



### Narrow escape

The raging wildfires in Los Angeles force actor Nora Fatehi to evacuate her place

LEISURE | P2



### NATO snubs Trump

NATO won't heed to Donald Trump's proposal for a massive hike in defence spending but will likely agree to go beyond its current target

INTERNATIONAL | P10



### Wealth erodes

Investors' wealth tumbles ₹12L crore in three days of market slump due to uninterrupted foreign fund outflows

BUSINESS | P11



### India beat Ireland

Superb batting by top order helps India Women defeat Ireland evens by six wickets in the first of three ODIs

SPORTS | P12

### I'm human not god, says Modi in maiden podcast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

# Diaspora integral part of '47 vision: Prez

New Delhi, Jan 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his maiden podcast, has said he can make mistakes, but will not do anything wrong out of bad intention.

In the podcast hosted by Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath and released Friday, Modi said it has been his life's mantra that he may make mistakes but will not do anything wrong out of bad intentions.

"When I became (Gujarat) chief minister, I said I will not spare any effort to work hard. I will not do anything for myself. And, thirdly, I am human and I can make mistakes. But I will not do anything wrong out of bad intentions. I have made it a mantra of my life. Mistakes are inevitable. I must have made mistakes. I am a human too, not a god."

Modi said he sees his success in how he prepares a team who can deftly handle things, as he asserted that there are many young politicians with potential. He declined to name any.

He said, "When I became (Gujarat) chief minister I said I will not spare any effort to work hard. I will not do anything for myself. And, thirdly, I am human and I can make mistakes. But I will not do anything wrong out of bad intentions. I have made it a mantra of my life. Mistakes are inevitable. I must have made mistakes. I am a human too, not a god."

When Kamath asked him if he has planned for the time beyond him, training those he has faith in, not for today but after 20-30 years, Modi said, "I can see people with a lot of potential. When I was in Gujarat, I'd say I want to go after preparing (team) for the next 20 years. I am doing it. My success lies in how I prepare my team who will be able to deftly handle things. This is my benchmark for me."



President Droupadi Murmu, Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram and other guests, during a photo-op with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman recipients at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar Friday

The goals set towards a developed nation (Viksit Bharat) by 2047 require the active participation of every countryman, including those living abroad. While felicitating 27 NRIs who have excelled in various fields on the concluding day of the three-day long 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) at the Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, President Droupadi Murmu said, the Indian diaspora is an integral part of the grand mission

ident Murmu said, "Viksit Bharat is a national mission that requires the proactive and enthusiastic participation of every Indian, including those living abroad."

She asserted that the diaspora's global presence and their achievements place them in a position to significantly contribute to India's development.

"The Indian diaspora represents the best of our country and they have carried with them not just the knowledge and skills acquired in this sacred land, but also the values and ethos that have been the foundation of our civilisation for millennia," she said.

"Whether in the fields of technology, medicine, arts, or entrepreneurship, the Indian diaspora has made a mark that the world acknowledges and respects," she pointed out.

Referring to the convention, the President described it as

### NODAL MINISTER FOR GLOBAL ODIAS

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday announced that the state government will appoint a nodal minister from the Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture for the non-resident Odias, who want to engage with the state for their projects and investments. He said the world now sees limitless opportunities in Odisha. In short, Odisha is going global, he added.

tal stewardship, while contributing to global well-being.

"As India celebrates the achievements of our Pravasi Bharatiya family, we should also look forward to the future with hope and determination. Together, we can build a 'Viksit Bharat', a nation that stands tall on the global stage and continues to be a beacon of light for the world," she added.

The President also conferred Trinidad & Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo and 26 others with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman.

Murmu said Kangaloo's outstanding contributions in leading her nation, with a special focus on women and the Indian diaspora, have set a high benchmark on the world stage. The Trinidad & Tobago President got the award in the public affairs category.

Other awardees included Ajay Rane (Australia, commu-

nity service), Marialena Joan Fernandes (Austria, education), Swami Sanyuktanand (Fiji, community service), Saraswati Vidya Niketan (Guyana, community service), Lekh Raj Juneja (Japan, science and technology), Prem Kumar (Kyrgyz Republic, medical science) and Soukthavy Chowdhury (Laos, business).

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman is the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians. The awardees represent the excellence achieved by the Indian diaspora in various fields.

Murmu congratulated all the awardees and appreciated them for working for the society in different fields. She said that their success stories are not just a matter of pride for India, but they also inspire millions across the world to strive for excellence.

The valedictory session was also attended by Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati,

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, and Union ministers Jual Oram, Dharmendra Pradhan, Kirtivardhan Singh, and Pabitra Margherita.

Addressing the gathering, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the diaspora has made outstanding contributions to both India and the world in diverse domains based on their immense talent, creativity, dedication, commitment, and perseverance.

"They have left an indelible mark on global society. Their extraordinary achievements have made the country and Indians proud and have strengthened our relationships with other people and nations," he said.

Stating that India approaches the world with the twin perspectives of "India First" and "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", Jaishankar said this is an era of greater inter-dependence, technology flows and talent mobility.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: Noting that the Indian diaspora represents the best of the country and an integral part of the nation, President Droupadi Murmu Friday emphasised their crucial role in achieving the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Addressing the valedictory session of the PBD here, Pres-

ident Murmu said, "Viksit Bharat is a national mission that requires the proactive and enthusiastic participation of every Indian, including those living abroad."

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Referring to the convention, the President described it as

more than just an event, saying, "It is a platform where ideas converge, collaborations are forged, and the bonds between India and its diaspora are strengthened."

On India's timeless philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), she said this vision is about creating an ecosystem that balances economic progress with social justice and environmen-

tal stewardship, while contributing to global well-being.

"As India celebrates the achievements of our Pravasi Bharatiya family, we should also look forward to the future with hope and determination. Together, we can build a 'Viksit Bharat', a nation that stands tall on the global stage and continues to be a beacon of light for the world," she added.

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### TRUMP SENTENCED, BUT NOT PUNISHED

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

New York, Jan 10: President-elect Donald Trump was sentenced Friday in his hush money case, but the judge declined to impose any punishment.

The outcome cements Trump's conviction before he returns to power before while freeing him to return to the White House unencumbered by the threat of a jail term or a fine.

Trump's sentence of an unconditional discharge caps a norm-smashing case that saw the former and future president charged with 34 felonies, put on trial for almost two months and convicted by a jury on every

count. Yet, the legal detour — and sordid details aired in court of a plot to bury affair allegations — didn't hurt him with voters, who elected him to a second term.

Manhattan Judge Juan M Merchan could have sentenced the 78-year-old Republican to up to four years in prison.

Instead, he chose a sentence that sidestepped constitutional issues by effectively ending the case.

Merchan said like when facing any other defendant, he must consider any aggravating factors before imposing a sentence, but the legal protection that Trump will have as president "is a factor that overrides all others".

### Five migrant workers killed in T'gana mishap

Malkangiri, Jan 10: Five migrant workers from Odisha were killed and 16 others were injured in an accident in Telangana's Suryapet district Friday.

The deceased Odia workers were identified as Rupu Harijan, 51, Sulu Harijan, 47, and Sunamani Harijan, 61, of Kamata village in Korapat district; and Pratyush Pravat Harijan, 17, of Hatiguda village and Sunil Garada, 37, of Laharikani village in Nabarangpur district.

The accident occurred near Ilapuram in Chivvemla mandal (block) when a private bus carrying the workers rammmed into a stationary truck. The bus driver apparently failed to notice the truck parked by the roadside and rammmed into it.

### ADR: Regional parties got ₹200 crore from donations

New Delhi, Jan 10: Regional political parties declared donations worth over ₹200 crore for the financial year 2022-23 with JMM, JJP, TDP and TMC reporting the highest increase in their incomes from donations, according to an analysis by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), however, declared no donations for the year.

The report highlighted the dominance of a few parties in the total donations received, significant delays in submissions to the Election Commission of India (ECI) and gaps in

disclosure of donor details. Out of 57 regional parties analyzed, only 18 submitted their donation reports to the ECI within the stipulated time.

A total of 2,119 donations, declared by 28 regional parties, amounting to ₹216.765 crore were analysed. It is to be noted that people donating more than ₹20,000 are required to reveal their identity.

Seventeen other parties de-

layed their submissions, with delays ranging from two to 164 days. Seven parties, including BJD and Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), declared no donations for the year.

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Milord, my client couldn't possibly be at the crime scene - his employer makes him work seven days a week

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### LA blaze: Investigators rule out lightning angle

Los Angeles, Jan 10: While the raging wildfires tearing across Los Angeles in US have claimed the lives of at least 10 people, and destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, investigators are considering an array of possible ignition sources while dismissing the lightning angle to the huge inferno. The investigators will look into the next two most common causes: intentionally set and those sparked by utility lines.

In hilly, upscale Pacific Palisades, home to Hollywood stars like Jamie Lee Curtis and Billy Crystal who lost houses in the fire, officials have placed the origin of the wind-whipped blaze behind a home on Piedra Morada Drive, which sits above a densely wooded arroyo.

While lightning is the most

common source of fires in US, according to the National Fire Protection Association, investigators were able to rule that out quickly. There were no reports of lightning in Palisades area or the terrain around the Eaton fire, which started in east Los Angeles County and has also destroyed hundreds of homes.

John Lentini, owner of Scientific Fire Analysis in Florida, who has investigated large fires in California including the Oakland Hills fire in 1991, said the size and scope of the blaze doesn't change the approach to finding out what caused it.

"This was once a small fire," Lentini said. "People will focus on where the fire started, determine the origin and look around the origin and determine the cause."

So far there has been no official indication of arson in either blaze, and utility lines have not yet been identified as a cause either.

Utilities are required to report to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) when they know of "electric incidents potentially associated with a wildfire," Terrie Prosper, the commission's communications director, said via email. CPUC staff will then investigate to see if there were violations of state law.

The 2017 Thomas Fire, one of the largest fires in state history, was sparked by Southern California Edison power lines that came into contact during high wind, investigators determined. The blaze killed two people and charred more than 440 square miles (1,140 square kilometers), according to the investigation headed by the Ven-

tura County Fire Department. So far no such reports for the current fires have been posted to the CPUC website that tracks such filings.

While lightning, arson and utility lines are the most common causes, debris burning and fireworks are also common causes.

But fires are incited by myriad sources, including accidents.

In 2021, a couple's gender reveal stunt started a large fire that torched close to 36 square miles (about 90 square kilometers) of terrain, destroyed five homes and 15 other buildings and claimed the life of a firefighter, Charlie Morton.

The Eaton and Palisades fires were still burning with little to no containment on Thursday. Winds softened, but there was no rain in the forecast as the flames moved through miles of dry landscape.

### 3 kids among 5 of family wiped out in Meerut

Meerut (UP), Jan 10: Five members of a family, including three children aged eight, four and one whose bodies were stuffed in sacks and kept in a bed box, were found killed in their home, police said Friday. Two persons were detained for the sensational murders that rocked this Uttar Pradesh town.

The deceased were identified as Moin alias Moinuddin, 52, his wife Asma, 45, and their daughters Afisah, 8, Aziza, 4, and Adeeba, 1.

Several suspects have also been taken into custody for the killing that came to light Thursday night. The bodies of the parents were wrapped in bedsheets. And all five had deep head injuries and slash marks

on their necks.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Vipin Tada said, "Based on a complaint filed by the relatives of the deceased woman, a case has been registered against three named accused and some unidentified persons. Two named suspects and several others have been taken into custody for questioning."

Police said the bodies of the husband and wife were found wrapped in bedsheets, while those of their three children were stuffed in the storage compartment of a bed at the family's home in the densely populated Suhail Garden neighbourhood in the Lisari Gate police station area. "All pieces of evidence are being gathered, and the case will be solved soon," he said.

# leisure



## PAMELA OPENS UP ON EX-HUBBY TOMMY LEE

Hollywood star Pamela Anderson has said that she has lost touch with her former husband Tommy Lee and wishes they had a better rapport. The Baywatch star had a rocky marriage with Lee from 1995 to 1998 before they divorced after the leak of the couple's sex tape, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

## ANGELINA JOLIE LIED ABOUT SINGING SKILLS

Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie lied to director Pablo Larrain about her singing ability because she was so determined to land the main role in Maria Callas biopic *Maria*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today the stars advocate that you concentrate on money matters and how to save some, and in this purpose you will remain engrossed. However, Ganesha advises you not to neglect domestic duties lest you encounter a morose spouse.

**TAURUS**  
You are likely to be mentally alert and watchful today, says Ganesha. Creativity will run through your veins no matter what you attempt. You may dabble in performing arts, designing, graphics or special effects. Your charm will play Pied Piper to the opposite gender today.

**GEMINI**  
You will find yourself caught in two minds repeatedly, owing to your unpredictable mood swings. This will be the cause of a lot of mental stress. You can reduce your anxiety by talking out your issues with family members and experts. You need to take care of your health today, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You will get a surprise gift or god news from your friends or relatives. You will enjoy with your family. You will get the affection and co-operation of family members. Happiness and rapport in domestic life is indicated. Ganesha's grace is upon you.

**LEO**  
You will look to give your house a new appearance by decorating it or undertaking some renovation projects. You will make the best out of waste and produce some truly marvellous pieces of art for improving the ambience of your nest. You will be able to save up on some money. Laudable, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Emotions that have been locked in the inner recesses of your heart might just surface today. You may develop an emotional attachment with your material possessions. However, Ganesha says, if you don't find your surroundings conducive, you will feel extremely restless.

**LIBRA**  
There is a very strong possibility of major improvements in your public standing and image today. But it all depends so much upon your personal character, and, therefore, you must guard it zealously, even with your own life. Those who seek to malign or dent your reputation will be disappointed, says Ganesha.

**SCORPIO**  
Today promises to be an exceptional day for those involved in business. With sheer brilliance, you will steer deals right to your door step, and will display great finesse in negotiations and bartering. Bring out the leader in you and take charge when you introduce new products or market them in business, suggests Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You need to increase your tolerance power as you may have to face criticism from close ones. However, it is not feasible to please everyone around. You may just be happy doing basic favours for your loved ones. Ganesha asks you to be patient.

**CAPRICORN**  
You'll kick start the day in high spirit which will take everyone by surprise. You will shift gears at work so that you can perform more efficiently and productively. Such a change will boost your confidence as you will see the positive results for yourself.

**AQUARIUS**  
Cooperative and supportive, your colleagues will help you improve your performance at work. Also, your creativity will win you praises from one and all, foretells Ganesha. The day will have a perfect end as you will spend quality time with your friends and family.

**PISCES**  
You are going to be very emotional today. You will be able to express your love to your wife or other loved ones in a very unique and dramatic way. It is not a good day for putting forth marriage or love proposals, and if you do it could be disappointing.



## I HAD NOWHERE TO GO: NEENA

How Danny beat Mallya at his own game

**Mumbai:** Vijay Mallya is credited with revolutionising the market in India. Prior to his United Breweries brought about, beer was not among India's favourite beverages. Mallya's success lay in beating competition at every turn to monopolise the beer market in India. Yet, there was one market where he was beaten fair and square, and that too, by a Bollywood star. This is the story of how Danny Denzongpa beat the king of good times at his own game.

Danny, born Tshering Phintso Denzongpa in Sikkim in 1948, began his Bollywood career in 1971 with *Zaroorat*. Over the years, he has acted in some of the biggest hits of the Hindi film industry, including *Love Story*, *Ghatak*, *Agneepath*, *Khuda Gawah*, *Krantiveer*, and *China Gate*. In 1987, the actor diversified into the beer business when he founded Yuksom Breweries in his native state. The company is named after his hometown. In 2005 he expanded the business, setting up Denzong Breweries in Odisha. Four years later, he acquired Assam's Rhino Agencies. According to Yuksom's website, the brand has a production capacity of 6.8 lakh HL per annum. This makes Yuksom the third-largest Indian beer company, behind only Kingfisher and Kingmaya. In 2009, the beer market in India was expanding drastically. The North East was considered the final bastion. Mallya's United Breweries had cornered almost all of India but had not gained entry into the seven states of the northeast. The liquor baron had his eyes set on Assam's Rhino Agencies, a new brewery, for that. However, Danny wanted his Yuksom to dominate the NE market. MSN reported that on hearing Mallya's takeover plans, Danny bought Rhino Agencies himself and solidified his position in the market. UB never did acquire a brewery in the northeast and kept away from production in that market.

Yuksom employs largely locals as part of Danny's bid to promote his home state. Sikkim Express reported in 2022 that the breweries in the northeast employ 250 people and contribute as much as 100 crore to the local economy every year.

**Mumbai:** Neena Gupta's journey in Mumbai began in the early 1980s, when she made the move from Delhi. In a recent interview, the actor revealed that she never opted for rentals. Instead, she would sell her apartment, add more funds, and invest in her next home. During one such transition, Neena had to move in with her aunt, who asked her to leave in the middle of the night, leaving Neena and her daughter without a place to go.

During a conversation in an episode of YouTube channel

Housing.com, Neena shared that she had booked a three-BHK flat in a builder's latest project. Having already sold her current residence and invested the funds in the new property, her finances were temporarily strained. She had to move in with her aunt and uncle during this period.

Looking back, Neena shared, "I shifted to my aunt's house where I had stayed before. I thought I stay there so much of the time and I just come back to my house to sleep. Since Masaba was little then, my aunt used to help in looking after the baby. But one day, she threw me out in the middle of the night, she kicked me out. I had no money left. There was this one night where I had nowhere to go with a baby."



### LA BLAZE

## Nora's narrow escape

**Mumbai:** Actor Nora Fatehi was caught in the midst of the raging wildfires in Los Angeles, which forced her to evacuate her place at a moment's notice. She admitted to feeling terrified, labelling the catastrophic scenario unfolding in LA as 'craz'.

Nora took to Instagram Stories Thursday to post a video sharing her ordeal and give an update about her well-being.

"I'm in LA and the wildfires are crazy. I've never seen anything like this. This is insane. We just got an evacuation order like 5 minutes ago. So, I quickly packed all my stuff and I'm evacuating out of here, out of this area," Nora shared.

The actor added that she is planning to stay near the airport and try to get a flight out as soon possible.

Nora said, "I'm going to stay there, because I have a flight today and I really hope I can catch it. I hope it doesn't get cancelled because this s\*\*t is scary. I have never experienced this before. I am going to keep you guys updated. Hopefully I can get out in time. And yeah man, I really hope people in LA are safe."



## Once bigger than SRK, this star failed to pay medical bills

**Mumbai:** Collectively, Shah Rukh, Salman, and Aamir have dominated the box office since the early 90s. But even as their star was ascending, there was another actor who was considered an even brighter prospect than them. Yet, within a few years, his star dwindled so sharply that he was relegated to participating in reality shows, left on the verge of bankruptcy.

Rahul Roy debuted in Hindi films in 1990 with the sleeper hit, *Aashiqui*. He and the film's female lead, Anu Aggarwal, became overnight stars. The film's success catapulted him to household name status. *Aashiqui*'s success was followed by a string of hits starring

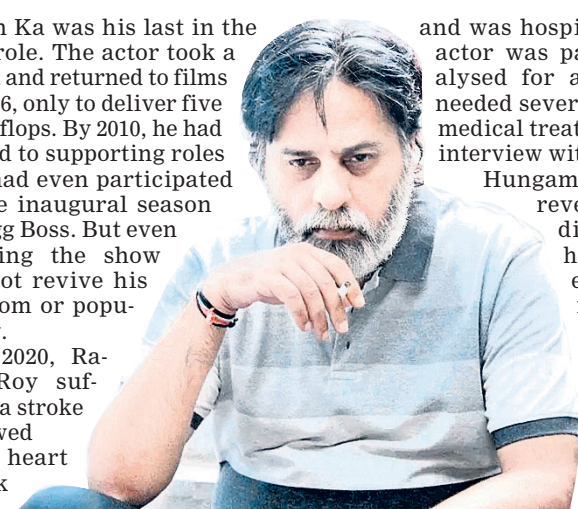
Rahul - including *Pyaar Ka Saaya* and *Junoon*. At this point, the 26-year-old was called the next big thing, ahead of Salman and Aamir. Shah Rukh had just debuted in films and was not even in the same league as the others by then. But this false dawn was not to last.

In the mid-90s, many films that Rahul signed were shelved. He said no to other films that ended up becoming box-office successes. He reportedly rejected Yash Chopra's *Darr*, which made Shah Rukh a star. At the same time, his films began failing at the box office. After *Junoon* in 1992, Rahul starred in 15 consecutive flops over the next 9 years. The 2001 release *Afsana Dil*

and was hospitalised. The actor took a break and returned to films in 2006, only to deliver five more flops. By 2010, he had moved to supporting roles and had even participated in the inaugural season of *Big Boss*. But even winning the show did not revive his stardom or popularity.

In 2020, Rahul Roy suffered a stroke followed by a heart attack

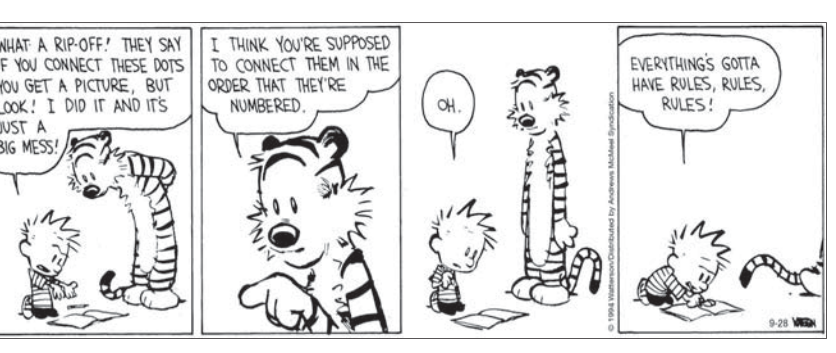
and was hospitalised. The actor was partially paralysed for a while and needed several expensive medical treatments. In an interview with Bollywood Hungama in 2023, he revealed that he did not even have the money to foot his medical bills and his former co-star Salman Khan came to his aid.



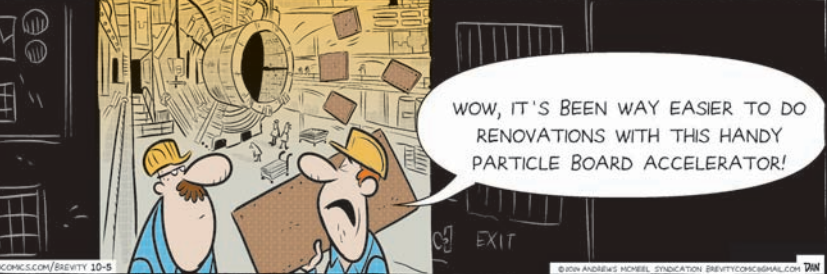
### PEANUTS



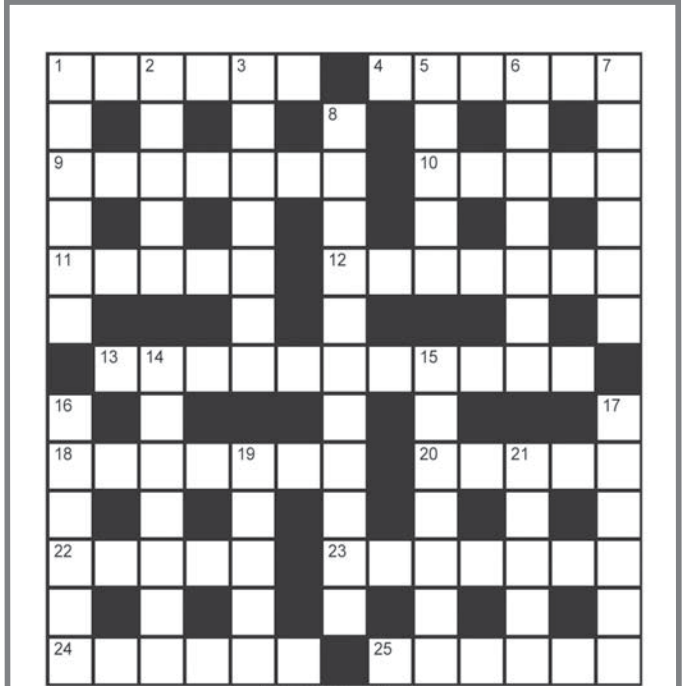
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



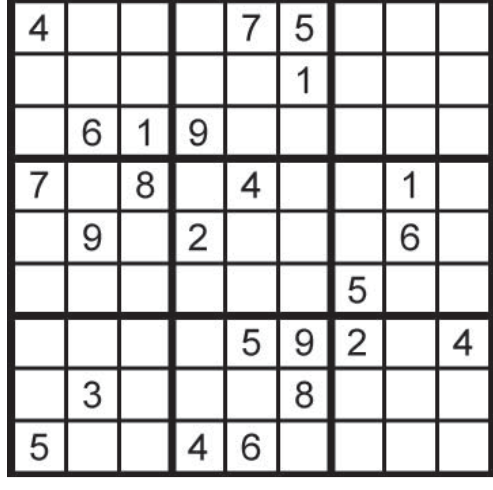
### FUN POST CROSSWORD



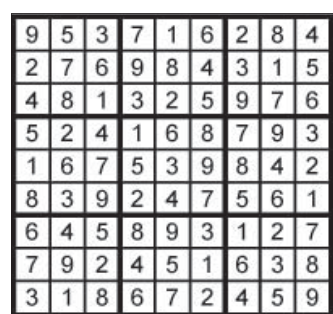
- Across**
- 1 Bird of prey
  - 4 Skeleton's place?
  - 9 Mexican peninsula
  - 10 Proclamation
  - 11 Jeans material
  - 12 Shepherd's pipe
  - 13 Domed building for star gazing
  - 18 Spanish nobleman
  - 20 Packing box
  - 22 Unearthly
  - 23 Juj and mojo, e.g.
  - 24 Wish undone
  - 25 Sinew
  - 5 City on the Aire
  - 6 Chinese breed of small dog
  - 7 Constraint
  - 8 Phlegmatic
  - 14 Billets and flats
  - 15 Hermit
  - 16 Bathing choice
  - 17 Deduce
  - 19 Soup scoop
  - 21 Modify
- Down**
- 1 Mideast capital
  - 2 Pie choice
  - 3 Hassock

### 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

An artiste performs at the Mukteswar Dance Festival in Bhubaneswar, Friday



downtown

Invest in Odisha: CM to Indian diaspora

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: Inviting the Indian diaspora to invest in Odisha, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday said that he will appoint a nodal minister to liaison with the interested NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).

Majhi made this announcement while addressing the valedictory session of the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention here in presence of President Droupadi Murmu, who also hails from the state.

"The Pravasis who want to engage with the state for projects, investment and others will be supported and facilitated. I am elated to announce that my government will appoint a nodal minister from the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department for this purpose," Majhi said.

The Chief Minister said that he seeks the involvement and cooperation of the diaspora in taking the Odia culture and heritage to the world.

Majhi held a formal discussion with the Odia diaspora and assured them of support if they want to establish their projects in the state.

"It is a great opportunity for us to meet the diaspora in our state and the government does not want to miss it. Therefore,



Cognizant's biggest campus soon

Bhubaneswar: Cognizant CEO Ravi Kumar S met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday to discuss the development of the American IT firm's biggest campus in the state, a statement said.

At the meeting, Majhi said the state government would allot land in Bhubaneswar city for development of the Cognizant campus and provide all support, it said.

"Both discussed on developing Cognizant campus in Bhubaneswar as its biggest centre in India," it added.

Ravi Kumar S, who is of

Odisha origin, was in Bhubaneswar to attend the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention. He expressed happiness over the growth of the firm's existing centre in Bhubaneswar, and exuded confidence that it would grow further in the next five years, the statement said.

The CM sought his cooperation for bringing more investments in the IT sector, and he assured all help, it said.

Majhi congratulated him for his success and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman being conferred on him.

I appeal to you to come up with projects and the state govern-

ment will provide all support," he said.

OSRTC bus service expands to nine routes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: In a significant step towards enhancing public transport infrastructure, Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC) launched 13 bus services in nine new routes here Friday.

Commerce and Transport (C&T) Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena flagged off the buses through a virtual conference from Kharvela Bhawan here.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond and Food Supply and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra.

C&T principal secretary



Usha Padhee welcomed the guests and outlined the vision behind the initiative. "The new bus services are aimed at improving regional connectivity and providing affordable and comfortable travel options to the people of Odisha," she said.

Among others, transport commissioner Amitav Thakur, OSRTC CMD Diptesh Pattanaik

and other officers were present on the occasion.

The newly launched services will connect the following routes - Siddha Bhairavi, Ganilaya (Kantilo), Kotpad, Joranda and Paralakhemundi with Puri, Indravati and Berhampur with Bhubaneswar, Kundura with Cuttack and Berhampur with Rourkela.

Top court opens doors to people for guided tours



New Delhi, Jan 10: Opening its doors for augmenting public engagement and awareness, the Supreme Court has allowed guided tours for people on designated days.

The drive allows people to put to rest their curiosities on the court's mystique, and stroll through its majestic corridors every working Saturday - except the second and the fourth and declared holidays.

An official said, "Opening of the secured apex court premises will provide a great opportunity to the public to gain inside access to the interiors of the building and admire the majestic structure in its full glory."

A circular issued January 9 by Registrar Mahesh T Patankar (court and building) read, "In pursuance of the directions of the competent authority, the guided tour shall be conducted on every working Saturday, except second and fourth Saturdays and declared holidays in four slots from 10am to 11.30am; 11:30am to 1pm; 2pm to 3.30pm and 3.30pm to 5pm."

Officials would accost the public during the tour and introduce them to the various sections of historical value.

For conducting the guided tour smoothly, a pre-online booking would be mandatory.

"A visitor can arrange pre-planned escorted visits with on-line booking made in advance," the official said, "and will be accompanied throughout the premises and introduced to parts of historical importance and they will also get a chance to see the courtrooms."

Public members would have a chance to sightsee the grounds which usually takes about an hour and guided through the courtrooms aside from the National Judicial Museum and Archive.

Visitors will have a chance to see the new judges library in SC's administrative building complex where entry is otherwise restricted.

The first such tour happened November 3, 2018, and since then 296 such tours have taken place.

The Supreme Court building was constructed in 1958, with its foundation stone laid by India's first President, Rajendra Prasad in 1954.

Night flea market: A fusion of culture, creativity & commerce

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: The Night Flea Market featured at Ekamra Utsav is drawing a large number of visitors and tourists eager to explore the shops, the cultural extravaganza, entertainment nights and live performances.

Organised by Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) on the occasion of Pravasi Bharatiya Dibas, the flea market will remain open from 4pm to 11pm daily until January 16.

The Night Flea Market has transformed the Ekamra Utsav into a hub for emerging entrepreneurs, home-based business-



es, and local artisans. 33 stalls are brimming with a diverse array of offerings, ranging from clothes, footwear, and accessories to handcrafted home decor, organic food products, and health-oriented items.

Handicrafts, gifts, rural bazaar items, toys, looms sarees, printed and embroidered clothes, handmade key lockets, photo frames, bags, ornaments, paintings and handlooms are available at various stalls in the

fest. It has become a one-stop destination for visitors to discover and support local talent.

What sets the initiative apart is its celebration of Odisha's rich cultural heritage. Each evening is enlivened with live performances by talented local artistes, including singers, dancers, and folk performers. The market also hosts comedy shows, band performances, and musical acts from emerging groups. These lively events have turned the market into a dynamic space where creativity thrives, fostering interaction between performers and the public, and infusing the atmosphere with energy and enthusiasm.

Greater Flamingos of Chilika Lake tagged to record migration route



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: In a first of its kind, Greater Flamingos— migratory bird to Chilika Lake during winters, were tagged recently at Nalabana Bird Sanctuary, with the combined efforts from state Forest department, Chilika WL Division and Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun.

A star attraction for visitors and bird enthusiast visiting Chilika, Greater Flamingo has a uniquely shaped beak adapted for filter-feeding and long legs for wading in the shallow waters of the water lake.

Every year, in the month of November, these migratory birds arrive for wintering and return to their breeding ground during April-May. However, the exact

place from which these flamingos come from has remained unknown. According to previous Bombay Natural History Society studies, Greater Flamingos breed at the Great Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, and likely migrate to Chilika from there. However, possibilities are also there that they might also be arriving from other breeding sites in Asia, Iran and Kazakhstan.

With the support from WII, led by R Suresh Kumar, the team successfully captured and tagged two Greater Flamingos January 8 and 9, coinciding with the 5th National Chilika Bird Festival. A solar-powered GSM-GPS transmitter, weighing 30gm, was installed which will record the location of the birds every 10 minutes.

The device will enable a deeper understanding of fine-scale habitat of Flamingos and will help the department for evidence-based decisions on habitat management and conservation. The initiative marks the beginning of a collaborative project by the Wildlife Wing of state Forest department and the WII for long-term collaboration in monitoring the birds of Chilika Lake.



City police foils robbery plot; 4 held

Bhubaneswar: The Laxmisagar police nabbed four persons for allegedly planning to commit robbery at a place near Oscar City Market area here, Thursday night. IIC P Shyam Sundar Sahoo said the arrested accused - N Nagesh, 21, L Prabhas, 19, A Bishnu, 22, and Srisant Barik, 18 - are history-sheeters who had been booked four times in the past by the Laxmisagar police in connection with criminal offences. They all reside near Old Station Bazaar, within Laxmisagar police station limits. Two iron rods, a screw driver, a knife, two swords, chilli powder packet, and glass bottles have been seized from them, he added. Sahoo said Thursday night a police patrol team was alerted by an informer about the gathering of four miscreants near Jharpada Durga puja ground for plotting a robbery. The police rushed to the spot and apprehended them. A search on their person led to the recovery of the weapons. During questioning, the hoodlums allegedly spilled the beans about their plans to commit robbery near Oscar City. They were then arrested and taken into custody, Sahoo said. They were booked under Sections 310 (4), and 5 of BNS, and produced before a local court Friday.

CARE Hosp hosts 'CARE Connect'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: CARE Hospitals hosted its flagship 'CARE Connect' programme at a City hotel here Friday, bringing together healthcare professionals to share insights on the latest advancements in neurosurgery and recovery stories by the patients.

The event featured testimonials from several individuals who had undergone treatment at CARE Hospitals. The stories highlighted the hospital's patient-centric approach, demonstrating the compassionate care that played a vital role in their recovery journeys. The doctor fraternity from

the hospital also shared recent advancements in cutting-edge technologies in neurosurgery. Neuro and Spine surgeon at the hospital, Atmaranjan Dash highlighted the hospital's use of Bi-Portal Endoscopic Spine Surgery, an invasive technique that promotes faster recovery of patients.

"Our focus on minimally invasive procedures is reshaping patient care by reducing recovery time, while ensuring effective results," Dash added.

Neurosurgeon Susant Das also shared about recent advancements in brain surgery and said, "By adopting the latest technologies in neurosurgery, we ensure that patients receive the best care available."



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While the non-biological PM is rediscovering that he is a human after all, foreign investors in our stock markets have ushered in 2025 by taking out \$2 billion just in the past six days

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONG GENERAL SECY

### TAHIR HUSSAIN MOVES HC

Former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain Friday sought interim bail in the Delhi High Court in a murder case related to the February 2020 riots to fight assembly polls from Mustafabad constituency on an AIMIM ticket



### SHORT TAKES

#### AMU receives bomb threat mail

**Aligarh:** Aligarh Muslim University has received an email with the sender threatening "to blow up the campus," police said. The sender claimed to detonate the bomb already planted on the campus and also threatened to mix "pork oil" in the food if he did not get ₹2 lakh, his demand, through UPI. Superintendent of Police (City) Mrigank Shekhar Pathak said all sensitive areas on and around the campus have been going through checks since last evening, when top varsity officials, including the vice chancellor, received the email. Authorities are "not taking any chances" with the threat, Pathak said.

#### Hindi not national language: R Ashwin

**Chennai:** Former cricketer R Ashwin has said Hindi was not the country's national language but only an official language. He made these comments while attending the convocation of a private college near here Thursday, where he asked the students in what language they would like him to address them. While a few preferred English and there was overwhelming support when he gave the option of addressing them in Tamil, there seemed to be no takers for Hindi. "Hindi - no response. I thought I will say it (Hindi) is not our national language, but an official language," the former India all-rounder said.

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	25.9°	24.2°
Min Temp	12.8°	12.8°
Humidity	90%	90%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
Fog/mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VIARIATION
SENSEX	77378.91 ↓ 241.30
NIFTY	23431.50 ↓ 95.00
DOLLAR	86.16 ↑ 0.13
EURO	88.90 ↑ 0.14
GOLD	₹78,617 ↑ ₹513
SILVER	₹92,769 ↑ ₹1,068

### CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an Affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, I have changed my surname from Biswal to Behera and henceforth I shall be known as Saudamini Behera for all purposes. Sd./- Saudamini Behera

I, Sashi Rath, S/o Birabar Rath, R/o plot No.- C1/30, Banaja Apartment, Unit 6, Ganganagar, Bhubaneswar hereby declare by this affidavit that now onwards I shall be known as Sashi Ranjan Rath for all future purposes.

### SAMBHAL MOSQUE WELL ROW

# Top court orders status quo, issues notice to Centre, ASI

**The mosque committee, in a fresh plea, said the Sambhal district administration, was conducting a purported drive to revive old temples and wells in the city**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**New Delhi, Jan 10:** Ordering a status quo, the Supreme Court Friday asked the Uttar Pradesh authorities, the Archaeological Survey of India and others not to take steps over a "private well" near the Mughal-era Jama Masjid mosque in Sambhal. Considering a plea of the management committee of Shahi Jama Masjid, Sambhal, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar issued notices to the Centre, the director general of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Sambhal district magistrate and other private individuals from the Hindu side led by Hari Shankar Jain. "Issue notice returnable February 21. In the meanwhile, a status report to be filed by the respondents in two weeks. The respondents shall not give effect to any notice in relation to

the well," the bench ordered. The mosque committee, in a fresh plea, said the Sambhal district administration, was conducting a purported drive to revive old temples and wells in the city with reports indicating at least 32 old unused temples were revived and 19 wells were identified for public use and prayers. "In the list of wells being sought to be revived by the district administration is also a water well situated in the precincts of the mosque itself," it said. The plea therefore sought a direction to the Sambhal district magistrate to ensure a status quo over the private well located near the mosque entrance besides any future action without the Supreme Court's permission. While a covered half of the

well was said to be inside the mosque, the other half protruded outside on a curved platform. Water from the well, situated at the junction of three narrow lanes leading to the main entrance of the mosque, was being used by the mosque, the plea said. It was argued that the survey led to violence and loss of lives, prompting the urgent intervention of the top court. Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, representing the mosque management committee, referred to the well's historical significance and said, "We have been drawing water from the well since time immemorial." Ahmadi raised concerns over a notice referring to the site as "Hari Mandir" and plans for starting religious activities there.

### Man tries to set self, family on fire in front of Vidhan Bhavan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Jan 10:** Alleging false case against himself, a man Friday attempted immolation along with his family members in front of Vidhan Bhavan in the state capital, police said. Raj Kamal Rawat and his family members, who belong to Kanta village in Nigohan of Lucknow district, were saved due to the "alertness" of the police, officials said. According to the police, Rawat attempted immolation with his wife and children but the police stopped them from doing so. The police said a land dispute occurred between Rawat and one Shahenshah of the same village. Shahenshah was shot outside his house at night in September 2024. In his statement, Shahenshah named Rawat and said he had shot him and his wife was with him, the police said. Based on Shahenshah's statement, Rawat was arrested and sent to jail, according to the police. Arms were also recovered from him, the police added. According to the police, Rawat came out of jail four days ago and alleged that a false case was filed against him by Shahenshah and others. The police said Rawat alleged that even after coming out of jail, he and his family are being harassed by the rivals. Rawat alleged that he visited Lucknow and attempted immolation along with his family due to the harassment, the police said, adding that the matter is being investigated.

### SAVARKAR REMARKS

# Rahul appears in court via video link; gets bail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, Jan 10:** A special court in Pune Friday granted bail to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case related to his alleged objectionable remarks on Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar. The MP/MLA court granted bail to the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha on a surety bond of ₹25,000 after he appeared before it through video conferencing, his lawyer said. Senior Congress leader Mohan Joshi stood as surety for Gandhi (54) before the court presided over by Amol Shinde, judicial magistrate (first class) and special judge for MP/MLA cases. Advocate Milind Pawar, representing Gandhi, said soon after his client appeared before the court, they moved a bail application. The judge allowed the plea and granted bail to the former Congress president on a surety bond of ₹25,000, he informed. The advocate said the court also granted permanent exemption to the Lok Sabha MP from Rae Bareilly

from appearing before it. The case was filed on a complaint by V D Savarkar's grandnephew Satyaki, who alleged Gandhi had made defamatory remarks against the Hindutva icon at a programme he attended in London in March 2023. Earlier, advocate Sangram Kolhatkar, representing Satyaki Savarkar, objected to Gandhi's application seeking virtual appearance. There was no provision that allows an accused to appear in court through video conferencing before securing bail, Kolhatkar argued. The court, however, permitted Gandhi to attend the proceedings online. Wearing a bottle green sweater, the Congress MP appeared before the court and stated his name when the judge asked for it. The matter will be next heard February 18. As per the complaint, Gandhi, while speaking at the London event, stated that Savarkar had written in a book that he and five to six of his friends once beat up a Muslim man and he (Savarkar) felt happy. According to the complaint, the freedom fighter had not written this anywhere and the Congress leader's remarks were aimed at defaming him. At the time, the court had asked the Pune police to investigate the allegations and file a report. The Vishrambaug police, after an inquiry, submitted that there was prima facie truth in the complaint.

### MATHURA TEMPLE-MOSQUE DISPUTE

# Plea against combining multiple lawsuits may be raised later: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 10:** The Supreme Court Friday said a plea challenging the Allahabad High Court order to combine 15 lawsuits by Hindu petitioners in the Mathura Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah Masjid dispute may be raised later. A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar took a prima facie view in favour of the high court decision to consolidate all the lawsuits, saying it favours both sides of the litigation. On January 11 last year, the Allahabad High Court directed that the 15 suits on an application filed by the Hindu plaintiff be consolidated "in interest of

justice". At the beginning of hearing Friday, the SC bench said it is seized of an issue related to a 1991 law on places of worship and asked as to why it should intervene on the matter of the consolidation of the lawsuits at the moment. "If required, you can raise the plea later," the CJI told the lawyer representing the mosque committee. In a related important development, the top court, December 12, restrained till further directions the courts in the country from entertaining fresh lawsuits and passing any effective interim or final orders in pending ones seeking to reclaim religious places, especially mosques and dargahs.



Sadhus of Niranjani Akhara show their skills during the royal entry procession or 'Chavni Praves' for the Mahakumbh 2025 at Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

# After 30 yrs in jail, Swamy Shraddananda moves SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 10:** Swamy Shraddananda, jailed for 30 years for killing his wife, has moved the Supreme Court seeking authorities to decide his mercy plea before the President in December, 2023. When the petition came up for hearing before a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih Friday, the bench told advocate Varun Thakur, appearing for 84-year-old Shraddananda alias Murali Manohar Mishra, to provide a copy of his plea to the Centre's counsel. It said the plea would be heard next week. Thakur said Shraddananda had spent 30 years in jail without even a day's parole. In October last year, the apex court refused to entertain Shraddananda's plea seeking a review of the top court's ver-

dict directing him not to be released from prison for the rest of his life. Shraddananda, whose wife was the grand-daughter of a former Dewan of the princely state of Mysore, had sought a review of the July 2008 verdict of a three-judge bench of the apex court. Shakereh, the wife of Shraddananda, was the grand-daughter of Sir Mirza Ismail, a former Dewan of the erstwhile princely state of Mysore. The couple married in April, 1986, but Shakereh suddenly disappeared in May 1991, the apex court noted in its July 2008 verdict. It said in March 1994, the central crime branch, Bengaluru, took over the investigation on the "missing" complaint regarding Shakereh and Shraddananda confessed to having killed her. In his fresh plea filed in the apex court, Shraddananda referred to the



**In October last year, the apex court refused to entertain Shraddananda's plea seeking a review of the top court's verdict directing him not to be released from prison for the rest of his life**

powers by the President under Article 72 and by the Governor under Article 161 were available despite the court imposing a sentence of life up to death as a substitute for death penalty. Articles 72 and 161 of the Constitution deal with the power of the President and the Governor to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases. Shraddananda said he filed a mercy petition before the President in December 2023, which was pending for consideration. "The petitioner is in jail since 30 years without single day parole or without any remission," the plea said, "and the petitioner was suffering with multiple diseases." It sought a direction to the respondent authorities to decide his mercy petition. A trial court in 2005 convicted Shraddananda and sentenced him to death following

which the Karnataka High Court in September the same year confirmed the conviction and the death sentence. His appeal against the high court order came up before a two-judge bench of the apex court, which unanimously upheld his conviction but differed on sentencing. While one of the judges said he should not be released from prison till the end of his life, the other judge said he deserved nothing but death. The matter then came up before a three-judge bench which delivered its verdict July 22, 2008. "We accordingly substitute the death sentence given to the appellant by the trial court and confirmed by the high court by imprisonment for life and direct that he shall not be released from prison till the rest of his life," the bench said.

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DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

PETA's innovative solution for elephant conservation

Freebies dominate poll debate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10: The political discourse in Delhi is currently being dominated by conversations around "freebies" ahead of the Assembly polls overshadowing other major issues including pollution, law and order, crimes against women and infrastructure.

Earlier today, Aam Aadmi Party supremo Arvind Kejriwal promised financial assistance to Residential Welfare Associations to hire security guards when the party returns to power in the national capital.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), under former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, is leading the charge with its campaigns like "Revdi Par Charcha", emphasising its free electricity, water, healthcare, education, and public transport initiatives for women. It has also announced new schemes, including the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana, promising Rs 2,100 monthly for women, and the Sanjeevani Yojana, ensuring free healthcare for senior citizens in both government and private hospitals.

Congress has countered with its 'Pyari Didi Yojana', offering Rs 2,500 monthly for women, alongside the 'Jeevan Raksha Yojana', which promises insurance coverage of up



Peoples' issues take a backseat

The elections for the 70-member Delhi Assembly are scheduled February 5 and results will be announced after the counting of votes February 8

to Rs 25 lakh. Meanwhile, the BJP is likely to unveil its manifesto soon, with anticipated schemes such as 300 units of free electricity for households and Rs 2,500 monthly allowances for women.

Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who termed these free schemes as 'free ki revdi' once, had to reassure the people of Delhi that the BJP would continue all the welfare schemes if voted to power.

"Facing defeat, these AAP-da people are perplexed. They are scaring Delhiites that if the BJP comes to power, this or that scheme will be discontinued. But I have come to assure

Delhiites that under BJP rule, no scheme will be stopped, but those involved in corruption in these schemes will be weeded out," Modi said, urging the people to

vote for a "double-engine" BJP government both at the Centre and in Delhi.

With such announcements grabbing the voters' attention, critical issues like pollution, especially the smog that chokes Delhi every winter, remain largely unaddressed. Many residents have raised concerns over the lack of concrete action plans to combat air pollution, which continues to pose a severe health risk to Delhiites.

Delhiites also experienced water shortages throughout the city due to high levels of ammonia in the Yamuna River with water treatment plants unable

to treat the water. Many people lost their lives during the rainy season in the national capital due to potholes on the roads and open sewers. The drowning of three UPSC aspirants in Delhi's Rajinder Nagar coaching centre due to poor drainage and lack of desilting sparked outrage among the residents over the lack of facilities for the residents.

The national capital also faced many law and order issues, with shootouts taking place at multiple locations due to the alleged involvement of various gangs said to be active in the city. Additionally, there has been a rise in crimes against women.

While the promises of free welfare schemes attract many voters, some argue that addressing these systemic core issues is vital for the city's long-term growth. Reacting to the freebies in the polls, Bhartiya Liberal Party president Munnish Kumar Raizada told PTI, "Kejriwal is an utter failure in terms of governance in last 10 years. He has encouraged the culture of freebies while paralyzing governance and policy-making at the same time."

The elections for the 70-member Delhi Assembly are scheduled February 5. Results will be announced after the counting of votes February 8.



Animal rights organisation offers life-like mechanical elephant to Kerala mosque

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Malappuram (Kerala), Jan 10: An animal rights organisation has sent a letter to the authorities of a mosque in this north Kerala district, offering to donate an innovative, life-like mechanical elephant for use in religious ceremonies.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India made the offer following a recent incident during the religious processions at a ceremony held at the mosque near Tirur, where an agitated elephant attacked and injured at least 24 devotees.

This offer aims to "prioritise both community safety and compassionate celebrations."

PETA India stated that it initiated a compassionate movement to replace live elephants in temples at the beginning of 2023, resulting in the adoption of at least 12 mechanical elephants in temples across South India.

Of these, PETA India donated seven life-size mechanical elephants to temples in Kerala and Karnataka in recognition of their decision to refrain from owning or hiring live elephants.

"These mechanical elephants are now used to conduct ceremonies at their temples in a safe and cruelty-free manner, helping real elephants stay with their families in the jungle," it said.

In the letter, PETA India Se-

The mechanical elephants are three metres tall, weigh 800 kilograms, and are made from rubber, fibre, metal, mesh, foam, and steel

They run on five motors

A mechanical elephant looks, feels, and can be used like a real elephant

It can shake its head, move its ears and eyes, swish its tail, lift its trunk, and even spray water

nior Advocacy Officer Farhat Ul Ain said, "Elephants are wild animals and inherently unpredictable, especially in large, noisy crowds. Anything can trigger an elephant, which can make them attack."

Farhat added, "Such attacks underscore the urgency to embrace options such as mechanical elephants, ornate palanquins, and chariots that preserve the cultural grandeur of processions while sparing animals and humans from harm."

The statement explained that the mechanical elephants are three metres tall, weigh 800 kilograms, and are made from rubber, fibre, metal, mesh, foam, and steel. They run on five motors.

A mechanical elephant looks, feels, and can be used like a real elephant. It can shake its head, move its ears and eyes, swish its tail, lift its trunk, and even spray water, it said.

It can be climbed upon, and a seat can be affixed to its back. The elephant is operated by simply plugging it in and can be taken through the streets for rituals and processions. Mounted on a wheelbase, it can be moved and pushed around easily, the statement added.

Kerala's Kappad, Chal beaches get global Blue Flag certification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 10: Kerala's famed Kappad and Chal beaches in Kozhikode and Kannur districts, respectively, have been bestowed with the coveted Blue Flag certification by Denmark-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) for meeting stringent environmental and safety standards, the state government said Thursday.

Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas said the Blue Flag status not only enhanced the global appeal of these beaches but also firms up Kerala's reputation as a leading sustainable tourism destination.

Noting it as a 'milestone', Riyas said Kerala continues to set a global benchmark in preserving its picturesque landscape while promoting and implementing eco-friendly initiatives to provide a unique experience for tourists.



Shinkari Melam artists play 'chendas', a percussion instrument, during the 'Seenagers Fest', in Thiruvananthapuram, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Tributes pour in for singer P Jayachandran

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thrissur (Kerala), Jan 10: Tributes from the music and film fraternity poured in for singer P Jayachandran who died Thursday.

The singer's body was brought to his residence at Poonkunnam this morning, where a lot of people including prominent film, music, and political personalities paid their last respects.

Renowned lyricist and music director Sreekumar Thampi, Revenue Minister K Rajan, Forest Minister A K Saseendran, veteran Kathakali artist Kalamandalam Gopi, lyricist Rafeeq Ahmed, Congress leader V M Sudheeran and other notable personalities were among those who offered their tributes to the departed singer.

"A great chapter in history is coming to a close. Ours was not just a bond between two filmmakers but a



relationship between two brothers,"

Sreekumar Thampi said. Actor Mohanlal described the legendary singer as an elder brother. "My beloved Jayettan has passed away. Jayettan, whose songs exuded eternal youth and resonated across generations, was like an elder brother to me," Mohanlal wrote on Facebook.

Actor Mammootty shared a photo of the singer on Facebook, paying tribute with the message, "Heartfelt respects to the beloved 'Bhava Gayakan' (emotional singer)."

Singer KS Chithra expressed her grief, saying, "Deeply saddened to

hear about Jayettan's sudden demise." Actor Jayaram wrote on FB, "I was fortunate to act with that voice. Farewell to the beloved 'Bhava Gayakan'."

The singer's body will be kept at the Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, Regional Theatre for public homage before being taken back to the residence in Poonkunnam.

Higher Education Minister R Bindu, film directors Balachandra Menon, Sathyan Anthikad and others paid last respects here. The body will be shifted to the ancestral home in Chendamangalam, Ernakulam district Saturday at 8 am. The funeral is scheduled for 3.30 pm, according to sources.

Jayachandran, affectionately called 'Bhava Gayakan' for his soulful renditions that beautifully expressed emotions such as love, longing, and devotion, passed away Thursday evening at a private medical college here.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT MAHARAJA KRISHNA CHANDRA GAJAPATI MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL BERHAMPUR-760004, GANJAM, ODISHA. TENDER CALL NOTICE. No. E-671: The Superintendent, MKCG Medical College Hospital Berhampur-760004, Dist. Ganjam, Odisha invites sealed tenders in the prescribed Proforma from the Registered and reputed Manufacturers, Authorized Suppliers, Dealers, Stockiest and Wholesaler for 'Supply of Consumable & Disposable Items' for M.K.C.G Medical College Hospital, Berhampur.

Delhi HC seeks report on action against child labour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10: The Delhi High Court Friday asked the city government to file a comprehensive report concerning the steps taken by the authorities against use of child labour as well as rescue and rehabilitation of such children.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Vibhu Bakshu and Justice Tusshar Rao Gedela sought district-wise information on these issues in the report which has to be affirmed by the Delhi chief secretary.

"The respondent (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi) will file

a status report clearly indicating how many meetings of task force were held district-wise; action plan have been made for conducting rescue operation district-wise; steps taken for rehabilitation of rescued children." "Let a comprehensive report be filed, affirmed by the personal affidavit of the chief secretary of Delhi," the bench ordered. "There has to be some accountability district wise," remarked the court.

The court also asked the Delhi Police to file a status report concerning its probe into an FIR alleging assault and molestation of volunteers who had participated in a raid to rescue child labourers.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.O-1200 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KARANJIA (MAYURBHANJ) E-mail ID : eerwkaranja@yahoo.com Letter No. 110 / WE // Date : 07.01.2025 "e" Procurement Notice for Const. of bridge-cum-weir for year 2024-25 Bid Identification No. - RWDKNJ - 11/2024-25

SAMBALPUR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, SAMBALPUR Email Id: sambalpurm.hud@nic.in 'e' Procurement Notice Bid Reference No. 22/SMC\_SBP/2024-25 Tender ID No.: 2025 ORULB 108998 No. C-1456: The Municipal Commissioner on behalf of Municipal Corporation, Sambalpur invites tenders in Single Cover System. Bid documents consisting of specification of Quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. Website i.e. https://tendersodisha.gov.in

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, ANANDPUR No.102/Dt : 09.01.2025 Corrigendum No.1 No.C-1438 : With reference to the RFP Notice No. 84 dated 07.01.2025 on "Preparation of Comprehensive Drainage Master Plan and Detailed Project Report for Drainage System of Anandpur Municipality Area. The following existing condition of RFP is amended as follow :

FINANCIAL PROPOSAL-II (COVERING LETTER ON BIDDERS LETTER HEAD) Ref No : Date : To, The Executive Officer, Anandpur Municipality, Anandpur Municipality, Keonjhar, Odisha, Sub: Financial Proposal for Preparation of Comprehensive Drainage Master Plan and Detailed Project Report for Drainage System of Anandpur Municipality Area. Sir, I, the undersigned, offer to provide the consulting services for Preparation of Comprehensive Drainage Master Plan and Detailed Project Report for Drainage System of Anandpur Municipality Area in accordance with your RFP No. \_\_\_ Date \_\_\_. OIPR-13049/11/0012/2425



# Women-led development priority of Centre: EAM



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 10:** External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar Friday said that women-led development is the priority of the Centre, and it has also been incorporated into India's foreign policy. Jaishankar said this while chairing a plenary session on 'Diaspora Divas: Celebrating Women's Leadership and Influence - Nari Shakti' held on the concluding day of 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention here. He said, "India cannot become a developed nation until we are able to deal with traditional, historical and societal attitudes. If India is to become a modern, industrial and tech-centric society, we cannot neglect the role of 50 per cent of the talent."

"Women-led development has been the priority of the Central government. It has also been incorporated into our foreign policy," Jaishankar said without elaborating. Giving due respect to women's skills, the government is committed to ensuring their nutrition, health and education by reducing social disparities, he said. As significant steps towards women empowerment by the Centre, maternity leave was extended to 26 weeks, loans were provided to 3 crore women entrepreneurs under the MUDRA scheme, and 32 lakh bank accounts were opened under the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, the minister said, adding that women's participation in higher education increased 28 per cent. He also said that under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, over 10 crore smoke-free

kitchens have been provided, and 72 per cent of the beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana are women. Praising women expatriates, who have created their unique identity in various fields, Jaishankar said that their achievements could be inspirational for all. Notable participants included Shullette Cox from Jamaica's Promotions Corporation, Purnima Sagar from PT Infotech Solutions in Indonesia, and Sudha Majithia, a key entrepreneur in Tanzania. The participants shared their experiences and insights, highlighting the significant role of women in shaping India's global presence and empowerment narrative. Dr Ritu Karidhal of ISRO, known as the 'Rocket Woman of India', moderated the panel discussion.

# Guests get a peek into state's culture & history

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 10:** The rich art, craft, culture and heritage of Odisha were showcased at the three-day 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention in which Indian diaspora from 24 countries participated. The Odisha Exhibition Hall at the convention centre featured thematic displays centred around Jagannath culture, festivals such as 'Manabasa Gurubar' and 'Dola Purnima', as well as the state's timeless maritime tradition. The exhibition also highlighted various aspects of Odia culture, including classical and folk dances, traditional crafts, and festivals. It also featured a narrative of Odisha's history, including the Kalinga War, the Paika Rebellion, and the state's journey towards becoming a separate entity in 1936. Photographs of events such as Rath Yatra and Suna Besha and the iconic Konark Wheel further emphasised the state's cultural richness.



The exhibition has beautifully captured Odisha's cultural essence, winning the hearts of all. It is a commendable effort to highlight Odisha's glorious heritage and promote it globally. **DHARMENDRA PRADHAN** | UNION EDUCATION MINISTER

The pavilion also displayed significant artefacts, including Pipli's Chandua, Pattachitra, Sambalpuri sarees, traditional handlooms, as well as Odisha's tribal heritage, local crafts, and music. One of the highlights was a digital representation of the

ancient maritime trade routes of the 'Sadhabas', which drew considerable attention. Additionally, a digital quiz section on the state's history, festivals, and tourism destinations provided an engaging experience for visitors. A comprehensive digital encyclopaedia on Odisha, provided by Odia Language, Literature and Culture department, offered in-depth knowledge to all visitors. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also visited the exhibition and praised its outstanding representation of Odisha's rich traditions. Pradhan said, "The exhibition has beautifully captured Odisha's cultural essence, winning the hearts of all. It is a commendable effort to highlight Odisha's glorious heritage and promote it globally." He emphasised that the exhibition not only promotes Odisha's art and culture but also ensures its global recognition, enhancing pride in the state's unique heritage.



# Unique Ramayana exhibition mesmerises overseas Indians

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 10:** Vishwaroop Ram, one of the exhibitions at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention here, has mesmerised the Indian diaspora with its unique presentation of the Ramayana. Titled 'Universal Legacy of Ramayana', the exhibition showcases the epic through traditional and contemporary art forms. The display features idols of Lord Ram, Laxman, and Devi Sita, along with a life-size piñata of Ravan brought from Mexico. The collection includes nearly 150 artefacts, including 66 Indian exhibits such as paintings, puppets, masks, and multimedia installations, as well as 80 artefacts from 17 countries. The exhibition, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday, also features 16 Ramayana masks, postcards, posters, and a painting catalogue from Thailand. From Sri Lanka, the display includes the Ravanhattha, a traditional

musical instrument linked to Ravan. Puppets and paintings depicting scenes from the Ramayana have been brought from Indonesia, while Nepal, Canada, and New Zealand have contributed 19 postal stamps featuring Ramayana themes. The exhibition also showcases idols of Ram and Hanuman from Fiji, along with Ramayana texts in Persian (from Iran), Arabic (from Kuwait), Russian (from Russia), Chinese (from China), and Mongolian (from Mongolia). The exhibition also features masks and puppets from Cambodia, shadow puppets from Singapore, Ravan headgear from Trinidad and Tobago, and books and shadow puppets

from Malaysia. According to officials, the Ramayana has cultural, religious, and artistic connections in 22 countries, which are represented through local interpretations displayed on a large LED screen. Some of the countries where the epic has significant influence include Thailand, Russia, Mexico, Canada, Mongolia, New Zealand, China, Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Cambodia. During his address at the convention Thursday, Modi recalled his visit to Laos last October where he had witnessed the Lao version of the Ramayana. Known as Phalak Phalam or Phra Lak Phra Ram, the performance left a lasting impression on him. Sharing his thoughts on X, Modi wrote, "I saw a part of the Lao Ramayana, highlighting the victory of Prabhu Shri Ram over Ravan. It is heartening to see the people here remain in touch with the Ramayan. May the blessings of Prabhu Shri Ram always remain upon us!"

# PBD exhibitions open for public Jan 11, 12

**Bhubaneswar:** The exhibition put up at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention here would remain open for the public January 11 and 12, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said here Friday. Addressing media persons after the valedictory session of the conclave, Ahuja said, "The chief minister has decided that the exhibition would continue for two more days and we hope that many more citizens of Bhubaneswar including students from schools and colleges will visit it." The three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention that began at Janata Maidan here January 8 came to an end with the valedictory address by President Droupadi Murmu Friday. Apart from different sessions and meetings with the diaspora, mesmerizing cultural performances showcasing art forms from the state were held on these three days. The convention has four exhibition halls including Vishwaroop Ram - the Universal Legacy of Ramayana, Diaspora's Contribution to Technology and Viksit Bharat, Spread and Evolution of Indian diaspora and Heritage and Culture of Odisha. The entry of public was restricted to the venue during the three days for the visit of VIPs like the President, PM, Cabinet Ministers and other dignitaries and their security, said AK Chatterjee, Secretary (CPV & OIA). During the conference, the chief secretary said that the state government would consider setting up a special cell or a nodal officer to deal with the issues faced by NRIs from Odisha. "We have a special cell to look after the army personnel as they are away from home. For the NRIs, we will submit a proposal to the chief minister and take a decision immediately so that the grievances of the Pravasi Odias who are outside can be addressed properly by a nodal officer," Ahuja said.

# Srimandir favourite destination for NRIs

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 10:** Srimandir in Puri has turned out to be a major tourist destination for members of the Indian diaspora who participated at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention here. According to Tourism department officials, the 28 tourist destinations identified in four districts - Puri, Khurda (Bhubaneswar), Cuttack and Jajpur - for the PBD event witnessed a footfall of 3,400 NRIs during the first two days (January 8 and 9) of the convention. "Of them, 2,300 visited the 12th century Srimandir and nearby designations like Sun Temple in Konark and Raghurajpur," said a department official who is taking care of the NRI tourists. Meenika Guiness, a Hindu NRI from Mauritius, said she felt blessed after visiting Srimandir for the first time. "We have been staying in Mauritius for the last four generations. I got an opportunity to visit India to attend the PBD event. So, I came here and got the opportunity to visit the Jagannath temple. It is a very



sacred place. It is like a dream come true for me as I usually visit Hindu temples in Mauritius," she said. Babulal Kanojia, an NRI businessman based in Oman, said he visited the Srimandir Thursday. "It was a wonderful time for me. My visit to Odisha has become successful with that," he said. Ritwik, an NRI settled in Kuwait, has planned to visit the Sun Temple and Srimandir during his stay in Odisha. Special arrangements have been made at the tourist destinations including the Srimandir for smooth visit of the international guests, he said.

Apart from Srimandir, the guests also visited the Blue Flag Beach and spent some time at the beach festival, and kite festival underway in the Holy Town of Puri. Similar arrangements have also been made at the Sun Temple. Other facilities such as deployment of guides, security personnel, help desks and souvenir shops have been arranged for the overseas guests, said the official, who didn't wish to be named. Members of the diaspora are visiting places of tourist interest through packages offered by the Tourism department or on their own arrangements.



national



If two crore people of Delhi are hurt, I am hurt. After the AAP government is formed in Delhi, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) will receive government funds to appoint security guards

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP SUPREMO

DECOMPOSED BODY OF WOMAN FOUND IN FRIDGE

The decomposed body of a woman was found inside a refrigerator in a house in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas city Friday, following which a former tenant was taken into custody for questioning, police officials said



SHORT TAKES

TMC suspends Santanu Sen

Kolkata: The ruling TMC Friday suspended its former Rajya Sabha MP Santanu Sen and ex-MLA Arabul Islam for alleged "anti-party activities", the party's state vice-president Jayprakash Majumdar said.

Couple, son killed over property dispute

Surajpur: A couple and their 31-year-old son were killed by a group of persons over a property dispute in Chhattisgarh's Surajpur district Friday, police said.

NIA chargesheets man in Bihar

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Friday chargesheeted a Bihar native for allegedly being part of conspiracy by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) outfit to carry out terror acts in India.

Badal's resignation accepted by SAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 10: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) working committee Friday accepted Sukhbir Singh Badal's resignation as party chief, days after the Akal Takht Jathedar asked it to implement the religious body's December 2 edict as soon as possible.



could do for the party. I thank workers and leaders who supported me. "Now five years have passed. When I was to go to the Akal Takht Sahib, I had made up my mind to go as a humble Sikh. But it (my resignation) was not accepted due to some reasons. The working committee should start a new membership drive and thereafter, a new president can be elected," he said.

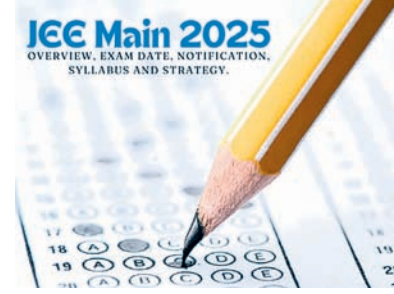
SC allows dropout students to register

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 10: The Supreme Court Friday allowed petitioners, who dropped out of their courses between November 5 and November 18, 2024, to register for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Advanced.

A bench of Justices B R Gavi and Augustine George Masih passed the order while hearing the pleas against bringing down from three to two, the attempts given to JEE-Advanced aspirants. The apex court noted the joint admission board (JAB), entrusted to conduct the JEE-Advanced exam, had issued a press release November 5 last year which said students who appeared for the class 12 examination in academic years 2023, 2024 and 2025 would be eligible to appear for the JEE-Advanced.

JEE advanced 2025



18, 2024, another press release was issued restricting the eligibility to only two academic years -- 2024 and 2025. "If the students, acting on the said representation (of November 5), have dropped from their course with an understanding that they would be entitled to appear for JEE examination, the withdrawal of the promise Novem-

ber 18, 2024 cannot be permitted to act to their detriment," the bench held. Without observing on the merits of JAB's decision, the top court said students who dropped out between November 5 and November 18, 2024 would be permitted to register for the test. The top court was hearing two petitions, including one filed by 22 aspirants challenging the reduction in the number of attempts available to aspirants for JEE-Advanced 2025 from three to two. During the hearing, the counsel appearing for the petitioners said on account of the promise made in the November 5 2024 press release, they dropped out of colleges to pursue the test conducted for admission to the IITs. "This is very important because one of the primary considerations in giving three attempts instead of two was to ensure that there was less stress on students," the counsel said.

Bank of India POSSESSION NOTICE. Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015. [Rule-8(1)] of security interest(Enforcement)Rules-2002. Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

Indian Overseas Bank (A Govt. of India Undertaking) Regional Office: Ambapua Main Road, Berhampur, Ganjam PIN-760011, E-mail: berhampur@ioabnet.co.in. E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Movable & Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE table with columns: Sl. No., Reserve Price, EMD, Demand Notice Amount, Date of Demand / Possession Notice, Date of Inspection of Property Documents, Date & Time for Submission of request letter of participation, KYC documents & Proof of EMD to Authorised Officer / Service Provider, Date & Time of E-Auction With Unlimited 10 Minutes Auto Extension if someone bids at the last 5 minutes, EMD Deposit Account & IFSC Code.

# international



**No conditions are required for this, (only) a mutual desire and political will to conduct a dialogue and resolve existing problems through dialogue is required. We see that Mr Trump also declares his readiness to resolve problems through dialogue, we welcome this**

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

## LANKAN PREZ DISSANAYAKE TO VISIT BEIJING NEXT WEEK

China Friday termed the upcoming three-day visit of Anura Kumara Dissanayake as significant as the Sri Lankan president seeks to balance ties with Beijing weeks after his India visit. Dissanayake will pay a state visit to China from January 14 to 17 at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced here Friday



### of the day quote

Poland has identified a Russian group tasked with influencing Polish elections through disinformation and stoking instability

KRZYSZTOF GAWKOWSKI | DEPUTY PM, POLAND

I think we can exclude that the United States in the coming years will try to use force to annex territory that interests it

GIORGIA MELONI | PRIME MINISTER, ITALY

I spoke to Putin about a contract between us and Gazprom, which says that they have to somehow deliver the gas to us. We are able to push something through the southern flow (route through Turkey), but so far we have storage, Slovak consumption is secured

ROBERT FICO | PRIME MINISTER, SLOVAK

## LA BLAZE FIREFIGHTERS SEE PROGRESS

The fires, engulfing iconic Los Angeles neighbourhoods and tearing through the Hollywood Hills, have so far killed 10 people and destroyed nearly 10,000 structures

REUTERS

Los Angeles, Jan 10: Firefighters reported some progress fighting the wildfires that have charred hillsides, homes and streets in Los Angeles County, but the strong winds that fanned the flames were expected to pick up again Friday, worsening conditions.

The fires, engulfing iconic Los Angeles neighbourhoods and tearing through the Hollywood Hills, have so far killed 10 people and destroyed nearly 10,000 structures.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said late Thursday he expected the death toll to grow.

"It looks like an atomic bomb dropped in these areas. I don't expect good news, and we're not looking forward to those numbers," Luna told a press conference.

Some Pacific Palisades residents ventured back to areas where a wall of fire had already swept through. Brick chimneys



loomed over charred waste and burnt-out vehicles.

"We are alive. That's all that matters," private security guard Bilal Tukhi said while standing watch outside his employer's damaged home, saying the scene reminded him of his native, war-torn Afghanistan.

As of early Friday, five fires were still burning.

The Palisades Fire between

Santa Monica and Malibu on the city's western flank and the Eaton Fire in the east near Pasadena already rank as the most destructive in Los Angeles history.

They have consumed more than 34,000 acres (13,750 hectares) - or some 53 square miles - and turned entire neighborhoods to ash.

The Palisades Fire is now

6% controlled, while the Eaton Fire still blazed out of control, according to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The skies buzzed with aircraft dropping water and fire retardant on the flaming hills.

### KENNETH FIRE 35% CONTROLLED

One rapidly growing blaze that broke out Thursday near Calabasas, one of the wealthiest cities in the US and home to numerous celebrities and gated communities, was 35% under control by early Friday, fire officials said.

The so-called Kenneth Fire had expanded to 960 acres (388 hectares) in a matter of hours. The Hurst Fire was 37% contained, while the Lidia Fire, the smallest of the five, was 75% contained.

Winds dropped Thursday from the gusts of up to 100 miles per hour (160 kph) seen earlier in the week, allowing crucial support from the air for firefighters on the ground.

## DEFENCE SPENDING TARGET

# NATO will not be going Trump's way

Trump says NATO members should spend 5% of GDP on defence

That call won't fly for alliance members

But some are ready to raise goal beyond current 2%

Trump has said US won't protect allies that don't meet targets

Some see new goal of around 3% to be agreed at June summit



REUTERS

Brussels, Jan 10: NATO won't heed Donald Trump's proposal for a massive hike in defence spending but will likely agree to go beyond its current target, according to officials and analysts.

The US president-elect declared Tuesday members of the military alliance should spend 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) on defence - a huge increase from the current 2% goal and a level that no NATO country, including the United States, currently reaches.

Trump's comments - at a press conference that also generated a blizzard of headlines on Greenland, Canada and Panama - were a reminder of his focus on NATO spending during his first term and his threats not to protect allies that fail to meet the target.

Officials from NATO countries said they agreed defence spending needs to rise further but did not endorse the 5% figure, which analysts said would be politically and economically impossible for almost all members. It would require hundreds of billions of dollars in extra funding.

However, a new target is likely to be agreed at a NATO summit in The Hague in June,

spurred by fears that Russia may attack a NATO country after Ukraine and by Trump's exhortations, officials said.

The key open questions are what that new target will be and whether it will be enough to satisfy Trump.

Some expect NATO's 32 members to agree, after much wrangling, to a target of around 3% of GDP. But even that would be a stretch for many, who barely meet or fall short of the 2% goal now - a decade after it was set.

If they attempt to do so, we will discover them because we ask about the sources of money if there are any suspicions.

Italy, with defence spending at around 1.5% of GDP, is among eight NATO members that do not meet the current target.

Poland, which borders Ukraine, is the NATO member that spends the highest share of GDP on defence - 4.12% last year, alliance estimates show. It is followed by Estonia with 3.43% and the United States with 3.38%.

NATO estimated the combined defence spending of its members at \$1.474 trillion in 2024 - around \$968 billion from the United States and \$507 billion from European nations and Canada. The overall average is about 2.71% of NATO GDP.

## SHORT TAKES

### PIA resumes ops in Europe

Islamabad: Pakistan's national flag carrier Friday resumed its operations in Europe with the maiden flight to Paris, ending a more than four-year ban by the European Union's aviation agency over safety standards. Pakistan International Airlines' authorisation to operate in Europe was suspended in June 2020 over concerns about the ability of Pakistani authorities and its Civil Aviation Authority to ensure compliance with international aviation standards following the crash of its plane after a failed attempt to land in Karachi. The first flight after the ban's suspension took off from Islamabad International Airport (IAP) at 12:10 pm, utilising a Boeing 777 (AP-BGK) aircraft. The flight carried 330 passengers and 14 crew members. The inaugural flight, PK-749, was waved off by Aviation Minister Khawaja Asif, PIA CEO Air Vice Marshal Amir Hayat and other senior officials.

### SK's presidential security chief resigns

Seoul: South Korea's acting leader Friday accepted the resignation of the chief of the presidential security service, Park Jong-joon, as he faced police questioning over how his forces blocked law enforcement efforts to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol last week. The acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, also expressed regret over the clashes between law enforcement officials and the presidential security service over the attempts to detain Yoon and called for lawmakers to reach a bipartisan agreement to launch an independent investigation.

### Militants attack residences of min

Karachi: Armed militants attacked the residences of a senior minister and a deputy commissioner and stormed a police checkpost in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, police said. A senior police official said armed militants attacked the residence of Balochistan Minister for Finance and Mineral Resources Mir Shoaib Noshervani with a hand grenade in his native town of Kharan late Thursday night. "The armed men came on motorcycles and drove away after hurling the hand grenade," he said. No casualty has been reported in the incident, he said. In a similar incident, the militants attacked the residence of the Kalat deputy commissioner with a hand grenade Thursday night, injuring one police constable on duty at the gate.

## Japan slaps new sanctions on Russia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Jan 10: Japan's Cabinet Friday approved additional sanctions against Russia over its war on Ukraine, including freezing the assets of dozens of individuals and groups and banning exports to dozens of organisations in Russia and several other countries that have allegedly helped it evade sanctions.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said Friday's approval of the additional sanctions shows Japan's commitment to efforts by the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations to strengthen sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

Japan has imposed several previous rounds of sanctions, and the latest step comes after Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba reaffirmed the country's policy at an online G7 summit in mid-December following Russia's increased cooperation with North Korea and use of third countries in evading sanctions.

According to a joint statement by Japan's foreign, trade and finance ministries, 11 individuals, 29 organisations and three banks from Russia, as well as a North Korean trading company executive and a Georgian bank that allegedly helped evade sanctions, were added to an asset freeze list.

The Cabinet approved total export bans on 22 Russian organisations, including ones related to the military, as well as technology and machinery makers.

## BIGGEST 'RETURNS FLIGHTS'

### The Home Office said its asylum processing is helping clear the backlog by redeploying 1,000 staff to work on immigration enforcement, which has helped ramp up the deportations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 10: The UK government has claimed to have exceeded its target of deporting illegal migrants to countries of their origin, hitting the highest rate of removals since 2018 leading to 16,400 people with no right to be in the UK being removed.

Home Office figures released Thursday claim enforced re-

## Maduro sworn in for third term as US raises reward for capture

REUTERS

Venezuela, Jan 10: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, whose nearly 12 years in office have been marked by deep economic and social crisis, was sworn in for a third term Friday, despite a six-month-long election dispute, international calls for him to stand aside and an increase in the US reward offered for his capture.

Maduro, president since 2013, was declared the winner of July's election by both Venezuela's electoral authority and top court, though detailed tallies confirming his victory have never been published.

Venezuela's Opposition says ballot box-level tallies show a



landslide win for its former candidate Edmundo Gonzalez, who is recognized as president-elect by several countries including the United States. International election observers said the vote was not democratic.

The months since the election have seen Gonzalez's flight to Spain in September, his ally Maria Corina Machado going into hiding in Venezuela, and the detentions of high-profile Op-

position figures and protesters.

In the latest in a series of punitive steps, the outgoing Biden administration increased its reward for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Maduro on drug trafficking charges to \$25 million, from a previous \$15 million.

It also issued a \$25 million reward for Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello and a \$15 million reward for Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino, as well as new sanctions against eight other officials including the head of state oil company PDVSA Hector Obregon.

The US indicted Maduro and others on narcotics and corruption charges, among others, in 2020. Maduro has rejected the accusations.



This undated photo released by the private security firm Ambrey shows the oil tanker Sounion burning in the Red Sea

PTI PHOTO

## UK claims highest deportations of illegal migrants

turns were up 24 per cent compared to the same 12 months prior, including the removal of 2,580 foreign criminals - marking a 23 per cent increase on last year.

The government said "bespoke charter flights" have removed immigration offenders to countries around the world, including four of the biggest "returns flights" in the UK's history carrying more than 800 people.

Individuals removed since the July 2024 election are said to include criminals convicted of drug offences, theft, rape and murder.

"This government was elected on a promise of change - and within just six months we have redeployed resources for a scheme that returned just four volunteers and instead worked to remove 16,400 people with no right to be here," said Prime Minister Keir Starmer.



"Our message to those wanting to come here illegally is clear - you are wasting your money putting your trust in these vile gangs and will be returned swiftly. No more gimmicks. This government is delivering for working people as we restore order to the asy-

lum system through our Plan for Change," he said.

The Home Office said its asylum processing is helping clear the backlog by redeploying 1,000 staff to work on immigration enforcement, which has helped ramp up the depor-

"This government inherited a broken asylum and immigration system. We are taking swift action to increase enforcement and returns of those with no right to be here," said Home Secretary Yvette Cooper.

"We will continue our crackdown on illegal working and make progress with clearing the asylum backlog. We have now exceeded our pledge to get returns to the highest level in half a decade. Our priority is to ensure the rules are respected and enforced," she said.

The minister also pointed to new legislation to disrupt criminal smuggling networks, working through the Border Security Command to combat criminal gangs behind people smuggling. It comes as the government also announced the introduction of a new sanctions regime designed to prevent, combat, deter and disrupt irregular migration, with a "world-

first regime" to target individuals and entities enabling dangerous migrant journeys by disrupting the gangs' finances.

Starmer visited the City of London Police this week to witness first-hand how law enforcement is leveraging public-private partnerships to stop criminals benefitting from dirty money.

The Home Office said in addition to its returns target, illegal working visits and action against exploitative employers has "soared" with 32 per cent more arrests and 29 per cent more arrests compared to the same period last year, as part of a crackdown on "dodgy" car washes, nail bars and construction sites.

"Biometric kits and body worn cameras will be rolled out to frontline Immigration Enforcement teams throughout 2025 to boost arrests and prosecutions," the Home Office said.



