



### Strong attitude

Actor Shruti Haasan grabs attention for shutting down a social media user who asked about her marriage plans

LEISURE | P2



### Yoon's office raided

South Korean police try to search President Yoon Suk Yeol's office but could not enter the main building

INTERNATIONAL | P10



### Gold reclaims sheen

Gold prices rally to reclaim the ₹80,000-level in the national capital driven by increased buying from jewellers and stockists

BUSINESS | P11



### Eves face whitewash

Opener Smriti Mandhana's elegant century goes in vain as India lose to Aus by 83 runs in the third Women's ODI to suffer a 0-3 series whitewash

SPORTS | P12



HOME COMING: Syrian families arrive to cross into Syria from Turkey at the Cilvegözü border gate, near the town of Antakya, southern Turkey

PTI PHOTO

## Malhotra assumes charge as RBI Guv



**Mumbai:** Sanjay Malhotra Wednesday took charge as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank

of India. Malhotra, a career bureaucrat, arrived at the Central bank's headquarter this morning, where he was welcomed by senior RBI staffers. The Central bank confirmed Malhotra's appointment through a post on the microblogging site X and also shared a few pictures. Malhotra, who recently served as the Revenue Secretary, signed the documents to take the charge of the important institution that performs a variety of roles. Deputy Governors Swaminathan J, M Rajeshwar Rao, and T Rabi Sankar were present when he assumed charge. Analysts are expecting the RBI to cut interest rates at the forthcoming policy review in February, and are of the opinion that Malhotra's appointment cements the possibility. **P9**

## Blast kills Taliban refugee minister



**Islamabad:** A suicide bombing in the Afghan capital Wednesday killed the Taliban refugee minister

and two others, Interior Ministry officials said. The explosion struck inside the ministry, killing Khalil Haqqani, the refugee minister, officials said. The officials provided no further details. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media. Khalil Haqqani is the uncle of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting interior minister who leads a powerful network within the Taliban. Haqqani was the most high-profile casualty of a bombing in Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power three years ago. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast.

# Rape accused on bail kills survivor

PNN & AGENCIES

**Jharsuguda/Rourkela, Dec 11:** A man, who was out on bail after being jailed for raping a minor girl, killed the victim, chopped her body into pieces and threw the body parts in different places, police said Wednesday.

According to the police, the accused, identified as Kunu Kissan (29) from Gadagaonmal village under Lephripara police limits in Sundargarh district, was arrested for allegedly raping the minor in Sundargarh district in August last year. The victim had lodged a rape case with Dharuadihi police station. He was released from the prison December 4 last year.

"A missing complaint was filed December 7 by the girl's family. We had taken up the investigation," Jharsuguda Superintendent of Police Parmar Smit Parshottamdas said.

CCTV footage showed the girl travelling on a motorcycle with two persons, whose faces were covered as they were wearing helmets, he said.



Though the girl was a native of Sundargarh district, she was staying at Jharsuguda town in her aunt's house and working at a beauty parlour.

"Using AI technology, we were able to trace the accused in Sundargarh. During interrogation, he admitted that he had killed the girl and threw her body parts in two different places," the SP said.

The accused first slit the throat of the victim using a sharp knife along National Highway-143, connecting Rourkela and Deogarh, and threw her body parts at Tarkera Nali and Balughat of Brahmani riv-

er, he said. Police, with help of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), launched a search operation in Brahmani river to trace the body parts.

After hours-long search operation, the body parts of the girl, including her head, were found, the SP said. The police arrested the accused and an associate of his and further investigation is underway.

During interrogation, the accused said he was planning to kill the girl since his release from jail in December last year on bail so that she doesn't give her statement before the court, the SP said. The victim was scheduled to testify in the court December 15.

He feared that he would be convicted in the case if the victim gave statement before the court, and had accordingly changed his motorcycle registration for executing the plan, the officer said. The accused and the victim had known each other for a long time, police sources said, adding that a DNA test will be conducted of the victim's body parts.

## Winter Session ends 16 days earlier than slated

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** The Winter Session of the state Assembly was adjourned sine die Wednesday, 16 days ahead of its scheduled conclusion. Speaker Surama Padhy adjourned the House sine die for an indefinite period. The session which began November 26, was scheduled to continue till December 31. However, it ended with just 12 working days. During the remaining period, there are a few holidays.

BJP MLA Ashok Mohanty said the House was adjourned sine die since there was no official work left. BJD legislator Pradip Disari, however, claimed, "The BJP government closed the House out of fear. They ran away from the Assembly fearing the opposition." During the session, the House passed a total of three bills including the Appropriation Bill.

The session had begun on a stormy note on the very first day with the Opposition members creating a ruckus over absence of 'secular' and 'socialist' from the preamble of the Indian

Constitution displayed in the Assembly complex on the occasion of the Constitution Day.

The issues of shortage of potatoes and Polavaram dam were also raised by the opposition Congress and BJD several times. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's statement on the alleged sale of government jobs during the previous BJD administration created a ruckus in the House.

The House Tuesday witnessed noisy scenes with the opposition protesting against alleged non-payment of salaries to around 60,000 women supporting staffers under the 'Mission Shakti' scheme.

On the last day of the session, issues like the Centre's move to delink the Waltair division from the East Coast Railway Zone also led to a war of words between the members of both treasury bench members and opposition MLAs.

Senior BJD member Ranendra Pratap Swain, however, objected to closing of the session before a discussion on the Odisha Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which was introduced in the House.



## Trump calls Trudeau 'Guv of the great state of Canada'

DURING LAST WEEK'S DINNER AT MAR-A-LAGO, THE PRESIDENT-ELECT REPORTEDLY TOLD HIM TO MAKE CANADA THE 51ST STATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AGENCIES

**Washington, Dec 11:** US President-elect Donald Trump took a jab at Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the social media platform Truth Social, describing him as the Governor of Canada.

Trudeau flew to Mar-a-Lago last week for a dinner with Trump to discuss the President-elect's warning to impose a 25 per cent tariff on Canada if its government failed to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and illicit drugs from the country into the United States.

In a post on Truth Social mocking the Canadian prime

minister, Trump said, "It was a pleasure to have dinner the other night with Governor Justin Trudeau of the Great State of Canada."

During the dinner, when Trudeau said that such a tariff would destroy the Canadian economy, the President-elect reportedly told him to make Canada the 51st state of the United States. The Canadians passed off the comment as a joke, but Trump has continued to play up the dig. Trump repeated this in an interview with NBC News over the weekend and again in the post Tuesday.

"I look forward to seeing the



Governor again soon so that we may continue our in depth talks on Tariffs and Trade, the results of which will be truly spectacular for all! DJT," Trump said in his post.

The President-elect's mockery of Canada and its leader is the latest salvo after his promise to impose steep tariffs on

Canadian exports, The New York Times reported.

Donald Trump is returning to world stage. So is his trolling.

Throughout his first term in the White House and during his campaign to return, Trump has spun out countless provocative, antagonising and mocking statements. There were his belittling nicknames for political opponents, his impressions of other political figures and the plentiful memes he shared on social media.

Now that he's preparing to return to the Oval Office, Trump is back at it, and his trolling is attracting more attention — and eyerolls.

## BJD questions CM silence on B'desh territorial claims

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Opposition BJD Wednesday criticised the BJP-led state government's silence on remarks by a Bangladeshi leader, who said the country has legitimate territorial claims over West Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha.

The issue was raised in the Assembly by BJD member Ganeswar Behera.

"A Bangladeshi leader has said the country has legitimate claims over Odisha, Bengal, and Bihar. While West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee strongly reacted to it, I am surprised that Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi is silent," Behera said.

"I do not know whether the Odisha CM is aware of the development or not. If he is aware and still silent, then it is unfortunate," Behera added, seeking a statement from Majhi. The BJD leader also questioned, "Is it Odisha's 'Asmita' (pride) to remain silent over such a remark against the state?"

In a strong statement, Banerjee had called the claim "absurd". "When you come to occupy our land, don't think we will have lollipops," Banerjee said Monday.

## 4 killed, 28 injured as van turns turtle



PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur, Dec 11:** At least four people, including three women, were killed and 28 others sustained injuries when a pickup van they were travelling in overturned in Gajapati district Wednesday, police said.

The accident took place at Chiting Ghat in Mohana police station area.

"The accident took place when 36 residents of Ramagiri village were going to Chandragiri in the pickup van to attend a funeral ceremony. The vehicle overturned when the driver applied brakes suddenly. The exact cause of the accident, however, is being investigated," Mohana police station inspector-in-charge Basant Kumar Sethi said.

The deceased were identified as Basanti Bhuyan, 65, Chandrama Bhuyan, 61, Radha Kudumba, 58, and Haribandhu Gamang, 60.

While two persons died at Chandragiri CHC, two others succumbed to their injuries at MKCG Medical College and Hospital, where they were referred for better treatment, a police officer said. The condition of at least five injured persons was stated to be critical, sources in the hospital said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Your secretarial staff is here, sir. They want to know if the historic no-trust motion against you will go on record or not



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

**GaneshaSpeaks.com**  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**  
Today, you will show everyone what you're capable of. You are likely to come up with great ideas and work strategies, which will prove productive. However, if appreciation doesn't come your way, Ganeshasays you must learn to take disappointment in your stride.

**TAURUS**  
This day you will be compelled to be resigned to your fate. Ganeshasays you must learn to take disappointment in your stride.

**GEMINI**  
You will end up having an argument with people owing to your aggressive nature. These people could slander your reputation on account of your enmity. However you will be able to defeat them. They will have to give up against your intellectual superiority. Be wary, says Ganeshasays.

**CANCER**  
You will make new friends. You will have a jolly time with them, but some worry or tension will nag you. But Ganeshasays that all worries will go away by evening, when you relax with friends.

**LEO**  
You will be seized by a desire to do something new for a change today. Your mood will be bright throughout the day. You will be able to achieve success owing to your energy and enthusiasm. The planets are in your favour, hence you can accept the challenges coming your way and prevail over them, says Ganeshasays.

**VIRGO**  
Expenditures will be like oil spills- wasteful and dirty. But cosmic energies and positivity are gathering wind today, and you should do well to make full use of them in your personal and professional life, says Ganeshasays.

**LIBRA**  
Libra : Ganeshasays today is the right day to get closer to your loved one. You will spend the evening with your beloved. Today you will be mentally very energetic too. Make the most of the day.

**SCORPIO**  
The day does not begin on a very good note as you seem to be in a belligerent mood. Be calm and patient as your hot temper may spoil a good deal. Limit your conversations and discussions with colleagues and friends, advises Ganeshasays. Practising meditation and yoga will bring you some respite towards the end of the day.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
No pains, no gains. So, when you go through a lot of turmoil and toil hard for your work, the rewards are definitely going to be fruitful, says Ganeshasays. Time for get together and soiree with family and friends! In a nutshell, a day with lot of fun activities.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your hands are full with plenty of projects and assignments. Finish them off as soon as you can and spend rest of the day refreshing your mind. Communicating with people of all walks of life will make you enhance your horizon of knowledge, feels Ganeshasays.

**AQUARIUS**  
You are in for a challenging day today. But, luck is by your side and you will be able to come out of the storm hale and hearty, assures Ganeshasays. If you are a businessman, you may enter into some major business venture, sign important contracts and take up new projects.

**PISCES**  
You need to tread cautiously today when it comes to matters related to business. Do not make any decisions in haste, or it could come back to haunt you at a later date. All financial dealings will need to be carefully monitored. Do not indulge in speculative activities or undue risk taking.



## SELENA GOMEZ TALKS ABOUT LONELINESS IN HOLLYWOOD

Actress-singer Selena Gomez, who has earned the best supporting actress Golden Globe nomination, has spoken up on the issue of the feeling of loneliness and getting isolated in Hollywood, reports *People* magazine. For others feeling lonely in Hollywood, Selena is ready to offer a helping hand.

## PAMELA'S BAYWATCH SWIMSUIT TO BE SHOWCASED IN EXHIBITION

Hollywood star Pamela Anderson's iconic fiery red swimsuit from *Baywatch* will be displayed at an exhibition at London's Design Museum. The 57-year-old wore the red bathing suit during her stint on the hit TV show between 1992 and 1997, reports femalefirst.co.uk.



# Shraddha recalls her tough times

**Mumbai:** Apart from his professional work, Shatrughan Sinha also used to grab headlines due to his personal life. The actor was at the peak in the '80s of his career when he was involved with two women in his life. He was romantically linked with his co-star Reena Roy when he announced his marriage with Poonam Sinha. Now, after all these years, in an interview with *Lehren Retro*, Shatrughan accepted two-timing with his wife and Reena Roy.

He said, "I have definitely made mistakes in my life. It was natural for a boy, who had come all the way from Patna to get lost in the glitz and glamour of the industry. I didn't know how to deal with stardom. People get lost in all this. I didn't have any guardian to guide me. However, after Poonam came in my life, she helped me a lot."

Explaining about his situation while he was in a love-triangle, the veteran actor said, "I don't want to take the name, but whatever was happening with this person. I am grateful to her. I have received lots of love from her, and have learnt a lot. I have no complaints."

Shatrughan 'guilty' for two-timing Poonam, Reena

ther Shakti Kapoor was quite clear

about the fact that she has to make it on her own. In a recent interview, Shraddha revealed how her father never requested anyone to cast her when she became an actress.

The actress said during an interview with GQ India, "Despite being from the industry, my father (Shakti Kapoor) wasn't making any calls to get me work. He was always a strong advocate of individualism. He said, 'I it on my you have to too. Face your tles. Don't rely on me.' This made me experience rejection and failure on a very personal level. Until *Aashiqui 2* happened, it was very difficult to convince people to cast me."

On work front, Shraddha was last seen in *Stree 2* which was a massive success at the box office. It also starred Rajkummar Rao, Abhishek Banerjee, Aparshakti Khurana and Pankaj Tripathi.

AGENCIES



## Shruti shuts down netizen

**Chennai:** Shruti Haasan, who is currently busy shooting her upcoming film *Coolie*, recently grabbed attention for her clever response to a social media user who asked about her marriage plans.

During an interactive Q&A session on Instagram, the actress was yet again questioned about her marriage plans by a curious fan. The user remarked, "Last time I also asked the same question, but you didn't respond. When will you marry?" Shruti did not lose her candid demeanor as she replied with a sharp yet humorous tone, "No, and stop asking." Her response quickly went viral, and many of her fans praised her strong attitude. This is not the first time the actress has

**Hyderabad:** Despite a challenging year, including the loss of her father and her ex-husband Naga Chaitanya remarrying Sobhita Dhulipala, Samantha Ruth Prabhu continues to radiate positivity.

The actress recently shared a post on her Instagram, predicting what 2025 holds for the zodiac signs Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn.

According to the forecast, these signs can expect a busy year, progress in their craft, financial stability, a loving partner, completion of big goals, opportunities to relocate, multiple income sources, and even fertility for those trying to conceive.

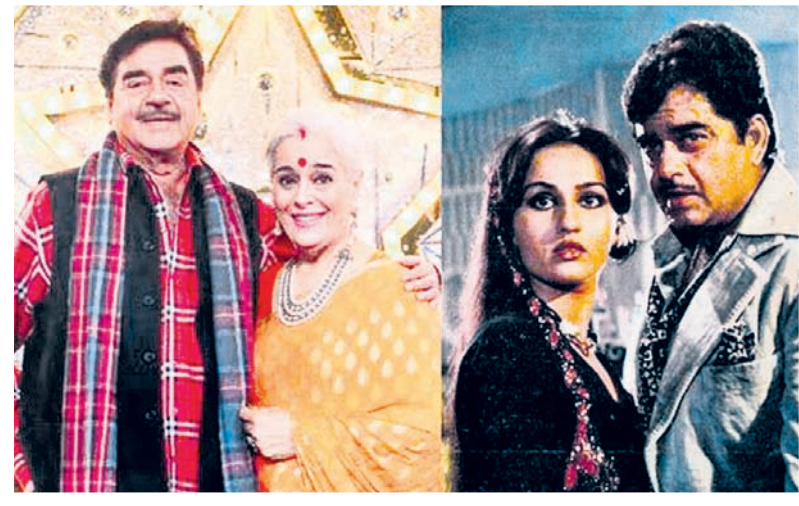
Samantha also shared the post with 'AMEN' written on top, expressing her hopes that these predictions come true for her. In a follow-up story, she posted a quote stating that some years are for winning, while others are for building character. These cryptic messages came after her ex-husband, Naga Chaitanya, remarried Sobhita Dhulipala.

Samantha has reportedly always dreamed of becoming a mother. Even three months before her separation from Chaitanya, she was planning to start a family. Despite the challenges she's faced, her desire to become a mom remains strong.

AGENCIES



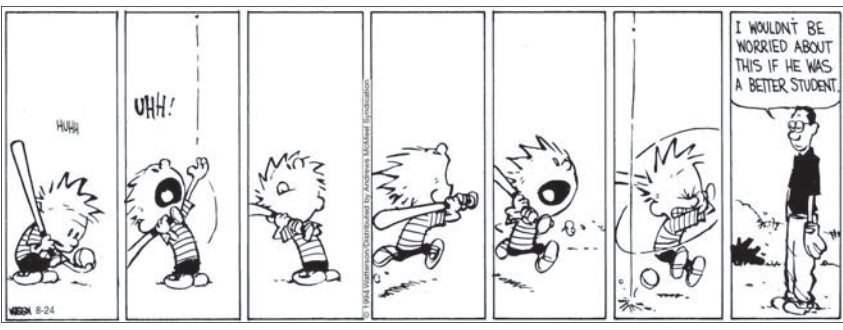
Samantha radiates positivity



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

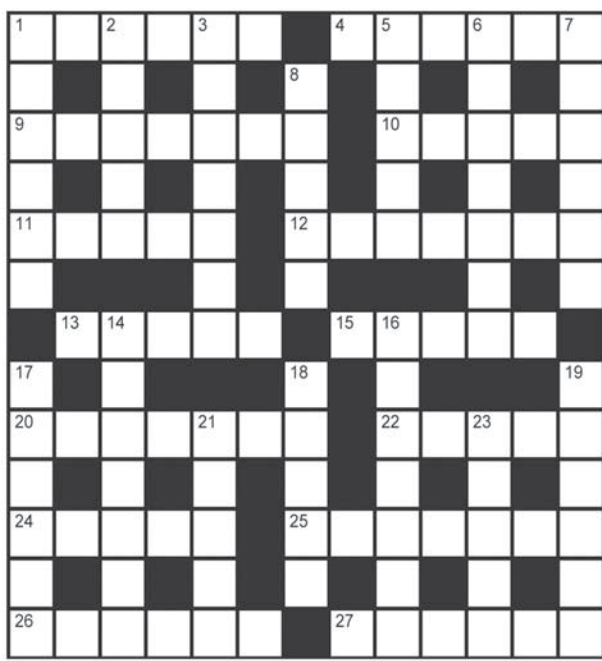


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Guanaco kin
  - 4 Succulent plant
  - 9 Agave plant liquor
  - 10 Bowler's headache
  - 11 Bouffe
  - 12 Butcher's tool
  - 13 Modify
  - 15 Barrel part
  - 20 Sewing aid
  - 22 Kind of trip
- Down**
- 24 Roulette bet
  - 25 Between's pal
  - 26 Rates of return
  - 27 Garden decorations
  - 1 Georges Simenon, e.g.
  - 2 Provoke
  - 3 Metal money
  - 5 Seating request
  - 6 Yafu starter (3,4)
  - 7 6th planet from the sun
  - 8 Angler's desire
  - 14 Free time
  - 16 Constrain
  - 17 Well-built
  - 18 Churchill
  - 19 Position
  - 21 Amalgam
  - 23 Expression

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.

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

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

D	E	F	I	C	I	T	N	E	P	A	L
E	O	O	A	E	E	A					
S	P	R	I	N	G	C	H	I	C	K	E
K	F	S	O	G	O	T					
S	K	E	T	C	H	E	E				
I	I		B			R					
E	N	T	R	E	E	P	O	I	S	O	N
N		N				U	U				
T	A	H	I	T	I	B	R	A	N	C	H
I	A	I	I	H	D	E					
C	A	R	B	O	N	D	I	O	X	I	D
E	E	U	E	O	A	L					
D	O	M	E	S		S	A	D	D	L	E

### SUDOKU

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



# 14 cos got ₹4,097cr power relief in 10 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** The state government has exempted electricity dues amounting to ₹4,097.67 crore for 14 industries under various schemes during the last 10 years, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo told the Assembly Wednesday.

In a written reply to a question from senior Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati, the Deputy CM, who is in charge of the Energy department, said the electricity duty for these 14 industries was exempted since the financial year 2015-16 under schemes such as the Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) and the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Policy. According to the statement submitted by Singh Deo, the state government exempted the highest electricity dues of ₹3,599.88 crore for Vedanta Limited, Jharsuguda, under the SEZ Policy, 2015, while Central PSU Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Paradip received an exemption of ₹314.03 crore. Additionally, Angul-based Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) was granted a waiver of ₹103.16 crore in electricity duty.

Apart from these exemptions, the Deputy CM further informed the House that the state government has also exempted electricity dues (through rebate on interest for pending bills) amounting to ₹1,324.83 crore for 36 industries under the One-Time Settlement Scheme, 2022 of the Energy department.

Under this scheme, the government waived electricity dues of ₹550.12 crore for Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), a unit of SAIL, ₹440.12 crore for IMFA Limited, Choudwar, and ₹203.91 crore for Central PSU National Aluminium Company (Nalco), the Deputy CM said.



Among others, the power bills of JSPL, Angul (₹35.76 crore), Aditya Aluminium Limited, Sambalpur (₹17.79 crore), Tata Steel Limited, Kalinganagar (₹16 crore), and Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh (₹10.13 crore) were also exempted by the state government, he informed.

According to data provided by the engineer-in-chief-cum-principal chief electrical inspector, power dues worth ₹1,096.32 crore were pending against 23 industries as of October this year, Singh Deo added.

The largest outstanding amount of ₹285.02 crore is pending from Jindal India Thermal Power Limited, Talcher in Angul district, followed by Visa Steel Limited, Jajpur, which has not paid ₹246 crore in electricity dues, he stated.

Similarly, Dhenkanal-based GMR Kamalanga Energy Limited, Maithan Ispat Nigam Limited, Jajpur, and Shyam Metals & Energy Limited, Sambalpur have not paid power bills of ₹179.35 crore, ₹85.31 crore, and ₹83.25 crore, respectively.

Other industries with pending electricity dues include Oswal Chemicals and

## BJD MLA demands pension for scribes

**B**JD legislator Goutam Buddha Das Wednesday raised the demand in the Assembly for pension and increased health coverage for journalists in the state. The first-time MLA, who was earlier a journalist, made the demand during the Zero Hour. “As I have worked as a journalist for more than 25 years, I personally know the problems faced by them. The previous BJD government had launched a health insurance scheme for the journalists and later enhanced the coverage from ‘3 lakh to ‘5 lakh per year,” Das said. He demanded that the state government raise journalists’ health coverage to ‘10 lakh per annum and include parents of the journalists under the scheme. The government should also make a provision for an annual pass system for working journalists so that they can freely enter the Secretariat for news coverage, he said. At present, only accredited journalists are allowed into the Secretariat, he said, adding, “The annual pass system has been stopped since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. It has not yet resumed.” He also demanded that the government bring a law for protection of working journalists, and establishment of a press academy. Later, speaking to reporters, he said, “After retirement, journalists face a lot of hardship. The pension amount they receive from EPF is negligible. So, there is a need to make a provision of pension for them.”

Fertilisers Limited, Paradip (₹79.95 crore), AMNS, Paradip (₹56 crore), Bhaskar Steel & Ferro Alloys, Sundargarh (₹23.67 crore), and Yazdani Steel & Power Limited, Jajpur (₹13.68 crore).

## BJD used women as vote bank: Pravati

**A** day after Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik accused the BJP government of conspiring to stop the salary of Mission Shakti staffers, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida Wednesday alleged that the previous BJD government used women as “vote bank”.

Parida, who is also the minister in charge of Women & Child Development and Mission Shakti, said this while replying to a debate on the admissibility of an adjournment motion in the Assembly. ‘Mission Shakti’ is a scheme for empowering women through promotion of SHGs to take up various socio-economic activities which were launched in 2001. “The Leader of the Opposition has alleged that the BJP is conspiring. Whoever says this has himself put women on the mountain of conspiracy and left them in a hanging position. The BJD government turned Mission Shakti movement like a polio-infected child,” Parida said.

Parida’s statement came

after Opposition members expressed concern over the plight of thousands of women agitators who have been spending winter nights under open sky on the streets.

The women belonging to different categories of Mission Shakti supporting staffers,

have been sitting on dharna for three days on Mahatma Gandhi Marg near the Assembly building demanding

their pending salaries for the last six months. However, the state government is of the opinion that their service period has expired in April this year and the previous BJD government did not renew their services. BJD members like RP Swain, Arun Sahoo and Sujata Sahu lambasted the BJP government and accused it of conspiring against the Mission Shakti movement.

Congress Legislature Party leader RC Kadam and Cuttack-Barabati MLA Sofia Firdous blamed both the BJD and the BJP for the plight of women.



**IN MEMORIAM:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi pays tribute to noted Tamil poet and freedom fighter Subramania Bharati on his birth anniversary during the ‘State-level Indian Language Festival’ at Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond is also seen

## Pradhan urges Nadda to set up NIPER in Odisha

*The initiative would greatly benefit pharmaceutical and biotech sectors across eastern India, says the Sambalpur MP*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Wednesday urged Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda to set up a National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) in Odisha.

In his letter to Nadda, the Sambalpur MP said establishment of NIPER in the coastal state would greatly benefit the pharmaceutical and biotech sectors across eastern India.

“The Odisha Bio-Tech Park in Bhubaneswar is the first-of-its-kind facility in eastern In-

dia, offering key resources like water, electricity and effluent treatment needed to support biotechnology industries,” Pradhan said, describing it as an ideal location for the establishment of NIPER.

He also pointed out that the proposed NIPER would help bridge gaps in pharmaceutical education and research, foster innovation, and create a skilled workforce, ultimately boosting India’s global competitiveness in the pharmaceutical industry.

Moreover, setting up of the NIPER in Odisha would support the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme in the pharmaceutical sector and contribute to the goals of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’, he said. Pradhan urged Nadda to consider Odisha as the next location for NIPER which would be a significant step forward in advancing pharmaceutical education and research in the country.



## Opportunity to Contribute towards Nation-building

### Let us strengthen the National Statistical System

NSO, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation conducts **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** to provide data on employment scenario in India

**Key Outputs of PLFS**

- Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)
- Worker Population Ratio (WPR)
- Unemployment Rate (UR)

**All Citizens are requested to co-operate with the enumerators of National Statistics Office (NSO) and provide accurate data**



**Identity of the individuals participating in the survey is kept confidential in all Reports/microdata of MoSPI**

For PLFS Report of NSO, MoSPI, please visit [www.mospi.gov.in](http://www.mospi.gov.in), microdata available at <https://microdata.gov.in/nada43/index.php/home>



₹10L BRIBERY

3 accused in CBI remand for 5 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** A local court here Wednesday allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to take the three accused in ₹10 lakh bribery case for five-day remand for further interrogation, while dismissing their bail petitions. The court's decision followed the Central agency's appeal for a remand of 10 days, as the trio's three-day remand ended Wednesday.

A senior CBI official said an Income Tax (I-T) team reached the City Wednesday to probe the aspects of illicit financial transaction. They would scrutinise the bank accounts of arrested men, including Chanchal Mukherjee - Group General Manager (GGM) of a Central PSU - and two others, to investigate any possible involvement of foreign funding.

Notably, the CBI had laid a trap near a luxury hotel in the City Saturday and caught the accused GGM receiving a bribe of ₹10 lakh which was delivered to him by the accused director of the said company in Bhubaneswar. The CBI sleuths r recovered the bribe money.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	28.1°	26.0°
Min Temp	18.2°	15.5°
Humidity	65%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST PARTLY CLOUDY SKY WITH HAZE.		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	81526.14	▲ 16.09
NIFTY	24641.80	▲ 31.75
DOLLAR	84.98	▲ 0.02
EURO	89.15	▼ 0.43
GOLD	₹78,935	▲ ₹597
SILVER	₹96,150	▲ ₹625

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Sujit Kumar Pradhan S/o Rajendra Pradhan, Resident of Sumandi, P.O.- Solabhagapentho, Dist.- Ganjam, Odisha declare by this Affidavit No.-A/5541 dated 10.12.24 that now onwards I shall be known as SUJIT PRADHAN for all future purposes.

By virtue of Affidavit No. - 3392, dtd. 3.12.2024 before the Executive Magistrate, Jajpur Road, I, Sanapala Narayanamurty, S/o- Sanapala Daleppa of Yethurallapadu, Andhrapradesh - 532474 at Present Mahatabnagar, Gosala, Jajpur Road, Dist- Jajpur hereby declare that my son name has changed from Sanapala Yaswanth to Yaswanth Sanapala. Henceforth, my son will be known as Yaswanth Sanapala for all purposes. Sanapala Narayana Murty

FREE TEA FOR DRIVERS

STA's move to reduce winter road accidents

The initiative, which runs between 3am and 6am, has been implemented on several major highways across the state

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar/Cuttack, Dec 11:** In a bid to curb road accidents during the winter season, particularly during late-night and early-morning hours, the State Transport Authority (STA) has introduced a proactive measure to ensure the safety of drivers. As part of this initiative, free tea is being distributed to drivers along highways to help them stay alert and refreshed.

The initiative, which runs between 3am and 6am, has been implemented on several major highways across the state. The Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) are coordinating this effort in collaboration with local volunteers. Identified hotspots such as roadside dhabas and toll gates serve as distribution points where tea is offered to drivers of long-distance vehicles, including buses, trucks, and taxis.

STA officials, staff, and volunteers are also utilising these interactions to educate drivers about the risks of driving under fatigue, drowsiness, and road hypnosis. Drivers are being informed about accident-prone areas, commonly referred to as black spots, and advised to remain cautious, especially



during foggy conditions that significantly impair visibility. Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur has issued directives to all RTOs through the Joint Commissioner (Road Safety) to ensure the continuity of this initiative until December 31. This directive aligns with the Commerce and Transport department's broader goal to enhance driver awareness and improve road safety standards across the state.

Thakur said that winter driving conditions present unique challenges, including dense fog that reduces visibility and increased vehicular movement in forested and hilly regions due to seasonal picnickers.

The STA has identified several factors contributing to road accidents, such as driver inexperience, negligence, fatigue, improper parking, and violations of road safety norms.

Additionally, road hypnosis—a condition where a driver remains physically alert but mentally unresponsive due to monotony—has been flagged as a significant cause of accidents.

Statistics indicate a spike in road accidents during December, particularly during nighttime and early morning hours. To combat this trend, the STA has intensified its efforts to ensure that drivers remain well-rested and vigilant. Alongside distributing tea, awareness campaigns are being conducted to sensitize drivers about safe driving practices.

The STA's initiative aims to bring about a noticeable reduction in road accidents during the winter months, thereby ensuring safer travel for all road users. The department remains committed to exploring and implementing innovative measures to safeguard lives on the roads.

Workshop on coastal protection at RDWU

RESHMI YADAV, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** A workshop dedicated to coastal environment protection was held Wednesday at Rama Devi Women's University (RDWU). The event was jointly organised by the university's departments of Biotechnology and Political Science, in collaboration with the Odisha Environment Congress (OEC).

The workshop was presided over by university vice-chancellor Aparajita Chowdhury, with former Utkal University vice-chancellor Vinayak Rath as the chief guest. The keynote address was delivered by, Odisha Environmental Society (OES) secretary Jay Krushna Panigrahi. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members and students.

Rath expressed concern over the increasing threats to Odisha's coastal areas and highlighted the potential negative impacts of proposed infrastructure projects, such as the construction of a coastal highway. "The development of the coastal highway will affect the environment and local communities," Rath noted.

Panigrahi provided insights into the adverse effects of climate change on Odisha's coastal ecosystem, stating, "Climate change is increasingly disrupting the fragile ecosystem along the coast." OEC organising secretary Sudarsan Das spoke on the state's environmental laws. Other notable speakers included OES general secretary Bhругu Buxipatra, who highlighted the role of youth in protecting the environment.



Prez confers Nat'l Panchayat Awards



Odisha emerges as a significant achiever, securing accolades in seven categories

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** President Droupadi Murmu presented the National Panchayat Awards to 45 recipients in New Delhi on Wednesday, recognizing their exceptional contributions to sustainable and inclusive development. Odisha emerged as a significant achiever, securing accolades in seven categories.

Speaking at the event, President Murmu emphasized the crucial role of villages in India's progress, stating, "With 64 per cent of our population residing in villages, their development and empowerment are essential for India to become a developed nation. Self-reliant and capable local bodies form the foundation of a developed India." She urged Panchayats to enhance self-reliance by developing local revenue sources, fostering self-confidence, and strengthening Gram Sabhas.

Highlighting the role of women in governance, she remarked, "It is encouraging that women representatives are driving positive changes at the grassroots level through Panchayati Raj institutions."

Among the winners, Keluapalli Gram Panchayat in Ganjam received the Healthy Panchayat Award for its robust health initiatives, while Sahapur Gram Panchayat in Ganjam was honoured for its infrastructure advancements. Chhatrapur Block Panchayat, also in Ganjam, earned the Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Puraskar for exemplary governance.

Koraput district was recognised as the Best District Panchayat for community-driven initiatives, and Sundargarh's Kasira Gram Panchayat won the Gram Urja Swaraj Vishesh Panchayat award for sustainable energy efforts. Additionally, Kendrikela Gram Panchayat was commended with the Carbon Neutral Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar, and the State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (SIRD & PR) received the Best Panchayat Institution Award.

7 green energy projects get nod

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** The state government Wednesday approved seven renewable energy projects worth ₹1,386.09 crore.

The single-window committee (SWC) of the Energy department headed by Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev approved these projects with a cumulative capacity of 192.41 mega watt (MW) aimed at strengthening Odisha's sustainable energy infrastructure, an official statement said.

The projects with a cumulative capacity of 192.41 MW are expected to strengthen the state's sustainable energy infrastructure

The approved projects include a 99 MW wind power project, five ground-based solar projects of 91.77 MW and one rooftop solar project of 1.64 MW, it said.

These projects will leverage Odisha's natural potential for renewable energy generation, emphasising the state's commitment to achieving its renewable energy goals under the Odisha Renewable Energy Policy-2022, the department said.

Speaking on the occasion, Dev emphasised the importance of renewable energy in driving sustainable economic growth. He reiterated the government's commitment to facilitating investments and ensuring timely implementation of approved projects.

So far, the SWC has given approval for investment proposals worth ₹9,781.47 crore for a total capacity of 1,441.79 MW in the renewable energy sector.

H&UD min visits TTS site in City



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra Wednesday visited the Temporary Transit Station (TTS) near Sainik School to review garbage management efforts. The minister stated that the processing of the significant amount of waste at the site would be completed within a month.

Minister Mahapatra emphasised that the ongoing treatment process aims to minimize odour and ensure a long-term solution in the future. He noted that less waste would be stored at the station moving forward, and a meeting under Chief Minister Mohan Majhi would be convened to establish a permanent plan to address the issue.

The minister also highlighted a contract signed by Indian Oil

to develop a biogas plant that will use the waste collected at the site. "We are here to find solutions to the garbage problem. The treatment process has started to reduce odour and lessen the volume of waste stored at the station," Mahapatra said.

Additionally, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) ceased transporting waste to the Bhuasuni landfill as of May 17, 2023, following directives from the National Green Tribunal. Presently, BMC generates approximately 800 tons of waste daily, with 384 tons being wet waste and 416 tons dry waste. Waste management is facilitated through 37 Micro Composting Centers (MCCs) for wet waste and 22 Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) for dry waste.

The TTS processes over 550 tons of waste daily, using windrow technology for 250-300 tons of wet waste, recovering recyclables for authorized recyclers, and converting non-recyclables into Refused Derived Fuel (RDF) for transport to the Raigangpur cement plant. From December 2023 to date, BMC has processed 150,000 tons of waste, including 100,000 tons of RDF sent to Dalmia Cement Factory.

Odisha shines at 9th Int'l Gita Mahotsav in Haryana



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Odisha's classical dance, Odissi, and its vibrant folk dances have captivated audiences at the ongoing 9th International Gita Mahotsav in Kurukshetra, Haryana. The cultural stage at the Odisha pavilion has emerged as a major attraction, drawing praise from visitors for its rich artistic offerings.

Highlights of the performances include the Odissi dance recital 'Ahe Nila Shaila', which beautifully showcased Jagannath culture. Folk dances such as Dalkhai and Rasarkeli had spectators tapping their feet, while the Pashu Mukha dance brought mythological themes like Hari-Arjuna (Nabagun-

jar) and Mahishasurmardini to life. The Kandhei Nacha (puppet dance) from Ganjam district was particularly popular with children, adding a playful charm to the showcase.

Culture Minister Surjya Banshi Suraj lauded the performers, stating, "Odisha's dance traditions are timeless. They reflect the essence of our rich Odia culture and heritage. The mesmerising performances at the Gita Mahotsav offer audiences a unique opportunity to connect with Odisha's cultural legacy."

As the state partner for this year's Gita Mahotsav, Odisha has gone beyond dance to highlight its cultural diversity. The pavilion features exhibitions of traditional arts, crafts, textiles,

cuisine, and tourist attractions, drawing admiration from Indian and international visitors alike.

Daily performances of classical Odissi and folk dances such as Gotipua, Ghoda Nacha, Dhemsa, Ghumura, and Bajasol bring Odisha's vibrant traditions to life. Each dance narrates stories deeply rooted in the state's cultural and historical legacy.

The folk dances Dalkhai and Rasarkeli, traditionally performed during festivals like Nuakhai and Puspuni, received widespread applause for their dynamic rhythm and expressive storytelling. International visitors have been especially impressed by the intricate choreography and the narrative depth of the performances.

The festival, first held in 2016, is a celebration of cultural and artistic heritage. This year's edition runs until December 15, with Odisha's pavilion, inaugurated December 5, standing out as a testament to the state's commitment to preserving and promoting its artistic legacy on a global stage.

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# Nayagarh elephant deaths spark concern



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Dec 11:** The forests of Nayagarh district and Mahanadi Wildlife Division are increasingly becoming unsafe for elephants as Khurda forest division’s Ranpur range and Nayagarh forest division – both in this district – have reported 18 jumbo deaths in last 13 years. According to reports, most of these majestic creatures are falling victim to poaching. Six elephant deaths were recorded in Ranpur forest range, while Nayagarh forest division and Mahanadi Wildlife Division reported 12 fatalities together. The timeline of deaths reveals a disturbing trend. Reports suggest that barring Ranpur forest range, one death each occurred in 2011-12 and 2012-13, two deaths in 2014-15, four in 2015-16 (the highest during this period), one death in 2017-18, two deaths in 2019-21 and one in 2023-24 in Nayagarh district and Mahanadi Wildlife Division. The highest number of elephant deaths (four) occurred in 2015-16. This alarming pattern

suggests lapses in forest management and lack of proactive measures to protect elephants. Wildlife activists and locals have criticised the Forest department for its alleged indifference towards elephant conservation. Allegations of poor oversight, unmotivated personnel, and insufficient action to address recurring threats have further fueled dissatisfaction. Moreover, the lack of systematic efforts to raise awareness or implement effective solutions has left people deeply concerned. The most troubling aspect of this crisis is the persistent mystery surrounding the causes of elephant deaths. This has left the conservationists perplexed whether enough is being done to ensure the safety and survival of these gentle giants. Efforts must intensify to uncover the root causes, prevent further losses, and protect the elephants that symbolise India’s rich wildlife heritage, said a few wildlife activists. Lack of food and water in forests is becoming increasingly evident. Further, human settlements encroaching on forests obliterate the traditional paths and habitats, resulting in escalation of human-wildlife conflicts. Notably, a tusker was spotted near the residential offices of Nayagarh divisional forest officer (DFO) and the District Collector a few months ago. Similarly, during the harvest season for paddy and sugarcane, several elephant herds from the forests of Ranpur forest range in Khurda forest division, forests of Nayagarh and Mahanadi Wildlife Division frequently approach the nearby villages, causing significant damage to crops and properties. However, most of the farmers do not get adequate compensation for crop losses caused by elephants. This often leads to man-animal conflicts as reports suggest that some farmers, out of anger, have resorted to harming or killing elephants. The pachyderms frequently die due to poisoning and electrocution on their migratory paths. A recent instance of such an incident occurred in Biluapada Ghati area of Baisipalli proposed reserve forest under Dasapalla forest range. In this case, a tusker was killed by electrocution. Similarly, animals are often targeted using poisoned food, traps, and even gunfire. When contacted, environmentalists and wildlife activists Bibhuti Prasad Das, Sanjay Sahu and Antaryami Sahu suggested crucial measures to prevent such tragedies. They emphasised the need for providing adequate food and water to elephants in forested areas.

# state



**BOAT RACE:** Fishermen from 10 villages participate in a boat race at Satiguda reservoir in Malkangiri district on the occasion of district level cultural festival Malyabanta Mahotsav, Wednesday

## Man killed in bear attack

**Dabugaon:** A bear mauled a man to death at Medana village under this block of Nabarangpur district early Wednesday morning. The deceased was identified as Banamali Majhi, 54. According to reports, Majhi had gone to a nearby field to relieve himself when the wild animal attacked him. His screams alerted locals, who chased the bear but the latter disappeared into the nearby forest. The locals then rushed a critically-injured Majhi to Dabugaon community health centre (CHC) in an ambulance, where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival. Hiranya Majhi, the younger brother of the deceased, filed a complaint with Dabugaon police who registered a case (36/24) and started an investigation. The body was handed over to the family after a post-mortem was conducted.

# Jumbo attacks claim 2 in Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul, Dec 11:** Two people, including a woman, were killed in separate incidents of elephant attacks in this district Wednesday. Sources said Mandodaga Sahu, a woman from Baghuaboli village under Bagadia police limits in Chhendipada forest area, was harvesting paddy on her farmland when an elephant from a 22-member herd came there, grabbed her with its trunk and trampled her. Tensions flared in the village as locals surrounded the police and forest officials, demanding compensation for the kin of the



deceased. The protesters allowed the body for conduct of a post-mortem after they got assurances from officials that her family would be provided with

₹60,000 and other government assistance within 24 hours. In another incident, Brundabana Sahu, 59, from Boudabada village under Kaniha police limits, was killed by a tusker on National Highway 53 near Bhalubasanala. The incident occurred when Sahu was on his way to Bajrakote Haat early Wednesday morning. Enraged locals blocked the road for four hours demanding compensation for the victim’s family and a government job for one of the family members. The blockade was withdrawn after officials assured the protesters of compensation.

## 108 Ambulance staffers shut down GPS in protest

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, Dec 11:** Staffers of the government’s 108 Ambulance service have launched a protest raising several demands at the Sub-divisional Hospital here Wednesday. They have demanded wage revision, reduction in duty hours, and most importantly, reinstatement of the sacked 100 employees. The staffers have shut down GPS facility in the ambulances, resulting in complete disconnection of contact with the control centre. The agitating 108 Ambulance employees said that they are prepared to provide the services without GPS till their demands are conceded. However, it is not possible for general public to establish contact with ambulance without active GPS facility. Due to the disruption in the free emergency health services, patients are forced to look for alternative arrangements to get their patients to the hospital, which could be life threatening for critical patients.

# Chilika: A fragile ecosystem at risk of collapse

AKASH RANJAN RATH

Chilika, famous for its rich natural heritage and beautiful ecosystem, is Asia’s largest brackish water lagoon, a Ramsar site, and one of the biodiversity hotspots in the country. It’s a unique habitat that supports 24 species of mammals, 221 species of birds, 61 species of reptiles, 30 species of decapoda, and 136 species of mollusca. Some critically endangered and endangered species such as Pallas’ fish eagle, spoon-billed sandpiper, bar-tailed godwit, Barkudia insularis, finless porpoise, Irrawaddy, bottlenose, humpback dolphins, fishing cats and many more are found here. Chilika is also home to over 700 species of plants including seven rare and 11 endemic ones. Almost 80-90 per cent of Irrawaddy dolphin population resides here because they prefer water less than 20m deep, abundant food supply, better water quality, isolation and to stay close to fresh water and

sea mouth. It’s a diverse habitat of fresh and salt water, shoreline, rocky islands, salt marshes and spits, sandbars and rivers like Daya, Bhargavi, Ratnachira, Luna, Kusumi, Bada, Rushikulya meet the sea here. The ecosystem provides livelihood to more than two lakh fishermen in various ways. Already climate change, habitat destruction, illegal prawn culture, pesticide contamination and poaching are going on for decades, causing serious damage to this fragile ecosystem. Any further pressure on it will affect the health of the lagoon and ultimately lead to its disappearance. The majority of residents of this region belong to vulnerable communities, primarily comprising poor fishermen who rely entirely on Chilika for their livelihood. Their dependence spans various activities including fishing, boating for transportation and tourism like bird and dolphin watching. A large scale project such as the proposed two-lane coast-



al highway (NH-516A) over Chilika, connecting Gopalpur and Satapada, in such a sensitive region will undoubtedly impact its ecological health. The construction of concrete structures, vehicular pollution (noise, artificial light, plastic waste) and 24\*7 activities will introduce significant environmental stress. Additionally, activities such as drilling, risk of oil spill, smoke emissions could cause irreparable damage to Chilika’s fragile ecosystem over time. Like other cetaceans, Ir-

rawaddy dolphins are highly sensitive to noise and artificial light. In Chilika lagoon, they are geographically isolated and are accustomed to this area. Habitat fragmentation and various forms of pollution are likely to have a significant impact on their behaviour, migration, communication, hunting and resting periods. Likewise, migratory and residential birds will experience stress, particularly at night during their feeding, resting and perching time. Same will happen with nocturnal mam-

als and other species. The potential consequences of such a project include a decline of diversity due to reduced bird activity, drop in fish population and possible endangerment of dolphins, which are vital to the lake’s biodiversity. This proposed project could severely impact the livelihood of residents. Tourism could also partly impact as some visitors may opt to explore this Ramsar site on vehicle. Boating trans-

port will be hugely affected, rendering thousands jobless. Just like the pollution in the areas surrounding the Mahandi, Kathajodi, Daya and other bridges, the peripheral zones of this bridge too will become polluted with polythene, cigarette butts, alcohol and water bottles, wrappers and remnants from worship rituals.

*The writer is ex-Honorary Wildlife Warden, Puri.*

## March 2025 deadline for Jamunanaki bridge



RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

**Rourkela, Dec 11:** If things go as per plan, the Jamunanaki bridge, which was supposed to be completed before the Hockey World Cup 2023, will be completed in March 2025, according to sources at the Public Works department. The bridge being constructed at a cost of ₹22 crore is aimed at connecting Rourkela with Kuanrmunda. However, there has been an inordinate delay in the construction work. The bridge, which was supposed to be completed before the Hockey World Cup last year, could not be completed after one year and eleven months. Now, the department expects it to be completed by March 2025, though only half of the construction is over till date. Once the bridge is completed, it will provide access to Biramitrapur through Kuanrmunda. Being constructed with District

Mineral Foundation (DMF) fund, the bridge originates from Jamunanaki in Kuanrmunda and lands near Panposh Sports Hostel. Significantly, the construction of the bridge began in 2021 and the initial deadline for its completion was before the Men’s Hockey World Cup. “The workers are going down up to 100 ft under water, as the design necessitates, and this is causing the delay,” said assistant chief engineer of PWD Manoj Mahanand. He was hopeful that the bridge would be over by March 2025. Explaining further about the delay in the work, he said, “We are unable to work for six months during and after the monsoon as this is a very deep place. Besides, the deep sinking is also delaying the work.” Once the bridge is completed, residents of Chhend will gain direct access to National Highway 143, said sources.

## Man held in Balasore for theft in Bangalore

**Balasore:** A 22-year-old man was arrested in this district for allegedly stealing jewellery worth over ₹70 lakh from the house of a doctor in Bangalore where he worked as a domestic help, police said Wednesday. The accused was nabbed from his village in Khaira area of the district on Tuesday, they said. The incident came to light when a jewellery shop owner at Khaira alerted the police about a man who tried to sell gold and diamond ornaments, an officer said. When the shop owner enquired more about the jewellery, he fled, raising suspicion, police said. He was traced with the help of CCTV camera footage, the officer added.

## E-Procurement Notice for Road Works Identification No. 03/SERW/BLS/2024-25

1. Name of the Work	: Roads
2. Total No. of Works	: 53 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost	: Estimated Cost Rs.5.689 to Rs.49.304 lakh
4. Class of Contractor	: 'D', 'C' & 'B' Class
5. Time of Completion	: 1 Month (One Calendar Month)
6. Other Details	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender in the Office of the Addl. Chief Engineer, R.W. Division, Balasore
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Balasore	03/SERW/BLS/ 2024-25	13.12.2024 at 11.00 A.M.	21.12.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.	21.12.2024 upto 1.00 P.M.	21.12.2024 at 5.30 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in).  
OIPR-25108/11/0003/2425 Sd./- Addl. Chief Engineer, R.W. Division, Balasore

## GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF PANCHAYATIRAJ & DRINKING WATER OFFICE OF THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, PANCHAYAT SAMITI, SEMILIGUDA, DIST.: KORAPUT e-Procurement Notice No. 01/2024-25

**PERCENTAGE RATE e-TENDER** Date: 04.12.2024  
No. 4997/2024  
No. 1-355: The Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti, Semiliguda, Dist.: Koraput, PIN - 764036 (Odisha) (for and on behalf of Governor of Odisha) invites “PERCENTAGE RATE Bids” IN SINGLE COVER SYSTEM, in electronic tendering system for the construction works detailed in the table.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Name of the Scheme	Approximate Value of Work Excluding GST	Class of Contractor	E.M.D. (Rs.)	Cost of Tender Documents	Period of Completion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Construction of Addl. Class Room at Block Colony PS, Semiliguda	S&ME Deptt.	11,38,615/-	"C" & "D"	11,400/-	6000/-	6 (Six) Calendar Months
2	Construction of Addl. Class Room at P.Muthai P.S, P.Muthai GP	S&ME Deptt.	11,65,590/-	"C" & "D"	11,700/-	6000/-	6 (Six) Calendar Months
3	Construction of Addl. Class Room at Anchalika High School, Kunduli	S&ME Deptt.	12,79,043/-	"C" & "D"	12,800/-	6000/-	6 (Six) Calendar Months
(3 Nos. of Work only)							
Sl. No.	Description				Critical Dates		
(i)	Period of availability of bid documents for Online bidding				09.12.2024 to 23.12.2024 upto 17.30 hours		
(ii)	Last date & time of seeking clarification				23.12.2024 upto 17.30 hours		
(iii)	Last date & time of online bidding				23.12.2024 upto 17.30 hours		
(iv)	Date & time of opening of online Bid				24.12.2024 at 16.00 hours		
(v)	Transparent Lottery (If required)				24.12.2024		
1. Bid documents consisting of specification, the bill of quantity, tender call notice including the estimated cost, tender value, bid security/EMD, cost of bid documents, required class of contractor, completion time etc. are available in the e-procurement portal/website <a href="https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a> .							
OIPR-19066/11/0001/2425				Sd./- Block Development Officer, Semiliguda			

## AN INVESTOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS INITIATIVE

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**Date and Venue:**  
Friday, 13th December 2024; 6:30 p.m. onwards.  
at The Sarovar Court, Ispat Market, Ambagan Circle, Bank street, Sector 19, Rourkela - 769 005, Odisha.  
For registration, please contact: Ranjit Malik, Mobile: 99370 88035.  
Registration is compulsory.  
The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
No walk-ins will be allowed.  
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Visit [https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how-to-know-more-about-the-process-to-complete-a-one-time-know-your-customer-\(KYC\)-requirement-to-invest-in-mutual-funds](https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how-to-know-more-about-the-process-to-complete-a-one-time-know-your-customer-(KYC)-requirement-to-invest-in-mutual-funds). Investors should only deal with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website ([www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html](http://www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html)). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMC's and / or Investor Relations Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints directly with the AMC's, if they are unsatisfied with the resolutions given by AMC's they may raise complaint through the SCORES portal on <https://scores.gov.in>. SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint online with SEBI and subsequently view its status. In case the investor is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaints raised directly with the AMC's or through the SCORES portal, they may file any complaint on the Smart ODR on <https://smartodr.in/login>.  
Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

## CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KERALA

(Established under the Central Universities Act, 2009)  
Tejaswini Hills, Periyar P.O., KASARAGOD-671320  
No. CUK/RC/FO/2023 14.11.2024  
**EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION (NON-TEACHING)**  
Online applications are invited from the eligible Indian nationals for filling up the post of **Finance Officer** on direct basis. The notification containing full particulars such as number of posts, notification no., category, essential qualifications, experience, pay, details of submission of online application etc. are available at the University website: [www.cukerala.ac.in](http://www.cukerala.ac.in). The last date for receipt of online application is **31.12.2024, 5.00 PM**.  
CBC-21353/12/0001/2425 REGISTRAR

## GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-849 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER

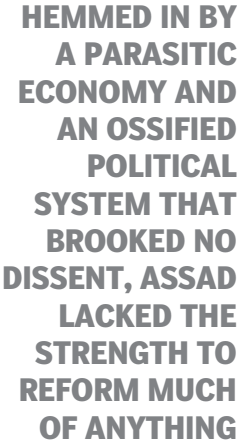
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, DHENKANAL, KAMAKHYANAGAR  
E-Mail: [rw.kamakhyanagar@yahoo.co.in](mailto:rw.kamakhyanagar@yahoo.co.in)  
**E-Procurement Notice No. 13 Road Work / 2024-25**  
1. Name of the Work : Road Works  
2. Total No. of Works : 2 (Two) Nos.  
3. Tender Cost : Rs.8.40 to 12.61 Lakhs (Approx.)  
4. Class of Contractor : “C” & “D” Class  
5. Period of Completion : 2 Calendar Months  
6. Availability of Tender : 16.12.2024 at 11.00 A.M. to Online for Bidding 22.12.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.  
7. Last date & time of seeking tender clarification : 21.12.2024 upto 4.00 P.M.  
8. Date & time of opening of tender : 23.12.2024 at 11.00 A.M.  
Other details can be seen from the website: <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.  
Sd./- Superintending Engineer  
R.W. Division-II, Dhenkanal  
Kamakhyanagar  
OIPR-25094/11/0016/2425





## WISDOM CORNER

ECKHART TOLLE



**THE LEGAL  
SYSTEM  
OFFERS  
MULTIPLE  
LAYERS OF  
APPEAL,  
OFTEN USED  
BY LITIGANTS  
TO DELAY  
COMPLIANCE**

According to the National



The legal framework in India grants robust powers to the judiciary to enforce compliance with its orders. Articles 141 and 144 of the Constitution establish that the law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts and that all authorities are duty-bound to assist in its enforcement. The Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, provides the judiciary with the power to penalise individuals for civil or criminal contempt, which includes willful disobedience of court orders. However, despite these provisions, actual instances of stringent punishment for disobedience remain limited. Courts often exercise caution, granting extensions or allowing appeals in the interest of procedural fairness, which can lead to delays that ultimately undermine the

Establishing a dedicated compliance unit within the judiciary could provide a systematic approach to tracking

*The writer is General Secretary, Confederation of Central Govt. Employees and Workers, Odisha State Coordination Committee, Bhubaneswar*

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**SPECTRUM NATION**

# Whither social & economic justice

It needs to be mentioned here that a section of fundamental-



## Champion of Earth

**Sir, India's veteran ecologist and nature scientist Madhav Gadgil has been named as one of the six 'Champions of the Earth' by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for 2024. He is renowned for his seminal work in the ecologically fragile Western Ghats, which is a unique global biodiversity hotspot. Gadgil made an extensive study on Western Ghats chairing the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel in 2011 and came out with a list of grave findings for the region. The panel's report which is popularly known as the Gadgil report recommended in 2011 that the entire hill range be declared an ecologically sensitive area and recommended a ban on mining, quarrying, industries, new thermal power plants, hydro-power projects, and large-scale wind energy projects. Gadgil's bold and honest recommendations faced opposition from some of the state governments, political bigwigs, industries and local communities. Braving all odds he championed for the protection of the planet and the environment. Gadgil's research has helped to protect marginalised people, promote community-driven conservation of ecosystems and influence policymaking at the highest level.**

*M Pradyu*, KANNUR

## China's climb down

Sir, It is good to know that China has begun to understand its limitations across the border. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's statement in the Parliament has clearly outlined New Delhi's firm commitment towards stitching bilateral relations and, at the same time, remaining resolute on quite a few of its already announced stands on the issue. Notwithstanding its earlier bravado, following the fresh understanding in October on the Ladakh standoff, Beijing has certainly climbed down over its stance. Jaishankar underlined the main principles that should govern the new found bonhomie between the two sides. Going back on the present status quo, especially with respect to the LAC, cannot be tolerated, and honouring all past agreements on the disputed issue cannot be compromised, at any rate by India. Of late, the leaders of both sides have had a flurry of diplomatic activities to stabilise bilateral ties, and that seems to have paid off.

*Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA*

## Letters

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### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate,  
Bhubaneswar-751010








of the day

quote

Recently when IT Minister (Nara Lokesh) went to America, he went to Google campus and requested them. And the result of that is today Google has (agreed to come to Vizag). We signed an MoU (agreement) before coming here. We are looking at a big opportunity in AI



All-round development of the people of the state is possible only with mutual cooperation between the Centre and the state. We all are in favour of this belief. Our government will work to carry forward the healthy tradition of the federal structure



It is a happy coincidence that today, on the occasion of International Gita Jayanti, Jankalyan Parv and Mukhyamantri Jankalyan Abhiyan are being launched



SHORT TAKES

**NIA searches premises of Arsh Dala associates**

**New Delhi:** In a crackdown on the terrorist-gangster nexus case, the National Investigation Agency conducted searches on the premises of the alleged operatives of the proscribed Khalistan Terrorist Force and those connected to Canada-based Arsh Dala, in Punjab and Haryana Wednesday. The NIA sleuths swooped down at the premises of suspects linked to arrested accused Baljeet Maur and those connected with Dala and Khalistan Terrorist Force (KTF) in Bhatinda, Muktsar Sahib, Moga, Ferozepur, Sangrur and Mansa in Punjab and Sirsa in Haryana, officials said.

**India, UAE to hold strategic dialogue**

**New Delhi:** India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will carry out a comprehensive review of their strategic ties Thursday as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will host his counterpart from the Gulf nation Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan for wide-ranging talks. Al Nahyan, also the deputy prime minister, is paying a three-day visit to India to explore ways to further expand ties between the two countries in a range of key areas including trade and investment.


**Mumbai BEST crash: Drivers ‘overworked’**

**Mumbai:** Two lawyers have approached Maharashtra’s State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) for an “impartial” inquiry into the BEST bus accident, which left seven dead and 42 injured, claiming that drivers of the civic-run transport body are overworked. They said the tragedy in Mumbai’s Kurla area occurred as senior officials of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) ignored their drivers’ working conditions.

**Actress Sapna’s son found dead**

**Bareilly (UP):** Actress Sapna Singh staged a protest in Bareilly after her 14-year-old son was found dead under suspicious circumstances, with police arresting his two friends over the case, officials said Wednesday. She ended the protest Tuesday after more than 90 minutes following the police’s assurance that action would be taken.

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER




India’s strength is its innovative youth and technology power. We have introduced a new National Education Policy to nurture a scientific mindset. The government is removing roadblocks in the path of the country’s youth by introducing reforms

DHANKHAR ‘BIGGEST DISRUPTOR’: KHARGE

*Addressing a press conference along with leaders of other opposition INDIA bloc parties, Kharge alleged that Dhankhar was acting like a school headmaster, often sermonising experienced Opposition leaders and preventing them from speaking in the House*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The Congress and several Opposition parties Wednesday accused Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar of being the "biggest disruptor" in the House and alleged he was acting as a government spokesperson for his "next promotion", as they defended their move to seek the removal of the Vice President. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge launched a no-holds barred attack against the Vice President, who is the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, saying his "partisan" conduct in the House prompted them to move a notice for his ouster and that it has harmed the country's dignity. It was for the first time in Parliament's history that a move has been initiated by the Opposition to remove the Chairman through a no-confidence motion. Addressing a press conference along with leaders of other opposition INDIA bloc parties, Kharge alleged that Dhankhar was acting like a school headmaster, often sermonising experienced Opposition leaders and preventing them from speaking in the House. "We have no hesitation in saying that the biggest disruptor in the Rajya Sabha is the Chairman himself," he said, adding, "His loyalty is towards the ruling party, instead of the Constitution and constitutional traditions. We can see that he is acting as a government spokesperson for the sake of his next promotion." Alleging that politics has taken precedence over rules in the Upper House



of Parliament, Kharge said the Chairman's conduct has been contrary to the dignity of the high post he holds. Meanwhile, Dhankhar, who was addressing a programme in Jaipur, said there are forces in the country and outside who are unable to digest India's progress but made no reference to the ouster move by the Opposition. The Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day without transacting any business amid uproar by the treasury and opposition benches over the no-trust notice against the House Chairman and the George Soros issue. Leader of the House J P Nadda condemned the Congress for the no-confidence notice, and said it was an attempt by the opposition party to divert attention from the issue of "ties between the top Congress leadership and Soros". Nadda further said they are trying to divert attention from the real issue by making accusations against the Chair. Defending the House Chairman,

Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju said Dhankhar, a son of farmer, has been a protector of the dignity of the House. "Opposition does not believe in democracy. It does not obey the Chair," he said. "You level baseless allegations (against the chair). You have no right to be a member of Rajya Sabha if you cannot honour and obey the Chair." He went on to state that the treasury benches will defend any move to attack the honour and dignity of the Chair. "We will not allow this." At his news conference, Kharge said that in the 75th year of adoption of the Constitution the Opposition parties have been forced to bring the motion as the Chairman's actions in the last three years have been opposed to the dignity of his post. The Chairman makes comments on the Opposition leaders with a vast experience in different fields and schools them like a headmaster, he said, adding that while the Opposition leaders speak for five minutes, the Chairman himself speaks for 10 minutes.

SNIPPETS

Cold wave conditions in Delhi, Rajasthan


**New Delhi/ Srinagar/ Jaipur:** Cold wave conditions have gripped Rajasthan and marked its arrival in Delhi Wednesday as higher reaches of Kashmir witnessed fresh snowfall. Chilly winds marked the arrival of cold wave conditions in the national capital as Delhi recorded a low of 4.9 degrees Celsius, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The minimum temperatures in early December have been recorded below 5 degrees Celsius for the first time in 14 years, it said. According to data, the lowest minimum temperature during this period was recorded December 6, 1987, at 4.1 degrees Celsius. Cold wave conditions are expected to prevail in Delhi between December 11 and 13.

EU envoy meets Rahul; bilateral ties discussed

**New Delhi:** Ambassador of the European Union to India Hervé Delphin and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi Wednesday discussed topics relevant to the relations and future of their democracies in a world marked by challenges, geopolitical tensions and crises. Delphin met Gandhi at his 10, Janpath residence here. The Congress posted on X pictures of Gandhi and Delphin from the meeting and said, "They had a lively and detailed discussion covering a broad range of topics relevant to the relations and future of our democracies in a world marked by challenges, geopolitical tensions and crises".

Apex court relaxes bail conditions for Sisodia

**New Delhi:** AAP leader and former Delhi deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia won't have to report to the investigating officer twice a week in the corruption and money laundering cases related to the Delhi excise policy after the Supreme Court relaxed his bail conditions Wednesday. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan eased the conditions, calling them unnecessary. "The petitioner shall regularly attend the trial," it said. The apex court November 22 agreed to hear Sisodia's pleas and issued notices to the CBI and the ED seeking their responses. The apex court August 9 granted him bail in both cases linked to the alleged 2021-22 Delhi excise policy case, saying a 17-month long incarceration without trial deprived him of his right to a speedy trial.



Police personnel conduct a security drill to maintain law and order in the view of VHP and Bajrang Dal's 'Dattamala Abhiyan', in Chikmagalur district, Karnataka

PITI PHOTO

MARRIAGE INTEGRAL PART OF LIFE: TOP COURT

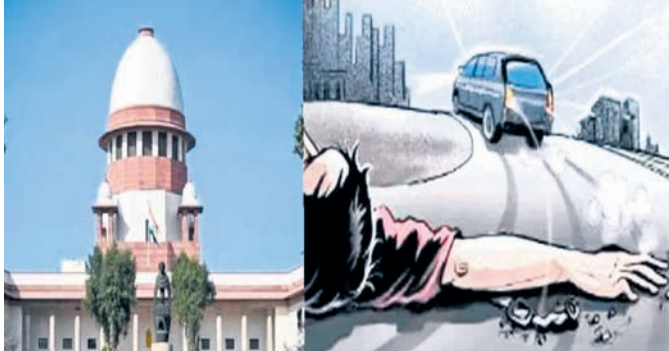
SC enhances compensation to road accident victim

*The top court enhanced the compensation nearly five times from ₹11.51 lakh -- granted by the Delhi High Court -- to ₹50.87 lakh by factoring in the “loss of income earning capacity”, “pain and suffering”, “loss of marriage prospects”, “attendant charges” and “future medical treatment”*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Observing that marriage is an integral part of life, the Supreme Court Wednesday awarded a

compensation of ₹50.87 lakh to a 22-year-old woman who suffered mental disability owing to injuries in a road accident as a child for loss of marriage prospect, pain, medical expenses. The top court enhanced the compensation nearly five times from ₹11.51 lakh -- granted by the Delhi High Court -- to ₹50.87 lakh by factoring in the "loss of income/earning capacity", "pain and suffering", "loss of marriage prospects", "attendant charges" and "future medical treatment". The woman, when aged seven, met with a near fatal road accident in June, 2009, rendering her 75 per cent permanently disabled on account of moderate intellectual disability. "The appellant (woman), therefore, has not only lost her childhood but also her adult life.



Marriage/companionship is an integral part of the natural life of a human being," a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said. "Although, in the present case the appellant is capable of reproduction, it is near impossible for her to rear children and enjoy the simple pleasures


India evacuates 75 nationals from Syria

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** India evacuated 75 of its nationals from Syria two days after rebel forces overthrew President Bashar Assad's authoritarian government. The evacuation, coordinated by the embassies of India in Damascus and Beirut, was put into effect following an assessment of the security situation, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. "The Government of India today evacuated 75 Indian nationals from Syria, following recent developments in that country," it said in a late-night statement Tuesday. "The evacuees included 44 'zaireen' from Jammu and Kashmir who were stranded at Saida Zainab. All Indian nationals have safely crossed over to Lebanon and will return by available commercial flights to India," it said. The MEA said the government accords the highest priority to the safety and security of Indian nationals abroad. "Indian nationals remaining in Syria are advised to stay in touch with the Indian Embassy in Damascus," it said. The Syrian government collapsed Sunday as the rebels seized control of the capital Damascus after capturing several other prominent cities and towns. Assad fled the country after the rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) took control of Damascus, marking the end of his family's 50-year rule. Russian state media reported that Assad is in Moscow and will be given asylum. His nearly 14-year tenure was marked by civil war, bloodshed and brutal crackdown on his political opponents. The MEA Monday said it is monitoring the unfolding developments in Syria and advocated a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process going forward in that country.

DELHI ASSEMBLY POLLS

AAP delegation meets EC over voter ‘deletion’ issue



*Kejriwal claimed the EC gave them several assurances, including that no large-scale deletions would occur before the Delhi elections and strict action would be taken against those filing questionable deletion requests*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** An Aam Aadmi Party delegation led by its chief Arvind Kejriwal met the Election Commission Wednesday and urged it to halt any deletion of voter names in the electoral rolls ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections. After the meeting, the AAP national convenor alleged that the BJP was orchestrating a conspiracy to remove voters, mostly from marginalised communities, including Dalits, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Purvanchalis, from the electoral rolls. Kejriwal claimed the EC gave them several assurances, including that no large-scale deletions would occur before the Delhi elections and strict

action would be taken against those filing questionable deletion requests. Responding to the accusations, the Delhi BJP said AAP is looking for excuses to cover up its defeat in the upcoming elections, and the campaign to get illegal voter names removed will continue. Kejriwal said that the EC has assured them that in cases of any voter deletions, a field inquiry will be conducted by the Booth Level Officer (BLO), accompanied by representatives from various political parties. The former chief minister of Delhi noted that if any individual applies to delete more than five voters' names, the concerned sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) will carry out a field inquiry. "The BJP is snatching away the rights of people as an Indian citizen by cutting their votes in Delhi. BJP workers have given applications to cut the names of thousands of voters in many assembly constituencies," the AAP chief alleged. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva hit back, saying AAP and Kejriwal are in "panic" due to their impending defeat.



of the day quote

We have to work to give rights to all sections of society, especially the deprived and the exploited

HEMANT SOREN | J'KHAND CM

We have submitted 3,000 pages of evidence showing how the BJP is conspiring to delete voters' names on a mass scale

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP SUPREMO

Darbar move is an issue which I fail to understand why it was not projected during campaigning for assembly polls. The issue gained momentum only after the election result although we have mentioned it in our manifesto and meetings

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

POST OF THE DAY

Understand the chronology  
> Gaurav Gogoi gave belt treatment to BJP on Manipur  
> Speaker muted his mike  
> Modi minister Piyush Goyal interrupts \*Abba Dabba Jabba\*  
> Speaker adjourns the house  
If this is not systematic murder of democracy. What else is it???

@mr\_mayank

SHORT TAKES

J&K: Security forces destroy suspected IED

**Srinagar:** Security forces detected and destroyed a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) on the Handwara-Baramulla highway in Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday, officials said. A joint patrolling party of police and the Army found a suspicious bag by the roadside at Langate in the Handwara area of Kupwara district, the officials said. They said the bomb disposal squad was rushed to the spot and the bag taken to an isolated place. The bomb disposal squad destroyed the suspected IED in a controlled explosion, the officials said.

Naxalite killed in encounter

**Bijapur:** A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Wednesday, police said. Two security personnel also sustained injuries in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast triggered by Naxalites during the same operation, they said. The gunfight took place in a forest of Munga village under Gangloor police station area when a team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, a police official said.

AAP MLA booked

**Bharuch:** Police have registered a case against AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava and 10 others for their protest at an industrial unit in Gujarat's Bharuch district hours after an explosion there last week claimed four lives, officials said Wednesday. The legislator, for getting "publicity", allegedly incited the crowd and tried to prevent police from taking the bodies for post-mortem, as per the First Information Report (FIR). Vasava and the others have been booked on charges of obstructing on-duty police, inciting people and putting their lives in danger by holding the protest at the unit after the explosion, police said.



We want protection for minorities in Bangladesh. The Union government must act. It should also bring back those who want to return to India

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

SM KRISHNA CREMATED WITH STATE HONOURS

Ex-Chief Minister of Karnataka and former External Affairs Minister S M Krishna was cremated Wednesday with full state honours in his ancestral village Somanahalli in this district. The 92-year-old veteran politician, who had also served as the Maharashtra Governor, died at his residence in Bangalore Tuesday after prolonged illness



LS passes Railways Amendment Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The government Wednesday asserted that the Railways Amendment Bill will not lead to the privatisation of the national carrier and alleged that a "fake narrative" is being propagated by some Opposition members regarding this.

The Lok Sabha passed the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024, by a voice vote Wednesday after a debate, which could not be held earlier due to frequent disruptions of House proceedings during the last week. Responding to the debate on the bill, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw targeted the opposition, saying their "fake narrative" regarding railways will fall flat just like the one about the Constitution failed.

"A few members have said the Bill will lead to privatisation of railways, an attempt has been made to set a fake narrative. I want to appeal to them with all sincerity not to do this, their one fake narrative about the Constitution has already failed," Vaishnaw said.

The Railways (Amendment) Bill 2024 which seeks to enhance the functioning and independence of the Railway Board was introduced in the Lok Sabha during the previous Parliament session.

With the inclusion of the Railway Board under the 1989 Railway Act, the appointment, qualifications, tenure and criteria for the Chairman and members of the Board will be the responsibility of the central government.

Uproar in LS over Kalyan's remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Lok Sabha Wednesday witnessed repeated adjournments as remarks by Kalyan Banerjee against Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia created an uproar which refused to die down despite apology tendered by the TMC member.

Finally, the chair adjourned the House for the day. Trouble arose when Banerjee was speaking during a discussion on the amendments to the Disaster Management Act.

The TMC member alleged non-cooperation by the central government during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai countered it, saying it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who helped all the states and successfully handled the crisis by taking everyone along.

Rai also alleged that the West Bengal government tried to put hurdles in the transportation of Covid vaccines through its territory.

Scindia stood up and supported Rai, saying that India had emerged as a "Vishwa Bandhu" during the pandemic and helped all the needy countries across the world. Following this, Banerjee attacked Scindia and made certain remarks against the minister which were expunged by Speaker Om Birla.

Top court to hear pleas on Places of Worship Act today



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A three-judge bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan is likely to hear the matter

The top court is seized of the pleas, including one filed by Ashwini Upadhyay who has prayed that sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, be set aside

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Thursday a batch of PILs challenging the validity of certain provisions of a 1991 law that prohibits filing a lawsuit to reclaim a place of worship or seek a change in its character from what prevailed August 15, 1947.

A three-judge bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan is likely to hear the matter. The top court is seized of the pleas, including one filed by Ashwini Upadhyay who has prayed that sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, be set aside.

Among the various reasons submitted was the contention that these provisions take away the right of judicial remedy to reclaim a place of worship of any person or a religious group. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Maharashtra MLA Jitendra Satish Awhad have also filed pleas against several pending petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, saying the law protected public order, fraternity, unity and secularism of the nation.

The matter will be heard in the backdrop of several suits filed in various courts, including those related to the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi, Shahi Idgah Mosque in Mathura and Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal, claiming these were built after destroying ancient temples and seeking permission to allow the Hindus to offer prayers there. The Muslim side, in most of

these cases, has cited the 1991 law to argue that such suits are not maintainable.

As many as six petitions, including those filed by former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy, have been filed against the provisions of the 1991 law. Swamy wanted the apex court to "read down" certain provisions to enable Hindus to stake claim over the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi and Shahi Idgah Mosque in Mathura, while Ashwini Upadhyay claimed the entire statute was unconstitutional and no question of reading down arises. The doctrine of reading down a law is generally used to save a statute from being struck down entirely subject to adjudication over its constitutionality.

On the other hand, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind had cited the five-judge Constitution bench judgement in the Ram Janmaboomi-Babri Masjid title case, noting the reference to the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, to argue that the law cannot be set aside now.

The top court had March 12, 2022, sought the Centre's response to the plea filed by Upadhyay challenging the validity of certain provisions of the law.

TECHIE SUICIDE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore/Samastipur/Jaunpur, Dec 11:** The family of the 34-year-old techie who allegedly died by suicide here, has demanded justice for him and strict action against his harassers.

Atul Subhash, who worked for a private firm in the city, had left behind a 24-page purported death note, giving extensive details of what he alleged was years-long emotional distress of marital issues; multiple cases filed against him and harassment by his wife and relatives, and a judge based in Uttar Pradesh, police said.

Following Subhash's death, a case of abetment of suicide has been registered against his wife Nikita Singhania, her mother Nisha, father Anurag and uncle Sushil, a police official said.

Speaking to PTI Videos in Bangalore, Subhash's brother Bikas said, "I want my brother to get justice. I want this country to have a legal process through which even men can get justice. I want strict action against those who are sitting on a legal chair and doing corruption because if this continues then



The carcass of a blue whale that washed ashore at Pamban beach is being removed in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu

Sanjay Malhotra takes over as 26th RBI Guv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** Sanjay Malhotra took charge as the 26th Governor of Reserve Bank of India Wednesday, and promised to focus on deepening trust, growth and ensuring stability.

Malhotra, 56, takes over as the central bank governor at a critical time where inflation has shot above the comfort level, growth has declined to a 7-quarter low and rupee is at all-time low level against US dollar.

"I can assure that we will put in the best foot forward in public interest to deliver what the public of India looks forward to, which is trust, which is growth and which is a stable and certain policy," he told reporters at his maiden interaction as a RBI Governor. The career bureaucrat arrived at the RBI headquarters at the Mint Street around 1000 hours and completed formalities of taking charge in the presence of Deputy Governors M Rajeshwar Rao, T Rabi Sankar and Swaminathan J.

Michael Patra, Deputy Governor in-charge of the critical monetary policy function, was not present. Malhotra said, "We are in a very dynamic world right now fraught with geopolitical tensions, climate



change risks and political uncertainties", and affirmed that the RBI will remain "alert and agile" to meet the challenges.

RBI is a prestigious institution which has done commendable work over its history courtesy the diligence and hard work of its staff members and senior officials, said Malhotra, specifically mentioning his predecessor Shaktikanta Das' name.

Although there was no explicit mention of inflation in his remarks, Malhotra stressed that the focus will be on "stability" and "trust". Policy certainty can be among the factors which can ensure stability, Malhotra said, adding that in his earlier

assignment as the Revenue Secretary he focus was on stability in policy.

As an institution, he said, the RBI is what it is because of the "trust" it has earned for working with the public's interest in mind, and added that it would be his endeavour to strengthen it. Whatever decisions are taken will be done with public interest in mind, Malhotra said. He, however, declined to take any specific questions from the media. Resorting to cricket analogies a favourite with his predecessor Das, Malhotra said he cannot start playing his shots on day one itself.

The new Governor said that he would respond to media questions after understanding various issues from RBI's officers. The next monetary policy review is scheduled for the first week of February, offering Malhotra nearly two months of time before he makes his maiden decision on interest rate and other important issues.

Malhotra, who till Tuesday was Revenue Secretary (1990-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre) in the finance ministry, said financial inclusion would be an important area for him, despite the successes achieved in the past.

Much needs to be done to eradicate manual sewer cleaning: SC

TROUBLE DOWN UNDER

Observing a large segment of India's population, involved in manual scavenging, had remained unheard and muted, in bondage and systematically trapped in inhumane conditions, the top court in 2023 directed the Centre and states to take appropriate measures, frame policies and issue directions to ensure that manual sewer cleaning was completely eradicated in a phased manner



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Observing much needed to be done, the Supreme Court Wednesday directed the Centre to file an action taken report on the compliance of its direction for ensuring manual sewer cleaning was completely eradicated in a phased manner.

A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Aravind Kumar asked additional solicitor general Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, to call a meeting of the central monitoring committee with all the stakeholders within two weeks. The committee reviews the implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabil-

itation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013).

"The order passed by the court (in 2023) said that considering the development of technology, it was entirely possible to eradicate manual scavenging and employment of labour for sewer cleaning. This has not been done. From the report, it appears that much needs to be done," the bench said.

Senior advocate K Parameshwar, who is assisting the court as amicus curiae, submitted 40 deaths occurred due to sewer cleaning and cleaning septic tanks in 2024 but no FIR was filed.

He flagged most of the committees as mandated under the Act were not in place and pointed out noncompliance of the laws. The matter would come

up in January, 2025. Observing a large segment of India's population, involved in manual scavenging, had remained unheard and muted, in bondage and systematically trapped in inhumane conditions, the top court in 2023 directed the Centre and states to take appropriate measures, frame policies and issue directions to ensure that manual sewer cleaning was completely eradicated in a phased manner.

The top court had asked the Centre to issue guidelines and directions that any sewer-cleaning work outsourced or required to be done by or through contractors or agencies, did not require individuals to enter sewers. Issuing a slew of directions, the court

previously asked the central and state governments to pay ₹30 lakh compensation to the next of kin of those who died while cleaning sewers.

It directed all the states and union territories to make sure all departments, agencies and corporations ensured the guidelines and directions framed by the Centre were incorporated in their own guidelines. The apex court had further directed in the case of sewer victims suffering from any disability, the minimum compensation won't be less than ₹10 lakh.

If the disability was permanent and rendered the victim economically helpless, the compensation should not be less than ₹20 lakh, it said.



of the day quote

An estimated 35 per cent to 50 per cent of all sub-Saharan African populations either prefer or accept cousin marriage, and it is extremely common in the Middle East and South Asia

IQBAL MOHAMED | MP, ENGLAND

I don't think this investigation will be fair. Even if they say there is an investigation, from the very beginning they already decided to file cases

SARA DUTERTE | VICE PRESIDENT, THE PHILIPPINES

South Africa will use its G20 Presidency to secure urgent progress on shared goals through several priority actions

RONALD LAMOLA | MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION, SOUTH AFRICA

SHORT TAKES

Indian-origin PhD student suspended

**New York:** An Indian-origin student pursuing PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has been suspended until January 2026 following his pro-Palestinian activism and is currently appealing the university's decision. Prahlad Iyengar, also a National Science Foundation fellow, has been "suspended until January 2026," according to a post on X by a group called 'MIT Coalition Against Apartheid'. This suspension effectively terminates Iyengar's five-year NSF fellowship and severely disrupts his academic career, the organisation said in the post.

Israeli strikes kill 38 Palestinians

**Cairo:** Israeli air attacks across the Gaza Strip killed at least 38 Palestinians Wednesday, most of them in a strike on a house in Beit Lahiya on the northern edge of the enclave, medics said. The Beit Lahiya strike killed at least 22 people, including women and children, health officials said. Relatives listed the names of the dead on social media. More than 30 people were living in the multi-storey building before it was struck, and several family members remained missing as rescue operations continued through the morning, the Palestinian WAFA news agency said.

Brazil's Lula remains under intensive care

Rio de Janeiro: Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva remains in intensive care in a Sao Paulo hospital but is getting better, doctors said in a statement Wednesday. The 79-year-old leader underwent an unplanned surgery for a brain bleed in the early hours of Tuesday, after suffering from complications resulting from a fall at home in October. Doctors told journalists after the operation that Lula would remain in intensive care for 48 hours. Lula "progressed well in the immediate postoperative period, with no complications," doctors from the Sirio-Libanês hospital said Wednesday.

Communal attacks kill more than 40 people

Congo: More than 40 people have been killed over the last week in a flare-up of violence between two feuding communities in western Democratic Republic of Congo, the Congolese army and local authorities said. The bloodshed is among the most significant for the Teke and Yaka groups since the brokering of an April peace agreement that was meant to ease tensions.



Developments in Syria demonstrate that countries with a strategic partnership with Russia can rely on Moscow only as long as they are of use to President Vladimir Putin

BORIS PISTORIUS | DEFENCE MINISTER, GERMANY

PAK BLOCKS 80K SIM CARDS FOR SPREADING FAKE NEWS

Pakistan authorities have blocked approximately 80,000 SIM cards for spreading fake news amid concerns regarding the social media propelled misinformation, the government said Wednesday



Georgia cracks down on pro-EU protests

REUTERS

**Tbilisi, Dec 11:** Seventy-five-year-old Marina Terishvili's teenage son Mamuka was shot dead at a nationalist rally in Georgia in 1992. Now her other son, Giorgi, has been arrested for his role in protests against perceived Russian influence in their homeland.

Seven police cars pulled up at her house in the capital Tbilisi Friday and took Giorgi, a 52-year-old taxi driver, into custody, she said.

He was placed in pre-trial detention for two months for "participating in group violence" according to a rights group and local media, and faces up to six years in prison if convicted, part of a broad crackdown on demonstrators who have clashed nightly with police for almost two weeks.

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association rights group said he had not yet entered a plea and Marina Terishvili said she did not know why he had been detained.



"I can't deny that he went to the rallies, because he has a brother who died Feb. 2, 1992, and he went there in honour of his soul," Marina said, adding that Giorgi could not tolerate the idea that his younger brother had died in vain.

Giorgi is among more than 400 people who authorities and rights groups say have been arrested during protests against government moves to delay the South Caucasus country's longstanding bid to join the European Union.

Around 30 face criminal charges, mostly relating to allegations of "group violence" aimed at overthrowing the government. Among those jailed are two leaders of the country's pro-EU Opposition.

SK cops try to raid President's office

REUTERS

**Seoul, Dec 11:** South Korean police tried to search President Yoon Suk Yeol's office Wednesday but have not been able to enter the main building, Yonhap news reported as an investigation into the US ally's decision to declare martial law widened.

The attempt to search the presidential office significantly escalates the investigation against Yoon and top police and military officers over the Dec 3 martial law declaration that plunged the country with Asia's fourth-largest economy into a constitutional crisis.

Yoon is now the subject of a criminal investigation into insurrection allegations and is banned from leaving the country, but he has not been arrested or questioned by authorities.

A presidential security service official said earlier Wednesday that the police raid of Yoon's office was under way, confirming media reports at the time. Yonhap later said investigators at the presidential com-

pound had not yet entered the main building.

Yonhap said police had not managed to agree with the Secret Service on the method of the seizure and search. Police declined to comment.

"We are responding based on the law and past government cases," a presidential office official said denied that the office was opposing the search.

Former Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun, a close confidant of Yoon, and two senior police officers including the national police chief have been arrested on charges of insurrection as part of the investigation.

Kim attempted suicide using a shirt and underwear late Tuesday night at a detention centre where he is being held, a Justice Ministry official told parliament.

He was now under observation and his life was not in danger, the official added.

Kim has resigned and apologised for his part in the short-lived imposition of emergency rule, saying he alone was responsible.

SITUATION UNCLEAR WHAT HAS PREVENTED POLICE INVESTIGATORS FROM ENTERING YOON'S OFFICE

ATTEMPT TO RAID THE OFFICE MARKS ESCALATING PROBE INTO DEC 3 FAILED MARTIAL LAW

EX-DEFENCE MINISTER SEEN AS LEADING MARTIAL LAW ATTEMPTS SUICIDE, OFFICIAL SAYS

OPPOSITION TO INTRODUCE BILL TO IMPEACH YOON FOR VOTE ON SATURDAY



REBUILDING TASK

Syria's new leader faces cash crunch

REUTERS

**Damascus, Dec 11:** The main commander of the rebels who toppled Bashar al-Assad said Wednesday that anyone involved in the torture or killing of detainees during the ousted president's rule would be hunted down and pardons were out of the question.

"We will pursue them in Syria, and we ask countries to hand over those who fled so we can achieve justice," Abu Mohammed al-Golani said in a statement published on the Syrian state TV's Telegram channel.

The world is carefully watching to see if Syria's new rulers can stabilise the country after a 13-year civil war fought along sectarian and ethnic lines destroyed the country.

Syria ran one of the most oppressive police states in the Middle East during five decades of Assad family rule. Golani, whose former al Qaeda affiliate Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) is now the country's most powerful force, must balance demands for justice from victims with the need to prevent violence and secure international aid.

The new interim prime minister said he aimed to bring back millions of Syrian refugees, create unity and provide basic services, but rebuilding would be daunting.

"In the coffers there are only Syrian pounds worth little or nothing. One US dollar buys 35,000 of our coins," Mohammed al-Bashir told Italian newspaper Il Corriere della Sera.



IRAN BLAMES US, ISRAEL FOR ASSAD'S FALL

**TEHRAN:** Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei says the recent events in Syria, including the fall of its government, were part of a joint plan by the United States and Israel. "There should be no doubt that what has happened in Syria is the result of a joint American and Zionist plan," Khamenei said in a speech in Tehran Wednesday that was broadcast on state TV. "We have evidence, and this evidence leaves no room for doubt." The Supreme leader added, "A neighbouring state of Syria has played a clear role in this matter, and it continues to do so. Everyone can see this." Khamenei also rejected speculation by analysts who have said that Iran will be weakened by the fall of Syrian President Bashar Assad's government. "Those ignorant analysts are unaware of the meaning of resistance. They think that if resistance weakens, Islamic Iran will also weaken. But I say, with the help and power of God — by the will of Almighty Allah — Iran is powerful and it will become even more powerful," he said.

"We have no foreign currency and as for loans and bonds we are still collecting data. So yes, financially we are very bad," said Bashir, who ran a rebel-led administration in a pocket of northwestern Syria before the lightning offensive swept into Damascus and toppled President Bashar al-Assad.

Rebuilding Syria is a colossal task following a civil war that killed hundreds of thousands of people. Cities have been bombed to ruins, swathes of countryside depopulated and the economy gutted by inter-

national sanctions.

US Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer said Washington was still working out how it will engage with the former rebels. But Washington remains cautious. "We have seen over the years any number of militant groups who have seized power, who have promised that they would respect minorities, who have promised that they would respect religious freedom, promised that they would govern in an inclusive way, and then see them fail to meet those promises," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

Biden pushes new Russia, Iran, Korea, China effort before Trump term

BIDEN'S NEW DOCUMENT ORDERS VARIOUS ARMS OF THE US GOVERNMENT TO RESTRUCTURE GROUPS CURRENTLY ORGANIZED BY REGION TO BETTER FOCUS ON ISSUES LINKING THE FOUR COUNTRIES THAT SPAN EUROPE AND ASIA

REUTERS

**Washington, Dec 11:** President Joe Biden is pushing US national security agencies ahead of Donald Trump's inauguration to devise new strategies to tackle the risky, deepening ties among Russia, Iran, North Korea and China, according to US officials.

In exchange for Iran's help with the Russian war effort in Ukraine, Moscow is giving its ally fighter aircraft, missile defense and space technology, Biden concluded in a national security memorandum issued Tuesday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is giving North Korea

fuel, money and technology, and is recognizing it as a de facto nuclear state. Russia is conducting joint patrols with China in the Arctic, the administration said.

The classified document was described in general terms to reporters, but has not independently been reviewed by Reuters. Russia, China, Iran and North Korea have disputed similar assessments in the past and accused Washington of destabilizing behavior.

Biden's new document orders various arms of the US government to restructure groups currently organized by region to better focus on issues linking the four countries that span Eu-



rope and Asia.

The document's strategies and policy suggestions could be implemented - or rejected altogether - by President-elect Trump, a Republican who takes

office Jan 20.

"When the new team sort of looks at it, I don't think they will see anything in it that is trying to box them in or tilt them toward one policy option

or another," said one of the senior administration officials, who declined to be named.

The officials said the challenges ahead include ensuring that any sanctions and export controls imposed on the four countries are applied in a coordinated way that doesn't risk blowback from those countries and enabling the United States to better handle simultaneous crises involving several of the countries. North

Korean troops are now serving in Russia, for instance.

But there are limits to the countries' cooperation, another of the officials said, including Russia and Iran's failing to assist their ally Bashar al-Assad, the former Syrian president who was toppled over the weekend. "This realignment sort of raises for China the question about what kind of future it wants to see and if it really wants to be all-in with this grouping," the person said.

BIDEN'S MEMO URGES RESTRUCTURING OF US AGENCIES FOR GLOBAL STRATEGY

RUSSIA, IRAN, NORTH KOREA, CHINA COOPERATION POSES CHALLENGES FOR US

NEW STRATEGIES AIM TO PREVENT BLOWBACK FROM SANCTIONS, EXPORT CONTROLS



of the day

Quote

India's data centre market has attracted investment commitment of \$60 billion in the last six years and the cumulative inflow is estimated to surpass \$100 billion by 2027-end

ANSHUMAN MAGAZINE | CHAIRMAN & CEO

- INDIA, SOUTH-EAST ASIA, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA, CBRE

Supply chains will have to be restored but you would have to reset it, realign it, you will have to make sure that it is spread so much that no geopolitical or strategic risks will threaten our wellbeing

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

Presently our logistics cost is 14-16 per cent. I assure you that within two years, our logistics cost will be 9 per cent. So we will be more competitive in the international market

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Adani opts out of US funding for SL project

**New Delhi:** Billionaire Gautam Adani's group has pulled out of a loan deal with a US agency to fund a port terminal in Sri Lanka, saying it will use its own resources for the project. In an exchange filing late Tuesday, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) said the project "is on track for commissioning by early next year". "The project will be financed through the company's internal accruals and capital management plan," the firm said. "We have withdrawn our request for financing from the International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)". The US IDP had in November last year agreed to provide a \$553 million loan to support the development, construction, and operation of a deep-water container terminal called the Colombo West International Terminal (CWIT) at the Port of Colombo in Sri Lanka.

TPCODL launches 'Bill Pay and Win Scheme'

**Bhubaneswar:** TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, has introduced the 'Bill Pay and Win Scheme' to encourage timely and digital electricity bill payments. The scheme rewards customers who settle their bills on time and digitally, offering them a chance to win exciting prizes through a lucky draw. As part of the initiative, customers who maintain a zero-arrear status are eligible to participate, with 56 winners already receiving prizes in Bhubaneswar. TPCODL also offers additional benefits, including a 4% digital payment rebate and a 10 paise/unit discount for timely bill payments.

Equirus Wealth crosses ₹10K-cr AUM

**New Delhi:** Wealth management firm Equirus Wealth Wednesday said it has surpassed ₹10,000 crore in assets under management (AUM). The firm achieved this feat in just 18 months, and highlighted its ability to provide innovative investment solutions that cater to the diverse needs of High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs) and Ultra HNIs, Equirus Wealth said in a statement.



With the global blue economy projected to reach \$6 trillion by 2030, India's maritime sector stands poised to play a transformative role in our emergence as the world's third-largest economy

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

ADB lowers India's GDP growth forecast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Wednesday lowered India's economic growth forecast to 6.5 per cent for the current financial year from its earlier estimate of 7 per cent due to lower-than-expected growth in private investment and housing demand.

The multilateral development bank has also lowered India's growth forecast for 2025-26 financial year.

Changes in US trade, fiscal, and immigration policies could dent growth and add to inflation in developing Asia and the Pacific, according to the latest edition of Asian Development Outlook (ADO).

The report also said Asia and the Pacific's economies are projected to grow 4.9 per cent in 2024, slightly below ADB's September forecast of 5 per cent.

"India's outlook is adjusted downward from 7 per cent to 6.5 per cent for this year, and from 7.2 per cent to 7 per cent next year, due to lower-than-expected growth in private investment and housing demand," ADB said.

Last week, the Reserve Bank also significantly lowered the growth projection for current fiscal year to 6.6 per cent from 7.2 per cent earlier and hiked the inflation forecast to 4.8 per cent in view of slowdown in economic activity as well as stubborn food prices.

India's growth will remain robust, with the economy



» GDP GROWTH FELL TO 7-QUARTER LOW OF 5.4% IN JULY-SEPT PERIOD OF FY 2024-25 AS AGAINST RBI'S OWN PROJECTION OF 7%

» RBI ALSO SIGNIFICANTLY LOWERED THE GROWTH PROJECTION FOR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR TO 6.6% FROM 7.2% EARLIER

» THE REPORT ALSO SAID ASIA AND THE PACIFIC'S ECONOMIES ARE PROJECTED TO GROW 4.9% IN 2024, SLIGHTLY BELOW ADB'S SEPTEMBER FORECAST OF 5%

supported by higher agriculture output resulting from the summer (or kharif) crop season (which will also put downward pressure on food prices); continued resilience of the services sector; and lower-than-expected Brent crude prices in 2024 and 2025, ADB added.

It further said strong forward-looking and labour market indicators, such as PMI for industry and services, urban

labour force participation and Reserve Bank of India's industrial outlook, suggest that economic momentum will recover in the coming quarters.

The report further said Southeast Asia's growth outlook has been raised to 4.7 per cent this year from a previous forecast of 4.5 per cent, driven by stronger manufacturing exports and public capital spending.

The forecast for next year is unchanged at 4.7 per cent. The Manila-headquartered bank has kept the growth forecast for China unchanged at 4.8 per cent this year and 4.5 per cent next year.

According to the report, Asia and the Pacific's economic growth will remain steady this year and next, but expected US policy changes under the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump are likely to affect the region's long-term outlook.

Rupee hovers near all-time low

*Rupee just shy of all-time low with gain of 2 paise at 84.83 against US dollar.*

*A bounce back in the greenback from earlier lows also weighed on the Indian currency*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Mumbai, Dec 11:** The rupee settled for the day higher by 2 paise at 84.83 against the US dollar Wednesday, a tad above its all-time low level, amid rising expectations of a shift in the Reserve Bank's monetary policy stance post the appoint-

ment of Sanjay Malhotra as the new RBI governor.

Forex traders said the Indian rupee touched a fresh all-time low of 86.87 in intraday trade as change of guard at the Reserve Bank of India raised odds of a rate cut by the Re-

Indian rupee touched a fresh all-time low of 86.87 in intraday trade

Rupee settled higher by just 1 paise at 84.85 against \$ Tuesday

serve Bank of India (RBI) in its February meeting.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at an all-time low of 84.87 against the greenback. The USD/INR pair traded in a tight range and ended the session at 84.83 against the dollar, higher by just 2 paise from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee settled on a flat note, higher by just 1 paise at 84.85 against the

INOXGFL ENTERS SOLAR MFG

INOXGFL Group Wednesday announced its foray into solar manufacturing through Inox Solar -- a privately held entity by the promoters. Inox Solar is targeting an initial capacity of 5 GW of solar modules and 2.5 GW of solar cell manufacturing capacity by 2026, at an outlined capex of ₹1,500 crore, a company statement said



Snapping losing run, benchmarks edge up in restricted trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher in restricted trade Wednesday as investors awaited key US inflation data for further cues.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 16.09 points or 0.02 per cent to close at 81,526.14 even as 17 of its constituents declined and 13 advanced.

Snapping its three-day losing run, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 31.75 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 24,641.80.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Bajaj Finance, Nestle India, Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Infosys, Maruti, Bharti Airtel and Hindustan Unilever were among the gainers.

JSW Steel, Adani Ports, NTPC, State Bank of India, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank, Titan and HDFC Bank were the laggards. The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.35 per cent and the midcap index gained 0.25 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, Consumer Durables rose 0.59 per cent, Industrials by 0.40 per cent, Auto by 0.37 per cent, IT and Tectk by 0.35 per cent each and FMCG by 0.34 per cent.

As many as 2,146 stocks advanced, 1,840 declined and 110 remained unchanged on the BSE. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms climbed by ₹91,110.2 crore to ₹4,60,46,637.96 (\$5.43 trillion).

On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex edged up 1.59 points to close at 81,510.05. Falling for the third day, the NSE Nifty dropped by 8.95 points to settle at 24,610.05.

US dollar.

The government Monday appointed revenue secretary Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. He takes guard at a time when the Indian economy is faced with the dual challenge of slowing growth rate and high inflation.

While Shaktikanta Das kept benchmark interest rates unchanged for almost two years in a bid to control inflation, the incoming governor is said to be a team player who believes prices cannot be managed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) alone and the task needs government help as well.

THREE-WEEK HIGH

GOLD RECLAIMS ₹80,000-MARK

GOLD & SILVER



Traders attributed the rise to increased demand from jewellers and retailers in local markets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Gold prices rallied to reclaim the ₹80,000-level in the national capital Wednesday driven by increased buying from jewellers and stockists, amid a strong global trend, as per the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity jumped ₹620 to touch nearly a three-week high of ₹80,400 per 10 grams. It settled at ₹79,780 per 10 grams Tuesday.

Extending the rally for the third straight day, silver surged ₹1,450 to hit a one-month high of ₹96,300 per kg. The white metal closed at ₹94,850 per kg Tuesday.

Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed ₹620 to ₹80,000 per 10 grams Wednesday. The yellow metal finished at ₹79,380 per 10 grams in the previous trading session.

In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery rose ₹112, or 0.14 per cent, to trade at ₹78,450 per 10 grams.

During the day, the yellow metal bounced ₹640, or 0.82 per cent, to hit a high of ₹78,978 per 10 grams.

"Gold traded with minor gains as Comex prices once again approached

the \$2,700-mark, recovering strongly from the \$2,600 support range seen a week ago. In MCX, gold is expected to trade within a range of ₹77,400-79,250, with volatility likely to remain elevated ahead of the data release," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst -- Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Silver, however, declined ₹396, or 0.41 per cent, to ₹95,129 per kg Wednesday.

Comex gold futures rose \$10.20 per ounce, or 0.38 per cent, to \$2,728.60 per ounce in the international markets.

"Gold prices jumped breaching \$2,700 once again, extending recent gains as heightened

geopolitical tensions in Syria, firm dollar index and rising rate cut expectations is supporting prices," Manav Modi, Analyst, Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. However, silver quoted 0.33 per cent lower in the Asian market hours.

"The US Federal Reserve is likely to cut interest rates for the third time in next week's monetary policy meeting," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Lower interest rates are favourable for non-yielding metals like gold.

Markets will also keep a close watch on Consumer Price Index (CPI) and unemployment claims data Thursday.

Musk unable to let go of Indian dream

Tesla restarts search for New Delhi showroom with DLF

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Elon Musk's Tesla has resumed its search for showroom space in New Delhi, two sources told Reuters, in the first sign it is rethinking entering the Indian market after putting its investment plans on hold earlier this year.

Musk said in April he would meet Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a trip where he was to potentially announce an investment of \$2-3 billion in India. However, he called off his visit at the last moment after Tesla decided to sack 10% of its staff amid falling sales.

Tesla which had paused its search for a showroom in India in recent months, is now in early-stage talks with DLF to help secure space in the capital region, said the two sources, who have direct knowledge of the situation.

A third source said it is not certain that Tesla's talks with India's biggest property developer will lead to a deal and the electric vehicle giant is also in discussions with others.

Tesla and DLF did not respond to requests for comment.

One of the sources said Tesla is looking for 3,000 to 5,000



» MUSK IN APRIL CALLED OFF PLANS TO VISIT INDIA, MEET MODI

» BILLIONAIRE ALSO WANTS TO LAUNCH STARLINK IN THE COUNTRY

square feet (280-465 square metres) to create a consumer experience centre as well as a space three times larger for its delivery and service operations.

Tesla is evaluating multiple locations including DLF's Avenue Mall in southern Delhi and the Cyber Hub office and retail complex in nearby Gurugram city, the source added.

Foreign retailers including Japan's Uniqlo, Spain's Mango and Britain's Marks and Spencer also have outlets in the Avenue Mall, where Tesla

is looking to secure an 8,000 square feet showroom space, the second source said.

Tesla's search is still "exploratory" and nothing has been finalised, the first source said.

It was not immediately clear whether Tesla will consider importing cars at the tax rate of as high as 100% or if it will make investment commitments under India's new policy, which would allow it to import certain EVs at a lower rate of 15%.

After Tesla did not deliver

on earlier investment plans, India's government is trying to relax certain provisions of its policy to attract automakers such as Hyundai Motor and Toyota which have expressed initial interest.

India's EV market is small, making up about 2% of total car sales of 4 million last year, but the government wants to increase the share to 30% by 2030.

Tesla's showroom hunt comes as Musk's Starlink is also considering entering India after winning a lobbying battle against billionaire Mukesh Ambani over how New Delhi should allocate spectrum for the service.



WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Deadlock of draws



GUKESH DRAWS AGAINST LIREN IN 13TH GAME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Singapore, Dec 11:** Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh tried his best but could not break past a resilient defending champion Ding Liren of China and had to settle for a draw after 68 moves in the 13th and penultimate game of the World Chess championship here Wednesday.

With the scores tied at 6.5-6.5 and only one game of classical chess to go, it is only likely that the match will be extended to the tie-break stage where games of shorter duration will decide the winner. As was expected and predicted, the 18-year-old

Gukesh went for the King pawn on his opening move and yet again faced Liren's first-choice opening in French defense.

The Chinese yet again spent a lot of time in the opening phase of the game when Gukesh came out with a novel idea early, but it was clear right from the beginning that there was little for the white.

The middle game saw the exchange of a couple of minor pieces that gave Gukesh's white only a small advantage optically. And as the game progressed, it was clear that the exchange of pawns on the queen side will only lead to an equal endgame.

Gukesh, knowing fully well that this could be his last chance with the favourable colour, left no stone unturned as he kept looking for more but Liren kept his cool and traded pieces when necessary to reach a queen-plus-rook endgame that was just level.

The players nevertheless fought on for a long time. The pieces changed hands and eventually it was a queen and rook plus pawns on the board.

Much as he tried, Gukesh did everything in the book to keep pushing for more even in the theoretical drawn endgame but

**With the scores tied at 6.5-6.5 and only one game of classical chess to go, it is only likely that the match will be extended to the tie-break stage where games of shorter duration will decide the winner**

Liren was up to the task.

The game was eventually drawn to a two versus three rook-and-pawns endgame, and Gukesh played on till there was no life left in the position.

Liren held fort till the very end and will go into the last game of the match as favourite.

**As close as the match gets, it only gets exciting. Quite excited (about the 14th game), but of course, it's an important game. I will try to do my best**

D GUKESH | GRANDMASTER

SHORT TAKES

BOA notice to IOA chief

**New Delhi:** Terming it an act of "administrative overreach", the Bihar Olympic Association (BOA) has sent a legal notice to Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha over the appointment of a single-member fact-finding commission to probe the governance structure of some states including Bihar.

Acting on alleged complaints about governance and election irregularities in several state Olympic associations, the IOA chief had through an office order appointed an external panel each December 2 for Telangana, Bihar, and Rajasthan respectively.

Hemanta Kumar Kalita, secretary general of the Boxing Federation of India, was named as the fact-finding commissioner for Bihar. By December 10, he was expected to deliver his conclusions, observations, and suggestions to the president of the IOA.

Madrid beat Atalanta

**Madrid:** Real Madrid's big stars turned on the style to revive the Spanish giant's faltering Champions League title defense.

Galacticos Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham all scored in a thrilling 3-2 win at Italian league leader Atalanta. But Madrid still had to ride its luck as Mateo Retegui fired over from in front of goal in stoppage time when handed a golden chance to level the game.

It was only Madrid's third win in the competition's revamped league phase and leaves the 15-time champion in the unseeded playoff positions in 18th place.

Six-time champion Liverpool leads the way after maintaining its perfect record in Europe this season with a 1-0 win against Girona.

Chavan breaks record

**Bhubaneswar:** Gujarat's Sakshi Chavan erased a seven-year long meet record in the women's 200m race on the final day of the 39th National Junior Athletics Championships at Kalinga Stadium Wednesday.

Sakshi's gold-medal winning time of 24.14 seconds was better than the previous meet record of 24.24 seconds set by Jisna Mathew in 2017.

It was double delight for Sakshi as she was also declared the best female athlete in the women's U20 category, while Delhi's 400m sprinter Jay Kumar walked away with the best athlete award in the men's U20 group.

Haryana won the overall title with 303 points. Tamil Nadu was second with 269 points.

NZ BATTER RECALLS FALL FROM GRACE

‘In India, I was dragged into fixing world’

**A decade after he was banned by the ECB, Vincent has healed and made peace with his past**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Wellington, Dec 11:** Former New Zealand batter Lou Vincent has opened up on how he was drawn to the world of match-fixing during his time at the now defunct Indian Cricket League in the late 2000s, saying being part of a gang at that time gave him a sense of belonging as he battled depression.

Vincent, who represented New Zealand in 23 Tests and 108 ODI, was handed 11 life-bans by the England and Wales Cricket Board in 2014 for match-fixing.

Last year, the ban was revised allowing him to be involved in domestic cricket.

The 46-year-old had started his career with a Test hundred on debut against the mighty Australian side of 2000s. As he fought depression and got involved in match-fixing, his promising international career came to a premature end at the age of 29.

In an interview, Vincent nar-



**Even if you've completed the fixing, they own you. It's hard to get out, and the only way to get out was literally the way I did (confess)**

LOU VINCENT | FORMER BATTER, NEW ZEALAND

rated how his early upbringing impacted his personality and career.

"So I didn't have the mental package to be a professional sports player. So at 28 I was deeply in depression and then went to India, and was dragged, sucked into that fixing world. It was pretty easy to

see how it happened," a candid Vincent admitted.

"I felt like I was part of a gang. It almost made me feel better, because I am thinking: 'I am part of a match-fixing gang, I am with a group that's going to have my back and nobody knows our little secret.'

2024 WORLD CUP HOST

**During the bid campaign, FIFA has accepted limited scrutiny of Saudi Arabia's human rights record that was widely criticised this year at the United Nations**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Zurich, Dec 11:** Saudi Arabia has been officially confirmed by FIFA as host of the 2034 World Cup in men's soccer.

The Saudi bid was the only candidate and was acclaimed by the applause of more than 200 FIFA member federations. They took part remotely in an online meeting hosted in Zurich Wednesday by the soccer

body's president Gianni Infantino.

The decision was combined with approving the only candidate to host the 2030 World Cup, Spain, Portugal and Morocco will co-host in a six-nation project, with Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay each getting one of the 104 games.

The South American connection will mark the centenary of Uruguay hosting the first World Cup in 1930.

FIFA and Saudi officials say hosting the 2034 tournament can accelerate change, including more freedoms and rights for women.

It will kick off a decade of

SERIES WHITEWASH FOR WOMEN IN BLUE

Mandhana's century goes in vain as India loses to Australia in third ODI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Perth, Dec 11:** Opener Smriti Mandhana's elegant century went in vain as India lost to Australia by 83 runs in the third Women's ODI to suffer a 0-3 series whitewash here Wednesday.

Opting to field after winning the toss, India had Australia on the ropes at 78 for four before middle-order batter Annabel Sutherland's scintillating 95-ball 110, and brisk half-centuries from Ashleigh Gardner (50) and skipper Tahlia McGrath (56 not out), lifted the hosts to a competitive 298 for six in the allotted 50 overs at WACA.

In reply, India were bowled out for 215 in 45.1 overs.

In pursuit of a stiff target of 299, the stylish Mandhana anchored the innings beautifully during her 105 off 109 balls and as long as the southpaw was at the crease, the visitors were in with a chance.

However, her dismissal at

a crucial juncture put paid to India's hopes of earning a consolation win.

The problem with the Indian innings was that the senior batter lacked support from the others after Alana King ended a 118-run partnership between Mandhana and Harleen Deol (39 off 64 balls) by dismissing the latter.

During her stay in the middle, Mandhana found the fence 14 times and cleared it once, leading the team's recovery after the swashbuckling Richa Ghosh's (2) early departure.

Spin bowling all-rounder Gardner completed a fine match by taking five wickets for 30 runs after her contribution with the willow.

Besides Ghosh, captain Harmanpreet Kaur (12 off 22 balls) and Jemimah Rodrigues (16 off 11 balls) failed with the bat, and it did not help India's cause.

Senior all-rounder Deepti Sharma too flopped, getting out

for a duck.

Earlier, Australia survived a stellar spell from India pacer Arundhati Reddy to post a challenging total in the final match of what has been a one-side series dominated thoroughly by the formidable home team.

Sutherland led Australia's recovery after Reddy struck four times in quick succession for career-best figures in limited-overs cricket.

Having already lost the series, India opted to bowl at the iconic WACA ground but did not get the required breakthroughs in the first powerplay with Phoebe Litchfield (25 off 33) and Georgia Voll (26 off 30) going strong.

However, Reddy, playing only her fifth ODI, changed the course of the game in one over by removing the openers in a space of four balls.

India's catching left a lot to be desired as they grassed three tough chances.



PCB faces losses, lawsuits, alienation if it withdraws from Champions Trophy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Karachi, Dec 11:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) could face revenue losses, lawsuits and risk alienation from the cricket world if it decides to withdraw from the ICC Champions Trophy as deadlock persists with governing body ICC over the mode of organising the 50-over event scheduled in February-March.

A senior cricket administrator who is well versed with the organisation ICC events told PTI on Wednesday that it would not be a easy decision for the PCB to not play in the Champions Trophy if their Hybrid Model formula is not accepted in entirety by the ICC and Board of Control for Cricket in India.

"Pakistan has not only signed a host agreement with the ICC but like all other participating nations in the event it has also signed a mandatory members participation agreement (MPA)

with the ICC," the administrator explained.

"It is only after a member nation signs the MPA for playing in an ICC event that it is eligible to get a share of revenues earned from ICC events. Most importantly when the ICC signed a broadcasting deal for all its events rights it has given a guarantee to them that all ICC members are available to play in their events including the Champions Trophy," he said.

Last week, the ICC reached a consensus to conduct next year's Champions Trophy in a hybrid model, allowing India to play its share of matches in Dubai while agreeing "in principle" to a similar arrangement in multi-lateral events till 2027.

However, a formal announcement is awaited.

As part of the broadcasting deal, at least one Pakistan and India match has to be scheduled in all ICC events, said the administrator.

FIFA gives Saudi its biggest sports win yet



scrutiny on Saudi labor laws and treatment of workers mostly from South Asia needed to help build and upgrade 15 stadiums, plus hotels and transport networks ahead of the 104-game tournament.

One of the stadiums is planned to be 350 meters (yards) above the ground in Neom — a

futuristic city that does not yet exist — and another named for the crown prince is designed to be atop a 200-meter cliff near Riyadh.

Saudi and international rights groups and activists warned FIFA it has not learned the lessons of Qatar's much-criticized preparations to host the 2022 World Cup. The kingdom plans to spend tens of

billion of dollars on projects related to the World Cup as part of the crown prince's sweeping Vision 2030 project that aims to modernize Saudi society and economy. At its core is spending on sports by the \$900 billion sovereign wealth operation, the Public Investment Fund, which he oversees. Critics have called it "sportswashing" of the kingdom's reputation.

2027 Women's World Cup in Brazil

**Zurich:** The 2027 Women's World Cup in Brazil will be played from June 24 to July 25. FIFA, soccer's international governing body, announced the dates Tuesday.

Thirty-two teams will participate in the Women's World Cup, which is being played in South America for the first time. Brazil has one of CONMEBOL's three spots as host. UEFA has the largest number of slots with 11, followed by AFC with six, CAF and CONCACAF with four apiece and OFC with one. The other spots will be determined via playoff. Spain is the defending champion, having won the 2023 Women's World Cup jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

FIFA is expected to announce the Brazilian host cities and stadiums for the tournament next year. Twelve bids were submitted, including many of the stadiums that hosted games for the men's World Cup in 2014.