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## 30 killed in Nigeria village

Abuja, : At least 30 people were killed, and several others abducted when gunmen raided Kasuwan-Daji village of Niger state in the northern part of the country on Sunday. In a statement, the Police said the gunmen stormed the village, opening fire on residents and setting fire to the local market and several houses. The attack is the latest in a



cycle of deadly violence in the conflict-hit region.

Authorities said the attackers came from the National Park Forest along the Kabe district, highlighting a pattern in which expansive, abandoned forest reserves are used as hideouts by armed gangs. The attack came weeks after gunmen seized more than 300 children and staff of a Catholic school in the state in central Nigeria. Those victims were released after nearly a month in captivity

## Venezuela Crisis: India expresses deep concern, calls for dialogue to address issues

Delhi, : India on Sunday said that the recent developments in Venezuela are a matter of deep concern and Government is closely monitoring the evolving situation. India also reaffirmed its support to the well-being and safety of the people of Venezuela and called upon all concerned to address issues peacefully through dialogue, ensuring peace and stability of the region. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, "Recent developments in Venezuela are a matter of deep concern. We are closely monitoring the evolving situation."

"India reaffirms its support to the well-being and safety of the people of Venezuela. We call upon all concerned to address issues peacefully through dialogue, ensuring peace and stability of the region," the statement said. "The Embassy of India in Caracas is in contact with members of the Indian community and will continue to provide all possible assistance," the statement added. On Saturday, the MEA advised Indian nationals to avoid all non-essential travel to Venezuela amid the unfolding situation in the South American nation.

## Trump made a mistake by raising Modi, the world can take big action!

NEWDELHI: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called the US move a violation of international law and a "horrific" move. The US invasion of Venezuela and the removal of long-time ruler Nicolas Maduro from power have created a storm in world politics. An emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council is scheduled to be held on Monday over the incident. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called the US move a "violation of international law and a terrible



act." Venezuela's ambassador to the UN, Samuel Moncada, said the US is waging a war to plunder Venezuela's natural resources and the world's largest oil reserves. Venezuela has claimed that the US has violated the UN Charter by attacking the political freedom of a sovereign country. UN Secretary-

General Antonio Guterres has expressed concern that such an attack violates international law. On the other hand, US President Donald Trump's action has increased fear and tension in Latin American countries. These countries have strongly criticized the US military action. This action is also being condemned all over the world. But Trump has no interest in all this. Now he has openly threatened Colombian President Gustavo Petro. Speaking to reporters, Trump said

about Petro, 'He is producing cocaine and sending it to the United States, so he has to be careful.' It is noteworthy that without naming Maduro, Colombian President Petro described Washington's attack as 'an attack on the sovereignty of Latin America'. He said that it will create a humanitarian crisis. Recently, Trump said that he would not rule out attacking drug production facilities in Colombia as part of his anti-drug strategy. Petro has condemned one of Trump's statements as a threat of attack.

## Security Council Schedules Urgent Session on Monday Regarding US Military Capture of Nicolas Maduro

NEWDELHI: Diplomatic tensions are rising in New York as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) prepares to convene swiftly following the dramatic capture of Nicolas Maduro. Under the presidency of Somalia for January, the Council has confirmed it will hold an emergency meeting on Monday at 10:00 am local time (1500 GMT). The session was called to address "Threats to international peace and security," a direct response to the recent United States military operation that resulted in the detention of the Venezuelan leader and his wife. Momentum for the meeting began with Colombian President



Gustavo Petro, who vocally rejected the US intervention. In a statement on X, Petro condemned the violation of sovereignty in Latin America, arguing that internal conflicts must be resolved by the people themselves rather than foreign powers. "As members of the United Nations Security

Council, we seek to convene the Council," Petro stated, emphasizing the principle of self-determination as the bedrock of the UN system. Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, has expressed deep concern regarding the implications of this military strike. Through

his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric, Guterres warned that such actions set a "dangerous precedent." He urged all parties to strictly adhere to the UN Charter and international law, regardless of the internal situation in Venezuela. The geopolitical landscape shifted on Saturday

when US President Donald Trump confirmed a "large-scale strike" aimed at removing Maduro. Social media posts from the President showed the ousted leader aboard the USS Iwo Jima, while additional footage released by the White House depicted Maduro in handcuffs, interacting with law enforcement. Back in Venezuela, the political vacuum is already being filled. The nation's Supreme Court has swiftly ordered Vice President Delcy Rodriguez to assume the duties of acting president. The court cited Maduro's "material and temporary impossibility" to govern as the legal basis for the transfer of power.

## Maneka Gandhi calls on Odisha CM in Bhubaneswar



BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): Former Union Minister and ace environmentalist Maneka Gandhi on Sunday called on Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in Bhubaneswar. During her short interaction with CM Majhi at his Residence Office, Maneka lauded the Odisha Government for its people centric

governance. Meanwhile, she discussed some key matters relating to women & children development & environmental issues, with Majhi. On the other hand, she was accorded a rousing welcome on behalf of the CM wherein Majhi honoured the woman icon with presenting a typical made-in Odisha scarf.

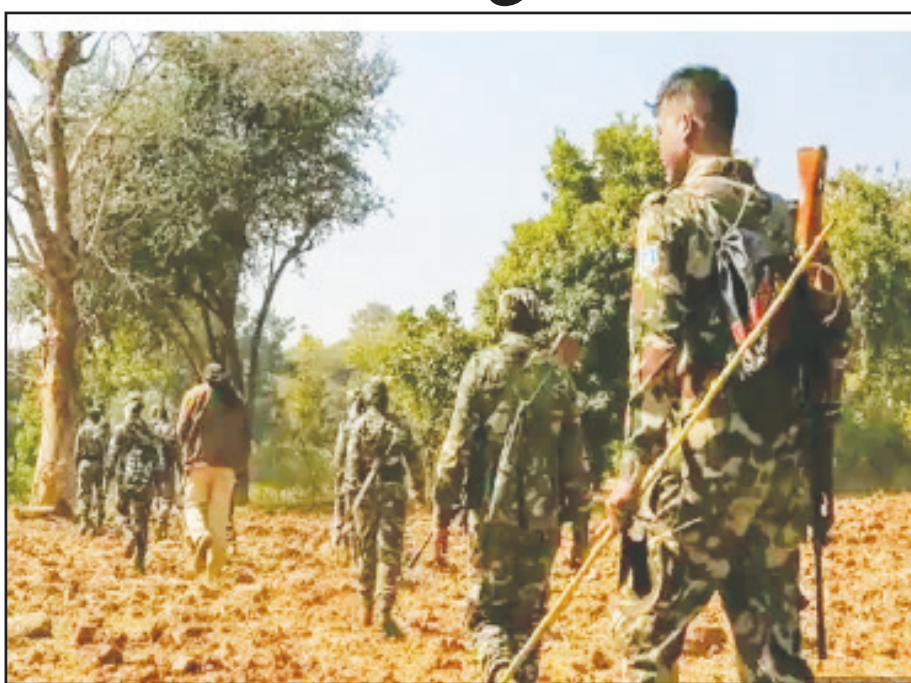
## Top Maoist Leader Sachin Mangdu Killed in Bastar Anti-Naxal Operation

NEWDELHI: Joint teams of the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and CoBRA commandos launched the offensive in Sukma and Bijapur districts after receiving specific intelligence. The forces engaged Maoist cadres in forested zones, recovering weapons such as AK-47 rifles, Insas rifles, and explosives. Sachin Mangdu, a divisional committee member with an ₹8 lakh bounty, fell during the encounter. Authorities confirmed his identity after recovering his body. Earlier reports speculated he had escaped, but police clarified his death late Friday. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai hailed the operation as a decisive strike against the Maoist leadership. He reaffirmed the state's commitment to achieving a Naxal-free Chhattisgarh by March 2026, aligning with the Centre's nationwide deadline. The Bastar division has witnessed intensified operations since 2025, with over 200 Maoists eliminated. Security forces continue targeting leadership networks and supply chains to weaken insurgent strength. Human rights groups demanded transparent investigations into the encounters, while tribal activists voiced concerns about militarised actions in indigenous areas.

## 256 Naxals killed in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region in 2025

Jagdalpur-Bastar, : Bastar Range Inspector General of Police P. Sundarraj said that 2025 marked a decisive turning point in the fight against Left-Wing Extremism in the region, with security forces killing 256 Naxals in encounters and facilitating the surrender of more than 1,500 Maoists during the year. "In 2025, in various encounters in the Bastar division, 256 Naxals were killed... More than 1,500 Naxals surrendered. Their rehabilitation work is

being done," IG Sundarraj told ANI on Saturday. Speaking to the media, the Bastar IG said sustained intelligence-based operations, coordinated action by multiple security agencies, and focused area domination had significantly weakened Maoist networks across the Bastar division. He added that surrendered cadres are being rehabilitated under government policies to help reintegrate them into the mainstream. His statement came after



security forces recovered the bodies of 14 Maoists following

multiple encounters in the Bijapur and Sukma districts. According to the IG, the operation was launched based on specific intelligence inputs about the Maoist movement in the southern parts of the two districts. "During the operation, multiple encounters took place between security forces and Maoists. After conducting searches in the area, two Maoist bodies were recovered from Bijapur district and 12 from Sukma district, taking the total to 14," Sundarraj said. He

added that a large cache of graded weapons, including an AK-47 and INSAS rifles, was also seized from the encounter sites. An official release described 2025 as a historic year for the Bastar Range, citing major breakthroughs against Maoist leadership, large-scale recovery of arms, and the surrender of senior cadres. These developments, the release said, have created a strong foundation for long-term peace and stability in the region."



# BJP Responds to Owaisi’s Call on 26/11 Masterminds, Says India Acts Responsibly Against Terror

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent) :Senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday responded to AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi’s remarks urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bring back the alleged masterminds of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks from Pakistan, drawing comparisons with recent US actions in Venezuela. Owaisi had cited reports of US military operations in Venezuela and the capture of President Nicolás Maduro, stating that India should take similar steps to ensure justice for the victims of the 2008 Mumbai



attacks. Reacting to the statement, BJP MP Ghulam Ali Khatana said that India’s approach to counter-terrorism under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government has been responsible and measured. “India responds to terrorism by targeting terrorists, not nations. As the world’s largest democracy, we believe in maintaining

constructive relations with all our neighbours and do not act under provocation,” Khatana said. Bihar minister Dilip Jaiswal also dismissed Owaisi’s remarks, calling them sensational in nature. “Asaduddin Owaisi is known for making attention-seeking statements. He is now offering advice to the US President. I hope President Donald Trump considers it,”

Jaiswal said. During a public rally on Saturday, Owaisi had urged the Prime Minister to take decisive steps against individuals he described as responsible for planning the 26/11 attacks, referencing names of Pakistan-based terror leaders. He also referred to recent global military actions while making his appeal. The BJP, however, reiterated that India’s counter-terror strategy prioritises national security, international law, and diplomatic responsibility, while continuing its commitment to combating terrorism in all forms.

# Dera Sacha Sauda Chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Granted 40-Day Parole Again

NEWDELHI: Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been granted a 40-day parole, according to sources cited by news agency PTI. Singh is currently serving a 20-year prison sentence at Sunaria Jail in Rohtak, Haryana, after being convicted of raping two of his followers in 2017. This is the latest temporary release granted to Singh, who has received multiple paroles and furloughs since his conviction. He was earlier granted a 40-day parole in August last year, a 30-day



parole in January, and a 21-day furlough in April, along with several other temporary releases in previous years. In 2019, Singh and three others were also convicted for the murder of a journalist, a case that dates back more than 16 years. Since 2017, Singh has been released from prison on at least

14 occasions, raising concerns among civil society groups and religious organisations. During most of these releases, Singh reportedly stayed at the Dera Sacha Sauda ashram in Baghpat district, Uttar Pradesh. The organisation is headquartered in Sirsa,

Haryana, and has a large follower base across Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and nearby states. In Haryana, the group has notable influence in districts such as Sirsa, Fatehabad, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, and Hisar. Singh’s repeated paroles have drawn strong criticism, particularly from Sikh organisations including the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). Critics have questioned the consistency and fairness of granting repeated temporary releases to a person convicted of serious crimes.

# TDP, YSRCP Indulge In Slugfest Over Credit For Bhogapuram Airport

Amaravati: With the first validation flight landing successfully at Bhogapuram Greenfield International Airport on Sunday, a war of words broke out between Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) over who should get credit for the project. While TDP, which is heading the ruling coalition, claimed the credit for the airport, Opposition YSRCP called Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu ‘credit chor’. Former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy posted that with the first flight landing at Bhogapuram airport, Andhra Pradesh accelerates on its growth runway, marking a significant milestone for Vision Vizag. “Congratulations to the GMR Group for their exceptional efforts. During our tenure expedited permissions, timely approvals and land acquisition including R&R with an outlay of close to Rs 960 crore helped lay a strong foundation for steady progress. Significant portion of the project work was completed, which has been instrumental in achieving this milestone. I also fondly recall the efforts and contribution of Nitin Gadkari Ji in approving the Bhogapuram Airport Bypass National Highway project in March 2023, connecting Visakhapatnam Port with Bhogapuram International Airport,” wrote the YSRCP president.

# "Imperialist Aggression": India's Left Parties Slam US Venezuela Strike as UN Charter Violation, Stage Jantar Mantar Protest

New Delhi, : India's major Left parties on Sunday vehemently condemned the United States' military operation in Venezuela as a "blatant violation of the UN Charter", denouncing the "kidnapping" of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores during a dramatic raid in Caracas. The parties—CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML) Liberation, RSP, and All India Forward Bloc—staged a vocal protest at Jantar Mantar, raising placards against what they termed "US imperialist adventurism" aimed at seizing Venezuela's vast oil reserves. In a joint



statement, Left leaders including CPI(M) General Secretary M.A. Baby, CPI's D. Raja, CPI(ML)'s Dipankar Bhattacharya, RSP's Manoj Bhattacharya, and AIFB's G. Devarajan expressed outrage over remarks by President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Trump declared the US would

"run Venezuela" during a transitional period following the Delta Force operation on Saturday, January 3, which captured Maduro—facing US charges of narco-terrorism and cocaine trafficking—and transported him to a New York detention center. Rubio justified the "trigger-based mission" as arresting "indicted fugitives," warning Maduro had ignored "generous offers" to step down and hinting at future targets like Cuba and Mexico. The Left parties alleged the strike revives the Monroe Doctrine, treating Latin America as America's "backyard" for exploitation, and called for global condemnation alongside demands for proof of Maduro's well-being. CPI(M) urged the Indian government to firmly oppose the aggression and affirm solidarity with Venezuelan sovereignty. The protest echoes international fury: Venezuela's interim

Vice President Delcy Rodríguez branded the raid a "barbaric kidnapping", rejecting Trump's claims of her cooperation while demanding Maduro's release. The operation involved neutralizing Venezuelan military assets, with Trump hinting at potential follow-up strikes. Maduro faces charges dating back to 2020, including ties to gangs and drug cartels, which he denies. Left leaders framed the US action as part of a pattern of interventions from Guatemala to Chile, threatening Latin American self-determination and regional stability.

# Hindus are Foreigners: Comrade Mathews

Kochi, : Kottayam based Baseline Marthoma Mathews III, head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, popularly known as Comrade Mathews, has come out with a new historical revelation capable of turning the history of India upside down. Mathews has claimed in his social media page that the Hindus are foreigners and came to India from European countries after 52 CE. According to Mathews, Christians reached the sub-continent much earlier and hence the Hindus cannot claim the status of the original residents of India. The statement of Mathews has been made in the backdrop of a media blitzkrieg that Christians are under attack in India and various “militant” Hindu organizations are behind the attacks. The heads of various Christian denominations want unfettered freedom to forcibly convert Hindus to Christianity as part of their mission to annihilate Sanatana Dharma. There is an apprehension among the followers of Sanatana Dharma about the possibilities of Comrade Mathews making further claims about Lord Ayyappa of Sabarimala. “There was an instance of some evangelists claiming the gullible believers that Lord Ayyappa was a Christian whose original name was Iype. They had also claimed that Villwamangalam, a monk who lived in Kerala in the 17th century and authored Sree Krishna Namaritham, was a Christian whose original name, according to evangelists, was William de Magalathumadom, a Nadar Christian.

# CM Mamata Writes To CEC Over ‘Procedural Violations, Administrative Lapses’ In SIR Process

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, expressing concern over alleged irregularities, procedural violations and administrative lapses during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in the state. In a letter dated January 3, CM Banerjee alleged that critical instructions related to the SIR process are being communicated informally through WhatsApp messages and text messages, without any formal written notifications, circulars, or statutory orders. She claimed that the absence of formal documentation undermines transparency, accuracy and



accountability, and could potentially lead to the disenfranchisement of genuine voters. “I am once again constrained to write to you in order to place on record my grave concern regarding the serious irregularities, procedural violations and administrative lapses being witnessed during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in West Bengal,” Banerjee wrote. “I strongly urge you to immediately address and rectify the

glitches, correct the flaws and make the necessary corrections, failing which this unplanned, arbitrary and ad hoc exercise must be halted. If allowed to continue in its present form, it will result in irreparable damage, large-scale disenfranchisement of eligible voters, and a direct assault on the foundational principles of democratic governance,” the letter stated. CM Banerjee further said that the undue haste with which the SIR is being conducted, without adequate groundwork

or preparation, has rendered the entire process fundamentally flawed. “There has been no proper or uniform training of officials entrusted with this sensitive constitutional responsibility; the IT systems being used are defective, unstable and unreliable; instructions issued from time to time are inconsistent and often contradictory; and there is a complete lack of clarity and planning on the part of the Election Commission of India (ECI) and its State-level functionaries,” she said. The Chief Minister claimed that these deficiencies have reduced a vital democratic exercise to a farce and have severely eroded public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

# "Congress's MGNREGA Save Campaign is Actually Corruption Protection War": Shivraj Singh Chouhan

New Delhi, : Union Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Congress, accusing the opposition of waging a "Corruption Protection War" disguised as a "Save MGNREGA Campaign". Addressing a press conference, Chouhan declared that Congress has a problem with "Gram (village), Kaam (work), and Ram (development)", alleging the party seeks to preserve systemic graft in rural employment schemes. Detailing the Modi government's transformative Viksit Bharat-Jai Ram Ji Scheme, Chouhan announced a legally guaranteed 125-day employment assurance, unemployment allowance for delayed

work allocation, penal interest for payment delays, and a robust Rs 1.51 lakh crore budgetary allocation — with the Centre contributing Rs 95,600 crore. He contrasted this with the UPA era, noting the Modi government invested Rs 8.48 lakh crore in rural development versus UPA's Rs 2 lakh crore expenditure over 10 years. Decentralized Planning: Gram panchayats now independently decide village development priorities, ending Delhi's top-down diktats. Administrative Expenses: Increased from 6% to 9% (Rs 13,000+ crore) for timely payments to employment assistants, technical staff, and mates. Permanent Assets: Focus shifts to water conservation, roads, schools,

anganwadi buildings, hospitals, farm ponds, check dams, disaster management, and FPO structures — moving beyond mere earth-digging. Chouhan emphasized work scheduling aligned with peak agricultural seasons to balance farming and employment needs, safeguarding both farmers and labourers. Branding MGNREGA a "corruption hub", the minister exposed systemic fraud: contractors performing manual labour, machine-operated work billed as human effort, same roads repaved annually for repeat payments, and 80-year-olds listed as active workers. Social audits by Gram Sabhas uncovered 10.91 lakh+ complaints proving fake muster rolls and worker impersonation rackets.



# A minor boy drowned while bathing in the river.

Jagatsinghpur (Correspondent). A 14-year-old boy drowned while bathing in the Balia River on Saturday. The deceased petty boy was identified as Sai Prasad Nayak, a resident of Parianga village under Kujanga block. The report said that Sai, accompanied by his elder brother Nirmalya Nayak and with a few friends, had gone to the Balia River for bathing. But all of a sudden, Sai swept away from the river water and disappeared from the spot. After being allotted few villagers rescued Sai from the water and sent him to Kujanga hospital for treatment, where he was declared brought dead. Police seized the body and sent for a postmortem. The deceased Sai was reading in class 8 in Saraswati Sishu Mandir at Rahama.

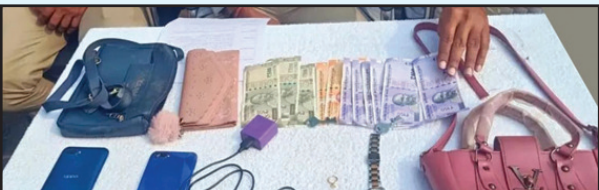
# New regional party will not support free scheme: Moquim

Cuttack (Correspondent): A new regional party will be formed in Odisha. A challenge to BJP, BJD and Congress. Senior politician Mohammed Moquim has signaled a big change in Odisha politics. Moquim has explained the approach of the proposed new regional party. The new regional party will work for complete drug eradication. Anti-liquor activists will be given priority in the party. The mining department can refund the excise revenue. Moquim further said that the new regional party will not support the free scheme. Instead of the free scheme, there will be a plan to provide employment to people. The emerging youth and student group of the state will be included in the party. There is a political vacuum in the state now. After coming to power, the BJP has failed to provide good governance. People have tested the BJD and the Congress. Mohammed Moquim said that the people of Odisha want a political alternative.

# Vigilance Caught Taking Bribe of Rs 40,000, CRRI Police Station IIC Bijay Kumar Barik

Cuttack (Correspondent):: CRRI Police Station IIC Bijay Kumar Barik was caught taking bribe from a licensed liquor dealer. Cash of Rs 5 lakh was also recovered from his house. After this, Vigilance arrested Cuttack CRRI police station IIC Bijay Kumar Barik. Today, i.e. on January 4, CRRI Police station IIC Bijay Kumar Barik of Cuttack was arrested by Odisha Vigilance at Rajmahal Chowk in Bhubaneswar. He was demanding a bribe of Rs 40,000 from a licensed liquor seller. All the bribe money has been seized from the accused Mr. Barik. After this, simultaneous searches are underway at two places of Mr. Barik. A case has been registered against the accused Bijay Barik in this regard. During the search, about Rs 5 lakh was seized from the official quarters of Bijay Kumar Barik located in Unit 1 of Bhubaneswar. He is being questioned regarding the bribe demand and the source of the seized money. The investigation is ongoing. More information is awaited in this regard.

# Two Arrested For Snatching In Rourkela



Rourkela(Correspondent): Police on Sunday arrested two youths in connection with a snatching incident reported under the jurisdiction of Sector-19 Police Station in Rourkela town of Sundargarh district. The accused were identified as Abhisek Nag alias Abhi (22), a resident of Sector-16, and Subrat Kumar Swain alias Hritik (22), a resident of Sector-6.According to police, the arrests followed an investigation into a bag-snatching incident that took place on December 31, 2025.Police said the duo, riding a motorcycle, allegedly snatched a bag containing cash and valuables from a woman near Fitness Park. Acting on leads, the police traced and apprehended the suspects and subsequently solved the case.During interrogation, the accused reportedly confessed to their involvement in the present case and also admitted to their role in several other pending snatching cases in areas under Sector-19 and Jhirpani police stations.Police recovered two vanity bags, cash amounting to Rs 2,680, two mobile phones, and a wristwatch from the possession of the accused. Several personal documents, including Aadhaar cards, PAN cards, voter ID cards, bank passbooks, and ATM cards, were also seized.

# Odisha on High Alert After Indore Water Crisis: Water Samples Collected from All ULBs and Districts, Drain-Passing Pipelines

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): Following the severe health crisis in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, caused by contaminated drinking water, the Odisha government has swiftly implemented stringent precautionary measures across the state.The Indore incident, which resulted in 10 to 15 deaths and hundreds of hospitalisations, was primarily due to drinking water pipelines mixing with drainage lines, leading to toxic water reaching households. The contamination in Indore stemmed from improper infrastructure, particularly in the Bhagirathpura area,



where a public toilet pipeline was constructed over the drinking water lines. This caused the spread of diseases like typhoid and diarrhoea. Taking this as a critical lesson, Odisha’s Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mohapatra has

ordered comprehensive vigilance to prevent similar occurrences.Speaking to the media today, the Minister stated, “Water samples have been collected from all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and districts. These will be tested to ensure the quality of drinking water.” He further added, “Drinking water

pipelines that pass through drains have been removed. Where such issues still exist, immediate steps are being taken.”These actions aim to avert any potential contaminated water crisis in Odisha. The government is emphasising continuous monitoring of drinking water supplies in both

urban and rural areas. Experts have welcomed these measures, noting that timely decisions like these will safeguard public health in the state. Sources indicate that the Urban Development Department may soon announce more detailed plans to strengthen water infrastructure. The public has also been urged to remain vigilant and report any irregularities to local authorities immediately. Odisha’s proactive response is seen as a reassuring step for residents, highlighting the government’s commitment to public safety.

# Woman Teacher Found Dead In Nabarangpur; Husband Detained

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): A 27-year-old woman teacher was found dead under mysterious circumstances at her residence in Umerkote of Nabarangpur district on Sunday.Her husband has been detained for questioning in connection with the case.The deceased has been identified as Sanjana Mistry, who worked as an assistant teacher at a government high school in the area. She was married to Anupam Chand, the younger son of Kabul Chand, in July 2024. Sanjana was the daughter of Pravash Kumar Mistry of Raighar area..

# Odisha Chief Secretary Reviews Kharif Paddy Procurement and PDS Efficiency

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent):Odisha’s Chief Secretary, Anu Garg, conducted a comprehensive review of the Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department’s operations.The meeting, held at the conference hall in Lok Seva Bhawan on Saturday, emphasised the status of Kharif paddy procurement, the efficiency of the Public Distribution System (PDS), and the modernisation of departmental processes.Key officials in attendance included Principal Secretary of the Supplies, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department, Sanjay Kumar Singh; Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Cooperation Department,



Rajesh Prabhakar Patil; and Managing Director of the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. (OSCS), K. Sudarshan Chakravarthy, along with other senior departmental officers.During the review, it was revealed that for the 2025-26 paddy procurement season, 19,67,812 farmers have registered their names. The total registered paddy cultivation area stands at 61,67,414 acres. In comparison, the 2024-25 season saw procurement of 73.45 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of Kharif

paddy and 19.18 LMT of Rabi paddy.As of January 3, 2026, paddy procurement has commenced in 18 districts, with approximately 11.84 LMT already procured.A total of 2,71,318 farmers have sold 12.05 LMT of paddy. Procurement preparations are ongoing in other districts, considering the current paddy harvesting status.To ensure smooth sales for farmers, the department has leveraged advanced technology, including satellite imagery

for transparency in the procurement process. Key measures include linking farmers to cooperative societies, implementing a token system, quality checks, timely lifting of paddy by millers, direct bank transfers to farmers within 48 hours of sale, and specified rice collection from millers. The Chief Secretary conducted a detailed analysis of these aspects and provided necessary guidance.For effective management, CCTV surveillance has been installed at procurement centres (mandis), mobile applications are available for nodal officers, and online tracking monitors vehicle movements from mandis to millers’ depots.

# Dhenkanal Quarry Blast: Outrage Over Police Delay, Missing Bodies

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): A tragic explosion in an illegal black stone quarry at Gopalpur village under Badalo and Nimidha panchayats of Motanga police limits killed five workers and sparked widespread outrage.The blast erupted on Saturday afternoon when workers, without safety gear, used dynamite to break stones in a quarry more than 140 feet deep. As a result, two severed heads were recovered from beneath heavy rocks, while three bodies remained missing, fueling speculation and anger among locals.Furthermore, reports revealed that quarry mafias continued illegal operations in Odapada tehsil, extracting stones with administrative and police support despite official records showing the quarry closed since 2025. In addition, allegations surfaced that victim bodies were removed to cover up deaths, with past incidents disguised as road accidents.Meanwhile, police and tehsil officials, including Motanga IIC Deepak Kumar Lenka and Tehsildar Manoj Kumar Majhi, reached the site only in the evening. However, they failed to find clear evidence in the dark, and their delayed response drew sharp criticism from residents.On Sunday, rescue operations intensified. Fire brigades from Khajuriakata and Hindol Road, three JCB machines, ODRAF teams, and dog squads joined the effort. Moreover, hundreds of locals gathered at the site, demanding accountability and transparency.

# Odisha Tightens Reins on Ama Bus Amid Rising Road Fatalities and Public Protests

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): In the wake of a tragic accident involving a Ama Bus that claimed the life of an auto-rickshaw driver and injured a student near Rupali Square, the Odisha government has swung into action to overhaul the public bus service’s safety and operations.Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi directed a high-level review meeting on Sunday, leading to the formation of a five-member committee tasked with stringent monitoring and reforms.The meeting, chaired by Principal Secretary Usha Padhee, included key officials such as Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur, CRUT Managing Director Sanjay Biswal, DCP

Jagmohan Meena, and Traffic DCP. Padhee announced the committee’s establishment to ensure enhanced safety, disciplined management, and better passenger services. Comprising the Transport Commissioner, DCP, Traffic DCP, and senior CRUT officials, the panel will convene every 15 days to review operations, safety measures, and service quality, with provisions for emergency meetings as needed.“To prevent such unfortunate incidents from recurring, we’re implementing comprehensive steps,” Padhee told the media. Driver recruitment processes will be tightened, with mandatory rigorous training, evaluations of driving skills, road



safety awareness, lane discipline, and behavioural standards before appointment. For the next month, the entire system will be under strict surveillance to enforce compliance.In response to the Saturday accident, which Padhee described as “extremely unfortunate,” an ongoing investigation will determine accountability. To promote positive conduct, outstanding drivers and conductors will receive monthly incentives. All

operational buses will undergo daily mechanical inspections to confirm roadworthiness. Additionally, mini buses will be integrated with Ama Bus routes to improve last-mile connectivity and operational efficiency.Statistics highlight the urgency: From February to December 2025, Ama Bus-related accidents resulted in 7 fatalities and 97 injuries. To curb violations, lane driving has been made mandatory, with police

and traffic authorities monitoring via smart city surveillance systems.Enforcement has intensified, including checks for drunk driving. Transport Commissioner Thakur led special teams starting from the Master Canteen bus stand, extending to all police station areas. Breathalyser tests are now routine, even during daytime, with strict action promised against violators.In a dramatic incident during Sunday’s checks, one Ama Bus attempted to evade inspection near Master Canteen, leading to a police chase; it was apprehended near Damana Square, seized by Kharavel Nagar police, and the driver was detained for questioning. CCTV

footage captured the escape attempt.Chief Minister Majhi expressed deep sorrow over the Rupali Square incident, announcing Rs 4 lakh in ex-gratia from the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund (CMRF) for the deceased auto driver’s family. He also wished a speedy recovery to the injured student and instructed the Transport Department to coordinate with CRUT for systemic improvements.The accidents have sparked public outrage. On Sunday, another Ama Bus caused a serial collision near Omfed Chowk, leading to a massive traffic jam. Agitated locals blocked over 15 buses, creating tense scenes until Maitri Vihar police intervened to restore order.



## EDITORIAL

### Intellect, Imagination & Prakriti

Three things prompt us to speak and write: first is the intellect, the second is imagination, and the third is Prakriti. It has taken millennia to transition from instinct to reason, a radical cultural shift. When we speak and write, it is the intellect, a dimension of the mind, that speaks and writes. It is predominant in our day-to-day living. We use the intellect at home, work and in other places wherever it is warranted. We train this intellect right from school by reading and listening to academic lectures. Our intellect makes us what we are. Our rational mind makes us look externally and not internally. When we use intellect, it involves an effort that puts us through a lot of thinking and questioning, which is a functional aspect of intellect. Without this, knowledge would not have flourished. We would not have seen the phenomenal knowledge that has given us many things, including comforts. So, we cannot speak and write spontaneously. We think before we speak and write, having to exert considerable effort and energy.

The second is imagination, another dimension of the mind that borders on emotion. It is creative and expresses as art. It is also a way of communication, but it occurs through symbols and imagery. Intellect has given us knowledge and the imagination of art. Imagination is more important than intellect, for intellect is limited to knowing and understanding, while imagination embraces the entire world and beyond. The more one imagines, the stronger the mind gets and one can control one's thoughts better. The power of imagination is the key to innovation.

Sometimes, the intellect collides with imagination to invent. This happens in science. Most inventions in science have happened this way. Pure intellectual inquiry can result in the culmination of ideas. But imagination makes ideas new, hitherto unknown. our ego and makes us more self-centred. It is the intellect transformed into the ego that performs the twin functions of speaking and writing through the medium – the body. Similarly, imagination in which there is a presence of ego that prompts creation cannot be ruled out.

But there is another thing also that prompts and guides us to speak that we fail to recognise. It is Prakriti that takes the place of the intellect and imagination and performs the twin functions of speaking and writing. When Prakriti overpowers us, intellect and imagination have little roles to play. The body just becomes an instrument in her hands. In the realms of intellect and imagination, we have learnt that intellect and imagination are mere prompters and the body performs the twin functions.

When Prakriti uses us, our speaking and writing become spontaneous and natural. This can happen only when we establish perfect harmony with the Prakriti by our Jnana nishta, which refers to self-knowledge that is fully assimilated and established in our living. It brings us closer to Prakriti. Then we become instruments in her hands. It is then that Prakriti speaks and acts through us. Our speaking and writing become spontaneous and natural. We do not exert any effort. For this reason, sages speak spontaneously, without volition. They do not use intellect and imagination, unlike us.

# The Indispensability of Comma

Bijaya Kumar Parhi

The English word 'punctuation' has been derived from the Latin word 'punctum', meaning a point. It's a device to divide a written sentence by points, stops or marks. Its primary purpose is to ensure the clarity and readability of writing. It adds meaning to the written words and drives the understanding of readers when it is used in sentences. It's one of the most important mechanics of writing any language. In spoken language, de facto, punctuation is hardly felt, but the absence of punctuation in writing a language can't be ignored. A modest punctuation mark, being fundamental to grammar, is capable of making a cornucopia of difference in meaning in black and white. The life-line of a language is Grammar. In short, it is a set of rules by which one can speak and write a language correctly and effectively. It is divided into five categories- such as-Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, Punctuation and Prosody. Punctuation mark is extremely important in written English as it helps us understand the precise meaning of a written text and enables us to communicate complex information accurately.

Comma is a punctuation mark which indicates a pause or break between parts of a sentence. But now the use of comma is considered obsolete and outmoded in written language. Any write up without comma is now considered to be trendy. So, this modern usage of words without comma has

certainly resulted in a threat to grammar of any language. The sensible and orthodox writers have vehemently objected to this trend.

Recently, a renowned Professor of English and Comparative Literature of the Columbia University has opined that the use of comma in writing is unnecessary. He has stated that especially in the age of Internet, comma has slowed down the breakless pace of writing. It is a tradition not to be carried forward. This statement has created many controversies and writers across the globe haven't accepted this in good taste. Pico Iyer, the author of 'Video Night in Kathmandu', 'The Lady and the Monk' and 'The Global Soul', has showed his disagreement on this statement. He expressed his view that void of comma in a sentence is similar to the removal of traffic post on a busy road. Besides, some contemporary writers are of the opinion that there is hardly any meaning between the words 'does not' and the shortened version 'doesn't'. But the same comma is highly essential in the sentence- Let's observe, David. If the sentence is written- Let's observe David, the meaning changes. So, omission of commas is a sort of violation of grammar in writing a language.

Punctuation marks like - Comma, Full stop, Semi colon, Colon, Inverted Comma, Question mark, Exclamation, Dash, Hyphen etc. are being variably used in writing English language. Each of these is unique in its function. A good number of grammar books has been written specifying the usage of all. The usages of all these not only make

expressions correct in grammar perspective but also elucidate the thought of a writer flawlessly and enables the readers to comprehend it. Without comma, we feel that we are playing tennis without a net. Comma does the similar function of a pause in singing a song, as sensible use of pause adds beautiful rhythm and clarity to a song. Such cases are similar in other punctuation marks. The place of comma in writing a language is sacrosanct. A few examples will suffice its inevitability. Out of its many usages, if it is not used in vocative case, the meaning is affected. e.g. 1. Friends, listen to me. 2. Children, don't run in the sun. The absence of comma in these two sentences gives another meaning. Similarly, after an absolute construction, the second clause creates ambiguity in meaning. E.g. The enemies having fled, the soldiers returned to the camp. Not for nothing, the use of comma also indicates the omission of a verb. E.g. Virtue leads to happiness: vice, to misery. Practice should be made to ensure that 'Comma' shouldn't go into the state of 'Coma'. Writers of all languages must use this punctuation judiciously. Teachers, scholars and educators mustn't think the use of comma either unnecessary or speed-breaker. This should retain its significance and essentials in the fast-paced age and the era of chatGPT, otherwise grammar of language will lose its logic. Let not this punctuation be thrown into the pit of oblivion.

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# When the Calendar Changes but the Mind Does Not

Dr Simant Kumar Nanda

The New Year has just stepped in. Across the world, people welcomed the first morning of January with joy, hope, and togetherness. On that day, we lived a rare and precious human experience. We enjoyed unitedly for happiness, consciously or unconsciously setting aside anger, greed, and ego. Non violence in thought and behaviour prevailed. Self esteem was enhanced not through dominance but through shared pleasure, lively bonds of friendship, loyalty, trust, and caring. For a brief moment, humanity appeared lighter, kinder, and emotionally connected, reminding us that peace is not an alien concept but a natural human state when the mind is unburdened. Yet, almost immediately, this harmony was overshadowed by reports of renewed global tensions and aggressive assertions of power. The contrast was striking. While ordinary people across countries were celebrating unity and joy, the world witnessed familiar patterns of dominance and strategic aggression re-emerging. This sudden shift raises an uncomfortable but necessary question. Why does peace feel effortless in personal and social spaces, yet appear so fragile at national and global levels? The answer does not lie only in politics, diplomacy, or military strategies. It lies deeper, within the inner architecture of the human mind. Modern neuroscience explains that the human brain carries both cooperative and competitive impulses. When fear, insecurity, and the hunger for control dominate, ethical reasoning weakens. At the individual level, joy and companionship activate empathy and emotional bonding. At collective levels, especially when power and resources are involved, ego-driven decision making often overrides moral restraint. Science thus supports what philosophy has long warned us about, that unchecked ego and perceived

superiority distort judgement and generate conflict. The real fault line of turmoil runs not through borders but through human consciousness. History repeatedly shows that whenever individuals, institutions, or nations begin to believe themselves invincible or indispensable, dominance replaces dialogue. The tragedy is not ignorance alone but the unwillingness to introspect. Recognition of limits requires humility, and humility is often seen as weakness in a world obsessed with power. As a result, cycles of conflict repeat themselves regardless of changing calendars. Despite unprecedented technological progress, the world today remains deeply fragmented. Economic inequality, racial prejudice, religious intolerance, and ideological polarization continue to widen social divides. Technology has reduced physical distances but has failed to bring emotional proximity. Scientific advancement has empowered humanity materially, but ethical maturity has not kept pace. The result is a world where prosperity exists alongside deprivation, and knowledge coexists with moral blindness. India, a civilization that historically harmonised science, spirituality, and social life, is not immune to this paradox. Discrimination based on caste, class, region, language, gender, and belief continues to challenge the ideals enshrined in the Constitution. Odisha, rich in cultural heritage, ecological wealth, and spiritual traditions, reflects this contradiction in its own way, where deep rooted values of coexistence exist alongside struggles of marginalisation, uneven development, and environmental stress. These are not merely administrative failures. They are reflections of collective ethical fatigue. At this juncture, the ancient Indian wisdom of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the idea that the world is one family, assumes renewed relevance. This is not just a philosophical slogan but a scientific and civilizational necessity. Ecology teaches that all systems are interconnected. Climate

science confirms that actions in one region affect the entire planet. Public health has shown that diseases do not recognise borders. Systems theory reminds us that instability in one part of a system eventually destabilises the whole. In this light, global cooperation is not idealism but survival logic. However, such wisdom cannot remain confined to scriptures, speeches, or ceremonial diplomacy. It must be adopted at the grassroots level of human establishment. It must reflect in governance that values inclusion, in economics that respects human dignity, and in social conduct that prioritises empathy over exclusion. The collective joy experienced on the first day of January stands as living evidence that humans are capable of such harmony. What is lacking is not capacity but continuity. The challenges ahead will test humanity more severely than ever before. Climate instability, water scarcity, ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence, cyber insecurity, large scale migration, and future pandemics demand cooperation rather than confrontation. Even space exploration, once driven by curiosity, risks becoming another arena of competition if the mindset of dominance is not corrected. Science advances rapidly, but without ethical anchoring, progress can easily turn destructive. A true New Year does not begin with fireworks or resolutions alone. It begins with sustained inner discipline. Peace is not negotiated only at international forums. It is cultivated within individual minds and reflected through collective behaviour. The first of January showed us what humanity can be when ego recedes and empathy leads. If that spirit can be extended beyond celebration into daily conduct, turmoil will lose its inevitability. Until then, the world will continue to oscillate between moments of unity and cycles of unrest, reminding us again and again that the greatest challenge facing humanity is not political, technological, or even cosmic, but the unresolved conflict within the human mind itself.

# The US-Venezuela Conflict-Impact on International Politics, Law, and Global Peace - A Comprehensive Analysis

Kishan Bhawnani

The entire world was stunned when, on the night of January 3, 2026, the United States launched a large-scale military operation codenamed Operation Absolute Resolve. Under this operation, the US Air Force and special forces conducted airstrikes in several areas, including the Venezuelan capital Caracas, and detained President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. In the first week of January 2026, a swift military operation was carried out by the US, and the US President confirmed that the US had detained Maduro in Venezuela through airstrikes and special operations and brought him abroad. The US administration states that Maduro faces serious charges of narco-terrorism, cocaine trafficking, conspiracy, and possession of weapons against the United States, for which he will face American justice. The US Attorney General clarified that legal proceedings would begin in the Southern District of New York based on these charges. These allegations are based on ongoing indictments in the US, which claim that Maduro's government and associates were involved in extensive illegal activities against US interests and laws. However, Maduro and his supporters

have consistently denied these allegations. I, Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhawnani, Gondia, Maharashtra, believe that the tension between Venezuela and the United States at the global level is not a new issue. For decades, there has been political, economic, and strategic tension between the two countries, primarily involving oil resources, unbalanced bilateral relations, and disagreements. In 1976, Venezuela nationalized its oil industry, ending the control of American companies, a move the US had long opposed. Since then, the bitter conflict between the two countries has intensified.

Friends, Regarding this action, which the US president described as a successful military operation, it's important to understand that he claimed it was an operation against drug trafficking and narco-terrorism in Venezuela. Trump stated that the US would now temporarily take over Venezuelan government functions and guide the country towards a safe, orderly, and just transition. Serious charges have been leveled against him, including narco-terrorism, cocaine trafficking, and conspiracy, and he is expected to face trial in a New York federal court. US officials say this action is based on indictments against Maduro for large-scale drug trafficking and terrorism-related

activities. However, human rights organizations and international legal experts have called this operation a clear violation of international law, as it is an armed attack against a sovereign nation without the permission of the UN Security Council.

Friends, Regarding the reactions of major world powers to the attack, the question arises: is a third world war about to begin? Countries like Russia, Iran, and Cuba have reacted strongly to this global event. These countries are condemning the US action as a violation of Venezuela's sovereignty, a breach of its territorial integrity, and an act of imperialist aggression. Russia has called the US action a violation of international norms. Iran and Cuba have also appealed to the United Nations and the international community to condemn the US action and restore peace. The European Union, however, took a somewhat different stance. They did not directly condemn the action but instead called for verification of the facts and a decision based on those facts, stating that they respect international law. This broadly means that the EU did not openly support the US, but also did not explicitly condemn it. Some countries have made this crisis the subject of a United Nations Security Council meeting, and almost all major global powers view this event as a

significant test of international law.

Friends, Regarding the background of the oil and drug dispute, the United States claims that Venezuela, home to one of the world's largest oil reserves, has become a major hub for drug trafficking and criminal networks. Therefore, it has described this action as a necessary measure to combat drug trafficking and protect national security. However, critics also view it as an economic strategy to gain control over oil resources. They argue that economic interests may play a significant role in this intervention, as Venezuela's oil reserves have placed the region at the center of economic and strategic considerations.

Friends, if we try to understand this issue from the perspective of human rights and legality, several human rights groups have stated that the US is targeting innocent civilians and leaders without evidence and transparency, and this action may be against the UN Charter, which clearly states that a country cannot use force against another country without the permission of the Security Council or in response to a presented threat. This dispute has now become a major test for international courts, the United Nations, and global peace structures. (CONTINUING)



# Two-Day District-Level Fisheries and Animal Resources Fair Concluded

Rayagada, (Correspondent): The two-day district-level fisheries and animal resources fair concluded today. Chief guest Sarswati Majhi, President of Rayagada Zilla Parishad, attended and explained animal husbandry and fish farming techniques to the gathered farmers. Esteemed guest Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Naveen Chandra Naik urged farmers to avail subsidies under various government schemes. Certificates were also distributed. Fisheries and Animal Resources Minister Gokulananda Mallik motivated farmers via video message, emphasizing



the slogan "Atmanirbharata is the key mantra for a developed India." ADM Naveen Chandra Naik, CDVO Dr. Mrunmay Kumar Panda, Deputy Director Fisheries Jitendra Behera, District Fisheries Officer Susanta Goud, Scientist Dr. Biranchi Narayan Mishra, Deputy Director District Animal Treatment Office

Rayagada Dr. Ashok Kumar Behera, Sub-Divisional Animal Treatment Officer Rayagada Sansl dhak Ashwini Kumar Biswal, Assistant Fisheries Officer Chandrabhaga Konark Sri Prtam Kumar Tripathy, and Assistant Professor at Senchuria University Paralakhemundi shared insights on the benefits of fish farming, goat

rearing, and integrated farming. The CDVO, Deputy Director Fisheries, and DFO discussed various schemes and insurance benefits. They also emphasized promoting organic farming. Outstanding farmer Kodru Isaac from Kolnara, fish farmer Aradh Jalgaranga from Gudari, and SHGs from Padmapur and

Kashipur blocks were awarded certificates along with cheques worth Rs 5,000 for their farming excellence. Farmers from Gunupur, Padmapur, Ramnaguda, Kolnara, and Muniguda blocks participated actively. SHGs, goat farmers, poultry farmers (chicken and duck), and fish farmers showcased their products in exhibition stalls, where techniques for superior breeds were demonstrated to farmers. The event concluded with cultural performances. Uttam Kumar Das coordinated the program.

# MV-26, 208 villagers file public complaint at Korukunda police station



Malkangiri correspondent : 208 families of MV-26 village under Korukunda police station in Malkangiri district today reached Korukunda police station and filed a written public complaint regarding the arson incident.

The villagers have alleged that almost all the houses in the village were burnt to ashes in the horrific fire that broke out between

Rakhalguda and MV-26 on 07 and 08 December 2025. In this incident, household goods, rice, cash, jewelry along with valuable documents like land title deeds, Aadhaar cards, ration cards, voter IDs and bank passbooks were destroyed. The villagers said that it is impossible to rebuild the houses as the government assistance amount is very less compared to the damage.

Therefore, they have demanded the administration to provide full compensation and assistance after assessing the exact damage. In this regard, Korukunda Police Station Officer R. Vijay Kumar said that 208 public complaints have been received. While cases were registered on 200/25 and 201/25 regarding this incident, he informed that the new complaints will be attached to those cases.

## Congress has failed due to AICC's wrong decision: Mohammed Moquim



Cuttack (Correspondent): Former MLA Mohammed Moquim has again targeted the Congress party's decision. Moquim has said that the Congress has failed due to AICC's wrong decision. Amidst the talk of forming a new regional political party in the coming days, former MLA and former Congress leader Mohammed Moquim has again targeted the Congress party. He has again targeted the national leadership of the Congress and said that the Congress is failing today due to AICC's wrong decision. Not only in Odisha, but also in other states. Moquim said that the Congress has lost power in the states from which it has lost power and will not return to power. He directly blamed the Delhi leadership for this. He further said that in the Congress Working Committee (CWC), Shashi Tharoor and Digvijaya Singh have already said that the Congress cannot grow further in this set-up. Regarding the new party, he said that the blueprint for the new party is not yet complete. There are 3/4 rounds of discussions left. This party will be different and will do different types of social justice work.

# District level forest fire control awareness camp organized

Malkangiri correspondent : the district level forest fire control awareness camp was organized at Chitrakonda Eco park. The program was chaired by DFO Mr Sai Kiran DS. The keynote speaker of the program was Monsun Khemudu ACF and Priyanka Mahuka ACF was the guest of honour. Mr Sai Kiran welcomed the newly appointed forest guards and instructed the forest staffs, fire squad and VSS members and NGOs to assist to control forest fires this year too. The ACF Monsoon Khemudu expressed suppression measures, there were 2862 fire points in the previous year 2024, which reduced to 1047 in the year 2025. This year,



with the goal of zero casualty, with help of all the para staff, forest guards, regular foot patrolling, and roadside dramas, street play were performed in sensitive areas, and green nets were provided to the forest dwellers and Mahua plucker. Discussions were held on fire prevention measures and everyone was informed about the fire control situation. Last

year, due to the excellent steps taken by the Forest Department, forest fires in Malkangiri district had reduced. After the awareness program, an entertainment program was organised. All Range officers of the district, Foresters, forest guards, Srusti NGO workers AJY staffs many para staff VSS members participated in the program.

# Mahima" Subarnapur Lok Mahotsav and State Level Pallishree Mela

SUBARNAPUR, (Rayagada)--- On Saturday, before the start of "Mahima" Subarnapur Lok Mahotsav and State Level Pallishree Mela - 2026, the first invitation letter along with the invitation was presented by Subarnapur Collector Dr. Nruparaj Sahu at the temple of Maa Sureshwari Devi, the town's presiding deity, with prayers. During this invitation, Additional District Magistrate (Revenue) Rajendra Majhi, Additional District Magistrate (General) Smt. Anjalina Pradhan, Sub Collector, Sonepur, Dr. Soumyarupa Rath, District Cultural

Officer, Ms. Yamuna Pradhan, Deputy Chief Executive, DSMS, ORMAS, Zilla Parishad, Subarnapur, District Financial Services and Savings Officer, Subarnapur, Mr. Mangala Padhan, District Panchayat Officer cum District Information and Public Relations Officer, Mr. Arjun Majhi, employees of the Zilla Parishad Office, intellectuals of Sonepur town, Mr. Sribatsa Mallik, Mr. Baikuntha Satpathy, theatre artist Mr. Gadadhar Barik, eminent artist Mr. Choudhuri Bibhar along with other dignitaries and public of Sonepur town were present.

# SUV-Truck Collision on Odisha-Andhra Border Leaves 3 Dead, 2 Injured Including Child from Balasore Family

BALESORE; A devastating road accident occurred near Barua on the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border, resulting in the deaths of three individuals and serious injuries to two others, including a girl child. All the victims belonged to the same family from Balasore district in

Odisha. The incident involved a family of five travelling in an Innova car from Bhubaneswar to Visakhapatnam. According to reports, a truck attempting to avoid a two-wheeler lost control, crossed the divider, and collided head-on with the oncoming car. The truck then veered off the road

and entered a nearby field. Upon receiving information about the accident, staff from the 1033 National Highway service arrived at the scene and rushed the injured to Barua Hospital for treatment. One woman succumbed to her injuries at the accident site, while two others passed away later at the

hospital. The two surviving victims, including a small child, remain in critical condition. The family hailed from Balasore, and authorities are investigating the exact circumstances leading to the crash. This tragic event highlights ongoing concerns about road safety on interstate highways.

# Collector orders to stop the salary of the Tirtol police station IIC

JAGATSINGHPUR correspondent. The Jagatsinghpur collector J Sonal has issued an order to stop the salary of Tirtol police station IIC Pradeep Kumar Sethy on the charge against him of unlawfully releasing 4 Hyvas that had been seized by the district administration, being involved in an illegal sand quarry on November 25. Meanwhile collector has dispensed a showcase notice against the delinquent cop to answer his wrongdoing. Report said that on November 25 a large enforcement team of Jagatsinghpur civil administration

led by DIG Satyajit Nayak, collector J Sonal and SP Ankit Kumar Verma swooped down on the Kilipal quarry located on Mahanadi River in Tirtol block and confiscated 46 Hyvas and chain-mounted excavators from spot and arrested six persons in the scale of illegal mining beyond the permissible limits. The seized vehicles were stationed at the Tirtol police station premises for document verifications. On the other hand the errant vehicle owners had approached the High Court of Odisha seeking to immediate release of their sand-

laden vehicles. The Hon'able High Court, after being heard from parties, had directed to release the vehicles from police supervision after furnishing legal documents to the police, sub-collector, and district mining officer. But strangely, Tirtol IIC Mr Sethy, without complying Hon'able High Court direction, had released 4 vehicles lacking civil administration consensus. Collector J Sonal construed the matter promptly and asked to halt the salary of IIC and slapped a showcase notice to defend his stand on the alleged allegations.

# BSP Gains Momentum in Bissamcuttack; Massive Joining Ceremony Held Within 10 Days

Bissamcuttack (Rayagada), correspondent: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) continues to strengthen its organizational base in the Bissamcuttack Assembly constituency of Rayagada district. In a significant political development, the party organized its second major joining ceremony within just ten days, generating widespread discussion in the politically active region. A grand joining programme was held today at Kalyan Mandap in Bissamcuttack town, where BSP State President Saroj Kumar Nayak attended as the chief guest and formally



welcomed the new members into the party. Among the prominent leaders who joined the BSP were the Sarpanch of Chanchadaguda Gram Panchayat, along with several panchayat representatives and ward members from different panchayats under the Bissamcuttack block. More than 100 active workers from BJD, BJP, and Congress—hailing from Bissamcuttack,

Muniguda, Kalyansinghpur, and Kolnara blocks—resigned from their respective parties and joined the BSP. Addressing the gathering, State President Nayak said that the induction of these grassroots leaders would further strengthen the party's organizational base at the village and block levels. Since the announcement of the party's state and district leadership, BSP has

been focusing on strengthening its structure from the grassroots upward. Political observers believe that this series of joining programmes could prove decisive in the coming political scenario. Several senior leaders were present on the dais, including State In-charge Jitendra Jakka, District President Purna Chandra Takri, ST Cell District President Shripati Urlaka, District In-charge Ramdas Takri, Advisor Bishikesan Takri, former Zilla Parishad President Gangadhar Puala, District General Secretary Ravindra Garadiya, Shiva Praskha, and others.

# Police Submit 30K-Page Chargesheet in Pitabas Panda Murder Case

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent) : Police submitted a massive 30,000-page chargesheet in the sensational murder case of BJP leader and lawyer Pitabas Panda at the SDJM Court in Berhampur today. The chargesheet, sealed in two tin boxes under tight security, marks one of the largest ever filed in Odisha's judicial history. Pitabas Panda was shot dead at close range on October 6, 2025, around 10 pm on the main road of Baikunth Nagar while returning home on his scooter after collecting a parcel from a hotel. According to the chargesheet, sharpshooter Kurupati Bhuyan

approached Panda, greeted him, and then fired a shot that struck his chest. Panda collapsed along with his scooter. Kurupati attempted a second shot, but the bullet misfired. He and accomplice Chintu Pradhan fled the scene on a bike through Gokarneshwar temple road towards Shitalapalli. Police have named 16 accused in the case, including former Berhampur MLA Bikram Panda, former Mayor Shib Shankar Das, BJD corporator Malay Bishoyi, BJD leader Madan Dalai, sharpshooter Kurupati Bhuyan, bikerider Chintu Pradhan, Sunya Das, and Yogi Raut, among others.





## Viral video: Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh turn heads at NBA game in New York

Star couple Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh were recently spotted at an NBA game in New York, and their stylish appearance garnered attention on social media. The couple also posed for selfies with fans at the venue, creating a buzz among their admirers present at the match. One of the fans posted the video on her Instagram handle and shared her experience. In the video, Deepika looked stunning in her black leather jacket and smoky eyes. Ranveer was his usual fabulous, fashionable self in a black coat and black beanie. Ranveer and Deepika welcomed the New Year in the United States. Deepika also ticked off a Backstreet Boys concert from her bucket list in Las Vegas. Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh have been spotted lately in New York, enjoying a vacation. Fans spotted them and keenly clicked selfies with them. On the other hand, the couple also shared a special moment, preparing 'modaks' at celebrity chef Vikas Khanna's New York-based restaurant, Bungalow. "This has to be the most blessed end to 2025 -- a new beginning in honor of India. Team Bungalow had the privilege of celebrating with Ranveer & Deepika her first modak. All our guests walking into Bungalow today will enjoy pomegranate & cardamom modaks for an auspicious beginning to 2026," Khanna wrote in the caption, further offering a nod to Ranveer Singh's latest release, 'Dhurandhar'. "Celebrating DHURANDHAR -- standing taller than any film in the world," he added. Ranveer, meanwhile, continues to enjoy a strong run professionally, following the blockbuster success of his latest film, 'Dhurandhar'. Directed by Aditya Dhar, 'Dhurandhar' emerged as one of the biggest films of 2025, offering a perfect closure for Bollywood this year. With Ranveer Singh in the lead role, actors like Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, and R Madhavan also feature in key roles. The film has already achieved huge box office success. It has become the "first Hindi film ever" to cross the Rs 100 crore mark in its fourth week. In two parts, the second instalment of the movie is scheduled to arrive in theatres on March 19, 2026.

## Weak bones in winter: Pediatric orthopaedic surgeon explains the link between cold weather and your child's bone health

Healthy bones are important for a child's growth, movement, and overall development. Many parents may notice that their children tire easily, complain of pain in their bodies or legs, or often have fractures frequently. These signs may indicate that their bones are weak. If not addressed early, this can affect the child's height, posture, mobility, and bone strength for life. In winter, bones may particularly be susceptible to problems.

Importance of indoor and outdoor play for children in winter  
In winter, outdoor play, a key way for kids to exercise, is often replaced by indoor activities, such as screen time. This change doesn't just mean fun; it also means less movement, which is crucial for building strong bones.

Vitamin D is an important nutrient for your child's health. It facilitates calcium absorption, which is essential for strong bones. Children can make Vitamin D when they get sunlight. "However, with shorter days and colder weather, they often miss out on this critical nutrient. Wearing more clothes and spending more time indoors means they get less sun exposure," Pediatric orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Avi Shah Narayana Health SRCC Children's Hospital, Mumbai tells Health Shots. Without sufficient vitamin D, bone health can weaken, which may lead to problems later on.

What causes weak bones in children?

Pediatric orthopaedic clinics often notice an increase in specific problems as winter arrives. Recognising these issues can help prevent them.

Growing pains misdiagnosed: Many parents may assume their child's leg and heel pain is just growing pains. "However, if the pain occurs frequently, especially after physical activity, it could indicate that the child lacks important nutrients, such as Vitamin D", says the surgeon. These nutrients are vital during their growth period.

Muscle aches and fatigue: Insufficient vitamin D intake can lead to muscle weakness and increased fatigue. Children who are typically lively may become sluggish, and their muscles may take longer to recover after play.

Increased injury risk: When people are less active and have stiff muscles, they are more likely to get sprains, strains, and

fractures. "Minor falls can cause injuries that seem worse than expected", says the doctor. Children benefit from moving around, and if they don't get enough activity, they face a higher risk of injury.

Delayed physical milestones: Vitamin D deficiency may be associated with developmental delays. "This may mean slower progress toward growth milestones or a higher risk of injuries requiring medical care", says the expert.

How to improve bone health?

Recognising challenges is just the first step. Taking action can improve bone health during the colder months.

Encourage outdoor time: Set aside 15-20 minutes each day for outdoor play, even if it's cold. "Even in winter, sunlight gives you a natural boost of Vitamin D", shares the doctor.

Keep them active: Incorporate physical activities into your family routine. "You can try winter sports like ice skating or indoor activities like jumping rope or yoga", says the expert. It's important to participate in weight-bearing activities.

Nutritional defence: Make sure they eat a healthy diet. They need enough calcium and protein in their meals. Good sources of calcium include dairy products and leafy greens. For protein, focus on lean meats and legumes.

Limit screen time: It's easy to let indoor activities take over playtime when screens are involved. Encourage physical activity to reduce screen time, particularly during the day.

Consult medical professionals: If you suspect your child may have nutritional deficiencies, speak with a healthcare provider. Get professional advice before starting any supplements. This advice should be based on your child's specific needs.

What are red flags for joint pain in children?

Watch for signs of problems with your child's bones and joints. "If your child has ongoing pain, falls often, feels tired, or shows delays in development, it's important to see a doctor", says Dr. Shah. Taking action early can help prevent long-term issues, such as nutritional problems and potential orthopaedic complications.



## Myths about cooking dal, shares tips to minimise bloating



Dal is one of the most common dishes in Indian cuisine, with almost every region having their own versions of the dish. Despite its massive popularity, there remain some aspects of cooking dal (lentils) that are not clear in the public perception.

Taking to Instagram on January 4, Dr. Jayesh Sharma, Raipur-based oncologist with over 25 years of experience, clarified two such concepts: what the foam that forms while boiling dal actually is, and whether cooking dal in a pressure cooker is good for health.

### Is foam from boiling dal dangerous?

The white foam that forms while boiling any dal is a cause of concern for many people. It is usually eliminated during the cooking process, with some people calling it an anti-nutrient, and some even referring to it as poison. However, Dr. Sharma discarded the beliefs as completely false.

"Foam is basically made up of protein, a bit of starch, and a compound called saponin, which is a part of the defence mechanism of plants," he explained. "When consumed in limited quantities, saponin shows anti-inflammatory and anti-cholesterol properties."

In large quantities, however, saponin makes the dal taste bitter and can also damage the gut lining. If a person suffers from irritable bowel syndrome, their gut lining can be disturbed even by normal quantities of saponin.

Should dal be cooked in pressure

cooker?

"Some people worry that when dal is cooked inside a pressure cooker, the foam stays inside and later causes bloating," stated Dr. Sharma. That is definitely not the case.

"Bloating is not caused by the foam. It is caused by some complex sugars in dal, called FODMAPs. They are not digested well by the human body," he noted. "That's why some people may show less or more bloating."

According to the oncologist, the best way to break down FODMAPs is to use a pressure cooker. The higher temperature helps break down not only FODMAPs but also saponins.

That's why some people may show more or less bloating. The best way to break that down is pressure cooking because the temperature is higher. So FODMAPs break down better, and even saponins follow suit.

Tips to cook dal for better digestion and bloating

Wash and soak the dal properly. This gets rid of surface-level saponin and starts the breakdown of FODMAPs.

Cook well in a pressure cooker, which locks in the nutrients.



## Internet Outrage After Google Gemini Logo Appears in Trailer of Vijay's 400-Crore Film Jana Nayagan

The trailer of actor Vijay's upcoming film Jana Nayagan has sparked widespread online backlash after viewers noticed what appeared to be a Google Gemini AI watermark in one of its scenes. The trailer, released on Saturday evening, presents Vijay in the role of a police officer on a mission of vengeance. However, a brief moment early in the video—showing a character cocking a shotgun—was followed by a fleeting frame that appeared to display the Google Gemini logo. Screen recordings of the scene were quickly shared across social media platforms, triggering criticism and ridicule. When HT reviewed the trailer at around 8 am on Sunday, the logo was no longer visible. Despite this, the damage had already been done, with the film and its makers facing intense scrutiny online. Several users described the apparent use of AI-generated visuals as "unacceptable," especially for a film reportedly made on a 400-crore budget. Many called the oversight an insult to filmmaking craftsmanship and questioned how such an error passed quality checks. "This is unacceptable. AI doesn't belong in mainstream cinema like this," one user wrote. Another commented, "₹400 crore budget, and this kind of mistake?" Others expressed disappointment, noting that Jana Nayagan is expected to be Vijay's final film before his full-time political entry. While there has been no official clarification from the filmmakers regarding the watermark, the incident has reignited debate around the use of artificial intelligence in cinema, particularly in high-profile commercial projects.





# Chaulia Premier League Season–2 Concludes Kamal Fighters Crowned Champions After Defeating Eagle Warriors

JAJPUR  
(Correspondent) :The Chaulia Premier League (CPL) Season–2 cricket tournament, held at Chaulia Padia under Jafarpur Panchayat of Dasarathpur block, concluded successfully today. The tournament, which began on December 1, witnessed the participation of seven teams. The final match was played between Kamal Fighters and Eagle Warriors amid much enthusiasm from spectators. After winning the toss, Kamal Fighters chose to bat first and scored 59 runs



for the loss of two wickets in the allotted 8 overs. In reply, Eagle Warriors managed to score 51 runs losing two wickets in their stipulated overs, falling short of the target. Kamal Fighters thus emerged as the

champions of the tournament. The winning team was awarded a trophy along with a cash prize of ₹12,000, while the runners-up received a trophy and ₹8,000. Debashish Das was adjudged Man of the Match, while

Subashish Das received the Man of the Series award. The matches were officiated by umpires Divyaprakash Nayak and Papuna Panda. The prize distribution ceremony was held under the chairmanship of educationist Shubendu Kumar Mahapatra. BJP leader Babita Mallik attended as the chief guest and presented trophies and cheques to the winning and runner-up teams. Distinguished guests included BJP leaders Jayachandi Mandal and Chinmayee Pandav, senior

journalist Sushant Kumar Behuria, social worker Gopinath Jena, and advocate Prakash Raut. The speakers emphasized that sports play a vital role in building a healthy and disciplined society. The successful organization of the tournament was made possible through the collective efforts of Lion Purushottam Jena, Dipti Ranjan Barik, Ajit Jena, Rudranarayan Das, Debashish Das, and other youths of Chaulia village, including Babu, Krishna, Bubu, Raja, Tapu, and Litu, among others.

## BCCI Responds to Bangladesh's Request to Shift T20 World Cup Matches from India, Calls It a 'Logistical Nightmare'

NEWDELHI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has reacted to reports suggesting that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is preparing to approach the International Cricket Council (ICC) to seek a relocation of Bangladesh's matches in the T20 World Cup 2026 from India to Sri Lanka. The development follows the ongoing controversy surrounding Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman's exit from the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, which has added strain to cricketing relations between the two boards. The 20-team T20 World Cup is scheduled to be held jointly in India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8, with Bangladesh drawn in Group A alongside England, Italy, Nepal, and the West Indies. Bangladesh are currently slated to play matches in Kolkata and Mumbai. However, according to ESPNcricinfo, the BCB is considering writing to the ICC to request a review of security arrangements in India and a possible venue change. Reacting to the reports, a senior BCCI source described the proposed move as highly impractical. "You can't just change games at someone's whim. It is a logistical nightmare," the source told news agency PTI. "Opposition teams' flights and hotels are already booked. On each matchday, three games are scheduled, including one in Sri Lanka. Broadcast crews and operational teams are also involved, so it is easier said than done."

## Bangladesh Refuses to Travel to India for T20 World Cup

NEWDELHI: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has responded sternly to Kolkata Knight Riders' decision to release pacer Mustafizur Rahman after being advised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). In a decisive move, the BCB revoked Mustafizur's No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Indian Premier League with immediate effect. Furthermore, the board announced that Bangladesh will not travel to India for next month's T20 World



Cup. According to a report on Cricbuzz, the decision emerged from a meeting between BCB officials and concerned authorities. Initially, the

BCB had sent letters to both the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the BCCI, seeking clarity on the security status in India. However, after

reassessing the situation, the board opted for a completely different course, prioritising the safety and well-being of its players.

## Women's HIL 2025-26: Rampal Replaces Menezes as Head Coach

NEWDELHI: Soorma Hockey Club sacked women's team head coach Jude Menezes on Sunday, January 4, after a disastrous start to the Hockey India League (HIL) 2025-26 season. The team lost all four of its opening matches, prompting the management to hand over the reins to former India star Rani Rampal. Rampal, who had been serving as team mentor, stepped in as interim head coach for the remainder of the tournament. The club announced the decision on social media, stating



that Menezes and the management had "mutually decided to part ways with immediate effect." The statement added that the move was taken in the best interests of the team and expressed gratitude to Menezes for his contribution. Soorma

Hockey Club, runners-up to the now-defunct Odisha Warriors in the inaugural HIL season, have yet to register a victory this campaign. Their struggles began with a 0-1 defeat to the Rarh Bengal Tigers, followed by another 0-1 loss to the Delhi SG

Pipers. The Ranchi Royals then beat them 2-0, and in a return fixture, the Pipers handed them a 3-1 defeat. Rampal's appointment marks a crucial turning point for the franchise. With her leadership experience and deep knowledge of Indian hockey, the club hopes to revive its campaign. The squad features captain Salima Tete, veteran goalkeeper Savita Punia, 2022 Commonwealth Games silver medallist Penny Squibb, 2018 Asian Games gold medallist Shihori Oikawa, and Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Sarah Robertson.

## State-Level 30th Nimapada Cup Cricket Tournament: Pioneer Sporty Puri in the Semi



N i m a p a d a ,  
(Correspondent) :The state-level 30th Nimapada Cup Cricket Tournament, dedicated to the memory of the late Tapas Das, the renowned young cricketer of Nimapada who created records in the Odisha cricket world, began today. The tournament is being organized by the Nimapada Athletic Association at the local Barabati Ground (Mini Stadium). The opening match of the state-level tournament was played between Pioneer Sporty Puri and Paramount Bhubaneswar. Pioneer Sporty Puri won the toss and, batting first,

scored 232 runs for the loss of 7 wickets in 25 overs, with Rajesh Behera top-scoring with 68 runs. In reply, Paramount Bhubaneswar chased the target but were bowled out for 173 runs, losing 9 wickets, despite Debashish Samantray scoring 49 runs and Anshuman Sahu scoring 35 runs. As a result, Paramount Bhubaneswar lost the match by 59 runs. Rajesh Behera was awarded the Man of the Match, and the prize was presented by guest Prarthasathi Chhotaray. The opening match was held under the chairmanship of Akshay Kumar Behera,

President of the Athletic Association. The chief guest was former Ex-minister and State BJP spokesperson Samir Ranjan Dash. Other distinguished guests present included Jagat Prasad Sabut, Secretary of Patitapaban Seva Sangha and senior educationist; District Council Member Pradipta Kumar Khato; and Jibananda Mahapatra, among others.

The match was officiated by Abhinandan Patra and Tribhuvanath Dash.

Tomorrow's match will be played between Solar Cricket Club, Cuttack and Pragati Sporting, Bhubaneswar.

## PM Modi Inaugurates 72nd National Volleyball Tournament in Varanasi

NEWDELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 72nd National Volleyball Tournament in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, via video conferencing today. As the Member of Parliament from Varanasi, he expressed happiness in welcoming and congratulating all the players. Furthermore, the Prime Minister highlighted that the National Volleyball Championship is commencing in Varanasi with teams from 28 states, presenting a vibrant picture of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat. He praised the athletes for their immense hard work and noted that their efforts will be tested on the grounds of Varanasi in the coming days. Recalling a local Banarasi saying, Shri Modi observed that the players have now



arrived in Varanasi and will also come to know the city. Moreover, he emphasised that Varanasi is a city of sports lovers, where wrestling, boxing, boat races, and kabaddi enjoy immense popularity. He remarked that institutions like Banaras Hindu University, UP College, and Kashi Vidyapeeth have produced many national-level players. In addition, Shri Modi highlighted Varanasi's centuries-old tradition of welcoming seekers of knowledge and art. He expressed confidence

that the championship will witness enthusiastic audiences, strong hospitality, and high energy throughout. The Prime Minister also noted that Varanasi's pleasant cold weather and seasonal delicacies, such as malaiyyo, add charm to the city. He urged participants to experience Baba Vishwanath's temple, boating in the Ganga, and the city's rich heritage. Finally, Shri Modi encouraged the players to perform well, expressing hope that every spike, block, and point from Varanasi's soil will elevate India's sporting aspirations.

## BCB Formally Requests ICC For Relocating Men's T20 World Cup Matches Out Of India

Dhaka: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said it has formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC) to relocate all of their 2026 Men's T20 World Cup matches to venues outside India, citing safety and security concerns. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) convened an emergency board

meeting on Sunday afternoon, after having done one via Zoom on Saturday evening, after Mustafizur Rahman was released from the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) squad for IPL 2025 on the instructions of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) owing to ongoing tensions between India and Bangladesh. "The Board

reviewed the situation in detail, taking into account developments over the last 24 hours and expressed deep concern over the overall circumstances surrounding the participation of the Bangladesh National Team in matches scheduled to be played in India. "Following a thorough assessment of the prevailing situation and

the growing concerns regarding the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India and considering the advice from the Bangladesh Government, the Board of Directors resolved that the Bangladesh National Team will not travel to India for the tournament under the current conditions. "In light of this decision, the BCB has

formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC), as the event authority, to consider relocating all of Bangladesh's matches to a venue outside India," said the BCB in its detailed statement on Sunday. India and Sri Lanka are scheduled to co-host the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup from February 7 to March 8, with matches

spread across multiple venues in both countries. Bangladesh's refusal to play in India threatens to disrupt the tournament schedule, considering their itinerary of games includes matches against the West Indies on February 7, Italy on February 9, and England on February 14 at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata, as well as against Nepal on

February 17 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. "The Board believes that such a step is necessary to safeguard the safety and well-being of Bangladeshi players, team officials, board members and other stakeholders and to ensure that the team can participate in the tournament in a secure and appropriate environment."



## Venezuela Crisis May Lift Safe-Haven Demand For Gold, Silver

Mumbai: Global markets are set to begin the first full trading week of 2026 on edge after a major geopolitical shock involving Venezuela, a country with the world's largest oil reserves. Investor focus has shifted sharply to safe-haven assets like gold and silver, while oil prices are expected to move higher amid fears of supply disruptions. Markets turned cautious after US forces captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife during a military operation over the weekend. The US has charged them with drug trafficking, escalating tensions in an already fragile region. The development is being seen as a major geopolitical event that could unsettle energy markets and increase demand for safe assets

at the start of the year. Gold began 2026 on a strong note, rising over 1 percent to trade near \$4,370 per ounce, supported by geopolitical risks and expectations that US interest rates may ease later this year. Silver also gained more than 2 percent, moving close to \$73 per ounce, helped by dollar softness, supply deficits and rising industrial demand. However, on a weekly basis, both metals saw profit booking after last year's sharp rally. COMEX gold slipped nearly 5 percent, while silver dropped over 8 percent as higher margin requirements forced some traders to cut positions.

In the domestic market, MCX Gold futures saw a sharp fall at the start of the week, marking their steepest

single-day decline in two months. Since then, prices have moved in a narrow range. Analysts say gold may recover if prices hold above key support levels, but a sustained fall below these levels could trigger further correction. Oil prices also opened the year on a positive note, with WTI crude ending the week near \$57.3 per barrel. Oil had a tough 2025, falling nearly 20 percent due to oversupply concerns.

However, rising tensions involving Venezuela and renewed Russia-Ukraine strikes on energy infrastructure have increased the risk premium. Markets are now watching the upcoming OPEC+ meeting on January 4, where the group is widely expected to maintain its pause on additional supply increases.

## Rajasthan Regional AI Impact Conference Aims To Boost AI Ecosystem, Foster Innovation

New Delhi: The Rajasthan 'Regional AI Impact Conference 2026' on January 6 will feature key announcements and the signing of memoranda of understanding (MoUs), aimed at strengthening the state's AI ecosystem, fostering innovation, and accelerating the adoption of AI across priority sectors, it was announced on Sunday. As part of the country's build-up to the 'India AI Impact Summit 2026', the Rajasthan Regional AI Impact Conference 2026 will be held in Jaipur. The conference will serve as a key regional platform to explore how Artificial Intelligence can drive governance reform, economic growth, innovation, and inclusive development, said IT Ministry. It will witness



the participation of senior leadership, including IT and Electronics Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw; Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Electronics and IT; Bhajan Lal Sharma, Chief Minister of Rajasthan, and Rajyavardhan Rathore, Cabinet Minister for IT & Communication, Government of Rajasthan, among others. The agenda will include high-level

sessions on AI for Public Service Delivery and Governance, Ethical and Responsible AI, AI and the Future of Employment and Skills, and the emergence of Rajasthan's AI startup and innovation ecosystem. Discussions will also examine advanced applications such as Digital Twins and AI-led infrastructure planning, and strategic questions around whether AI can enable

India to leapfrog from an outsourcing-led model to world-class intellectual property creation. In addition, experts will share perspectives on Global AI, National AI and Regional AI strategies, with a dedicated academic and research lens brought in by IIT Jodhpur, highlighting the role of institutions in shaping locally grounded yet globally relevant AI solutions,

said the IT Ministry. Meanwhile, IndiaAI, in collaboration with the Government of Assam, and IIT Guwahati, will convene the Human Capital Working Group Meeting on January 5-6, 2026 at IIT Guwahati campus. Anchored in the objective of treating AI as a public utility, the Working Group Meeting will focus on designing inclusive, scalable, and responsible approaches to AI-led workforce transition. Deliberations will place particular emphasis on education reform, gender-responsive AI strategies, and domain-specific augmentation of human capabilities, ensuring that AI adoption strengthens human potential rather than displacing it.

## BYD overtakes Tesla to become world's largest EV seller in 2025

New Delhi: Chinese automaker BYD overtook Tesla in full-year electric vehicle sales in 2025, becoming the world's largest EV seller for the first time, according to a report by the Global Times. The change in market leadership came during a challenging year for the U.S. carmaker, which posted its first annual drop in vehicle deliveries. In contrast, BYD recorded strong growth in its electric vehicle business. The report said Tesla delivered 1.63 million vehicles

in 2025, an 8.6 per cent decline compared with the previous year. This marked a major shift for the company, which had long held the top position in the global EV market. Tesla's annual production also fell by 6.7 percent to 1.73 million units from its 2024 level, as competition intensified from automakers such as BYD and Hyundai. BYD released its 2025 annual results a day earlier, revealing total vehicle deliveries of 4.6 million units, up 7.7 percent year on year. Of that figure,

pure electric vehicle sales jumped 28 percent to 2.25 million units, according to the report. The Global Times noted that Chinese new-energy vehicle manufacturers have continued to strengthen their competitiveness in both production and supply chains. Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the China Passenger Car Association, said these companies are increasing investment in research and development, accelerating technological progress, and building complete industrial chains supported by China's

advanced manufacturing base. He added that a strong domestic market, well-developed infrastructure, and supportive policies have also contributed to industry growth. The report further pointed out that Tesla relies on its gigafactory in China to meet delivery targets, highlighting the importance of China's manufacturing ecosystem. The expansion of integrated industrial chains continues to underpin the growth of Chinese automakers.

## ICAR-CIFA will host ICAR Sports Tournament for Eastern Zone-2025 (TEZ)

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): The ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar, will host the ICAR Sports Tournament for Eastern Zone-2025 (TEZ) from 6 to 9 January 2026 at the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar. The prestigious event will witness enthusiastic participation from 720 sportspersons representing 25 ICAR research institutions across the Eastern Zone. The tournament aims to promote sportsmanship, teamwork, and physical fitness while strengthening camaraderie among ICAR institutions. A total of 39

sporting events will be conducted during the four-day meet. The Sports Meet will be inaugurated on 6th January 2026, 9.30am by Dr. M. L. Jat, Secretary (DARE) & Director General, ICAR, New Delhi, as the Chief Guest in the presence of Dr. J. K. Jena, Deputy Director General (Fisheries Science), ICAR, New Delhi, informed Dr. Pramoda Kumar Sahoo, Director, ICAR-CIFA, Bhubaneswar. ICAR-CIFA extends a warm welcome to all participating teams and wishes the athletes a successful and memorable tournament.

## Foreign Ownership In S. Korean Stock Market At Highest Level In Nearly 6 Years

Seoul: Foreign ownership as a share of total market capitalisation reached its highest level in five years and eight months in December amid a rally in the South Korean equity market, a report showed on Sunday. Foreigners bought a net 3.5 trillion won (US\$2.4 billion) worth of local shares in December, raising their stockholdings to 32.9 percent of total market capitalisation, the highest level since April 2020, according to a report published by the Korea Center for International Finance (KCIF), reports Yonhap news agency. Separate data from the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS) showed that foreign ownership stood at 29.6 percent as of November,



compared with 31.5 percent in April 2020. The FSS has yet to release its December figures. The KCIF report said foreign investors purchased a net 4.5 trillion won worth of shares in the electronics sector in December, including 2.2 trillion won in SK hynix and 1.4 trillion won in Samsung Electronics. As a result, foreign ownership of SK hynix rose to 53.8 percent in December from 53.2 percent a month earlier. Foreign holdings in Samsung

Electronics also advanced to 52.3 percent from 52.2 percent over the same period. In the bond market, foreign investors bought a net 8.8 trillion won worth of bonds last month, the report said. The KCIF attributed the sharp rise in foreign investment to expectations that robust global demand for memory chips will benefit South Korean chipmakers. The Seoul government's policies aimed at reforming the stock market and

improving corporate value also helped attract foreign investors, the report added. South Korea's benchmark stock index closed at 4,214.17 on Dec. 30, the last trading day of 2025, up 75.7 percent compared with the first trading day of the year. Meanwhile, South Korean stocks surged more than 2 percent on Friday to close at an all-time high, led by strong gains in large-cap semiconductor shares. The local currency weakened against the U.S. dollar. The benchmark Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) rose 95.46 points, or 2.27 percent, to close at 4,309.63, climbing past the 4,300 level for the first time ever.

## Capex recovery to drive earnings growth in defence, capital goods: Report

New Delhi: India's capital expenditure cycle is showing early but clear signs of a comeback, and market experts believe several sectors linked to investment spending could see strong growth over the next two to three years. According to the India Equity Strategy 2026 report by Antique Stock Broking, improving economic conditions, policy support, and rising investments by both companies and households are creating the base for a broad recovery in capex. The report said this revival is no longer limited to government spending, as private investment is slowly returning as well. The defence sector is expected to be one of the biggest long-term beneficiaries of the capex push. Higher



budget allocations, a strong order pipeline, and the government's focus on indigenisation under the Atmanirbhar Bharat programme are giving defence companies better revenue visibility for several years. Growing export opportunities are also adding to the sector's growth prospects. Capital goods companies are also likely to see sharp improvement in earnings. The report notes that new orders are picking up at a time when operating leverage is high. With factories

already running above long-term average capacity levels, even small increases in revenue could lead to a big jump in profits. In addition, valuations in some parts of the sector have corrected, making investments more attractive. Industrial and electronics manufacturing services companies are set to benefit from both domestic capex and global supply-chain shifts. As global firms look to reduce their dependence on China under the "China+1" strategy, India is

becoming a preferred manufacturing destination. This trend is expected to support steady demand for industrial equipment, electronics, and automation-related services. The report also highlights that while government spending on infrastructure continues to support growth, the gradual return of private investment is a key positive change. This shift is likely to benefit infrastructure developers, construction firms, and engineering companies, especially those linked to roads, railways, power projects, and urban infrastructure. Lower interest rates, better affordability, and rising household investment are also helping revive housing demand.