

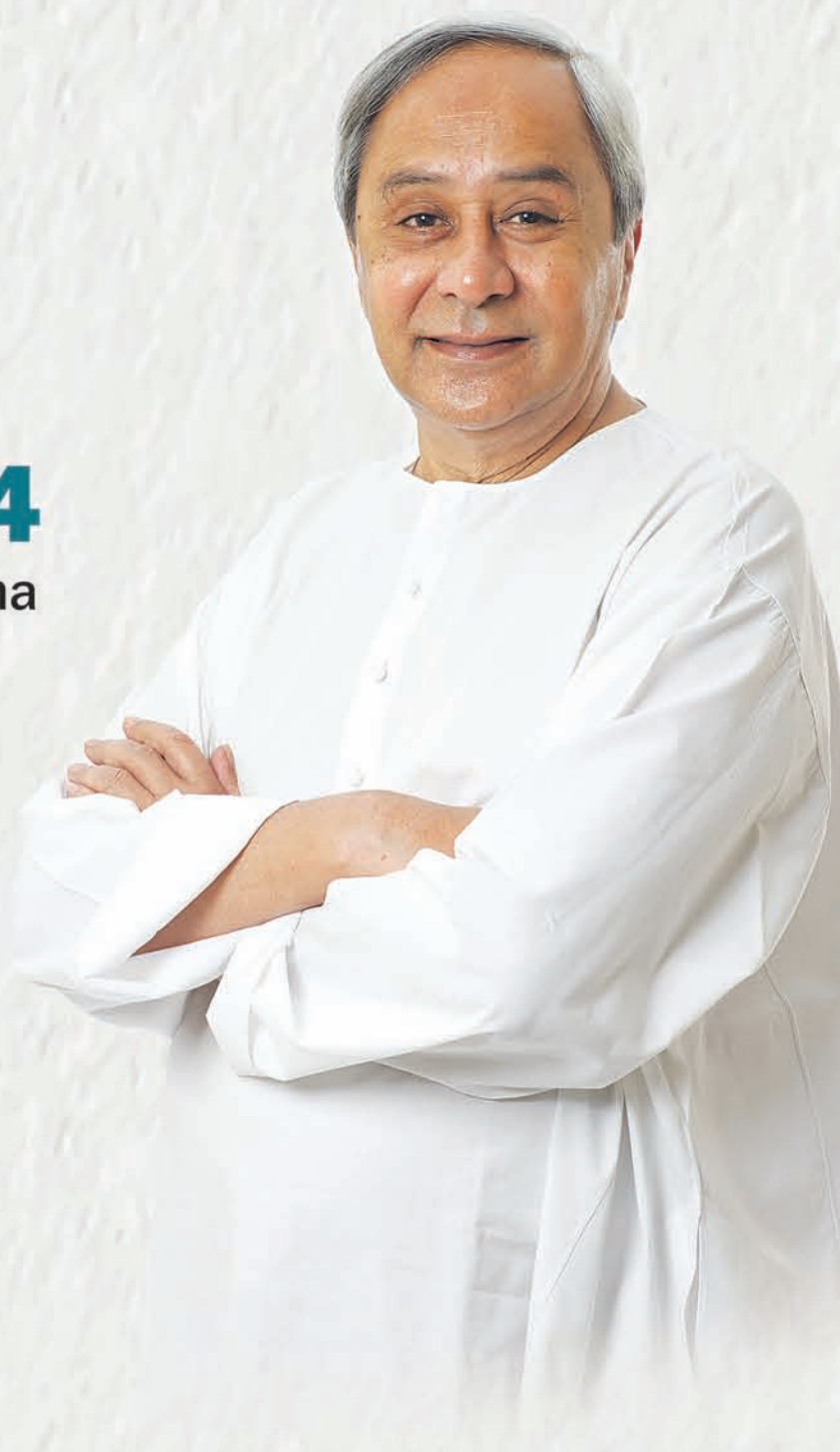


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FIRST WORLD ODIA LANGUAGE CONFERENCE 2024

3rd to 5th February | Bhubaneswar, Odisha



Grand Inauguration by
Shri Naveen Patnaik
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha

February 3rd, 11 AM
Janata Maidan, Bhubaneswar



Highlights of the Conference

- Inaugural & Concluding Events
- Conference Rooms named after Five Eminent Poets of Odisha
- Diverse Academic Sessions: 16 Thought-Provoking Topics
- Global Perspectives: Esteemed International Scholars in Attendance
- Literary Confluence: A Gathering of Hundreds of Brilliant Minds
- Tribute to Eminent Litterateurs and Writers
- Thematic Exhibitions

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leisure



AMY ADAMS IN TALKS TO STAR OPPOSITE JENNA ORTEGA

Actress Amy Adams is in negotiations to co-star alongside Jenna Ortega in *Klara and the Sun*, which Taika Waititi is set to direct. The film, based on Kazuo Ishiguro's eponymous novel, is being produced by Heyday Films' David Heyman, Garrett Basch and Waititi, reports *Deadline*.

TIFFANY PLEADS NO CONTEST TO RECKLESS DRIVING CASE

Actress Tiffany Haddish pleaded no contest to reckless driving for a DUI incident that occurred in Los Angeles late last year. The *Girls Trip* actress, had her two misdemeanour charges dropped after taking a plea deal following her DUI arrest over Thanksgiving weekend, reports *People magazine*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

A romantic link is about to be presented to you as a surprise, shining and smiling. Ganesh advises you to be prepared in your best dress and to practice some romantic talking. You never know what the evening has in store for you. Only Ganesh does, and he is sporting a knowing smile.

TAURUS

Spontaneity yet sincerity will be the ruling emotions of the day. Keep your eyes and ears open, advises Ganesh, as trouble might be headed your way. Make it a point to read the print well before you sign any legal contract today. Prevention is better than cure, reminds Ganesh.

GEMINI

Today, your enthusiasm for sports and outdoor activities is palpable. According to you, variety is the spice of life. You will keep on jumping from one venture to another. You will establish a good rapport with your bosses and colleagues.

CANCER

You will have enthusiasm for swift action. Variety adds spice to life. So you may change job or trade. Ties with superiors will be good. Ganesh says this is the time for challenges.

LEO

You will spend the day with your family and friends today and feel closer to them. You will try to help others, as always. You will like to guide someone if your own situation is comfortable today. You will be able to fulfill the expectations placed upon you by someone and will garner a lot of well-wishes, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

You are born with a talent for business. Your organisational skills too are flawless. Ganesh advises you to use all your creativity, innovative ideas and ability to motivate others to make progress in your business. Ganesh says you may freely express yourself and make full use of your sharp judgement.

LIBRA

Ganesh says that today will be a day where you will want to look good and feel good too. You will be able to attract people with your speech and your impressive personality today at social gatherings. Your social stature will also rise today. Romantic liaisons may take a serious turn today. Ganesh's blessings are forever with you.

SCORPIO

According to Ganesh, your family and friends top your priority list today. Life looks hunky dory on personal as well as professional front. Apart from business developments, romantic relations are on the bloom. And this is evident from your blushing cheeks. Creative indulgences may give a new dimension to your life!

SAGITTARIUS

You feel like going back to carefree, childhood days. You even practice that by taking an impromptu pleasure trip, in the outskirts of the city. And bumping into an old pal, reliving your past is like an icing on the cake.

CAPRICORN

You will walk down the memory lane, cherish those lost moments and later on feel an urge to meet or contact old friends, says Ganesh. Expectations of your near and dear ones, however, may seem burdensome. You will still see the brighter side of everything, and spending quality time with your sweetheart will certainly re-energise your powers to deal with difficulties.

AQUARIUS

Your will finally end today and you will enjoy the fruits of your hard-work. You are very good a considering all the pros and cons of every situation/project, drawing a plan on paper and distribution of responsibilities, however, execution of those plans is a problem area for you.

PISCES

You will come up trumps against your competition today. This will make you enthusiastic about your future prospects. You shy away from the spotlight usually, but today you will find yourself thrust into the role of a leader, as you take on new assignments. A progressive day awaits, says Ganesh.

Sadhu Meher: State's face in national cinema

BIJAY MANDAL, OP

Bhubaneswar: The sudden demise of Sadhu Meher came as a rude shock to the Odia film fraternity, not because he was the first actor from Odisha to win a National Film Award as Best Actor but his cinematic vision helped Odia cinema scale new highs.

Needless to say, the loss will haunt every Odia for years, as Meher remained Odisha's identity on the national film scene for over half a century.

Albeit a few stellar portrayals in movies like *Ankur*, *Bhuban Shome*, *Manthan*, *Deb Shishu* and *Safed Haathi*, Meher appeared mostly in supporting roles in the 50-odd Hindi films he featured. Admittedly, he was not the quintessential showbiz star but certainly among the most re-

The legendary actor-director, who worked with stalwarts of parallel cinema like Mrinal Sen and Shyam Benegal, explored the rich tapestry of Odisha's art and culture at the national level like no other

spected and dependable names in Mumbai. After all, not many artistes from Odisha can claim to be the favourites of the likes of Buddhadev Dasgupta, Mrinal Sen, and Shyam Benegal.



With lyricist Sibabrata Das

Though he was not among the most sought-after actors of his

time, the depiction of Odisha's culture, tradition, and rich heritage under his direction fetched him the prestigious Padma Shri. He was also a recipient of Jaydev Samman, the top honour for Odia cinema.

Born in Gudvelipadar village of Boudh district in 1940, Meher's journey was anything but a bed of roses. In his own admission, he was jobless for nearly five years after earning a gold

medal from the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. Meher, after graduating from Sambalpur's GM College, moved to Kolkata to become a theatre actor. The celebrity status of stage performers at that time lured him into the profes-

sion. However, one of his teachers at Rabindra Bharati University advised him to try his luck at FTII-Pune, as the popularity of the theatre was on the

wane those days. The guidance not only earned him a seat at the prestigious FTII but a gold medal in acting too.

However, that recognition didn't earn him a place in the film industry. Jobless, Meher worked on his acting skills for the next few years, performing on stage instead of hopping studios without any success. He was noticed by eminent film director Shyam Benegal during one of his shows

who offered him the iconic character 'Kishtaya' in *Ankur*. Rest, as they say, is history. He went on to work with the biggest names in parallel cinema. Meher gradually turned to direction and dished out several memorable movies, TV shows, and sci-fi to viewers.

Beyond his directorial ventures, Meher portrayed memorable characters like Anadi Haldar in *Aadim Shatru* (Parts 1 and 2) and Bishupal in *Chakrant of Byomkesh Bakshi*, which were aired on Doordarshan in 1997. He is also credited with launching one of the brightest stars of Odisha, Uttam Mohanty (*Abhimaan*), in 1977.

Sadhu Meher may not be around, but his cinematic brilliance and legacy will remain unsurpassed for years to come.



1940 - 2024

Kriti exudes confidence in her craft

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Sanon, who recently visited Delhi to promote her upcoming film *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya*, expressed confidence in her ability to stand on her own in the industry.

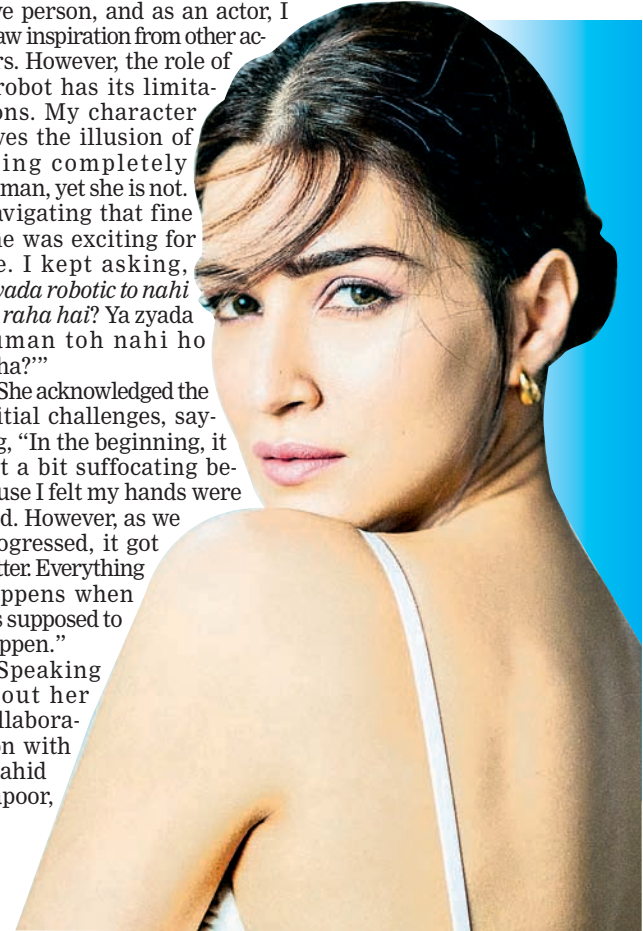
Talking about her character, she shared, "I am a very impulsive person, and as an actor, I draw inspiration from other actors. However, the role of a robot has its limitations. My character gives the illusion of being completely human, yet she is not. Navigating that fine line was exciting for me. I kept asking, 'Zyada robotic to nahi ho raha hai? Ya zyada human toh nahi ho raha?'"

She acknowledged the initial challenges, saying, "In the beginning, it felt a bit suffocating because I felt my hands were tied. However, as we progressed, it got better. Everything happens when it's supposed to happen."

Speaking about her collaboration with Shahid Kapoor, she said, "I'm more confident as an actor now. Earlier, I would have been very nervous to be in front of him, but now I'm confident enough to hold my own."

On the work front, *Teri Baaton Ne Aisa Uljha Jiya* will be in theatres February 9.

AGENCIES



'I don't mind people making fun of me'



Mumbai: Veteran actress and politician Jaya Bachchan, who often gets into a playful tiff with the paparazzi, has said that she doesn't mind being the source of such entertainment and a meme generator.

The senior actress, along with her daughter Shweta Bachchan, appeared on the second season of her granddaughter Navya Naveli's podcast, *What the Hell, Navya*, where they discussed the term 'Jaya-ing'.

Shweta and Navya explained the meaning of the term to Jaya and said that when some-

one is being 'salty', it is said that the person is 'Jaya-ing'. Shweta told her mother, "You are an internet sensation, a meme-generator."

During the podcast, they also touched upon the subject of side hustle, a concept where people indulge in other work as a source of additional income.

Jaya said, "I do a side hustle. I provide meals for some of the people who do my memes. I don't mind people making fun of me, but people should do it properly."

IAN S

Mystery shrouds Poonam Pandey's 'death'



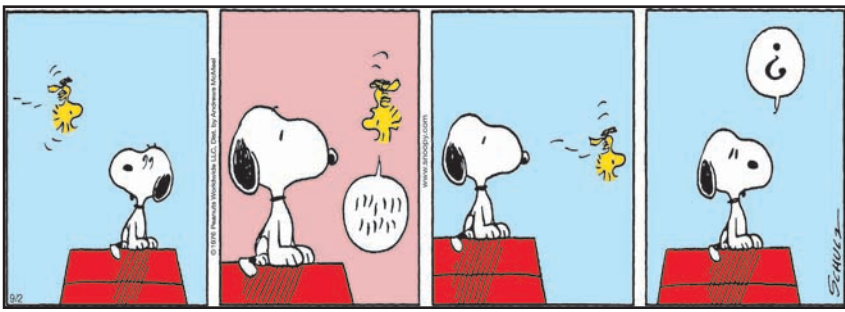
When IANS went to her housing society, The Park in the Oshiwara area of Mumbai, people in the neighbourhood said the

actress hasn't been at her house for the last two days and no movement has been witnessed at her home. A security guard at the housing society said, "She hasn't been home for two days. Her driver last went out of the building around 3:45 p.m. Friday."

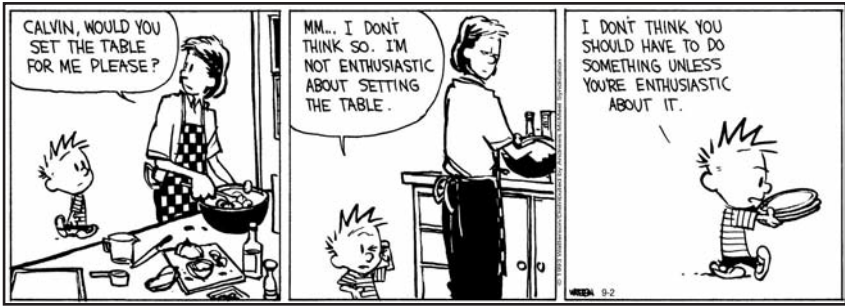
Speculation arose that she had reportedly passed away in Kanpur. The publicist, who initially confirmed the death based on information from a relative, is now unreachable. The mystery surrounding her location persists, with no information on her funeral rituals till filing of this report.

IAN S

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

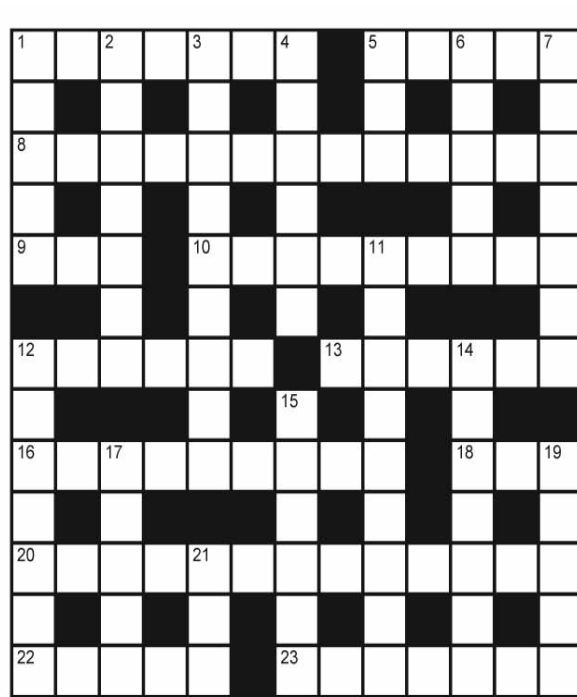


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

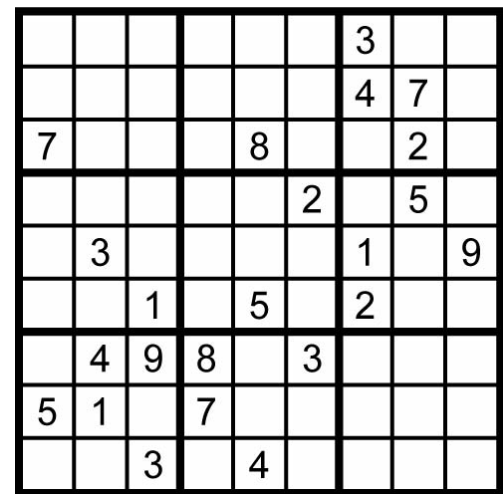


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- Across**
- 1 Against
 - 5 Beat
 - 8 Without
 - 9 Luau dish
 - 10 Docksideside
 - 12 Magical drink
 - 13 Soaking wet
 - 16 Profitable
 - 18 Chinese brew
 - 20 Speech teacher's forte
 - 22 Ruhr Valley city
 - 23 Stage artist's chore
 - Down**
 - 1 Primrose
 - 2 Italian operatic composer
 - 3 Nirvana (7-2)
 - 4 Pulls the plug
 - 5 Poetic contraction
 - 6 Coffee shop order
 - 7 Slicker
 - 11 Stroll
 - 12 Solar follower
 - 14 Lead astray
 - 15 Carnival
 - 17 Angry
 - 19 Harass
 - 21 Mantel piece

SUDOKU

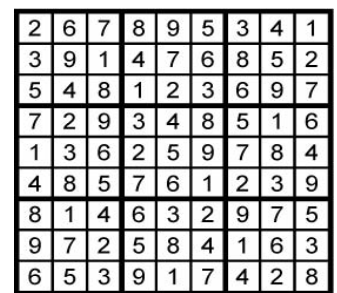
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CM unveils 'Akshar Bhumi'
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurates 'Akshar Bhumi' (Odia language park) at Kalamandal in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

NK tests missiles
North Korea Friday extends a provocative run in weapons tests by firing cruise missiles into the sea

Gaming tax
Monthly GST collections from online gaming companies have jumped over 400 per cent to about ₹1,200 crore since new TDS regime

Yashasvi propels India
Yashasvi Jaiswal single-handedly guides India to 336/6 with an unbeaten century on Day 1 of the 2nd Test against England

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BHUBANESWAR | SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3 2024

P1



TIGHT SECURITY: Police personnel stop Muslims as they gather to offer 'namaz' at Gyanvapi Mosque, in Varanasi, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Veteran actor-director Sadhu Meher no more

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: Acclaimed actor and director from Odisha Sadhu Meher breathed his last at the age of 84 in Mumbai Friday.

Meher was suffering from age-related illnesses for over a year and had undergone heart surgery a few months back. However, he was recuperating and expected to recover completely, family sources said.

The ace performer, who bagged the National Film Award for Best Actor for his stellar performance in Shyam Benegal's 'Ankur', is survived by his daughter Niyati Meher, a Mumbai-based architect, according to a family friend.

Meher had made significant contributions to both the Odia and Hindi film industries. In 2017, he was honoured with the prestigious Padma Shri award. Besides, he is also credited with launching the career of Odia superstar Uttam Mohanty in 'Abhiman'.

The FTII-Pune alumnus was also well-known for movies like 'Bhuvan Shome', 'Manthan' and 'Mrigaya'. He had also acted in the critically-acclaimed Odia movie 'Bhukha' by Sabyasachi



Mohapatra.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik took to X (formerly Twitter) and wrote, "Meher was a popular actor and director in both Odia and Hindi film industries. He had received laurels for his brilliant acting skills. He was the first Odia actor to receive the National Film Award. His demise has left a void in the film industry."

Many cine celebrities, both from Odisha and Mumbai, also expressed their shock and offered their condolences over the death.

► **Obituary on Leisure Page**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



With the opposition in jail, elections are unnecessary. The money saved will help strengthen democracy

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	72085.63 ↑ 440.33
NIFTY	21853.80 ↑ 156.30
DOLLAR	82.97 ↑ ₹0.08
EURO	90.42 ↑ ₹0.61
GOLD	₹62,900 ↓ ₹76
SILVER	₹71,076 ↓ ₹11

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	31.5°C	29.8°C
Min Temp	20.3°C	16.6°C
Humidity	91%	73%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST		
PARTLY CLOUDY SKY		

PM in state today

Narendra Modi is scheduled to launch projects worth more than ₹68,000 crore during a public programme in Sambalpur

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: The state government has prohibited the use of drone cameras at venues where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit during his one-day trip to the western Odisha town of Sambalpur February 3. The PM is scheduled to launch projects worth more than ₹68,000 crore during a public programme in Sambalpur, official sources said.

A high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary PK Jena and attended by DGP Arun Kumar Sarangi among other senior officials Friday decided to ban the use of drone cameras at the PM's venues. The issue relating to the use of drone cameras was raised at the meeting keeping in view Modi's visit to Bahanaga in Balasore district June 3, 2023. The PM had visited the Bahanaga triple train accident site where some drone cameras were used to click pictures of his visit. Then, the Special Protection Group had raised objections.

Official sources said the Prime Minister will inaugurate the 412km Dhamra-Angul pipeline section of Jagdishpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra pipeline project. Built at a cost of more



than ₹2,450 crore under the 'Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga', the project will connect Odisha with the National Gas Grid.

The PM will also lay the foundation stone of Nagpur-Jharsuguda Natural Gas Pipeline Section (692km) of Mumbai-Nagpur-Jharsuguda pipeline project. The project, which will be developed at a cost of more than ₹2,660 crore, will improve natural gas availability to Odisha, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

During the programme, the PM will also dedicate to the nation and lay the foundation stone of multiple power projects worth about ₹28,980 crore.

The projects to be dedicated to the nation include NTPC Darlipali Super Thermal Power Station (2x800 MW) and NSPCL Rourkela PP-II Expansion Project

(1x250 MW) in Sundargarh district. He will also lay the foundation stone of NTPC Talcher Thermal Power Project, Stage-III (2x660 MW) in Angul district. These power projects will supply low-cost power to various parts of Odisha as well as other states.

The PM will lay the foundation stone of the Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC) Talabira Thermal power project worth more than ₹27,000 crore.

Modi will also inaugurate coal infrastructure projects of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) including First Mile Connectivity projects - Bhubaneswari Phase-I in Talcher Coalfields in Angul district and Lajkura Rapid Loading System.

Built at a cost of about ₹2,145 crore, these projects will boost the quality and supply of dry fuel from Odisha.

The PM will also inaugurate IB Valley washery built at a cost of over ₹550 crore in Jharsuguda.

Modi will dedicate to the nation a 50-km-long second track of Jharsuguda-Barpali-Sardaga rail line phase-1 built by MCL, with an investment of ₹878 crore, the official said. The PM will also inaugurate three road sector projects, developed at a cumulative cost of about ₹2,110 crore.

Revival of LTTE: NIA raids in TN

ACCORDING TO SOURCES, THE RESIDENCES AND OFFICES OF SOME OFFICE-BEARERS OF A POLITICAL PARTY WITH EXTREME TAMIL NATIONALISTIC IDEOLOGY WERE RAIDED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 2: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) began conducting raids at several places in Tamil Nadu early Friday morning following reports of suspected funding for the banned Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) being organised in the state in a bid to revive the outfit.

Sources in Tamil Nadu Police told IANS that the residences and offices of some office-bearers of a political party with extreme Tamil nationalistic ideology were raided.

Certain former operatives of the outlawed organisation have set up base in the state.

A former top Intelligence operative of the LTTE, Satkunam

alias Sabesan was arrested by the NIA for drugs and arms smuggling in October 2021.

The NIA had been tracking his involvement in international drug syndicates and arms smuggling rackets with links in Pakistan and Dubai.

Satkunam was arrested in a case related to smuggling of arms and drugs from Pakistan to the Indian coast.

It may be recalled that a ship carrying AK-47 assault rifles, 300 kg of heroin and 1,000 pellets was apprehended off the Vizhinjam coast in Kerala.

Satkunam was the key conspirator in this case and was arrested from Chennai and six Sri Lankan nationals were also held.

The NIA had then stated that Satkunam was transferring huge amounts of money (proceeds of the smuggling) from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka to the former cadres of the LTTE in a bid to revive the organisation.



Justice CS Singh new Orissa High Court CJ



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 2: Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh, a judge of the Patna High Court, was Friday elevated as the Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court.

The Supreme Court Collegium had in November 2023 recommended the appointment of Justice Singh as the Orissa High Court Chief Justice. He will replace acting Chief Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi.

Chief Justices were also appointed to five other high courts.

Acting Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court Manindra Mohan Shrivastava was appointed as its Chief Justice.

Justice Ritu Bahri, acting Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court, was appointed as Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court.

Justice Vijay Bhishnoi of Rajasthan High Court was appointed as Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court. Justice Arun Bhansali, also of Rajasthan High Court, was appointed as Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court.

Similarly, Madras High Court judge S Vaidyanathan has been elevated as Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court.

Cops let off 'spy' pigeon after 8 months of probe

IT TURNED OUT THE PIGEON WAS AN OPEN-WATER RACING BIRD FROM TAIWAN THAT HAD ESCAPED AND MADE ITS WAY TO INDIA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 2: Indian police cleared a suspected Chinese spy pigeon after eight months of detention and released it into the wild.

The pigeon's ordeal began in May when it was captured near a port in Mumbai with two rings tied to its legs, carrying words that looked like Chinese. Police suspected it was involved in espionage and took it in, later sending it to Mumbai's Bai Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Animals.

Eventually, it turned out the pigeon was an open-water racing bird from Taiwan that had escaped and made its way to India. With police permission, the bird was transferred to the Bombay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, whose doctors set it free Tuesday.

That probe took an 'astonishing eight months,' People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) said in a statement.

PETA India said police had granted 'formal permission for the hospital to release the pigeon' Wednesday.



Local media reports said the bird fluttered away in good health. The pigeon is the latest of several detained by authorities on

suspicion of espionage. Border security officers took a pigeon into custody in 2016 after it was found carrying a

threatening message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi close to the border with Pakistan.

Another pigeon was held under armed guard in 2010 after it was found in the same region with a ring around its foot and a Pakistani phone number and address stamped on its body in red ink.

Officials in that case directed that no one should be allowed to visit the pigeon, which police said may have been on a 'special mission of spying.'

Mumbai police could not be reached for comment.

SHORT TAKES

Delhi Police at Kejriwal's home

New Delhi: A Delhi Police crime branch team was at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence to serve him a notice in connection with a probe over his claim that the BJP was trying to buy some AAP MLAs, official sources said Friday night. A team of Crime Branch officials have reached Kejriwal's residence to serve him the notice related to the inquiry, they said. In a post on X, Kejriwal had claimed last week that seven of his party MLAs had been contacted by the 'them'. After Kejriwal's allegations, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva had hit back saying, "The allegation that the BJP wants to break away MLAs of the ruling AAP, having 62 out of 70 MLAs in Delhi, shows his mental bankruptcy."

No SC relief for Hemant Soren

New Delhi: In a setback to former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, the Supreme Court Friday refused to interfere with his arrest by ED in a money laundering case and asked him to approach High Court. A special bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna, MM Sundresh and Bela M Trivedi asked advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Soren, to seek relief from HC. Sibal said, "In these kinds of cases, this court needs to send a message. Here, we are dealing with a Chief Minister, who has been arrested. Please see the evidence. This is not fair." Justice Khanna told Sibal, "First, the courts are open to everybody. Second, High Courts are also constitutional courts. If we permit one person to approach the apex court, then we will have to permit everyone."

Ekamra Utsav, BhuFesto 3.0 start today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) is all set to launch Ekamra Utsav, a vibrant festival celebrating the rich tapestry of Odia language and culture, February 3.

The event, which will conclude February 9, coincides with the Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani (World Odia Language Conference) organised by the state government.

Ekamra Utsav holds special significance as it marks the inauguration of World Odia Language Conference, highlighting the states dedication to preserving and showcasing its linguistic heritage, it was learnt.

BDA Vice-Chairman Balwant Singh has urged City residents to participate in the festival in large numbers, while BMC Mayor Sulochana Das has sought cooperation from citizens to make the event a grand success.

Comprising three distinct components, Ekamra Utsav promises a diverse array of experiences. The main event, 'Sangitara Murchana', will take place at the IDCO Exhibition Ground, featuring captivating performances by acclaimed artistes from across the nation and region.

This cultural extravaganza will enchant attendees with live music, band performances, and various other forms of performing arts. All the performances will be based on Odia language and culture.

In addition to 'Sangitara Murchana', the mega event will include food festival, 'AMA BYANJAN', offering attendees the opportunity to immerse themselves in the vibrant traditions and flavours of Odisha.

'AMA BYANJAN' aims at showcasing the diverse and flavourful regional cuisine of Odisha. Hosted at the IDCO Exhibition Ground, this gastronomic extravaganza will feature delicacies representing various districts of the state, tantalising visitors with authentic local delicacies.

The food area will serve as a vibrant community hub, complete with experience zones and a bustling flea market, inviting attendees to savour, explore, and connect. The visitors can also enjoy other cuisines, including continental, in the food area.

The 'Night Flea Market' of Ekamra Utsav is also scheduled to begin February 3 and conclude February 9. It will take place at the IDCO Exhibition Ground here. The event promises to showcase the cultural vibrancy of Odia's heritage against the City's lively backdrop, running from 4pm to 11pm daily.

Besides, a drone show will be held February 7, 8, and 9 on Odia language, art, and culture. As many as 200 drones will be used for this purpose, it was learnt. In order to promote language, Madhusudan Marg leading to the venue will also display designs based on Odia language, art, and culture.

"The Ekamra Utsav will honour the profound legacy and ancient roots of the Odia language through a captivating and all-encompassing exhibition centred on the Odia alphabet. The event, designed to celebrate the rich heritage of Odisha, encapsulates the essence of the state's cultural mosaics, including its cinema, language, literature, and all facets that define the Odia identity," said a BDA official.

"The exhibition will serve as a vibrant demonstration of Odisha's diverse and enduring heritage, inviting visitors to explore and appreciate the multifaceted layers of this ancient classical language and the culture it represents," said the official.

The third edition of the Bhubaneswar Kahani Utsav (Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling, BhuFesto) will unfold its enchanting tales from February 3 to February 5.

Spread across four distinct locations within the City—Indira Gandhi Park, Odisha Crafts Museum Kalabhoomi, APJ Abdul Kalam Park in Kalinga Nagar, and Buddha Jayanti Park in Niladri Vihar—this captivating event will feature renowned storytellers such as Kuna Tripathy, Akash Dasnayak, Ushashi Mishra, and Meera Parida.

Attendees can also look forward to contemporary retellings of classical Odia novels, adding a modern twist to timeless tales of the region.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at 'Akshar Bhumi' (Odia language park) at Kalamandal in Bhubaneswar, Friday

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The third edition of the Bhubaneswar Kahani Utsav (Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling, BhuFesto) will unfold its enchanting tales from February 3 to February 5.

Spread across four distinct locations within the City—Indira Gandhi Park, Odisha Crafts Museum Kalabhoomi, APJ Abdul Kalam Park in Kalinga Nagar, and Buddha Jayanti Park in Niladri Vihar—this captivating event will feature renowned storytellers such as Kuna Tripathy, Akash Dasnayak, Ushashi Mishra, and Meera Parida.

Attendees can also look forward to contemporary retellings of classical Odia novels, adding a modern twist to timeless tales of the region.

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Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at 'Akshar Bhumi' (Odia language park) at Kalamandal in Bhubaneswar, Friday

ancees will be based on Odia language and culture. The 'Night Flea Market' of Ekamra Utsav is also scheduled to begin February 3 and conclude February 9. It will take place at the IDCO Exhibition Ground here. The event promises to showcase the cultural vibrancy of Odia's heritage against the City's lively backdrop, running from 4pm to 11pm daily.

Besides, a drone show will be held February 7, 8, and 9 on Odia language, art, and culture. As many as 200 drones will be used for this purpose, it was learnt. In order to promote language, Madhusudan Marg leading to the venue will also display designs based on Odia language, art, and culture.

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Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at 'Akshar Bhumi' (Odia language park) at Kalamandal in Bhubaneswar, Friday

CM INAUGURATES 'AKSHAR BHUMI'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday inaugurated 'Akshar Bhumi' (Odia language park) at Kalamandal in the City ahead of the three-day 'Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani' (World Odia Language Conference) beginning here Saturday.

The conference, which will be inaugurated by Patnaik at Janata Maidan here at 11am Saturday, will have 16 sessions and a special session on Jagannath consciousness, said Odia Language, Literature and Culture department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan.

Language experts from different parts of India and abroad and Odia associations will attend the conference, she said.

A walk-through museum has also been set up to showcase the history of Odia language. She appealed to all Odias in the

Odia Language, Literature and Culture department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan appeals to all Odias in the state and abroad to sing 'Vande Utkal Janani' simultaneously at 11am February 3 to mark the inauguration of 'First World Odia Language Conference 2024'

state and abroad to sing 'Vande Utkal Janani' simultaneously at 11am February 3 to mark the conference's inauguration.

The recommendations and outputs of the conference will be implemented by the state government as per the direction of the chief minister, she added.

Officials said it will be attended by a number of internationally-renowned scholars including Padma Shri Hermann Kulke, Uwe Skoda, Arlo Griffiths, Ante Schmedichen and many national-level scholars.

Uwe Skoda and Arlo Griffiths were given a rousing welcome after their arrival at Biju Patnaik International Airport here.

Renowned Odia writer Debi Prasanna Pattanayak will be honoured with Lifetime Achievement award for his outstanding contribution to Odia language and linguistics.

Apart from this, several Jnanpith award winners, Padma awardees, Sahitya Akademi awardees will also be honoured during the conference.

Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) have organised a series of events in Bhubaneswar on the sidelines of the conference.

INWEC celebrates leadership change

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: ICC National Women's Entrepreneurship Council (INWEC), a wing of Indian Chamber of Commerce, conducted its leadership transition at an event organised at Hotel Crown here, Friday.

The event saw passing of the Convenor position from Sambad Group Executive Director Tanaya Patnaik to Preeti Patnaik, who is the

MD of Tushi Motors and Co-founder of Kalinga Desi Agro Foundation. CA Swati Kejriwal, partner at M/s O.M. Kejriwal & Co, was picked as the new Co-convenor. The Sambad Group Executive Director made invaluable contributions to INWEC and now continues her association with the council as a member of the Advisory Board. Her experience and vision will further enrich the council's strategic direction.

"The incoming leadership, marked by Ms Preeti Patnaik and Ms CA Swati Kejriwal, represents a blend of entrepreneurial spirit and professional expertise," said an official, adding their induction is a testament to INWEC's commitment to fostering a diverse and dynamic leadership landscape.

The event also witnessed a brainstorming session on challenges and triumphs of women entrepreneurs by the outgoing INWEC Convenor and the new Convenor and renowned celebrity columnist Nisha Jamwal.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Bijay Krishna Sahoo, S/o- Dwitikrishna Sahoo, resident of Gania (Patna Sahi), P.O./P.S.- Gania, Dist.- Nayagarh, Odisha-752085 declare by this affidavit No.-86, dtd. 30.01.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as BIJAYA KRISHNA SAHOO for all future purposes.

LOST

This is to inform that I, Gayatri Patra, W/o Baman Ch. Patra, At/PO./P.S.- Balichandrapur, Dist.- Jajpur have lost my RSD Document No.10791001468 dated 23.8.2010 of Subregistrar, Badachana while making xerox copy of the same in Balichandrapur Market. I have purchased the said piece of land from Prasanna Kumar Sahoo. If it is found by anyone please contact Mob.: 9938333110.

14.1L fresh cancer cases, 9.1L deaths in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: In 2022, India had more than 14.1 lakh new cancer cases and over 9.1 lakh deaths due to the disease, and breast cancer was the most common, according to the latest estimates of the disease's global burden by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Cancers of lip, oral cavity and lung were the most common ones in men, accounting for 15.6 and 8.5 per cent of the new cases, respectively, whereas, cancers of breast and cervix uteri were the most frequent ones in women, making up close to 27 and 18 per cent of the new cases, the International Agency for

WHO says

CANCERS OF LIP, ORAL CAVITY AND LUNG WERE THE MOST COMMON ONES IN MEN, ACCOUNTING FOR 15.6% 8.5% OF THE NEW CASES, RESPECTIVELY

CANCERS OF BREAST AND CERVIX UTERI WERE THE MOST FREQUENT ONES IN WOMEN, MAKING UP CLOSE TO 27% AND 18% OF THE NEW CASES

ABOUT ONE IN FIVE PEOPLE DEVELOP CANCER IN THEIR LIFETIME, AND ROUGHLY ONE IN NINE MEN AND ONE IN 12 WOMEN DIE FROM THE DISEASE

Research on Cancer (IARC). WHO's cancer agency has estimated. It also calculated that the number of people alive within five years following a cancer diagnosis was nearly 32.6 lakhs in India. Globally, the agency estimated two crore new cancer cases and 97 lakh deaths, and about 5.3 crore people were alive within five years following a cancer diagnosis. About one in five people develop cancer in their lifetime, and roughly one in nine men and one in 12 women die from the disease, it said.

In India, the risk of developing cancer before turning 75 was calculated to be 10.6 per cent, while the risk of dying from cancer by the same age was found to be 7.2 per cent. Globally, these risks were 20 per cent and 9.6 per cent, respectively.

A majority of countries do not adequately finance priority cancer and palliative (pain-related) care services, as part of universal health coverage (UHC), the WHO said publishing survey results from 115 countries.

Of the participating countries, only 39 per cent covered the basics of cancer management

and six such projects in Boden and Sinapali blocks being built at a cost of Rs 425.43 crore. The projects will help irrigate 21,269 acre of land.

"All the projects have been taken up based on grievances and demands by people to the 5T Chairman when he visited Nuapada in May 2023," said an official. Pandian also reviewed other major projects in the district like construction of a trauma care facility at Nuapada DHH being executed with an allocation of Rs 75.70 crore, construction of OPD-IPD complex and implementation of 'Ama Hospital' at SDH, Khariar at a total cost of Rs 17.74 crore. Later, Pandian also reviewed progress of work on the road connecting Sunabeda to Komna being built at a cost of Rs 30 crore.

Pandian also interacted with people at Binopur field and received their grievances on various issues while assuring an early resolution.

5T Chairman reviews projects in Nuapada

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian reviewed various development projects, interacted with general public and participated in the Nua-O programme during his visit to Nuapada district, Friday.

While participating in the Nua-O programme, Pandian interacted with college students and advised them to work hard to achieve their dreams.

The Nabin Odisha Chairman urged them to take benefit of the platform provided by Nua-O in order to showcase their talents and achieve holistic personality development in addition to academic achievements.

He emphasised that students should work hard with self-confidence to achieve success in life, assuring them that the college transformation projects in

Nuapada district will be completed by end of February. The 5T Chairman motivated them to aim high in life while speaking to them about achievements of prominent personalities from their district.

Later in the day, Pandian reviewed the progress of redevelopment of Maa Sunadei temple, Jogeswar temple and Patal Ganga being done with an allocation of Rs 12.35 crore.

He also took stock of the progress of the ongoing mega lift irrigation project at Konabira

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Centurion-SVNIRTAR pact for research collaboration

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: To enhance opportunities for students and foster research collaborations, Centurion University signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with SVNIRTAR (Swami Vivekanand National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research) here Friday.

The MoU was signed in presence of PP Mohanty, director of SVNIRTAR, Sukanta Parida, director of Centurion University's Admissions and Marketing, and Sunil Jha, director of Centurion University's School of Paramedics and Allied Health Sciences. "The objective of this collaboration is to facilitate opportunities for student internships, project engagements, and joint research endeavors, with enriched learning experiences, industry exposure, and opportunities for research in rehabilitation and allied sciences. Through this MoU, Centurion University and SVNIRTAR aspire to create a conducive environment for mutual learning, skill development, and knowledge exchange among students and faculty members," said an official of the university.

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Man killed, 3 hurt in series accidents

BHADRAK

One person was killed and three were injured in a series accident in the district Friday. Police identified the deceased as Rajkishor Sahu, 32, of Uttarbad village under Bhandarpokhari police limits here. Police said an oil tanker, en route to Bhubaneswar, first hit a truck from behind. The driver of the truck lost control and dashed a car parked on the roadside. Then, it ran over a motorcycle killing the rider on the spot. Three passengers in the car sustained injuries and were admitted to the DHH, they said. Following the incident, locals staged a demonstration on the spot and paralysed traffic for a few hours. Police rushed to the spot and managed to bring the situation under control later, said Amitav Das, IIC, Bhadrak rural police station.



VIKSIT ODISHA FOR VIKSIT BHARAT



Inauguration, dedication to nation and foundation stone laying ceremony of 18 ground-breaking projects, worth over ₹68 thousand crores

by

Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi

On Saturday, 3rd February, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Inauguration

- 4-laning of Rimuli-Koida Section of NH-520
- 4-laning of Birmitrapur Brahmani bypass Section of NH-143
- 4-laning of Brahmani bypass to Rajamunda Section of NH-143
- IB-Valley Washery (10 MTPA), Lakhanpur
- Lajkura CHP – RLS
- Bhubaneswari Ph-I CHP-SILO
- Dhamra - Angul Pipeline Section (412 Km) of Jagdishpur-Haldia & Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline Project
- Permanent Campus of IIM Sambalpur

Flagging off

Puri-Sonepur-Puri Weekly Express

Dedication To The Nation

- NTPC Darlipali Super Thermal Power Project (2x800 MW)
- NSPCL Rourkela PP-II Expansion Project (1x250 MW)
- Doubling of Sambalpur– Talcher Railway Line
- Jhartarbha Sonepur New Railway Section
- Doubling of Jharsuguda-Barpali-Sardega Rail Line
- Renovated Jharsuguda Head Post Office Heritage Building

Foundation Stone Laying

NLC Talabira Thermal Power Project (3x800 MW)

Nagpur – Jharsuguda Pipeline Section (692 Km) of Mumbai –Nagpur – Jharsuguda Pipeline Project

Redevelopment of Sambalpur Railway Station

NTPC Talcher Thermal Power Project, Stage-III (2x660 MW)

In the august presence of

Shri Raghubar Das
Governor, Odisha

Shri Naveen Patnaik
Chief Minister, Odisha

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan
Union Minister of Education; and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw
Union Minister of Railways; Communications; and Electronics and Information Technology

Shri Bishweswar Tudu
Union MoS of Tribal Affairs; and Jal Shakti

Shri Nitesh Ganga Deb
Member of Parliament

Shri Nauri Nayak
Member, Odisha Legislative Assembly

WATCH LIVE ON



FOCUS INTERIM BUDGET

PROMISE OF GOLDEN ERA



The government's growth strategy seems to be one that will kickstart a virtual cycle while guarding against fiscal slippage, in view of international war situations

It is a sparkling poll budget right from the President's address of Draupadi Murmu harping on the economy, to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman harping on the need to give hope to the people, attract investments, highest capital expenditure, focus on rural recovery with housing, post-harvest activities unveiling series of programmes for farmers, women, middle class and dream GDP growth of 7.3 per cent.

The election emphasis was sharper in the President's speech as she unfolded the narrative of space to the economy and the finance minister announced bringing a White Paper on mismanagement of the economy till 2014, which marks an era of one of the five fragile economies led by Congress-led UPA. It may also illustrate how it is becoming one of the top five economies.

The President in her ceremonial address to the joint session of Parliament in the new building presented the government's achievements over 10 years across a variety of areas, offering a glimpse into the issues the BJP-led NDA might focus ahead of the 2024 elections. "Since childhood we have been hearing the slogan of the 'GaribiHatao' (Indira Gandhi's plank in 1971), now for the first time in our lives, we are witnessing eradication of poverty on a massive scale" adding that the poor people, youth, women, and farmers would be the four 'strong pillars' of Viksit Bharat.

Repeating the "four pillars", Sitharaman stressed on the various programmes on the path to progress and growth. She repeatedly harped on all kinds of farming classes - farmers, fishermen and dairy developers, the potential voters.

The interim budget is not without its focus to impress. It has large figures such as ₹47.65 lakh crore expenditure (about ₹3 lakh crore more than 2023-4), ₹30.8 lakh crore revenue including ₹26.06 lakh crore from taxes, capital expenditure outlay rise by 11.1 per cent to ₹11,11,111 crore, 3.4 percent of

GDP, a 50-year-interest free innovation loan and foreign direct investment of \$596 billion - twice the inflow during 2005-2014, the UPA period, inflow.

But a matter of concern is its fiscal deficit and maturity of dated securities, long term bonds that are to mature and have to be repaid. Though technically fiscal deficit comes down to 5.1 per cent from last year's 5.8 per cent, she said gross and net borrowings through dated securities would be ₹14.25 and ₹11.75 lakh crore. Total debt, external and internal, at ₹168.72 lakh crore on 31 March 2024 is set to rise to ₹183.67 lakh crore. Outstanding debt has increased by ₹15 lakh crore entailing the higher interest liabilities.

The finance minister has cut ₹32,000 crore subsidies in food, fertiliser and petroleum. The food subsidy cut comes amid the rising minimum support prices. It banks on reduction of numbers of beneficiaries following Aadhar linkages. The allocation to MNREGA, however, is raised to ₹86,000 crore from ₹60,000 crore of the current fiscal.

Outgo to states as their share of revenue is ₹22.22 lakh crore. Interest payment liability has been budgeted at ₹11.90 lakh crore, 10.18 percent more than 2023-24. The innovation funding as interest free loans for 50 years

may be reviewed. The time-frame is too long though and may give a psychological edge.

Sitharaman has not announced any concession on the tax front. The highest income tax rates remain at 39 per cent while corporate tax remains at 22 per cent and a new venture 15 per cent. Her core supporters are critical as she ignored the "middle class" facing high cumulative inflation of 27.5 per cent in five years at the rate of Reserve Bank of India's 5.5 per cent a year. One comment is interesting. It says, "We are clearly not a vote bank that needs to be appeased".

Expectedly her focus is on climate, farmers, agriculture growth and other measures that would immensely improve the conditions of the people as per the principle of 'Reform, Perform and Transform' and goes on to include MSMEs, aspirational districts, the Eastern region, and its people - Bihar and West Bengal, key electoral targets! Other than the PM housing for rural area, for the first time she mentioned housing for the middle class "living in rented houses, or slums, chawls and unauthorised colonies" to buy or build their own houses.

Along with are mentioned agriculture and food processing to employ 10 lakh persons, post-harvest activities includ-

ing aggregation, modern storage, supply chains and marketing, intense dairy development, setting up of fisheries department to boost Matsya Sampada, five aquatic parks and sea food exports. Also announced was the Atmanirbhar Oilseeds Abhiyan. The premise is that these sectors would transform critical sectors and please the crucial electorate in the farm sector in various parts of the country. However, difference of farm-gate prices and high retail for consumers has yet to be bridged.

Women have been wooed in different ways. A laudable scheme of course is vaccination for girls in age group of 9 to 14 for prevention of cervical cancer. Similarly, maternal and child health care is being brought under one comprehensive programme. Anganwadis are upgraded as centres for nutrition delivery, early childhood care and development. Ayushman Bharat benefits are being extended to all Asha, Anganwadi and helpers. It is expected to incentivise the grass-root workers.

Overall health has got ₹1,095 crore more at ₹90,170 crore and education ₹13,000 crore at ₹1.25 lakh crore. The budget also effects cut in ₹32,000 crore subsidies in food, fertiliser and petroleum.

The government is adhering to the fiscal glide path, retaining the capex focus offering as much as trillion rupees in 50-year interest-free loans to private players to take up scientific research. The finance minister is buoyant on consumer confidence and has subtle satisfaction of inflation being in the 2 to 6 per cent range even though the RBI has been insisting on 4 per cent target for stabilising the economy.

The government's growth strategy seems to be one that will kickstart a virtual cycle while guarding against fiscal slippage, in view of international war situations. The budget has many promises making good noises, but one only hopes that the final July budget would be different.

INFA



Shivaji Sarkar

THE BUDGET HAS MANY PROMISES MAKING GOOD NOISES, BUT ONE ONLY HOPES THAT THE FINAL JULY BUDGET WOULD BE DIFFERENT

All that is hard or obscure is bound to dissolve in the Eternal Love.

THE MOTHER



Leadership Puzzle

As the Lok Sabha elections approach, speculation is rife about the Enforcement Directorate (ED) appointing a regular director. The interim chief, Rahul Navin may be regularised, or a new incumbent might be brought in. Recent weeks have seen Rahul Navin's name circulating as the potential regular director for the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), another key investigating agency operating under an ad hoc arrangement since July 2022.

Some babu watchers believe that the Modi sarkar may strategically fill vacant yet key positions with regular appointees in the run-up to the elections. Notably, before SK Mishra's term concluded in September last year, names such as Nitin Gupta and Pravin Kumar, currently serving as Chairman and Member of CBDT respectively, were prominently mentioned as possible successors. Interestingly, the buzz began when Nitin Gupta was re-engaged as CBDT Chairman on a contract for a brief nine-month tenure ending in June 2024, aligning with the 2024 LS polls.

With sources indicating that the ED will have a regular chief before the election announcement, Modi's decision on whether to go for an interim arrangement or select a regular officer remains a focus for him as he seeks a third consecutive term at the Centre

IAS aspirations of DANICS officers deferred

The last meeting of the Departmental Promotion Committee for DANICS cadre officers by UPSC occurred in December 2019, resulting in 19 officers being promoted to IAS in January 2020. Since then, a four-year gap has hindered further promotions, leading to the accumulation of around 20 vacancies against sanctioned IAS posts for DANICS.

Sources report that over 30 officers now face career stagnation, with notable cases like T Phillip retiring next month without receiving due promotions despite meeting all eligibility criteria. Issues such as deficient Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APAR), vigilance concerns, and disciplinary matters have impeded progress.

Procedural delays involving officers like JK Jain, Raj Kumar and OP Mishra have adversely affected their batch (1995) and subsequent ones. Meanwhile, junior DANIPS cadre batches up to 2002-2003 have already been promoted to IPS. Contentious cases in the 1995 DANICS batch continue to affect successive batches negatively.

Sources have informed DKB that recent court cases have further complicated empanelment and promotions for various cadres, including IRS and CSS. Cadre-controlling authorities have advocated delaying contentious cases until their final resolution.

Despite DANICS officers being eligible for promotion to IAS, the average time for promotion has extended to 27-28 years. This contrasts sharply with states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, and Punjab, where state civil service cadres achieve IAS promotions within 8 to 10 years.

Warring Karnataka officers asked to give peace a chance

The Supreme Court has intervened in the ongoing feud between Karnataka's IAS officer Rohini Sindhuri and IPS officer D Roopa, offering them a renewed chance at reconciliation. The court's decision prohibits both officers from making public statements on the case, maintaining an interim stay on criminal defamation proceedings initiated by Sindhuri against Roopa last month.

The legal saga originated from Roopa's special leave petition against a criminal defamation suit filed by Sindhuri in Bengaluru. The Supreme Court had earlier directed Roopa to either delete contentious posts or express regret for a potential resolution.

In response to the court's directive, Roopa confirmed the removal of all posts related to Sindhuri from her social media accounts. The Karnataka High Court had ruled in August last year that Roopa must face a criminal trial based on Sindhuri's allegations of defamation.

The Supreme Court's intervention comes after a public spat in early 2023 left both officers without postings. In a positive turn, the officers were assigned new roles in September 2023. Sindhuri was named Chief Editor at the Karnataka Gazetteer Department, while Roopa became Inspector General of Police in the Internal Security Department. As legal proceedings continue, the court's intervention offers hope for a reconciliation in this high-profile squabble.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark. **RABINDRANATH TAGORE**
- There is an untroubled harmony in everything, a full consonance in nature; only in our illusory freedom do we feel at variance with it. **FYODOR TYUTCHEV**
- The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep. **ROBERT FROST**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1865:** In a personal meeting with Confederate representatives, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln offered liberal pardons in exchange for the South's quitting the Civil War, with reunion as a precondition of peace—an offer that was rejected.
- 1874:** Avant-garde American writer Gertrude Stein, whose Paris home was a salon for the leading artists and writers of the period between World Wars I and II, was born.
- 1917:** Not yet involved in World War I, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany after the Germans announced their intention to practice unrestricted submarine warfare.
- 1959:** American rock 'n' roll singer Buddy Holly was killed in a plane crash at age 22. Holly's style was influenced by gospel music, country music, and rhythm and blues acts, which he performed in Lubbock with his friends from high school.
- 1960:** The Italian comedy La dolce vita, which was directed by Federico Fellini, had its world premiere, and it became widely hailed as one of the most important films in cinema.

LOL

Those raccoons are not luggage

As migration approached, two elderly vultures doubted they could make the trip south, so they decided to go by airplane. When they checked their baggage, the attendant



noticed that they were carrying two dead raccoons. "Do you wish to check the raccoons through as luggage?" she asked. "No, thanks," replied the vultures. "They're carrion."

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Growth sans human development

While the interim budget has to be commended for its continued focus on infrastructure investment and will to contain fiscal deficits, the lack of mention of its intent to usher foundational learning and vocational education in government schools, inadequate allocation to improve health care infrastructure, and rising anaemia levels among children and women is extremely disappointing. While it leaves no stone unturned to decry the Congress government on every count, it fails to realise that be it HDI (Human Development Index), GII (Gender Inequality Index), GHI (Global Hunger Index), its track record in the human development parameters, IMR (Infant Mortality Rate), MMR (Maternal Mortality), MDPI (Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index), or women's representation in Parliaments, it continues to be equally unedifying.

First, the genuine achievements of the government must be put on record. From 12% allocation to capital expenditure out of total Central government expenditure during the Manmohan budget (2012), it has

now gone up to 23% under Modi. As percentage of GDP, it has swelled from 1.7% to 3.4% of GDP, as recommended by the Deepak Parekh Committee a decade ago. The prime beneficiaries of this allocation priority have been roads, railways, and defence. The 2023-24 budget witnessed a whopping increase of 23% over the previous year's budget and this year's 11%. This will have a Keynesian multiplier effect in terms of the overall output increase and the generation of additional employment. The allocation for the MNREGA programme, which creates work and ensures minimal livelihood for nearly 113.7 million households with unskilled workers, is praiseworthy. Besides 10.11 cr free gas to women (Ujjwala), 11.72 crore toilets (Swachh Bharat), tap water to 10.82 cr households (Jal Jeevan), 6.27 cr poor families having hospital care under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, and 2.6 cr pucca houses built, these are humongous achievements.

While the budget claims that 25 cr people have moved out of the MDPI, the SDG report says that 21.3% are still suffering from

malnutrition, 26.2% are deprived of clean cooking fuel, and nearly 24.6% have poor sanitation. Chronic malnutrition and poor sanitation are the prime causes of stunting among children (34.7%). While there have been a slew of programmes geared to the supplementary nutrition requirements of children and pregnant and nursing mothers under Indira's ICDS in 1975 and lately under Modi under Poshan (2019), the allocation to the Women & Child Development programme is a measly Rs 25848 cr, 0.4% increase over previous budget, the picture is equally disturbing in the Poshan programme, where the allocation is only Rs 15047 cr, a 0.4% increase over the previous year. Sadly, the allocation to Anganwadi Centre (22 lakh) catering to nutrition, basic health care, and early childhood education and care accounting for 70 million children and 10 million pregnant and nursing mothers, has been brought down from Rs 21948 cr to Rs 21200 cr for next year. In the Budget 2022-23, Sitharaman had promised to upgrade 2 lakh Anganwadi Centres. There was no commensurate

budget to resuscitate the rickety and leaky Anganwadi Centres. In the present budget, there is a repeat of the same promise without any additional allocation. The saddest omission in the budget is its lack of any reference to the wonderful NEP 2020 which sets a credible road map for foundational learning, vocational training, and early childhood education. The NEP rightly notes the dismal early childhood care and education and suggests proper training of the Anganwadi workers and improvement of infrastructure and ensures that foundational learning in terms of elementary reading, writing, and numeracy is ensured by the child reaches grade 3 by 2025. This is in the backdrop of scathing ASER survey reports, which point to very low levels of foundational learning. The irony of Nirmala's budget is a complete misalignment between allocation and economic infrastructure. This structural mismatch needs to be fixed if India aspires to become the envy of the world.

The writer is a leading development economist of Odisha.



Satya Narayan Misra

IN THE PRESENT BUDGET, THE GAP BETWEEN INTENT AND ALLOCATION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE GLARING AND IRONICAL

Fooling through fake numbers

Sir, Railway numbers hide more than they reveal. New rail lines like Puri-Konark, Jajpur-Keonjhar Road-Jajpur Town-Aradi, Keonjhar-Badampahar via Jashipur, Rayagada-Gopalpur; Bargarh-Nuapada via Padampur, and Junagarh Road-Nabarangpur have not been included in the Budget even after 10 years of the BJP-led NDA government. Not a penny has been spent on the Jaleswar-Digha railway line in the 10 years of this government. The line was sanctioned in 2011 and detailed estimates were approved in 2013. Let alone the acquisition of land, railways have not even asked for land. Even after seven years of inclusion in Budget, Gunupur-Theruvuli new railway line has not been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. Please note that land acquisition happens only after approvals and the submission of land schedule by the railways. Fake numbers of thousands of crores are marketed every year through the media. This is how it operates. The same method is adopted for Kottavalasa-Koraput and Jagdalpur-Koraput doubling projects, Vizianagaram-Titagarh 3rd line, Jharsuguda-Bilaspur 4th line, Raipur-Titagarh doubling, and the so-called allocation is added up for two states in each case. This is how people in Odisha are fooled by thousands of crores.

Barna Baibhaba Panda, BHUBANESWAR

Snow leopards in danger

Sir, The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SLPAI), under the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEPP), has put the number of snow leopards in India at 718. The study, which covered 1,20,000 km of the trans-Himalayan region, has recommended the setting up of a dedicated snow leopard cell at the Wildlife Institute of India. One of the loveliest big cats, snow leopards are seen predominantly in six Himalayan states: Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. Their anatomy is perfect for high altitude because they possess a large nasal cavity and an abundant number of Red Blood Corpuscles (RBC) that help them breathe oxygen well. The large and thick fur, along with the long and girthy tail, helps the snow leopard wrap itself up in the biting cold of the Himalayas. Sadly, habitat loss, poaching for its skull, climate and infrastructural change, and man-animal conflict have reduced the snow leopard population.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

HP shivers at sub-zero temperatures



The state capital Shimla recorded 5-cm deep snowfall and a minimum temperature of minus 0.6 degrees Celsius

leased for the repair of roads Thursday.

In the past 24 hours till 8 am, Triund received 75 cm of fresh snow while Narkanda and Shikari Devi were wrapped under 60-cm thick blanket of snow, followed by 45 cm each in Kamrunag and Chansel, 42.6cm in Shilaroo, 35 cm in Kothi and Khadralla, 30 cm each in Pangli, Jot, Bara Bhangal, Bir-Billing, Kapla, Parashar lake, Kufri and Khara-Patthar and Kufri, the weather bulletin showed.

The state capital Shimla recorded 5-cm deep snowfall and a minimum temperature of minus 0.6 degrees Celsius, it added. According to weather data, Kusumseri recorded a low of minus 13.8 degrees Celsius, followed by minus 7.0 degrees Celsius in Kalpa, minus 6.1 degrees Celsius each in Narkanda and Manali, minus 5.4 degrees Celsius in Sumdo, and minus 3.1 degree Celsius in Dalhousie.

Widespread rain lashed mid and lower hills and Nagrota Suriyan was wettest in the state with 57 mm rainfall, followed by 45 mm in Slapper, 38 mm each in Kahu and Ghaghas, 35 mm in Jogindernagar and 32 mm in Berthin. The local meteorological station has issued yellow warning for thunderstorm and lightning at isolated places February 3 and 4 under the influence of a fresh western disturbance and predicted a wet spell in the state till February 6.



AAP MP Swati Maliwal at Parliament House complex during the Budget session in New Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Feb 2: Shimla residents woke up to a fascinating view Friday with the entire town donning a mantle of snow but the sleet on road disrupted vehicular traffic and office-goers had a hard time commuting.

As many as 720 roads, including four national highways, in Himachal Pradesh are blocked following snow while 2,243 transformers are disrupted. The maximum of 250 roads are closed in Shimla district, followed by 163 in Chamba, 139 in Lahaul and Spiti, 67 in Kullu, 54 in Mandi and 46 in Kinnaur district, according to the data shared by the state emergency operation centre.

The vehicular traffic to upper Shimla areas was halted at several places due to closure of roads leading to Rohru, Chopal, Narkanda, Khadralla and other places. Snowfall and widespread rain caused sharp fall in minimum temperatures and residents in high altitude tribal areas shivered under piercing cold wave conditions with the mercury staying 14-18 degrees Celsius below the freezing point.

Snow blankets Dalai Lama's abode

Dharamsala: McLeodganj, the abode of the Dalai Lama in Himachal Pradesh, was marooned in a blanket of snow Thursday, weather officials said. However, lower areas like Dharamsala saw rain. The majestic Dhauladhar ranges of the Himalayas, forming the backdrop to the Tibetan spiritual leader's official palace, have been experiencing heavy snow, a Met Official said. McLeodganj has been receiving some of the heaviest snowfall in many years. The weather official said McLeodganj and its nearby areas like Naddi and Bhagsu have experienced more than one foot of snow. "McLeodganj is like a wonderland," remarked tourist Shubham Gill from Punjab's Amritsar, adding: "This is the season's first snowfall, but after many years in His Holiness' abode."

Machinery from low areas was shifted to snow-bound areas in a proactive move and the roads were cleared by sprinkling calcium chloride, Public Works Department Minister Vikramaditya Singh told reporters Friday.

Calcium chloride, a crystalline white colour ionic salt, made up of calcium and chlorine melts snow with immediate contact. The process is economical as the cost per kilometer is Rs 500 on a single lane.

Snowfall is important for drinking and irrigation schemes, agriculturists and horticulturists and tourism but best efforts would be put in to ensure that the roads are cleared, Singh said, adding that Rs 72 crore was re-

DELHI RECORDS 12.3 °C MINIMUM TEMP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 2: The national capital Friday recorded a minimum temperature at 12.3 degrees Celsius, four notches above the seasonal average, the India Meteorological (IMD) Department said.

The IMD's forecast for the day showed that the maximum temperature is likely to hover around 19 degrees, with the minimum at around 12 degrees.

This morning, Delhi and its neighbouring regions were enveloped by dense fog, causing

low visibility and significant disruptions in road, rail, and air travel. The IMD said that a layer of fog shrouded isolated areas of Delhi and East Uttar Pradesh, while dense fog was observed in isolated pockets of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Jharkhand.

Delhiites witnessed fog after two days of downpour, which brought some relief from fog resulting in better visibility.

The IMD further predicts 'very dense fog' for the day.

"Fog conditions observed (at 0530 hours IST of today): Very Dense fog over some parts of

Delhi; in isolated pockets of Haryana; Dense fog in isolated pockets of Rajasthan, East Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha; Moderate fog in isolated pockets of West Bengal," IMD posted on X.

'Scoring good marks not most important in life'

AGENCIES

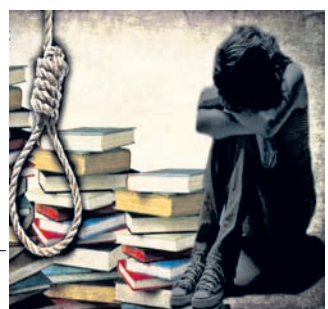
New Delhi, Feb 2: Discouraging the growing trend of suicides by students under pressure, the Delhi High Court has called upon the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) to put in conscious efforts for counselling students and making young minds understand that scoring good marks is not the most important thing in life and they can give their best without succumbing to the stress of performing better.

The court raised the concern while dealing with a petition concerning the alleged suicide last year by two IIT-Delhi students belonging to a Scheduled Caste (SC) community.

Police said an enquiry was conducted into the two incidents of July and September last year, and while there was no evidence of caste-based discrimination, it was found that the deceased were failing in multiple subjects and were under pressure to perform better academically.

"This court can understand the sentiments of the parents of the deceased and deeply discourages the growing trend of pressuring young minds to perform the best in every aspect of life, leading them to take unfortunate steps," said Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar in the order released on Thursday.

"It is high time that the faculty as well as other staff members of the Indian Institute of Technology make conscious efforts and take endeavours to counsel, encourage, motivate and invigorate the students. It is of utmost priority to make the young minds understand that though scoring good marks and performing your best is important, but it is not the most important thing in life and one can certainly give his or her best without succumbing to the pressures or stress of performing better," the court said.



Himachal to be a frontrunner in reducing fossil fuels: CM

The state transport department was the first in the country to adopt e-vehicles, marking a successful milestone in our commitment to environmental sustainability, CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu was quoted as saying

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Feb 2: Himachal Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu Friday said that 19 electric vehicles launched by the

transport department have proven to be game changer for environment and cost savings of Rs 28 lakh in one year.

The state transport department was the first in the country to adopt e-vehicles, marking a successful milestone in our commitment to environmental sustainability, Sukhu was quoted as saying in a statement.

The launch of 19 electric vehicles in the Transport Department has proven to be a game changer for both environment conservation and cost savings and replacement of fossil-fuel based vehicles resulted in savings of Rs 28 lakh in the state exchequer in just one year, he said in a statement.



Last year, February 3, the transport department was provided with 19 e-vehicles across 12 Regional Transport Offices and in the transport directorate.

Sukhu said that he is also using an e-vehicle, while in Shimla town. The State

Government has envisioned a green revolution, promoting the widespread adoption of electric vehicles and aiming to become the frontrunner in sustainable transportation, he added.

Sukhu said that the State Government was committed to

foster sustainability in transportation operations, curb air pollution particularly in urban areas and reduction in carbon footprint will also have a positive impact on the public health.

The State Government is also strengthening the infrastructure for green mobility and six green corridors will be completed by the end of this current financial year. He said that the state aims to reduce dependency on imported fossil fuels, ensuring that funds remain within the State envisioning a future with sustainable eco-friendly transportation coexisting harmoniously with the breathtaking Himalayan landscapes.

Get experience of 'driving' train at this Delhi Metro station

People can take an online quiz on Delhi Metro through a kiosk, officials said. Another huge screen displays the metro network with icons marking tourist sites nearby, and details about such sites can be seen by clicking on icons

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: Visitors at a prominent Delhi Metro station can get an experience of 'driving' a train as the DMRC has installed interactive museum exhibits to engage more with passengers and people in general.

The exhibits were unveiled Wednesday at the Shivaji Stadium metro station in the presence of Vikas Kumar, Managing Director of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.

The simulator consists of a screen and a joystick, and visitors can get an immersive experience of 'sitting in a train pilot's seat' by pulling the lever, the action being translated on the screen which carries simulated visuals.

Besides, an interactive digital display through a wide screen mounted on a kiosk allows visitors to navigate through the history of the DMRC since its inception in 1985 to the first groundbreaking held October 1, 1998, onto opening of its first corridor in December 2002.

People can also take an online quiz on Delhi Metro through a kiosk, offi-



cial said. Another huge screen displays the metro network with icons marking tourist sites nearby, and details about such sites can be seen by clicking on icons.

Also, a huge working model depicts a train, underground and elevated tracks, bridges and viaducts at the station's interactive zone. A demonstration by some of the sniffer dogs deployed as part of the CISF security cover was also held on the occasion.

The exhibits at the Shivaji Stadium metro station have been installed, besides the existing museum of Delhi Metro at Patel Chowk station. Started in 2009, this museum has space constraints, the officials said. The DMRC is now planning to set up a bigger metro museum at the Supreme Court metro station on the Blue Line, where the exhibits currently placed at the Shivaji Stadium metro station will be relocated, and many more exhibits will be added in future.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा
Bank of Baroda

REGIONAL STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH : SAMBALPUR
Ground Floor, At: Christian Para, G.M. College Chowk,
Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN - 768001

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to be held for SI No.1: on 07.03.2024 & for SI No.2: on 11.03.2024 from 2.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrowers and Guarantors that the below described Immovable properties Mortgage/Charged to the Secured Creditor, will be sold on the basis of "SYMBOLIC POSSESSION" of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrowers/Guarantors/Secured Assets/Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below-

PROPERTY INSPECTION DATE AND TIME : 02.03.2024 time 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM.
Status of Possession of Properties: Physical, Encumbrance Known to Bank - NIL

Last Date of Submission of online payment of EMD : For SI No.1: 06.03.2024 & For SI No.2: 08.03.2024 latest by 2.00 P.M.
The linking of interested property started: after 5.00 P.M. on 06.03.2024 till 2.00 P.M. on 07.03.2024 for SI No.1 & after 5.00 P.M. on 08.03.2024 till 2.00 P.M. on 11.03.2024 for SI No.2
The scheduled date of Auction to be held for SI No.1: on 07.03.2024 & for SI No.2: on 11.03.2024 from 2.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M.

Sl. No.	Branch/Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the Property & the Owner	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increase Amount	Total Dues (Type of Possession)
1.	BARAGARH BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Bira Kishor Dash, S/o: Nilamani Dash, Add-1- Back Side of Mini Stadium, Ward No:13, PO:Dist.: Bargarh, PIN- 768028, Odisha, Add-2- Sauntapur, PO.:Gudesira, Via: Bardol, Dist: Bargarh, PIN-768028 / Guarantors: 1) Mrs. Leelamayee Dash, W/o: Bira Kishor Dash, Add-1-Ward No:13, Behind Mini Stadium, Dist: Bargarh, PIN-768028, Odisha, Add-2-Sauntapur, PO: Gudesira Via: Bardol, Dist: Bargarh, PIN- 768028, 2) Nilamani Dash, S/o: Mr. Sananda Dash, At: Sauntapur, PO: Gudesira, PS: Sadar, Dist.: Bargarh, PIN: 768028, Odisha	Equitable Mortgage of Property Consisting of MS. Khata No:2414/11411, Plot No: 68/1/20843, Area: Ac0.135 Dec, Mouza: Ward No.: 18, Bargarh, PS/Tahasil/Dist: Bargarh, Standing in the name of Mrs. Leelamayee Dash, W/o: Mr. Birakishor Dash, Bounded by North: Smt Sita Panigrahi, South: Road, East: Pramod Kumar Panigrahi, West: Pramod Kumar Panigrahi	₹51,03,000/- ₹5,10,300/- ₹20,000/-	₹ 2,01,21,158.16 plus further interest and charges, legal expenses thereon as on 20.11.2023 till full payment (Physical)
2.	SUNDERGARH BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) M/s. Mangala Motors, Represented by its Prop. : Mr. Jagannath Pruseth, S/o: Late Nilakantha Pruseth, 2) Mr. Jagannath Pruseth, S/o: Late Nilakantha Pruseth, At: Tola- Mohantypara, Behind of District Co-Operative Bank, PO: Sundergarh, P.S.: Town Sundergarh, Dist.: Sundergarh, PIN- 770001 / Guarantor: Mr. Shashanka Sekhar Nayak, S/o: Mr. Lalit Nayak, House No-25, At: Mundalasa, PO: Sagara, Dist.: Sambalpur, PIN- 768224	Equitable Mortgage of Property Consisting of MS. Khata No: 183, Plot No: 2443/3534, Area: Ac0.10 Dec, Mouza: Chitabhang, PS/Tahasil/Dist: Sundergarh, Standing in the name of Mr. Jagannath Pruseth, S/o: Late Nilakantha Pruseth, Bounded by North: Owner Land, South: Private Land and Rakhita, East: Plot No.: 2441, West: Plot No.: 3523	₹19,60,000/- ₹1,96,000/- ₹20,000/-	₹ 2,26,58,185.48 plus further interest and charges, legal expenses thereon as on 27.01.2023 till full payment (Physical)

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.bankofbaroda.com/e-auction.htm and https://ibapi.in

Also prospective bidders may contact the Authorized Officer on Mob:7278141330

STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS FOR SUBSEQUENT SALE UNDER RULE 6(2) & 8(6) AS PER AMENDED SARFAESI ACT 2002

This may also be treated as notice under rule 6(2) & 8(6) of security interest (Enforcements) Rules, 2002 to the Borrowers / Guarantors of the said loan about holding of E-Auction sale on the above mentioned date

Place: Sambalpur, Date: 02.02.2024

Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

Scan here for more details

of the day quote

Art and crafts cut across borders and build bridges of understanding
DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

The Assam government will introduce a bill to end polygamy in the state during the upcoming budget session of the assembly
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

While people are happy about the consecration of the new Ram temple in Ayodhya, it does not mean they will vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party on the mandir issue in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls
RAJ THACKERAY | MNS CHIEF



Unemployment has broken all records. Big institutes of the country such as IIMs and IITs are facing the challenge of placements. There is neither any vision nor any plan in the budget to create new jobs and deal with unemployment. The biggest misfortune is that the finance minister did not say a single word on unemployment
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

403 INDIAN STUDENTS DIED ABROAD SINCE 2018: GOVT

A total of 403 incidents of death of Indian students abroad have been reported since 2018 due to various reasons with Canada topping the list with 91 cases followed by 48 in the UK, the Government informed Lok Sabha Friday



Will pursue Gyanvapi case till SC: AIMPLB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: The Varanasi district court arrived at the decision of allowing 'puja' in a Gyanvapi mosque cellar in "haste", the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) said Friday, asserting it would pursue the matter right up to the Supreme Court.

Muslim organisations under the umbrella of AIMPLB also said they are seeking time from President Droupadi Murmu to apprise her of their concerns and may also write to Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud.

The AIMPLB also said the Places of Worship Act, 1991, should be implemented in letter and spirit to prevent disputes arising in the country. The AIMPLB's reaction came soon after the Allahabad High Court Friday adjourned till February 6 hearing on an appeal filed by the Anzuman Intezamia Masjid Committee challenging the Varanasi court order.



All India Muslim Personal Law Board President Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani during a press conference in New Delhi

The committee, which looks after the affairs of the mosque, had moved the High Court Thursday, within hours of the Supreme Court refusing to hear its plea against the Varanasi district court's order and asking it to approach the High Court.

AIMPLB president Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani said the decision of allowing puja at the mosque cellar has pained not only Muslims but people of other religions as well who believe in secularism. "The notion

that a mandir (temple) was demolished to build a mosque is wrong. Islam does not allow taking away someone's land to build a mosque," he said.

"The court ruled on it in haste and the other (Muslim) side was not even given a chance to put forward its arguments in detail. This has hurt the confidence of minorities in the judiciary," Rahmani told a press conference.

"In the Babri Masjid decision, it was accepted that the temple was not brought down to build

a mosque but the decision was made in the favour of the other side on the basis of 'aastha (faith). Courts should rule on the basis of facts and not 'aastha'," he said.

He said the Places of Worship Act is a very important law as "we can prevent disputes through it". If this is not implemented in letter and spirit it will give rise to disputes in the country, the AIMPLB president said.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind president Maulana Arshad Madani claimed the Muslim side was not given a chance to present its case before the court "we wanted to which is very disappointing". "We will take the matter to the highest of courts," he said. "If such a big minority says that it is losing faith in the judiciary, it is not good for the country." "Some people are saying that the matter of Gyanvapi came into existence after the Places of Worship Act, 1991, but the fundamental principle of the law is that the place of worship as it stood in 1947 will remain the same," he said.

IIT Madras becomes first IIT to introduce sports quota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras has become the first IIT to introduce sports quota for its undergraduate admissions and will create two supernumerary seats in each course from the 2024-25 academic session, according to its director V Kamakoti.

Currently, the IITs do not have a sports quota while many of the country's premier universities, including Delhi University, do. "Starting from 2024-2025 academic session, IIT Madras will offer two supernumerary seats per undergraduate programme for Indian nationals under the Sports Excellence Admission (SEA) programme. "We are the first IIT to introduce sports quota and the idea is to reward and encourage students who have achieved a certain level of excellence in sports of their choice," Kamakoti said.

"Two seats per programme will be allotted through the SEA. While one will be gender-neutral, other will be female-only," he added. To be eligible for admission through SEA, candidates must have secured a position in the Common Rank List (CRL) or category-wise rank list in the JEE (Advanced) and must have won at least one medal in any national and international-level sports competition in the last four years.

The candidate will also be required to have obtained the minimum required Class 12 marks as per the eligibility criteria for IIT admissions. "A separate Sports Rank List (SRL) will be prepared based on the total score obtained by the candidates based on their performance in specific



list of sports. The seat allotment will be done based on SRL only," he explained.

The idea was mooted by IIT Madras before the IIT Council, the apex body of the top tech institutions, last year. "The notion of sports quota exists in the higher education system in India but hasn't been introduced in IITs yet. In principle, all IITs had welcomed the proposal. A detailed implementation modalities and timelines were prepared in consultation with JEE Apex Board (JAB)," he said.

JAB is responsible for deciding guidelines for the conduct of JEE (Main) examination and also co-ordinating the conduct of JEE (Advanced) exam for admissions to IITs. IIT Madras is conducting the JEE-Advanced this year. Among the sports for which candidates will be eligible for admission under the quota are aquatic, athletics, chess, cricket, badminton, basketball, football, hockey, squash, table tennis, lawn tennis, volleyball and weightlifting.

"For the academic year 2024-2025, the SEA will consider the scores obtained by the candidates in these sports only to ensure the availability of facilities at the admitting IIT so that the candidates can continue to excel in sports," Kamakoti said.

Different weightage will be allocated to different national and international games with the highest being for World Championship and SAF games.

SHORT TAKES

1 dead, 31 hurt in Himachal fire

Shimla/Chandigarh: A woman was brought dead to PGIMER here Friday evening and 31 others were injured after a fire broke out in a factory in the Baddi industrial area of Himachal Pradesh's Solan district in the afternoon, officials said.

Congress spent Rs 71.8 cr on BJJ

New Delhi: The Congress spent Rs 71.8 crore on its Kanyakumari to Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra which amounts to an average of more than Rs 49 lakh per day for the 145-day journey that culminated in Srinagar January 30 last year. The party spent Rs 40,10,15,572 on pre-poll surveys in 2022-23, up from Rs 23,00,000 that it had spent in the previous fiscal, as per the party's latest annual audit report filed with the Election Commission for FY 2022-23. The party's election expenditure was more than Rs 192.5 crore in 2022-23, down from more than 279.5 crore in the previous fiscal. During the period of the audit, the party fought elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh in 2022 and Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya in early 2023. The party won in Himachal Pradesh.

AAP, BJP hold protests against each other



Police personnel stop AAP supporters during a protest in New Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: The AAP and the BJP staged counter-protests within a few hundred metres of each other as the Delhi Police deployed a large number of personnel and multiple layers of barricading to keep order, turning central Delhi into a fortress that caused traffic jams at several places.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had planned its demonstration in front of the BJP headquarters here against the alleged "cheating" in the Chandigarh mayoral elections, while the BJP's protest was before the AAP office over alleged "corruption" in the Arvind Kejriwal government.

But workers and leaders of the two parties could not reach their planned protest sites - their offices are barely 800 metres apart - owing to a wall of barricades and police personnel de-

ployed on the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg.

Not just in central Delhi, police said "elaborate arrangements" were made on the national capital's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to maintain law and order. A total of 48 BJP and 15 Aam Aadmi Party workers were detained as they tried to breach barricades, police said, adding that no Delhi cabinet minister and MLA were detained.

Addressing a large gathering at the protest at his party's office, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal targeted the BJP, saying if it can "rig" the Chandigarh mayoral polls, it could go to any extent in Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

Referring to the BJP, he said, the world's biggest party was caught on camera "stealing" votes in the Chandigarh mayoral polls. The elections to the posts of mayor, senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor were held Tuesday and the BJP won all defeating the Congress-AAP alliance.

BJP leaders and workers, who gathered in large numbers in front of their party's office waving flags and holding placards and posters criticising Kejriwal, attacked his government, alleging it is corrupt. They demanded Kejriwal's resignation.

Champai takes oath as Jharkhand CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Feb 2: After two days of political uncertainty, JMM legislature party leader Champai Soren Friday was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand and the JMM-led coalition government will seek a vote of confidence February 5.

Along with Champai Soren, senior Congress leader Alamgir Alam and RJD leader Satyanand Bhokta were sworn in as state ministers by Governor C P Radhakrishnan at the Raj Bhavan. Immediately after the swearing-in, 38 lawmakers of the ruling alliance were flown to Hyderabad to prevent any poaching attempt by the BJP in the run-up to the trust vote.

In its first cabinet meeting, the Champai Soren-led coalition government decided to seek a vote of trust Monday. The Governor gave 10 days to Champai Soren to prove a majority in the Assembly, prompting the alliance to shift its MLAs from Jharkhand, a legislator said. A senior leader of the coalition said: "The decision to shift the legislators to Hyderabad, the capital of Congress-ruled Telangana, was taken considering that the opposition BJP may make attempts to poach them."

India to replace military personnel in Maldives

New Delhi: India will replace its military personnel in the three aviation platforms in the Maldives by May 10 and the first phase of the process would be completed by March 10, the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said Friday after a high-level meeting between the two sides on the contentious issue. The Maldivian foreign ministry's comments came hours after the India-Maldives core group concluded a meeting in Delhi that primarily focussed on withdrawal of Indian military personnel from the island nation. The MEA said both sides agreed on a "set of mutually workable solutions" to enable continued operation of Indian aviation platforms.

Indian Navy foils piracy attempt

New Delhi: The Indian Navy foiled a piracy attempt on an Iranian-flagged fishing vessel with a crew of 11 Iranian and eight Pakistani nationals along the east coast of Somalia, in the latest in a series of such rescue missions in the region. Indian warship INS Sharda came to the rescue of FV Omaril after seven pirates boarded it and took the crew as hostages, officials said Friday.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, DEO CANAL DIVISION, KARANJIA
 AT/PO-KARANJIA, DIST-MAYURBHANJ-757037, Tel:06796-220124, e-mail: eedcd2016@gmail.com

"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.:05/SEDCD of 2023-24 (Online)
 No.A-1396:Name of Work : As per Detailed Tender Call Notice. Total No. of Packages: 01 (One), Estimated Cost of Package: 25.42 Lakh. Period of Completion: 03 Months. Class of Contractor: "C & B". Other details:
 Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of tender on-line for bidding
 Superintending Engineer, 05/SEDCD of From To
 Deo Canal Division, Karanjia 2023-24 (on-line) 05.02.2024 at 10.00 A.M. 15.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.
 OIPR-32380/11/0006/2324 Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Deo Canal Division, Karanjia

OHPC
ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD.
 OFFICE OF THE SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER (ELECTRICAL), UPPER KOLAB HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT
 AT/PO- BARINIPUT, DIST-KORAPUT-764006, PHONE: (06854) 242001, FAX:(06854) 242038
 E-mail:sgmet_ukhep@ohpccltd.com CIN:U40101OR1995SG003963

E-Tender NOTICE No.UKHEP-13/2023-24, Dated 01.02.2024
 No.CAD-3959:The Unit Head, Upper Kolab Hydro Electric Project, Bariniput, Koraput, Odisha invites percentage rate bid in single cover system in ONLINE MODE only from eligible contractors for the works as mentioned below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	EMD (In Rs.)	Cost of bid document	Class of Contractor	Availability of Bids online for Bidders	Due date and time of Opening of Bid
1	Construction of boundary wall around area proposed for shifting of existing distribution transformer, earth filling to the same area & construction of catch water drain, UKHEP Bariniput.	40,72,878.35/-	40,729/-	7090/- (Rs.6000+18% GST)	"B" Class	From 10.00 AM of 09.02.2024 to 13.00 Hrs. of 20.02.2024	At 11.30 Hrs. of 21.2.2024

1. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only through the Govt. e-Procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in, by using their compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC). 2. Further details like tender specification (DTCN), BOQ and any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can be seen in the same website.
 OIPR-04002/11/0068/2324 Sd./- Unit Head, UKHEP, Bariniput

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, NUAPADA
 Email: rd_nuapada@rediffmail.com
BID IDENTIFICATION No. RWNPD-12 (Online) of 2023-24
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
 No. O-2398: Bid documents consisting of Work, Estimate Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD/BID Security, Time of Completion, Class of Contractor and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

1. Name of the Work	: Road & Building works in the District of Nuapada as mentioned in DTCN
2. Total No. of Works	: 06 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost	: Rs.5.39 to 46.15 lakh
4. Period of Completion	: 20 (Twenty) to 09 (Nine) Calendar Months
5. Other details	:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of Opening of Tender
		From	To		
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nuapada	RWNPD-12/2023-24 (Online)	06.02.2024 at 10.00 A.M.	16.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.	15.02.2024 upto 05.00 P.M.	17.02.2024 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
 OIPR-25050/11/0019/2324 Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nuapada

Government of Odisha
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Rural Works Division-II, Dhenkanal
Kamakhyanager
 No.O-2401: E-mail: rw.kamakhyanager@yahoo.co.in
e-Procurement Notice No.18/Building Work/2023-24

1. Name of the Work	: Building Work
2. Total No. of Works	: 1 (One) No.
3. Tender Cost	: Rs.1.72 (Approx.)
4. Class of Contractor	: "D" & "C" Class
5. Period of Completion	: 01 Calendar Month
6. Availability of Tender online for bidding	: 05.02.2024 at 11.00 AM to 11.02.2024 upto 5.00 PM
7. Last date & Time of seeking tender clarification	: 10.02.2024 upto 4.00 PM
8. Date & Time of opening of Technical Bid	: 12.02.2024 at 11.00 AM

Other details can be seen from the website http://tendersorissa.gov.in
 Sd./- Executive Engineer
 R.W.Division-II, Dhenkanal
 Kamakhyanager
 OIPR-25094/11/0022/2324

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
SOIL CONSERVATION, PURI
 Station Bazar, Puri-752002
 E-Mail:asco.puri@gmail.com/pdws.puri@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. : ADSC, PURI-02 of 2023-24
 No.L-219:The Assistant Director, Soil Conservation, Puri on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in single cover system in ONLINE MODE , as detailed below.

- Estimated Cost- Ranging from Rs. 28 lakhs to 49.5 lakhs
- Bid Cost: Rs 6,000/- as Mentioned against each in Column - 04
- Period of completion: Calendar Months Mentioned in Column - 07
- No. of works (Tender): 5 nos.
- EMD: As mentioned in Column-05
- Class of Contractor: As Mentioned in Column - 06
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: 02.02.2024 at 11.00 A.M. To 15.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal: 15.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date of submission of documents: 16.02.2024 11.00 A.M. to 19.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M. (Except Holidays)
- Date & time of opening of online bids: 20.02.2024 12.00 PM & onwards
- Name and address of the officer inviting Bid :Assistant Director, Soil Conservation, Puri
 Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tendersodisha.gov.in

A. All the volumes / documents shall be uploaded in the portal by the Procurement Officer Administrator and published by Procurement Officer Publisher (Officer Inviting tender)
 B. The Tender documents published by the Tender inviting Officer (Procurement Officer Publisher) in the website "http://tendersodisha.gov.in" will appear in the Latest.
 C. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website "http://tendersodisha.gov.in". Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.
 Sd./-
 Asst. Director, Soil Conservation, Puri
 OIPR-08164/11/0005/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA
 Ph:06670-230656 (O), E_mail:rw_bhawanipatna@yahoo.co.in
 Letter No.497, Date:02.02.2024
 No.O-2402: e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.EERWBPT/Online-13/2023-24

1. Name of Works	: Road work (As per Annexure-A)
2. Total No. of Work	: Road-7 No.
3. Estimated Cost	: As per Annexure- 'A'
4. E.M.D.	: 1 % of Estimated Cost
5. Cost of Tender document	: As per Annexure- 'A'
6. Class of Contractor	: Please refer DTCN & Annexure A
7. Other details	: As per DTCN & www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	
		From	To
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bhawanipatna	EERWBPT/Online- 13/2023-24	03.02.2024	12.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which is available in website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
 Executive Engineer
 Rural Works Division, Bhawanipatna
 OIPR-25070/11/0001/2324

ZILLA PARISHAD,
SAMBALPUR
 Dist- Sambalpur, Odisha-768001
 Ph:0663-2410992, Email Id:ori-dsambalpur@nic.in

TENDER CALL NOTICE
 Notice No.537/ Date 1.2.2024
 No.CAD-3955:Sealed Tenders are invited from GST registered dealers/suppliers/manufacturing organisations/ MSME Firms based in Odisha FOR SUPPLY OF SPORTS KITS/ DANCE COSTUME/ MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS for tribal youth clubs/ sports clubs/ cultural institutions under Annual Action Plan of SDC, Sambalpur for the year 2023-24. Intending bidders may download the Bid documents containing eligibility criteria and detail terms and conditions of the tender can be downloaded from the website https://Sambalpur.nic.in.

The sealed tenders should reach the Office of the "Chief Development Officer-cum-EO, ZP, Sambalpur on or before 05.02.2024 up to 05.30 PM by Regd. post/ Speed post/ Courier only and the same will be opened on 06.02.2024 at 11.00 AM in the Conference Hall of Zilla Parishad, Sambalpur" in presence of the bidders or their authorised representatives. The details of the bidding process are as follows

Sl. No.	Bidding Schedule	Date and Time
1	Last Date of submission of Bid	05.02.2024 upto 5.30 PM
2	Opening of Technical Bid	06.02.2024 at 11 AM
3	Opening of Financial Bid	06.02.2024 at 11 AM

Bidders are required to submit the technical and financial bids separately. The bids in sealed Cover-I containing "Technical Bid" and sealed Cover-II containing "Financial Bid" should be placed in third sealed cover super-scribed "TENDER CALL NOTICE FOR SELECTION OF FIRMS FOR SUPPLY OF SPORTS KITS or DANCE COSTUME or MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS". The Tenders must reach the undersigned on or before 05.2.2024 by 5.30 PM through Speed Post/ Regd. Post/ Courier only in the following address.
 CDO-cum-EO, Zilla Parishad, Sambalpur
 Katcheri Road
 At/Po/Dist-Sambalpur,Pin-768001
 Sd./-CDO-cum-Executive Officer
 OIPR-19241/11/0016/2324 Zilla Parishad, Sambalpur

Forging Odia identity through Meher's poetic rebellion

Odisha as a state gained its present boundaries on the first of April in 1936. The journey of its regional and linguistic success is a celebratory one because, unlike most regions, Odisha stood scattered among many provinces. While Ganjam and Visakhapatnam were under the control of Madras presidency, the coastal regions of Puri, Balasore and Cuttack were taken over by the Bengal presidency, and finally, the Koshali-speaking western belt of Sambalpur had been included in the Central province. Hence, the Odia-speaking community served as a linguistic minority in all the provinces, languishing in ignorance.

The colonial powers first invested their controls through the southern districts as they were gifted to them by the then Nizam of Hyderabad in 1803. The British hold became widespread only when they swelled up to vigour in the presidential provinces of Bengal and Madras. It was in fact the rulers of Bengal, formerly the Afghans followed by the Moguls, who had a significant impact on the produce and inhabitants of present Odisha. But that was from 1568 to 1751. In 1751 the Marathas defeated the Moguls and took over parts of Odisha as well, until 1803, when the Nizams both rose and declined in power and gifted the districts away. The outcome of these multiple invasions was a plethora of linguistic influence and interference with the original classical language.

The speakers, being a minority in a scattered plain, were ignored, and the language neared loss of extinction. The threats turned gigantic when Bengali officials ordered Bangla to be the official language in the mid-1850s in the entire region. As a result, the native language of Odia suffered a loss at the hands of Indian insiders. Undoubtedly, the decades-long interaction with Europeans and their education system had gained Bengal its class of English and Bengali-speaking elites, which in turn also conveys that the exposure of Europeans to Bengali literature was immense compared to Odia. This seemingly created a superiority complex in the former. It was in fact this complex that made the officials enforce the Bengali language on Odia youths.

Although lesser in number, but with the setting up of schools, a class of Odia-speaking and English-understanding youth emerged in various parts of the fragmented Odisha by the mid-nineteenth century. These elites were highly aware of the poverty of exposure that the Odia language had, and were also sensitive about the kind of exploitation the language and its speakers had to bear for centuries. These Odia elites stood in opposition to the impact of not only the Bangla language on the coast

but also to the control of Telugu in the South and Hindi in the West. Their collective effort was to awaken the Odia identity and uplift it from its state of minority.

Among all, the elites who contributed much to the formation and strengthening of this collective Odia identity were Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918), Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), Madhusudhan Rao (1853-1912), Radhanath Ray (1848-1908), Madhusudan Das (1848-1934) etc. They all actively began writing in Odia against the discrimination that was prevalent then. Although they all operated in different regions, but their interest was unified. The poverty of literature, which was cited as a major reason behind abolishing it as a language, was overcome by visionary writer Fakir Mohan Senapati when he set up the first printing press in 1866 and encouraged the writers of Odia language to shape the intellect of the natives from scratch.

Setting up the press helped Odia to take baby steps towards creating and distributing literature. It was finally in 1869 that the language faced its full frontal blow of ignorance, wherein K.C.

Bhattacharya's infamous debate made the attitudes of Bengali rulers and officials clear. He strongly believed that Odia was merely a derivative of the Bangla language and did not qualify as an independent language at all. This statement and notion engraved deep cuts in the hearts of Odia writers and prompted them to strengthen the glory of their native language.

By that time in the century, the First War of Independence (1857), had already taken place. So it was clear that while the northern part of India was dealing with a broad notion of unity and nationality, Odisha, on the other hand, was struggling for its regional independence and unification. Therefore, after hearing what Kanti Chandra Bhattacharya had to say about Odia, the reformers of the land,

Raja Baikunthanath De and Bichitrnananda Pattnaik joint handedly framed a memorandum which demanded the merger of all the fragments of Odia-speaking land in 1875, but all went in vain?

With the roars of unified nationalism growing louder and louder in the north, the Hindi tongue

gained priority as a national language. Along with the overpowering controls of Bangla, Odia now had to fight the powers of Hindi for its existence. Hindi makes its entrance to the Central province of which Sambalpur was a part. While Senapati wrote vehemently on the coast, here in the western belt, Gangadhar Meher gained importance for spreading awareness. Meher was known for his exquisite metaphorical language and romantic style of painting rural pictures in his poems. But the poet took a sharp turn from his style when he became aware of the Hindi language, making its swift movements towards the decline of the Odia language. After the grand failure of the 1875 memorandum, most Odia poets suffered setbacks. Writings became increasingly patriotic in tone, but the devotion was for Odisha and not for the bigger picture of one nation. Meher, too, during the time, wrote voluminously to awaken the spirits of union.

In 1894, he wrote "Bharati

Rodana"—a poem of great length on the slow and painful death of the Odia language in the hands of Hindi. The poem treats Hindi as a foreign language that not only tries to substitute Odia in all fields but also possesses the greater threat of leading it to its extinction. Meher personified the land of Sambalpur as a representative Odia mother. A mother who is crying outrageously as her sons, the youths, are armless before the despotic. Through the mother figure spoke Meher: He invoked the minds of youths to unite and create agitations against the imposition. He expressed the regret of being in such a disadvantageous position and the agony of not being able to do anything significant for the union. The lamentation is then followed by an invitation to Barpalli, the district centre, to raise their powerful voices against the oppression. Meher, while expressing the "Rodana" or painful cries of "Bharati", the mother, also makes a limpid distinction between who is the rightful son of the land and who is not. Taking the liberty of words, Meher conveys his ardent desire to unify the land for the interest of the primary Odia language and requests all his readers to be a part of the cause and fight for the significance of their mother tongue.

His words certainly make a point that each passing hour is a strike at the language, and thus, those who have forgotten their mother tongues or those who do not have the heart to stand against exploitation are cowards and selfish.

In 1895 came the proposal of substituting Odia for Hindi in the

district headquarters of Sambalpur as the official language. The announcement itself was so deep a cut that it prompted Meher to pen "Utkala-Bharatinka Nibedana" in 1895, soon after the proposal was made to the Chief Commissioner.

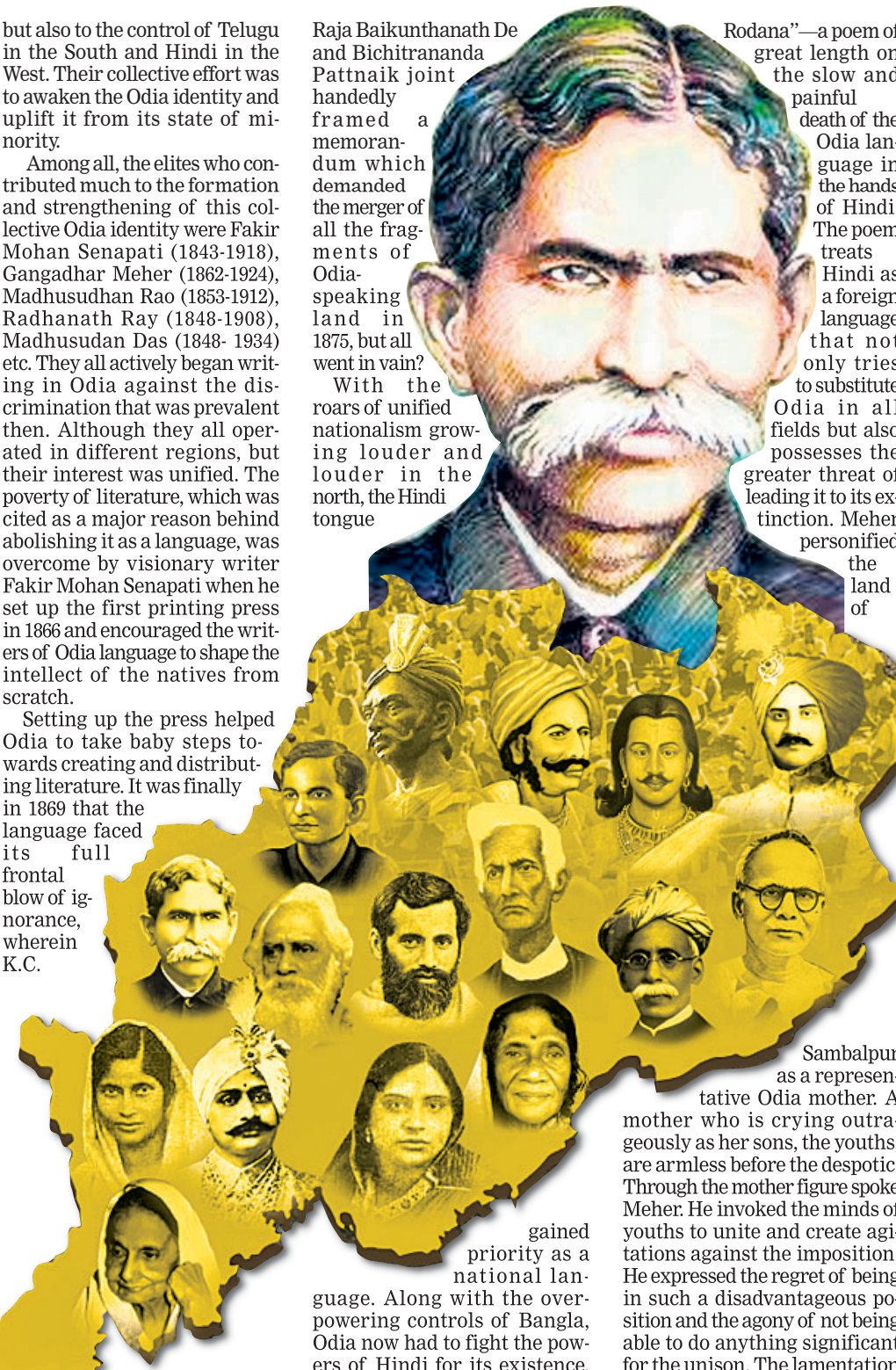
While he could only predict the fall in the previous poem, in this, however, he was certain about it and thus made his stanzas more prosaic than verseful. He made another personified effort, which gave out a firmer plea for revolution instead of only lamenting. He laid all emphasis on the survival of the native language before anything. Meher even urged his readers to surrender their lives for the cause. Once again, in this work, he portrays Sambalpur as the sad and ephemeral mother. He calls her 'Dukhini', a sad individual who has been betrayed by her own sons. This time, other than invoking the youths for a linguistic cause, Meher makes numerous allusions to social reformers Balaram, Bal Mukund Patnaik, Dinabandhu Patnaik, Gopinath Guru and Banamali Mishra. He tries to convey that had these figures been alive, Odia language would never have been on the downtrodden path. He further makes prayers to the then-appointed Chief Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner to rethink the proposal and withdraw it.

Through the representative image of Harihar Singh, Meher utilises the allusion to transmit that those in power remain silent even though their intention was to support. They were cowardly as they did not risk their occupations or positions for the safeguarding of their Odia language. Rather they chose to stay silent in protection of their chairs. The poem finally urges all the readers to unite at Barpalli to oppose the proposal.

In response to the previous proposal, the Utkala Sabha once again sent a memorandum demanding a region of unified Odia language, but it was all rejected. Poets like Meher, Senapati, Madhusudhan Rao, among others, held their scepters high to create a sense of regionalism at a time when the northern part of India was struggling for the greater picture of the nation. It took the entire lives of these writers and many more to finally gain Odia and Odisha what they were entitled to in 1936, but until then, the suffering was immense for centuries.

The efforts of these writers have chiselled the shape of Odisha on the Indian map and thus can be treated as the proprietors of regionalism in colonial India.

Soumyaa Nayak,
Research Scholar,
Centre for Comparative Literature,
University of Hyderabad



Expansive worldview of timeless Odia writings

The project of selecting 100 famous Odia short stories and translating them into English, German, Japanese, French and Spanish is going to see the light of the day.

New technologies are also being harnessed to preserve and disseminate Odia literature.

Till date, 62 full-length books and 82 issues of Konark, the quarterly literary journal published under the auspices of Odisha Sahitya Akademi, have been digitised and uploaded to the Odisha Virtual Academy portal.

Odisha is the first state in the country to have been formed on the basis of language. The architects of modern Odisha were deeply aware that language is fundamental to cultural identity. In their language, Odias find a rich well-spring of unity. The timeless works of great writers created in Odia embody and express a unique and expansive worldview.

The First World Odia Language Conference 2024 aims to promote Odia, recognised as a classical language, at national and international levels by exploring and celebrating its rich contribution to the culture and civilisation of the world. It seeks to encourage young Odias living outside Odisha and India to take pride in the glorious achievements of their state in the fields of literature, culture and knowledge creation. To achieve these objectives, several initiatives have recently been undertaken, which include translating immortal classics of Odia literature into English and a few foreign languages.

The project of selecting 100 famous Odia short stories and translating them into English, German, Japanese, French and Spanish is going to see the light of the day. The prime objective of undertaking such ambitious initiatives is to expand the global readership of Odia literature and enable it to transcend the constricting boundaries of language and region.

New technologies are also being harnessed to preserve and disseminate Odia literature. Till date, 62 full-length books and 82 issues of Konark, the quarterly literary journal published under the auspices of Odisha Sahitya Akademi, have been digitised and uploaded to the Odisha Virtual Academy portal.

Concerted efforts are also being made in the context of the conference to involve school, college and university students in activities that would inspire them to shape a brilliant and vibrant future for their own language, literature and culture.

The three-day long conference is beginning today at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar with intellectual discourses, eloquent exhibitions and creative corners for students and general visitors.

Intellectual discourses

The landmark event will bring together scholars, researchers and enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate and explore the rich tapestry of Odia language, literature and culture. Special talks will be delivered by Padma Shri Hermann Kulke, Uwe Skoda, Arlo Griffiths, Mauricio Damian Agullera Linde and Annette Achmiedchen. The conference will feature 17 international academic and scholarly seminars and provide a platform for comprehensive discussion and insights into the diverse facets of Odisha's heritage.

First World Odia Language Conference 2024: Day 1	
HALL-1 (PLENARY HALL) ADIKABI SARALA DAS HALL	
Feb 3, 2024	
●	Inaugural Function (10:00 - 11:30am)
●	Talk: Padma Shri Hermann Kulke (12:00 - 1:15pm)
●	Talk: Prof Uwe Skoda (1:15 - 2pm)
●	Jagannath Consciousness (Special Session) (3:00 - 5:30pm)
HALL-2 ATIBADI JAGANNATH DAS HALL	
●	Origin and Development of Odia Language (3:00 - 5:30pm)
HALL-3 KABI SAMRAT UPENDRA BHANJA HALL	
●	Ancient & Medieval Odia Literature (3:00 - 5:30pm)
HALL-4 BYSAKABI FAKIR MOHAN SENAPATI HALL	
●	Odia: The Classical Language of India (3:00 - 5:30pm)

PALM LEAF INSCRIPTIONS AND ANCIENT ODISIA HERITAGE

The rich collection (of palm-leaf manuscripts) is not only in Odia but also in Telugu, Bengali, Tamil, Persian and Devanagari scripts. While the bulk of the collections has come from Puri and Ganjam districts, a few have been collected from Bhubaneswar, Manjusa, Srikakulam, Midnapur and Delhi.

A mention has already been made about the importance of these manuscripts as source material for research and scholarly studies. The manuscripts have thrown light on several aspects of history and literature of which the most important is perhaps the discovery in this museum of the Paipalad Samhita of the Atharva Veda and Sayana's commentary of the second part of Yajurveda. For a long time till the discovery in the Odisha State Museum, it had been presumed that no copy of this important Vedic literature existed. This has since been published and has enriched the knowledge of

the Vedas to a great extent. As far as Odishan history and culture is concerned, these manuscripts provide a fund of information and evidence enriching our understanding of the past. Particular mention may be made of the extensive details about the wars, war preparations, arms, geography, trade routes, as-

tertwined with the literary traditions of the country. While palm-leaf inscriptions and paintings are available in several states of India, it is in Odisha that the art reached perfection and great excellence.

The numerous illustrated manuscripts in the collection of Odisha

State Museum embody the rich artistic traditions of the state. This tradition continues even today and thrives among the handicrafts artisans of the state, particularly in Puri district. The art form essentially consists of inscribing letters and artistic designs on palm leaf, mostly cut into standard sizes. While for manuscripts the leaves are cut in rectangular sizes held together with two wooden plank covers

stringed through a hole in the centre, for paintings the leaves are stitched vertically and folded like a bellow. However, instances of cutting the leaves into fancy shapes like balls strung into a garland or leaves cut into shapes of animals and other objects are also not wanting.

How palm-leaf manuscripts are prepared

The process of preparing the palm leaf to make it ready for etching is quite elaborate and time taking. The unripe leaves of the tree are first cut into the required shapes and are sun dried. However, the leaves are not to be exposed to intense heat and should not be completely dried. Once this initial preparation is complete, the semi-dried leaves are buried in muddy swamps and left there for four to five days for further seasoning. After these are retrieved and washed they are once again dried but this time they are air dried and are not exposed to the sun. After this, these dried leaves are kept inside the grain stores and put inside the paddy heaps. This treatment is

the final seasoning of the leaves which makes them insect proof

and stiff. These seasoned leaves are then stitched or stringed together as needed. The etching whether of words or of artistic designs is done with the help of an iron stylus.

Great concentration and planning is required before any design can be engraved as no alteration is possible on account of the very nature of the material. After the etching is complete, the leaf is rubbed with a paste made of bean-leaves, charcoal made of burnt coconut shells, til oil and turmeric. The leaves are then wiped with a piece of cloth and the paste deposited in the etched portions of the palm-leaves reveal prominently the engraved design. For painting the palm-leaves, vegetable and mineral colours are used. While writing texts, including illus-

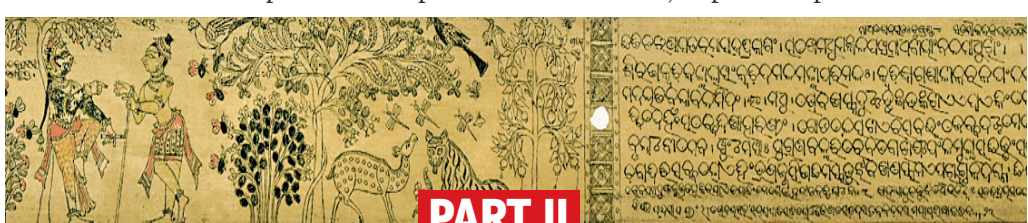
trated texts, was popular and wide spread in the ancient times,

number of illustrated texts both plain and painted of which the

more prominent ones are Jayadeva's Sri Gita Govinda, Bidagdha Madhava of Rupa Goswami, Amara Sataka of Amaruka and Ushabhilasa of Sishu Sankara Das.

The themes of these manuscripts are mostly the love episodes of Radha and Krishna as well as other mythical and legendary incidents. The paintings and drawings also present excellent scenes of nature. As the art form is practised today, mostly large drawings are made on the rectangular palm leaves stitched together vertically.

(Excerpts from an article by Dr Bhagyalipi Malla, former Superintendent, Odisha State Archives, Bhubaneswar, in the Odisha Review)



international



I would say that our partnership with India is one of our most consequential relationships. We work closely with India on our most vital priorities
MATTHEW MILLER | STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON

INDIA PAYS UP \$32M UN DUES
India has paid its annual dues of \$32.895 million to the UN's general budget, according to Stéphane Dujarric, the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. At his daily briefing Thursday, he thanked New Delhi for the contribution which earned it a place on UN's "honour roll"



of the day quote

What we expect is a government that would take seriously solving the very deep structural problems of Pakistan
KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA | IMF MANAGING DIRECTOR

Tackling the grave and deep-seated human rights problems of the Philippines will require more fundamental & sustained reforms and also a clear commitment to accountability
IRENE KHAN | UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

I should have told the president about my cancer diagnosis. I should have also told my team and the American public, and I take full responsibility
LLOYD AUSTIN | US DEFENCE SECRETARY

NK tests more cruise missiles

The launches, which were the North's fourth round of cruise missile tests in 2024, came hours after state media reported that Kim reiterated his focus on strengthening his naval forces as he inspected unspecified naval projects at a shipyard in Nampho, on the west coast

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Feb 2 : North Korean Friday extended a provocative run in weapons tests by firing cruise missiles into the sea, as leader Kim Jong Un called for his military to step up war preparations while touring a shipyard. Kim in recent months has emphasised his effort to build a nuclear-armed navy to counter what he portrays as growing external threats posed by the United States, South Korea and Japan, which have stepped up their military cooperation to cope with Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency did not specify when Kim visited Nampho. It paraphrased Kim as saying that the strengthening of his naval force "presents itself as the most important issue in reliably defending the maritime sovereignty of the country and stepping up the war preparations."

KCNA did not specify the types of warships being built in Nampho, but said they were related to a five-year military development plan set during a ruling party congress in early 2021.



South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the US and South Korean militaries were analysing the North Korean launches into its western sea. It said the South's military detected multiple missiles but it did not immediately provide a specific number or an assessment of their flight characteristics

time the ministry was aware of that state media reported on Kim Jong Un conducting a military inspection in Nampho. That could suggest an expansion of naval projects from the country's eastern shipyard of Sampo, which has been the North's base for submarine construction. "By making military threats routine, North Korea is trying to create a sense of insecurity among South Korean people to undermine trust in their government and to attract international attention to build an atmosphere in which its demands must be accepted to resolve the crisis on the Korean

Peninsula," she said. South Korea's army said its special operation troops wrapped up a 10-day training with U.S. Green Berets Friday in a region near the country's capital, Seoul, in the allies' latest combined military exercises. The countries in past months had staged larger drills, including trilateral exercises involving Japan. Kim Jong Un also called for naval might Sunday while inspecting a test of a new nuclear-capable cruise missile, the Pulhwasal-3-31, designed to be fired from submarines. The North also last month conducted tests of a long-range cruise missile, which it has described as nuclear-capable and can cover ranges of up to 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles), which would potentially put U.S. Military bases in Japan within reach. While North Korea has demonstrated quick progress in expanding its lineup of land-based nuclear-capable missiles, experts say Kim's naval ambitions may require significant more time, resources and technology breakthroughs.

Malaysia halves Najib's jail term

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Feb 2: Malaysia's Pardons Board said Friday it has reduced ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak's 12-year jail sentence by half and sharply cut the fine imposed after he was convicted in a corruption case linked to the theft of billions of dollars from state coffers.

With the sentence commuted, Najib will be freed by August 23, 2028, the board said in a statement.

The board also cut Najib's 210 million ringgit (USD 44.5 million) fine to 50 million ringgit. It is unclear if Najib is still eligible for additional time off for good behaviour. If so, he could be out as early as August 2026.

Despite his conviction, Najib is still influential in his party, the United Malays National Organisation, which is now a member of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's unity government that took power after 2022 general elections.

The Pardons Board didn't explain why it commuted Najib's sentence, nor why it waited until Friday to announce it.

The board isn't required to give any grounds for its action, but calls are mounting for it to explain the move.

The board said it considered Najib's application for a royal pardon at its meeting Monday and decided instead to reduce his sentence and fine after considering advice and opinions. The meeting was chaired by the country's then-king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, who is from Najib's home state of Pahang.



People visit a military-historical exhibition at the Dvortsovaya (Palace) Square, in St. Petersburg, Russia. The exhibition marked the 80th anniversary of the battle that lifted the Siege of Leningrad

SHORT TAKES

Judge acquits Greta Thunberg

London: A judge Friday acquitted climate activist Greta Thunberg of a charge that she had refused to follow a police order to leave a protest that blocked the entrance to a major oil and gas industry conference in London last year. The gallery erupted with clapping as Judge John Law told Thunberg and her four co-defendants to stand and told them they were cleared of the criminal charge of breaching the Public Order Act on the grounds that there were "significant deficiencies in the evidence" presented against Thunberg and the others. Thunberg, 21, was among more than two dozen protesters arrested October 17 after preventing access to a hotel during the Energy Intelligence Forum, attended by some of the industry's top executives.

French farmers lift road blockades

Paris: French farmers were gradually lifting their roadblocks around Paris and elsewhere in the country Friday, a day after the French government offered over 400 million euros (\$436 million) in various measures meant to answer their grievances over low earnings, heavy regulation and unfair competition from abroad. On major highways around the French capital, protesters took down tents, cleaned up the road and set fire to straw bales that they were using as barricades.

Landslide warnings

Copenhagen: Norwegian authorities issued warnings for landslides and avalanches in southern Norway Friday as bad weather continued to hammer the Scandinavian country. In the northern part of the country, officials said roads might be closed at short notice.

Four Indian students dead in US

NEW DELHI: Four Indian students have died in quick succession in the US, sparking fears regarding the safety and security of those studying abroad, and angry netizens calling for a travel advisory. The most recent reported case was of Shreyas Reddy Benigeri, a student of Lindner School of Business in Cincinnati, Thursday after the deaths of Purdue University's Neel Acharya, MBA student Vivek Saini in Georgia, and University of Illinois' Akul B Dhawan. Announcing Benigeri's death, the Indian Consulate in New York said that a police investigation is underway even as calls for an advisory for Indian students grew louder among netizens. "Deeply saddened by the unfortunate demise of Shreyas Reddy Benigeri, a student of Indian origin in Ohio. Police investigation is underway. At this stage, foul play is not suspected," the Consulate said in a post on X.

Explosion in Kenya injures hundreds

NAIROBI: A truck loaded with liquid petroleum gas cylinders exploded and set off a late-night inferno that burned homes and warehouses in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, killing at least three people and injuring more than 270, officials said Friday, with the death toll expected to rise. At least 24 people were critically injured, the Kenya Red Cross said. The truck was parked inside a gas cylinder storage and filling site that had multiple applications to operate there rejected last year because it was too close to residential areas, Kenya's Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority said, raising questions over whether the site was operating illegally. Witnesses said they heard a sound they suspected to be gas leaking from inside the storage site before at least two explosions and the massive fire, which broke out at around 11.30 pm Thursday. A huge fireball lit up the night sky.

3 killed as small plane crashes

CLEARWATER (US): About 10 people had enjoyed a day of golf and were having drinks inside a woman's mobile home moments before a small plane crashed and obliterated the property, an eyewitness said Friday. The pilot and two people on the ground were killed, the Federal Aviation Administration said. The last of the guests had lingered to finish her drink, and was in the home along with her host when it went up in flames, their neighbour Rick Renner told The Associated Press. The pilot of the single-engine Beechcraft Bonanza V35 had reported engine failure shortly before crashing into the Bayside Waters mobile home park around 7 pm Thursday, the FAA said.

Hungary under pressure to ratify Sweden's NATO bid

REUTERS

Budapest, Feb 2: Pressure is mounting on Hungary to ratify Sweden's bid to join NATO after Budapest finally joined other European Union states in agreeing on new aid to Ukraine. Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Friday he "went to the wall" for his country before agreeing to the EU deal worth 50 billion euros (\$54 billion) at a summit in Brussels Thursday after weeks of resistance.

Hungary had been the only one of the 27 EU member states not to back the deal at a December summit. It is also the only NATO country that has not yet ratified Stockholm's membership application, a process that requires the backing of all members.

Orban, who has better ties with Russia than other EU states and most NATO members, says his government backs Sweden joining the alliance. Now he faces pressure from abroad to accelerate the process.

Opposition lawmakers have called an extraordinary session of parliament for Monday to put Sweden's NATO accession on the agenda. But lawmakers in Orban's governing Fidesz party told Reuters Thursday they would "wait" with a final vote until a meeting of Orban and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson.

Orban's press chief did not respond to a Reuters query Friday on when the meeting might take place.

GAZANS FEAR ISRAELI ASSAULT ON LAST REFUGE

REUTERS

Gaza, Feb 2: Israeli forces shelled the outskirts of the last refuge on the southern edge of the Gaza Strip Friday, where the displaced, penned against the border fence in their hundreds of thousands, said they feared a new assault with nowhere left to flee.

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million residents are now homeless and crammed into Rafah. Tens of thousands more have arrived in recent days, carrying belongings in their arms and pulling children on carts, since Israeli forces launched one of the biggest assaults of the war last week to capture adjacent Khan Younis, the main southern city.

If the Israeli tanks keep coming, "we will be left with two choices: stay and die or climb

the walls into Egypt", said Emad, 55, a businessman and father of six, reached on a mobile phone chat app.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said late Thursday that troops would now turn to Rafah, which along with Deir al-Balah just north of Khan Younis is among the last remaining areas they have yet to storm in an almost four-month assault.

As the only part of Gaza with access to the limited food and medical aid trickling across the border, Rafah and nearby parts of Khan Younis have become a warren of makeshift tents clinging to the winter mud. Wind and cold weather added to the misery, blowing tents down, flooding them and the ground between them.

'PRESSURE COOKER OF DESPAIR'
The United Nations says rescuers can no longer reach the sick



and wounded on the battlefield in Khan Younis, and the prospect of combat reaching Rafah is almost unthinkable.

"Rafah is a pressure cooker of despair, and we fear for what comes next," Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, told a briefing in Geneva.

Since then, Gaza health authorities say more than 27,000 Palestinians have been confirmed killed, 112 of them in the past 24 hours, with thousands more bodies feared lost amid the ruins, in an Israeli assault that has laid much of the territory to waste. Mediators are waiting for a

response from Hamas to a proposal drafted last week with Israeli and US spy chiefs and passed on by Egypt and Qatar for the war's first extended ceasefire.

The only truce so far lasted only a week in late November, when militants freed 110 women, children and foreign hostages.

The proposal on the table envisages a first phase lasting 40 days, during which Hamas would free remaining civilian hostages, followed by further phases to release soldiers and hand over the bodies of the dead,

The Gaza war was triggered by Hamas fighters who stormed across the border fence into Israel October 7, killing 1,200 people and capturing 253 hostages, according to Israeli tallies

business

of the day quote

Budget proposals are non-inflationary and will help achieve 7 per cent-plus growth rate for the fourth year in a row in 2024-25

AJAY SETH | ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY

GST collections are expected to grow about 11 per cent in 2024-25. If the monthly collection is Rs 1.67 lakh crore this fiscal, a growth of 11 per cent would be Rs 1.80-1.85 lakh crore monthly collections. This should be the new normal for GST collection in the next fiscal

SANJAY MALHOTRA | REVENUE SECRETARY

The global uncertainty has certainly impacted FDI, particularly considering that the interest rates in the US and other developed countries have massively seen a spike

PIYUSH GOVAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

RESULTS CORNER

IndiGo profit shines

New Delhi: IndiGo's parent InterGlobe Aviation Friday reported more than doubling of its profit after tax to Rs 2,998.1 crore in the three months ended December 2023, as it remained profitable for the fifth straight quarter. In the year-ago period, the profit after tax stood at Rs 1,422.6 crore. "For the third quarter of financial year 2024, we reported a profit after tax of 30 billion rupees with a profit after tax margin of 15.4 per cent. With these 5 consecutive quarters of profit we continue to recover from the losses of Covid and have now become net worth positive again," IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said.

JSW Infra surges 2X

New Delhi: JSW Infrastructure Friday reported a more than two-fold jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 253.57 crore in the October-December quarter of this fiscal, driven by higher income. The country's second-largest private port operator posted a net profit of Rs 116.38 crore during the October-December period of 2022-23. The total income surged to Rs 1,018.30 crore in the third quarter from Rs 842.02 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Apple's new record

New Delhi: iPhone maker Apple's revenue grew in double-digits and hit a new record in December 2023 quarter on strong iPhone sales, a top official of the company said Friday. Apple posted quarterly revenue of \$119.6 billion, up 2 per cent year-over-year, and its installed base of active devices has now surpassed 2.2 billion, reaching an all-time high across all products and geographic segments.

Bol profit jumps

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of India (BoI) Friday posted a 62 per cent jump in net profit to Rs 1,870 crore in the December quarter on account of decline in bad loans. The Mumbai-headquartered bank had earned a net profit of Rs 1,151 crore in the year-ago period. The lenders' total income increased to Rs 16,411 crore during the third quarter of the ongoing fiscal against Rs 14,160 crore a year ago, BoI said.

Tata Motors rises

New Delhi: Tata Motors Ltd Friday reported a 133.32 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 7,100 crore for the December 2023 quarter. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 3,043 crore in the year-ago period, its first profit in two years.



To every Paytm, Your favourite app is working, will keep working beyond 29 February as usual

VIJAY SHEKHAR SHARMA | CEO, PAYTM

EIFFEL TOWER GETS UPI TOUCH

Tourists visiting Paris' Eiffel Tower will now be able to book their trip to the iconic monument using India's Unified Payment Interface, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said Friday. The NPCI said its arm NPCI International Payments (NIPL) has tied up with French e-commerce and proximity payments Lyra, which will help ensure that the UPI payment mechanism is accepted in the European country, starting with the Eiffel Tower



STANDOFF DEEPENS

Investors can't oust CEO: BYJU'S

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: Edtech major Think and Learn Pvt Ltd, which operates under the brand name BYJU'S, Friday said investors have no voting rights on the CEO or management change as per the shareholder's agreement.

At least six BYJU'S investors have called for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to address issues at the edtech major and oust founders from having control over the firm.

"Think & Learn Pvt Ltd has noted with sorrow, statements from a select few investors calling for an EGM to replace founder and group CEO Byju Raveendran. Under these unfortunate circumstances, we would emphasise that the shareholder's agreement does not give them the right to vote on CEO or management change," the company said in a statement.

The investors led by Dutch investment firm Prosus in the EGM notice requested the resolution of the outstanding governance, financial mismanagement and compliance issues and the reconstitution of the Board of Directors.

"The resolutions being put forward for the EGM to consider include a request for the resolution of outstanding governance, financial mismanagement and compliance issues, the reconstitution of the Board of Directors so that it is no longer controlled by the founders of T&L and a change in leadership of the Company," a recent notice to shareholders by the group of investors said.

According to a source, who did not wish to be identified, the notice has been backed by General Atlantic, Peak XV, Sofina, Chan Zuckerberg, Owl, and Sands, who jointly account for around 30 per cent stake in BYJU'S. As per the notice, a consortium of BYJU'S shareholders had in July and December requested the board of directors for the meeting but it was disregarded.



GST mop-up from gaming cos jump 400%

Monthly revenue of online gaming firms now stands at ₹1,200cr from ₹225cr since Oct 1 when the gaming tax was implemented

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: Monthly GST collections from online gaming companies have jumped over 400 per cent to about Rs 1,200 crore since October 1 when the 28 per cent levy on e-gaming platforms has come into effect, a senior official said Friday.

The GST Council had in August last year clarified that online gaming companies will have to pay 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on the full face value of bets placed on their platforms. Foreign e-

gaming companies were mandated to register with the GST authorities, failing which their portals will be blocked.

The amendments to GST law came into effect from October 1, 2023.

"There has been a jump in GST revenues from online gaming companies post October 1. From monthly revenue of Rs 225 crore, the aggregate tax paid by the sector now stands at about Rs 1,200 crore," the official told PTI.

GST officers had last year sent around 71 show cause no-

tices to online gaming companies for alleged GST evasion of over Rs 1.12 lakh crore during financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

However, no overseas online gaming company has registered in the country since



October 2023. "These overseas companies keep changing their VPNs and change their websites when they are blocked. It is a challenge that the tax officers are facing," the official added.

The spate of notices to online gaming companies follows the GST Council's clarification in August that 28 per

cent tax would be levied on full value of bets placed on online gaming platforms.

GST Council is chaired by the Union finance minister and comprises finance ministers from all states and Union Territories.

Online gaming companies have been approaching High Courts against such GST demands contesting the claims of revenue authorities. These companies claim they were paying taxes at the rate of 18 per cent as games played on their platforms were 'games of skill'.

NIFTY AT NEW PEAK

MARKET BENCHMARKS REBOUND ON FIRM GLOBAL CUES



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 2: Benchmark equity indices bounced back sharply Friday, with the Nifty hitting its lifetime peak in intra-day trade, tracking a rally in global markets along with buying in Reliance Industries, Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 440.33 points or 0.61 per cent to settle at 72,085.63. During the day, it jumped 1,444.1 points or 2 per cent to 73,089.40.

The Nifty went up by 156.35 points or 0.72 per cent to 21,853.80. During the day, the benchmark soared 429.35 points or 1.97 per cent to reach its lifetime peak of 22,126.80.

Among the Sensex firms, Power Grid, NTPC, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, JSW

On the weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,384.96 points or 1.95%, and the Nifty climbed 501.2 points or 2.34%

Steel, Wipro, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finance were the major gainers.

Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Larsen & Toubro and TTC were among the laggards.

"A conservative interim budget had no slowdown effect on the market, which continued to grow on the pre-election rally. The drastic fall in the fiscal deficit target is leading to a reduction in bond yields, which will lead to lowering of corporate borrowing

costs, increasing incentives to step up investment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.80 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.49 per cent. Among the indices, oil & gas jumped 4.22 per cent, energy went up by 3.44 per cent, metal (2.95 per cent), services (2.22 per cent), utilities (2.18 per cent), IT (2.17 per cent) and power (1.81 per cent).

Financial Services, FMCG, telecommunication and bank were the laggards.

The BSE benchmark declined 106.81 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at 71,645.30 on the Budget day Thursday. The Nifty dipped 28.25 points or 0.13 per cent to 21,697.45.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.48 per cent to \$79.08 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,879.58 crore Thursday, according to exchange data.

Investors' wealth climbs

Investors became richer by Rs 13.34 lakh crore Friday as the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms reached an all-time high amid buoyant investor sentiments. The market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed companies went up Rs 3,34,413.44 crore to reach its all-time high of Rs 3,82,76,857.79 crore.

Bharat Rice at ₹29/kg in retail market soon

Govt has no plans to lift restrictions on rice exports



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The first priority for the government as of now is to ensure that rice prices are brought down

SANJEEV CHOPRA | UNION FOOD SECRETARY

serting that prices of all essential food items are under control except rice.

Prices of rice have risen by 14.5 per cent in retail and 15.5 per cent in the wholesale markets in the last one year, he added.

To control prices, Chopra said the Centre has decided to sell subsidised 'Bharat Rice' at Rs 29 per kg in the retail market through two cooperatives the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd (NCCF) as well as retail chain Kendriya Bhandar.

E-commerce platforms will also be roped in to sell Bharat Rice.

He said Bharat Rice will be available in the market from next week in 5kg and 10kg packs.

In the first phase, Chopra said the government has allocated 5 lakh tonne of rice for sale in the retail market. The government is already selling Bharat Atta at Rs 27.50 per kg and Bharat Dal (chana) at Rs 60 per kg.

Efficacy of Giloy to treat liver diseases gets UK recognition

HARIDWAR: The hepatoprotective (ability to keep the liver healthy) and other beneficial effects of Giloy (*Tinospora cordifolia*) have now been accepted by the United Kingdom as well, which has been published in the famous research journal 'Journal of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain'. It was published by Oxford University Press in 'Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology'. Acharya Balkrishna Maharaj said that in the said research paper it is stated that the hepatoprotective effects of T-cordifolia are beneficial in inhibition of lipid peroxidation, management of oxidative stress and other factors. It is also found that T-cordifolia can be used in the management of liver disorders and as a hepatoprotective supplement in the food industry. The research shows that bioprospecting of its alkaloids may lead to the development of new formulations against liver diseases. He informed that T-cordifolia has traditionally been found effective in the treatment of jaundice and used over the ages. It reduces inflammation by inhibiting the proinflammatory cascade and reduces nitrosative stress by inhibiting iNOS. It also exhibits anticarcinogenic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant and other activities. It has been found to be an active ingredient in several polyherbal formulations used to treat chemical-mediated hepatotoxicity. Acharya said that every effort was made to suppress Ayurveda but Patanjali has always worked to bring glory to the ancient Indian system. During the Corona period, an attempt was made to create a misconception about Giloy that excessive consumption of Giloy has adverse effects on the liver. But the scientists of Patanjali Research Institute did research on Giloy and presented it with evidence.



E-Summit inaugurated by Chand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: Annual Entrepreneurial Conclave, E-Summit '24 that celebrates the passion of entrepreneurship is getting conducted in IIT Bhubaneswar Campus from February 2-4.

The Summit was inaugurated Friday by Dr Tapan Kumar Chand, a well-known industry professional, former CMD of Nalco & present President Vedanta Aluminium as Chief Guest along with patron, Professor Shreepad Karmalkar, Director, IIT, Bhubaneswar; Dr Sreetama Misra, Chairperson, E-Summit-24, Dr Venugopal



Armuru PIC E-Cell, Dr Rajesh Roshan Dash, Dean - Students Affairs with other industry leaders & dignitaries.

The E-Summit is intended to support the startups across the nation as well as encourage and inspire students to become entrepreneurs as it believes that

the future of our beloved nation is in the hands of the youngsters. It initiates to facilitate interaction among global industrialists, funding agencies, seasoned and upcoming entrepreneurs, academia and students of the participating institutes bridging and connecting to foster growth.

Fiscal consolidation does not change India's credit profile: Fitch

CENTRE HAD EARLIER ESTIMATED THAT FISCAL DEFICIT WILL COME DOWN TO 5.4% IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR, BEGINNING FROM APRIL 1, 2024. HOWEVER, IN THE INTERIM BUDGET, IT BETTERED ITS ESTIMATES TO 5.1% OF GDP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: Fitch Ratings Friday said the slightly faster pace of fiscal deficit reduction does not significantly change India's sovereign credit profile but the government's emphasis on deficit reduction will help to stabilise the debt-to-GDP ratio over the medium term.

In a post budget commentary, Fitch Ratings Director, Sovereign Ratings, Jeremy Zook said over the next five years, India's government debt-to-GDP ratio would be broadly stable at just above 80 per cent of GDP. This is based on a continued path of gradual deficit reduction, as well as robust nominal growth of around

10.5 per cent of GDP. In the interim Budget 2024-25, presented in Parliament Thursday, the government revised lower its current year fiscal deficit to 5.8 per cent from 5.9 per cent budgeted earlier.

The deficit, which is the gap between the government's revenue and expenditure, will come down to 5.1 per cent in 2024-25 and further to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26.



Fitch said this demonstrates a firm desire to adhere to a path of gradual fiscal consolidation even amid an election year.

"The budget presented on Thursday was broadly in line with our expectations, though with a slightly faster pace of deficit reduction, from when we

affirmed India's 'BBB-' rating with a Stable Outlook in January. As such, it does not significantly change the sovereign credit profile. India's fiscal deficit and government debt ratio are high relative to peer medians, but the government's emphasis on deficit reduction helps to stabilise the debt ratio over the medium term," Zook said.

This Budget was important in signalling the current government's clear commitment to fiscal consolidation and its capex agenda, should it return to office, he added.

"Our current forecast is for the deficit to reach 5.4 per cent of GDP in FY25, above the budget target due to more conservative

revenue forecasts in the next year. But the government has shown a recent record of achieving fiscal targets, which gives credibility for it to reach the 5.1 per cent target," Zook said.

Replying to a question in the post-budget conference on her message to rating agencies, Sitharaman said: "Not only aligning with the fiscal consolidation roadmap that we gave earlier, but bettering it - that is one simple, straight forward message that every rating agency should take on board."

Higher dividends from banks and financial institutions, apart from improvement in tax mobilisation, would help achieve the fiscal deficit glide path.

JAIS-WAL STANDS TALL

YASHASVI MASTERCLASS STEERS INDIA TO 336/6 AS OTHER BATTERS FALTER ON THE OPENING DAY OF THE SECOND TEST AGAINST ENGLAND



A START TO REMEMBER: Shoaib Bashir was ecstatic after dismissing Rohit Sharma for his maiden international wicket

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, Feb 2: Yashasvi Jaiswal batted with supreme confidence for an unbeaten 179 (257b, 17x4, 5x6) that single-handedly drove India to 336/6 on day one of the second Test against England here Friday and secured his place at the top of the order for the foreseeable future.

Unlike the series opener, Jaiswal made sure he converted his strong start into a big hundred but the other Indian batters failed to make the most of batting friendly conditions. Jaiswal had R Ashwin (5 batting) by his side at stumps.

The 22-year-old now has two hundreds and as many fifties to his name in only his 10th Test innings. His maiden Test ton – a 387-ball 171 – came against the West Indies last year.

India made 111 runs in the final session for the loss of three wickets including Axar Patel (27) and KS Bharat (17). For England, debutant Shoaib Bashir (2/100) and Rehan Ahmed (2/61) picked up two wickets apiece.

Debutant Rajat Patidar (32) played one on to his stumps while offering a forward defence to

leg-spinner Rehan. A total of 93 overs were bowled with four spinners in operation.

Trailing 0-1 in the five-match series, India would like to get to at least 500 on day two and then put pressure on the England batters on a pitch where variable bounce is expected to come into play from day three.

The odd ball kept low even on the opening day but conditions remained favourable of the batters. However, the injury to Ravindra Jadeja has resulted in a longer tail, which will need to wag for India to get anywhere close to 500.

Veteran James Anderson, playing his first game since July last year, was the most economical and effective bowler for England, returning figures of 17-3-30-1. However, England's inexperienced spin attack, including debutant Shoaib Bashir, Tom Hartley, Rehan Ahmed and Joe Root, could not extract much out of the surface.

The 20-year-old Bashir was the pick of the spinners as he was able to generate more bounce due to his tall structure. The 6'4" tall off-spinner got the prized wicket of Rohit Sharma in the first session before he had Axar

caught at backward point towards the end of the day.

Jaiswal changed the tempo of the innings with his attractive strokeplay in the second session in which India collected 122 runs in 32 overs to reach 225/3. The youngster, who took 89 balls to reach his half century in the morning, took another 62 deliveries to complete his second Test century.

The standout feature of Jaiswal's innings was his ability to hit the ground and strike aerial shots with equal ease. His fearless approach was best summed up when he stepped out to smash left-arm spinner Hartley for a six over long on to get to three figures.

He raised his arms in celebration and the Vizag crowd along with his teammates duly applauded his special feat. Jaiswal played a lot of cuts off the spinners in the early part of his innings

but turned to drives and lofted drives against them in the second session.

Jaiswal shared a 90-run stand with Shreyas Iyer (27), who once again failed to

capitalise on a start. It came as no surprise that Anderson employed the short ball tactic against Iyer, who was up to the task on the day. However, he tried to cut one off Hartley and ended up under- edging to Ben Foakes, who took a sharp catch behind the stumps.

In the morning, Bashir had Rohit Sharma caught at leg slip as the cautious hosts reached 103/2 at lunch. Shubman Gill (34) looked good before Anderson had him caught behind with a beauty.

BRIEF SCORES

India 336/6 (Yashasvi Jaiswal 179 batting, Shubman Gill 34, Rajat Patidar 32, Axar Patel 27, Shreyas Iyer 27; Rehan Ahmed 2/61, Shoaib Bashir 2/100) vs England. Match to continue.



I wanted to play it session by session. When they were bowling well, I just wanted to get through that spell. However, I wanted to convert the loose balls, and play till the end. The pitch played a bit differently as in the morning it was a bit damp and then it settled. With the older ball, there was some bounce

YASHASVI JAISWAL

It (donning India jersey) was a dream come true moment for me. Representing the country is a dream for every player. Going into the middle, there was no pressure as I have played lot of games in domestic cricket. I slept well last night. It was normal for me

RAJAT PATIDAR

India favourites against Pakistan in historic clash



Team India members huddle around the draw board during the Davis Cup draw ceremony in Islamabad, Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MATCH DETAILS

FEBRUARY 3

1st singles

R Ramanathan vs Aisam Qureshi

2nd singles

Aqeel Khan vs Sriram Balaji

FEBRUARY 4

Doubles

Barkatullah/Muzammil Murtaza vs Yuki Bhambri/Saketh Myneni

1st reverse singles

R Ramanathan vs Aqeel Khan

2nd reverse singles

Aisam Qureshi vs Sriram Balaji

Islamabad, Feb 2: India will be without their top singles players but the visitors, who have come to Pakistan after 60 years, will still start as favourites in the historic Davis Cup World Group I playoff tie, which is being played within a restricted environment due to security concerns.

India have never lost to Pakistan in Davis Cup history, winning all seven ties so far, and the trend is likely to continue. However, the hosts are expected to put up a good fight through their biggest stars, Aisam-ul-haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan, after choosing to play on grass courts.

If Pakistan stood a chance against India, it had to be on the grass courts because both Aisam and Aqeel are tremendous fighters, and this surface brings the best out of them.

The courts in Islamabad are fast with low bounce, and it made sense that N Sriram Balaji, who is a doubles specialist, has been asked to play singles on the opening day along with the team's best singles player, Ramkumar Ramanathan.

India had an option in the form of Niki Poonacha but he is taller than Balaji, and on low-bounce grass courts, taller players struggle more as they have to go down a lot to pick up balls, and that could disturb the rhythm of a player.

This strategy was successfully used by the iconic Leander

Paes to torment the Europeans, who would come to India to compete in Davis Cup. Also, Balaji has the experience of playing at a good level and that will give him the confidence to handle the pressure of playing against Pakistan on their home soil.

He recently played at the Australian Open and the one-week camp in New Delhi, before arriving in Islamabad, would have also made him sharper and ready for the singles challenge.

Ramkumar is one player in the current generation of Indian players who loves to serve and volley, and playing on grass is his strength too. Ramkumar will open the tie for India with a clash against 43-year-old Aisam.

Pakistan are playing in home conditions but not many home fans will be there to cheer them as ITF has allowed only 500 guests and fans to watch the action unfold at Islamabad Sports Complex.

SHORT TAKES

Eves thrash Bhutan

DHAKA: A rampaging India hammered Bhutan 10-0 to begin their SAFF U-19 Women's Championship campaign on a rollicking note with Pooja scoring four goals here Friday. Pooja struck in the 31st, 58th, 59th and 90+4 minute while Sibani Devi (8th, 19th and 36th) scored a first-half hat-trick. Striker Sulanjana Raul (53rd), Menaka Lourembam (61st) and Arina Devi (73rd) added three more goals to take India's tally to double figures. Goalkeeper Anika Devi and Arina made their junior international debuts Friday. India will play their next match against Bangladesh Sunday.

Real back in top

MADRID: Real Madrid regained the Spanish league lead with a comfortable 2-0 win at Getafe in a match rescheduled because of the Spanish Super Cup. Joselu Mato scored a goal in each half to move Madrid two points clear of Girona at the top of the standings. It was the sixth straight league victory for Madrid, which is unbeaten in 25 matches in all competitions, since a 3-1 league loss at Atletico Madrid in September. Madrid are 10 points ahead of both Atletico and defending champions Barcelona. Atletico will play Madrid Sunday at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

United pip Wolves

MANCHESTER: On the transfer deadline day, Manchester United relied on some homegrown talent for a dramatic victory. Kobbie Mainoo, an 18-year-old midfielder, scored in the seventh minute of stoppage time to seal United's 4-3 win over Wolverhampton Thursday at Molineux. Marcus Rashford fired United into the lead after five minutes. Rasmus Hojlund doubled the visitors' lead in the 22nd. Wolves got back into the game through Pablo Sarabia's penalty in the 71st, but Scott McTominay restored United's two-goal advantage with a header. Max Kilman gave Wolves hope with a goal in the 85th and Pedro Neto equalised. Mainoo then struck his first Premier League goal to seal the win.

Ashmita marches into Thailand Masters semis



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, Feb 2: India's Ashmita Chaliha dished out a brilliant performance as she beat Ester Nurumi Wardoyo of Indonesia in straight games to storm into the women's singles semifinals of the Thailand Masters badminton tournament here Friday.

The 24-year-old Chaliha remained the only Indian in the fray after Mithun Manjunath lost his men's singles quarter-finals while the women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also exited from the Super 300 tournament in the last-eight stage.

World No.61 Chaliha, who made it to the main draw from the qualifiers, beat Wardoyo, ranked 44th, 21-14, 19-21, 21-13 in a 57-minute match.

The first game saw both Chaliha

and Wardoyo fighting on an even keel as they tied the score at 7-7 and 8-8, before the Indonesian took a 14-10 lead. Chaliha fought back and made it 14-14 but she could not stop the Indonesian from taking seven straight points to pocket the first game.

The player from Assam made amends in the second game with a superb fight back. She won six-straight points from 15-19 down to win the second game and take the match to the decider.

With the momentum going her way, Chaliha just outplayed her opponent in the deciding game as she did not allow her opponent to take the lead even once. It was Chaliha all the way as she took 12-3 lead before wrapping up the match with ease.

Chaliha will face the winner of the match between fourth seed Supanida Katethong of Thailand and Wen Chi Hsu of Chinese Taipei in the semifinals.

However, sixth seeded doubles pair of Treesa and Gayatri suffered a narrow loss to fourth seeds Indonesia's Febriana Dwipuji Kusuma and Amallia Cahaya Pratiwi 12-21, 21-17, 21-23 in the last-eight match. In the men's singles quarter-finals, Manjunath lost to Dutchman Mark Caljouw 19-21 15-21.

India sail into U-19 WC semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bloemfontein (South Africa), Feb 2: Contrasting hundreds by Sachin Dhas and skipper Uday Saharan were the twin pillars on which India built their commanding 132-run win over Nepal in their final Super Six Group 1 match, which also carried them to the ICC U-19 World Cup semifinals here, Friday.

Dhas (116, 101b, 11x4, 3x6) and Saharan (100, 107b, 9x4), who added 215 off 202 balls, lifted India from a tricky 62/3 to a formidable 297/5 after they opted to bat first. The tournament favourites, who now have eight points, then limited the Himalayan nation to 165/9 and in the semis, India are all set to face South Africa at Benoni, Tuesday.

However, Nepal made a rather strong start to their chase reaching 65/1 in the 14th over before they fell headlong, losing six wickets for a mere 12 runs to be placed at 77/7 in the 28th over.

Left-arm spinner Saumy Pandey, who now has 16 wickets to be placed at the second spot in the tournament's highest wicket-taker list, sparked the collapse with figures of 10-1-29-4.

The only silver lining for Nepal was the unbroken last wicket partnership of Aakash Chand (18 n o) and Durgesh Gupta (29 n o) who put together 45 runs to cover



Sachin Dhas celebrates his century; (inset) Uday Saharan reacts after reaching 50 against Nepal, Friday

the stipulated 50 overs. From being 77/7 in 27.5 overs, skipper Dev Khanal delayed the inevitable with a valiant 33 from 53 balls.

Earlier, India got off to a brisk start with Adarsh Singh scoring 21 off 18 balls before falling prey to Gulsan Jha's short ball tactic. The Indians were rattled further with the dismissals of Arshin Kulkarni (18) and Priyanshu Moliya (19) in the space of three balls.

However, the momentum

shifted dramatically with a game-changing partnership between skipper Saharan and Dhas. Saharan anchored the innings, playing second fiddle to the aggressive Dhas.

BRIEF SCORES: India U-19 297/5 (Sachin Dhas 116, Uday Saharan 100; Gulsan Jha 3/56) beat Nepal U-19 165/9 (Dev Khanal 33, Durgesh Gupta 29 n o; Saumy Pandey 4/29, Arshin Kulkarni 2/18) by 132 runs.

Krishna brace fashions Odisha FC win over Blasters

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: Roy Krishna struck twice in five minutes in the second half to help Odisha FC bounce back from a goal down to 2-1 victory over Kerala Blasters at the Kalinga Stadium here, Friday.

Krishna's magic came after Dimitrios Diamantakos, the league's leading goal-scorer, gave the visitors an early lead bagging his 10th strike of the season as he tapped in a cross by Nihal Sudeesh in the 11th minute.

Missing Kwame Peprah, the Greek forward picked from where he had left off in the opening



Roy Krishna (No.21) celebrates one of his goals with his teammates

leg of the campaign, demonstrating some ruthless efficiency to slot home his shot.

However, it was the Juggernauts' game from there on,

with each member of their attacking contingent taking formidable shots in drawing the scores level. In the 53rd minute, Moroccan midfielder Ahmed

Jahouh delivered a curling and accurate cross to the 36-year-old Fijian who was stationed merely a few yards away from Sachin. He outmanoeuvred the Blasters defence to put the ball past the goalkeeper.

The home team then pushed forward as the opposition's defence became slightly disoriented. Fullback Amey Ranawade sensed a similar opportunity, sprinting up ahead on the right flank, before sliding in a well-directed pass for Krishna. The ex-Bengaluru FC striker jumped and nodded the ball in, effectively eliminating the early advantage that the Blasters had garnered.

Ladakh set to have KICE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leh, Feb 2: The Union Territory of Ladakh will soon have a Khelo India Centre of Excellence as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Sports Authority of India and Union Territory of Ladakh's sports department here Friday.

It was the perfect gift for the UT on a day the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 opening ceremony was held at the Nawang Dorjay Stobdan Stadium. The UT was hosting its maiden major national event.

Fifteen states and two public institutions are taking part

in ice hockey and ice skating events over five days. The second part of the Winter Games will be held in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir from February 21-25.

The Khelo India Centre of Excellence in Ladakh will provide a big boost to sportspersons in this challenging region. The centre will serve three sports – athletics, archery and boxing.

Despite the chilly weather, a motley turnout at the NDS Stadium witnessed traditional folk dances during the opening ceremony and were treated to some foot-tapping music by the popular local band, Dashugs.