

## A weaker economy in 2025

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva expects the Indian economy to be 'a little weaker' in 2025 amid uncertainty the world over, especially in view of the US trade policy under President Donald Trump. Though she didn't delve deeper into the matter, her remark holds credence as the Indian economy is plagued by a host of issues – slowing GDP growth, a weak rupee, persistent foreign fund outflow and high inflation. According to government data, India's economic growth rate is estimated to slip to a four-year low of 6.4 per cent in 2024-25, mainly on account of poor showing by the manufacturing and services sector



of uncertainty in the world this year mainly around the trade policy of the US. In her annual media roundtable with a group of reporters, she said global growth is expected to be steady in 2025, but with regional divergence.

Georgieva said she expects the Indian economy to be a little weaker in 2025. However, she did not explain it any further. The World Economy Outlook will have more details about it. "The US is doing quite a bit better than we expected before, the EU is somewhat stalling, (and) India a little weaker," she said. Brazil was facing somewhat

higher inflation, she said.

In China, the world's second-largest economy, the IMF was seeing deflationary pressure and ongoing challenges with domestic demand, she said. "Low-income countries, despite all the efforts they are making, are in a position when any new shock can affect them quite negatively," Georgieva said.

"What we expect in 2025 is to have quite a lot of uncertainty, especially in terms of economic policies. Not surprisingly, given the size and role of the US economy, there is keen interest globally in the policy directions of the incoming administration, in particular on tariffs, taxes, deregulation and government efficiency," Georgieva said.

"This uncertainty is particularly high around the path for trade policy going forward, adding to the headwinds facing the global economy, especially for countries and regions that are more integrated in global supply chains, medium-sized economies, (and) Asia as a region," she said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 11: The Indian economy is expected to be 'a little weaker' in 2025 despite steady global growth, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has said. Georgieva also said she expects quite a lot

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## J'khand shocker: Principal orders 80 schoolgirls to remove shirts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhanbad, Jan 11: The principal of a private school here was accused of ordering 80 girls of Class X to remove their shirts for writing messages on them, prompting the administration to initiate an inquiry.

The girls were allegedly forced to return home in their blazers without shirts beneath. The incident took place in a prestigious school in Digwadih under Jorapokhar police station Friday, Dhanbad Deputy Commissioner (DC) Madhvi Mishra said.

The parents complained to the DC that the students, after completing their examination, were celebrating 'pen day' by

writing messages on each others' shirts.

The principal, who is a woman, objected to the celebration and asked the students to remove their shirts, even though they sought an apology. All students were sent back home in their blazers without the shirts, the parents told the DC.

"Several guardians lodged complaints against the principal. We also talked to some of the victim girls. The administration has taken the matter seriously. A committee has been set up to probe the matter," Mishra said. Action would be taken on the basis of the probe panel's report, the DC said.

Jharia MLA Ragini Singh described the incident as 'shameful and unfortunate.'



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# Insurance anxiety grips victims

*As hundreds of Los Angeles residents return to find homes reduced to ashes due to a devastating wave of wildfires, many are fearful that their insurance policies may not cover the rebuild cost and that future premiums will be astronomical*



LA WILDFIRES

REUTERS

**Altadena, California, Jan 11:** As Los Angeles construction worker Ivan De La Torre surveyed a landscape of smoking wreckage in fire-ravaged Altadena, a question nagged at him: how would insurance companies cover the cost of rebuilding an entire neighborhood?

As hundreds of Los Angeles residents return to find homes reduced to ashes due to a devastating wave of wildfires, many are fearful that their insurance policies may not cover the rebuild cost and that future premiums will be astronomical.

"My concern is that the insurance companies won't be able to handle all the claims and file for bankruptcy and that's that. It's scary," said De La Torre, 32, whose uncle and sister both lost their houses in a fire that consumed half of Altadena, a suburb north of Los Angeles of some 40,000 people.

Leo Frank III, a 66-year-old actor

- Wildfire survivors fear insurance will not cover rebuild costs
- Insurance companies pledge to help homeowners

- Homeowners increasingly rely on state-backed coverage
- Insurance costs from California fires could top \$20 billion

who lost his family home in Altadena, said he fears insurers could drag their feet on paying claims and fail to cover the full cost of reconstruction.

"We will rebuild. No one is taking our house," said Frank, as he hunted for a shower seat for his 96-year-old mother in a parking lot full of donated supplies in Pasadena.

"But it will be a mess." Frank said he knows some neighbors who lost their homeowners coverage prior to the fires as insurers retreated from parched regions in California increasingly prone to wildfires.

"We were lucky we still had a policy," he said.

The wildfires, among the worst natural disasters ever to hit Cali-

fornia, have killed at least 11 people and destroyed or badly damaged more than 10,000 structures.

Reuters contacted nine of the top home insurance companies in California for comment.

State Farm, Nationwide, Allstate, Mercury, Liberty Mutual and Farmers responded with statements saying they were working with policyholders to help them make claims, without addressing specific concerns about residents not receiving sufficient payouts or rising future premiums.

Following the fires this week, California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara invoked moratorium powers to suspend all policy renewals and cancellations from insurance companies for one year.

## Jeju Air black box data missing from crucial minutes before crash



REUTERS

**Seoul, Jan 11:** The two black boxes on the Boeing jet involved in the worst aviation disaster on South Korean soil stopped recording about four minutes before the accident, the transport ministry said Saturday.

South Korean investigators previously said the flight data and cockpit voice recorders were key to finding out the cause of last month's crash that killed 179 people.

It happened about four minutes after the pilot of the airliner operated by Jeju Air reported a bird strike.

Authorities investigating the crash plan to analyse what caused the black boxes to stop recording, the ministry said in a statement.

The voice recorder was initially analysed in South Korea, and, when data was found to be missing, sent to a US National Transportation Safety Board laboratory, the ministry said.

Black box recorders collect data on communications involving pilots in

- Data could be crucial to determining cause of crash Dec 29
- Crash killed 179 people, the worse on South Korean territory
- Black boxes record communications data and aircraft systems performance

the cockpit as well as how the aircraft systems perform in-flight.

Jeju Air, which departed the Thai capital Bangkok for Muan in southwestern South Korea, belly-landed and overshot the regional airport's runway Dec 29, exploding into flames after hitting an embankment. Only two people survived - crew members who were sitting in the tail section.

Two minutes before the pilots declared a Mayday emergency call, air traffic control gave caution for "bird activity".

Sim Jai-dong, a former transport ministry accident investigator, said the discovery of the missing data from the budget airline's Boeing 737-800 jet's crucial final minutes was surprising and suggests all power, including backup, may have been cut, which is rare.

The transport ministry said other data available would be used in the investigation and that it would ensure the probe is transparent and that information is shared with the victims' families.

## Vandalism against minorities 'political in nature': B'desh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, Jan 11:** A vast majority of incidents against the minority communities since August 4 last year were 'political in nature' and not 'communal,' Bangladesh government said Saturday quoting a police report.

Police have set up a WhatsApp number to directly receive complaints of communal violence and maintain contact with the minority community. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' press wing said here that the police investigation came after the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council recently claimed that there were 2,010 incidents of communal violence since a day before deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country August 5 following a massive student-led protest that toppled her 16-year regime.

Of these, a total of 1,769 incidents were reported as attacks and vandalism; police have so far registered 62 cases on the merits of the claims, and arrested at least 35 culprits based on the investigation.

## Over 150 workers of Imran Khan's party granted bail

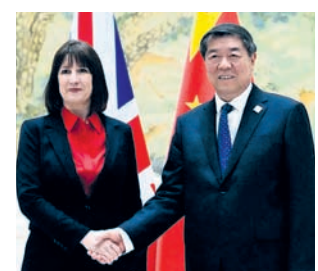
**Islamabad:** An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan granted bail to at least 153 workers of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party, more than a month after they were arrested during a protest. During a hearing, presided over by Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain, petitions of 177 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers were heard. Subsequently, bail was granted to 153 of them while the court rejected the pleas of 24 Friday, Dawn newspaper reported. Khan, 72, had November 13 issued a "final call" for nationwide protests November 26, demanding the restoration of the PTI's electoral mandate, the release of detained party members, and the reversal of the 26th constitutional amendment. Responding to his call, thousands of PTI workers reached Islamabad but faced a crackdown by police, which forcibly dispersed them while arresting more than 1,400.

## Chinese Foreign Minister makes surprise visit to Maldives

**Beijing/Male:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a surprise visit to the Maldives, during which he held talks with President Mohamed Muizzu and discussed the state of bilateral relations, amid Male's recent warming up to India. Wang, who is also a member of the powerful Political Bureau of the Communist Party, met Muizzu during his stopover in Male Friday while on his way back from a tour, official media reported. This was the first major visit by a Chinese official to Maldives after Muizzu visited China in January last year, months after his election. During Muizzu's visit, the two countries elevated the bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and signed some key agreements. In his meeting with Wang, Muizzu stressed the importance of fast-tracking key infrastructure projects outlined in the agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the two countries, Maldives media reported. He emphasised the need to prioritise social housing and road development projects, which are among the most urgent requirements for the Maldivian people, and referred to China's commitments in this regard.

## UK seeks 'common ground' with China

*Britain's Treasury chief Rachel Reeves travelled to Beijing accompanied by a delegation of British business leaders and finance officials*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Jan 11:** The UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, arrived in China this weekend for the first UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) since 2019 in an effort to seek "common ground" on trade and investment with Beijing.

According to the UK Treasury department, Reeves met with her counterpart, Vice Premier He Lifeng, Saturday for a series of conversations around the support for safe trade and investment.

It claims to have resulted in agreements worth GBP 600 million to the British economy as both sides agreed to deeper cooperation across areas such as financial services, trade, investment, and the climate to support secure growth.

"By finding common ground on trade and investment while being candid about our differences and upholding national security as the first duty of this gov-

ernment, we can build a long-term economic relationship with China that works in the national interest," said Rachel Reeves.

"The agreements we've reached show that pragmatic cooperation between the world's largest economies can help us boost economic growth for the benefit of working people - a priority of our Plan for Change. More widely, today is a platform for respectful and consistent future relations with China. One where we can be frank and open on areas where we disagree, protecting our values and security interests, and finding opportunities for safe trade and investment," she said.

The minister is joined on her visit by the Indian-origin chief executive of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Nikhil Rathi, Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey and senior representatives from some of Britain's biggest financial services firms.

## Athlete raped by 60 people over 5 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pathanamthitta, Jan 11:** An 18-year-old athlete from Kerala has claimed that she was raped by over 60 people over a period of five years.

Fifteen persons have been taken into custody for allegedly raping the Dalit girl at various locations when she was a minor, police Saturday said. While six persons were arrested Friday after registering five FIRs in two police stations in the Pathanamthitta district, nine people were apprehended Saturday, the police added.

The police said that they re-

ceived evidence indicating that the girl was exploited by individuals including her coaches, fellow athletes, and classmates.

As per the statement of the girl, she had used her father's mobile phone to communicate with the suspects and 40 persons have been identified by verifying the phone details and the information from the diary in her possession, police sources said.

As the incidents occurred when she was a minor, sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act also would be

invoked against the accused, a top police official said.

Meanwhile, the Pathanamthitta Child Welfare Committee (CWC) stated that individuals outside the Pathanamthitta district might also be involved in the case.

According to the CWC chairman, the girl had been a victim of sexual exploitation since the age of 13. As it was an unusual case, she was referred to a psychologist for more in-depth counselling, he told a news channel. The CWC also revealed that several phone numbers of potential suspects were found saved on her father's phone.



**SALVAGE ACT:** Rescue operation underway after an under-construction building collapsed at Kannauj railway station in Uttar Pradesh, trapping two dozen workers under the rubble, Saturday. At least 23 people have been injured in the incident. Six of them were pulled out of the debris and rushed to a hospital. **PTI PHOTO**

## Hollywood celebrities clear their closets for fire aid Two migrants from Bolangir killed in TN

REUTERS

**Los Angeles, Jan 11:** When wildfires destroyed parts of Los Angeles this week, real estate agent Jenna Cooper started asking friends for clothing and other items to help people in need.

Her request spread quickly through a network of powerful women. Actors including Sharon Stone and Halle Berry responded, providing sweaters, shoes, clothing, handbags, belts, pajamas and more pulled from their own collections.

"I'm packing up my entire closet," Berry wrote on Instagram. "If you live in the Southern California area, I urge you

to do the same. This is something we can do right now."

Cooper, who also runs a home goods store called +COOP, cleared half the space to create a pop-up shopping experience for displaced people to take what they need. Many Angelenos lost entire homes in the fires, which were still burning.

Stone circulated information about the donations on social media, which helped attract publicity. She and her sister, Kelly Stone, contributed clothing, bedding and more, and Kelly volunteered to assist shoppers.

"The first thing they need when they come in the store is a hug," Kelly Stone said. She



then said to shoppers, "Show me pictures of yourself, how do you dress?" so she could direct them to sweaters or trench coats that reflected their style.

At the store Friday, a thera-

py dog named Jackie Robinson greeted people at the door. Inside, they looked through racks of dresses and coats, stacks of denim, shelves of shoes and baskets of handbags. Offerings

ranged from packages of fresh underwear from Target to new or lightly used Zara dresses and some Gucci and Ferragamo shoes in the mix.

Cooper said she received donations and volunteer support from power players across Los Angeles, including actors, executives, lawyers, restaurant owners and moms. Her network of real estate agents in New York was sending gift cards, she said.

Ellen Bennett was choosing items for her 72-year-old mother, who lost her home on the east side of Los Angeles. Bennett said she selected "the basics," including socks, sweaters, pants, a jacket and a pair of running shoes.

## Two migrants from Bolangir killed in TN

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, Jan 11:** Two migrant workers from Bolangir district were found murdered near Perambur railway station on the outskirts of Chennai in Tamil Nadu early Saturday.

They were identified as Umesh Pandey, 24, and Kunu Banchor, 22, both residents of Laxmijor in Hatisalpada of Bolangir. Their bodies were recovered near the railway tracks.

According to family members, the two youths had left

Bolangir for Chennai January 11 in search of work. Droupadi, a cousin of Umesh, received a call from a railway police officer in Chennai, informing her about the deaths of the two youths.

The victims' families allege the two were murdered and their bodies dumped near the railway tracks. However, authorities have not yet confirmed the cause of the deaths.

Local authorities have assured an investigation into the deaths to determine if foul play was involved.



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Indian judiciary brought laurels in int'l sphere: CM

PBD exhibition draws huge crowds

Majhi inaugurates Centre for Judicial Archives in Cuttack



Cuttack, Jan 11: Indian judiciary has brought laurels in international sphere, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Saturday.



Addressing a gathering after inaugurating the Centre for Judicial Archives on the premises of the Orissa High Court premises here, Majhi said, "Indian judiciary has brought laurels in international sphere. The Centre for Judicial Archives will not only be a preserver of judicial records but also of culture. The state government is committed to providing all assistance, including financial, administrative and technological support, to the centre."

He thanked the state government for providing ₹38 crore for the construction of the centre and facilitating all possible assistance in this regard. Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said the centre will not only be a torch bearer for the state but for the nation as a whole.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 11: A large number of people, mostly school and college students, Saturday witnessed a mega exhibition held at the venue of the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention at Janata Maidan here.

As per the direction of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the exhibition was thrown open to general public after the culmination of the PBD convention held from January 8 to 10. The exhibition will remain open till 9pm Sunday, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said.

The entry of public was restricted to the venue during the three days of the event in view of the visit of VIPs such as the President, Prime Minister, Cabinet ministers and other dignitaries, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the event Thursday.

The convention has four exhibition halls based on themes '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'.

Apart from people of the state capital, students from districts such as Keonjhar,



Nayagarh, Puri and Cuttack made a beeline to witness the exhibition.

"Though our school had earlier planned to take children on tour to a picnic spot, we changed the decision last night after being informed that the mega exhibition will remain open for the public from Saturday. It has been very useful for the students," Sabita Swain, a teacher from Nayagarh district, said.

The teachers said the exhibition offers a lot of learning for the children, showcasing Odisha's cultural heritage, maritime history, palm leaf manuscripts and the achievements of the global Indian diaspora.

The exhibition also highlights Odisha's timeless traditions, such as Jagannath cul-

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SABITA SWAIN | TEACHER FROM NAYAGARH

along with Odisha's tribal heritage, local crafts, and music are also prominently displayed.



ture, Manabasa Gurubar and Dola Purnima. Pattachitra painting, Pipli's Chandua, Sambalpuri sarees, and traditional handlooms

The digital representation of ancient maritime trade journeys of 'Sadhabas' (traders) was also an amusement for the visitors.

POST NEWS NETWORK

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The CM said the centre will serve as a repository of the rich heritage of legal system. It will be a storehouse of historical judgments and cases delivered while upholding the values of democracy, equality and impartiality, he said. "I am confident that this centre will be a beacon of knowledge and an inspiration for judicial education across the country," he said.

Highlighting the significance of setting up of the facility, Orissa High Court Chief Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh said many endangered important historic records of the HC failed to attract the attention of State Archives for their preservation.

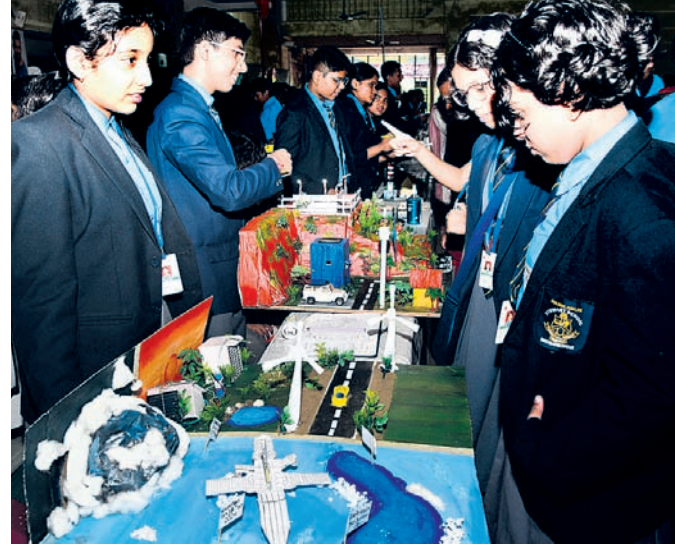
"The Centre for Judicial Archives is meant for care, conservation and consultation of the oldest records. It is not a destination for the elite, but a place for the marginalised to know that facts of their importance have been preserved

2 held for crude bomb attack

Bhubaneswar: Two miscreants who hurled crude bombs at a group following a dispute during the New Year's Eve celebrations were arrested by the Laxmisagar police Saturday. As many as two persons were injured in the attack, IIC P Shyam Sundar Rao of Laxmisagar police said. Rao identified the arrested accused as Debasish Nayak, 24, and Gauranga Nayak, 22. The accused lived in the same locality as the victims in Haldi Padia slums, he added.

Rao said December 31, 2024 night the duo disrupted the New Year's eve celebrations in the area by playing loud music. Following this, some neighbours lodged a complaint with the police. The matter was resolved following police intervention. However, the summoning of the police didn't go down well with the duo who sourced few hand-made bombs from Jatni to settle scores with the neighbours, Rao added. Accordingly, January 6 the duo, riding on a scooter, hurled the bombs at the victims' house. The impact of the blasts left the victims with grievous injuries on neck, abdomen and other parts of their body. The duo then fled the spot, and went underground thereafter. Rao said the accused have been booked under Sections 126 (2), 115 (2), 109, 324 (4), 351 (2), and 3 (5) of BNS. They were produced before a local court Saturday.

STEWART SCHOOL HOSTS 64TH SCIENCE, ART EXPO



Bhubaneswar, Jan 11: Stewart School-Bhubaneswar hosted its 64th Annual Science and Art Exhibition Saturday, drawing participation from over 1,500 students who showcased more than 800 projects and experiments.

This year's exhibition em-

phased robotics, with more than 300 projects highlighting advancements in the field.

Students across all age groups presented projects on diverse topics, ranging from the solar system and water cycle to global issues like climate change and millet awareness.

The event also featured computer-based projects alongside impressive drawings and paintings by the students. The event was graced by alumnus and chief guest Ajay Kumar Suda, accompanied by notable dignitaries such as former principal of SCS College Prafulla Kumar Mishra, Puri Odisha Bigyan Academy secretary Ashis Kumar Mohanty, and at HCL Tech Pvt Ltd, Chennai solution director Deepak Kumar Behera.

Principal Rashmi Rekha Senapati commended the students for their creativity and dedication, calling them "young scientists" and encouraging them to continue innovating. "Keep experimenting, keep learning, and keep pushing boundaries," she said. FC North, secretary of the school, also lauded the students, stating, "This exhibition is a testament to the importance of fostering a passion for science and technology. Your hard work and innovation are inspiring."

Weather forecast for BBSR and CTC, including temperature, humidity, and rainfall.

AIEC, ICC ink MoU to boost India-Malaysia trade ties

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 11: India-Malaysia bilateral trade has surpassed the USD 20 billion mark in 2023-24 and is projected to reach USD 30 billion by 2025. Malaysia is also exploring membership in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC).

In this context, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India Economic Council (AIEC) and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) during the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held recently in Bhubaneswar.

The agreement was signed in the presence of External Affairs Minister S Jaishan-



kar and Minister of Digital of Malaysia Gobind Singh Deo. Key signatories included AIEC chairman Dato Ramesh Kodammal, along with senior leaders from the AIEC Council.

The MoU exchange involved Rajib Sekhar Sahoo, chartered accountant and principal partner at SRB and Associates, and member of the ICC National Executive Committee, alongside the immediate past

chairman of ICC Odisha State Council JB Pany.

The agreement aims to create a platform for businesses, organisations, and individuals engaged in economic activities in India, Malaysia, and other ASEAN member states. It will facilitate joint events, exchange of views, and provide updates on legislative and regulatory developments in the region.

Mega blood donation camp organised at KIIT

Bhubaneswar: KIIT and KISS organised a mega blood donation camp Saturday, collecting a record 3,000 units of blood. Inaugurated by KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, the event was part of the "Art of Giving" initiative. Samanta announced plans to collect 60,000 units of blood annually through similar camps across Odisha's 30 districts. "KIIT and KISS alone will donate 6,000 units of blood, ensuring the supply to various state blood banks," he said. Prominent attendees included KIIT Deemed to be University vice-chancellor Saranjit Singh, Pro-VC CBK Mohanty, registrar Jyanya Ranjan Mohanty, joint registrar Shyam Sundar Behra, KIMS principal RC Das, and group director Dilip Panda, along with senior officials. Teams from KIMS, SCB Medical College, Capital Hospital, Central Red Cross Blood Bank, BMC Hospital, and district hospitals in Dhenkanal, Puri, Khurda, and Jajpur contributed to the collection efforts, supporting the state's healthcare infrastructure.

Over 600 litre illicit liquor seized; 5 held



Bhubaneswar, Jan 11: Continuing the special drive against the trade and smuggling of illicit liquor, the Excise sleuths Saturday seized over 600 litres of ID (illegally distilled) liquor and arrested five persons in that connection, officials said.

In the first case, the Excise sleuths arrested a 27-year-old man, identified as Sarbeshwar Sahoo, from Kargil slum near the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) while he was

trading ID liquor. Sources said a total of 550 litres of the liquor was seized during the search of a car which he allegedly used to transport the contraband from Badamba in Athagarh.

In subsequent raids at four different sale points of illicit brew in the Capital city, the Excise sleuths nabbed four persons and seized 30 litres of country liquor, and 54 litres of ID liquor. A scooter used to transport the liquor has been seized, sources said, adding that all the accused have been forwarded to court following arrest.

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# CORRUPTION ALLEGED IN DMF SPENDING

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar/Hatadihi, Jan 11:** Irregularities have come to light in spending of funds under the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) in Keonjhar. Allegations indicate widespread corruption through approvals for various projects. Significant expenses were incurred for a single project, despite trust board meetings not being held in regular intervals. Projects were executed and funds spent without proper trust board approvals.

Records suggest that more than ₹36 crore has been spent on videography, vehicle rentals, fuel, and other expenditures. Discrepancies between approved projects and fund utilisation have been revealed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

According to DMF communication (No. 2559, Nov 16, 2024), the trust board has been convened once in FY2015-16, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23. In 2016-17, it met twice; thrice in 2017-18; and twice in 2018-19. However, no meeting was held in 2019-20, 2023-24, or 2024-25. As per the DMF Rules, 2015, Clause 4(4), the board is required to meet twice in a financial year. The last one, held November 19, 2022, was the 11th trust board meeting. Since then, nearly two years have passed without another meeting.

From 2016-17 to September 2024, 2,833 projects were approved by the trust board, while 3,280 projects received administrative approval. Of these, 989 projects have been completed, 1,562 are ongoing, and 708 have not been started. Additionally, 21 projects have been cancelled. Notably, the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 8th, and 9th trust board meetings mention the number of projects approved but did not include budgetary allocations. For instance, in the 10th trust board meeting, Project No-207, named "school transformation project", was approved with an estimated budget of ₹30 crore.

The absence of trust board meetings has raised questions about the oversight and management of DMF funds. Nearly 300 projects, approved during the 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th trust board meetings, have received administrative approval, and approximately ₹800 crore has been spent on those. Additionally, it has been reported that around 190 projects used fake trust board numbers and serial numbers, resulting in the expenditure of significant funds worth several crores.

According to a letter (No. 2375/25, October 2024) from the DMF office, ₹11,925 crore was collected, of which ₹5,502 crore has been spent. Out of this, ₹36.50 crore was used for contingency expenses. The breakdown includes ₹31.26 lakh for videography, ₹33.97 lakh for advertisements, ₹36.21 lakh for vehicle rentals, ₹14.51 lakh for fuel, ₹5.89 lakh for travel, ₹33 lakh for toilets, and ₹3.38 lakh for miscellaneous expenses that includes spending on tea, as revealed under the RTI Act.

On the other hand, a letter (No. 11258/22, August 2022) from the State Planning and Convergence department highlighted the formation of a 21-member committee for the trust board, which includes public representatives. However, a new committee has not yet been formed since the last general election.

While individual projects have been approved in trust board meetings, many others have received administrative clearance and incurred expenditures. Irregularities related to these processes have been reported to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, the Planning and Convergence department, and the Prime Minister's Office.

Regarding allegations of misuse of DMF funds, the Additional Secretary of the Planning and Convergence department, Pradyumna Mahakud, said that the Keonjhar District Collector and the DMF trust board chairperson have been asked to submit a report. However, the report has not been provided yet. As per a letter (No. 18260/17, December 2024) from the State Planning and Convergence department, a reminder has been sent to the DMF trust requesting them to submit the final and detailed report.

# Ancient Buddhist relics unearthed at Ratnagiri



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chandikhole, Jan 11:** Excavation work has resumed at Ratnagiri, the world-famous Buddhist site in Jajpur district, revealing numerous ancient Buddhist relics. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), during its ongoing excavation, has discovered a fragmented statue of Gautama Buddha, a stone-crafted elephant, and remains of fragmented ancient walls, previously believed to have been constructed like chambers.

The site has yielded numerous votive stupas, terracotta artifacts, and stone fragments believed to date back more than 1,200 years. Dr Sunil Kumar Pattnayak, an archaeologist and ed-

itor of Ancient South-east Asian Maritime Trade Organisation, has stated that the relics span from the 8th to the 11th century CE.

Notably, the intricate hair design of the Buddha statues unearthed at Ratnagiri is unique and unmatched.

The excavation is being supervised by ASI Deputy Superintendent Prajnaprati Pradhan and involves students of Guwahati, Assam, Sambalpur, and Utkal Universities. The initiative is led by Puri Circle Superintendent Dibashish Gadnayak, who expressed optimism about discovering more relics as the work progresses. However, the excavation has faced challenges due to encroachments in the surrounding area, he said.

The new findings coincide with preparations for an international Buddhist congregation scheduled to take place at the site January 12.

# Sanskrit scholar pens 'Mahakavya' on Modi

*The 700-page work 'Narendra Arohanam' was unveiled last week*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, Jan 11:** A Sanskrit scholar in Ganjam district has authored a 'Mahakavya' on the life and works of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Sanskrit language.

The 700-page work 'Narendra Arohanam', authored by Somanath Dash, associate professor in National Sanskrit University, Tirupati and

published by Somnath Sanskrit University, Veraval, Gujarat was unveiled in a youth festival held at Veraval, last week.

The book consists of 1,200 slokas (verses) in 12 chapters, with English and Hindi descriptions. It has depicted the life journey of Modi, his childhood activities, as Chief Minister in Gujarat and as Prime Minister till his second term.

"Born in a humble family in Gujarat, Modi saw many ups and downs in his life and has become an ideal for all youth of the world nowadays. His ascetic political jour-

ney and struggle in life will always be inscribed in history. So I have decided to write the life and works of such a personality in Sanskrit," said 48-year-old associate professor.

Dash said he took over four years to complete the book, where several eminent personalities, including Sanskrit professors, expressed their opinions.

Dash said he has never met Modi, and collected materials on the life and works of the Prime Minister from different books, journals, his speeches and his monthly radio talk 'Maan Ki Baat' and others.



# 2 kids burnt to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baunsuni, Jan 11:** Two minors were burnt to death after a haystack caught fire during play at Balakira village under this police limits in Boudh district Saturday evening.

The deceased were identified as Krishna Bhoi of Balakira village and Krishna Urbha of Basant Bahal village under Boudh police limits. Both the deceased are maternal uncle and nephew in relationship. A pall of gloom and mourning spread in the area after reports of the deaths spread.

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Igniting IDEAS for A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

with

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# leisure



## THE WEEKND REFLECTS ON MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

Singer-songwriter The Weeknd opened up about experiencing a "mental breakdown" and how it led to him reconsidering how he presents in his music career. The singer, whose real name is Abel Tesfaye, seems to be doing away with his public persona.

## HOLLAND'S FATHER CONFIRMS ENGAGEMENT TO ZENDAYA

After Zendaya sparked engagement rumors at the 2025 Golden Globes by wearing a stunning 5-carat ring, Tom Holland's father, Dominic Holland, has confirmed the happy news. He shared details about how his son proposed to Zendaya.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today will be as agreeable as any day can be. You are satisfied with what you have, says Ganesha. Besides, you have already planned on what you desire and are moving towards it. A date of romantic nature may turn out to be interesting or it may lead to a controversy; you have to decide on it.

**TAURUS**  
This day is meant for taking some time out from your busy schedule, and seeking some fun and relaxation. So says Ganesha. It is possible that you will be getting together with your friends and family members for a fun filled evening followed by a great dinner and a late night movie.

**GEMINI**  
You know where you are headed, and will redouble your efforts to reach your goals today. You are full of energy and enthusiasm, which helps you to achieve all your targets. You will receive unexpected gains owing to your hard work. Bountiful success will be yours at the end of a hard day's labour, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
A restless or irritating mood is indicated. Keep you cool and be calm even in adverse circumstances, suggests Ganesha. If you do so, you will always succeed in life. It is difficult to wriggle out of adversity, if you have hot temper.

**LEO**  
You will be able to influence people with your co-operative and accommodating attitude today. You will have discussions on various topics with people who come into contact with you. You will also come into contact with people who share the same mental wavelength as you do, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha says don't let setbacks cow you down today as you will emerge stronger from each one of them. It will be your logic and reasoning abilities that will aid you in gaining the perfection in completing your work. You may look forward to spending the evening with your beloved or a special friend.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that today you will get worried over petty matters and be tense. To get mental peace keep yourself occupied with religious or spiritual activity. Along with that if you go to some religious place you will gain mental peace, which will stay with you for a long time.

**SCORPIO**  
According to Ganesha, you will be soaked in your work today. During the day, you may be loaded with duties and responsibilities, however, evening has a different story to reveal. Exciting as ever, a get away with friends may be liberating and relaxing.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
A day of full of caution, warns Ganesha. There are chances that your heart will find its partner, forcing you to fall in love. You may be cupid's next prey. However, watch your steps, as the initial stages of a relationship may be fragile and need to be handled with care.

**CAPRICORN**  
It has become difficult for you to bear the heavy weight of responsibilities on your shoulders. But, be prepared for some more; the weight is about to get heavier as more responsibilities are going to be added. You will no longer enjoy the work, and it will bring down your efficiency level to an extent, feels Ganesha.

**AQUARIUS**  
You may receive some good news from the foreign shores today. The day will bring on a positive note and it will remain like that for the whole twenty-four hours. You'll be in a mood to merry and it will be transformed to everyone around you, says Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
Those who work hard to move towards their goals will do well today. It is a good day for business. You will be able to do a lot of new things in your job-business today. With Ganesha's blessings you will definitely succeed, but you need to work hard without getting disappointed.

## Samantha's 'tall ambitions'

**Mumbai:** Samantha Ruth Prabhu is an actress who consistently captivates her fans with her unwavering strength in the face of challenges. After overcoming the condition of myositis, she recently shared that she is on the road to recovery from the painful effects of Chikungunya. Despite these struggles, her latest social media post showcases her bold spirit, resilience, and unyielding determination to never give up.

The *Yashoda* actress recently took to the stories section of her IG and dropped a picture and captioned it "Tall ambitions", indicating her life mantra.

Samantha has been facing a hard time health-wise. The *Oh Baby* star recently announced through social media that she is recovering from chikungunya at the moment.

Nevertheless, this did not stop her from working towards her fitness goals. Samantha took to her Instagram stories and shared a video of herself sweating it out in the gym. The diva wrote along with the video, "Recovering from Chikungunya is so fun. The joint pains and ALL".

On the work front, Samantha is presently busy with her highly anticipated action series, *Rakt Brahmand*. She will be seen sharing screen space with Aditya Roy Kapur for the first time in the project.

## Malaika, Arjun spark reunion rumours

**Mumbai:** Malaika Arora and Arjun Kapoor's recent appearance at a fashion show has reignited speculation about their relationship status. The former couple attended the event, which also saw Karan Johar and Siddharth Malhotra walking the ramp. While no footage of Arjun and Malaika interacting has emerged, their simultaneous presence has left fans wondering if the two exchanged words during the night.

Malaika turned heads in a striking red leather dress paired with diamond jewelry and sleek, loose hair, exuding her signature glamour. Arjun, on the other hand, opted for an all-black ensemble, looking effortlessly sophisticated.

Last year, Arjun confirmed his single status at a promotional event for *Singham Again*, candidly telling fans, "Abhi single



AGENCIES

## Reason behind Salman's single status

**Mumbai:** Salman Khan's relationship status has long been one of the most puzzling mysteries in the Hindi film industry. Despite being considered one of India's most eligible bachelors, the superstar has never taken the plunge into marriage. For decades, fans have speculated about why the charismatic actor remains single. Well Salman's father, veteran screenwriter Salim Khan, offers a straightforward explanation.

In an interview Salim Khan revealed that the disconnect lies in Salman's expectations versus reality. According to Salim, Salman seeks a partner reminiscent of his mother, someone homely and grounded. However, he tends to gravitate toward career-oriented women, particularly his co-stars, given the close and glamorous environment they share on set.

"There's a contradiction in Salman's thinking," Salim explained. "He's often attracted to the heroines he works with but later tries to mold them into an image of his mother. That's not possible," he added.

On the work front, Salman will next be seen in the big budget potboiler *Sikandar*, directed by AR Murugadoss, slated or a release this March, on Eid. The movie also stars Rashmika Mandanna and Kajal Aggarwal.

AGENCIES



## Jacqueline's happy space

**Mumbai:** Actress Jacqueline Fernandez, who has been receiving a lot of positive response to her recent movie *Fateh*, has said that essaying the character of Khushi in the film became her happy space during the filming.

In *Fateh* the actress shares the screen with Sonu Sood, and looks ravishing. The film also marks the directorial debut of Sonu.

Reflecting on her character, Jacqueline expressed her gratitude for the response she has received. She said, "Playing Khushi was a real happy space for me, the role was essayed to portray a refreshing character that has intellect and quirk. Her simplicity resonated with me. The overwhelming response from the audience is heartwarming".

She further mentioned, "I'm glad the audiences are getting to see me play characters that align with me as a person. 2025 started with a bang. I'm looking forward to sharing more on the exciting projects that are in the pipeline".

Meanwhile, the actress' 2025 lineup promises more surprises as she is set to star two of the biggest commercial entertainers and legacy films, *Welcome to the Jungle* and *Housefull 5*, both of which are highly anticipated. She will be reuniting with Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar in both the films.



AGENCIES

### PEANUTS



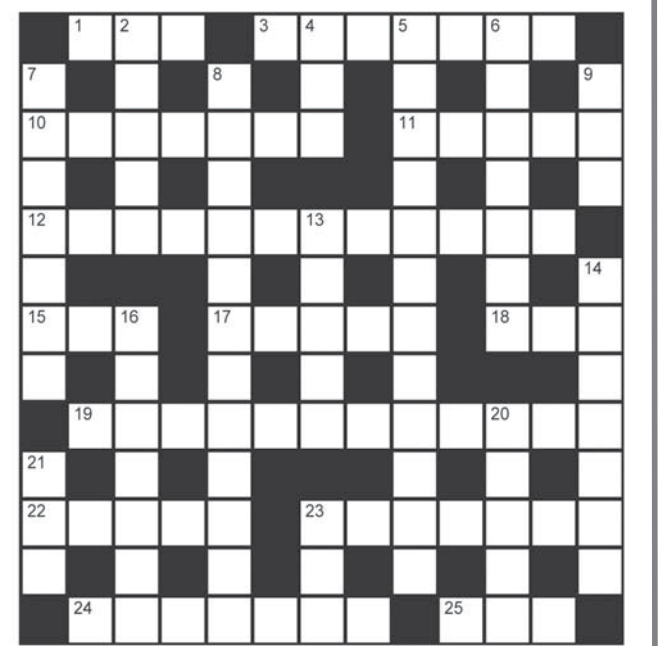
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



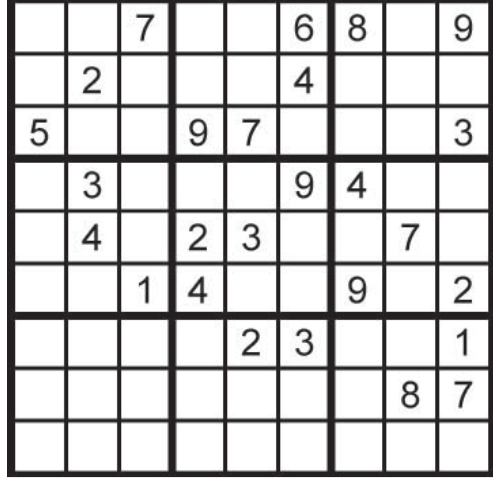
### CROSSWORD



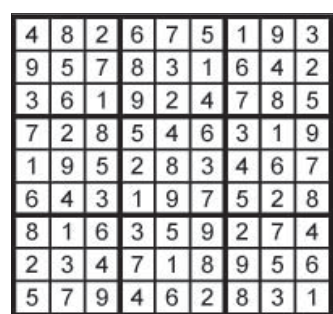
- Across**
- 1 Broke bread
  - 3 Captivate
  - 10 Encroach
  - 11 Picture questions?"
  - 12 Police state
  - 15 ET carrier
  - 17 \_\_\_ one's sorrows
  - 18 Sandpiper
  - 19 Cheese and ale dish (5,7)
  - 22 Relinquish
- Down**
- 2 Something to talk about
  - 4 "Maid of Athens, \_\_\_ we part": Byron
  - 5 Behavioral quirk
  - 6 Piano keyboard
  - 7 Aware
  - 8 Lightbulb type
  - 9 Boeing 747, e.g.
  - 13 Smell
  - 14 Bureaucratic stuff (3,4)
  - 16 First step
  - 20 Nightstick
  - 21 Ram's ma'am
  - 23 On the other hand

### 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



