Himalayas, Gangotri and Yamunotri temples in the Uttarkashi district, will be reopened April 19 on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya.

As the thick grey clouds hung low over the capital, the parade of troops and military vehicles advanced through the wet and windy conditions as the officers on foot, on horseback and atop tankers moved in formation,

Formations remained tight and steps perfectly timed as the troops continued rehearsing for

According to the India Meteorological Department, rainfall recorded between 8:30 am and 11:30 am showed Palam receiving 12.6 mm, Janakpuri 12.5 mm, Lodi Road 11.8 mm, Ridge 11.4 mm and Safdarjung 8.6 mm, while Mayur Vihar recorded 4 mm.

As the thick grey clouds hung low over the capital, the parade of troops and military vehicles advanced through the wet and windy conditions as the officers on foot, on horseback and atop tankers moved in formation,

Formations remained tight and steps perfectly timed as the troops continued rehearsing for

the Republic Day celebrations. Patriotic songs and narrations played across Kartavya Path as different Army regiments carried on with the rehearsal. Commands rang out clearly

The floats of Operation Sindoor, BrahMos and other military missile systems passed by

Those who arrived early were seen coping with the wet and windy conditions, with mothers adjusting their chil-

of the day

QUOTE

The economy has collapsed under the BJP government. The poor are becoming poorer. Wealth has been centralised. The wealth of a few corporate houses has increased tremendously. The per capita income of the common people is not increasing, and the common people are forced to live in deprivation

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

India's start-up ecosystem has witnessed transformational growth over the last decade, with the state emerging as a strong and competitive contributor from the Northeast

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

More than 110 people have already died; everyday three to four people are dying by suicide out of SIR anxiety... 40 to 45 more people are fighting for their lives in hospitals. After all these years, we have to prove whether we are citizens of this country?

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

X

POST OF THE DAY

Uttar Pradesh is currently the most difficult state for BJP to retain. There is massive anti incumbency against Yogi

Adityanath govt BJP is likely to be reduced to around 120 seats in 2027 Sanghis will refuse to accept this reality today. On result day they will rant and cry just like 4th June

@Politicx2029

SHORT TAKES

Elgar Parishad case: 2 more activists get bail

Mumbai: Two more accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case were granted bail by the Bombay High Court Friday on the grounds of parity, noting that several other co-accused had already been granted similar relief. A bench of Justices A S Gadkari and S C Chandak ordered release of Sagar Gorkhe and Ramesh Gaichor, who have been in Navi Mumbai's Tajola jail since their arrest in September 2020, and directed them to furnish a bail bond of ₹1 lakh each.

Another Maoist's body found, toll rises to 17

Chaibasa: One more body of a Maoist was found in a forest in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district, taking the toll of the red rebels in a gun-battle with the security forces to 17 in two days, police said Friday. Search operation is still on in the Saranda forest where a total of 16 rebels, including Patiram Manjhi alias Anal Da, carrying a cumulative bounty of ₹2.35 crore on his head, were killed Thursday.

Chhagan Bhujbal, 45 others discharged

Mumbai: A special court here Friday discharged NCP minister Chhagan Bhujbal in an alleged money laundering case linked to financial irregularities in construction of 'Maharashtra Sadan' in New Delhi and a housing project in Navi Mumbai. Special judge Satyanarayan Navander, in his ruling, said the prosecution under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) could not proceed in the absence of a subsisting "predicate offence", which it said is "akin to a tree without roots".



Ensuring timely and affordable healthcare for every resident of Delhi is a priority of the BJP government

REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

KARNATAKA HC LIFTS BAN ON BIKE TAXIS

The Karnataka High Court Friday lifted the ban on bike taxis, paving the way for the resumption of services across the state. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C M Joshi directed the state government to register motorcycles as transport vehicles and issue them carriage permits



TN battle: PM tears into DMK

Modi, who addressed a massive rally that turned out to be a show of strength with the presence of top leaders from key alliance parties, including AIADMK and AMMK, also attacked the DMK over the Karthigai lamp lighting row, accusing it of insulting Lord Murugan and the courts for electoral gains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Maduranthakam, Jan 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday launched the NDA's poll campaign in Tamil Nadu with a no-holds-barred attack on the ruling DMK, calling it "CMC- corruption, mafia and crime" promoting government, and asserted that the countdown for its exit has begun.

Modi, who addressed a massive rally that turned out to be a show of strength with the presence of top leaders from key alliance parties, including AIADMK and AMMK, also attacked the DMK over the Karthigai lamp lighting row, accusing it of insulting Lord Murugan and the courts for electoral gains.

Modi was presented with a silver Thirupprankundram Murugan frame as a memento, along with a cardamom garland, by the alliance party leaders. Setting the tone for the high-stakes 2026 electoral showdown for the 234-member Tamil Nadu Assembly, Modi asserted that "a BJP-NDA double-engine government is being formed for sure. This huge sea of people is a strong message to the whole of Tamil Nadu, the country; Tamil Nadu is ready for change", while referring to the massive gathering at the rally.

"You gave the DMK a clear mandate twice. But they have broken the trust of the people. The DMK gave so many assurances, but their work is zero. People are calling DMK the CMC government -Corruption, Mafia, Crime-promoting government. The people have made up their mind to uproot the DMK, CMC," The Prime Minister said.

The Assembly elections are expected to be held in the next few months. Modi said, "we just don't talk about Tamil culture,



but take serious efforts to protect it," and mentioned restoration of the bull-taming sport 'jallikattu' through the legal route after a 'ban' during the "DMK-Congress" government, calling it another pro-Tamil achievement of the NDA, which ensured the Tamil heritage.

The state wants to get free from the DMK's "misgovernance" and looks forward to the good governance of the BJP-NDA. "All our senior leaders are here to decide TN's fate, with the determination to free it from the DMK rule," he said.

AIADMK chief and Leader of Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami, Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) chief TTV Dhinakaran, PMK's Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, and TMC-M leader G K Vasan were among those who shared the dais with Modi.

Incidentally, old foes Palaniswami and Dhinakaran shared the stage for the first time in many years, with each complimenting the other and stressing the common goal to show the door to the DMK in the hustings.

The DMK government has nothing to do with democracy and accountability, and "func-

tions for only one family," Modi said, and added its "countdown (for defeat) has started."

The NDA government has done "unprecedented" development work for Tamil Nadu in the last 11 years, ensuring a manifold increase in allocation of funds to the state, including in the railway sector.

The BJP-led dispensation at the Centre was concerned about the welfare of Tamil Nadu farmers, fishermen, and women and has initiated various steps in this connection, the Prime Minister pointed out.

On Tamil language and culture, he listed out various efforts to popularise them. He said he has gifted copies of 'Thirukkural' to various heads of state with a view to "linking them to Tamil Nadu's knowledge. Thirukkural is a collection of 1330 couplets dealing with various facets of life, including governance. In his address, Palaniswami slammed the DMK-led government, saying its only achievement was "corruption" and to "perpetuate dynasty rule" in Tamil Nadu.

AMMK General Secretary Dhinakaran, who rejoined the NDA recently after walking out in September 2025, said his party had wholeheartedly joined the alliance to unseat the ruling DMK and not under "coercion".

Though he may have differences with the AIADMK leadership, he said he did not want these to come in the way of public welfare or efforts to end the DMK rule in the state.

Reacting strongly to Modi's double-engine government pitch, Chief Minister M K Stalin asked Modi to ponder how states such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Karnataka, and West Bengal, where the "double engine" has not entered, were registering growth.

TN passes resolution backing MGNREGA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Jan 23: The Tamil Nadu Assembly Friday adopted a resolution urging the Centre to continue with the MGNREGA to protect the livelihoods of the rural population in the state.

The resolution was moved by Chief Minister M K Stalin. Referring to the latest rural employment scheme Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) introduced by the Centre, Stalin said, "The proposed new scheme replaces the MGNREGA and is designed in a manner that undermines the livelihoods of rural people across India, the financial structure of the states, the self-reliance of the local bodies and employment opportunities for the rural women."

Stalin noted that the all initiatives whether it is an infrastructure project or a scheme to uplift the livelihoods of the people, all the programmes were implemented efficiently without discrimination in Tamil Nadu. "In several Union government projects, Tamil Nadu ranks first in India and continues to receive appreciation from various ministries," Stalin said amid thumping of desks by the Treasury benches.

Stalin alleged that the Centre was not releasing funds based

In several Union government projects, Tamil Nadu ranks first in India and continues to receive appreciation from various ministries

M K STALIN | TN CM

on progress of a project and that the Union government deliberately avoids immediate release of funds showing a 'step-motherly' attitude towards the development of Tamil Nadu.

Under MGNREGA, ₹1,026 crore for wages and ₹1,087 crore for the material component remain unreleased to this day. "Who is affected due to the delay of the funds. It is the common people and farmers living in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu. Why this discrimination against our state, Stalin asked.

Recalling that the DMK MPs have strongly opposed the VB-G RAM G scheme at its introduction stage, Stalin said, "All opposition parties have raised their voices together. However, the Union government disregarding the people's voice has passed it. This new scheme is not based on the needs of the people. I have already written a letter to the PM regarding this December 18, 2025."

The Chief Minister said under the new scheme VB-G RAM G, employment to is not provided as a "Right to Work" but is based on a provisional allocation to be determined by the Centre.

KERALA POLLS

PM Modi targets Left over gold theft

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday launched a blistering assembly poll campaign offensive in Kerala, accusing the ruling Left of "corruption" over the Sabarimala gold loss case while branding the Congress as a "compromised coalition" ideologically tethered to the Muslim League and Maoists.

Visiting the state for the first time since the BJP's historic victory in the prestigious Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, Modi addressed a massive rally Friday, seeking a decisive mandate in the upcoming April polls to fulfill the developmental aspirations of the people of Kerala.

Elections to the 140-member assembly are expected to be held in three to four months.

Branding the Congress as 'MMC', Muslim League Maoist Congress, Modi said it was important to be vigilant against them, as they were allegedly using Kerala as a "testing ground" for their strategies.



A tiger and a tigress during mating at the Pench Tiger Reserve, in Nagpur district, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

SNIPPETS

No FIR against TMC MLA even 24 hrs after EC deadline

Kolkata: More than 24 hours after the Election Commission's deadline expired, no FIR has been registered against TMC MLA Monirul Islam in connection with the vandalism at the Farakka Block Development Office in Murshidabad district during the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls, officials said Friday. The Commission had Thursday directed the Murshidabad District Magistrate-cum-District Election Officer to ensure that an FIR was filed against Islam by 5 pm the same day for his alleged role in the January 14 violence at the Farakka BDO office. However, police sources said no complaint had been received so far. "We have not received any formal complaint yet. Therefore, no FIR has been registered," a senior police officer said. The delay has raised questions over the implementation of the Commission's directive, even as the poll body has reiterated strict enforcement of law and order during the SIR process ahead of the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections. Violence had erupted during a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) hearing at the Farakka BDO office January 14, when a group of people led by the local MLA allegedly vandalised the premises.

Sabarimala gold loss: Court grants statutory bail to ex-TDB officer

Kollam (Kerala): A court here Friday granted statutory bail to former TDB administrative officer Murari Babu in two cases related to the alleged gold loss from the Sabarimala temple. Kollam Vigilance Court Judge Mohit C S granted bail to Babu as 90 days had elapsed since his arrest, and the Special Investigation Team (SIT) had failed to file chargesheets in the two cases. Babu is the second accused in the case related to the alleged gold loss from the Dwarapalaka (guardian deity) idol plates and the sixth accused in the case pertaining to the alleged gold loss from the doorframes of the Sreekoil (sanctum sanctorum). The court granted bail, subject to the condition that he should not influence witnesses or tamper with evidence, and that he should appear before the investigating officer whenever required. Babu, who was lodged at a Special Sub Jail in Thiruvananthapuram, was released Friday night and later left for his residence with his family.

Turkman Gate violence: HC sets aside bail granted to accused

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has set aside the bail granted to an accused who was allegedly part of the mob that indulged in stone-pelting during a demolition exercise near Faiz-e-Elahi mosque in Turkman Gate here early this month, and remanded the matter to the trial court for reconsideration. The trial court had granted bail to Ubedullah January 20. On Friday, Justice Prateek Jalan directed that the bail plea be re-heard Saturday at 10 am, after he was informed that the Principal District and Sessions Judge (PDSJ) concerned has placed the matter before the sessions judge who passed the bail order. Justice Jalan said if the sessions judge was unavailable for any reason, the PDSJ would either take up the matter herself or assign it to any other judge for consideration. The order was passed after the counsel for the accused moved an application to inform that the sessions judge who was supposed to hear the bail plea during the day was not available and the matter was also not taken up by the link judge.

Failed twice in NEET, youth amputates foot for quota seat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaunpur (UP), Jan 23: "I will become an MBBS doctor in 2026." Lakhs of medical aspirants likely gave themselves this self-motivation talk but a youth from Uttar Pradesh took on an unheard-of gambit to realise his dreams: he amputated his foot to be eligible for disability quota.

Suraj Bhaskar, around 20 years of age, had twice failed the medical entrance exam, NEET, for admission into a government medical college, leading him to take the extreme step and claim he lost a foot in a

violent attack, police said.

While police saw through his ploy, they are currently seeking legal opinion to determine what sections of criminal law could be levelled against him.

Findings of a police probe into the incident that happened in Khalilpur village in Jaunpur district were shared with Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Ayush Srivastava on Wednesday.

The matter came to light after the aspirant's elder brother, Akash Bhaskar, informed police on Sunday that "unidentified assailants" allegedly assaulted Suraj the



previous night, leaving him unconscious with a severed foot before fleeing.

Suraj Bhaskar, around 20 years of age, had twice failed the medical entrance exam, NEET, for admission into a government medical college, leading him to take the extreme step and claim he lost a foot in a violent attack, police said

Accordingly, a case was registered and an investigation launched, which was later

handed over to City Circle Officer Goldy Gupta, he said.

During the probe, police found several inconsistencies in Suraj's statement. Examination of his phone and questioning a woman whose number cropped up in the probe further deepened suspicion, police said.

Investigators also recovered a diary belonging to Suraj in which he had written, "I will become an MBBS doctor in 2026." Failing to clear the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) examination twice, he slipped into mental stress, police said.

To avail admission under the disability quota, he allegedly devised a plan to become physically disabled by amputating his own foot and staging the incident as a criminal attack, they said.

"The accused tried to mislead the investigation with a fabricated story, but his claims did not stand scrutiny during sustained questioning and examination of evidence," police said, adding that further legal action is underway.

Line Bazar Station House Officer Satish Singh said Suraj is currently undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

international

of the day quote

The European Union is willing to implement a sweeping free trade agreement with the Mercosur group of South American countries on a provisional basis

URSULA VON DER LEYEN | EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT

We want Nigerians to know that this partnership (with the US) is working. Nigeria is acting decisively. Security agencies have clear instructions to protect communities and respond swiftly to threats

IBRAHIM IDRIS | INFORMATION MINISTER, NIGERIA

Individuals are being surveilled and detained, sometimes violently including at hospitals, churches, mosques, courthouses, markets, schools, and even within their own homes, often solely on mere suspicion of being undocumented migrants

VOLKER TURK | UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SHORT TAKES

SK imposes travel bans on 3 civilians

Seoul: South Korea placed overseas travel bans on three people as part of an investigation into alleged drone flights over North Korea that have deepened animosities between the rivals, authorities said Friday. North Korea threatened retaliation earlier this month after accusing South Korea of launching surveillance drone flights in September and again in January. The South Korean government denied operating any drones during the times specified by North Korea and began probing if civilians sent them. The development threatens to further dampen prospects for a push by South Korea's liberal government to resume long-stalled talks with North Korea.

'Rebuilding Sri Lanka' fund exceeds Rs 8.5bn

Colombo: Sri Lanka has received LKR 8.5 billion (around \$27.5 million) in foreign contributions to carry out post-cyclone reconstruction, a top finance ministry official said Friday. A total of 47 countries contributed in the form of aid, with the US topping the list with LKR 1 billion worth of assistance, followed by Australia. "Since the process began, we have been overwhelmed by the assistance extended by well-wishers, citizens overseas, organisations, and individuals contributing from overseas," Secretary to the Treasury Harshana Suriyapperuma told reporters. The island nation received assistance worth LKR 8.5 billion, which also includes USD 9.49 million in foreign currencies, he said.

Takaichi dissolves Japan's parliament

Tokyo: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi dissolved the lower house of parliament Friday, paving the way for an early election February 8. The move is an attempt to capitalise on her popularity to help the governing party regain ground after major losses in recent years, but it will delay parliamentary approval for a budget that aims at boosting a struggling economy and addressing soaring prices. Takaichi, elected in October as Japan's first female leader, has been in office only three months, but she has seen strong approval ratings of about 70 per cent. Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party could still face some challenges as it reels from a series of scandals about corruption and the party's past ties to the Unification Church.

ABU DHABI SUMMIT

Russia, Ukraine clash over Donbas deadlock

Kyiv/Moscow, Jan 23: Ukrainian and Russian negotiators met in Abu Dhabi Friday to tackle the vital issue of territory, with no sign of a compromise, as Russian attacks plunged Ukraine into its deepest energy crisis of the four-year war.

Kyiv is under mounting US pressure to reach a peace deal in the war triggered by Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, with Moscow demanding Kyiv cede its entire eastern industrial area of Donbas before it stops fighting.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskii said the territorial dispute would be a top priority of the talks in the United Arab Emirates.

"The question of Donbas is key. It will be discussed how the three sides... see this in Abu Dhabi today and tomorrow," he told reporters in a WhatsApp chat a day after talks with US President Donald Trump at the World Economic Forum in Davos that yielded no immediate results.

The negotiations in the Gulf are expected to continue on Saturday morning, Zelenskii's aide said.

The talks unfold against a backdrop of intensified Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy system that have cut power and heating to major cities like

- Trilateral talks in UAE will focus on key issue of land
- Negotiations scheduled to continue Saturday
- Ukraine resists Russia's demand to cede Donetsk region
- Zelenskii says US security guarantees ready

Kyiv, as temperatures hover well below freezing.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's demand that Ukraine surrender the 20% it still holds of the Donetsk region of the Donbas - about 5,000 sq km (1,900 sq miles) - has proven a major stumbling block to a breakthrough deal.

Zelenskii refuses to give up land that Russia has not been able to capture in four years of grinding, attritional warfare. Polls show little appetite among Ukrainians for territorial concessions.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that Russia's insistence on Ukraine yielding the Donbas was "a

very important condition".

Donetsk is one of four Ukrainian regions Moscow said in 2022 it was annexing after referendums rejected by Kyiv and Western nations as bogus. Most countries recognise Donetsk as part of Ukraine.

As Friday's talks proceeded, the head of Ukraine's top private power producer, Maxim Timchenko, told Reuters that Ukraine needs a ceasefire that halts attacks on energy, saying the situation was nearing a "humanitarian catastrophe".

SECURITY GUANTEES AGREED, ZELENSKIY SAYS

Zelenskii said Thursday in Davos that the Abu Dhabi talks would be the first trilateral meetings involving Ukrainian and Russian envoys and US mediators since the war began.

Last year Russian and Ukrainian delegations had their first face-to-face meeting since 2022 when they met in Istanbul. A top Ukrainian military intelligence officer also had talks with US and Russian delegations in Abu Dhabi in November.

Ukraine has sought robust security guarantees from Western allies in the event of a peace deal to prevent Russia, which has shown little interest in ending the war, from invading again.

US threatens to starve Iraq of its oil dollars over Iranian influence

REUTERS

Dubai/Washington, Jan 23: Washington has threatened senior Iraqi politicians with sanctions targeting the Iraqi state - including potentially its critical oil revenues - should armed groups backed by Iran be included in the next government, four sources told Reuters.

The warning is the starkest example yet of US President Donald Trump's campaign to curb Iran-linked groups' influence in Iraq, which has long walked a tightrope between its two closest allies, Washington and Tehran.

The US warning was delivered repeatedly over the past two months by the US Charge d'Affaires in Baghdad, Joshua Harris, in conversations with Iraqi officials and influential Shi'ite leaders, according to three Iraqi officials and one source familiar with the matter who spoke to Reuters for this story. The message was delivered to some heads of Iran-linked groups via intermediaries, they said.

Harris and the embassy did not respond to requests for comment. The sources requested anonymity to discuss private discussions.

Since taking office a year ago, Trump has acted to weaken the Iranian government, including via its neighbour Iraq.

Iran views Iraq as vital for keeping its economy afloat amidst sanctions and long used Baghdad's banking system to skirt the restrictions, US and Iraqi officials have said. Successive US administrations have sought to choke that dollar stream, placing sanctions on more than a dozen Iraqi banks in recent years in an effort to do so.

Overthrow 'illegal' Yunus regime: Hasina

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina Friday called on the people of the country to overthrow the Muhammad Yunus-led regime, saying free and fair elections will not be possible if it remains in power.

In her first public address to a gathering in India since fleeing Dhaka 17 months ago, the Awami League leader also said Bangladesh should urge the United Nations to conduct a "truly impartial investigation" into the events of the past year and urged the people to rise up unitedly to "restore" the constitution and protect the religious minorities.

Hasina's message in a pre-recorded audio clip was played out at an event in New Delhi, and it came a day after campaigning for the February 12 parliamentary elections began in Bangladesh. The Awami League party has been barred from contesting the polls.

In her remarks, Hasina launched a no-holds-barred attack on Yunus as she accused him of running an "illegal" regime and alleged that the country is now "ravaged by the monstrous onslaught of extremist communal forces and foreign perpetrators."

"In this grave hour, the entire nation must rise united, galvanised by the spirit of our great Liberation War," she said in the audio message that was played out at an event at the Foreign Correspondents



Club in New Delhi.

"To overthrow the foreign-serving puppet regime of this national enemy at any cost, the brave sons and daughters of Bangladesh must defend and restore the Constitution, reclaim our independence, safeguard our sovereignty, and revive our democracy," she said.

Hasina, 78, has been living in India after she fled Dhaka following the collapse of her government in August 2024, in the face of a massive anti-government agitation.

"At this darkest time for our countrymen and women, we reaffirm our determination to help you restore the thriving homeland that was snatched away from you," she said.

The Awami League leader also listed five "actions" to help unify Bangladesh and "banish the divisive actions" of the past 12 months.

The actions included removing Yunus from power and inviting the United Nations to conduct an impartial investigation into the "events" that took place under the Yunus government in the last one year.

French govt survives no-confidence votes

REUTERS

Paris, Jan 23: The French government survived two votes of no-confidence in parliament Friday over its decision to ram through the income part of the 2026 budget without giving the National Assembly the final say.

A total of 269 lawmakers voted in favor of the no-confidence motion presented by the hard-left France Unbowed together with the Greens and Communists, whereas 288 votes were required to bring down the government. Even fewer backed a second no-confidence motion, brought by the far right.

Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu will now again invoke article 49.3 of the constitution to force the expenditure part of the budget through the National Assembly - a move that will almost certainly trigger further votes of no confidence.

President Emmanuel Macron's government is having

to circumvent parliament after months of negotiations failed to deliver a deficit-taming finance bill that would pass in a lower house where no party has a working majority.

In the hunt for a budget, Macron lost two governments and saw France plunged into turmoil rarely seen since the 1958 creation of the Fifth Republic, the current system of government.

With France depending on an emergency rollover budget from last year to keep afloat, Lecornu made last-minute concessions earlier this month to secure the agreement of Socialists to not topple the government if it resorted to using the special constitutional powers.

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen said government opponents who supported Lecornu in the confidence vote would pay the price in future elections, including local elections in March and presidential elections in 2027.

What is Trump's 'Board of Peace' and who has joined so far?

REUTERS

US President Donald Trump has invited dozens of world leaders to join his Board of Peace initiative aimed at resolving global conflicts but diplomats say it could harm the work of the United Nations.

While some traditional allies of the US have responded cautiously, and in a few cases have rejected Trump's offer, others including nations that have long had strained ties with Washington such as Belarus have accepted.

WHAT IS TRUMP'S BOARD OF PEACE?

Trump first proposed the Board of Peace last September when he announced his plan to end the Gaza war. He later made clear the board's remit would be expanded beyond Gaza to tackle other conflicts worldwide.

The US president will be the inaugural chairman of the board and it will be tasked with promoting peace around

WHICH COUNTRIES HAVE ACCEPTED TRUMP'S INVITATION SO FAR?

A senior White House official said Wednesday about 35 world leaders have so far committed to joining the Board of Peace out of the 50 or so invitations that were sent.

These include Middle East allies such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar

and Egypt. NATO members Turkey and Hungary, whose nationalist leaders have cultivated good personal ties with Trump, have also agreed to take part, as have Morocco, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kosovo, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Paraguay, and Vietnam.

Others which have accepted include Armenia and Azerbaijan, which reached a US-brokered peace agreement last August after meeting Trump at the White House.

More controversially, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, long shunned by the West over his country's poor human rights record and backing for Russia's war in Ukraine, has accepted Trump's invitation, which comes amid a broader rapprochement between Washington and Minsk.

Russia, which has also seen frosty relations with Washington improve markedly as Trump courts President Vladimir Putin while accusing Kyiv of blocking efforts to end the Ukraine war, has not yet said whether it will join

the Board of Peace.

Neither has China, which has often been at loggerheads with Trump but recently struck a delicate trade truce.

Russia and China are both veto-wielding members of the United Nations Security Council, so are likely to be cautious about any initiatives that could be seen as undermining their power at the world body.

WHICH COUNTRIES HAVE REFUSED TO JOIN OR HAVE YET TO COMMIT?

The Board of Peace initiative, which comes amid a growing transatlantic rift over Greenland, tariffs and other issues, has drawn a cautious response from some close US allies who are often uncomfortable with Trump's belligerent, unilateralist, "America First" approach to international diplomacy.

Norway and Sweden have declined his invitation, while Italy's Economy Minister Giannaro Giorgetti said joining the board appeared problematic. Italian daily Il Corriere

della Sera reported that joining a group led by one country's leader would violate Italy's constitution.

France also intends to decline the invitation, a source close to President Emmanuel Macron said, prompting Trump to threaten to hit French wines and champagnes with 200% tariffs unless Paris joined his board.

Canada said it has agreed "in principle" to join but that the details were still being worked out. Other key US allies including Britain, Germany and Japan have not yet taken a clear public stance, though a German government spokesperson said Chancellor Friedrich Merz would not attend a signing ceremony for the board on Thursday at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Ukraine has said its diplomats are examining the invitation but President Volodymyr Zelenskii has said it is hard for him to imagine being on any board with Russia after four years of war.

Pope Leo, the first US pontiff

and a critic of some of Trump's policies, has been invited to join the board and is evaluating the proposal, the Vatican said Wednesday.

WHAT POWER WILL THE BOARD HAVE?

The UN Security Council in November mandated the Board of Peace but only through 2027 and to be solely focused on Gaza. Russia and China abstained, complaining that the US-drafted resolution did not give the UN a clear role in Gaza's future.

The resolution welcomed the establishment of the Board of Peace as a transitional administration "that will set the framework, and coordinate funding for the redevelopment of Gaza" under Trump's peace plan until the Palestinian Authority has satisfactorily reformed.

It also authorized the Board of Peace to deploy a temporary International Stabilization Force in Gaza. The Board is required to report to the 15-member Security Council every six months on its progress.



Just last year, here in Davos, I ended my speech with the words: Europe needs to know how to defend itself. A year has passed. And nothing has changed. We are still in a situation where I must say the same words again

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

INDIA JOINS WEF INITIATIVE

The World Economic Forum Friday announced a major global initiative to invest in skill development that will reach more than 850 million people. It also announced the launch of new skills and education accelerators in India and Jordan, strengthening a global network of 45 national accelerators that have collectively supported 14.8 million people



A demonstrator protests outside the Big Horn Correctional Facility, a dormant prison that is under contract to become a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Hudson, Colorado, U.S.

REUTERS

of the day

quote

Despite these operational disruptions, IndiGo delivered a topline of around 245 billion rupees in the December quarter, reflecting a growth of around 7 per cent with a reported profit of around 5 billion rupees and an underlying profit excluding exceptional items and forex of 31 billion rupees

PIETER ELBERS | INDIGO CEO

Today, we have installed 500 (vending) machines. There is a huge growth path, and we are looking to have a 10x growth in this network in the next 5 years. So, we are looking at about 5,000 machines in the next 5 years

RAJAT AGRAWAL | BARISTA, CEO

There is strong growth momentum in the Emerging Business segment, with significant untapped potential in smaller towns, and we will continue to expand our branch presence

LAKSHMINARAYANAN DURAISWAMY | MD, SUNDARAM HOME

SHORT TAKES

JSW Steel profit grows threefold

New Delhi: JSW Steel Friday posted over three-fold growth in consolidated profit after tax to ₹2,410 crore in the December quarter, as the company recorded higher sales numbers accompanied by lower input costs. It had posted a profit after tax of ₹719 crore in the October-December period of 2024-25, the company said in an exchange filing. JSW Steel said the "profit after tax for the quarter stood at ₹2,410 crores after recognising deferred tax assets (net) amounting to ₹1,439 crores on the brought forward unabsorbed depreciation in Bhushan Power & Steel Limited (BPSL) as it is probable that carried forward unabsorbed depreciation will be recovered against the likely capital gains on the slump sale of BPSL's steel business undertaking. The company's total income rose to ₹46,264 crore in the third quarter from ₹41,525 crore in the same period a year ago.

Suzlon in world's top 10 sustainable cos

Mumbai: Suzlon Group announced at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, Davos, that it has been ranked amongst the top 10 in the 2026 Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations list by Corporate Knights. Suzlon has also become the only Indian company to be featured in the top 10 of this prestigious global ranking. The Global 100 ranking evaluates over 8,000 publicly listed companies with revenues exceeding US\$1 billion, assessing performance across sustainable investments, sustainable revenues, and growth momentum. The 2026 methodology places particular emphasis on the speed and scale of sustainable revenue growth, reflecting the urgency of the global energy and climate transition. Girish Tanti, Vice Chairman, Suzlon Group, said, "Being the only Wind Energy OEM in the top 10 of this list is a testament to our commitment to meeting the highest global sustainability standards. We have committed to achieve Net Zero by 2040; Zero Waste to Landfill by 2028 and Water Neutrality by 2030. Our sustainability goals continue to be a consistent growth driver as we advance our vision of creating a leading and global full stack green energy solutions company."



India is emerging as one of the world's major forces in artificial intelligence (AI), supported by strong reforms, digital public infrastructure, and a skilled technology workforce

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA | MANAGING DIRECTOR, IMF

CERT-IN HANDLED 29.44L INCIDENTS

The Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) at the centre of India's cybersecurity architecture handled over 29.44 lakh cyber incidents in 2025, issued 1,530 alerts and 390 vulnerability notes, the government said Friday. CERT-In empanelled 231 certified cybersecurity audit organisations, strengthening audit and vulnerability assessment capacity across critical information and communication technology infrastructure, according to an official statement. Cyber Swachhta Kendra (CSK), established by CERT-In, covers 98 per cent of India's digital population, sending large-scale notifications on botnet and malware infections.



India's forex reserve crosses \$700 billion

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: India's foreign exchange reserves witnessed a massive surge of \$14.167 billion to reach \$701.36 billion in the week ended January 16, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed Friday.

In the preceding week that ended January 9, the country's foreign exchange reserves had increased by \$392 million.

The largest component of the foreign exchange reserves, Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), increased by \$9.65 billion in the week ended January 16, reaching \$560.51 billion. FCA includes the value of other major global currencies such as the yen, euro and pound, in addition to the dollar, expressed in dollar terms.

The gold reserves also increased by \$4.6 billion to \$117.45 billion in the reporting period.

According to the RBI, the value of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) decreased by \$35 million to \$18.70 billion in the week ended January 16. The value of the reserve position in the IMF decreased by \$73 million to \$4.684 billion.

Previously, October 17, 2025, the country's foreign exchange reserves had reached \$702.25 billion. The all-time high for India's foreign exchange reserves is \$704.89 billion, recorded in September 2024.



time was weighed down by an uptick in crude oil prices, a sharp depreciation of the rupee, FIIs selling and earnings delivery falling marginally short of expectations amid premium India valuations.

Looking ahead, market sentiment will likely remain cautious as investors keenly wait for the upcoming Union Budget and the US Fed's interest rate decision, they added.

Market watchers predicted that if better-than-expected results for Q3 FY26 are reported for some companies, they could trigger only a stock-specific reaction because foreign institutional selling is expected to continue in the near term.

The rupee slumped 41 paise to touch 91.99 against the US dollar in intraday trade on Friday, amid persistent foreign fund outflows.

Analysts said that intervention from the central bank has kept the volatility in check to some extent, but could not reverse the overall negative trend for the domestic currency.

Godrej to launch handloom friendly washing machines

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai, Jan 23: This Republic Day, the Appliances Business of Godrej Enterprises Group will launch "Tested for Handlooms" initiative. With its handloom friendly front-load washing machine technology, the brand is making handloom care effortless, encouraging fellow Indians to celebrate India's handloom fabrics and wear them more frequently with pride.

Every Indian state has its own handloom fabric- Kasavu from Kerala, Mysore Silk from Karnataka, Pochampally Ikkat from Telangana, Paithani from Maharashtra, Chikankari from Lucknow, Bandhani from Gujarat & Rajasthan, Muga Silk from Assam and several others, with some having been recognized by UNESCO as well.

However, handlooms are often seen by people as high maintenance. Most people rely only on hand wash or dry cleaning due to concerns around fabric damage, consequently wearing and buying handloom fabrics less often.

To address these concerns and make everyday handloom care easier, Godrej has tested its AI-Powered advanced Front Load Washing Machines successfully for twenty five han-

BUDGET 2026

Gross tax revenue to improve 9.6%, capex to grow 10%: Report

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: India's gross tax revenue is projected to improve in FY27, rising by 9.6 per cent, marginally lower than projected nominal GDP growth of 10.1 per cent, a report said Friday.

The report from CareEdge Ratings said that direct tax collections are expected to see some improvement in FY27, aided by recovery in income and corporate tax collections. The government's capex is projected to grow 10 per cent to ₹12.3 trillion in FY27, while the fiscal deficit is expected to be budgeted at 4.2-4.3 per cent in FY27. "We expect gross borrowing to be in the range of ₹16-17 trillion in FY27; Net borrowing likely at ₹11.5-12 trillion," the report said.

Though GST rate rationalisation is expected to weigh on collections, GST revenues are likely to show signs of improvement. Non tax collections have been healthy this fiscal year aided by a higher Reserve Bank of India dividend, with non tax revenues up 20.9 per cent during the first eight months of FY26. The RBI dividend trans-



fer is likely to remain high at ₹2-Rs 2.5 trillion in FY27 compared to ₹2.7 trillion in FY26 and non debt capital receipts may fall short by ₹0.2 trillion in FY26, the firm forecasted.

The ratings agency noted that excise duty on tobacco products, effective February 1, 2026, is expected to support union excise duty growth in FY27.

"With higher-than-expected dividend transfer by RBI, we expect the non-tax revenues to overshoot the budgeted amount

of ₹5.8 trillion, by ₹0.3 trillion in FY26," the report said.

Another recent report said that Budget 2026 will maintain fiscal prudence and prioritise strategic, capex heavy sectors making defence sector the top beneficiary.

A pre budget survey of over 50 investment managers found that infrastructure ranked second at about 29 per cent, reflecting confidence in public capex and long term growth multipliers.

Air India Express awarded for enhancing domestic connectivity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Air India Express has been announced as the winner in the airline category at Wings India 2026, constituted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, government of India, in collaboration with FICCI and the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

The airline has been selected by the jury for enhancing guest experience, growing connectivity, delivering superior services, leveraging digital and technology, driving sustainability, and innovation. The award will be presented 28th January at Wings India, India's premier aviation event, in Hyderabad.

As per reports, Air India Express' network spans 45 domestic and 17 international destinations across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Gulf region. The airline now operates a fleet of over 100 aero planes, with over two-thirds of its fleet now comprising brand new Boeing and Airbus aircraft.

The career recently unveiled line fit and retrofit cabins featuring plush contoured leatherette seating, soothing mood lighting, a quieter cabin



experience, larger overhead bins for more cabin storage, and fast-charging USB-C and USB-A ports for every seat. In December, Air India Express ranked number one in on-time performance amongst all Indian airlines.

The airline has also made sustained investments in elevating its airport, onboard and digital experience. 'Gourmair' hot meals inspired by regional flavours and the industry's first customised fare options including India's only Lite (cabin-bag only) fare. The airline's network is anchored by its three largest hubs - Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai, which together form the backbone of its connectivity. These hubs enable seamless transfers, and improved schedule reliability, enhancing

AM/NS India's training for ITI students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koida, Jan 23: Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), under its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative Project 'Daksh', successfully concluded a two-day, industrial training visit in Ghorabhurani - Sagasahi mine of AM/NS India followed by knowledge sharing seminars and certificate distribution ceremony at Government ITI in Koida, Sundargarh during January 20-22, 2026.

The initiative was designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world mining practices, equipping students with practical technical expertise while fostering a strong culture of safety.

On the first day of the visit, 20 ITI students were trained at the Sagasahi mine, gaining hands-on exposure to stone processing, machinery, operations, and safety. On the next day, an additional 21 students from the Mines Machineries Trade visited the mine to learn about mining machinery, iron ore crushing, safety practices

and the slurry beneficiation project. On the third and last day, seminar and training sessions were organised for 165 ITI students which featured discussions by officers from AM/NS India on health and safety protocols, mining machinery operations, and best industrial practices.

The sessions were conducted by Jagadeesh Bhonagiri, Head - Health, Safety and Training, Sagasahi Mine, AM/NS India, and Danveer Prasad, Mechanical Engineer, Sagasahi Mine, AM/NS India. As part of the engagement, students showcased safety posters and slogans, which reaffirmed the role of awareness-driven initiatives in shaping responsible and safety-conscious industry professionals. Dr. Vikas Yadvendu, Head - CSR, AM/NS India, said, "This programme is a testament to AM/NS India's commitment to nurturing talent and building industry readiness among local youth. By combining technical training with safety awareness, we are empowering students to step confidently into the mining sector."

Silk India exhibition begins in City



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: With the arrival of the festive and wedding season, Odisha Art and Craft is once again ready to captivate the people of Bhubaneswar with its Silk India Exhibition. With the aim of offering a wide range of silk sarees suitable for wedding ceremonies and various other occasions at one place, Odisha Art and Craft has organized the Silk India Exhibition at Hotel Prachi, Janpath, Bhubaneswar being held from January 23 to February 1, 2026, and will re-

main open daily from 10:30 am to 8:30 pm.

This ten-day exhibition offers customers a variety of special sarees and dress materials ideal for festivals and weddings. Handloom sarees from 13 states are the main attraction of the exhibition. After the inauguration Friday, models showcased sarees designed by more than 150 weavers and designers from across India through a graceful ramp walk.

Speaking on the occasion, Manas Acharya, Managing Director of Odisha Art and Craft, said that the organization has

dlooms from different parts of India, ranging from Banarasi Silk and Patola Silk to Pochampally Ikat and Jamdani. The machine's gentle wash program is now proven to wash as many as twenty-five handloom fabrics with utmost

care for as many as 25 washes. The fabrics have been subjected not just to visual checks by a team but also examined under the microscope at 40x magnification, to assess the fabric's structural integrity for acceptable levels of wear and tear.

Commenting on this initiative, Kamal Nandi, Business Head - Appliances Division of Godrej Enterprises Group, said, "It is only when technology meets our traditions that we can preserve what matters and pioneer progress for generations. Indian handlooms need our collective efforts for its revival, and with our 'designed for India' washing machines, we encourage Indians to wear and flaunt their beautiful handlooms more often, with confidence and pride."

Big win for Men in Blue

Kishan's statement knock, Surya's welcome fifty give India 2-0 lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, Jan 23: Ishan Kishan justified his national recall with a sensational 32-ball-76 while captain Suryakumar Yadav scored his first fifty after 23 innings as India decimated New Zealand by seven wickets for a 2-0 lead in the five-match T20 series here Friday.

Ahead of the all important T20 World Cup, it all seems to be falling in place for India with Suryakumar (82 not out off 37) overcoming a prolonged lean patch and Kishan emerging as a destructive top-order enforcer. India were expected to chase 209 on a belter of a pitch but not with such ease after losing Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson by the second over of the chase.

Suryakumar and Shivam Dube (36 not out off 18) closed out the game in a canter as India gunned down the target in 15.2 overs.

Kishan, back in the side after a gap of more than two years, went berserk from ball one and ended with 11 fours and four sizzling sixes.

Suryakumar maintained the momentum generated by Kishan in the able company of Dube, who too collected his fair share of sixes.

At the start of the chase, Samson could not carry on for long despite being dropped at deep square leg on the second ball of the innings.

The pressure piled up on India when trump card Abhishek's mistimed flick off Jacob Duffy to be holed out at deep square leg.

The counter attack from Kishan tilted the game in favour of India. Earlier, Kuldeep Yadav regained form with two timely strikes in the middle overs as India limited New Zealand to 208



for 6. Rachin Ravindra (44 off 26) and skipper Mitchell Santner (47 not out off 27) took the attack to India in different phases of the game to ensure New Zealand got past 200-run mark.

At 111/3 in 10 overs on a true surface, New Zealand looked on course for a total well over 200 but India were able to pull things back. Shivam Dube, the seventh bowling option introduced in the 12th over, got rid of the in-form Daryl Mitchell off a slower ball to build pressure

on the opposition.

Santer ensued his team got 57 runs off the last five overs with a flurry of boundaries and a straight six off Hardik Pandya.

BRIEF SCORES	
New Zealand: 208 for 6 in 20 overs (Rachin Ravindra 44, Mitchell Santner 47 not out; Kuldeep Yadav 2/35) lost to India: 209/3 in 15.2 overs (Ishan Kishan 76, Suryakumar Yadav not out 82) by 7 wickets	

INDONESIA MASTERS

Sindhu, Lakshya bow out; Indian hunt ends in QF



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jakarta, Jan 23: P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen suffered straight-game losses to their respective opponents in the women's and men's singles quarterfinals, marking the end of Indian challenge in the USD 500,000 Indonesia Masters badminton tournament here Friday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, lost to top seed and world number four Chen Yu Fei of China 13-21 17-21 in the quarter-final contest that lasted 42 minutes to bow out of the Super 500 event.

With Friday's loss, Sindhu trails Fei 6-8 in head-to-head record. The Indian's last win over

Fei was way back in 2019.

In the men's singles, Lakshya, a 2021 world championships bronze medallist, was beaten 18-21 20-22 by Thailand's rising talent Panitchaphon Teeraratsakul in a close match that lasted 46 minutes. The 21-year-old Thai had also accounted for 2024 Paris Olympics bronze medallist Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the pre-quarterfinals. Kidambi Srikanth and Anmol Kharb had bowed out of the men's and women's singles competition Thursday.

The men's doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and M R Arjun has also lost in the pre-quarterfinals Thursday.

RANJI TROPHY

Tamil Nadu settled a solid first-innings at 286, riding on Pradosh's 78 and Siddarth's 56

POST NEWS NEWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Tamil Nadu strengthened their hold on the Ranji Trophy contest against Odisha with a disciplined all-round performance at the KIIT Cricket Stadium here. Finishing Day 2 with a commanding lead of 164 runs, the visitors built the advantage through solid batting depth and incisive bowling, keeping Odisha under sustained pressure.

Odisha's first innings folded for 148 in 51.2 overs, with Anil Parida top-scoring with a patient 56 off 128 balls. Sambit Baral chipped in with a handy 36, but the rest of the batting struggled to cope with Tamil Nadu's bowling discipline. R Sonu Yadav was the standout performer, ripping through the Odisha middle order with figures of 5 for 30 from 14.2 overs, while P Vidyuth provided effective support with two wickets.

In reply, Tamil Nadu piled on 286 in their first innings, powered by Pradosh Ranjan Paul's fluent 78 and Andre Sid-

Shrikrishna upsets veteran cueist Sitwala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bahadurgarh (Haryana), Jan 23: Young S Shrikrishna edged out fellow PSPB cueist and top seed Dhruv Sitwala in the quarterfinals of the senior men's competition at the National Billiards Championships here Friday.

The 25-year-old Shrikrishna, a former champion, played the big points well in a battle of equals to win a humdinger (4-3) and set up a semifinal meeting with seasoned campaigner Siddharth Parikh of RSPB. Parikh outplayed Rishabh Thakkar of Maharashtra 4-1.

In the other semifinal, reigning champion Sourav Kothari will play against young Rayaan Razmi. While Kothari defeated Brijesh Damani 4-2, Razmi prevailed by a similar margin over Dhvaj Haria.

After scoring a lopsided 3-0 win over veteran B Bhaskar in the quarterfinals, Shrikrishna seemed to continue from where he left off, running up a quick 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven frame clash.

However, southpaw Sitwala, a two-time Asian champion, hit back with runs of 139 and 130 to draw level. He even took a 112-44 lead over his younger rival in the decider before losing position. Shrikrishna then knit together a gritty 106 unfinished break under pressure to go through to the last-four stage.

Earlier in the morning, Aarav Sancheti's dominance over Rahul Williams continued as the Pune youngster scored a nervy 320-316 win to pocket the sub-junior boys' billiards title.

After trailing by about 30 points, Sancheti came good when it mattered to take a slender lead before being saved by the bell in the 90-minute title clash. This was his second title at the Nationals, and the 15-year-old is in with a chance to finish with a quadruple of trophies.

HOCKEY INDIA LEAGUE

Kalinga Lancers enter final

Alexander Hendrickx, top scorer for the home side, bags a brace by converting two penalty corners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Vedanta Kalinga Lancers booked their spot in the final of the Men's Hockey India League with a 2-1 win against Ranchi Royals at the Kalinga Stadium here Friday.

Alexander Hendrickx bagged a brace to give his side a 2-0 lead before Mandeep Singh pulled one back for the Royals.

Ranchi Royals began the game on the front foot, keeping possession and moving the ball around neatly to make inroads.

Having sustained the early pressure by staying steady at the back, Vedanta Kalinga Lancers grew into the game and eventually broke the deadlock after Hendrickx (12') converted his dragflick from a penalty corner, giving his side a 1-0 lead in the first quarter.

The Royals pushed forward in search of an equaliser, creating six circle entries and earning four penalty corners in the second quarter.

However, the Lancers continued to show why they're the most reliable defence in the league having conceded only eight goals thus far, keeping their opponents at bay to hold onto their one-goal advantage at half time.

It was an ideal start to the second half for the Lancers with Hendrickx (32') doubling their lead. The Belgian converted another penalty corner, rifling it into the back of the net to give his side a two-goal cushion.

Looking for a way back into the game, Ranchi Royals man-



Shilanand Lakra of Odisha stole the show as he scored twice for the Toofans against HIL GC

aged to pull one back after a cleverly executed variation from a penalty corner that saw Mandeep Singh (40') finish off the move to reduce the deficit with the score at 2-1 at the end of the third quarter.

The scoreline remained the same as the referee blew the final hooter.

Earlier in the day, Hyder-

abad Toofans defeated HIL GC 2-0 in the eliminator to book a spot in Qualifier 2.

Shilanand Lakra (16th, 39th) stole the show as he scored a brilliant brace to help his side progress ahead in the tournament.

It was Hyderabad Toofans who found the first goal in the 16th minute. Shilanand Lakra did well to win the ball in a dangerous position as he dribbled towards the goal and scored from a deflection.

In the 39th minute, Hyderabad Toofans were once again awarded a penalty corner. Amandeep Lakra stepped up and flicked the ball towards goal, and Shilanand Lakra was quick to pounce on the rebound, striking the ball into the net to extend the Toofans' lead.

HIL GC gave it their all in the final minutes of the match but Hyderabad Toofans showed great determination to keep a clean sheet and progress ahead in the competition.

Hyderabad Toofans will play the Qualifier 2 Sunday, while HIL GC will play next in the 3rd/4th place match Monday.

EUROPA LEAGUE

Villa edge Fenerbahce to enter round of 16

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: Aston Villa secured a place in the UEFA Europa League round of 16 with a game to spare after a 1-0 victory over Fenerbahce.

Jadon Sancho's first goal in Villa colours was enough to tie up all three points for Unai Emery's men on Matchday Seven, as he headed Matty Cash's cross home on 25 minutes.

Villa almost doubled their advantage shortly after the hour, Cash's long-range effort smacking the upright. The hosts stepped up their efforts to level the contest, with Marco Bizot forced into a number of saves, the pick of them denying substitute Talisca.

The win, coupled with results elsewhere, means that only a maximum of five teams can now overtake the second-placed Villans in the league phase table, ensuring the lowest they can mathematically finish is seventh.

A top eight spot sends Emery's charges straight through to the round of 16, skipping the last 32 play-off round, which will be contested in February.

It is the second season running that the Villans have secured a top eight finish in European competition and progressed straight through to the last 16, after finishing eighth in last season's Champions

League table before eventually reaching the quarter-finals.

Elsewhere, level on points coming into Matchday 7, Roma edged out Stuttgart at the Stadio Olimpico thanks to Niccolò Pisilli's goals late in each half.

In a high-energy game Stuttgart came closest first through Jamie Lewelling, before Roma youth product Pisilli struck after a defence-splitting pass from Matias Soule, UEFA reports.

Deniz Undav was unable to convert the best of Stuttgart's opportunities in the second half before Pisilli made sure of the result in added time. The result ensures both teams will at least contest the knockout phase play-offs.

In another action, Ryan Yates scored an own goal less than a minute after Morgan Gibbs-White missed a penalty for Nottingham Forest as Braga secured a vital win in Portugal.

Chances were few and far between in the first half, but the game came to life with Gibbs-White's missed spot kick followed by Yates inadvertently turning the ball into his own net less than 60 seconds later.

Ola Aina's powerful long-range strike rattled the bar before Pau Victor struck the post for the hosts and Elliot Anderson was dismissed late on for Forest.



Record win for Alcaraz in 100th Grand Slam match

With his win, the Spaniard improved to 87-13 at Slam level, tying Bjorn Borg for the best major record in 100 matches

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Melbourne, Jan 23: World No 1 Carlos Alcaraz earned a 6-2, 6-4, 6-1 victory against Corentin Moutet in his 100th Grand Slam match to reach the Australian Open fourth round here Friday.

With his win, Alcaraz improved to 87-13 at Slam level, tying Bjorn Borg for the best major record in 100 matches. The 22-year-old Spaniard has twice reached the quarterfinals in Melbourne.

The six-time Major winner has also surpassed legends, including Rafael Nadal and fellow ATP No 1 Club member



AUSTRALIAN OPEN

John McEnroe, who both went 86-14 across their first 100 major matches, as per ATP stats.

Novak Djokovic, a record 24-time major titlist and 10-time champion in Melbourne, went 79-21 across his first 100 Slam matches, while Swiss Roger Federer went 80-20. Alcaraz's great rival Jannik Sinner played his 100th major match (81-19) last year at Wimbledon, coincidentally against the Spaniard in the championship match. The Italian won that clash, ATP reports.

"It wasn't easy. When you play someone like Corentin, you don't know what's going to be next. That's really difficult to approach the match, but I had so much fun with it on the court. I think we both pulled off great shots, great points. I think

there were a few highlights in the match. I'm grateful to play this kind of match against him," Alcaraz said.

After leading 3-0 in the second set, Alcaraz dropped four consecutive games, but quickly regrouped and earned a crucial break at 4-4 to serve for a two-sets-to-love lead. He then raced to a double-break lead in the third set and applied the finishing touches to advance after two

hours and five minutes.

Alcaraz, who is yet to drop a set, will next play 19th seed Tommy Paul.

At just 22 years old, Alcaraz is a six-time major champion and is chasing more history. Should he claim his maiden Australian Open title, Alcaraz would complete his Career Grand Slam and become the youngest player to achieve that feat.

Experience vs Youth

Luxury brands have been getting airtime at the Australian Open as Aryna Sabalenka and Victoria Mboko advanced to the fourth round. When the top-ranked player in women's tennis meets one of the sport's rising teenage stars, though, it'll be all about the business of tennis. No 1 Sabalenka edged Anastasia Potapova 7-6 (4), 7-6 (7) and 19-year-old Mboko ousted 14th-seeded Clara Tauson 7-6 (5), 5-7, 6-3 to advance to the Round of 16. Sabalenka has won the Australian Open twice and reached the final here last year. She has also won two US Open titles. Mboko is making her Australian Open debut at Melbourne Park. There's been a bigger focus on fashion than usual at the tournament after Naomi Osaka's dramatic walk-on for her first-round match. So both had to field questions about endorsement deals timed to coincide with the year's first major - Sabalenka with Gucci; Mboko with Rolex - but the main focus Friday was, more pertinently, on a match-up between two players of vastly different experience.