



Remarkable run

Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* secures spots on the BAFTA Film Awards longlists

LEISURE | P2



Oil spill emergency

Russia-appointed officials in Crimea announces a regional emergency, as oil was detected on the shores of Sevastopol

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Nippon to sue US govt

Japan's Nippon Steel is set to file a lawsuit in response to US President Joe Biden's decision to block its takeover of US Steel

BUSINESS | P11



Fiery fifty

Rishabh Pant conjured up a spectacular 33-ball-61 to somehow keep India afloat against Australia in the final Test

SPORTS | P12



DESTRUCTION OF LEGACY: View of the partially demolished heritage site Manzil Mubarak in Agra district, Saturday. The demolition work at the 17th-century structure, also known as 'Aurangzeb's Haveli' along the Yamuna, allegedly by an Agra-based builder with 'political connections', was halted following status quo orders issued by the District Magistrate. Revenue department officials have also launched a probe into the incident

Smart devices in buses soon: CM

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday announced that smart devices will be installed in all buses as part of the state government's effort to ensure road safety and reduce accidents. The smart device will help detect and prevent different negligence and emergency including drunk driving and loss of consciousness by drivers. Addressing a function marking the beginning of the National Road Safety

Month here, the chief minister said the state government will provide assistance to fit smart devices in buses. Majhi also said to strengthen road safety by recruiting over 2,000 traffic police personnel. "Five hundred traffic personnel will be recruited this year", he said. The smart device can analyse the breath of drivers operating vehicles under the influence of alcohol, said Commerce and Transport department, principal secretary, Usha Padhee. "The smart device can



The CM also inaugurated the Odisha Yatri app on the occasion. This App will help people to book auto-rickshaws and taxis. He said the app will help reduce interference of middlemen who are taking benefits between the traveller and drivers. On the occasion, a padyatra was held to create awareness of this year's theme of 'Come Home Safe.' Apart from Transport department officials, NCC volunteers and students of several schools and colleges, drivers and artists participated.

Nuclear scientist Chidambaram dies

ROBBERS KILL 2

NEW DELHI: Eminent physicist Rajagopala Chidambaram, who played a key role in the nuclear tests of 1974 and 1998, passed away Saturday, according to the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). He was 88. Chidambaram, who was also associated with the nuclear weapons programme, breathed his last at Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai, a DAE official said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "deeply saddened" by the demise of Chidambaram. "He was one of the key architects of India's nuclear programme and made ground-breaking contributions in strengthening India's scientific and strategic capabilities. He will be remembered with gratitude by the whole nation and his efforts will inspire generations to come," the PM said.

Daring daylight robberies by armed miscreants in two different parts of the state, in a span of 24 hours, have raised serious questions over the law and order situation which continues to be on the slide for the past several years in Odisha. Hours after a private gold loan company in Sambalpur town was emptied of 30 kg gold by hoodlums at gun point Friday, two persons were shot dead when they resisted a robbery attempt at Panikoli market in Jajpur district Saturday



and an employee of Energy department, they added. According to the police, Ray was on his bike to a bank to deposit the store's cash when he was shot around 1.30 pm. He was admitted to the district headquarters hospital in critical condition but succumbed to his injuries, police said. According to sources, four unidentified armed men on two motorcycles arrived at the scene and fired at Ray, injuring him critically. Hearing Ray's screams, locals rushed to the spot. Anticipating trouble, the armed men tried to flee when the store owner chased them from behind and hit their bike. They fell down and fired upon the car and again tried to flee. As ill fate could have it, Panda was returning on his bike when the miscreants tried to snatch his vehicle. They fired upon Panda when he resisted. As a result, he died on the spot. However, two of them managed to escape by snatching the bike of another youth while two others were overpowered. Police arrived at the spot and launched a manhunt to nab others after arresting the two. All the miscreants are natives of Assam, it was learnt. As tension mounted in the area, Jajpur SP Yash Pratap Shimal and DIG Charan Singh Meena reached the site to keep situation under control. Notably, about 30 kg of gold was robbed at gunpoint from the branch of a gold loan company in Sambalpur, Friday.

Jajpur, Jan 4: Two persons were shot dead by armed men during a robbery attempt at a jewellery store at Panikoli of this district Saturday afternoon, police said. The victims were identified as Sunil Kumar Ray, the jewellery store employee and a native of nearby Bhubaneswar village, and Nila Madhab Panda, a resident of Soti under Korei block

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Murdering a journalist is abominable. Jailing him would have been better

Trump not to be jailed in hush money case

New York, Jan 4 : In an extraordinary turn, a judge Friday set President-elect Donald Trump's sentencing in his hush money case for January 10 — little over a week before he's due to return to the White House — but indicated he wouldn't be jailed. The development

nevertheless leaves Trump on course to be the first president to take office convicted of felony crimes. Judge Juan M Merchan, who presided over Trump's trial, signalled in a written decision that he'd sentence the former and future president to what's known as a conditional discharge, in which a case gets dismissed if a defendant avoids rearrest. Merchan rejected Trump's push to dismiss the verdict and throw out the case on presidential immunity grounds and because of his impending return to the White House. The judge said he found "no legal impediment to sentencing" Trump and that it was "incumbent" on him to sentence Trump. P10

Cowpea seeds germinate in space

New Delhi, Jan 4: ISRO Saturday said the cowpea seeds it had sent to space onboard the PSLV-C60 POEM-4 platform has germinated under microgravity conditions within four days of the launch of the mission. The space agency sent eight cowpea seeds as part of the Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies (CROPS) experiment conducted by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) to study plant growth in microgravity conditions. "Life sprouts in space! VSSC's CROPS experiment onboard PSLV-C60 POEM-4 successfully sprouted cowpea seeds in 4 days. Leaves expected soon," ISRO said in a post on X. The PSLV-C60 mission

placed two SpaDeX satellites in orbit on the night of December 30. The fourth stage of the rocket carrying the POEM-4 platform has been orbiting the earth with 24 onboard experiments at an altitude of 350 km since Tuesday. The CROPS experiment aims to understand how plants grow in the unique conditions of space, which is essential for future long-duration space missions. The experiment involves growing eight cowpea seeds in a controlled environment with active thermal regulation, simulating conditions

that plants might encounter during extended space travel. CROPS is envisioned as a multi-phase platform to develop and evolve ISRO's capabilities for growing and sustaining flora in extraterrestrial environments. Designed as a fully-automated system, a five to seven-day experiment has been planned to demonstrate seed germination and plant sustenance until reaching the two-leaf stage in a microgravity environment. The cowpea seeds have been placed in a closed-box environment with active thermal control. Passive measurements, including camera imaging, oxygen and carbon dioxide concentrations, relative humidity, temperature, and soil moisture monitoring, are available for plant growth and monitoring, the space agency said. ISRO also posted a separate 'selfie video' of the chaser satellite of the space docking experiment that is orbiting the earth at an altitude of 470 km. The chaser satellite is expected to dock with the target satellite in space on Tuesday, a feat that would make India only the fourth country to master this cutting-edge technology after Russia, the US and China.

4 jawans dead as vehicle falls into gorge

Srinagar, Jan 4: Four Army personnel were killed and one injured when their vehicle fell into a gorge in Bandipora district of J&K, officials said Saturday. The vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a gorge near SK Payen in the north Kashmir district, they said. Army's Chinara Corps said in a post on X that while performing duty in Bandipora District, a vehicle of Indian Army fell into the gorge due



to inclement weather and poor visibility conditions. "Injured soldiers were promptly evacuated for medical care with assistance from Kashmiri locals, for which we express gratitude towards the citizens in providing immediate succour," they said in a post on X.

"Tragically four brave hearts lost their lives in the unfortunate accident. Indian Army extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," the Army said. "Deeply grieved by the loss of lives of Indian Army personnel due to a tragic road accident in Bandipora. The nation is deeply grateful for their service and commitment. My condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured" the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said in a condolence message.

Manoj Sahoo CM's new private secy

Bhubaneswar: Senior bureaucrat Manoj Kumar Sahoo was Saturday appointed as the private secretary to the chief minister of Odisha, an official notification said. Sahoo, a 2006-batch IAS officer, was working as the special secretary to the chief minister after his appointment to the post last month. The Centre had in November 2024, approved his inter-cadre deputation to Odisha for three years. Sahoo is an Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre IAS officer and was serving as deputy election commissioner in EC office in Delhi before coming to Odisha. Sahoo replaced IAS officer Arindam Dakua who was appointed the ex-officio additional secretary of the H&UD department.

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POP ICON MADONNA SPARKS ENGAGEMENT RUMOURS

American pop singer Madonna sparked internet speculation about a possible engagement to her rumoured boyfriend, Akeem Morris, after sharing several photos from her New Year celebrations, in which she flaunted a giant diamond ring on her left hand.

MINAJ SUED FOR ASSAULT BY FORMER EMPLOYEE

American rapper Nicki Minaj has been slapped with a lawsuit over alleged assault, battery and "intentional infliction of emotional distress". The charges have been pressed by a man who alleges the Grammy-nominated rapper struck him in the face during a confrontation.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today you may want to do only those things that you love to do. You have a very optimistic outlook. Your decision making will be fast, but you may postpone some of them. Ganesha says you may go home dancing if that is what makes you happy.

TAURUS

There is a fair chance that you will make heads turn at work today, forecasts Ganesha. It may not be an auspicious day for auction bids or tenders. Some of you may succeed in interviews and entrance tests this afternoon, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

Your career is finally on track and your dreams don't look too distant any more. A candlelit dinner with your spouse will leave you wanting for more. And you shall get more. A night to remember indeed. Ganesha, however, warns you to hold your horses or an imminent accident awaits you.

CANCER

The first half of the day may leave you a little flummoxed. You may get discouraged when things are not going your way, predicts Ganesha. But your subconscious mind knows how to handle such situations. You will take a break from the rat race, and take a detour to your home.

LEO

You will spend an enjoyable day with your family members today. Even at the work-place you will be thinking of ways to be with your family. You will take time out for some self-improvement projects. It is necessary to bring about some changes in life, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

You will end up spending the whole day at work today, making detailed plans for the future. While taking important decisions, Ganesha says, keep your partner informed. Whenever needed, also take the consent of your family to avoid any misunderstandings in the future.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that you will find happiness and enhanced vigor today. You will make plans to go with your friends or family members for a short trip or excursion. You will be confused about something in the day which will drive you to seek answers in religious or philosophical discourses.

SCORPIO

According to Ganesha, you may just be happy basking in the glory of successful business deals. Focus on your target and there's lot more in store for you on the career front. Sometimes, it's all right to pamper your beloved with precious gifts, and for this you may end up splurging today.

SAGITTARIUS

The bossy nature of your soul mate is likely to put you off. At work, you may find yourself helpless and left scratching your head. Ganesha advises and foresees you sitting together with your beloved and resolving all your differences.

CAPRICORN

If you are a civil servant, good times are ahead for you. Also, you may have to deal with the government for your business and it will turn out to be a fruitful transaction, says Ganesha. If you are a lawyer, doctor, or any other professional, you will need to prove you metal and ensure that you utilise the every opportunity, coming your way.

AQUARIUS

Fortune is mighty pleased with you, so go ahead and play roulette if you wish! Partnerships will work today, as will business deals. But somewhere, a dark sentiment may cloud your thinking. Ganesha says that you should enjoy yourself and take life a bit lightly.

PISCES

You will find yourself in a good mood today. Your co-workers will also enjoy being around you. You will be able to influence people for the positive with your respectful demeanor and your sense of humor. You could find yourself splurging on yourself at a spa or a beauty parlor, says Ganesha.

Rakul's words of wisdom

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh's mantra for 2025, "This holiday season, let me go."

The *Doctor G* star recently treated fans with a couple of lovely pictures from her most recent holiday.

Rakul also penned a long note sharing her learning from the year gone by and how she looks forward to 2025, "This holiday was all about letting go...so here is what I wanted to share ...I always struggled with letting go and relishing food without feeling guilty, or the constant stress of getting back on track .. basically a lot of guilt attached to indulgence and constant noise in my head .. but I'm so happy that I could let go this year!! I was able to enjoy every bit of every meal be it sugar or fried... it's a hard task to live in the moment and enjoy the joy of it and I'm sure a lot of you resonate with it ..so here I am telling you .. it's fine .. pause, enjoy and get back on track .. cos how you feel is more important than how you look .. no one's validation is more important than your acceptance of yourself..."

The *Runway 34* star further added, "Ok now yes obviously we do need to get back on track and it is time to do so but without any fads, without any stress... embracing all the memories of the trip and looking into the future of 2025."



PRIYANKA'S 2025 GOALS

Mumbai: Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has revealed that her goal for 2025 is "abundance" in joy, happiness and peace.

Priyanka took to her Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures with her family including husband Nick Jonas and daughter Malti Marie. In the first image, Priyanka is seen flaunting her svelte figure in an orange bikini as she stood on her luxury villa's parapet.

Another image showed her sporting an itchy-bitsy red bikini posing alongside Nick on the beach while her daughter played with water. Some images showed happy moments the family spent together.

In one picture the actress is seen sitting on a jet ski. While others had moments of

Priyanka and daughter Malti together.

She wrote as the caption: "Abundance. That is my goal for 2025. In joy, in happiness and in peace. May we all find abundance this new year. So grateful for my family. Happy 2025. Thank you @airbnb for such wonderful memories."

On the work front, the *Dostana* actress has several exciting projects lined up, including *Heads of State*, where she stars alongside Idris Elba and John Cena.



All We Imagine As Light in BAFTA list

New Delhi, Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* continues its remarkable run on the international awards circuit, securing spots on the BAFTA Film Awards longlists in three categories, including Best Director.

The British Academy Friday evening shared the results of the first round of voting across 25 categories for its upcoming awards gala.

Kapadia's Malayalam-Hindi movie, which scripted history by becoming the first Indian movie to win the Grand Prix award at the Cannes in May, has made it to three longlists of 10 movies each Best Film Not in English Language, Best Director and Best Original Screenplay.

Besides *All We Imagine As Light*, Sandhya Suri's *Santosh* and Karan Kandhari's *Sister Midnight* are nominated in the longlist for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer.

Indian-origin British actor Dev Patel has also found a mention in the longlist for his directorial debut *Monkey Man*. Patel is nominated in the Leading Actor longlist.

According to BAFTA, the films mentioned in the longlists will advance to the nominating stage of voting, which started Friday and will conclude January 10.

The final nominations will be announced January 15. The 2025 BAFTA Film Awards will be held February 16.



NEW DELHI: India has the potential to host music festivals that are bigger in scale than renowned global events like Coachella, Punjabi singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh said during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on New Year's Day.

The globally popular singer met the prime minister at his residence Wednesday where they discussed music, culture and India's artistic legacy.

During the meeting, PM Modi asked Dosanjh about his experience of travelling outside of India and performing at various global festivals like the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in April 2023.

"I feel that they have made festivals like Coachella or any other very big. And I believe we can make it much bigger. People travel from all over the world for such festivals," said the 40-year-old singer.

Diljit said music is embedded in India's cultural fabric and noted how people who are not trained professionally can often display impeccable talent.

"Whether we are eating food in a dhaba or someone is singing in Rajasthani, the song we listen to is so melodious that I feel like I should stop singing. He is singing such a good song. And I sing professionally, this person is not even singing professionally. And he is singing better than me. He has so much art in him. If such a development happens here, people from all over the world will come," Diljit said.

'India can host music festivals bigger than Coachella'

PEANUTS



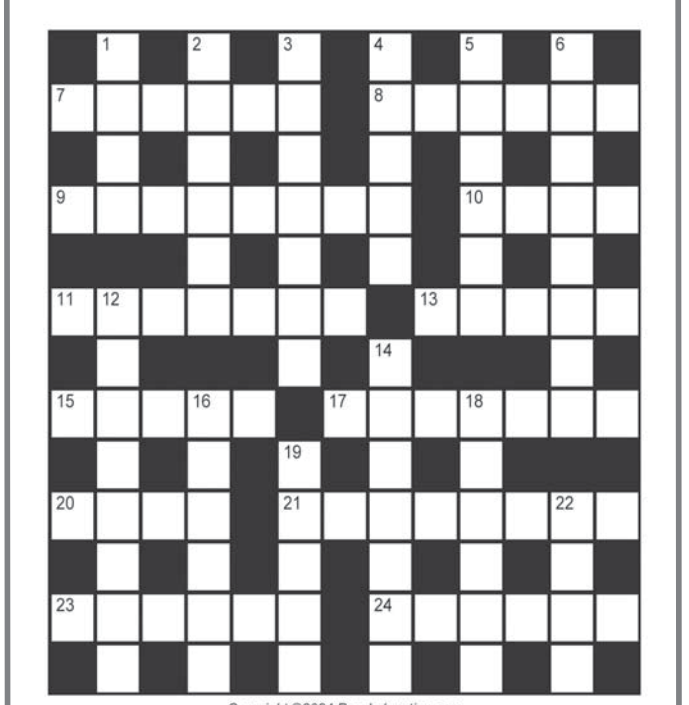
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



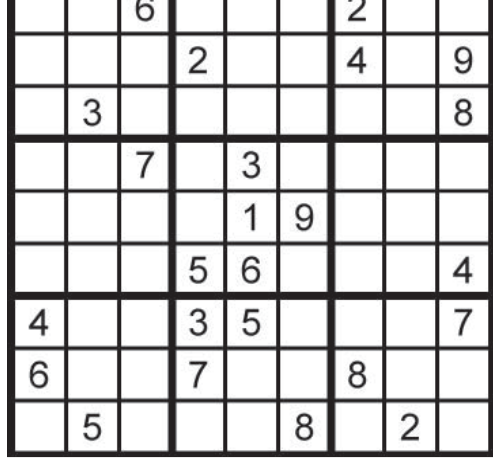
FUN POST CROSSWORD



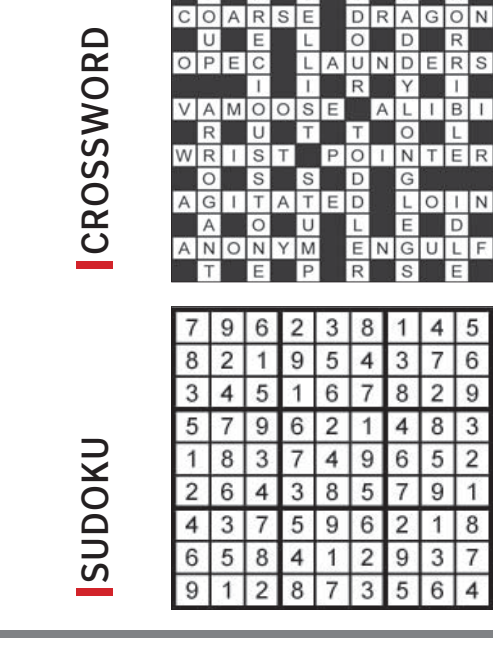
- Across**
- 7 Automotons
 - 8 Block out
 - 9 Court game
 - 10 Beat badly
 - 11 Theatre presentation
 - 13 ___ of roses
 - 15 Greek letter
 - 17 Dig up
 - 20 Glance over
 - 21 Deficiency
 - 23 Kind of artist
 - 24 Lauds
- Down**
- 1 Lotus position discipline
 - 2 Concession stand treat (3,3)
 - 3 Canaries, e.g.
 - 4 Sacred text
 - 5 Plant disease (3-3)
 - 6 Peevish
 - 12 Mackintosh
 - 14 Pool game
 - 16 Infinitely small
 - 18 Sharp as a tack place
 - 19 English race
 - 22 Jamboree

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy speaking at a function to mark the 51st anniversary of the state's leading Odia daily 'Dharitri' at the twin publications' headquarters in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Chief Executive of the publications Adyasha Satpathy, and Sahityayana in-charge and former Odisha Sahitya Akademi president Dr Hrushikesh Mallick are seen on the dais.

Dharitri staffers presenting a short play on environment protection on the occasion. **OP PHOTOS**

RBI's financial literacy programme in City

Bhubaneswar: As part of its drive to create awareness on financial literacy among people, RBI's Bhubaneswar branch Saturday organised a programme for visually-challenged persons and distributed booklets translated into Braille script among the participants. The financial literacy and awareness programme was conducted on the premises of 'The Odisha Association for the Blind' here on the occasion of International Braille Day. Around 180 participants, including students, employees, members, and office bearers of the association, attended the programme. "The Financial Awareness Messages (FAME) booklet of RBI, translated in Braille script, was distributed among the participants," Madhukar Anand, deputy general manager, RBI, said.

Over 3K nat'l, int'l industry leaders, investors to attend Utkarsh Odisha

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Around 3,000 national and international industry leaders, investors and start-up entrepreneurs are expected to attend 'Utkarsh Odisha: Make in Odisha Conclave 2025' scheduled to be held here from January 28, official sources said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the industry leaders and investors on the inaugural day. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who reviewed the preparations for the two-day event with officials Saturday, emphasised creating a unique identity for Odisha among national and international investors. He urged for flawless and attractive management of all programmes to make the event a success. The Chief Minister said the event would position Odisha as a preferred destination for investors in the long run.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) will hold its national executive council meeting January 27. The main event will feature four plenary sessions, 16 sectoral sessions, and four roundtable conferences over two days, from January 28. Special sessions will be dedicated to various industry sectors, including speeches by prominent industry leaders. A CEO roundtable with the Chief Minister, a session for Odia entrepreneurs, and another session specifically for women business leaders will also be part of the event. Additionally, a session for Odia women entrepreneurs will also be held. An industrial exhibition is scheduled to take place from January 28 to 30. The meeting was attended by Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Development Commissioner Anu Garg, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Nikunjia Bihari Dhal, Additional Chief Secretary of Public Administration department Surendra Kumar, and Principal Secretaries and Secretaries of various departments.

COLD WAVE GRIPS STATE

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Cold wave conditions gripped parts of Odisha Saturday with the mercury dropping to 4.6 degrees Celsius in G Udaygiri in Kandhamal district, the IMD said. Ten places in the state recorded temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius in the last 24 hours, it said. Semiliguda in Koraput district recorded 5.5 degrees Celsius, Phulbani in Kandhamal was at 7.5 degrees Celsius, Rourkela registered 8.7 degrees Celsius, Koraput was at 8.8 degrees Celsius, Jharsuguda and Angul were at 9 degrees Celsius, Daringibadi recorded 9.5 degrees Celsius, and Bhawanipatna and Chiplima registered 9.9 degrees Celsius. State capital Bhubaneswar recorded the season's lowest temperature of 12.7 degrees Celsius, 2.3 notches below the normal. Neighbouring Cuttack city also shivered at 12.4 degrees Celsius. The IMD said no large change in the minimum temperature is expected in the next two days, and thereafter, it might rise by 2-3 degrees Celsius. Light to moderate fog is expected Sunday morning in Angul, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Cuttack, Ganjam, Gajapati, Nayagarh, Keonjhar, and Mayurbhanj districts, it said.

Social security for only 5.5% elderly workforce



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Odisha performs poorly when it comes to providing social security to the elderly workforce in informal sector, which is one of the lowest in the country. Around 37.3 per cent of the state's elderly population are currently working, which is slightly above the national average of 35.7 per cent, according to an analysis of Longitudinal Aging Study of India (LASI) Wave I report by the Centre for Youth and Social Development in its study 'Emergent Odisha: Demography and Development'. "However, only 5.5 per cent of them are covered under any work-related social insurance scheme — one of the

lowest in the country," it said. Additionally, 46 per cent of the elderly in the state have had no schooling, while only 23.7 per cent have completed secondary schooling or above. Among elderly women, a huge 82 per cent are economically dependent, either fully or partially, on others, compared to 54 per cent of men, the report said. The labour participation rate among the elderly in the state is relatively high, with many continuing to work out of financial necessities. However, most of their work occurs in informal sectors and low-paying jobs, making it difficult for them to meet basic needs, it said. "This economic scenario, characterised by low wages

46% of the elderly in Odisha have had no schooling, while only 23.7% have completed secondary schooling or above

82% elderly women are economically dependent, either fully or partially, on others, compared to 54% of men

and insecure employment, significantly contributes to the perpetuation of poverty levels among the elderly in Odisha. The link between low wages, unstable job security and poverty translates into fighting social and economic burdens." The majority of the elderly in the state comes from the informal sector, yet only 35.7 per cent of them have access to IG-NOAP (Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension) scheme of the government and 38.4 per cent have access to widow pension as per the LASI Wave I report. There were a total of 3.6 million elderly pensioners in Odisha covered under the MBPY (Madhu Babu Pension Yojana), according to the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department of the state government. Additionally, 2.03 million elderly beneficiaries were enrolled in the NSAP (National Social Assistance Programme).

ISCHAEMIC STROKE

25% people have access to rehab centre in an hour

Roughly a fourth of the Indian population has access to a rehabilitation centre within an hour of experiencing an ischaemic stroke — caused when a blood clot affects supply to the brain, a study has found. The research, published in the International Journal of Stroke, also estimated that there is less than one ischaemic stroke centre per million population. Ischaemic stroke is the most common, accounting for about 70-80 per cent of all strokes in India, according to a September 2024 study, published in the journal Scientific Reports. In the recent study, researchers, including those from the US' Ascension Health and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS),



Hyderabad, found that a total of 566 stroke centres equipped with the 'intravenous thrombolysis' method of treatment (which breaks up blood clots) were spread across 26 states and Union Territories. Of the 566, over 60 per cent (361) were found to be also equipped with endovascular therapy for stroke patients, considered superior. Typically, an ischaemic stroke patient was 115 kilometres away


from the nearest intravenous thrombolysis treatment centre and about 130 kilometres away from the nearest endovascular therapy centre, the researchers found. Further, a little over 26 per cent of the Indian population can access intravenous thrombolysis centre in under an hour, while about a fifth can access endovascular therapy centre, the team found. For the analysis, data on "intravenous thrombolysis capable (IVT-C) and endovascular treatment capable (EVT-C)" stroke centres were collected in March 2021 from medical devices and pharmaceutical industry providers. Time taken to drive to the nearest stroke care centre was estimated using the application 'Google Distance Matrix API'.

"Access within one hour to an IVT-C and an EVT-C centre was available to 26.3 per cent and 20.6 per cent of the Indian population, respectively," the authors wrote. "The average stroke centres per million (SCPM) population was 0.41 and 0.26 for IVT-C and EVT-C, respectively," they wrote. Further, "median (typical) distances to the nearest IVT-C and EVT-C centres were 115 kilometres and 131 kilometres, respectively." The authors said establishing stroke facilities equipped with intravenous thrombolysis and endovascular treatments in poorly served regions in India is urgently needed to increase access and improve outcomes for stroke patients.

8th Death Anniversary

In Loving Memory

“We remember you with Pride and Gratitude. Your presence remains with us like a Blessing. We miss your Love, Affection and Guidance. Your path of Righteousness will continue to inspire us.”




✓ Gopal Chandra Mohanty

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Ex- Chairman, State Law Revision Committee.

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Ekamra Utsav to begin today in City

The event to feature a variety of cultural, culinary, and entertainment events celebrating Odisha's heritage and local talent



The Park Utsav, scheduled for January 5 to 12, will take place in five iconic parks: Madhusudan Park, Indira Gandhi Park, Buddha Park, Forest Park, and Abdul Kalam Park. The event will feature health-focused activities in the mornings from 6:30 am to 9 am, including yoga, zumba, and health talks. Evening sessions (3:30 pm to 6:30 pm) will offer cultural programmes, such as storytelling, workshops on waste management, magic shows, and live performances by local singers.

A major highlight of the Ekamra Utsav is the night flea market, running from 4pm to 11pm daily. The market will offer a variety of products from clothing to handcrafted décor, and provide a platform for local entrepreneurs and artists. Visitors can enjoy live performances from budding artists, college bands, and folk performers, along with demonstrations of traditional Odisha crafts like terracotta work and Pattachitra painting. Ekamra Utsav promises to be an unforgettable celebration of Odisha's culture, creativity, and community spirit.



IN MEMORIAM: Guests attend the 15th Rajkishore Nayak Memorial Gandhi Lecture- 2025 titled 'Global Legacy of Gandhian Ideology' at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) is all set to organise the Ekamra Utsav from January 5 to January 16, said BDA vice chairman N Thirumala Naik here, Saturday. The festival will feature a diverse range of events, including a Park Utsav, food festival, city lighting, flea market, and Ekamra Walks. The food festival will run at

Man arrested in fatal hit-and-run incident



The child's parents, though injured, survived and were rushed to a nearby hospital by bystanders. Tragically, the infant later succumbed to his injuries while receiving treatment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: A 42-year-old man was arrested by Tamando police Saturday in connection with a tragic hit-and-run incident that led to the death of a 19-month-old child. The child was allegedly run over and dragged by the suspect's mini-truck, sustaining fatal injuries. The suspect has been identified as Abhay Kumar Nayak, a resident of Balipatna, located on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. A senior officer at the Tamando police station said that the incident took place Friday

WEATHER
BBSR CTC
Max Temp 26.7° 25.5°
Min Temp 12.7° 12.5°
Humidity 80% 80%
Rainfall Nil Nil
FORECAST
Forecast:Fog/mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later

CLASSIFIED
LOST

I, Mamuni Behera, W/o - Debaraj Behera, R/o - Khandiabandha, Near Kartik Mandap, PO - Gopinathpur, Dist. - Puri, do hereby declare that two nos. of original sale deed bearing No. 1142001051 and 1142001036 which link to my sale deed No. - 11482400096 have lost on 02.01.25 at Badasankha Market area, Puri, Which is beyond recovery. I Shall not be liable if some misuse the same after getting. Contact - 9090456678

PM to lay foundation for Rayagada rly division Jan 6



₹107 crore projects to feature key components to strengthen the region's railway infrastructure

The initiative is expected to improve transportation links, enhance regional economic activity, and create employment opportunities. Project will also incorporate sustainability features, such as rainwater harvesting systems, along with adequate parking and circulating areas

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually lay the foundation for the new Rayagada railway division of the East Coast Railway (ECoR) zone January 6, alongside inaugurating several other key railway projects. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav will join the event at Jammu, while the ceremony at Rayagada will be attended by Governor Kambhampati Hari Babu, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, and Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, among others. The ₹107 crore Rayagada

railway division project aims to enhance rail connectivity and drive economic growth in the tribal regions of southern Odisha. Headquartered in Rayagada, the division will include a modern DRM office (G+2 structure spanning 12,000 sqm) and a divisional control office to optimise railway operations. Additionally, residential facilities for staff and officers will be developed to support its functions. The initiative is expected to significantly improve transportation links, enhance regional economic activity, and create employment opportunities. The project will also incorporate sustainability features, such as rainwater harvesting systems, along with adequate parking and circulating areas. In addition to the Rayagada division, the Prime Minister

will inaugurate the new Jammu railway division and the Charlapalli terminal station in Hyderabad. These projects are part of a broader push to modernise India's railway infrastructure and promote regional development. The Rayagada division is anticipated to play a pivotal role in addressing the transportation needs of the tribal belt, promoting socio-economic development, and ensuring better access to markets and resources for local communities. The foundation stone laying ceremony for the Rayagada division will be held in Rayagada, with the Prime Minister participating virtually from Jammu. The initiative underscores the government's commitment to strengthening rail infrastructure and connectivity, particularly in underserved regions, contributing to India's vision of inclusive growth.

Control centre opens for PBD



The centre to provide information and assistance to around 7K Non-Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin

with an Interactive Voice Response system in place for event-specific inquiries. Personnel from various departments will be deployed to assist the attendees. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the event January 9, while President Droupadi Murmu will address the gathering January 10. Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida, who also oversees the tourism department, confirmed that all departments are prepared for the occasion. "So far, 2,500 NRIs have registered, and guides speaking Odia, Hindi, and English will assist them at 31 tourist destinations," she said. For security and smooth operations, the Commissionerate Police in Bhubaneswar-Cuttack has deployed over 40 platoons of force, and around 100 Pravasi Mitra (volunteers) will assist with traffic management during the event.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: The state government Saturday launched a central command control centre to coordinate with guests during the three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) starting January 8. This centre will provide information and assistance to around 7,000 Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who are likely to attend the event here, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said. The centre can be reached by dialing 1929 for support,

Alcohol consumption linked to seven types of cancer

US surgeon general urges cancer warnings for alcoholic drinks and calls for reassessment of alcohol consumption guidelines

etary guidelines currently recommend two or fewer drinks per day for men and one drink or less per day for women. "Alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of cancer in the United States, after tobacco and obesity," Murthy's office said in a statement accompanying the new report, adding the type of alcohol consumed does not matter. His advisory sent shares in alcohol companies including Diageo (DGE.L), Pernod Ricard (PERP.PA), Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB.LBR), and (HEIN.AS), in some cases over 3 per cent. The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS), which represents top spirits makers, pointed to a new report, opens new tab by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine showing that moderate alcohol consumption is associated with lower rates of death from any causes, as well as higher risk of breast cancer. "The current health warning on alcohol products has long informed consumers



According to a new report, moderate alcohol consumption is associated with lower rates of death from any causes, as well as higher risk of breast cancer. **W**HO says there is no safe level of drinking and even a small amount of alcohol can harm health - a position that has prompted debate around the impact of moderate drinking

about the potential risks of the consumption of alcohol," the group's vice president for science, Amanda Burger, said in a statement, adding that no one should drink for health benefits. The US Beer Institute promotes responsible consumption of alcohol, a spokesperson said.

It is unclear when or if the Surgeon General's suggestions will be adopted. US President Joe Biden's administration is ending. Murthy could be succeeded by Janette Nesheiwat, a director of a New York chain of urgent care clinics and president-elect Donald Trump's pick for the role.

Trump, whose brother died from alcoholism and who does not drink himself, has long warned about the risks of alcohol. Robert F Kennedy Jr, Trump's nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, has been open about his past struggles with heroin and alcohol, and says he attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. The decision to update labels will ultimately be made by Congress.

'SAVE LIVES' Public health bodies like the World Health Organisation (WHO) are also increasingly turning their attention toward alcohol after making progress on stronger tobacco controls. The WHO says there is no safe level of drinking and that even a small amount of alcohol can harm health - a position that has prompted tense debate around the impact of moderate drinking and its role in society. The Mayo Clinic says the health risk is low for moderate intake, opens new tab and rises with the amount consumed. The Surgeon General report

says higher consumption raises risks and imbibing two drinks a day would result in about five more women out of 100 developing cancer and three more men out of 100. Current US dietary guidelines run until 2025, and companies including Diageo and Heineken have lobbied officials ahead of the change, lobbying records show, amid concerns the US could adopt the WHO's language around safe consumption. Other countries' guidelines already include such language, while nations like Ireland have already moved to introduce warning labels. Some scientists accused the industry of misleading people about the risks of developing cancer from drinking in a 2017 study. DISCUS said the researchers had anti-alcohol biases and their study was selective. The Surgeon General's advisory said alcohol is responsible for 100,000 US cancer cases each year, and more than the 13,500 alcohol-associated traffic crash deaths.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS
Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-909090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.



Kejrival Ji, you will have to give an account to the people of Delhi. They are demanding answers from you

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

ATUL SUBHASH'S WIFE, FAMILY MEMBERS GET BAIL

A city civil court here Saturday granted bail to engineer Atul Subhash's wife Nikita Singhania, her mother Nisha Singhania and brother Anurag Singhania in suicide abetment case



of the day quote

The growth rate of the agriculture sector and allied sectors is expected to be between 3.5 per cent and 4 per cent in 2025

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER

We reiterate our demand to sack Home Minister Amit Shah for his derogatory remarks against Dr Ambedkar

PAWAN KHERA | CONGRESS LEADER

The mother (RSS) created them (BJP and APP). RSS created Jan Sangh and later BJP was formed in 1980. The other (was formed) in 2012-13. There is a big institute. It is lab grown Hindutva. It (APP) was formed there

ASADUDDIN OWAIISI | AIMIM PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

One dead in factory blast in Telangana

Hyderabad: One person was killed and three others suffered injuries in a blast at a factory in Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana Saturday. One person suffered burn injuries to the face and hands, while the injuries of the remaining two were not serious, police said.

3-yr-old girl dies after receiving jab

Jaisalmer: A three-year-old girl died allegedly after being administered an injection at a medicine store in Jaisalmer Saturday, officials said. While the girl's family has accused the medicine store staff of negligence, Kotwali police station SHO Sawal Singh said the exact cause of death will be ascertained only after the autopsy report is received.

3 Rohingyas escape from detention centre

Goalpara: Assam Police launched a search operation to arrest three suspected Rohingyas who escaped from the detention transit camp in Goalpara district, an official said Saturday. The trio, taking advantage of the darkness, escaped by jumping the walls of the centre at Matia Thursday night.

Gangster killed in police encounter

Purnea: A notorious gangster, who had a bounty of ₹2 lakh on his head, was killed in a gunfight with the police in Bihar's Purnea district, police said Saturday. Shushil Mochi was wanted by Bihar's and West Bengal's police in multiple cases of dacoity, they said. The Special Task Force (STF) of the Bihar Police had been tracking him for days.

Two killed as two cars, truck collide

Hisar: Two people were killed and four others injured when two cars and a truck collided on Hisar-Chandigarh road Saturday, police said. The accident occurred near Surewala Chowk, about 55 kilometer from Hisar, the police said.

10-yr-old falls to death in open well

Jaipur: Following the death of a 10-year-old boy who fell into an open well at Sanganer in Jaipur district Friday, the administration Saturday suspended a patwari for providing misleading information about open borewells and wells in the area.

Delhi airport sees 400+ flight delays

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: Delhi airport Saturday saw 19 flight diversions, many cancellations and over 400 flight delays as low visibility conditions due to dense fog impacted operations for the second straight day.

An official said 19 flights were diverted at the airport between 12.15 am and 1.30 am due to reduced visibility. Of them, 13 were domestic, four international and two non-scheduled flights.

More than 45 flights were cancelled due to bad weather conditions at Delhi as well as at the destination airports, the official said. As per information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, over 400 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport.

The country's largest airline IndiGo had temporarily put arrivals and departures on hold at the airport early in the morning

The country's largest airline IndiGo had temporarily put arrivals and departures on hold at the airport early in the morning.

"While landing and take-offs continue at Delhi Airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information."

Khuddian bats for Centre-farmers talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 4: Punjab Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian Saturday sought Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's personal intervention urging that the Centre should hold a dialogue with the protesting farmers at the earliest to break the impasse.

He told Chouhan that farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal is sitting on an indefinite hunger strike for the past 40 days at Khanauri protest site in Punjab. He said being a Union agriculture minister, Chouhan should take personal interest in the matter. During a virtual meeting, Chouhan Saturday reviewed various schemes with state agriculture ministers and sought their suggestions on ongoing programmes and budget allocation ahead of the Union Budget.

Punjab's Agriculture Minister Khuddian, who joined the meeting through video-conferencing, raised the matter related to the protesting farmers and some other issues. Khuddian also told Chouhan that the latter has remained Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. He said states have many hopes towards the Centre and hoped that he will make personal intervention and will contribute in the present matter.

AIR POLLUTION SC plans pan-India tags for vehicles to mark fuel-type

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: The Supreme Court has stressed on the need of hologram-based colour-coded stickers for vehicles to tackle air pollution, saying it was considering to make it mandatory in states and Union Territories beyond the National Capital Region.

In 2018, the top court accepted the proposal of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), which envisaged that hologram-based light blue stickers would be used in vehicles using petrol and CNG in the National Capital Region (NCR), whereas diesel-run vehicles would have orange stickers.

STD	ETD	Airline	Flight	To/Via	Row	Status	STD	ETD	Airline	Flight
11:00	12:50	IX 1120	Strorage		F	Check-in closed	12:15	12:54	AJ 2483	
11:00	15:40	AI 1198	Japur		F	Check-in Open	12:15	12:17	AJ 825	
13:40	13:40	AJ 2839	Chennai		A-H	Check-in Open	14:10	14:10	AJ 2641	
13:45	15:20	AJ 2708	Chandigarh		A-B	Delayed	14:15	14:15	AJ 2819	
13:50	13:50	AJ 2617	Dehradun		A-F	Check-in Open	14:15	14:15	AJ 461	
13:50	13:50	IX 2513	Indore - Bengaluru		A-H	Check-in Open	14:20	14:20	9I 637	
13:50		MH 118D	Amritsar		H	Check-in Open			AJ 2951	
14:00		52 5198	Hyderabad		N	Cancelled			AJ 308	
14:00		55	Amsterdam		A	Check-in Open			6E 3204	
14:00		25	Frankfurt		A	Check-in Open			AJ 433	
14:00		19	Kathmandu		A	Check-in Open			AJ 638	
14:00		169	Srinagar		H	Check-in Open			6E 5106	
14:00		67	Copenhagen		N	Check-in Open			AJ 2465	
14:00		159	Goa		A	Check-in Open			AJ 193	
14:00		137	Milan		A	Check-in Open			AJ 2420	
14:00		410	feedback		F	Check-in Open				

More than 45 flights were cancelled due to bad weather conditions at Delhi as well as at the destination airports, the official said

As per information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, over 400 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport

In an update on X at 10.58 am, IndiGo said dense fog continued to affect visibility in Delhi, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Srinagar, Guwahati, and Patna, even during daytime.

"We assure you that our teams are working diligently to assist all impacted customers, ensuring your journey resumes as soon as the weather improves," it said in another post at 11 am. IGIA handles around 1,300 flight movements daily.



A Sikh devotee during a 'Nagar Kirtan' procession ahead of the 358th birth anniversary (Gurupurab) of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru, at golden temple in Amritsar, Punjab

Delhi student stabbed to death

New Delhi: A dodgeball game at school turned fatal for a Class IX student as a schoolmate enraged after being hit by the ball allegedly got the 14-year-old stabbed to death outside their school in East Delhi, police said Saturday. The alleged incident took place around 6 pm Friday with the police apprehending seven people, including three schoolmates, officials said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Abhishek Dhania said among the seven arrested, five are juveniles. The suspects were planning to flee the city when they were apprehended.

Bailey bridge collapses

Gangtok: A 25-year-old bailey bridge in Sikkim collapsed when an overloaded truck was crossing it Saturday, officials said. The 200-foot bridge, located over Lachung Chu River, was on the Lachung-Katao Road. No casualties were reported in the incident as the bridge did not fall into the river and the driver of the truck was rescued safely. An official in the North Sikkim district administration said vehicles are being diverted through an alternative bridge, which can be used by tourists and locals till the collapsed bridge is repaired and restored. Tourists need not panic as the alternative route is functional, popular tourist destinations in the area are open and passes are being issued by the tourism department, the official said.

NIA conducts searches in J'hkhand

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday searched multiple locations in Jharkhand's Bokaro district in connection with the February 2024 attack on security forces by Naxals, according to an official statement. NIA teams conducted searches at the premises of suspects and overground workers (OGWs) at eight locations, and seized digital devices such as laptop, mobile phones and memory cards, along with SIM cards, pocket diaries and incriminating documents, it said. The suspects and OGWs whose premises were searched were associated with members of the banned CPI (Maoist) and used to provide logistical support and facilitate extortion of levy money, said the statement issued by the NIA.

SC plans pan-India tags for vehicles to mark fuel-type

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

based on the fuel used, were also supposed to include the date of registration of the vehicle.



Plan (GRAP) was in force to curb air pollution. The bench said it may consider extending the direction for these stickers for vehicles beyond the NCR.

Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in the matter, had submitted that more than 50 per cent of the vehicles plying the Delhi-NCR roads did not have colour-coded stickers. The colour-coded sticker scheme was initially suggested by the amicus curiae to enable identification of vehicles and restrict vehicles using bad quality fuel during "poor category" pollution days.

international



I was offered the opportunity of a three-year exile while I was in Attock Jail, but I will live and die in Pakistan
IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

WORLD'S OLDEST PERSON DIES

Tomiko Itooka, a Japanese woman who was the world's oldest person according to Guinness World Records, died December 29, an Ashiya city official said Saturday. She was 116. Itooka was born May 23, 1908. She became the oldest person last year following the death of 117-year-old Maria Branyas



of the day quote

I am calling for independent, thorough and transparent investigations into all Israeli attacks on hospitals, healthcare infrastructure and medical personnel, as well as the alleged misuse of such facilities
VOLKER TURK | HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF, UN

Faced with a hostile attitude of mass expulsion of our brothers, we would have to consider a change of our cooperation policies with the United States, especially in the military realm
Xiomara Castro | PRESIDENT, HONDURAS

I find it much more worrying than such insults that Musk is supporting a party like the AfD, which is in parts right-wing extremist, which preaches rapprochement with Putin's Russia and wants to weaken transatlantic relations
Olaf Scholz | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

SHORT TAKES

50 B'deshi judges to take training in India

Dhaka: The diplomatic row between Dhaka and New Delhi notwithstanding, as many as 50 Bangladeshi judicial officers will undergo 10 day training at state-run academies in India, according to a media report Saturday. The Law Ministry has given permission to 50 judicial officials of subordinate courts to undergo training at the National Judicial Academy and State Judicial Academy at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh with no cost to Bangladesh. "The Law Ministry has given permission in the wake of the Supreme Court's advice," Prothom Alo newspaper said here. These judicial officers will participate in the training from February 10 to February 20. India and Bangladesh have witnessed strained ties since the deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to New Delhi on August 5 last year following a massive student-led protest that toppled her Awami League's 16-year regime.

US plans \$8 billion arms sale to Israel

Washington: The administration of President Joe Biden has notified Congress of a proposed \$8 billion arms sale to Israel, a US official said Friday, with Washington maintaining support for its ally whose war in Gaza has killed tens of thousands. The deal would need approval from the House of Representatives and Senate committees and includes munitions for fighter jets and attack helicopters as well as artillery shells, Axios reported earlier. The package also includes small-diameter bombs and warheads, according to Axios. Protesters have for months demanded an arms embargo against Israel, but US policy has largely remained unchanged.

Myanmar junta frees 6K prisoners

Bangkok: Myanmar's military government has released more than 6,000 prisoners, including 180 foreigners, under an amnesty marking the Southeast Asian nation's independence day, state media said Saturday. Myanmar has been in turmoil since early 2021, when the military overthrew an elected civilian government and violently suppressed pro-democracy protests, sparking a nationwide armed rebellion. The junta has said it will hold elections this year, but the plan has been widely condemned by opposition groups as a sham. Among those still imprisoned by the junta is the country's former leader, Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

HUSH MONEY CASE

Judge upholds Trump's conviction

US prez-elect will be sentenced in hush money case Jan 10, judge signals no jail

REUTERS

New York, Jan 4: President-elect Donald Trump will be sentenced January 10 in the criminal case in which he was convicted on charges involving hush money paid to a porn star, but is unlikely to face jail time or other penalties, a judge said Friday.

Justice Juan Merchan's ruling means Trump will be required to appear at a court hearing just 10 days before his January 20 inauguration - an unprecedented scenario in US history. Before Trump, no US president - former or sitting - had been charged with or convicted of a crime.

The judge said Trump, 78, may appear at his sentencing either in person or virtually.

He wrote that he was not inclined to sentence Trump to jail, and that a sentence of "unconditional discharge" - meaning no custody, monetary fine, or probation - would be "the most viable solution."

The case stemmed from a \$130,000 payment Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen made to adult film actor Stormy Daniels to keep her quiet about a sexual encounter she said she had with Trump, who denies it. A jury in May found Trump guilty of falsifying records to mask the payment prior to the 2016 election. The imposition of the sentence would pave the way for



It is a fake, made up charge by a corrupt judge who is just doing the work of the Biden/Harris Injustice Department. He created a case where there was none
DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT-ELECT, US

Trump to appeal. Merchan acknowledged in his ruling that Trump has made clear he intends to appeal.

Merchan announced his plan for the sentencing in denying Trump's motion to dismiss the case due to his presidential election victory. Trump's defense lawyers had argued that having the case hang over him

While acknowledging Trump's service as president, the judge said Trump's public statements excoriating the justice system were also a factor for him in determining how Trump's character would factor into the decision.

Merchan criticized what he called Trump's "unrelenting and unsubstantiated attacks" against the integrity of the criminal proceeding, and noted that he had found him guilty of 10 counts of contempt during the trial for repeatedly violating an order restricting out-of-court statements about witnesses and others.

"Defendant has gone to great lengths to broadcast on social media and other forums his lack of respect for judges, juries, grand juries and the justice system as a whole," Merchan wrote.

"Defendant's character and history vis-a-vis the Rule of Law and the Third Branch of government must be analyzed," the judge said, referring to the judiciary. "In that vein, it does not weigh in his favor."

A Manhattan jury in May found Trump guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records to cover up the payment to Daniels. He had pleaded not guilty and called the case an attempt by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, the Democratic prosecutor who brought the charges, to harm his 2024 campaign.

BLACK SEA OIL SPILL

Emergency in Crimea



Fuel oil spilled out of two storm-stricken tankers nearly three weeks ago in the Kerch Strait, close to eastern Crimea

REUTERS

Moscow, Jan 4: Russia declared a regional state of emergency Saturday in Crimea, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, as workers cleared tons of contaminated sand and earth on either side of the Kerch Strait following an oil spill in the Black Sea last month.

Mikhail Razvozhaev, the Russia-installed governor of the city of Sevastopol, said new traces of minor pollution required urgent elimination and declared a state of emergency in the city - giving authorities more power to take swift decisions such as ordering citizens to evacuate their homes.

The Kerch Strait runs between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and separates Crimea's Kerch Peninsula from Russia's Krasnodar region.

Rescue workers have now cleared more than 86,000 metric

tons of contaminated sand and soil, the emergencies ministry said Saturday. The oil leaked from two ageing tankers that were hit by a storm December 15. One sank and the other ran aground.

More than 10,000 people have been working to shovel up viscous, foul-smelling fuel oil from sandy beaches in and around Anapa, a summer resort. Environmental groups have reported deaths of dolphins, porpoises and sea birds.

The emergencies ministry said on the Telegram messaging app that oil-tainted soil had been collected in the broader Kuban region in Russia and in Crimea, whose annexation by Russia has not been recognised by most other countries.

US House Speaker: Republicans reelect Mike despite dissent

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 4: US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson was reelected to the chamber's top job Friday by a razor-thin margin that highlighted potential fissures among President-elect Donald Trump's Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Johnson appeared to initially fall short of the majority he needed to retain his job in a roll-call vote that lasted nearly two hours, but two Republican opponents switched their votes to support him after lengthy negotiations, with at least one reporting receiving a call from Trump himself.

Johnson won reelection with 218 votes - the minimum number needed. Republicans control the chamber by a razor-thin 219-215 majority.

Following the vote, Johnson vowed to extend Trump's 2017 tax cuts, which are due to expire this year and roll back regulations. "We're going to drastically cut back the size and scope of government," he said.

Other big challenges will loom, including addressing the nation's more than \$36 trillion in debt, which Congress will need to act on later this year.

Friday's vote was an early test of Republicans' ability to hang together as they advance Trump's agenda of tax cuts and border enforcement. It also tested Trump's clout on Capitol Hill, where a handful of Republicans have shown a willingness to defy him.

House Republicans have been racked by internal divisions over the last two years. Johnson was elevated to speaker after the party ousted his predecessor Kevin McCarthy in the middle of his term.

Members of Congress milled around the chamber for more than half an hour after voting had concluded, where Johnson and his lieutenants could be seen trying to persuade the holdouts.



Police attempt to stop people from leaving the protest site during a demonstration against impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, near his official residence in Seoul Saturday

SK investigators ask acting prez to clear way for Yoon's arrest

Seoul: South Korean investigators again asked the country's acting president Saturday to order the presidential security service to comply with an arrest warrant for impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol. The security service, along with military troops, Friday prevented prosecutors from arresting Yoon Suk Yeol in a six-hour standoff inside Yoon's compound. The investigators secured the warrant to arrest Yoon over his brief declaration of martial law last month. The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which is investigating the case, said Saturday it had again asked acting President Choi Sang-mok, the nation's finance minister, to order the presidential security service to cooperate with the warrant. The police asked the chief of the presidential security service, of Park Chong-jun, to appear for questioning Tuesday, Yonhap News reported. Yoon's December 3 martial declaration stunned South Korea and led to the first arrest warrant to be issued for a sitting president.

Biden to give US Presidential Medal of Freedom to Hillary, Soros, Messi

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is US' highest civilian honour

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 4: US President Joe Biden has named former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, fashion designer Ralph Lauren, football superstar Lionel Messi, former Defence Secretary late Ashton Carter, and controversial investor George Soros, along with 14 others for the prestigious Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the Nation's highest civilian honour, would be presented to the awardees at a White House ceremony by Biden Saturday afternoon.

The prestigious award is presented to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private



endeavours, the White House said Saturday.

Biden believes great leaders keep the faith, give everyone a fair shot, and put decency above all else. These nineteen individuals are great leaders who have made America and the world a better place. They are great leaders because they are good people who have made extraordinary contributions to their country and the world, the White House said.

Bangladesh EC to probe Awami League-era national elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 4: Bangladesh's Election Commission (EC) has decided to investigate irregularities and shortcomings in all previous elections, including the three preceding elections that have been controversial during the Awami League-rule in 2014, 2018 and 2024.

The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported that following a meeting, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin instructed all 10 regional election officers to examine the reasons behind the decline in the electoral system and submit detailed reports.

The CEC issued written directives, asking regional officials to identify past irregularities and report their findings to the EC secretariat. The 2014, 2018 and 2024 national elections are widely regarded as some of the most controversial in the country's history.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of former prime minister Khaleda Zia and al-



lied parties boycotted the 2014 election, resulting in one-sided voting and unopposed election of 153 candidates, an unprecedented occurrence in the country's electoral history.

The 2018 election was marred by allegations of rigging and came to be known as the "midnight election", with the BNP and its allies winning only seven seats.

The BNP and like-minded parties abstained from participating in the January 2024 election that faced criticism for allegedly fielding dummy candidates from the ruling Awami League as opposition representatives. As a result, the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League managed to secure a fourth consecutive term in office.

Business



My commitment is to take every effort to make Air India, an absolute top-class airline in the world. In terms of the hardware, the flight experience, customer experience, technology and in every which way

N CHANDRASEKARAN | TATA SONS CHAIRMAN

CCI DISMISSES PLAINT AGAINST COAL INDIA

Fair trade regulator CCI has dismissed allegations of abuse of dominance against Coal India concerning its e-auction scheme introduced in December 2022, ruling that the state-owned company had not violated norms. Coal India Ltd, a Maharatna public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Coal, is the single-largest coal producing company in the world



of the day quote

Initially a lot of resistance was there from the industry. We held several meetings with them and now finally the industry themselves realised the merit in focusing on high quality standards particularly when they are making that quality



We are seeing more than 3,000 retail stores coming up in the next two years. We are seeing a lot of FDI coming into the gem and jewellery sector reflecting confidence in the industry



There is continuous progress in the agriculture sector and we are all constantly making efforts for it... I have full faith that we will share suggestions together regarding the budget, improvement in schemes and move forward together in that direction



Data protection rules balance regulation, innovation: Vaishnaw

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: The Digital Personal Data Protection Rules drafted by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation while protecting citizens' rights, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Saturday.

The government has issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act Friday for public consultation till February 18.

"Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament. These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely safeguarding the rights of citizens," Vaishnaw told PTI in an interview.

The minister said earlier there was only one template available to the world -- the European data protection rule with high level of regulation -- but Indian rules have attempted to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in innovation ecosystem developing among start-ups in the country.



He said extensive consultation has been held with the industry and a digital office is being put in place for registration of complaints, their handling and adjudication.

The minister said the final rules will be placed before Parliament in the monsoon session and all entities handling data digitally will get two years to adapt their system and comply with the law.

"All entities covered under the Act will have to review existing consent after the rules are in place," Vaishnaw said. He said the rules may be im-

proved based on the experience of the new data regime.

"As far as possible, minimum prescription has been kept in the rules to ensure simple implementation of the Act. The rules have carefully addressed the large harm that the digital world may pose to the privacy of people, especially that of children," Vaishnaw said.

The Digital Personal Data Protection draft rules specify that a parent's verifiable consent will have to be obtained by social media or online platforms before children can create an account.

Parents' identity and age will have to be checked through voluntarily provided identity proof or virtual tokens.

"We have also kept graded penalties to protect the interests of micro, small and medium enterprises. It is to save businesses that may be running using a single computer. However, Big Techs have higher obligations under the rules. Minor breaches will attract small penalties and big breaches will lead to higher penalties," Vaishnaw said.

US pizza chain Papa John's targets 2025 India re-entry



REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 4: US pizza chain Papa John's International plans to make its return to the Indian market in 2025, a year later than planned, while many Western brands rethink their plans as inflation hits consumer spending.

Papa John's exited India in 2017 saying its restaurants were not able to meet the expectations of the brand and the franchisee.

In the meantime rivals Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut have become popular as Indians increasingly opt for international cuisine. India "remains a priority" and the company will open its first restaurants this year, a spokesperson for Papa John's said by email.

Under plans outlined in 2023, the company aimed to scale up to 650 outlets over a decade.

"India is a complex market

with unique consumer preferences. We are taking the necessary time to ensure our franchise partner opens with the right products and menu, technology, and restaurant footprint to ensure their long-term success," the company said.

Inflation is also squeezing middle class budgets, prompting some players to slow expansion plans. India's Tata Consumer Products, which operates Starbucks stores under a joint venture, is pushing back plans for some new outlets until later in its schedule.

Consumer analysts in India still believe in the longer-term prospects for Western fast-food brands in the country noting its growing eating-out culture and urbanisation of smaller towns.

Papa John's has more than 5,900 locations in about 50 countries and territories, according to its website.

HDFC Bank says Q3 deposit growth outpaces loan growth

REUTERS

Mumbai, Jan 4: HDFC Bank saw quarter-on-quarter deposit growth outpace loan growth in the three months to December 31, the country's biggest private lender said Saturday.

Deposits rose 4.2% to 24.53 trillion Indian rupees (\$286.03 billion), slowing from 5.1% rise in July-September quarter, the Mumbai-based bank said.

Its low-cost current and savings account deposits rose 1.1%, it said.

Gross advances, or loans sanctioned and disbursed, rose 0.9% to 25.43 trillion rupees, slowing from 1.3% sequential growth in the previous quarter.

HDFC Bank has the most assets among all private banks in India. It merged with its parent HDFC in July 2023, adding a large pool of loans to its portfolio but a much smaller volume of deposits.

After the merger, the bank's loan-to-deposit ratio rose to around 110%, putting it under pressure to boost deposits or slow loan growth.

Over the past few months, it has offered retail loans for sale to reduce its loan-to-deposit ratio, a key metric for banks to assess their liquidity position.

In the December quarter, HDFC Bank securitised 216 billion rupees of loans "as a strategic initiative", it said.

Securitisation volume estimated at ₹68k-cr in Q3

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Jan 4: The securitisation volumes in India are estimated at ₹68,000 crore for the October-December period this fiscal (Q3 FY25), according to latest data by credit rating agency ICRA.

This was driven by private banks boosting credit-to-deposit ratios, while non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) face muted growth amid industry headwinds, according to Abhishek Dafria, SVP and Group Head-Structured Finance Ratings, ICRA Limited.

"The securitisation volumes for Q3 FY2025 are estimated by ICRA to be ₹68,000 crore, which is similar to the volumes witnessed in the previous quarter," said Dafria in a post on social media platform X.

The market volumes are being driven upwards this fiscal by a few private sector banks who have been using securitisation as means to improve their credit to deposit ratio given the relatively lower pace of deposit growth.

"The NBCs, on the other hand, have seen relatively muted growth in disbursements, especially in the unsecured asset classes such as microfinance and personal loans, due to industry headwinds resulting in tepid securitisation vol-

ume growth for the quarter," Dafria posted.

According to estimates, ₹25,000 crore is on account of private banks acting as originators and the remaining ₹43,000 crore has been securitised by NBFCs. Securitisation by HDFC Bank, the largest private lender in the country, is around ₹12,000 crore in Q3.

In the second quarter this fiscal (Q2 FY25), securitisation volume in India rose 56 per cent (year-on-year) to about ₹70,000 crore. This was propelled by large issuances by some key players, especially a large private sector bank, and a few NBFCs that are primarily into vehicle financing, according to a recent report by CRISIL Ratings.

Apparel exporters seek tax incentives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 4: Apparel exporters body AEPC Saturday urged the government to announce tax incentives, including removal of a provision requiring payments to MSMEs within 45 days to claim deductions and customs duty exemption on garment machinery imports.

The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) has also requested that an interest equalization rate of 5 per cent be announced in the Budget, scheduled to be unveiled February 1 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Other demands include extension of concessional tax rate for new manufacturing units to encourage setting up of new garment units; simplification in the procedure of imports of trims and embellishments under IGCR (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate); and liberalizing e-commerce export procedures.

"Ready Made Garments (RMG) industry has also demanded removal of Sec43B (H) of IT Act in the ensuing Budget which pertains to payment to any MSME companies within a maximum 45 days' time to claim any deduction in tax. This has increased tax liabilities and has disrupted the cash flow of exporters," it said in a



AEPC has also requested that an interest equalization rate of 5 per cent be announced in the Budget, scheduled to be unveiled February 1 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

statement. It added that the cap per consignment of export value under e-commerce should be increased to minimum ₹25

lakh and export realization period should be extended to 12 months.

India's garment export sector relies heavily on imported machinery to maintain quality and global competitiveness, as domestic production is insufficient to meet demand.

"High import duties make Indian garments exports less competitive vis-a-vis countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam. AEPC recommends not only continuing existing exemptions but also reducing the customs duty to zero on remaining garmenting machinery to enhance the sector's efficiency," it said.

AEPC Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said, "The Union Budget is a great opportunity where our demands for long-term policy support can be considered."

AEPC Secretary General Mithileshwar Thakur said there is an urgent need to quickly adopt right strategies to take advantage of evolving supply chain reorientation.

"The Indian apparel sector is on a high growth trajectory and has the potential to outpace global competitors with upscaling of production capacity, channelizing investments into the sector, upskilling of workforce and labour reforms," Thakur said.

Japan's Nippon Steel to sue US govt for blocking acquisition

Nippon Steel and US Steel are expected to claim in court that Biden did not present sufficient evidence to prove the proposed acquisition poses a threat to US national security

AGENCIES

Tokyo, Jan 4: Japan's Nippon Steel Corp. is set to file a lawsuit in response to United States President Joe Biden's decision to block its takeover of US Steel Corp., local media reported Saturday.

Nippon Steel and US Steel are expected to claim in court that Biden did not present sufficient evidence to prove the proposed acquisition poses a threat to US national security,

and that his decision violates due process under the US Constitution and the law governing the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, Kyodo News reported, citing sources close to the matter.

Biden said Friday that he has decided to block the 14.1 billion US dollars sale of US Steel to the Japanese steel giant, citing risks to national security, while urging the two steelmakers to "fully and permanently" abandon their plan.

In a joint statement Friday, the two firms said the US authorities' review of the international buyout project was "manipulated to advance President Biden's political agenda" and that they will "take all appropriate action to protect our legal rights."

Meanwhile, Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Yoji Muto said, "It is incomprehensible and regrettable that this kind of decision has been made on the grounds of concerns over national se-



curity," Xinhua news agency reported.

The Japanese government regarded Nippon Steel's plan to acquire US Steel as a deal

"that would benefit both countries" as Japanese investment in the US has been on track to continue increasing, Muto said in a statement.

In late 2023, Nippon Steel announced plans to acquire US Steel, which is headquartered in Pennsylvania, one of the key swing states in the 2024

presidential election. Before Biden withdrew from the race, both he and his then-opponent, Donald Trump, had expressed opposition to the acquisition.

Nippon Steel is the world's fourth-largest steelmaker by volume, while US Steel ranks 24th, according to a 2023 tally by the World Steel Association.

Biden blocked the USD 15 billion acquisition of US Steel by Japan's Nippon Steel Friday — something he had first vowed to do in March. His decision comes after the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, known as CFI-US, failed to reach consensus on the possible national security risks of the deal last month.

The rise of US Steel, a storied American company, runs parallel to the arrival of America on the world stage. With roots dating to the late 19th century, US Steel has produced the materials used for everything from the nation's bridges and skyscrapers, to its tanks and battleships.

