









Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said that US President Donald Trump told him that his administration will not levy new tariffs on Brazilian steel and aluminium

# Now, Trump accuses Pelosi of quid pro quo

Why aren't we impeaching the US Speaker, asks US Prez

Washington, Dec. 21: President Donald Trump is in sunny Florida after his historic impeachment, while plans for his speedy trial back in Washington remained clouded. Senate leaders jockeying for leverage have failed to agree on procedures for the trial.

Trump is still expected to be acquitted of both charges in the Senate, where Republicans have the majority, in what will be only the third presidential impeachment trial in US history. Proceedings will begin in January.

But the impasse between Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer over whether there will be new witnesses and testimony — along with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's refusal so far to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate — have left the situation unresolved.

"Nancy Pelosi is looking for a Quid Pro Quo with the Senate. Why aren't we impeaching her?" Trump tweeted, mocking one of the accusations against him before heading out for



President Donald Trump speaks at the signing ceremony for S.1709, The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 in Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. (Right), US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. — AFP

a two-week stay at his Mar-a-Lago resort for the holidays.

McConnell, Trump's most powerful GOP ally in the Senate, welcomed the president's emerging defense team Friday for a walk-through of the Senate chamber. White House counsel Pat Cipollone and legislative affairs director Eric Ueland came to Capitol Hill to assess logistics.

A six-term veteran of the Senate, McConnell is acting very much though he has the votes to ensure a trial uncluttered by wit-

nesses — despite the protests of top Democrats Pelosi and Schumer.

"We have this fascinating situation where, following House Democrats' rush to impeachment, following weeks of pronouncements about the urgency of this situation, the prosecutors have now developed cold feet," McConnell, R-Ky, said.

"We'll continue to see how this develops, and whether the House Democrats ever work up the courage to take their accusations to trial."



McConnell has all but promised an easy acquittal of the president. He appears to have united Republicans behind an approach that would begin the trial with presentations and arguments, lasting perhaps two weeks, before he tries drawing the proceedings to a close. The Senate will reconvene on Jan. 3. That has sparked a fight with Pelosi and Schumer, who are demanding trial witnesses who refused to appear during House committee hearings. — Reuters

# America will pay dearly for criticism: North Korea

Seoul, Dec. 21: North Korea lashed back at the United States for taking issue with its human rights record on Saturday, saying Washington's "malicious words" would only aggravate tensions on the Korean Peninsula, state news agency KCNA reported.

The KCNA statement, attributed to a foreign ministry spokesperson, warned that if the United States dared to take issue with the North's system of government by citing human rights problems, it would "pay dearly".

The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday condemned North Korea's "long-standing and ongoing" violations of human rights in an annual resolution sponsored by dozens of countries including the United States, that Pyongyang's UN envoy rejected.

The North Korean foreign ministry statement is its first since US special envoy for North Korea, Stephen Biegun, publicly urged Pyongyang on Monday to return to talks. There has been no direct response from North Korea to Biegun's entreaty.

US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said on

if the United States dared to take issue with the North's system of government by citing human rights problems, it would 'pay dearly'.

— FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON North Korea

Friday that he remains hopeful the United States can restart diplomacy with North Korea, as the clock ticks down to North Korea's declared year-end deadline for new US concessions in talks over its nuclear arsenal.

North Korea has repeatedly called for the United States to drop its "hostile policy" before more talks. But tension has been rising in recent weeks as Pyongyang has conducted a series of weapons tests and waged a war of words with US President Donald Trump.

Some experts say the reclusive state may be preparing for an intercontinental ballistic missile test that could put it back on a path of confrontation with the United States.

Negotiations over North Korea's nuclear programme have been deadlocked since a summit in Hanoi collapsed in February. — Reuters



General Mark Milley

## U.S. PREPARED FOR WHATEVER: PENTAGON

Washington, Dec. 21: The Pentagon's top general said the US military is ready for anything from North Korea in the face of Pyongyang's ominous promise of a "Christmas gift" if Washington does not act to ease tensions. "Korea is one of those places in the world where we've always maintained high levels of readiness," said General Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The US alliance with Japan and South Korea is "rock-solid," he said.

"I think it's prepared to defend the interests of the United States, Japan and South Korea at a moment's notice," he told reporters. — AFP



I ask (protesters) to give us a chance to form an exceptional government

— Hassan Diab Lebanese PM-designate

## BRIEF

### Gunmen attack plane in Papua

Jakarta: Indonesia Gunmen opened fire on a small commercial plane as it landed in Indonesia's restive province of Papua carrying nine passengers, one of the plane's pilots said on Saturday. The attack occurred in the hilly district of Puncak, a stronghold of separatists who have battled Indonesian rule in the mineral-rich but impoverished region since the early 1960s. The Indonesian co-pilot, Purwanto Condro Usodo said he and pilot, Michael Cumming, were unaware of the shooting and managed to land the aircraft safely at Beoga airport from the mining town of Timika until passengers told them that they saw gunmen spray the plane with bullets while landing.

### Russia, Ukraine deal on gas transit

Minsk: Ukrainian and Russian officials say final details have been worked out for a contract that will continue shipments of Russian gas to European markets. The current contract for gas being sent to Europe through the territory of Ukraine expires at the end of the year and there had been high concern that failing to reach a new agreement would interrupt supplies as winter sets in. The Ukrainian presidential administration says details will be announced on Saturday. Russian deputy prime minister Dmitry Kozak says the deal is expected to be signed by the end of the year.

### Cruise liners collide off Mexico

Mexico City: Two Carnival Corp cruise ships collided on Friday in the port of Mexico's Caribbean resort of Cozumel, the luxury cruise operator said, crushing the stern of a 952-foot-long vessel and leaving passengers stunned at the loud impact. One person was lightly injured while evacuating a dining room on the massive ship named Carnival Glory, according to Carnival, the world's largest cruise operator. A passenger said the incident occurred during rough sea conditions. "Carnival Glory was maneuvering to dock when it made contact with Carnival Legend which was already alongside," the firm said.

## WEAPONS BAN: NZ OWNERS HAND IN GUNS

Wellington, Dec. 21: New Zealand authorities said on Saturday their country will be a safer place after owners handed in more than 50,000 guns during a buyback program following a ban on assault weapons. But critics say the process was flawed and many owners have illegally stashed their firearms. The government banned the most lethal types of semi-automatic weapons less than a month after a lone gunman in March killed 51 worshippers at two Christchurch mosques. The police then launched a six-month program to buy the newly banned weapons from owners.

The buyback ended midnight Friday, with gun collection events staying open late as police reported in a surge in last-minute returns.

Provisional figures indicate 33,000 people handed in 51,000 guns, and another 5,000 guns as part of a parallel amnesty in which owners could hand over any type of firearm without any questions being asked but without getting compensated.

Owners also modified another 2,700 guns to make them legally compliant, while police said they had seized a further 1,800 guns from gangs since March.

# Suspect fired shots: HK cop

Hong Kong, Dec. 21: Hong Kong police on Saturday said an armed suspect fired a live round at officers as they tried to arrest him in an operation linked to the months of pro-democracy protests engulfing the city.

Police said a 19-year-old man pulled a semi-automatic pistol from his waistband as officers approached him in Tai Po district on Friday.

The shot did not hit anyone and the man was subdued. A subsequent search of a nearby flat uncovered an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and more than 250 rounds of ammunition.

Police said they believed the man and the newly discovered weapons were linked to a group arrested earlier this month who were also allegedly found in possession of a pistol and were plotting to attack officers.

"The firearms we discovered matched the intelligence we had collected which indicated that some people hoped to use firearms in some public assemblies to wound some others, including police officers on duty," Senior Superintendent Lee Kwai-wah said.

Police said they believed the man and the newly discovered weapons were linked to a group who were also allegedly found in possession of a pistol and were plotting to attack officers

However, Lee said the suspect was also facing ongoing firearms charges from an arrest last year before the protests.

Riot police had to be called in to back up the officers as local residents began heckling police, with at least two tear gas rounds fired to disperse them.

Semi-autonomous Hong Kong has been shaken for six months by increasingly violent pro-democracy protests.

They were initially sparked by a now-abandoned attempt to allow extraditions to the authoritarian mainland but have since morphed into a popular revolt against Beijing's rule, with spiralling fears that the city is losing some of its unique liberties. — AFP



Figures named 'Lady Liberty Hong Kong', inspired by the outfit of anti-extradition law protesters with yellow helmets, goggles, gas masks and umbrellas, on display at a studio in Hong Kong. — AP

## Christmas treat

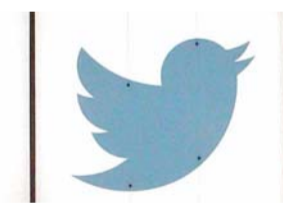


A worker feeds a crocodile named Lolong 2 at an enclosure during the 'Animal Christmas Party', where children were treated to a tour of the Malabon Zoo, in Manila. — AFP

# Twitter, Facebook ban fake users; some had AI-created photographs

New York, Dec. 21: Twitter has identified and removed nearly 6,000 accounts that it said were part of a coordinated effort by Saudi government agencies and individuals to advance the country's geopolitical interests.

Separately, Facebook said it removed hundreds of Facebook accounts, groups and pages linked to inauthentic behaviour from two separate groups, one originating in the country of Georgia and one in Vietnam, which targeted people both in Vietnam and in the U.S. Facebook said some of



the accounts used profile photos generated by artificial intelligence and masqueraded as Americans. It is one of the first such misinformation efforts to use material generated by AI.

Tech companies have stepped up efforts to tackle misinformation on their services ahead of next year's US presidential elections. The efforts followed revelations that Russians bankrolled thousands of fake political ads during the 2016 elections to sow dissent among Americans.

Twitter's and Facebook's announcements underscore the fact that misinformation concerns aren't limited to the U.S. and Russia.

In a blog post on Friday, Twitter said the removed Saudi accounts were amplifying messages favourable to Saudi authorities, mainly through "aggressive liking, retweeting and replying." While the majority of the content was in Arabic, Twitter said the tweets also amplified discussions about sanctions in Iran and appearances by Saudi government officials in Western media.

The Russian efforts in 2016 showed it was possible to actually change public attitudes through the targeted use of social media. — AP

# Mystery artist Banksy unveils dark nativity in Bethlehem

Bethlehem, Dec. 21: A manger scene juxtaposed against concrete blocks seemingly pierced by a mortar shell: with Christmas looming, the latest Bethlehem offering by secretive artist Banksy appeared in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Dubbed the "Scar of Bethlehem", the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph are backlit through damaged concrete, chiseled pockmarks exploding out from a gaping hole in four directions to approximate the Christmas Star.

The work is installed at Walled-Off Hotel, where all rooms overlook a concrete section of the barrier built by Israel to cut off the occupied West Bank from Israeli territory. "Love" and "peace" are respectively graffiti tagged in English and French on the artistic installation's concrete blocks, while three large wrapped presents are at the forefront of the scene.

"It is a nativity," the hotel's manager Wissam Salsaa said after the piece was installed. "Banksy has his own contribution to Christmas. It is a great way to bring up the story

of Bethlehem, the Christmas story, in a different way — to make people think more of how Palestinians live in Bethlehem." Salsaa calls the Israeli wall a "scar" that should induce "shame in anyone who supported" its construction.

Israel began building the separation barrier — in parts concrete, with other stretches consisting of fencing — in 2002 during the Palestinian uprising, or intifada. Built mostly inside the West Bank, Israel says it is necessary to prevent

attacks, but Palestinians label it an apartheid wall, separating them from Jerusalem. Traditional Bethlehem Christmas festivities will take place next

week at the church built on the spot where Christians believe Jesus was born. The manger scene and hotel — an establishment opened two years ago — are far from Banksy's only West Bank imprint. In 2007, he painted a number of artworks in Bethlehem, including a young girl frisking an Israeli soldier pinned up against a wall. In 2005, he sprayed nine stencilled images at different locations along the eight-metre-high (27-foot) separation barrier. They included a ladder



A peek into the 'Scar of Bethlehem' artwork by Banksy displayed in Bethlehem. — AFP

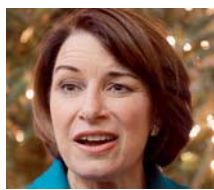
on the wall, a little girl carried away by balloons and a window opening onto a peaceful mountain landscape. Palestinian graffiti artists, too, have made the separation wall a place of political and artistic expression.

Like elsewhere in the world, Banksy's works in the occupied territory have become tourist attractions — in part due to him often ghosting in to create his works in the dead of night. The identity of the world's best known graffiti artist remains a mystery. — AFP



## For a cause

### Actress Jane Fonda might spend her 82nd birthday in jail after fifth arrest in three months for climate protests



People have to really look at what a person will do after taking office

— Amy Klobuchar  
US Senator

## IN BRIEF

### Muslim nations mull barter system

**Kuala Lumpur:** Iran, Malaysia, Turkey and Qatar are considering trading among themselves in gold and through a barter system as a hedge against any future economic sanctions on them, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Saturday. At the end of an Islamic summit in Malaysia, Mahathir praised Iran and Qatar for withstanding economic embargoes and said it was important for the Muslim world to be self-reliant to face future threats. "With the world witnessing nations making unilateral decisions to impose such punitive measures, Malaysia and other nations must always bear in mind that it can be imposed on any of us," Mahathir said.

### Europe storm death toll at 7

**Madrid:** The death toll from a storm that battered Spain, Portugal and France rose to seven on Saturday as the region braced for more violent winds. A 32-year-old South Korean woman died on Saturday, a day after being struck on the head by falling debris from a building in central Madrid. The building had passed an inspection in 2015 "but weather like this, with heavy rain and wind, causes these fateful cases," Enrique Lopez said. Emergency services in the southwestern region of Andalusia said a Dutch man who went missing while windsurfing had drowned.

### Six killed as bus slips into icy river

**Beijing:** Six people were killed when a passenger bus slipped onto an icy river in the industrial city of Tonghua in northeast China's Jilin Province on Saturday. The bus, which was carrying 37 passengers, slipped from an icy slope near 206 Hospital in Dongchang District at around 11 am local time, officials said. All passengers have been rescued and sent to the hospital for treatment, the state-run CGTN television network reported.

### TIMER ERROR FOILS BOEING'S ISS MISSION

**Cape Canaveral, Dec. 21:** Boeing Co's new astronaut capsule on Friday failed to reach the orbit of the International Space Station, US space agency Nasa said, cutting short a critical unmanned test mission in the embattled aerospace giant's race to send humans to the station. The CST-100 Starliner astronaut capsule successfully launched earlier from Cape Canaveral in Florida, but an automated timer error prevented the spacecraft from reaching the orbit that would have put it on track to meet up with the space station. The debut journey to the space station was a milestone test for Boeing, which is vying with SpaceX to revive Nasa's human spaceflight capabilities. SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule carried out its unmanned test flight to the space station in March. The thwarted mission took place as Boeing, whose shares dropped about 1% in morning trading, sought an engineering and public relations win in a year punctuated by a corporate crisis over a ban on its 737 MAX jetliner following fatal crashes. The plan was now for the capsule to head back to Earth, landing at White Sands, New Mexico on Sunday. Boeing's new Starliner capsule ran into trouble and went off course in orbit minutes after blasting off Friday on its first test flight, a crucial dress rehearsal for next year's inaugural launch with astronauts.



(From top), Sunbathers are seen on Bondi Beach as temperatures soar in Sydney. The picture above shows firetrucks stationed on a road as a bushfire burns in Bargo, southwest of Sydney. (Right), Firefighters tend to burning property caused by bushfires in Bargo. — AFP

# Australia heatwave melts roads as temp crosses 48

## Soaring temperatures, heatwave make life hell for Aussie firefighters

**Bargo, Dec. 21:** Roads are melting in South Australia after record temperatures, with concerns rising mercury could set off a new wave of bush fires. South Australia's heatwave has entered into a fifth day, with even sunset offering little respite. In Adelaide, which endured its hottest night on record, it didn't dip below 92 F on Thursday, Australia's ABC News reported. The state's Bureau of Meteorology noted that the temperature in the town of Nullarbor reached a sweltering 121 F, the fourth hottest temperature ever recorded in Australia. This overtook

■ **AUSTRALIA** endures bushfires every year but the early and intense start to this season, along with the record temperatures, has fuelled concerns about global warming

the record set by Eucla in Western Australia just hours earlier. A scorching heatwave intensified bushfires ravaging parts of Australia on Saturday, and out-of-control blazes surrounding Sydney worsened under catastrophic conditions. Australia's eastern coast has been hit by a

record-breaking heatwave, which has moved in from the west of the country, exacerbating hundreds of devastating fires in its path. Sydney was shrouded in toxic smoke as blazes flared to its north, south and west, some just 130 kilometres from Australia's largest city. "We are expecting very difficult circumstances, situations, in relation to all the fire fronts," New South Wales premier Gladys Berejiklian said. Evacuations were being carried out in Bargo, on the front of a 185,000-hectare blaze which tore through the nearby area. — Agencies

## Firefighters battle fatigue, injury & loss

**Dargan, Dec. 21:** After six exhausting weeks battling massive bushfires that are ripping through rural Australia, volunteer firefighter Andrew Moyle wishes for just two things: rest and rain. "Rain would be best," said Moyle, who juggles firefighting shifts of up to 18 hours with running his own maintenance business and managing a family cattle station. The colossal task of fighting unprecedented bushfires falls largely to people — a band of doctors, farmers and factory workers who at 70,000-strong are the world's largest volunteer fire service. For weeks the crew has toiled in searing temperatures and thick acid smoke as they try to curb a mega blaze that has turned a swathe of national park to ash. — AFP

## SWITZERLAND SHUTS DOWN NUKE PLANT

**Bern, Dec. 21:** Switzerland on Friday shut down one of its oldest nuclear power plants, part of a plan to end the domestic production of atomic energy before the middle of the century. Operator BKW took the Muehleberg Nuclear Power Plant, located 40 kilometers west of the capital Bern, off the grid shortly after midday in a ceremony broadcast live by Switzerland's main public TV station. BKW, which is majority owned by the canton (state) of Bern, said it plans to begin dismantling the plant in January, a process that will take until 2034. Decommissioning and depositing of radioactive remains is estimated to cost 3 billion Swiss francs (\$3.1 billion). Muehleberg is the smallest of Switzerland's four remaining nuclear power plants. It began operation in 1972. After the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in Japan, Switzerland decided to gradually phase out nuclear power. — AP

# Greta talks climate emergency

**Stockholm, Dec. 20:** After months of criss-crossing the Atlantic to attend first the UN climate summit in New York and then COP25 talks in Madrid, teenage eco-warrior Greta Thunberg was back in Sweden on Friday, taking part in a rally outside the parliament where her protests first began over a year ago. Dressed in her trademark yellow sou'wester and woollen hat and trailed by a pack of bodyguards, Thunberg met with a group of young climate activists just outside the parliamentary building. Named 2019 Person of the Year by Time magazine, Thunberg said she hoped the distinction would help put her cause in the spotlight. "I really hope that it raises awareness and motivates others to get involved in the campaign," she told Swedish news agency TT. Just over a year ago, at the start of the school year, the then-ninth grade student left her books at home and began sitting outside the Swedish parliament to raise awareness about the climate emergency. — AFP



Greta Thunberg attends a climate strike arranged by the organisation Fridays For Future outside the Swedish parliament Riksdagen in Stockholm. — AP

## NEW | DISCOVERY ■ The quarry contains the fossilised woody roots of dozens of ancient trees

# Scientists may have found world's oldest forest

**New York, Dec. 21:** Scientists have discovered what could be the world's oldest forest, potentially rich in information on the link between forests and climate change, according to a study published in the journal *Current Biology*. The title of world's oldest fossil forest had previously been given to a site in Gilboa, in the Catskills

region of upstate New York, dating back about 385 million years. The new site is an old quarry in the same region, just 25 miles further east, near the town of Cairo. After 10 years of samples and studies, an international team of 11 scientists concluded the quarry had once housed a forest two to three million years older

and more varied in types of trees. As at Gilboa, scientists found traces of the primitive tree type "Eospermatopteris". Somewhat similar to a palm tree, it has a thick bottom and crown of branches at the top, though no leaves. But at the new site, they also found trees from the "Archaeopteris" type. The "Archaeopteris" has

The title of world's oldest fossil forest had previously been given to a site in Gilboa, in the Catskills region of upstate New York, dating back to 385 million years "much more modern" characteristics, with leaves and root systems comparable to a spruce or pine, explained William Stein, one of the study

authors and a biology professor at Binghamton University in New York. Those trees could help understand how forests modernized, at a time

when carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere were getting lower and temperatures were dropping, Stein said. By studying the cooling process, it could be possible to better understand the relationship today between climate warming and deforestation, since it may be a similar process in reverse, he said. — AFP



Migrant children play in the snow by a disused ski lodge in Grevena, Thessaloniki. The facility hosts asylum-seekers from Somalia. — AFP

# Somalia's year of climate misery

**Somalia, Dec. 21:** As Somalia withered from drought early this year, and her goats dropped dead from thirst, Maka Abdi Ali begged for rain. When the skies finally opened, nature was unmerciful. Unrelenting downpours in October turned to flash floods, destroying her meagre home and few remaining possessions, and washing away whatever harvest and bony animals farmers managed to save during the months without rain. In central Somalia, 1,80,000 people fled the fast-rising waters in the country's worst floods in memory.

■ **THE ARID** Horn of Africa country has always been hostage to climate extremes. Rain is erratic, and drought a feature of life. But catastrophic weather events occurring with ever-greater fury

The arid Horn of Africa country has always been hostage to climate extremes. Rain is erratic, and drought a feature of life. But catastrophic weather events are occurring in Somalia with ever-greater fury and frequency, trapping millions in a near-constant cycle of crisis. The town of Beledweyne was inundated in the flood — the waters are now slowly receding. Little by little, the ability to recover is ground down, say experts. There is no time to rebuild homes and replenish food stocks before another disaster strikes.

Impoverished and weakened by decades of war, battling an armed insurgency, Somalia is ill-equipped to cope with the destabilising impact of double-tap environmental crises. Aid budgets are stretched trying to respond to back-to-back emergencies. In May, the UN launched a drought appeal, warning of looming starvation as Somalia faced its worst harvest. Six months later, it's again appealing for help, this time for \$72.5 million for half a million victims. "There hasn't been a day this year where we haven't been talking about either drought or floods," Abigail Hartley, deputy head of office for the UN humanitarian agency. Among those fleeing the inundation in Beledweyne, the epicentre of this disaster, were Somalis already on the run from other climate-stricken parts of the region. — AFP



Pope Francis bounces a terrestrial sphere covered in children's drawings he received during a ceremony of Christmas wishes in the Vatican. — AFP

# Pope, UN vow to fight climate cause

**Vatican City, Dec. 21:** Pope Francis and the UN chief issued a joint year-end message urging the world to remember children dying of hunger, migrants seeking safety and a planet threatened by nuclear weapons and climate change. Francis hosted secretary-general António Guterres at an audience and the two issued a joint video message from the pope's private library. The themes touched on a host of issues on which the Vatican and UN have found increasing common ground. The two leaders denounced the "scandal" of hunger and the plight of migrants forced to flee their homes because of conflicts, global warming or religious persecution. They declared as "immoral" both the use and possession of nuclear weapons and vowed to fight together against the

■ **THE TWO** leaders denounced the "scandal" of hunger and the plight of migrants forced to flee their homes because of conflicts, global warming or religious persecution

"plague" of all types of abuses against children. The Vatican has been harshly criticised by a UN human rights committee for the clergy sexual abuse scandal, though this week Francis responded to one of the committee's main complaints and abolished the rule of pontifical secrecy covering the cases. After decades of sometimes hostile relations over the UN's women's reproductive health policies, the Vatican under Francis has increasingly involved UN officials in policy statements. — AP







High praise

South African pace great Dale Steyn on Saturday rated the current Indian fast bowling unit as the best in world cricket

# Final showdown

## India eye a tenth straight series win against Windies

Cuttack, Dec. 21: India have everything going their way as they head into the third and final ODI against the West Indies here on Sunday eyeing a 10th straight bilateral series win over the Caribbean side.

**LIVE on TV**  
India vs West Indies  
3rd ODI  
on STAR Sports 1, HD  
@ 1:30 PM

In the recent assignments against the West Indies, he has been a revelation, scoring runs at will. Then the duo of Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant chipped in with brisk knocks, and they would like to end the year on a positive note.

The fielding, though, has failed to match the high standards India have set in recent years. While Iyer's effort to dismiss Shimron Hetmyer was eye-catching, Chahar dropped a sitter off Nicholas Pooran and grassed Shai Hope for a duck at the slip cordon, something that attracted Kohli's attention.



Virat Kohli during a training session at Cuttack on Saturday. — AFP

### ODIs AT CUTTACK

Team	P	W	L
India	16	12	4
Windies	3	3	0

### HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS

India 381/6 in 50 overs vs England in 2017
Windies 251/9 in 50 overs vs India in 1994

### LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS

India 178 in 45.5 overs vs SL in 1990
Windies 169 in 48.2 overs vs India in 2007

### HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES

India 153* Mohammad Azharuddin vs Zimbabwe in 1998
Windies 89 Brian Lara vs India in 1994

### BEST BOWLING PERFORMANCES

India 4/32 R. Jadeja vs Sri Lanka in 2009
Windies 4/27 Daren Powell vs India in 2007

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

## Birla on break from sport due to anxiety

New Delhi, Dec. 21: Aryaman Birla, who was part of Rajasthan Royals till the last IPL season, has said that he is taking an indefinite break from cricket owing "to severe anxiety related to the sport".

The 22-year-old, who plays for Madhya Pradesh in the domestic circuit, took to social media to announce his decision on Friday night. "It's been a journey of hard work, perseverance, dedication and immense courage to get to this point in my cricket career. However, I've been coping with severe anxiety related to the sport for a while now," Aryaman wrote in a statement.

The opening batsman comes from the illustrious Birla family and his father, Kumar Mangalam Birla, is one of the major business tycoons of the country. He added that he persevered to keep playing till now but the time has come to put his mental health above everything else.

"I've felt trapped. I've pushed myself through all the distress so far, but now I feel the need to put my mental health and wellbeing above all else." "And so, I've decided to take an undefined sabbatical from cricket. This lovely sport is an integral part of my life and I hope to be back on the field when the time is right."

Aryaman has played age-group cricket for Madhya Pradesh before making it to the senior Ranji side in 2017. He has played nine first-class games and four List A matches. Last year, he topped the CK Nayudu (Under-23) Trophy run charts with 602 at an average of 75.25, scoring three hundreds in nine innings.



I've been coping with severe anxiety related to the sport for a while now.

—ARYAMAN BIRLA, former Rajasthan Royals player

The opening batsman was also a part of the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Rajasthan Royals for two seasons from 2018-2020. However, he didn't get any game time and was released ahead of this year's auction, which took place on Wednesday.

"We all have our own journeys and I want to take this time to understand myself better, open my mind to new and varied perspectives and seek purpose in my findings," he wrote.

Aryaman's sabbatical comes two months after Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell stepped away from cricket citing mental health issues. Since then, many cricketers have opened up about their struggles, taking time away from the game to deal with their issues. — PTI



Can't wait to play under MSD & Fleming. It's going to be a great opportunity for me to pick their brains.

— Sam Curran is excited about playing for CSK in IPL

### SHORT TAKES



Rahul David's son Samit.

## David's son hits double century

Bengaluru: Former India captain Rahul David's son Samit has scored a brilliant double century in an Under-14 Karnataka state inter zonal cricket match. The Vice-President's XI skipper scored a 250-ball 201 in the first innings against Dharwad Zone this week. His innings was laced with 22 boundaries. Samit, who is elder son of batting great David, put up an impressive all-round performance. The 14-year-old followed his double ton with an unbeaten 94 in the second innings while also taking three wickets for 26 runs. The match ended in a draw. A right-handed batsman, Samit has been grabbing eyeballs for quite some time now in various competitions in school cricket. Samit made headlines in 2015 at the U-12 level cricket in Bengaluru by slamming three half-centuries while playing for his school Mallya Aditi International. — PTI

## BBL match called off due to smoke

Melbourne: Smoke from bushfires raging across eastern Australia prompted match officials to abandon Saturday's Big Bash League cricket match in Canberra over what they called "dangerous and unreasonable playing conditions". Chasing 162 for victory against Adelaide Strikers, Sydney Thunder were 40-1 in the fifth over when the contest was halted because of lack of visibility and poor air quality caused by smoke. "After a delay, officials deemed conditions were unsuitable for play to resume..." BBL said in a statement. Sydney captain Callum Ferguson was upset at being stranded four balls away from victory with his side already past the five-over target. Umpire Paul Wilson said there was no way they could have gone ahead with the contest. "I understand that the Thunder have four balls to go. We can't take that into consideration," Wilson said. — Agencies

## I know my game really well now, says Shreyas

Cuttack, Dec. 21: Shreyas Iyer on Saturday said he was flamboyant but not responsible in the beginning of his career, a far cry from the present day matured man who is displaying both in equal measure while solving India's number four conundrum.



The 25-year-old is gradually settling into the critical number four position in a team that has struggled to find one for the longest time. The Mumbaikar showed his worth with half centuries in the first two One-day Internationals against the West Indies.

"I think that comes with maturity and responsibility. I was a flamboyant player when I started playing first-class cricket. I never used to take responsibility. I just used to back my instincts and go with the flow," Iyer said.

"Lately, I've realised that once you play at the highest level, you got to take that maturity to another stage. I can even play strokes and I can even nudge the ball and take single, so I know my game well right now and I can play accordingly."

Asked about his sedate 88-ball 70, which he scored in the series opener on a day the top-order failed, he said, "You have to play according to what the team demands. The team didn't demand me to score big shots at that time, we just needed a big partnership." — PTI

## Windies coach wants more

Cuttack, Dec. 21: West Indies head coach Phil Simmons feels his team's "best show" may not be enough to beat India in the series-decider here on Sunday but the outcome of the game won't "influence" the direction the Caribbean outfit has taken under his guidance.

Simmons, a former player, was reappointed as West Indies coach in October. West Indies showed a lot of promise to go one-up in Chennai but the home team bounced back strongly to post a mammoth 387/5 en route to a series-levelling 107-run victory in Visakhapatnam. "I think all the guys know we want to play our best tomorrow and even though we play our best, we might not win," Simmons said.

The gulf between the two sides has progressively widened in the last decade or so as the West Indies, barring their 3-0 sweep over Afghanistan last month, have gone without a win in 16 bilateral ODI series since August 2014. "The thing is we are trying to build something and the game tomorrow does not influence the direction in which we are going... But we are trying to build something and will continue to be in direction we are going."



West Indies players during a training session at Cuttack on Saturday. — AP

However there's a positivity in the camp with their top-ranked batsman in the ICC ODI rankings, Shai Hope in fine form along with Shimron Hetmyer. "The basic they are telling us is 300, 320 (would be a par score here). That's what you have got to look at these days to win these games and especially against India, you are always looking at 320 to either make it or chase it," he said.

The series has witnessed some interesting exchanges between the two teams known who are known to play the sport with good spirit. Kohli had given Kesrick Williams a notebook celebration in Hyderabad T20I, but the West Indies pacer had the last laugh in Thiruvananthapuram as he got rid of the Indian captain. — PTI

## Abid, Masood put Pakistan in front

Karachi, Dec 21: Abid Ali and Shan Masood became only the third opening pair for Pakistan to hit centuries in the same innings as Pakistan turned the tables on Sri Lanka in the second and final Test in Karachi on Saturday.



Pakistan's Shan Masood celebrates his century against Sri Lanka during the third day of their second Test at National Stadium in Karachi, Pakistan, on Saturday. — AP

Abid, nicknamed "legend" in Pakistan's dressing room, hit 174 for his second hundred in as many Tests — becoming the first Pakistani and ninth batsman overall to score two centuries in his first two Tests.

When the third day's play ended Pakistan were in a strong position with 395-2, having an overall lead of 315 after conceding an 80-run lead in the first innings. Skipper Azhar Ali was unbeaten on 57 — his first fifty in 14 innings — and Babar Azam on 22 not out.

Masood batted for nearly five hours for his 135, which included three sixes and seven fours. Abid struck 21 boundaries and a six in his 398-minute batting. Abid, 32, completed his century with a sweep off-spinner Lasith Embuldeniya for two to follow his 109 in the drawn first Test in Rawalpindi — his debut.

The Rawalpindi century made Abid the first batsman ever to score hundreds in both Test and one-day debuts.

Abid's successive hundred has put him in an elite company. India's Mohammad Azharuddin scored three hundreds in his first three Test after making his debut against England at home in December 1984.

William Ponsford, Doug Walters and Greg Blewett of Australia, Sourav Ganguly and Rohit Sharma of India, Alvin Kallicharran of the West Indies and Jimmy Neesham of New Zealand are the others who hit two consecutive centuries in their first two Tests.



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— Carlo Ancelotti, Everton's newly-appointed coach

### SHORT PASS

## HYDERABAD, ATK PLAY OUT A 2-2 DRAW

Hyderabad: Roy Krishna scored a brace, including a late equaliser to secure a 2-2 draw for ATK against Hyderabad FC in an Indian Super League match here on Saturday. Krishna (15th, 90th minutes) scored both the goals for ATK, while Bobo (39th, 85th) was on target for Hyderabad as both the teams secured a point each from the match.

Phil Brown started with the attacking trio of Nestor Gordillo, Marcelinho and Bobo as they searched for their second win in the ISL. Antonio Habas, on the other hand, chose to drop Michael Soosairaj and Prabir Das and handed a start to Jobby Justin and Sumit Rathi as the two wingbacks.

The first chance came in the seventh minute when Bobo found Nestor and the Spaniard's shot from inside the box missed the near post by a few inches.

Javier Hernandez's cross from the left was deemed to have been handled by Ashish Rai as the referee pointed to the spot. Krishna struck from the ensuing penalty as the visitors took the lead against the run of play.

Hyderabad should have equalised soon after as Marcelinho's corner-kick only needed a nudge after Arindam Bhattacharya came off his line and missed the flight of the ball. — PTI

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# ARSENULL!

## Everton hold Gunners to goalless draw

Liverpool, Dec. 21: Carlo Ancelotti and Mikel Arteta were shown the huge jobs that lie ahead as managers of Everton and Arsenal respectively as they watched their new sides play out a drab 0-0 draw at Goodison Park on Saturday.

Ancelotti was confirmed as the Toffees new boss on the morning of the match, 24 hours after Arteta took charge of Arsenal. Both new managers were in the stands with Duncan Ferguson and Freddie Ljungberg in temporary charge for the final time.

And the lack of confidence of two sides struggling at the wrong end of the table was obvious in a match completely devoid of quality.

A point edges Arsenal into ninth, but the

Gunners have now won just once in their last 13 games in all competitions.

Everton move up to 15th, but are only four points clear of the relegation zone.

Ferguson's role in Everton's impressive victory over Chelsea and draw at Manchester United in their last two league games was enough to ensure the temperamental Scot a role in Ancelotti's back-room staff.

However, there was a dramatic dip in his side's energy levels as they looked jaded after a League Cup quarter-final defeat on penalties to Leicester in midweek.

"The boys were on their last legs to be honest after working so hard in the last three games," admitted Ferguson. "We still covered every blade of grass, we just lacked a bit of quality in the final third."

Carlo Ancelotti was confirmed as the Toffees new boss on the morning of the match, 24 hours after Mikel Arteta took charge of Arsenal.

Ljungberg named a youthful Arsenal side with 19-year-old Emile Smith Rowe starting for the first time in the Premier League alongside Reiss Nelson and teenagers

Gabriel Martinelli and Bukayo Saka.

Mesut Ozil, Alexandre Lacazette and Nicolas Pepe were among those left out by the Swede, who won just one of his six matches in caretaker charge. "We had a very young side out there because I wanted energy and I wanted to give them chances," said Ljungberg.

"I thought we could have won the game with the chances we had, but I loved the spirit we saw and that's what you need in the Premier League."

Unlike Ferguson, Ljungberg's future under Arteta has not been clarified, but he hopes to remain as part of the coaching staff.

"I've been told by the club they want me to stay but I will have a meeting

with Mikel tomorrow and hopefully it's a good one."

Neither side managed a shot on target before the break, but Arsenal had the better chances in the second half.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was denied by a fine save from Jordan Pickford as he pounced on Callum Chambers's flick on from a corner before the Gunners' captain fired too close to the England number one with his next effort.

Ljungberg's final decision of his caretaker spell was a brave one as he replaced Aubameyang 13 minutes from time as Lacazette was finally called on from the bench. — AFP



Everton's Dominic Calvert-Lewin (centre) heads the ball during the English Premier League match against Arsenal at Goodison Park in Liverpool on Saturday. — AFP

## I am not a clone of Jose, says Lampard

London, Dec. 21: Frank Lampard insists he doesn't want to emulate Jose Mourinho's unique style as the Chelsea manager plots to out-wit his old boss in Sunday's crucial clash at Tottenham.

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Lampard's first Premier League meeting with Mourinho is the headline act in a fascinating derby that will determine which of the London rivals spends Christmas Day in the top four.

Spurs manager Mourinho played a key role in Lampard's emergence as one of Chelsea's all-time greats during their time together at Stamford Bridge.

Yet while Mourinho's managerial credentials are well established after winning a host of trophies during his glittering 19-year career, Lampard is still carving out a name for himself in the coaching world.

The former England midfielder is in just his second season as a manager after leaving Championship side Derby to take charge at Chelsea in July.

Lampard acknowledges

Mourinho was a big influence on him as a player but, now he is in the dug-out, he will follow his own path rather than copy the Portuguese coach.

Asked to name the most important lesson he took from working with Mourinho, Lampard said: "There's not one thing, no; he's obviously a good manager with loads of good attributes."

"But there's not one specific thing I learned working under him, and I wouldn't strive to be a clone or anything."

"I'm happy to go up against Jose; for me to play under him, he was a big influence in my career."

Lampard and Mourinho remain on good terms from their Chelsea days — the Tottenham manager promising a "big hug" when they meet before kick-off and talking of his "love" for the 41-year-old.

But that didn't stop the student admitting beating his old teacher in such an important game would be a memorable moment. — AFP

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