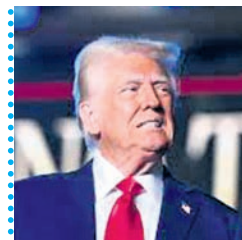




Kritika's choices

Actor Kritika Kamra says she has consciously steered away from projects that prioritise the male gaze

LEISURE | P2



Blow to Trump

A judge blocks a push from Trump to pause federal funding while his administration conducts a review to uproot progressive initiatives

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Markets shine

Sensex and Nifty surge nearly 1 per cent buoyed by a rally in IT, capital goods and industrial stocks

BUSINESS | P11



ICC in dilemma

The much-anticipated ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is set to kick off February 19, but the fate of the tournament remains uncertain

SPORTS | P12

Bhub-Indore direct flights from Feb 7

Kolkata: Low-cost carrier IndiGo Wednesday announced the launch of direct flights between Indore and Bhubaneswar from February 7, the airline said in a statement. The launch of this new route provides a convenient and efficient travel option between these two vibrant cities, significantly reducing travel time for passengers, it said. The direct flights will operate between the two cities four days a week, airline sources said. "We are pleased to introduce this exclusive direct service between Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha, and Indore, the largest city in Madhya Pradesh," the statement quoted Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales at IndiGo, as saying.

2 Maoists killed in J'khand encounter

Chaibasa: Two Maoists including a woman were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in a forest area under Sonua police station limit, around 80km from West Singhbhum district headquarters town, in the early hours of Wednesday, they said. A gunfight broke out between security forces and Maoists in a forest under Sonua police station area around 6.35am. Two bodies including a woman were recovered during the search operation. Kolhan range DIG Manoj Ratan Chothe said.

South Sudan plane crash claims 18

Juba: A small plane crashed in a remote part of South Sudan, killing at least 18 people Wednesday, an official said. The flight, chartered by Chinese oil firm Greater Pioneer Operating Co., had 21 people on board, including two pilots, said Gatchew Bipal, the minister of information in the oil-rich Unity state, where the crash happened earlier Wednesday. The plane crashed while it was taking off near an oil field to head to the international airport in Juba, the South Sudanese capital, he said. Local media reported that the plane was carrying oil workers. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the crash, and authorities had not yet revealed the identities of the victims.

MAHAKUMBH STAMPEDE: 30 KILLED



DISASTER STRIKES: Rescue personnel carry an injured amidst strewn belongings of devotees after the stampede at Sangam, Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mahakumbh Nagar, Jan 29: At least 30 people were killed and 60 injured in a pre-dawn stampede at the Sangam area of the Mahakumbh early Wednesday as millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya, one of the most auspicious days of the Hindu calendar.

Several hours after the incident took place between 1-2am, Mahakumbh DIG Vaibhav Krishna gave the details of the casualties at a press conference here in the evening.

"The incident took place due to the pressure of the crowd. The crowd broke barricades and jumped to the other side, crushing those waiting there. Over 90 injured were rushed to the hospital, of whom 30 died," he said.

The officer said 25 of the deceased have been identified. Four of them are from Karnataka and one each from Assam and Gujarat. Among those injured,

36 are undergoing treatment at the hospital and the rest have been sent with their families.

Over seven and half crore devotees took a dip Wednesday, officials said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences to the devotees who lost their family members in the stampede, describing the tragedy as "extremely saddening".

Later in the night, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced a three-member judicial commission to look into the reasons behind the stampede. He also announced an ex gratia of ₹25 lakh each for the kin of the deceased.

"It is important to get to the bottom of the whole episode on how such a tragedy occurred," a visibly-emotional Adityanath said, adding that the chief secretary and DGP would visit the Maha Kumbh Thursday for an in-depth probe into the tragic incident.

DIG Krishna said barricades

have been placed in the mela and akhara areas for lane management but they gave way under the pressure of the jostling.

As the barricades broke, people fell on those sitting and waiting for taking the holy dip during the 'brahm muhurt' (early morning time considered auspicious to perform certain activities), he said.

Many ordinary people, including women and children, fell down and were crushed.

The officer said the government has issued strict directives there will be no VIP protocol in the mela now onwards.

According to eyewitness accounts, one of the reasons for the tragedy was the sudden surge of pilgrims at the Sangam - all driven by an obvious desire to take the holy dip at 3am, the start of the auspicious hour.

After the stampede, Amritsnan, the traditional bathing ritual of akharas, was deferred but it resumed in the afternoon. The bathing for devotees, however, continued at the tight-

ly-packed Sangam and other ghats along the Ganges which were less crowded.

Around 2am, the blaring sirens of ambulances and police vehicles rushing to the Sangam pierced through the continuous chants of mantras and shlokas echoing from loudspeakers across the Kumbh Mela area.

Those injured were taken to the central hospital set up in the Mela area. Relatives of many injured also reached there, as did some senior administrative and police officials.

Security personnel and rescue workers were seen carrying many of the injured on stretchers. People's belongings, including blankets and bags, lay strewn around.

The opposition hit out at the Centre and the Uttar Pradesh government over the stampede, with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying that mismanagement and administration's special focus on VIP movement were responsible for the tragic incident. **MORE P8**

Over a week after a massive blaze ripped through the temporary tent city of Mahakumbh Mela raising concerns over safety and doubts over the preparedness, tragedy struck the world's largest gathering of humanity as devotees, in crores, were readying for a dip on 'Mauni Amavasya', considered the most sacred of the many bathing occasions during the months-long fair. Surging crowds jostled towards the 'nose' of the confluence of three holy rivers at Sangam and then chaos ensued. Devotees fell on each other as they were pushed from all sides and the dense crowd came to a standstill causing people to collapse due to suffocation. The Uttar Pradesh government, which spent ₹10,000 crore for the event and boasted of using underwater drones and AI to manage the crowd, was tight-lipped about the deaths throughout the day. About 18 hours after the horror unfolded, official sources said at least 30 people were killed. Witnesses and opposition parties have pointed to the mismanagement of crowd control measures, with claims that barricades, inadequate safety arrangements, and the unending VIP movement worsened the situation. As the government continued to downplay the scale of the disaster, the distraught relatives of the dead await accountability for the lack of preparation and response.



A devotee attempts to cross a barricade amid restrictions



Family members of victims mourn outside a hospital mortuary

Govt approves National Critical Minerals Mission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The government Wednesday approved a ₹16,300-crore National Critical Minerals Mission, envisaging a total outlay of ₹34,300 crore spread over seven years, with an aim to achieve self-reliance and accelerate India's journey towards green energy transition.

According to a release by the Mines Ministry, public sector enterprises are expected to contribute ₹18,000 crore to the mission which aims at promoting exploration of critical minerals within the country and at off-

shore locations.

Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth are essential raw materials required to fuel the growth of rapidly-growing clean energy technologies and their expanding uses ranging from wind turbines and electricity networks to electric vehicles and battery manufacturing. Demand for these minerals is growing with clean energy transitions gathering momentum worldwide.

This mission is of ₹16,300 crore, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, adding that 24 critical minerals have been identified.

Total outlay of ₹34,300cr over 7 years

145 MoUs worth ₹12.89L-cr inked: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: The state government has signed 145 MoUs with various companies which have proposed to invest ₹12.89 lakh crore, thereby generating employment for over 8.94 lakh people.

This was stated by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the two-day business summit, 'Utkarsh Odisha, Make in Odisha Conclave, 2025', came to an end Wednesday.

"A total of 145 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed in this summit. Through these MoUs, agreements have been made for investments worth ₹12.89 lakh crore," Majhi told reporters.

MAKE IN ODISHA CONCLAVE ENDS

He said the investment proposals have come from various sectors like chemicals, petrochemicals, textiles, mining and metallurgy, renewable energy, IT, tourism and food processing.

The Chief Minister said the MoUs upon implementation would create more than 8.94 lakh employment opportunities in the state. "This will bring about a major change in the socio-economic condition of the state and lead to an inclusive growth of Odisha," he said.

Majhi said that apart from signing of MoUs, the state government has also received 448 investment intents in proposal

form worth ₹3.84 lakh crore. This is likely to create 3.92 lakh more employment opportunities.

Representatives from 16 countries, including delegates from partner countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Australia, attended the conclave. Odisha is an attractive place on the global investment map, he said. Several top business leaders of India including Anil Agarwal, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Sajjan Jindal, Naveen Jindal, Karan Adani and others attended the conclave.

Majhi expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who inaugurated the state's flagship business

Exclusive industrial park for women soon

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said an industrial park exclusively for women entrepreneurs would be set up in the state. Attending the plenary session on women entrepreneurship enabled by 'Subhadra' on the second day of the Conclave Wednesday, Majhi said a special cell for women entrepreneurs will also be opened at the Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (IPICOL). "I want to make two announcements to promote women in entrepreneurship. First, the government has decided to open an industrial park exclusively for women and the second is opening of a special cell for women at IPICOL," Majhi said.

summit Tuesday and encouraged investors to set up their projects in Odisha. **MORE P3**

ISRO scores a 100, PSLV takes cake with 62 trips

STARTING OFF WITH THE SLV IN 1979, THE SPACE AGENCY CROSSED THE 100-MISSION MARK AFTER 46 YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh), Jan 29: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Wednesday achieved a historic milestone with its 100th mission and revealed an ambitious future plan of crossing the next 100 launches in five years.

Starting off with the SLV in 1979, the space agency crossed the 100-mission mark after 46 years, but what stands out is the PSLV's dominance through the years with 62 missions.

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has turned out to be ISRO's most trusted rocket, thanks to its unmatched

reliability.

While PSLV has been used for 62 missions, GSLV with indigenous cryogenic upper stage comes next with 17. LVM3 (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle MkIII—the heaviest rocket) with seven and SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle) with three, follow suit.

The others are Reusable Launch Vehicle, TV (Test Vehicle) and PAT (Pad Abort Test).

PSLV, often dubbed as the trusted workhorse of ISRO by scientists, has been used consistently to inject various satellites into precise Low Earth Orbits. The vehicle which is 44.4 metre tall is equipped to



take payloads of up to 1,750 kg to Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbits of 600 km altitude.

However, on account of its unmatched reliability, ISRO said PSLV was also used to launch various satellites into

the Chandrayaan-1 and Mars Orbiter Mission as the 'feathers in the hat' of PSLV.

GSLV has given ISRO a run for its money, thanks to the challenging technology behind the rocket. So much so, some repeated failures prompted GSLV to be called 'naughty boy', but things have since changed.

However, the flawless weather observation satellite INSAT-3DS mission last year prompted the ISRO to virtually heave a sigh of relief over the challenging GSLV rocket technology, with one of the scientists quipping the naughty boy has matured into an obedient, disciplined boy.

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Sambalpur: 2 elephant deaths in as many days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Jan 29: A second elephant death has been reported within two days in Sambalpur district under Dhamra range of the Sadar forest division.

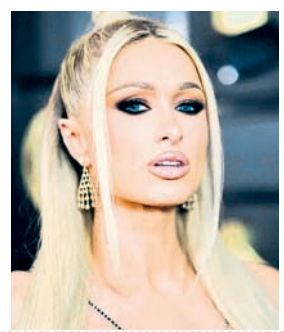
Local villagers Tuesday night discovered the body of a 20-year-old tusker near the Jadulising jungle area, falling under the Dhamra range. Preliminary reports suggested that the elephant might have died after coming in contact with live high-voltage electric wires. However, the exact cause of the animal's death has

not yet been confirmed.

The elephant's carcass was recovered by Forest department personnel after they were alerted by locals Wednesday morning. A veterinary team was called in to conduct a post-mortem. Forest officials said the cause of death will be determined once the report is available to them.

This follows a similar incident last Sunday, when another 20-year-old tusker was found dead near the Labadera Bolbanga jungle close to Khasapal village in Dhamra range under Sadar forest division in the district.

leisure



HILTON HEARTBROKEN LOSING HER HOME IN WILDFIRES

Paris Hilton has been left heartbroken and devastated after losing her home in the LA wildfires but has found a 'silver lining' in helping to give back. The 43-year-old socialite saw her Malibu beach house burn down when the disaster struck across California earlier this month.

MADONNA CALLS OUT TRUMP ADMIN OVER LGBTQ+ ISSUE

Madonna is speaking up in support of the LGBTQ+ community after Donald Trump started taking away their 'freedoms.' The Queen of Pop has told the community not to give up the fight after the Republican announced he has signed an executive order banning transgender people from enlisting in the military.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will find work to be very stressful today. However, it will not prevent you from taking shots at your opponents. You are thoughtful, but can be cunning too. People would have gauged it by now. Ganesh advises you to go ahead nevertheless.

TAURUS
It is quite likely that grandparents will shower love at home and seniors will shower favours at work, says Ganesh. You will probably collect certain overdue payments in the afternoon. Later in the day, a gamble you took in business may pay rich dividends, expects Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, resolving issues will be a tough task, but you will be able to accomplish it nonetheless. It may take time, but don't lose hope. Persistence and hard work will be rewarding. The grind will increase your understanding of the things happening around you. You will be able to understand those around you better.

CANCER
An enterprising day! You may have a chance of foreign travel, which could benefit you. Your health will not help you in your efforts. You will learn an important lesson of life in the afternoon.

LEO
You may want to carry some aspirin with you today, suggests Ganesh. For, there are strong indications that you shall be up against a lot of stress and tension at work. This headache-inducing factor aside, you have the uncanny knack of beating your opponents at their own game. This will superimpose your position of awe and respect at the workplace, as people realise the stuff you are made of.

VIRGO
Sorting out long-pending issues will be a lengthy process today. However, Ganesh advises you to be persistent as the results will make all your efforts worthwhile. You will gain the ability to look at things through other peoples' eyes, so to speak. Be generous, as you may have to take your beloved out for shopping in the evening.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will get fame and prestige in the field of broad casting media and in the world of art. This is the evening where you will have to make a choice and decision regarding higher studies. Luck will be with you.

SCORPIO
Today will consist of varying highs and lows at work and in confrontations, predicts Ganesh. At work, you may end up quarrelling with your peers. You will be reasonable in your views and still you will find yourself on the receiving side of the argument. Evening will compensate for the tough day as you kick back and relax in the company of loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS
Matters concerning family bonds will keep you occupied for most part today. Be sure to make all your loved ones feel special. Early in the day, those with whom love's labour has been lost might try to end all connections. Proceed with caution when it comes to children, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Power is a privilege of a few. It's a day for those of you in power, of governance and the national purse, says Ganesh. A marvellous day awaits all civil servants and government employees. The dealings you will undertake will materialise and earn you distinction; rewards for the commendable efforts you have put in the past may also come.

AQUARIUS
A sunny day and a starry night! Today is for friends, says Ganesh. You chat, sing, yell, and even talk philosophy, values and politics with your pals. You may indulge in a romantic evening with your partner, either in a restaurant or at the beach, or simply on the sofa watching Clark Gable woo Scarlett O' Hara.

PISCES
A turning point in romantic liaisons is likely today, says Ganesh. In love, as at the office, you will discover that there is no substitute for hard work. However, evening promises bountiful pleasure to make up for all the sweat and tears.

Kritika: I believe in making bold choice

Mumbai: Actress Kritika Kamra says she believes in making bold choices and that she has consciously steered away from projects that prioritise the male gaze. Speaking about her ethos, Kritika shared, "I've always consciously steered away from projects that prioritize the male gaze. My focus is on meaningful narratives that celebrate real stories and authentic characters."



"I want to bring life to roles that resonate with my beliefs and contribute positively to the larger narrative of cinema. It's never been about how many projects I do; it's about the kind of impact they have."

"I believe in making bold choices and staying true to who I am as an artist, and I feel fortunate to have found stories that allow me to express myself authentically," she added. The actress had previously shared that she is drawn to roles that break stereotypes and that she consciously lets go of work that glorifies weak, dependent women.

Speaking about her journey, Kritika shares, "From playing a tough spy in *For Your Eyes Only* to a sharp-witted cop in *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, I'm drawn to roles that break stereotypes." IAN5



Samantha talks about her anchor

Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has talked about the importance of meditation in her everyday life and says that for her it has become "her anchor." *The Family Man* actress took to Instagram, where she shared a video where she is seen meditating. For the caption, she wrote: "Meditation. If there's one thing I wish all of you would try, it's this. Just 15 minutes of meditation every day — in whatever way works for you. Sit in silence, focus on your breath, or follow a guided meditation on YouTube. There's no right or wrong way, nothing formal —

just the simple act of tuning in." "For me, meditation has become my anchor — a way to return to the ocean of calm and peace that's always within." She added that no matter how chaotic the world gets, I know that quiet spot inside her is "always there, waiting." "When you learn to find your way home to yourself, the noise outside loses its grip. Try it. Just for today. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and see what happens. PS: Don't bother about the chatter in your mind. The trick is to simply watch your thoughts and let them pass. Don't get entangled with them. PPS: Don't forget to tell me how it goes. Let's do this!," shares the actress. IAN5

Malaika's definition of fashion

Mumbai: Bollywood star Malaika Arora continues to reign supreme as a trendsetter, and her recent shoot further cements her position as a fashion maven. Malaika shared how fashion empowers her and allows her to express her personality while staying authentic to her unique style.



For Malaika, fashion is not just about following trends; it's a medium of self-expression and confidence. "Fashion is all about pushing the envelope," she stated. "It's about stepping out of your comfort zone and experimenting with what feels right for you, while staying true to who you are." Whether it's donning a bold outfit on the red carpet or a casual yet chic look during her everyday outings, Malaika consistently shows her ability to redefine style. The actress and entrepreneur also emphasized how fashion is empowering for her. "Clothing and style have a way of making you feel powerful. When I wear something that truly reflects my personality, it boosts my confidence and helps me carry myself with ease," she shared. Malaika revealed that authenticity remains her top priority. "Trends come and go, but staying authentic to your style is timeless. I always believe in wearing what makes me happy and comfortable," she remarked. AGENCIES

Express delivery- A sign of the times!

A state legislator's express warning to wield lathis if item dancers in jatras stage obscene or vulgar performances has courted controversy. It however comes as no surprise that he has apparently stockpiled about 100 pieces of the bamboo item for timely delivery if the need arose.

Surprisingly though, executive orders have been wielded faster than raining lathis or pressing out American espressos. One EO has not only courted controversy but been restrained by a court of law before its due delivery. Notwithstanding the temporary pause on its implementation, a flock of anxious 'moms-to-be' were seriously contemplating resorting to



pre-term delivery in the express time left, but were duly advised against it. Call it the emotional upheavals due to soaring estrogen levels in the third trimester or due

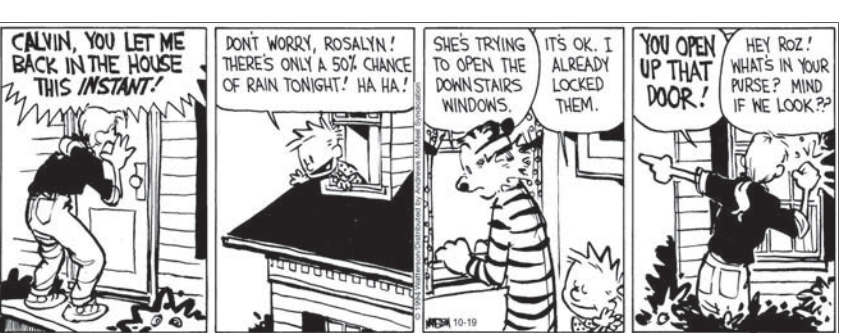
not for picturing their budding family as a part of making a certain country great again; they may well be contemplating stockpiling lathis for what they may fathom as a vulgar demon-

stration of authority staged by folks with an obscene amount of power. Meanwhile, topping the charts in terms of expressly affordable delivery is a certain airport café that is doling out Rs 10 *chai*, Rs 20 coffee and the likes to about 27000 flyers in a month. Yet another little feather in the heavily decorated cap of Republic of India! Talk about high performance delivered in service of all the mango people (*aam aadmi*) of our all-inclusive nation, whether its aspiring citizens work 90 hours a week or not, whether few choose to stare at their wives on Sundays or not, whether its citizens identify themselves as a he, a she or not! DR RACHNA RATH

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

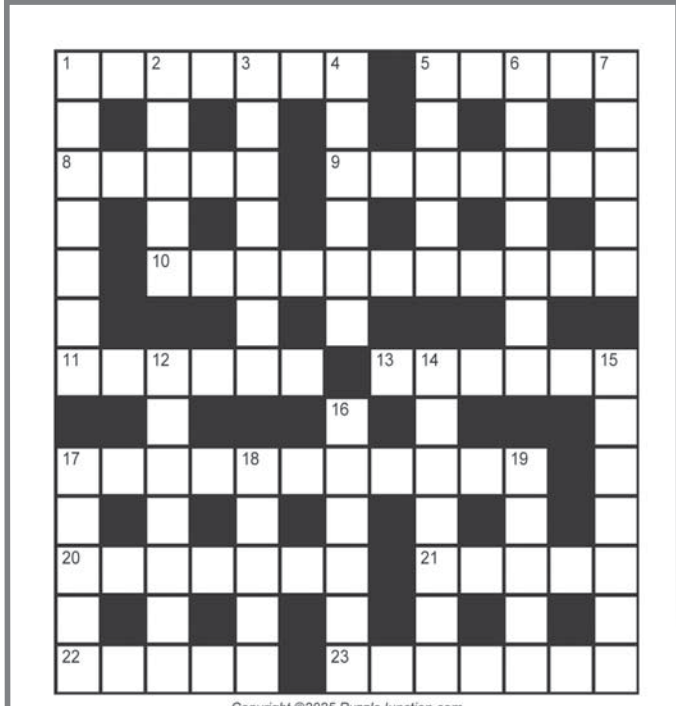


BREVITY



FUN POST

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Small work area
 - 5 Outline
 - 8 Prospector
 - 9 Robin Hood's forte
 - 10 Mastermind
 - 11 Protest
 - 13 Cold symptom
 - 17 Principal fictional character
 - 20 Kind of roulette
 - 21 Corrupt
 - 22 Bitter
 - 23 Sweet sultan, for one
 - 5 Old gold coin
 - 6 Garden-variety
 - 7 Stew seasoning
 - 12 Backer
 - 14 Capital of Kenya
 - 15 Intense
 - 16 Lady's chapeau
 - 17 Sear
 - 18 Out of this world
 - 19 Dog biscuit, e.g.
- Down**
- 1 Itch reliever
 - 2 Guitar relative
 - 3 Simón Bolívar's birthplace
 - 4 Crown covering

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.

			4					
	2							4
5				6				1
		6	8		4	1		
			5		1		3	
8		5		6	2			
	6	4		3				
3								9
	8		1					7

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

A	D	A	P	T	S	A	P	P	E	N	D
Q	D	I	T	T	U	X	O				
U	L	E	M	U	R	P	L	A	I	D	G
A	I	P	I	I	M	G					
T	I	B	I	A	E	C	L	I	P	S	E
I	N	D									
C	O	S	M	I	C	A	D	H	E	R	E
U											
T	A	B	L	E	A	U	A	S	C	O	T
E	V	X	R	S	A	O					
T	H	E	T	A	O	P	T	I	C	O	N
R	R	L	R	I	H	I					
A	S	T	U	T	E	E	C	Z	E	M	A

SUDOKU

5	6	1	8	9	7	2	3	4
9	3	2	1	5	4	6	7	8
8	7	4	2	3	6	5	1	9
3	5	9	4	7	2	8	6	1
6	2	8	9	1	3	7	4	5
4	1	7	5	6	8	9	2	3
1	4	5	7	2	9	3	8	6
2	9	6	3	8	1	4	5	7
7	8	3	6	4	5	1	9	2

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Now is the time - The right time

The 'Utkarsh Odisha' conclave, inaugurated by the esteemed Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, has concluded successfully today. In line with the Central Government's commitment to Odisha's prosperity, a strong support for investors was reiterated by Modi Ji. Describing Odisha as a breeding ground for new hopes, aspirations and opportunities, Modi ji expressed supreme confidence over the State emerging as an unprecedented model of industrial growth, urging investors to leverage its potential.

The Prime Minister guaranteed that investments in Odisha would yield remarkable success, backed by favorable policies and infrastructure development. He expressed confidence that the State's transformation would surpass expectations, making it a key hub for industrial and economic progress. The conclave reinforced Odisha's position as a thriving investment destination, promising growth for both investors and the state's economy.

Participation of investors in Utkarsh Odisha surpassed the numbers of previous events multi fold. Modi ji expressed happiness for this wonderful business summit as he considers that eastern India will be the growth engine of the country's development with Odisha playing a significant role in it. Odisha used to be the main centre of maritime trade in Southeast Asia. Even today the symbolic Bali Jatra is celebrated every year in Odisha as a tribute to the "Sadhaba" (traders) from Odisha.

It is a matter of great importance that Modi Ji highlights the legacy that connects Odisha with Southeast Asia. Now in the 21st century, Odisha is engaged in reviving its glorious heritage. Recently, the President of Singapore visited Odisha. Singapore is very excited about relations with Odisha.

While welcoming the industrialists, the Prime Minister quoted my speech "this is the time, the right time for investment." As the Prime Minister, he has visited Odisha almost 30 times, which is more than the number of visits by all the Prime Ministers put together, since independence.



My government is the people's government. People have given us a mandate to make Odisha a developed State by 2036 when it will be celebrating its centenary. With the support of the visionary Prime Minister, we will definitely make Odisha prosperous by 2036. The industrial development of Odisha will act as an engine of progress and development not only for our state but for the whole of India. This is the best time to invest in Odisha.

We met the heads of different companies during the two-day summit and apprised them about the favourable atmosphere for industrialisation in the State. As we all are aware, misunderstanding and lack of commitment is the biggest obstacle in the path of industrialisation. Though we had expected to bring investments worth ₹5 lakh crore initially it went substantially up, when investors heard the Prime Minister's strong commitment.

These investment promises are not only made in mineral-based industries, but also in many allied industries like shipbuilding and repair, petrochemicals, renewable energy, green hydrogen, semiconductors, food processing, agro-based industries, setting up of industrial parks, etc.

The people of our state will work in

Odisha without going to other states to earn their livelihood. It is my resolve that Odisha will no longer remain poor due to the blessings of Lord Jagannath. We are working towards achieving this goal and will continue to do so.

Earlier, even 20% of the approved projects could not be realised due to various reasons like opposition from locals and NOC from different agencies. So, in order to set up more industries and provide work to the people in the state, we are approving investment proposals through single window clearance system and Utkarsh Odisha conclave has given a hint at possible rise in investment proposals. But, our focus will be on food processing, agro-based industries, renewable energy, paper manufacturing, textiles, apparel, petrochemicals, wood industry, aviation, pharmaceuticals, tourism, cement and plastics.

The tourism sector, which is in the bad shape, can provide employment to the maximum number of people. The Prime Minister himself has called for the development of tourism sector based on the beaches, forests, mountains, art and culture of Odisha. We will work in this direction.

About 7 lakh Odias are working in textile and gemstone sectors in Gujarat. When cotton and textile mills will be established in Odisha, the cotton farmers will be benefited and the Odia people will also get employment. Similarly, we have taken the issue of establishment of sugar and jute mills seriously along with sugarcane and jute cultivation.

We have taken a resolve to set up agro-based industries in the coming days with the support of the industrialists of our state and the country. With the continuous support of the people of the State, a balanced industrial development blueprint can be implemented.

I express my gratitude to the guests, media, young entrepreneurs and representatives of industry associations for their kind support.

Mohan Charan Majhi,
Chief Minister,
Odisha

Industrial park for women entrepreneurs soon: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said an industrial park exclusively for women entrepreneurs would be set up in the state.

Attending the plenary session on women entrepreneurship enabled by 'Subhadra' on the second day of the 'Utkarsh Odisha: Make in Odisha Conclave 2025' at Janata Maidan here, Majhi said a special cell for women entrepreneurs will also be opened at the Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (IPICOL).

"I want to make two announcements to promote women in entrepreneurship. First, the government has decided to open an industrial park exclusively for women and the second is opening of a special cell for women at IPICOL," Majhi said.

The CM said that he was hopeful that these two measures will encourage women to start business independently. He also sought suggestions from women business leaders on how to further raise women's participation in business.

The session prepares a roadmap to shape the future of 'Subhadra' industry in the state by interacting with industry leaders on creating employment opportunities for women of Odisha.

Additional Chief Secretary, Industries department, Hemant Sharma said the state already has a 'Sub-

Youth our greatest assets: Majhi

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said the youth of Odisha are our greatest assets and that the state government is ensuring an industry-ready workforce through initiatives like Skilled-In-Odisha to help them compete and excel in the global economy.

The Chief Minister was addressing the Skilled-In-Odisha Plenary Session, on the second day of Utkarsh Odisha-Make in Odisha Conclave 2025.

The session brought together policymakers, industry leaders, academicians, and international experts to deliberate on empowering the youth of Odisha with globally competitive skills.

Skill Development & Technical Education (SD&TE) and Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain reiterated the government's commitment to youth empowerment through

continuous skilling, re-skilling and upskilling for overall economic development.

Secretary of Union Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Atul Kumar Tiwari highlighted the important schemes of the Centre. Lauding the efforts of the state government, Tiwari said, "Skilled-In-Odisha will play a critical role in Viksit Bharat 2047."

Commissioner-cum-Secretary, SD&TE Bhupendra Singh Poonia gave a broad overview of the skill advantage of Odisha. "Being a youthful state, Odisha can cater to the evolving workforce requirement of the industries. Through robust infrastructure and enabling policy framework, Odisha is re-aligning its skilling programmes to be industry ready," Poonia said.

The plenary session featured two engaging panel discussions.

hadra Yojana' under which women empowerment is being done.

"We want to link the Subhadra Yojana to entrepreneurship. Women will be encouraged by providing them a suitable platform," he said.

On the second day of the conclave, plenary sessions were held

on skill in Odisha, renewable energy and equipment, textile and apparel, agriculture & food processing, tourism development, health care, pharma & biotechnology, industrial infrastructure-ports, airport, railways & roadways and film & media.

Green economy may boost state's GDP by 23%

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Green economy could directly contribute ₹2 lakh crore to Odisha's GDP, boosting it by 23 per cent by 2030 and positioning the state as a leader in India's green growth, according to a study conducted by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

The study report was released at the 'Utkarsh Odisha: Make in Odisha Conclave 2025' by Development Commissioner Anu Garg.

The study said that Odisha has the potential to create approximately 10 lakh new full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs across three green sectors — energy transition, circular economy &

Odisha has the potential to create approximately 10 lakh new full-time equivalent jobs across three green sectors and attract ₹3.5 lakh crore in investments by 2030, according to CEEW study

bio-economy and nature-based solutions—and attract ₹3.5 lakh crore in investments by 2030.

The first-of-its-kind CEEW study — How a Green Economy Can Deliver Jobs, Growth and Sustainability in Odisha — calculates the jobs, market, and investment opportunities across 28 value chains. The study identifies 28 green value chains, ranging from seaweed cultivation and bamboo processing to floating solar and e-waste recycling, which together represent

immense economic potential. Its proposed Green Odisha Initiative provides a roadmap to integrate policies, investments, and actions across sectors to realise these opportunities.

About 14 value chains in the energy transition such as solar, wind, battery storage systems, and electric vehicle manufacturing could attract ₹1.5 lakh crore in investments and create four lakh new jobs by 2030, the report said. Further, bio-economy and nature-based solutions such as sustainable packaging, bio inputs for agriculture, mangrove restoration, agroforestry, and seaweed cultivation could create over five lakh jobs while contributing ₹26,000 crore to Odisha's economy, it said.



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Safeguard domestic workers' rights: SC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The Supreme Court Wednesday directed the Centre for a legal framework to provide a safeguard to domestic workers observing their exploitation and a "legal vacuum" over the protection of their rights.

In the opinion of a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, for now, there seemed no effective legislative or executive action to enact a statute, which could provide solace to millions of vulnerable domestic workers across the country.

"The simple reason for this harassment and rampant abuse, which seems to be prevalent throughout the country, is the legal vacuum which exists vis-à-vis the rights and protection of domestic workers," the court said.

Indeed, domestic workers in India remain largely unprotected and without any comprehensive legal recognition. As a result, they frequently endure low wages, unsafe environments, and extended hours without effective recourse, it added.

The court directed the Ministry of Labour and Employment along with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and the Ministry of Law and Justice, to jointly constitute a committee comprising area experts for a legal framework meant for the benefit, protection and regulation of the rights of domestic workers.

The composition of the expert committee, said the bench, was left to the wisdom of the Centre and its minis-

tries concerned.

"It will be appreciated if the committee submits a report within a period of six months, whereupon the Government of India may consider the necessity of introducing a legal framework which may effectively address the cause and concern of domestic workers," it added.

The top court passed the order while quashing a criminal case against former DRDO scientist Ajay Malik for the alleged wrongful confinement and trafficking of his domestic help.

The bench said it was an incontrovertible fact that the demand for domestic workers was mounting in India, given the rapid urbanisation and development.

"While any avenues for employment being opened to marginalised women merit celebration, we are at pains to note that despite their growing demand, this indispensable workforce has also been the most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse," it said.

In its opinion, domestic workers often belonged to the marginalised communities, such as SC, ST, OBC, and EWS and were compelled to undertake domestic work due to financial hardship or displacement, further reinforcing their vulnerability.



POOR VISIBILITY: Thick fog engulfs the streets near Acharya Vihar in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday morning. The regional meteorological department has issued a yellow warning (Be Aware) for a few districts, forecasting dense fog in the coming days

Over 1.3 tonne ganja seized in Boudh; 4 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Odisha Police seized over 1.3 tonnes of ganja from two separate locations in Boudh district Wednesday, arresting four individuals involved in smuggling the contraband.

The operation also led to the recovery of five rounds of live bullets and a country-made firearm from the smugglers within the jurisdiction of Ghantapada police station.

According to police sources, the first seizure took place when officers intercepted Mithun Hathi, a known ganja peddler, and his associate, who



were negotiating a deal near Ambajhari Gram Panchayat under Boudh police station limits.

Upon spotting the police, Mithun's associate managed to flee the scene, but Mithun was

apprehended. During a subsequent search, police found and seized 5.6 quintals of ganja, along with a motorcycle used for transporting the illegal goods.

In the second operation, po-

lice arrested Uday Chandra Bhoi, Srikanth Muduli, and Nilakantha Bhoi under Ghantapada police station limits.

They were found in possession of 7.4 quintals of ganja, which was also confiscated. Along with the drugs, the police found firearms and live ammunition from their possession. Additionally, authorities seized five motorcycles and a pickup van, all of which were allegedly used in the drug trade.

A senior police official confirmed that further investigations are underway to track down additional individuals connected to the smuggling network.

ICAR-CIFA hosts kisan mela on freshwater aquaculture



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: The ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA) organised a kisan mela-cum-exhibition on freshwater aquaculture here at Kausalyaganga Wednesday.

Over 460 farmers and farm women from Angul, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda, and Puri districts attended the event.

The mela was inaugurated by, secretary of Ramakrishna Mission, Bhubaneswar Swami Atmaprabhananda, who commended ICAR-CIFA's efforts in technology transfer for farmers and highlighted the importance of such events. Prominent attendees included ICAR-IIWM director Arjamadutta Sarangi, dean of Extension Education, OUAT Prasannajit Mishra

and SOA professor Bibudha Parasara.

ICAR-CIFA director PK Sahoo welcomed dignitaries and farmers, emphasising scientific fish farming as a means of economic empowerment, particularly for marginalised communities.

In 2024, the institute conducted interface meetings, awareness programmes, technology transfers, and training sessions, benefiting over 3,000 farm families across eight states.

Key technologies demonstrated at the mela included scientific carp culture, ornamental fish farming, carp seed rearing, catfish rearing, and integrated fish farming.

An exhibition was also held, featuring eight organisations from the agriculture and allied sectors showcasing products, technologies, and publications.

BHUBANESWAR RLY STATION REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Work permission granted for elevated approach & exit road

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: In a major step towards the redevelopment of Bhubaneswar Railway Station, the state government has granted working permission for the construction of the elevated driveway and exit road on the Master Canteen Square side of the station. This development is a crucial breakthrough in the modernisation of the station.

The permission specifically allows for the construction of the elevated approach and exit road on the land allocated by the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA). The move will ensure that the redevelopment project proceeds smoothly while keeping in mind the collaborative planning between East Coast Railway (ECoR) and BDA.

As part of the broader station redevelopment project, the development of parking areas and commercial spaces within the station precincts will be done in consultation with BDA, who is also planning to develop commercial areas over the land allotted to them, ensuring that the interests of both the railway station and BDA are aligned, creating a modern, vibrant station complex for the future.



Indian Railways is investing ₹419 crore into the redevelopment project, which will result in the creation of state-of-the-art facilities and amenities for passengers.

This includes entry from both sides, an air-concourse connecting all the platforms, separate entry and exit points, lift and escalators, baggage security check-in area, information centre, food plaza and waiting room.

The redevelopment of Bhubaneswar Railway Station is a testimony to Indian Railways Amrit Station Scheme for developing a seamless, world-class travel experience that meets the experience of passengers.

passengers. This includes entry from both sides, an air-concourse connecting all the platforms, separate entry and exit points, lift and escalators, baggage security check-in area, information centre, food plaza and waiting room.

Mayurbhanj Utsav from Jan 31 to Feb 2

Bhubaneswar: Mayurbhanj Utsav 2025 will be held at Utkal Mandap, Bhubaneswar, from January 31 to February 2, showcasing the region's rich art, culture, and heritage. The announcement was made during a press conference at Mayurbhanj Bhawan Wednesday. Key dignitaries present at the press meet included Utsav Committee chairman Arun Kumar Rath, actor Sukant Rath, former Karanjia Sub-Collector Rajani Kanta Biswal, and Chinmay Kumar Das Pattnaik. Film director Tapas Sargharia outlined the three-day event's cultural highlights, which include performances of Chhau and Jhumra dances by renowned artists. The festival will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi January 31, with the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Higher Education, Sports, Odia Language, Literature, and Culture also expected to attend. February 1, a special memorial gathering will be held at the Institute of Engineers, Sachivalaya Marg, from 10am to 2pm, marking the 150th birth anniversary of Maharaja Sriramchandra Bhanj Deo. The Maharaja and Maharani of Mayurbhanj will be the guests of honour.

ECoR campaign warns youth about selfies on tracks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has launched an awareness campaign targeting teenagers and college students, highlighting the dangerous practice of taking selfies near railway tracks.

This initiative comes in response to a rising number of accidents where young individuals have tragically lost their lives while attempting to take selfies or shoot videos on or near the tracks.

Taking selfies at railway stations or along tracks may seem like a harmless, trendy activity for social media, but it poses severe risks. In recent years, several incidents have been reported where students or young people were hit by moving trains while posing for photos in hazardous locations. Many of these accidents oc-

curred because individuals were distracted, failing to notice approaching trains, overhead electrical equipment, or the crowded and chaotic environment of the station.

To address this growing concern, Indian Railways has implemented stringent regulations.

According to Sections 147 and 153 of the Railway Act, anyone found taking selfies near moving trains or on railway tracks could face heavy fines, legal consequences, or even jail time. The message is clear: no photo or social media post is worth the risk of losing one's life.

As part of the campaign, ECoR is urging students, schools, and parents to play a vital role in spreading awareness about the risks associated with selfies at railway stations. ECoR emphasises that



students should recognise that their lives are far more valuable than any momentary fame on social media.

The campaign encourages schools and colleges to organise awareness programmes and workshops to help students understand the dangers of taking selfies in dangerous locations like crowded stations or near

railway tracks. Parents are also encouraged to have open discussions with their children about the dangers of this practice and guide them to make smarter decisions online.

To ensure the message reaches a wide audience, ECoR is utilising various platforms, including newspaper adver-

tisements, TV spots, public announcements, and social media campaigns. These efforts are designed to remind people, particularly teenagers, that taking selfies on or near railway tracks is never worth the risk.

Railway stations are crowded and busy places, with fast-moving trains and dangerous electrical equipment, making it easy for people to become distracted. ECoR is calling on the public to prioritise safety over social media fame and make thoughtful decisions. "Remember, your moment of fame shouldn't come at the cost of your life or someone else's," a spokesperson for ECoR said. By adhering to safety guidelines, everyone can contribute to a safer environment on railway premises and help prevent unnecessary accidents, he added.

Dr Patnaik appointed CMO for Indian ice hockey team

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Senior consultant in Arthroscopic and Sports Surgery at Manipal Hospital, Bhubaneswar and founder of Sports Science India (SSI), Dr Sarthak Patnaik, has been appointed as the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for the Indian ice hockey team at the 2025 Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China. The games will take place from February 7 to 14, 2025.

Expressing his gratitude, Dr Patnaik said, "I am honoured to be appointed as CMO. I look forward to ensuring the well-being of our athletes with the best possible medical care and support."

Hospital director Saktimaya Mohapatra lauded Dr Patnaik's achievement, calling it a testament to his dedication and expertise in sports medicine.

As CMO, Dr Patnaik will oversee the medical care of Indian ice hockey players, ensuring their peak physical condition. His leadership will be crucial in managing injuries and optimising performance.



With over 5,000 successful arthroscopic procedures, Dr Patnaik has treated top athletes like Neeraj Chopra, Ravi Kumar, Srabani Nanda, Pranati Nayak, and Odisha's Ranji Cricket Team. His international experience includes roles in Asia Ice Hockey Champions Trophy and Asia Cup events in Kuwait, Malaysia, and Kyrgyzstan.

A pioneer in hip arthroscopy in Eastern India, Dr Patnaik founded Sports Science India, the region's first dedicated sports clinic, and played a key role in organising Eastern India's first Sports Science Conclave.

His appointment underscores his global recognition and expertise in sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery.

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Odia language takes a beating

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Jan 29: Despite efforts by the state government to promote Odia language after it was granted classical language status, the use of mother tongue has taken a back seat in remote coastal areas of Kendrapara district, thanks to continuous influx of Bangladeshis who speak Bengali.

Although the state government has issued directives to write the signage/nameplates at all offices and business establishments in Odia, this is not being adhered to. To add to the concern, approximately 90 per cent of the population in coastal regions of Rajnagar and Mahakalpara blocks communicates in Bengali, instead of Odia, according to sources. Even in schools, students are reportedly interacting and exchanging ideas in Bengali.

Intellectuals have expressed concern over the decline in use of Odia language, attributing it to the increasing number of migrants in the area. Pratyush Nayak of Rajnagar said the crisis stems from unchecked migration from Bangladesh. During the Bangladesh Liber-

IMMIGRATION WOES

ation War (1950-71), only 1,237 migrants were officially settled in Kendrapara. However, the 2011 census reported over 78,000 Bengali-speaking residents in the district, with more than 42,000 of them now possessing voter ID cards.

In deference to an order of the Union government, a survey was conducted in 2004 to identify migrants in the coastal district. The findings revealed 1,551 migrants in Mahakalpara tehsil, 90 in Pattamundai tehsil, and 30 in Rajnagar tehsil. While deportation notices were issued to those identified in Mahakalpara, they were never effectively enforced due to host of reasons. Despite occasional reports of illegal migration, the district administration has been largely inactive on the issue. This linguistic and demographic shift has sparked growing concerns among cultural and social activists about the long-term implications for Odia heritage and identity in the region.

Tapan Kumar Kar of Rajnagar said that a protest was held in front of the District Collector's



office in Kendrapara December 9, 2008, seeking measures to prevent the influx of outsiders. During the protest, concerns were raised about the potential impact of immigration on internal security. However, the situation has not significantly changed in the local region.

Villages such as Ramanagar, Suniti, Babar, Danganal, Talachua, Bhakta, Rangani, Gupti, Bhitarkanika, Gahirmatha, Benakanda, Jambu, Kharinasi, Batighar, Pitapat, Ahirajpur, Baraji Bahakud, Amarabati, Manjulapalli, Daityaprasad, Ranipatna, Birabhanapur, Bhanjaprasad, Tikayantapur, Krushnanagar, Rajendranagar,

and Kakanagar have turned into settlements Bengali-speaking populace. Kar expressed concerns that the rapid growth of Bengali-speaking population is leading to a decline in the use of Odia language in these areas.

Maheswar Jena, an intellectual of the region, remarked that Odisha's culture and traditions are at risk of disappearing. He noted that residents of these regions are becoming increasingly disinterested in using Odia for communication, both spoken and written. Even in schools, students are speaking Bengali, while religious books, almanacs, and calendars written in Bengali are being sold in local shops. During elections, political leaders are delivering speeches in Bengali to attract voters, further marginalising the use of Odia. Jena questioned the future of Odia language in such circumstances.

When contacted, Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Nilu Mahapatra stated that the district administration has taken necessary steps to curb illegal immigration. He also emphasised that Odia is being taught in all schools throughout the district.

Ration card e-KYC exposes discrepancies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hatadihi, Jan 29: The launch of e-KYC (Know Your Customer) by the state government to ensure transparency in the food security scheme under public distribution system (PDS) has exposed the ugly secrets in the scheme, a report said.

The e-KYC aims to identify eligible and ineligible beneficiaries, including ghost beneficiaries, receiving government benefits under the scheme. As a result, ineligible beneficiaries are being flagged.

Accordingly, the State Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department has compiled a block-wise list of ineligible beneficiaries. The list reveals presence of 514 ineligible beneficiaries from 132 families under Hatadihi block in Keonjhar district.

The list includes names of salaried employees from various sectors who are not eligible for ration supplies under the scheme. However, it is yet



to be confirmed whether these ineligible beneficiaries in the list have availed ration supplies. The exact count of eligible and ineligible beneficiaries from the list remains unclear. Additionally, names of eligible beneficiaries also appear in the ineligible list, further raising several questions. Block supply officer Satya

Narayan Pattnaik said the state government has provided the list of ineligible beneficiaries to all blocks in the state. The list pertaining to Hatadihi block contains 514 individuals from 132 families. This data was sourced from HRMS portal, and investigations are underway to verify the truth and find out the eligible beneficiaries. The inquiry will also determine whether these 514 ineligible beneficiaries have availed ration supplies.

As per government regulations, employees earning less than ₹10,000 per month in rural areas are eligible for ration supplies. The list reportedly includes such employees, which requires further clarification. District civil supplies officer Ajay Kumar Rath stated that they have not yet received the official list of ineligible beneficiaries from the government. Reports from various blocks are awaited, and appropriate measures will be taken once the inquiries are completed.

Man gets 20-year RI for raping minor girl



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 29: An Additional District Judge-cum-special POCSCO court Wednesday sentenced a man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) after convicting him of raping and assaulting a 17-year-old mentally-challenged girl in 2019.

Judge Monalisa Mahanty also slapped a penalty of ₹5,000 on the convict, Basanta Rout, 39, a resident of Kanapur village under Hatadihi block. Defaulting on payment of the fine will invite additional 1 year in prison, ordered the judge. Furthermore, the judge directed the district legal services authority (DLA) to pay ₹10 lakh compensation to the victim and provide her the ₹5,000 fine collected from the convict.

According to the case diary, the incident occurred around 3:30pm December 12, 2019, when the victim had gone to the nearby river to take a bath.

Finding her alone, Basanta forcefully took her to a nearby mango orchard where he raped her. He also assaulted the girl after committing the crime and threatened to kill her if she discloses the matter before anyone. The critically injured girl narrated her ordeal before her family members, who lodged a complaint at Soso police station later in the evening. Acting on the complaint, police registered a case, arrested Basanta, and forwarded him to court. The judge pronounced the aforesaid judgement after verifying statements of 28 witnesses and going through the police investigation report.

Leopard hide seized; smuggler arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, Jan 29: A Special Task Force (STF) of Boudh forest division has arrested a wildlife smuggler and seized a leopard hide from him.

The STF officials, acting on a tip-off, conducted a raid at Kantamal-Manamunda road near Manamunda police station Tuesday. There, they seized the leopard skin from Ramakanta Bhoi, 32, a resident of Luisingh village under Kantamal police limits.

The STF has registered a case (No-3/25) and arrested Bhoi. He was forwarded to Kantamal Court Wednesday. The leopard hide has been sent to Dehradun for forensic examination, according to STF officials.

Though the Forest department has achieved success in seizing wildlife parts such as tiger hides, deer skins,



and pangolin scales in the past, it has become a Herculean task for the local forest authorities to tackle widespread poaching in the area.

Miscreants loot ₹5L from Jajpur bizzman

Jajpur: Four armed miscreants looted ₹5 lakh from a businessman in Jajpur district, police said Wednesday. The incident took place Tuesday night near Barabati Chhaka on National Highway-16. According to the complaint lodged by businessman Jitendra Das, four armed miscreants stopped his vehicle and snatched his bag containing ₹5 lakh after breaking the glass of his car. The businessman has filed a complaint at Dharmasala police station. Police have detained a suspect from Barabati area.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
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60Estg.No.845, Date: 28.01.2025
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice No. (49) of 2024-25
Bid Identification No.- C.C. (R&B) 03

1. Name of the Work : Road Works, 2. Total No. of Works : 7 Nos. Works, 3. Estimated Cost : i) Rs.26,51,316.00, ii) Rs.19,40,253.00, iii) Rs.32,58,324.00, iv) Rs.23,01,477.00, v) Rs.13,35,958.00, vi) Rs.44,98,654.00, vii) Rs.25,57,197.00, 4. Class of Contractor: SI No.1,3,4 & 7 "C" & "B" Class & SI No.2 & 5 "D" & "C" Contractor, SI No.6, "F" Contractors, 5. Period of Completion : 1 (One) Calendar Month, 6. Type of Tender : Single Cover System (Online), 7. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the Portal : From 30.01.2025 at 4.00 PM to 06.02.2025 at 5.30 P.M., 8. Last Date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal : 06.02.2025, upto 5.30 P.M., 9. Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Er. Narendra Kumar Ghadai, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.III, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
N.B. Subsequent corrigendum/amendment if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.
OIPR-34089/11/0020/2425 Sd/- Superintending Engineer, BBSR (R&B) Division No.III, BBSR

डॉ. हरिसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय, सागर (म.प्र.) भारत
DR. HARISINGH GOUR VISHWAVIDYALAYA, SAGAR (M.P.) INDIA
(A Central University)
Website: www.dhgsu.edu.in | Tele: +91-7582-265228
Adv. No. : R/NT/2025/02 Dated: 27.01.2025

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Please visit university website www.dhgsu.edu.in for qualifications, eligibility criteria, other details and updates.
Corrigendum, if any, shall be published only on University website.
cbc 21273/12/0014/2425 **REGISTRAR (Offg.)**

Government of Odisha
"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.: Online-AGL-18
No.O-1350 of 2024-2025

1. Name of the Work	: Road Works
2. Estimated Cost	: Rs.10.70 to 13.38 Lakhs
3. Period of Completion	: 1 (One) Calendar Month
4. Date & Time of availability of	: From 28.01.2025 to 03.02.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.
5. Last Date/Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	: 03.02.2025 upto 05.00 P.M.
6. Name & Address of the OIT	: Executive Engineer Rural Works Division, Angul

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd./- Executive Engineer
R.W.Division, Angul
OIPR-25096/11/0020/2425

EAST COAST RAILWAY
INDICATIVE NOTICE FOR ENGAGEMENT OF RETIRED STATE GOVT. OFFICIALS
VACANCY NOTICE NO-01/2025
ECoR/Pers/04/Engg./HQ/Re-Eng./Retd./State-Govt. Revenue/Forest Official/25 Date: 23.01.2025

ENGAGEMENT OF RETIRED STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN EXIGENCIES OF SERVICES IN RAILWAY PROJECTS UNDER CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER / CONSTRUCTION / EAST COAST RAILWAY/ BHUBANESWAR ON CONTRACTUAL BASIS WHERE LAND ACQUISITION IS INVOLVED.

Post - Consultant (Land Acquisition Officer) / Forest Range Officer / Forest Ranger
No. of Vacancies : 03 (Three)

The duly filled in application should be sent to the office of The Principal Chief Personnel Officer, East Coast Railway, 2nd Floor, South Block, Rail Sadan, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751017 in an envelope. The envelope should be superscribed with "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF CONSULTANT (LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER) / FOREST RANGE OFFICER/FOREST RANGER".

The Last date of receipt of application is 22.02.2025

For Educational Qualification/Eligibility, Age, Remuneration, Period of Engagement, Application format & other related terms and conditions, please refer to website : www.eastrail.in www.indianrailways.gov.in of the railway (About us > HQ Departments > Personnel > Notification).
Principal Chief Personnel Officer / HQ/ECoR, Bhubaneswar
PR-931/P/24-25

Cops rescue 15 students who fled school hostel

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 29: Fifteen boys, in the age group of 7-10, who had escaped from their hostel at Sihidia Primary School under Mahulpada police station in Bonai sub-division, were rescued by an alert police team Tuesday night. The students were attempting to reach their village, Balan, when they were spotted near Aamgaon by a night patrol team and taken to Barkot police station.

According to Mahulpada inspector-in-charge (IIC) Suresh Chandra Pradhan, "The school authorities immediately launched a search for the missing students upon realising they had left the hostel. To avoid being noticed, the boys walked through paddy fields and surfaced near Aamgaon."

Meanwhile, Barkot police in Deogarh district had already taken them into safe custody. "After receiving information in the morning, I contacted Barkot IIC Jainyaseni Pradhan and asked her to keep the students safe

until we arrived," he added.

Mahulpada police, along with school staff, later brought the boys back to the hostel. Upon interacting with the students, IIC Pradhan learned that one of the boys had been scolded by the hostel warden for mischief. Upset over the reprimand, the boy rallied a group of friends and convinced them to escape back to their village.

"The students told the Barkot IIC that they found the warden too strict and often scolding them, which made them want to leave the school," he said.

In response to the incident, the assistant Block Education Officer (BEO) arrived at the school in the morning and immediately convened a parents-teachers meeting, which was ongoing at the time of reporting. The warden, appointed by the welfare extension officer on the recommendation of the local committee and school authorities, had previously been warned for being overly strict with the students.

Demand for Gajapati palm jaggery up

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, Jan 29: Palm jaggery, known for its unique taste, has become a sustainable means of livelihood for farmers in Gajapati district as around 400 farmers from R Udayagiri, Nuagada, and Ramagiri blocks are engaged in its production.

Palm Jaggery Cooperative Society (PJCS) established by the state government in 1968 plays a pivotal role in supporting farmers, said sources. Located in Luburisingh village under R Udayagiri block, PJCS has been instrumental in promoting jaggery production. Even though maize and paddy are the primary crops in this region, a significant number of farmers are now opting for palm jaggery production due to its growing demand.

Palm jaggery is produced from date palm sap, a healthier alternative to toddy, which often causes health issues. The jaggery produced from this sap is healthier and highly rich in iron and vitamins. The sap is collected by cut-



Geographical Indication tag granted to palm jaggery last year has significantly boosted the sweetener's consumption demand

ting the upper part of the palm tree and placing earthen pots under it to gather the juice overnight. This

sap is then processed organically to produce jaggery in three forms: powdered, solid blocks, and liquid.

The PJCS sells these varieties at competitive prices—solid jaggery for ₹80 per kg, powdered jaggery for ₹150 per kg, and liquid jaggery for ₹100 per kg. Farmers earn between ₹900 to ₹1,000 daily through its production.

Last year, the farmers collectively produced 800 quintals of palm jaggery, which has a distinctive taste and comes in shades of dark brown and grey. According to farmers Dushasan Mandal, Emmanuel Sabar, and Sudhakar Raita, the Geographical Indication (GI) tag granted to palm jaggery last year has significantly boosted the sweetener's consumption demand.

The granting of GI tag to palm jaggery has attracted more number of farmers to undertake palm farming and the existing farmers to increase production. This contributes not only to their livelihoods but also to the region's agricultural prosperity.

REGIONAL STRESSED ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH
Plot No.: 831/3823, Sampur, Kalinga Nagar, Bhubaneswar-03
Mob.: 7328834142, Phone: 0674-2387100, 7328834141/44
Email: sarbhu@bankofbaroda.com

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE PROPERTIES "APPENDIX-IV-A" [See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8(6)]
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Movable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Mortgagor(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Movable properties Mortgaged /charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of 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 accounts. The details of Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s)/Guarantor(s)/Secured Asset/s/ Dues/ Reserve Price/e-Auction Date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below:-

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of the Movable Properties	Demand/Possession Notice Date/ Outstanding (Secured Debt.)	Date & Time of E-auction	Reserve Price		Status of Possession [Symbolic/ Physical]	Property Inspection Date & Time
					EMD	Bid Increment		
1.	BHUBANESWAR MAIN BRANCH / Borrower: M/s Gyankalp Charitable Trust, Plot No.: 370/1861/2379, Near Rebok Show Room, Patia, PO: KIIT, Bhubaneswar / Guarantors: 1) Mr. Pragyantjeet Mohanty, 2) Mrs. Samita Mohanty, 3) Dr. Pramod Kumar Mohanty, All are at 7/B, Kalpana Area, Bhubaneswar.	Movable Properties: 1) CPU (231 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹11,550/-), 2) Monitor (187 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹18,700/-), 3) Almira (45 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹4,500/-), 4) Plastic Chair (592 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹29,600/-), 5) Stabilizer (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹2,000/-), 6) Ply wood (7 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹350/-), 7) DTH Antenna (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹1,000/-), 8) TV old Model - LG Make (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹100/-), 9) Speaker (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹100/-), 10) AC complete - out door indoor unit (5 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹50,000/-), 11) Table - Still frame & Ply wood top (76 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹7,600/-), 12) Office Chair (20 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹8,000/-), 13) CC TV DVR (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹1,000/-), 14) Inverter with Battery - Luminous make (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹10,000/-), 15) LED TV - LG (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹8,000/-), 16) Photo copy Machine (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹4,000/-), 17) Sofa set - 2 nos. with 19 & 20 (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹2,000/-), 18) Freezer (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹3,000/-), 19) Center Table (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹500/-), 20) Tea pay - Glass top (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹600/-), 21) Stand Fan (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹500/-), 22) Computer Printer (4 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹2,000/-), 23) Tin Box (3 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹300/-), 24) Lawn Mow (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹1,000/-), 25) RO Water Filter (3 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹300/-), 26) Class room modular chair - with writing top (648 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹32,400/-), 27) Bus - Tata make, Modle Marcopolo Registration No. OR02BK.779 (1 no.)- (Reserve Price: ₹5,00,000/-), 28) Generator (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹1,00,000/-), 29) DG set (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹8,00,000/-), 30) Computer Table - Box Type (55 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹27,500/-), 31) Computer Table - Standard (25 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹8,000/-), 32) Sewing machine with Modulated Chair (204 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹2,04,000/-), 33) White writing Board (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹200/-), 34) Bed - Steel Square Pipe Frame with ply top (292 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹58,400/-), 35) Plastic Dining Table- folded (54 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹5,400/-), 36) Steel almira with locker (12 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹1,200/-), 37) Adjustable Book Rack - Steel make (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹400/-), 38) Coat stand Steel make (1 pc.)- (Reserve Price: ₹100/-), 39) Table - Steel frame, Ply top (8 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹800/-), 40) Ambulance - Maruti Omni Van, Registration No. OD-02-AY-6212 (1 no.)- (Reserve Price: ₹1,00,000/-), 41) Wooden bed (2 pcs.)- (Reserve Price: ₹100/-).	21.01.2016 / 15.09.2017 / (Reserve Price: ₹10,54,75,859.07 as on 29.01.2025 with interest from 30.01.2025 together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges & expenses Less recovery, if any	21.02.2025 from 02.00 PM to 06.00 PM	₹22,92,800/- ₹2,29,280/- ₹10,000/-	(Physical)	18.02.2025 upto 5.00 PM	

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in: <https://banknet.com/eauction-psb/eproperty/buyer/view-property-detail/> or <https://banknet.com>
Also, prospective bidders may contact the Authorised Officer on Mob.: 7328834142.
Also Please Note: The Authorized Officer/Bank has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale/modify any terms and conditions of the sale without any prior notice and without assigning any reason including calling upon the next highest bidder to perform in case the earlier bidder fails to perform.
LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF ONLINE PAYMENT EMD AMOUNT : 20.02.2025 LATEST BY 5.00 P.M.
STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE TO THE BORROWERS / GUARANTORS / MORTGAGORS FOR SALE UNDER RULE 8(5), 8(6) & 9(1) AS PER SARFAESI ACT 2002.
Date: 29.01.2025, Place: Bhubaneswar **Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda**



Whatever IS the difficulty if we keep truly quiet the solution will come
THE MOTHER

Pandemic's Legacy

Not only is Donald Trump back in the White House, but the far right is poised to occupy the Austrian chancellorship for the first time in the country's postwar history, and Germany is hurtling toward a fraught election next month, following the collapse of its "traffic light" coalition government. Is each of these countries unhappy in its own way (to paraphrase Tolstoy), or is there a common denominator to their unhappiness?

While many commentators have settled on the idea of widespread "anti-incumbency" bias in recent political outcomes, this does not tell us why voters have turned against incumbents. One explanation, of course, is inflation. But another, largely underappreciated cause, is the fallout from the pandemic, which left many communities not only with a lingering sense of loss, but also with unresolved conflicts and deep-seated distrust.

In Austria, the far right has benefited massively from discontent over how the pandemic was managed. In Italy, 40% of those who voted for Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy) in the last election thought the previous government's decisions about vaccines amounted to "an undemocratic restriction on citizens' freedom." And Trump, in his second inaugural address, elicited loud cheers from his audience when he made a point of mentioning that he would reinstate soldiers who had been discharged for disobeying vaccine mandates.

Libertarian resentment over past restrictions and mandates is one thing; an abiding distrust of scientists is quite another. The latter is bound to affect not just public health, but also climate policies and other highly politicized areas of science. Former US President Joe Biden was so fearful of scientists being persecuted by the incoming Trumpists - with their various "enemies lists" - that he preemptively pardoned the pandemic-era head of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Anthony Fauci, in the final hours of his presidency. (Trump still tried to please his base by removing Fauci's federal security detail, despite the fact that he has faced regular death threats.)

Trump's nominee to lead the National Institute of Health, Jay Bhattacharya, is most known for discounting the toll of the pandemic and arguing that the virus should be allowed to spread widely in order to build herd immunity. He has also been eager to link science funding to the level of academic freedom at universities, though it is unclear how he would make such assessments. Last fall, he agreed to speak at a "benefit dinner" hosted by the Heartland Institute, a power house of climate denialism. Other speakers included the right-wing Brexit-er Nigel Farage and the pro-Russia, far-right Austrian politician Harald Vilimsky.

There is nothing wrong with being cautious about scientific findings. As Karl Popper and many other philosophers of science have argued, scientists should be open to having their hypotheses falsified; they should welcome questioning and revisions. The problem is that very few of us are in a position to assess scientific debate, let alone challenge the prevailing consensus (even if we have "done our own research"). Nonetheless, in today's information ecosystem, it is easier than ever to dismiss inconvenient facts by making vague references to what supposedly went wrong during the pandemic, or by trotting out conspiracy theories about cover-ups and scientists being illegitimately empowered to govern.

True, many disputes about the pandemic simply map onto existing political divisions. But this was not inevitable. Rather, it is the result of certain politicians treating the virus as yet another front in the culture war. Even within the far right, political trajectories varied. Whereas Trump and former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro promoted libertarian policies and quack cures (such as injecting bleach), Viktor Orbán pursued a relatively restrictive approach.

What can be done? One option is to establish independent commissions to produce a proper historical record of how the pandemic was handled. Who made which decisions, and why? How much uncertainty were they facing, and how did they assess risks and trade-offs?

In theory, there is already support for such an idea in many political quarters. None other than Peter Thiel, the venture capitalist and financier of far-right causes, recently called for a fact-finding initiative modeled on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa (where he partly grew up).

Of course, there is a danger that such commissions would immediately be perceived as partisan, especially in the eyes of those who already distrust scientists. This was certainly the case with the House Select Subcommittee on the Corona virus Pandemic, whose final report garnered little national attention. One potential remedy is a citizen assembly comprising a random selection of adults (like a trial jury). Outgoing German Chancellor Olaf Scholz - who has admitted that pandemic-era school closures probably went too far - recently welcomed such an approach.

Critics will counter that since "ordinary citizens" must first listen to experts, the selection of expert testimony will remain a source of contention for vaccine skeptics or people with a political axe to grind. But just allowing a public airing of different assessments (though not conspiracy theories) could have a cathartic effect. While a citizen assembly's final report might not be accepted by all, it would at least establish an official record. Almost all commissions that similarly dealt with past dictatorships in Central Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere drew criticism; but few countries regret having established them.

At this point, any effort to mitigate the pandemic's toxic political legacy is to be welcomed.

The writer, Professor of Politics at Princeton University, is the author, most recently, of Democracy Rules

WISDOM CORNER

The true laboratory is the mind, where behind illusions we uncover the laws of truth
JAGADISH CHANDRA BOSE

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better
ALBERT EINSTEIN

The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts
CHARLES DARWIN

FOCUS UNION BUDGET

CREATE DEMAND



Increased spending and direct transfers can lead to inflationary pressures, especially in an economy already dealing with supply chain disruptions. Policymakers must adopt a calibrated approach to avoid stoking inflation while fostering demand



Sourajeet Pradhani

THE ESSENCE OF A SUCCESSFUL BUDGET LIES IN ITS ABILITY TO BALANCE IMMEDIATE NEEDS WITH LONG-TERM GOALS

The Union Budget will be presented by the Union Finance Minister on February 1. The Indian economy is going through a rough phase, with the projected GDP growth rate at 6.5%. The core sectors of the economy aren't doing that well. Even the services sector has taken a big hit too. The Q3 corporate earnings of the major companies haven't been great, which is reflecting in the Indian stock market.

The various analysts and commentators have put the entire blame on the global events, especially US, but the Indian corporates as well as the government cannot escape their roles in creating a bleak economic sentiment. Productivity, capacity utilization, capital investment, etc. are the responsibilities of the domestic players-private and public.

Demand is the cornerstone of economic growth. When consumers and businesses spend, they create a multiplier effect, leading to job creation, increased production, and improved investor confidence. Conversely, low demand can trigger a vicious cycle of reduced spending, lower production, and rising unemployment. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored this harsh reality, as economies worldwide grappled with plummeting demand amid lockdowns and uncertainty.

Governments play a pivotal role in stimulating demand, particularly during periods of economic downturn. By increasing public spending, cutting taxes, and ensuring direct financial transfers to the vulnerable sections of society, they can kickstart economic activity and build momentum. However, the nature and direction of spending are equally important. Infra-

structure development, rural employment schemes, and targeted subsidies can have a far-reaching impact on demand creation.

In India, the middle class is the biggest consumption class. They are the biggest contributors to the state exchequer. Hence, rationalization of personal income tax is imperative in this budget. The anger of the middle class towards the Modi government is based on the quality of public infrastructure present in the urban cities. The quality of improvement of roads, infrastructure, education, healthcare systems in Indian has been very slow. Reducing personal income tax rates can enhance disposable income, thereby encouraging consumer spending.

Urban consumption drives a large part of the Indian economy. Initiatives such as affordable housing schemes and incentives for electric vehicles can spur urban demand.

Similarly, rationalizing Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates on essential items can help ease the financial burden on middle- and lower-income

groups. GST is an example of retrospective economic policy since it doesn't differentiate between the rich and the poor. Recently, the finance minister was in the news for her comments on 'popcorn GST'. The RBI (Reserve Bank of India) must infuse liquidity in the market by reducing the policy rates and extending credit in vital sectors.

India does not operate in isolation. Global economic trends such as rising interest rates, geopolitical tensions, and slowing growth in major economies like the United States and China have a direct impact on the country. The budget must factor in these external headwinds and devise strategies to mitigate their impact.

Trade policies, export incentives, and measures to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) can bolster the economy while offsetting some of the global challenges. At this point, there is a lot of apprehension regarding Trump 2.0. The idea of tariff barriers, immigration policies, carbon emission policies, etc have put the entire world in doldrums.

Creating demand is not solely the government's responsibility. It requires collaboration with the private sector, financial institutions, and civil society. Businesses can contribute by adopting innovative models and expanding operations, while banks can ensure adequate credit flow to sectors with high growth potential. Simultaneously, public awareness campaigns can encourage consumer spending and foster a sense of economic optimism.

While the case for demand-side measures is strong, implementing them effectively comes with its own set of challenges. First, fiscal constraints limit the government's ability to increase spending without widening the fiscal deficit. Striking a balance between growth and fiscal discipline is a delicate task. Second, the efficient allocation and utilization of funds require robust governance and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that resources reach the intended beneficiaries.

Inflation is another factor that complicates demand creation. Increased spending and direct transfers can lead to inflationary pressures, especially in an economy already dealing with supply chain disruptions. Policymakers must adopt a calibrated approach to avoid stoking inflation while fostering demand.

The essence of a successful budget lies in its ability to balance immediate needs with long-term goals. By placing demand at the heart of its strategy, the government can ensure that the economy not only recovers but thrives in the years to come. The mantra is clear: a budget that creates demand is a budget that builds the future.

The writer is an investment banker.

SPECTRUM MARTYRS' DAY

Hey Ram @77

Hey Ram', were the last words coming out of Babu's mouth before he breathed his last. At the age of 79, the old and the uncompromising warrior against violence was the shot dead. Why? And why even after 77 years of his death, his philosophy and thoughts are haunting the people who rejoiced his killing? Why are these people still fearing Gandhi who they murdered 77 years ago?



Janardan Pati

GANDHIJI'S PHILOSOPHY AND HIS IDEAS ONLY CAN DEFEAT THE IDEOLOGY THAT KILLED HIM

The Special Court hearing the murder case of Gandhiji convicted

Nathuram Godse for murdering Mahatma Gandhi and sentenced him death penalty. Godse admitted to have killed Mahatma Gandhi in open court and also stated that he alone has murdered Gandhi and no one else was ever involved in the said crime. Such declaration undoubtedly was made only to ensure that VD Savarkar is safe.

Gandhiji was given many titles in his lifetime and the most known title given to him was 'Mahatma'. The 'Mahatma' title was given to Gandhiji by

Biswaguru Rabindra Nath Tagore in the year 1915. Though Gandhiji was the unchallenged leader of the Congress Party but he has acted as the President of the Indian National

Congress for only a brief period i.e., about five months. He left the party in the year 1934 and never joined again. Gandhiji was the tallest advocate of non-violence and after failing to direct the Indian non-cooperation movement in a nonviolent direction, he withdrew the non-cooperation movement in the year 1922. He realised that the Indian population is not yet ready to adopt his non-violence philosophy in their social and political life. Gandhiji adopted the simple clothing of a peasant and started wearing lion clothes and departed from his elaborate Gujrati attire. He used his hunger strike(s) as a weapon against the British authorities and forced them to concede

to small demands. He also used it to mobilise and unite his fellow countrymen.

Gandhiji was an avatar to Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Parisi-Christians unity and was an uncompromising warrior against untouchability. He also advocated for women's right. Gandhiji was a staunch Hindu but was also among the ones who opposed Manushastra and Varnavaad.

Such a person usually becomes the first target of people like Nathuram Godse and others. History

has witnessed the murder of Abraham Lincon who outlawed slavery, Martin Luther King and Patrice Lumumba who fought for the rights of black people and of course Mahatma Gandhi. We should examine the ideology behind the killing of Gandhiji from this point of view. Godse who murdered Gandhi on this day in 1948 had earlier attempted to kill him since 1934. Gandhiji left congress in the year 1934 and started campaigning against untouchability and illiteracy throughout the country. During such days, when Gandhiji was on a yatra to propagate against untouchability, Godse tried to kill him but failed.

Gandhiji's philosophy was not akin to Buddha's philosophy but both were against violence. Both were preachers of international brotherhood and both were against Brahmanical philosophy. Though Buddha was not murdered but his philosophy and his ideas were wiped out of India. Buddhism spread across China, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Tibet etc. but would not thrive in India.

Pushyamitra Shunga, the Military General of Emperor Brihadhratha, the last Maurayan emperor, killed him and thereafter or-

dered to kill Buddhist monks and destroyed Buddha Vihars. Before Buddhism came into being, the Brahmanical also destroyed the cult had also destroyed the Charvaka followers and their literature.

The same ideology that destroyed Charvaka and Buddhist ideology, has killed Gandhiji and is trying to wipe out his philosophy. It is not Godse alone that killed Gandhiji but people believing in his ideology have also contributed to the same.

In India, today, thousands are celebrating the killing of Gandhiji and worshipping his killers. Sadly, many political leaders and elected representatives are proudly declaring themselves to be the followers of Godse. Gandhiji was not a mere person but was an institution, an avatar, a philosopher, a reformer, an economist and a sociologist, inter alia. His ideas cannot be killed as he lives in the hearts of millions of Indians and others. We pay our respectful homage to him on his martyr day. Gandhiji's philosophy and his ideas only can defeat the ideology that killed Gandhi.

The writer, a leader of Communist Party of India (Marxist), is state president of Centre of Indian Trade Unions

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 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



Ensure road safety

Sir, The study came out of the government's 'Project Abhay' tested 50,713 truck drivers for checking their clarity of vision. The pilot study undertaken took six states namely UP, Rajasthan, MP, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It was shocking to note that about 55.1% drivers have been compromised with their vision and manage to drive. On the other hand, 53.3% require distance eye correction and 46.7% needing near-vision corrections. The transport minister has revealed that four states are topping the list of the maximum number of fatalities. UP, TN, Maharashtra and MP has shown the corroborated evidence while going by the lack of vision of these drivers. In order to bring more control over reckless driving, these drivers must be put into basic tests periodically like once in 3-5 years so that screening will help reduce the accidents. Also there will be conscious driving from them when the reasons for accidents have got claims other than vision such as drunken driving, unskilled driving and rash driving. The license to drive needs a periodic check else it would end only as a license to kill if there's no law enforcement on their health and vision.

AP Thiruvadi, CHENNAI

Spend more on noon meals

Sir, Children are the future citizens of our country. They are our hopes and aspirations. They carry a lot of promises and good vibes. In midday meal scheme, school going children are eating poor diet and less nutritious foods which lacks proteins and essential minerals. They should be given soya products, cheese, paneer, legumes, mushroom and milk products at large. A poor and less nutritious diet obstructs physical growth and causes mental impairment. They have less cognitive ability and poor concentration. A balanced diet boosts immunity and muscle strength. It fosters brain power and logical development. A lot of our budget is spent on infrastructure and economic growth. But, the health and development of school going children is overlooked in budget. Mid-day meal scheme should not be a formality. It is high time intelligentsia and civil society rose to the occasion and plead for their well-being and safeguard their rights. Mid-day meal scheme should be healthy, protein rich, nutritious and and life-giving. There should be more budgetary allocation for the same.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR



Saini sips water from Yamuna

AAP had accused the ruling BJP in Haryana of intentionally draining industrial waste into the Yamuna, with Kejriwal alleging that it is trying to kill people by 'mixing poison' in the river

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Jan 29: Amid the controversy over the Yamuna river in Delhi is "poisonous", Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday drank water from the river near the Delhi border and slammed AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal for "spreading lies".

"I drank the water of the holy Yamuna on the border of Haryana without any hesitation. Kejriwal has blatantly lied. Even I'm having relatives in Delhi. The AAP convener should immediately tender an apology," the Haryana Chief Minister wrote on X.

Meanwhile, state Revenue and Disaster Management Minister said the government has taken a strong cognisance of the statement of former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal regarding Delhi's water supply and filed a case against him in the Sonapat court under the Disaster Management Act.

Calling Kejriwal's statement absurd and misleading, Goel told the media that the Election Commission of India should take cognisance of such baseless statements.

"Kejriwal has done cheap politics by making such allegations on Haryana causing the

POISONING ROW



A former CM has made malicious allegations against the people of Haryana. 'AAP-da' people have become desperate due to the fear of defeat. Is Haryana different from Delhi? Don't they have children and relatives in Delhi? Will they mix poison for their own people?

NARENDRA MODI | PM

state government to take legal action," he said.

He said the water supplied to Delhi is the same water consumed by the President, the Prime Minister, and Union Ministers.

He accused Kejriwal of spreading fear not only among Delhi's people but also among Haryana's citizens with his false claims.

A day earlier, Chief Minister Saini said the statement of poisonous water made by Kejriwal "is a political stunt by the Aam Aadmi Party aimed at influencing voters in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections and deflecting attention from its own failures".

He said the issue has been raised with the Election Commission of India.

"Ensuring a reliable water supply to the national capital is a collective responsibility, which Haryana is fulfilling diligently and without any shortcomings," he said.

Exposing the failure of the Delhi government, the Chief Minister said in 2021 Delhi filed a petition to which the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) responded.

"The CPCB's reply highlighted the issue of ammonia nitrogen in the Wazirabad pond and mentioned that there is a water treatment plant in Agra capable of treating water with ammonia levels up to 24 mg/l. However, the Delhi government has not taken any steps to upgrade the Wazirabad plant. As a result, the people of Delhi are still forced to consume contaminated water, while Arvind Kejriwal is now blaming Haryana to cover up his own failures," he explained.

He said Delhi receives its drinking water supply of 1,049 cusecs at Munak from the waters of the Yamuna and Ravi-Beas rivers.

"Haryana is consistently supplying this water to Delhi through two canals: The Carrier Line Channel (CLC) and

the Delhi Branch. Since the commissioning of the Carrier Line Channel in 2014, Haryana has not supplied any water to Delhi through drains or directly from the Yamuna River; instead, clean water is being supplied exclusively through the canal system of CLC and Delhi Branch."

He assured the Haryana government is committed to ensuring the purity and continuous supply of water to Delhi.

The Chief Minister said in a statement that earlier, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) tested the water from Yamunanagar (Haryana) to Wazirabad (Delhi) and investigated the primary causes of pollution.

The investigation revealed that dirty water is being illegally discharged between Palla and Wazirabad.

In addition, the accumulation of sediment in the Wazirabad pond is causing an increase in ammonia nitrogen levels.

However, the Delhi government has not taken any action on the CPCB's report since 2021.

Neither has the illegal discharge of polluted water between Palla and Wazirabad been halted nor has any effort been made to clean the Wazirabad pond.

In her new book, CM Mamata blames Cong for BJP's success

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 29: In her new book, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has squarely blamed Congress for the BJP's return to power at the Centre for the third consecutive term in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

A total of three new books penned by the Chief Minister were released on the first day of the Kolkata International Book Fair on Tuesday afternoon and one of the three books titled 'Banglar Nirbachon o Amra (Bengal elections and us)', she has made an analysis of the results of the 2024 general elections.

As per her observations in the book, despite wholehearted attempts by the Trinamool Congress, the opposition INDIA bloc was unable to gain electoral success because of the failure on the part of Congress.

"We earnestly wanted a strong opposition bloc against BJP at the national level combining all anti-BJP forces. Since the beginning, we had insisted on a common minimum programme and common manifesto. The name of the opposition bloc too was my proposal. Congress was offered the chair of the leader of the national bloc. But despite that, there was neither a common minimum programme nor any common manifesto. The bloc constituents contested between themselves. This helped BJP to regain power even without gaining a majority," Chief Minister wrote in



In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Trinamool Congress improved its tally to 29 from 22 in 2019. On the other hand, BJP's tally declined to 12 from 18 in 2019

her book.

She has also claimed in the book that the number of seats that Congress had won in the last Lok Sabha elections was because of the backing of the other allies in the INDIA bloc.

On the West Bengal-specific election aspect, the Chief Minister had claimed that al-

though in the state Congress had a seat-sharing arrangement with CPI(M)-led Left Front, in reality, it was a bigger anti-Trinamool Congress arrangement with clandestine understanding with BJP.

According to her, the Trinamool Congress' electoral success in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls was because of the spontaneous public support inspired by the different developmental activities undertaken by her government.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Trinamool Congress improved its tally to 29 from 22 in 2019. On the other hand, BJP's tally declined to 12 from 18 in 2019. Congress managed to win from one seat, while CPI(M)-led Left Front ended with zero.

K9 helps sniff out narcotics in Haryana



Comprising highly skilled dogs, K9's exceptional performances have helped catch criminals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Jan 29: Haryana Police's special K9 unit has achieved some major successes in anti-narcotics operations since the beginning of this year.

The collaboration between the Narcotics Control Bureau

(NCB) and the Haryana Police's K9 units continues to prove vital in the fight against narcotics in the state. This year, so far the performance of these four-legged heroes has been outstanding, showing remarkable capabilities in narcotics detection and supporting law enforcement efforts in Haryana, said the officials.

The K9 unit currently deploys a highly skilled team of 62 dogs trained to detect narcotics nationwide. Since the beginning of 2025, these K9 units have excelled, delivering successful operations that have greatly

aided the state's narcotics enforcement efforts. The specially trained K9s have displayed remarkable resilience, successfully detecting narcotics even in the most challenging conditions.

Some recent successes include 'Oscar' successfully detecting 442 grams of the sulfa drug in Haryana's Rewari district. Likewise, 'Rainbow' and 'Jagga' uncovered 72 grams of Chitta in the Hisar district.

These remarkable findings highlight the effectiveness of the K9s in maintaining safety and combating illegal narcotics trafficking in the state, an official statement said Tuesday.

In addition to their narcotics detection work, the dogs of the Haryana Police showcased their outstanding obedience, agility, and courage training at the Republic Day celebrations in Faridabad.

Governor Bandaru Dattatraya, the chief guest at the Republic Day parade, praised the K9 teams for their incredible contributions to law enforcement.



Members of the Chinese community celebrate their Lunar New Year, in Kolkata, West Bengal

PTI PHOTO

REHABILITATION

Elephants sent from WB's ISKCON temple to Gujarat's Vantara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 29: The authorities of ISKCON temple in West Bengal's Mayapur said it has sent two captive elephants to a private sanctuary in Gujarat, where they will live in the company of other rescued jumbos.

One of the two elephants trampled to death one mahout last year and caused physical disability to another in 2022.

"Considering the issue of public safety following a few accidents, we have to bid them adieu with a heavy heart. We are sure they will be living in a better place," ISKCON Mayapur spokesperson Sadananda Vrajewar Das said.

The female elephants named 'Bishnupriya' and 'LakshmiPriya' had been with the Mayapur temple of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) for more than 10 years, he said.

The jumbos used for festivals and rituals at ISKCON Mayapur started for Vantara elephant sanctuary in Jamnagar January 19.

He said that ISKCON Mayapur had contacted several organisations for the past one year and authorities of Vantara were the most receptive.

The process to shift these elephants began following a nod from a high-powered committee of the Supreme Court.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India had urged ISKCON Mayapur to release their live elephants to a reputable sanctuary.

PETA India Director of Advocacy Projects Khushboo Gupta said, "We commend ISKCON for taking compassionate steps



to rehabilitate elephants Bishnupriya and LakshmiPriya to Vantara and are hopeful that other temples and institutions keeping captive elephants will also be inspired to send them for rehabilitation." Now mechanical elephants can perform all the functions done by real jumbos, Gupta said.

Citizens elated as dumpyard construction halts on Dwarka Expressway

RESIDENTS, VILLAGERS AND FARMERS HAD RAISED SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS REGARDING THE ADVERSE HEALTH IMPACTS THE DUMPYARD COULD HAVE ON CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY, LEADING TO WIDESPREAD PROTESTS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gurugram, Jan 29: Residents of the Dwarka Expressway area, along with various Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs) and a united NGO forum have expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini for stopping the construction of dumpyard and halting disposal unit in the residential area of Daulatabad.

The decision was also appreciated by prominent figures such as Bani Yadav, India's fastest female driver and motorsport promoter, and Sunita Godara, a gold medalist at the Asian Marathon Championship.

Representatives of different RWAs said this decision reflects the government's commitment towards protecting the health and environment of the local community.

The decision came after a strong agitation from the local community, supported by various Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs), villages and social organisations last year.



The community's collective voice was heard by the Chief Minister, who promptly took cognisance of the issue. The Haryana Chief Minister had instructed the Deputy Commissioner of Gurugram to put the project on hold and seek an alternative site for the dumpyard.

Officials said they are looking for fresh sites such as Sohna, Nuh, Tauru and Farukhnagar.

"We have also discussed the plan to have multiple sites so

We all thank the Chief Minister. This decision has brought relief to the local residents, providing them with cleaner air and happiness

BANI YADAV | INDIA'S FASTEST FEMALE DRIVER

that bulk waste can be dumped at different sites. We are planning to take land owned by panchayat and rent will be paid to them so that they have a rental income," said an administration officer.

"The decision to stop the dumpyard will positively im-

prove the lives of residents of the Dwarka Expressway area. We had serious concerns about the health of children and the elderly, but with the intervention of the honourable Chief Minister, these concerns now seem to be addressed, leading to a positive atmosphere in the ar-

ea," Sunita Godara, Asian Marathon Championship gold medalist said. Bani Yadav, India's fastest female driver, said that the government's awareness and promptness towards the environment is evident from the order to shift the garbage dumpyard.

"We all thank the Chief Minister. This decision has brought relief to the local residents, providing them with cleaner air and happiness," Bani Yadav said. The Rise Always Welfare



Kejriwal should say clearly that he would get caste survey done and breach the wall of 50 per cent cap on reservation, but he will not do so as he is against Dalits, backwards and minorities. When riots were taking place, where was he. Did he stand with you? RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

CST CATERING STALLS ROW

The Supreme Court recently said the Railways required immediate corrective steps for the "lapses" in the management of catering stalls at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Mumbai



of the day uote

The BJP government should not consider the Maha Kumbh a place for self-promotion, but should see it with a spirit of service so that the journey of spiritual tourists who come with the desire for peace can be completed peacefully AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

Anil Deshmukh resigned as home minister after allegations of ₹100 crore bribe were levelled against him. Nawab Malik, Chhagan Bhujbal were arrested on hearsay allegations and put in jail SUPRIYA SULE | NCP (SP) WORKING PRESIDENT

YSRCP strongly denounced the false and manipulative claims made by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu regarding the state's financial status. His presentation, riddled with selective comparisons and misinformation, deliberately seeks to mislead the public K GOVARDHAN REDDY | YSRCP LEADER

MAHA KUMBH STAMPEDE

Oppn slams Centre, UP govt



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 29: The Opposition Wednesday hit out at the Centre and the Uttar Pradesh government over the Maha Kumbh stampede, with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying that mismanagement and administration's special focus on VIP movement were responsible for the tragic incident. Gandhi also said "VIP culture" should be reined in and the government should make better arrangements to fulfil the needs of common devotees at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said "half-baked arrangements, VIP movement, paying more attention to self-promotion and mismanagement are responsible for this". Such arrangements despite spending thousands of crores of rupees are condemnable, he said. At least 30 people were killed and 60 others injured in the stampede that broke out at the Maha Kumbh Mela in the early hours of Wednesday, officials said. The pre-dawn stampede at the Sangam area broke out as millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip on Mauni Amavasya, considered one of the most auspicious days during the mela. Opposition leaders in Uttar Pradesh targeted the Adityanath government over the

stampede. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav demanded that the management of the world's largest religious event should be immediately handed over to the army. Yadav also said that those who claimed "world-class arrangements" in the Maha Kumbh should resign from their posts taking moral responsibility for the stampede. "In order to re-establish faith in the system among the saint community and devotees who have come to the Maha Kumbh, it is necessary that the administration and management of the Maha Kumbh should be immediately handed over to the army instead of the UP government," he said on X. BSP supremo Mayawati said the incident was saddening and worrisome. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee offered her condolences to the bereaved families. Banerjee in a post on X emphasised the need of "maximal planning and care" to handle huge assemblies such as the Kumbh, citing her experiences of organising the annual Gangesagar Mela in West Bengal. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren also offered his condolences to pilgrims who lost their family members in the stampede. Soren hoped that the Union government would investigate the incident thoroughly and take necessary

Govt asks airlines to moderate airfares

New Delhi: Amid persisting concerns over exorbitant airfares for Prayagraj flights, the civil aviation ministry Wednesday asked airlines to maintain reasonable prices, and sources said the country's largest carrier IndiGo has reduced the fares to Prayagraj in the range of 30-50 per cent. The development also comes on a day when Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said airfares for Prayagraj flights are "exorbitantly high" and urged aviation watchdog DGCA to take steps to reduce the prices.

steps to prevent such accidents in the future.

Congress chief Kharge said the news of "many people losing their lives" and many getting injured due to the stampede on the banks of the Tirthraj Sangam during the Maha Kumbh is extremely heartbreaking. "Half-baked arrangements, VIP movement, paying more attention to self-promotion and mismanagement are responsible for this. Such arrangements despite spending thousands of crores of rupees are condemnable," the Congress chief said in a post in Hindi on X. Kharge urged Congress workers to help the victims in every possible way. Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said the news of "many people's death and many getting injured due to stampede in Prayagraj Maha Kumbh is extremely saddening".

Noting that there is still a lot of time left for the Maha Kumbh with many more 'Mahasnans' to be held, Gandhi said the government should improve the system to prevent such a tragic incident. "VIP culture should be reined in and the government should make better arrangements to fulfil the needs of common devotees," Gandhi asserted.



Tri-service band performs during the Beating Retreat ceremony, at Vijay Chowk, in New Delhi

SAIF STABBING CASE

Court remands accused in 14-day judicial custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: A court here Wednesday refused the city police custody of the Bangladeshi national arrested for allegedly stabbing actor Saif Ali Khan, and sent him in judicial remand noting that there was no fresh ground to extend his police custody.

The Bandra magistrate's court after perusing the application submitted by the police seeking further custody said no fresh ground was made out.

"Further police custody, at least at this stage, is not justified," said Judicial Magistrate (First Class) Komal Sing Rajput. Citing the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita provisions, the court told the investigating officer that if there was any new development, police can again seek the accused's custody for the remaining period within permissible time.

Delhi polls: Cong releases manifesto



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: With the Delhi polls drawing nearer, the Congress Wednesday launched its election manifesto, promising to conduct a caste census and set up a ministry for Purvanchalis if it is voted to power in the capital.

The party, which was ousted from power by the AAP in 2013, also promised a monthly grant of ₹2,500 to women, free electricity up to 300 units, and LPG cylinders at ₹500. Free health insurance of up to ₹25 lakh and free ration kits were also among the party's guarantees.

The manifesto, divided into 22 focus areas, was unveiled by Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav, who was flanked by Congress communications in-charge Jairam Ramesh.

The manifesto also promises financial assistance of ₹8,500 per month for one year to educated unemployed youth. The party also proposed launching 100 Indira canteens across the city, offering meals at ₹5.

Ramesh targeted the BJP-led central government and the AAP-led Delhi government over the issue of pollution, saying both had failed to tackle the crisis. "We will conduct a Delhi caste survey to enumerate the various deprived classes in Delhi in the first Cabinet meeting of the state government," the manifesto mentioned.

The manifesto, with 219 points, covers a wide range of areas such as health, education, women's issues, minorities, Scheduled Castes, Purvanchalis and the LGBTQIA+ community. Encroachments on both sides of the Yamuna River will be removed to restore it to its original condition and flow. The manifesto also includes plans to set up green police stations to handle complaints

regarding solid waste and Yamuna pollution.

The party also stated it would restore the services of over 15,000 Civil Defence volunteers who made valuable contributions to public transport and various departments of the Delhi government.

Sports will be made compulsory in all Delhi government schools, with at least three teams from each school required to participate in zonal competitions, the manifesto said.

The party has promised to build sports stadiums using available land in rural Delhi. A fresh pension scheme of ₹5,000 per month for senior citizens, widows, persons with disabilities, transgender persons, and destitute individuals will be introduced.

The party further said it would improve the 2008 Ladi Scheme as envisioned by former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. There will be 33 per cent reservation in new state government jobs for women.

A 'Shagan' of ₹1.1 lakh for the marriage of disadvantaged widows, their daughters, and orphan girls has also been announced, according to the manifesto.

"We will establish 100 Indira canteens, operated predominantly by women, to provide affordable and nutritious meals to all. We will increase the number of working women's hostels and will take up the demands of Anganwadi and ASHA workers, including higher pay," the manifesto stated. Four per cent reservation will be there in state government jobs for persons with disabilities, according to the manifesto.

Giving permanent employment to the contract workers, including Safai Karamcharis, is also in the party's manifesto.

SHORT TAKES

ED raids nine places in MP

Bhopal: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Wednesday conducted raids at multiple locations in Madhya Pradesh in connection with a private firm allegedly engaged in producing and distributing adulterated milk products domestically and internationally using forged lab certificates.

Drugs seized

Aizawl: The Assam Rifles and Mizoram Police in a joint operation have seized heroin and highly addictive Methamphetamine tablets worth over ₹7.64 crore and apprehended the drug smuggler, officials said Wednesday. A Defence spokesman said that the Assam Rifles troopers and Mizoram Police personnel arrested a drug peddler at Zokhawthar in bordering Champhai district and a huge haul of heroin and Methamphetamine tablets (weighing 2.276 kg) worth ₹7.64 crore was recovered from him Tuesday night.

Multiple raids in J&K

Rajouri/Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Police Wednesday conducted raids at 25 places in Rajouri district on the houses of terrorists operating from across the Line of Control, officials said. A police spokesperson said that incriminating materials and important documents were recovered and seized during the massive searches.

150 vehicles gutted

Bangalore: Nearly 150 seized vehicles parked in an open area in Srirampura here were gutted in a fire accident Wednesday, said police. However, no casualties were reported. The vehicles at Srirampura station were parked in a two-acre vacant land, they said.

4 of family rescued

New Delhi: More than 30 hours after a multi-storey building collapsed in Burari here, four members of a family were pulled out alive from the debris in a late-night operation, officials said Wednesday. The family was trapped inside a space created after a ceiling slab of the newly constructed building fell on a cooking gas cylinder.

Beed sarpanch murder: Munde offers to resign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: Amid Opposition call for his resignation over the Beed sarpanch murder case, Maharashtra minister Dhananjay Munde Wednesday said he is ready to quit if asked by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis or deputy CM Ajit Pawar.

Munde's close aide Walmik Karad has been arrested in an extortion case linked to the murder. Munde, 49, who belongs to the Ajit Pawar-led NCP, is now the Food and Civil Supplies minister. Social activist Anjali Damania said she would file a Public Interest Litigation and make Fadnavis a respondent if the state government did not act against Munde within four days, while NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule the NCP minister should quit on "moral grounds." Massajog village sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh was abducted, tortured and murdered December 9, 2024, for allegedly trying to stop an extortion bid targeting an energy firm in Beed, Munde's home district.

SC asks hosps to regularise docs' absence during protests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The Supreme Court Wednesday directed hospitals, including AIIMS New Delhi, to regularise the unauthorised absence of doctors who were part of protests against the rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar Hospital, Kolkata.

The heinous crime triggered nationwide outrage and prolonged protests in West Bengal. The hospital staff and doctors took part in nationwide protests after the body of the post-graduate trainee doctor was found in the RG Kar hospital's seminar room August 9, last year.

During its probe, Kolkata police arrested civic volunteer Sanjay Roy the next day in the case. On Wednesday, a bench



comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar took note of the submissions of a doctors' body that some hospitals had regularised the absence of the doctors following its August 22, 2024 order whereas a few others, including AIIMS Delhi, decided to treat the period as leave of absence.

"We deem it appropriate to clarify that if protesting workers had joined work post the

Supreme Court order then their absence shall be regularised and not be treated as absence from duty.

"This is issued in peculiar facts and circumstances of the cases and is not laying down any precedent," the CJ said.

The lawyer appearing for the body said the decision to treat the protest period as leave could create trouble for some of the medical PG students.

Baraat returns empty-handed as no wedding was planned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Una (HP), Jan 29: In a bizarre incident, a marriage party (baraat) from Nari village in Himachal Pradesh's Una district returned home without the bride as no wedding was planned in any home of Singa village, where the marriage ceremony was supposed to take place.

The groom, who arrived with the wedding procession, did not even meet the bride. The 'baraat' arrived Tuesday in cars from Nari village but the villagers of Singa village were surprised as there was no wedding planned in the village. Everyone was in shock and when the groom's side showed the photograph of the bride,



they were told that she is not from the village. The distance between Nari village and Singa village is about 20 to 25 kilometers.

Guurvev Singh Gyani, the sarpanch of Singa village, said there is no such girl or family in the village, adding the

incident is unfortunate. The wedding was fixed in a hurry and neither did the families meet before the wedding nor the bride and groom got an opportunity for interaction.

The family members of the 34-year-old groom were looking for a suitable match for

their son for the past several years and when the girl's photograph was shown to the boy, he agreed as the girl was beautiful and well educated.

Sensing the gravity of the situation, the middleman Manu, the wife of one Rajiv from Nari village, a distant relative of the groom, fled from the spot in a car on the pretext that she would find the girl.

The couple Manu and Rajiv, who acted as middlemen and reportedly took ₹50,000 to fix the marriage, are now being questioned as the groom

and the bride never met, and they only spoke on phone for a week before the wedding.

The police arrived as the situation became tense and when contacted the middleman said that the bride had consumed some poisonous substance and was en route to Punjab's Nawanshahr Hospital.

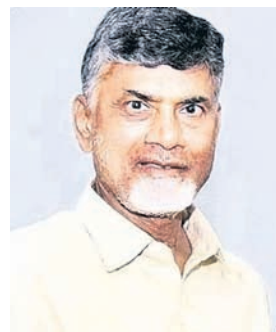
However, the suspicious groom's side surrounded the woman and brought her back to Singa village and the local panchayat representatives also reached the spot. After

this, the baraat was taken to the panchayat house.

The police have taken the statements of the victim boy and his family, but no FIR has been registered yet. After recording the statement, the disappointed baraat returned to its village.

The middleman told the police that the girl was in contact with a boy living in Australia. He is from Singa village and had sent the girl's photo and talked about getting the marriage fixed. Una Superintendent of Police Rakesh Singh said the police is keeping an eye on the matter. The statements have been recorded from both sides and further investigation is underway.

The groom, who arrived with the wedding procession, did not even meet the bride. The 'baraat' arrived Tuesday in cars from Nari village but the villagers of Singa village were surprised as there was no wedding planned in the village.



Andhra Pradesh tableau featuring 'Etikoppaka' toys winning the third position in the recent Republic Day parade is a matter of great pride and joy for the people of the state

COURT GRANTS 5-DAY CUSTODY PAROLE TO SHAFU UR REHMAN

A Delhi court Wednesday granted five days custody parole to February 2020 riots accused Shafa ur Rehman to contest and campaign for the upcoming state Assembly elections



of the day uote

Mumbai has been facing absolute injustice. Land and taxes are claimed by the Adani group. For example, Dharavi Redevelopment Project is looting land under the garb of redevelopment



The government is formulating a new MHADA housing policy, which includes affordable housing, rental housing, and housing for working women, senior citizens and students with hostels



Why waste your votes on the Congress? The Congress will not win, it will just cut our votes. The Congress and the BJP are fighting this election together to defeat the AAP. Vote to make someone win, not to make someone lose



Oppn slams 'excessive' govt interference in waqf matters

A parliamentary panel examining the Waqf Amendment Bill Wednesday adopted by a majority vote its report that contained changes suggested by ruling BJP members, prompting the Opposition to dub the exercise as an attempt to destroy the Waqf boards



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Opposition members Wednesday objected to the proposed omission of the 'waqf by user' clause in the Waqf Amendment Bill, contending that the provision existed since time immemorial.

Congress member Gaurav Gogoi said in his dissent note.

Gogoi, the deputy leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, said the Bill allows excessive government interference in the functioning, control and management of waqf and waqf properties in the country.

"...this has a detrimental impact on the community as well as the institution of the autonomy, which are necessary to administer the institution," he said.

In his dissent note, DMK member A Raja said the proviso of 'waqf by user' existed since the time of Prophet Mohammad and any move for its omission would violate the fundamental rights of the Muslim community. Raja said, "To obliterate the freedom to establish, manage, own and administer waqf by the religious denomination is violative of the Constitution of India." He also objected to the provision of including non-Muslims in the waqf boards and nominating members. Several endowments of Hindu faith forbade management by persons other than their denomination, he noted. Shiv Sena UBT member Arvind Sawant also objected

to the inclusion of non-Muslims as members of the Waqf Board.

"Nomination of such non-related members will create chaos as tomorrow the other communities may demand parity in all endowments," Sawant said in his dissent note to the report. He noted that as far as Hindu endowments are concerned, it is categorically mentioned that only Hindus will be members and office-bearers of the Hindu Endowments for Temples.

"The Waqf Act was made to save and safeguard the waqf properties. However, the proposed amendments to the Waqf Act are going to do the exact opposite. Instead of saving the waqf properties, they will open new ways and avenues to further encroach upon and usurp the waqf properties," Sawant said.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) members Kalyan Banerjee and Nadimul Haque objected to the amendment to the original Act that states if any government property is identified or declared as waqf property, before or after the enforcement of this Act, it shall not be a waqf property. The amendment states that if any question arises regarding the property to be government property then the issue shall be referred to an officer above the rank of collector, as notified by the state government, for adjudication.

"The said amendment hits the basic tenants of the property laws. The government is not meant to create its property by taking recourse in an unauthorised manner. When the government acts as a trespasser, such unauthorised acts cannot be legalised by the proposed amendment," the TMC leaders said.

YSRCP member Vijay Sai Reddy had submitted his dissent note before resigning as Rajya Sabha member January 25.



A flock of painted stork congregates at Pulicat Lake, in Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu

PTI PHOTO

Court summons Kejriwal Feb 17

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 29: A court in Haryana's Sonapat Wednesday issued a notice to AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal over his claim that the BJP-ruled state was mixing "poison in the Yamuna" river, and asked him to appear February 17.

The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Neha Goyal issued the notice to the former Delhi Chief Minister on a complaint filed by an executive engineer of the Rai Water Services Division, Sonapat.

"He is directed to appear in-person before this court on the next date of hearing, if he has to say anything in the matter. If he does not appear before this court on next date of hearing, it is deemed that he has nothing to say in the matter and further proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with law," said the court, asking Kejriwal to appear February 17.

Earlier in the day, Haryana's Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Vipul Goel said the state government will file a case against Kejriwal over his remark. "Kejriwal has made an irresponsible statement spreading panic among the people of Delhi

and Haryana. The Haryana government is going to get a case registered against him before CJM Court in Sonapat under the Disaster Management Act," he told reporters.

The complaint was registered under Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) Section 223, Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section 353 and 356 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Under the provisions laid down under Section 223 of BNSS, an opportunity of being heard is to be given to the accused before taking cognizance of offence by the magistrate.

Kejriwal had alleged on Monday that the "BJP people in Haryana are mixing poison in the water and sending it to Delhi" so that they can blame the AAP if people die and take political benefit. "Can anything be more disgusting than this?" Top BJP leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Haryana ministers criticised Kejriwal for his remarks, which came in the midst of the ongoing election season in Delhi. Haryana Revenue Minister Goel accused Kejriwal of speaking "big lies".

GRAP 3 curbs invoked in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality Wednesday invoked curbs under stage 3 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) amid a sharp rise in pollution due to unfavourable meteorological conditions, according to an official order.

The air quality in Delhi deteriorated sharply amid calm winds, smoggy situation and low mixing height with the 24-average AQI rising to 365 at 4 pm, prompting the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to implement curbs under stage 3 of GRAP.

Classes up to grade 5 are required to shift to hybrid mode under Stage 3.

Under Stage 3, the use of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars (4-wheelers) is restricted in Delhi and nearby NCR districts. Persons with disabilities are exempt. Stage 3 also bans non-essential diesel-operated medium goods vehicles with BS-IV or older standards in Delhi. During winters, the Delhi-NCR region enforces restrictions under GRAP, which categorizes air quality into four stages - Stage I (Poor, AQI 201-300), Stage II (Very Poor, AQI 301-400), Stage III (Severe, AQI 401-450), and Stage IV (Severe Plus, AQI above 450).

POST OF THE DAY

If you won't visit Mahakumbh, you are a traitor to the nation. And if you do, you are on your own. Survive the crowd, the unbelievable fares, 20kms walk, the mismanagement, the stampede and what not. Who's gonna tell this?

@NHER_WHO

SHORT TAKES

Saudi: Nine Indians killed in road mishap

New Delhi: Nine Indian nationals were killed in a road accident near Jizan in western Saudi Arabia, the Indian mission in Jeddah said Wednesday. The mission said it is providing full support and is in touch with the authorities and families. "We deeply mourn the tragic loss of 9 Indian nationals in a road accident, near Jizan, in the Western Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the Indian consulate said on X.

T'gana: 6 held in honour killing case

Hyderabad: Six persons, including family members of the wife of a man from a Scheduled Caste who was killed in a case of honour killing, were arrested in Suryapet district of Telangana Wednesday, police said. The deceased Krishna (32) married a woman from a different caste in August last year in an inter-caste love marriage, they said.

Warrant against Anmol Bishnoi

Mumbai: A special court here Wednesday issued a non-bailable warrant against gangster Anmol Bishnoi and two other wanted accused in the NCP leader Baba Siddique murder case. The special judge for cases under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), B D Shelke, said in his order that the court believes the "wanted accused Bishnoi has absconded or he will not obey the summons". Hence, a standing non-bailable warrant is required to be issued against him to secure his presence, the judge said. The court made similar observations while issuing NBWs against absconding accused Shubham Lonkar and Mohammad Yasin Akhtar.

Three die of suspected GBS in WB in four days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 29: Three persons, including a child, have died due to suspected Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) in West Bengal in the past four days, though the state health department is yet to officially confirm the cause of the deaths.

A senior health department official said, "The situation in West Bengal was absolutely under control and there was nothing to panic about". The three deceased persons were Deb Kumar Sahu (10) of Jagaddal in North 24 Parganas district, Aritra Manal (17) from Amdanga in the same district and another 48-year-old man in Dhaniakhali village in Hooghly district, sources said.

Apex court takes note of Dallewal taking medical aid

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday took judicial notice of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal taking medical aid and expressing his desire to participate in the meeting with the Centre's representatives February 14 in Chandigarh. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh adjourned the hearing on a plea seeking direction to the Centre for implementation of the proposal, including a legal guarantee of MSP on crops, made to the protesting farmers in 2021, after the farm laws were repealed.

Govind Pansare's killing: HC grants bail to six accused

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court Wednesday granted bail to six accused in the case of killing of rationalist and author Govind Pansare in 2015, on the ground of their long incarceration and considering that the trial is not likely to be completed in the near future. A single bench of Justice A S Kilor allowed the bail pleas of the six accused - Sachin Andure, Ganesh Miskin, Amit Degvekar, Amit Baddi, Bharat Kurane and Vasudev Suryavanshi. They were arrested on different dates between 2018 and 2019, and have been in jail since then.

Long-term personal enmity led to double murder in Palakkad

Palakkad (Kerala): Long-standing personal enmity was the motive behind the double murder of an elderly woman and her 53-year-old son allegedly by their neighbour Chenthamara in this district two days ago, police said Wednesday. Later in the day, the accused was remanded to judicial custody for 14 days by a magisterial court. A large team of police personnel took him to the magisterial court and from there to the Alathur sub-jail to ensure his safety from public retaliation. Meanwhile, family members of the victims and the accused told media that they want him to be given the death penalty so that everyone can live in peace and without fear.

'Oceans warming four times faster than in 1980s'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: A new study has found that the rate at which oceans are warming has become four times faster as compared to the last four decades.

Published in the journal Environmental Research Letters, the study showed that ocean temperatures are rising at 0.27 degrees Celsius per decade during 2019-23, compared to 0.06 degrees Celsius every decade in the late 1980s.

"If the oceans were a bathtub of water, then in the 1980s, the hot tap was running slowly, warming up the water by just a fraction of a degree each decade," lead author Chris Merchant from the University of Reading, UK, said. "But now the hot tap is running much faster, and the warming has picked up speed. The way to slow down that warming is to start closing off the hot tap, by



cutting global carbon emissions and moving towards net-zero," Merchant explained.

"The underlying rate of change of GMSST (global mean sea surface temperature) rises in proportion with Earth's decade," lead author Chris Merchant from the University of Reading, UK, said. "But now the hot tap is running much faster, and the warming has picked up speed. The way to slow down that warming is to start closing off the hot tap, by

energy from the Sun being absorbed by Earth is more than that escaping back to space.

The energy imbalance has roughly doubled since 2010, partly due to increasing levels of greenhouse gas, and because the Earth is now reflecting less sunlight to space than before, they said. In their analysis, the team found that nearly half (44 per cent) of the record-breaking heat experienced in 2023 and early 2024 could be traced back to oceans warming at an

Global ocean temperatures are known to have hit record highs for 450 days straight in 2023 and early 2024

accelerating rate. Global ocean temperatures are known to have hit record highs for 450 days straight in 2023 and early 2024. Other factors contributing to the record heat included El Nino, a natural warming event in the Pacific, the researchers said.

Comparing the recent El Nino to that of 2015-16 -- considered one of the strongest on record -- the team found that the remainder of the record heat experienced during 2023-24 was explained by sea surface warming at a rate that was faster over the past 10 years than the earlier decades.

Cabinet raises C-heavy molasses ethanol price



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Union Cabinet Wednesday approved a three per cent increase in the procurement price for ethanol made from C-heavy molasses to ₹57.97 per litre for the 2024-25 supply year, while keeping rates unchanged for other feedstocks.

The price increase, aimed at boosting ethanol production from sugar industry by-products, comes as India pushes to meet its accelerated target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol by 2025-26. Prices for ethanol produced from B-heavy molasses and sugarcane juice/ sugar/ sugar syrup remain unchanged at ₹60.73 and ₹65.61 per litre, respectively. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters that C-heavy molasses contains very little sugar content compared to other sugarcane feedstock. "The more we encourage C-heavy molasses for ethanol production, it will be beneficial for both farmers and environment," he said. Public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs)

will procure ethanol at the revised rates during the ongoing 2024-25 supply year (November-October) under the government's Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme.

The government said in a statement that the 3 per cent price increase for C-heavy molasses ethanol aims to ensure sufficient availability to meet increased blending targets.

As in previous years, GST and transportation charges will be paid separately to support sugarcane farmers. The price adjustment would help ensure adequate ethanol supplies to meet increased blending targets. State-run oil marketing companies aim to achieve 18 per cent blending in the current supply year ending October 2025. All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA) Chairman Praful Vithalani said the selective price hike as a "precautionary step", suggesting the government may want to boost sugar production by not increasing prices for syrup and B-molasses derived ethanol.

Ethanol blending by public sector OMCs has risen from 38 crore litres in 2013-14 to 707 crore litres in 2023-24, achieving average blending of 14.60 per cent.

international



Israel must stay in the zone to ensure 'hostile forces' will not gain a foothold on the Israeli border nor anywhere within 50 km beyond the zone
ISRAEL RATZ | DEFENCE MINISTER, ISRAEL

YEAR OF SNAKE BEGINS

Lunar New Year festivals and prayers marked the start of the Year of the Snake around Asia and farther afield Wednesday — including in Moscow. Hundreds of people lined up in the hours before midnight at the Wong Tai Sin Taoist temple in Hong Kong in a bid to be among the first to put incense sticks in the stands in front of the temple's main hall



of the day uote

The European Union is poised to take stricter measures on migration in 2025, with a focus on expanded deportations, but would not adopt the hard-line methods used by the Trump administration
NIKOS PANAGIOTPOULOS | MIGRATION MINISTER, GREECE



The UK could benefit from India's trailblazing progress in artificial intelligence (AI) in improving its own parliamentary procedures
LINDSAY HOYLE | MP, UK



Measures to curb border violations, illegal crossings, or infiltrations by the BSF or Indian nationals will be emphasised. Additionally, preventing the smuggling of illegal drugs like yaba and Phensedyl, weapons, ammunition, and explosives from India into Bangladesh will be a priority
MD JAHANGIR ALAM CHOWDHURY | HOME AFFAIRS ADVISER, BANGLADESH



SHORT TAKES

F-35 jet crashes at Alaska base

Anchorage (US): A US Air Force pilot was reported to be safe after an F-35 fighter jet crashed Tuesday at a base in Alaska. The accident occurred on the runway at Eielson Air Force Base, but it was not immediately known if the accident occurred while the advanced fighter craft was landing or taking off, Eielson spokesperson Staff Sgt. Kimberly Touchet told The Associated Press. "It's still under investigation, so they're trying to confirm all the details," she said.

70K prescription pills from India seized

Washington: The US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has seized nearly 70,000 prescription pills worth \$33,000 from a shipment of yarn from India. The shipment was destined for an address in Buena Park, California, CBP officials said. The pills, labelled Zolpidem Tartrate, are classified by the Drug Enforcement Administration as a Schedule IV controlled substance and belong to a class of medications called sedative-hypnotics. It is prescribed by doctors to treat insomnia.

Accidental firing hurt Indian fishermen

Colombo: Two Indian fishermen who sustained serious injuries during the apprehension of 13 Indian fishermen in the proximity of Delft Island were injured by accidental firing during their arrest by the Sri Lankan Navy, the island's top naval official said Wednesday. Vice Admiral Kanchana Banagoda, the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, said that according to initial investigations, the two Indian fishermen were injured due to the accidental discharge of a firearm by a Navy personnel. Five Indian fishermen sustained injuries, including two seriously, in an incident of firing by the Sri Lankan Navy in the proximity of Delft Island early Tuesday, triggering a strong reaction by India.

UK Chancellor backs 3rd Heathrow runway

London: The UK government is backing the construction of a third runway at London's Heathrow Airport, Treasury chief Rachel Reeves said Wednesday in a speech designed to signal that the new Labour government is serious about turning around the economy. Another runway at the UK's main airport will bolster the country's long-term economic growth potential, she said.

Judge blocks Trump's freeze on federal grants

The Trump administration plan plunged the US government — and states and organisations that rely on federal funding — into panic and confusion and set the stage for a constitutional clash over control of taxpayer money



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Jan 29: A federal judge Tuesday temporarily blocked a push from President Donald Trump to pause federal funding while his administration conducts an across-the-board ideological review to uproot progressive initiatives. The Trump administration plan plunged the US government — and states and organisations that rely on federal funding — into panic and confusion and set the stage for a constitutional clash over control of taxpayer money.

The order from US District Judge Loren L. AliKhan came minutes before the funding freeze was scheduled to go into effect Tuesday afternoon. The administrative stay, prompted by a lawsuit brought by non-profit groups that receive federal funds, lasts until Monday

afternoon and applies only to existing programmes. Administration officials said the decision to halt loans and grants — a financial lifeline for local governments, schools and nonprofits — was necessary to ensure that spending complies with Trump's recent blitz of executive orders.

The Republican president wants to increase fossil fuel production, remove protections for transgender people and end diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. But a vaguely worded memo issued by the Office of Management and Budget, combined with incomplete answers from the White House throughout the day, left lawmakers, public officials and average Americans struggling to figure out what programs would be affected by the pause. Even temporary interruptions in funding could cause layoffs or delays in public services.

Democrats have described the Trump administration's de-

cision as capricious and illegal. They argued that the president had no right to unilaterally stop spending money appropriated by Congress.

Just minutes after AliKhan ruled, Democratic attorneys general from 22 states and the District of Columbia filed their own lawsuit seeking to block and permanently prevent the administration from cutting off federal funding.

Justice Department attorney Daniel Schwei said the plaintiffs hadn't identified anyone specifically who would lose funding right away if the pause does go into effect. The White House did not immediately comment on the court-imposed stay.

Trump administration officials said programmes that provide direct assistance to Americans would not be affected, such as Medicare, Social Security, student loans and food stamps. They also defended the funding pause, saying Trump was following through on his promise to turn Washington upside down if elected to a second term.

The full scope of the administration's review was spelled out in a 51-page spreadsheet sent to federal agencies and viewed by The Associated Press. Each line was a different government initiative, from pool safety to tribal workforce development to special education.

Western officials warn Ukraine over weapons procurement dispute

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, Jan 29: Western officials have warned Ukraine that an escalating rift between the defence minister and procurement chief may jeopardise trust in the country and urged the government to resolve the situation quickly so as not to disrupt weapons supplies.

The conflict began last week when the Defence Procurement Agency's board unanimously voted to extend director Maryna Bezrukova's contract for another year. However, Defence Minister Rustem Umerov overruled the decision, refusing to renew her contract. He accused her of poor performance and failing to deliver weapons and ammunition to front-line troops.

The decision provoked an outcry from lawmakers and anti-corruption watchdogs who said the minister's move was illegal because Bezrukova had her contract extended by the agency's supervisory board in January. They also came to Bezrukova's defence, saying she has been instrumental in creating greater transparency and reforms within the DPA, which has long faced corruption allegations.

Under Ukrainian law, Umerov's decision to go ahead with her dismissal is illegal.

The incident comes at a politically sensitive time for Ukraine as the country's leadership is eagerly watching the Trump administration's next moves, and as Ukrainian troops continue to face challenges in holding the line in the east amid fierce Russian attacks.

SNIPPETS

Kim inspects nuclear facility

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a facility that produces nuclear material and called for bolstering the country's nuclear fighting capability, state media reported Wednesday, as the North looks to increase pressure on the United States following the inauguration of President Donald Trump. Kim's visit suggests a continued emphasis on an expansion of North Korea's nuclear arsenal, though Trump has said he's willing to talk to Kim again to revive diplomacy. Many analysts view North Korean weapons moves as part of a strategy to win sanctions relief and political concessions from the United States. The official Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim visited the nuclear-material production base and the Nuclear Weapons Institute. It didn't say where those facilities are located, but North Korean photos of Kim's visit indicated that he likely visited a uranium-enrichment facility that he went to last September. That visit was North Korea's first disclosure of a uranium-enrichment facility since it showed one to visiting American scholars in 2010. During the latest visit, Kim said North Korea reported "amazing" results in its production of nuclear material last year and underlined the need to exceed this year's production goal to strengthen "the nuclear shield of the country," according to KCNA.



Awami League calls for protest

New Delhi: Ousted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League has announced a series of protests demanding the resignation of Professor Muhammad Yunus-led interim government for its "oppression" of the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh. This comes as the first major demonstration by the Awami League, whose most of the leaders have either been arrested or underground since the fall of the Hasina-led government August 5 last year



following a students-led anti-discrimination movement. According to a statement posted on Awami League's verified Facebook page, the party will take to the streets starting February 1 to press for the resignation of the interim government and implement the strike and blockade programmes. The statement said the party would distribute leaflets and campaign for their demands from Saturday to Wednesday. Protest marches and rallies will be held nationwide February 6, followed by demonstrations and rallies February 10. It said a nationwide blockade has been announced for February 16, and a dawn-to-dusk "strict" strike will occur February 18.

1985 AIR INDIA BOMBING

Canadian court jails man to life for killing former suspect

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ottawa, Jan 29: A Canadian court has sentenced a 24-year-old man to life after he pleaded guilty to the killing of a Sikh businessman, a suspect in the 1985 Air India bombing who was later acquitted, according to local media reports.

A British Columbia Supreme Court judge Tuesday sentenced Tanner Fox to life with no parole for 20 years for killing Sikh businessman Ripudaman Singh Malik, the CBC news reported.

Malik was shot dead July 15, 2022 while he was sitting in his car in Surrey, British Columbia. Malik and co-accused Ajaib Singh Bagri were acquitted of mass murder and conspiracy charges in 2005 related to the Air India bombing.

Two weeks after Malik's murder, Canadian police arrested Fox, a resident of Abbotsford, British Columbia, a city about 75 kilometres east of Vancouver, and accomplice Jose Lopez, from the Vancouver suburb of New Westminister.

They pleaded guilty in October last to the second-degree murder of Malik. Lopez will be

sentenced Friday. Citing prosecutors, the Global News Tuesday reported that the two men were hired and paid to kill Malik, but they have not revealed who they believe hired them.

Malik's family urged Fox to reveal who hired him. "I'm asking both Mr. Fox and Mr. Lopez to do the right thing," Jaspreet Singh Malik, Malik's son, was quoted as saying by the Global News.

"Tell the RCMP who hired you. Let those people be brought to justice. We hope and pray that the RCMP continue this work and search down and find and bring to justice those people who hired Mr. Fox and Mr. Lopez."

The bombing of Air India flight 182, flying from Canada to India, off the Irish coast killed all 329 people on board, most of them Canadian citizens visiting relatives in India. The bombing is among the worst terrorist attacks in Canadian history and the history of the airline.

The plane was flying 31,000 feet above the Atlantic Ocean when a suitcase bomb exploded in the front cargo.

UK report flags 'Khalistani, Hindu extremism' as threats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 29: Two types of extremism with their origins in the Indian subcontinent — pro-Khalistan extremism and Hindu nationalist extremism — have been flagged as threats to "understand" in a leaked report into the UK government's 'Extremism Review'.

'Extremely Confused: The government's new counter-extremism review revealed', authored by Andrew Gilligan and Dr Paul Scott for the Policy Exchange think tank released earlier this week, claims 'Hindu nationalist extremism' has found a mention in such a review for the first time.

UK Home Office Security Minister Dan Jarvis told the House of Commons Tuesday that it was "not entirely clear which version of the report was leaked" and stressed that its claims did not represent government policy.

It follows Home Secretary Yvette Cooper ordering a 'Rapid Analytical Sprint' last August to determine the Labour government's policy on extrem-



ism. As per the leaked report, the longest section is labelled "Understand" and lists nine types of extremism in the following order — "Islamist, extreme right-wing, extreme misogyny, pro-Khalistan extremism, Hindu nationalist extremism, environmental extremism, Left wing, anarchist and single-issue extremism (LASI), violence fascination and conspiracy theories".

"Pages 17-18 of 'Understand' are devoted to two types of extremism which have their origins in the Indian subcontinent — what is described as pro-Khalistan extremism and

Hindu nationalist extremism. With regards to the former, the report offers the caveat that support for the Sikh state of Khalistan is not necessarily extremist; the problem is when this outlook leads to the advocacy of violence in support of that cause," reads the Policy Exchange report.

The report does however recognise that concerns exist about the Indian government's "overseas role", including accusations of Indian involvement in "deadly violence against Sikhs in Canada and the United States".

Congo's M23 rebels move towards Bukavu

REUTERS

Goma, Jan 29: Rwandan-backed M23 rebels in Democratic Republic of Congo were moving south Wednesday towards Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province, in what appeared to be an attempt to expand their area of control in the country's east after capturing the city of Goma.

M23 forces were advancing south from the town of Minova, along the western side of Lake Kivu, according to five diplomatic and security sources, one of whom was in direct contact with the rebels.

Any successful push south by M23 would see them control territory that previous rebellions have not held since the end of Congo's major war two decades ago, and further raise the risk of a new all-out war drawing in forces from multiple countries.

The conflict in eastern Congo has been going on for decades and is rooted in the spillover from Rwanda's 1994 genocide into Congo and in the struggle for control of Congo's lucrative mineral mines. The fall of Goma to M23 is its gravest escalation since 2012, when the rebels last occupied the city.

'Mona Lisa' to get its own room under 10-year renovation of Louvre

The renovation project, branded "Louvre New Renaissance," will include a new entrance near the River Seine, to be opened by 2031, and the creation of underground rooms, Macron said in a speech from the Louvre room where Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece is displayed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Jan 29: French President Emmanuel Macron announced Tuesday that the "Mona Lisa" will get its own dedicated room inside the Louvre museum under a major renovation and expansion of the Paris landmark that will take up to 10 years.

The renovation project, branded "Louvre New Renaissance," will include a new entrance near the River Seine, to be opened by 2031, and the creation of underground rooms, Macron said in a speech from the Louvre room where Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece is displayed.

Macron did not disclose an exact amount budgeted for the project to modernize

the most visited museum in the world, plagued with overcrowding and outdated facilities. But it is estimated to reach up to 800 million euros (\$834 million).

The Louvre's latest overhaul dates back to the 1980s, when the iconic glass pyramid was unveiled. Now, the museum is not up to international standards anymore.

A look at what's at stake **Mona Lisa to get its own room?** Macron said the expan-



The museum's latest big renovation in the 1980s was designed to receive 4 million annual visitors

sion of the museum will allow the "Mona Lisa" to be moved to a new, dedicated room accessible to visitors through a special

ticket. That will make the visit simpler for those who want to see the painting and ease the life of other visitors in the rest of the museum, he said. The "Mona Lisa" is now be-

Water leaks and other damages

The renovation announcement comes after Louvre Director Laurence des Cars expressed her concerns in a note to Culture Minister Rachida Dati earlier this month saying the museum is threatened by "obsolescence". According to the document first released by French newspaper Le Parisien, she warned about the gradual degradation of the building due to water leaks, temperature variations and other issues "endangering the preservation of artworks". The pyramid that serves as the museum's entrance, unveiled in 1989 as part of late President François Mitterrand's project, now appears outdated. The place is not properly insulated from the cold and the heat and tends to amplify noise, making the space uncomfortable for both the public and the staff, des Cars stressed. In addition, the museum suffers from a lack of food offerings and restroom facilities, she said.

ing shown behind protective glass in the museum's largest room, overcrowded with long, noisy queues of visitors eager to take a selfie with Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece. That makes some other paintings in the room by the greatest Venetian painters like Titian and Veronese go unnoticed by many.

The museum's latest big renovation in the 1980s was designed to receive 4 million annual visitors. Last year, the Louvre received 8.7 million visitors, over three-quarters being foreigners mostly from the United States, China and neighbouring countries Italy, the UK, Germany and Spain.



Going forward, we continue to expect a very robust degree of growth. We hope to add 5-10 new destinations, a combination of domestic and international destinations next year
VINAY DUBE | CEO, AKASA AIR

OLA TO UNVEIL GEN 3 E-SCOOTER

Ola Founder Bhavish Aggarwal Wednesday said electric scooter based on Gen 3 platform will be unveiled January 31. "Ringing the 'Next Level' with @OlaElectric Gen 3 scooters! We've significantly surpassed Gen 2 products in every way -- much higher performance, more features, great design! And a surprise to change the industry all over again," he stated on X



of the day note

We are investing in re-tail through Forevermark jewellery brand. We will open 15 stores, eight in Delhi and the rest in Mumbai this year
AMIT PRATHARI | MD, DE BEERS

McLaren entered India in 2022. We have crossed the 50 car mark (cumulatively) which is quite a bit for us. It is a good number to achieve in a period of two-and-half to three years for a brand like McLaren, which is operating in the high sports segment and also new to the country
LALIT CHOUDARY | DEALER PRINCIPAL, MCLAREN MUMBAI

Investing in digital upskilling, financial literacy, and AI-driven training programs will prepare SMEs for the evolving industrial landscape, ensuring a sustainable talent pipeline
NITIN JAIN | CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER OF BUSINESS GROUP, OFBUSINESS

Q3 RESULTS

MSI net profit jumps

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Wednesday said its consolidated net profit increased by 16 per cent to ₹3,727 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024. The auto major had reported a net profit of ₹3,207 crore in the October-December period of last fiscal. Total revenue from operations grew to ₹38,764 crore in the third quarter compared to ₹33,513 crore in the year-ago period, Maruti Suzuki India said in a regulatory filing. The company said its board has approved the scheme of amalgamation of Suzuki Motor Gujarat into the auto major. The board also approved the reappointment of Hisashi Takeuchi as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company for a further period of three years with effect from April 1, 2025, till March 31, 2028.

Tata Motors net dips

New Delhi: Tata Motors Wednesday reported a 22 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹5,758 crore for the third quarter ended December 2024. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹7,145 crore in the same quarter last fiscal, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing. Its consolidated total revenue from operations stood at ₹1,13,575 crore against ₹1,10,577 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

Adani Power net rises

New Delhi: Adani Power Wednesday posted a 7 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹2,940 crore for the December quarter due to higher revenues on the back of higher electricity sale volume. Consolidated total revenue for Q3 FY25 higher by 11 per cent to ₹14,833 crore vs ₹13,355 crore in Q3 FY24, primarily due to higher volume. According to the statement, its consolidated profit after tax increased 7 per cent to ₹2,940 crore in the quarter compared to ₹2,738 crore a year ago.

JSL net profit drops

New Delhi: Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL) posted an over 5 per cent fall in its consolidated net profit to ₹654.27 crore during the December quarter due to increased expenses. Its net profit was at ₹691.22 crore during the October-December period of the preceding 2023-24 fiscal.

AHEAD OF NEW FINANCIAL YEAR

Economy faces slowing growth, volatile trade

FM Sitharaman is set to unveil the Union Budget 2025 February 1. Ahead of the Budget, the market is abuzz with various speculations from cut in long-term capital gains tax to rationalisation of income tax slabs and possible fiscal deficit targets

New Delhi, Jan 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi may seek to arrest slowing economic growth in the world's fifth-largest economy and prepare for an uncertain year of global trade when his government presents the federal budget February 1.

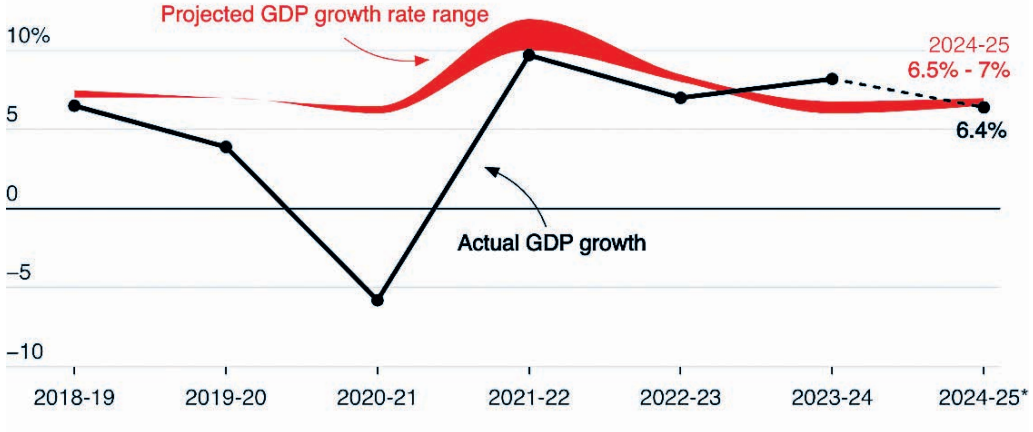
Economists expect policy changes aimed at strengthening consumption and tariff cuts to encourage local manufacturing as ways to boost growth. Below are some of the key economic indicators that will be considered by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the budget.

SLOWING GROWTH

A weaker manufacturing sector and slower corporate investments are seen dragging India's growth to 6.4% in 2024/25, the slowest pace in four years. Private investment is seen rising by 6.4% in 2024/25, lower than 9% growth in the previous year, while consumption, which accounts for nearly 58% of GDP, is estimated to expand

Mixed record on growth projections

India's real GDP growth rate has been mostly lower than the economic Survey projections.



Note: GDP growth range based on projections from the economic survey. GDP for 2024/25 as per first advanced estimates. Sources: Economic Survey, MoSPI | Reuters

by 7.3% year-on-year compared to 4% in the previous fiscal year.

Weak growth in wages has impacted discretionary spending of urban middle-class, according to large consumer companies on their quarterly earnings calls, even as rural demand has improved due to a strong monsoon in 2024.

The growth slowdown amid global volatility has wiped out a recent stock market rally.

INFLATION

India's retail inflation in December eased to a four-month low of 5.2%, raising hopes the country's central bank would start cutting interest rates in February.

But inflation in food items, which account for nearly half

of the consumption basket, continued to remain high at 8.39% in December, with vegetable prices rising at an eye-watering pace of 26.56%.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Modi continues to face criticism for not creating enough jobs in the world's most populous country. Government estimates of India's unemployment rate and those by private forecasters vary widely.

Government estimates show, opens new tab the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above fell to 3.2% in 2023-24 from 6% in 2017-18. Private forecaster Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) pegs the unemployment

rate in the same category at a much higher 8.05% in 2023-24 compared to 7.56% in the previous year.

FISCAL DEFICIT

Modi's administration is looking to contain its fiscal gap under 4.9% for 2024-25 as initially targeted, and aims to bring it down below 4.5% in the next financial year. The country's fiscal gap had ballooned to 9.3% in 2020-21 during the pandemic.

From 2026-27, the country will move away from targeting the fiscal deficit and prioritise lowering India's debt-to-GDP ratio. The general debt-to-GDP ratio, that includes state government debt, is estimated at 82.6% in 2024-25, according to the IMF.

Hatsun Agro buys Odisha's Milk Mantra, known for 'Milky Moo'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Jan 29: Dairy products manufacturer Hatsun Agro Product Ltd has completed the acquisition of Milk Mantra Dairy Pvt Ltd, known for its popular brand 'Milky Moo', thereby strengthening its presence in the Eastern parts of the country, a top official said Tuesday.

With this take over, Hatsun Agro Product Ltd would begin with a sizeable market share, wide distribution and procurement network besides two strategically located processing facilities in Odisha, with Milky Moo brand's strong market presence.

"With Milk Mantra, Hatsun Agro Product is now present beyond our strong position in South and West India, now establishing a robust presence in Eastern India. Odisha is a prosperous cow belt, and a growing economy. We are excited that

a strong brand Milky Moo is added to our stable of brands like Arun, ibaco, Hatsun and Arokyaa," said HAP Chairman RG Chandramogan in a company statement Tuesday.

With the acquisition, Hatsun Agro is committed to expanding and growing the dairy landscape in Odisha, he said.

Logistically, it also gives scope to strengthen markets like northern Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and adjoining states where Arun Ice-Cream is already present.

Milk Mantra Founder Sri Kumar Mantra said, "The acquisition by Hatsun Agro Product Ltd is a natural progression of the company's vision to scale our impact and innovation across a broader market. HAP has visionary leadership and has extensive resources that will further elevate the value delivered to consumers and farmers alike."

Digital payments rise 11.1% at Sept-end '24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: Digital payments across the country registered an 11.11 per cent year-on-year rise as September 2024, according to RBI's index that measures the adoption of online transactions.

RBI's Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) for September 2024 stands at 465.33 as against 445.5 for March 2024, the Reserve Bank said in a statement Wednesday.

The central bank had announced the construction of a composite RBI-DPI in March 2018 as a base to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country.

The index comprises five broad parameters that enable the measurement of the deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different periods.

These parameters are Payment Enablers (weightage 25 per cent); Payment Infrastructure - Demand-side factors (10 per cent); Payment Infrastructure - Supply-side factors (15 per cent); Payment Performance (45 per cent); and Consumer Centricity (5 per cent).

Indices shine on firm global cues

Sensex, Nifty surge nearly 1% on buying in IT stocks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 1 per cent Wednesday, buoyed by a rally in IT, capital goods and industrial stocks amid a firm trend in global markets.

However, unabated selling by foreign investors ahead of the Union Budget kept market sentiment extremely cautious, traders said.

The Indian market has demonstrated resilience in anticipation of the upcoming Union Budget, with expectations of measures, aimed at stimulating consumption and job creation

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 631.55 points or 0.83 per cent to settle at 76,532.96. During the day, it jumped 698.32 points or 0.92 per cent to 76,599.73. The NSE Nifty soared 205.85 points or 0.90 per cent to 23,163.10.

As many as 2,978 stocks advanced while 1,011 declined and 93



ITC Hotels debuts on bourses

Shares of ITC Hotels Ltd, the demerged hotels business of FMCG conglomerate ITC Ltd, Wednesday slipped up to 5 per cent in its debut on the stock exchanges. The stock listed at ₹188 apiece on the BSE, while on the NSE it began the trade at ₹180. It declined 5 per cent to settle at ₹178.60 -- the lower circuit limit -- on the BSE. On the NSE, the stock went lower by 4.52 per cent to settle at ₹171.85. Intra-day, it slumped 5 per cent to hit the lower circuit limit of ₹171. The firm's market valuation stood at ₹37,169.71 crore. In traded volume terms, 7.13 lakh shares of the firm were traded on the BSE and ₹248.95 lakh shares on the NSE. Shares of ITC dipped 0.55 per cent to ₹432.85 on the BSE. The demerger of ITC's hotel business came into effect January 1, 2025, with January 6 fixed as the record date. The move separated ITC Hotels from the parent entity.

remained unchanged on the BSE. From the 30-share blue-chip pack, Zomato jumped nearly 7 per cent. Tata Motors, Infosys, UltraTech Cement, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra and Bajaj Finance were the other major gainers.

DOMINANCE RACE Alibaba releases AI model it says surpasses DeepSeek

The release of DeepSeek's AI assistant has shocked Silicon Valley and caused tech shares to plunge, with the Chinese startup's purportedly low development and usage costs prompting investors to question huge spending plans by leading AI firms in US

REUTERS

Beijing, Jan 29: Chinese tech company Alibaba Wednesday released a new version of its Qwen 2.5 artificial intelligence model that it claimed surpassed the highly-acclaimed DeepSeek-V3.

The unusual timing of the Qwen 2.5-Max's release, on the first day of the Lunar New Year when most Chinese people are off work and with their families, points to the pressure Chinese AI startup DeepSeek's meteoric rise in the past three weeks has placed on not just overseas rivals, but also its domestic competition. "Qwen 2.5-Max outperforms

... almost across the board GPT-4o, DeepSeek-V3 and Llama-3.1-405B," Alibaba's cloud unit said in an announcement posted on its official WeChat account, referring to OpenAI and Meta's most advanced open-source AI models.

The January 10 release of DeepSeek's AI assistant, powered by the DeepSeek-V3 model, as well as the January 20 release of its R1 model, has shocked Silicon Valley and caused tech shares to plunge, with the Chinese startup's purportedly low development and usage costs prompting investors to question huge spending plans by leading AI firms in the United States.



But DeepSeek's success has also led to a scramble among its domestic competitors to upgrade their own AI models.

Two days after the release of DeepSeek-R1, Tik Tok owner ByteDance released an update to its flagship AI model, which it claimed outperformed Mic-

rosoft-backed OpenAI's o1 in AIME, a benchmark test that measures how well AI models understand and respond to complex instructions.

This echoed DeepSeek's claim that its R1 model rivalled OpenAI's o1 on several performance benchmarks.

Deepseek vs local competitors

The predecessor of DeepSeek's V3 model, DeepSeek-V2, triggered an AI model price war in China after it was released last May.

The fact that DeepSeek-V2 was open-source and unprecedentedly cheap, only 1 yuan (\$0.14) per 1 million tokens - or units of data processed by the AI model - led to Alibaba's cloud unit announcing price cuts of up to 97% on a range of models.

Other Chinese tech companies followed suit, including Baidu which released China's first equivalent to ChatGPT in March 2023, and the country's most valuable internet compa-

ny Tencent.

Liang Wenfeng, DeepSeek's enigmatic founder, said in a rare interview with Chinese media outlet Waves in July that the startup "did not care" about price wars and that achieving AGI (artificial general intelligence) was its main goal.

OpenAI defines AGI as autonomous systems that surpass humans in most economically valuable tasks.

While large Chinese tech companies like Alibaba have hundreds of thousands of employees, DeepSeek operates like a research lab, staffed mainly by young graduates and doctorate students from top Chinese universities.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY

ICC in a fix; PCB receives final warning



The fate of the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy is uncertain as incomplete stadiums and security concerns in Pakistan raise the possibility of relocating the tournament to the UAE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 29: The much-anticipated ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is set to kick off February 19, but the fate of the tournament remains uncertain, as per reports.

Originally scheduled to take place in Pakistan, the event now faces growing doubts about whether the country's infrastructure will be ready to host such a high-profile international competition. As venues remain incomplete and concerns over safety grow, the future of the tournament is increasingly at risk.

STADIUMS IN PAKISTAN STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

With just weeks left before the tournament's scheduled start, the stadiums in Lahore and other major cities are far from finished. Despite the appearance of floodlights and some signs of progress, the reality on the ground tells a different story.

Reporters on the ground have raised alarms about incomplete construction, with debris and mud still visible around several stadiums. This leaves many questioning whether the venues will be ready in time to meet the rigorous standards expected for an international competition like the Champions Trophy.

ICC CEO STEPS DOWN

With three weeks to go for the ICC Champions Trophy, ICC's CEO Geoff Allardice has stepped down from his position. ICC chairman Jay Shah announced the development through a media release Tuesday night. While no official reason has been given for the decision, TOI understands that Allardice was under pressure from the ICC board because of mishandling funds during the T20 World Cup in USA last year and also the messy build-up to the Champions Trophy. It is learnt that Allardice didn't apprise the board about two venues in Rawalpindi and Karachi not being ready for the Champions Trophy. After the T20 World Cup last year, ICC's head of events Chris Teteley and general manager marketing and communications Claire Furlong had stepped down. Head of anti-corruption unit Alex Marshall too quit his job. The ICC will go through a major restructuring. It is still not clear if Allardice has stepped down with immediate effect. However, the ICC statement says that the ICC Board will initiate the next steps to identify a replacement.



The revised deadline for stadium completion is set for January 30, but there are still major hurdles to overcome, from basic construction issues to ensuring the venues meet safety standards

The revised deadline for stadium completion is set for January 30, but there are still major hurdles to overcome, from basic construction issues to ensuring the venues meet safety standards. A recent ICC inspection team arrived in Pakistan to evaluate the situation, but no official update was provided. This secrecy has added to the growing anxiety

surrounding the event's viability in the host country. **ICC'S DILEMMA: WILL THE TOURNAMENT BE MOVED?**

As the clock ticks down to the tournament's opening day, the ICC is under increasing pressure to make a decision. Many insiders believe that the event may have to be relocated to another country if Pakistan cannot get its act together.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has already signaled its willingness to step in and host the tournament in world-class stadiums. Given the UAE's proximity and readiness, many are speculating that the tournament could be shifted to Dubai, where India has already indicated it will play its matches due to ongoing security concerns.

For Pakistan, this situation is particularly embarrassing. The country's struggles to complete stadiums and meet the safety requirements have left the ICC questioning the wisdom of hosting such a major event in Pakistan. While Pakistani media outlets have attempted to blame India for the delays, the reality is that the country's infrastructure challenges are at the heart of the issue.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY?

As the tournament's scheduled start date draws closer, there are only a few days left for the ICC to make an official announcement. The decision on whether the Champions Trophy will be held in Pakistan or moved to the UAE is expected to come in the next few days.

Given the logistical and security concerns, moving the event to a more stable and prepared location may be the best option. In the meantime, fans and players alike are anxiously awaiting the decision.

If the tournament is shifted to the UAE, it may offer a welcome change of scenery for those hoping to enjoy world-class cricket in a state-of-the-art environment. Whether in Pakistan or the UAE, the 2025 Champions Trophy promises to be a spectacle—if only the host nation can rise to the occasion.

VANDANA IN INDIA TEAM FOR BHUBANESWAR LEG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Veteran striker Vandana Katariya was Wednesday named in the 24-member Indian women's hockey team for the Bhubaneswar leg of the FIH Pro League, beginning next month, while teenage forward Sonam was included as a standby.

India will face England, the Netherlands, Spain, and Germany twice each from February 15.

Dynamic midfielder Salima Tete will continue to lead the Indian team with forward Navneet Kaur serving as her deputy.

Katariya, who was not a part of the squad for the women's Asian Champions Trophy, along with defenders Nikki Pradhan and Jyoti Chhattri, midfielder Baljeet Kaur and forwards Mumtaz Khan and Rutaja Dadas have been added to the squad.

"This team brings a good blend of experienced players and exciting young talent,

INDIA SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Savita and Bichu Devi Kharibam

Defenders: Sushila Chanu Pukhrambam, Nikki Pradhan, Udita, Jyoti, Ishika Chaudhary, and Jyoti Chhattri

Midfielders: Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Meha, Manisha Chauhan, Salima Tete, Sunelita Toppo, Lalremsiami, Baljeet Kaur, and Sharmila Devi

Forwards: Navneet Kaur, Mumtaz Khan, Preeti Dubey, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal, Beauty Ddungdung, Sangita Kumari, Deepika, and Vandana Katariya

as standbys.

The 19-year-old Sonam, in particular, stands a chance to make her senior international debut after an impressive performance in the recently concluded women's Hockey India League, where she was the second-highest scorer.

"I am particularly excited to see how some of the younger players perform, especially those who have shown great promise in the Women's Hockey India League," Harendra said.

"We are confident in the team's preparation, and I believe we have the potential to deliver strong performances against some of the best teams in the world," he added.

As per the FIH regulations, if a team has more than 4 matches scheduled during a Pro League stage, they can revise their 24-member squad after the first 4 matches.

However, any changes must be made using players from their pre-approved substitution list.

which will be crucial as we face top-level competition in the tournament. Our focus has been on building a balanced squad, with strong options in every position," Indian women's hockey team chief coach Harendra Singh said.

Goalkeepers Banwari Solanki, defenders Akshata Abaso Dhakale, and Jyoti Singh, along with forwards Sakshi Rana, Annu, and Sonam have been added



SHORT TAKES

Manchester City, PSG stare at early exit

Geneva: Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain each faces a shocking early exit from the Champions League for the first time in more than a decade when the final round of games Wednesday decides the new 36-team standings. When the 18 games kick off at the same time, 9 pm Central European Time (2000 GMT), to complete the inaugural league-phase format, Man City is outside the top-24 places that advance to the knockout stage and 22nd-place PSG risks dropping out. Man City must beat Club Brugge at home to rise safely from 25th place. A draw for PSG at 24th-place Stuttgart should be enough for both teams — barring a freakish big win for Dinamo Zagreb over AC Milan to take the tiebreaker on goal difference among teams that end on 11 points.

Jerry Holness joins as Indian women's coach

New Delhi: Renowned Jamaican athletics coach Jerry Lee Holness, who has mentored the likes of multiple Olympics and World Championships gold medalist sprinters Elaine Thompson and Nesta Carter, has taken charge of the Indian women's 400m team ahead of some high-profile events coming up this year. Holness, a highly-experienced and much travelled coach, joined the National Centre of Excellence at the Lakshmi Bai National College of Physical Education in Thiruvananthapuram.

Smith reaches 10k feat

Galle: Steve Smith scored his 10,000th test run to put him in elite cricket company and Australia was 145-2 after winning the toss and batting Wednesday in the first test against Sri Lanka. Smith needed only one run Wednesday to achieve the milestone, and he was 2 not out at lunch along with opener Usman Khawaja, who was unbeaten on 65. Smith was on 9,999 career test runs when he was dismissed in the fifth Australia-India test in Sydney earlier this month. Smith became the 15th player in test cricket, and fourth Australian, to score 10,000 runs in a career. He brought up the milestone on his first delivery, skipping down the wicket and punching a single to mid-on. Ricky Ponting (13,378), Allan Border (11,174), and Steve Waugh (10,927) are the other Australian batters to have scored 10,000 runs in a test career. Sachin Tendulkar is the leading all-time test scorer with 15,921 runs.

Bell, oldest living Olympic gold medalist dies at 94

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 29: American long jump great Greg Bell, who had been the oldest living Olympic gold medalist in athletics, has died at the age of 94.

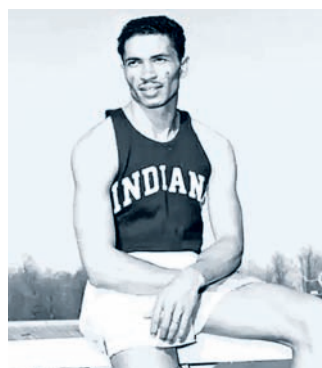
Bell breathed his last January 25, according to World Athletics which paid tribute to the 1956 Olympic long jump gold medalist.

World Athletics is deeply saddened to hear that Greg Bell, the 1956 Olympic long jump champion, died Saturday at the age of 94. He had been the oldest living Olympic gold medalist in athletics, it said.

Bell was the world's leading men's long jumper of the 1950s. As well as winning the Olympic title in Melbourne, his personal best of 8.10m he produced in Austin, USA in 1957 was just three centimetres off the world record that had been set by Jesse Owens in 1935.

He also jumped 8.09m in 1956 and 8.10m again in 1959.

Bell was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, in the USA November 7, 1930 and he attended Garfield



High School.

After starting work and then serving in the army, he joined Indiana University and remained undefeated in the long jump throughout his collegiate career, including wins at the NCAA Championships.

At the 1956 Olympic Games, a 26-year-old Bell jumped 7.83m in challenging conditions to win by 15cm ahead of his compatriot John Bennett.

Bell went on to secure silver at the Pan American Games in Chicago in 1959 and retired after finishing fourth at the US Olympic Trials in 1960.

THAILAND MASTERS

Srikanth advances to 2nd round

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patumwan, Jan 29: Former world no 1 Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth entered the second round of the Thailand Masters BWF Super 300 event with a straight-game win over his opponent here Wednesday.

Srikanth defeated Israel's Daniil Dubovenko 21-13 21-18 in the men's singles opening round.

This is Srikanth's second straight win over Dubovenko, having defeated him previously in the 2024 Macau Open back in September 2024.

Srikanth will next face Hong Kong's Jason Gunawan.

Among other Indians in men's singles, S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian defeated Malaysia's June Wei Cheam 15-21 21-15 21-19 in a tough three-game contest. He will next be up against Indonesia's Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo.

Ayush Shetty was shown the door by Malaysia's Jing Hong Kok 15-21 17-21, while Mithun Manjunath lost to another Malaysian in Sholeh Aidil 14-21 13-21 in men's singles.

Srikanth was dominant right from the start, racing to a 6-0

lead in the first game and his opponent struggled, handing the Indian a 1-0 lead.

Srikanth continued in the same vein and raced off the blocks in the second game as well, but the Israeli shuttler put up a better fight this time.

Srikanth led 11-7 at the interval of the second game and kept up his momentum to close down the encounter at 21-18.

In mixed doubles, the pair of Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika

Shivani Gadde defeated Thailand's Weeraphat Phakjarung and Sararat Chueboca 21-8 21-16 to advance to the second round.

They will next play another Thai duo of Ratchapol Makkasathorn and Nattamon Laisuan.

In men's doubles, Ruben Kumar and Hariharan defeated Thailand's Pannawat Jamtubtim and Ratchapol Makkasathorn 21-18 21-12.



GUKESH BEATS MENDONCA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Wijk Aan Zee, Jan 29: World Champion D Gukesh crashed through the defenses of compatriot Leon Luke Mendonca in the ninth round to jump into sole lead at the Tata Steel Master here.

On a day when R Praggnanandhaa lost his first game against Dutch GM Anish Giri, veteran P Harikrishna also found himself under the spotlight, falling to Russian-turned-Slovenian Vladimir Fedoseev.

"I'm happy that I played a good game today and there are still four rounds left so I'm not thinking much about the standings. I'm just happy as to how I am playing, Gukesh said after his game.

With the win, Gukesh took his tally to 6.5 points out of a possible nine and a half points ahead of Uzbek Nodirbek Abduattorov and Russian turned Slovenian Fedoseev, who are both on 6 points.

Praggnanandhaa on 5.5 points shares the fourth spot and it remains to be seen if things are going to get better for the Indian.

TALIBAN BAN

Afghan's female cricketers reunite after 3 years exile

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Jan 29: Cricketer Firooz Amiri says her team will represent millions of women in Afghanistan who are denied their rights" when the side reunites after more than three years for an exhibition game in Australia Thursday.

An Afghanistan Women's XI will play a Cricket Without Borders XI in the match at Melbourne's Junction Oval. It will bring together 21 female players who were formerly contracted by the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) before the Taliban regime re-took control in August 2021.

Since fleeing Afghanistan, the women cricketers were banned from playing in their home country, have been based in Canberra and Melbourne

and playing for various club teams in local competitions.

Amiri and Nahida Sapan, who will captain the Afghanistan Women's XI, thanked the Australian government and Cricket Australia for their support in promoting women's sport.

"It's very special for all of us to get back together after three years, leaving everything and losing everything back home in Afghanistan and come together again," Amiri said this week.

Amiri was forced to flee her home country when the Taliban took control. She and her family first traveled to Pakistan and then were evacuated to Australia.

"I also want to express deepest gratitude for everyone who support us. Your sup-



port means the world to us," Sapan said. "Together we are building not just a team. We are building a movement for change and improvement."

Sapan told the BBC in 2023 that her family received death threats from government offi-

cials after the Taliban re-took power. The threatening messages included "If we find you, we will not let you live."

Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley praised the resilience of the players. He said it was a powerful moment

THIS IS A VERY HISTORIC MOMENT FOR ALL OF AFGHAN WOMEN. THIS MATCH CAN OPEN DOORS FOR AFGHAN WOMEN FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND OUR FUTURE

NAHIDA SAPAN | AFGHANISTAN CRICKETER

when they were presented with their team shirts for the exhibition match.

"To see their playing shirts for the first time with their names and numbers on the back, you can see how much it means to them," Hockley said. "I'm just inspired by their resilience, their love for the game."

Hockley said CA would continue to "advocate" for change at a global level through dis-

cussions with the International Cricket Council (ICC). He said Thursday's game represented an important first step.

"This match shines the light on the fact that in places around the world, not every woman and girl has the chance to play," Hockley said. "We continue to advocate at the ICC and continue to engage with the ACB (Afghanistan Cricket Board)."

"It's such a complex situation. It's bigger than cricket." Under Taliban rule, the Afghanistan Cricket Board cannot field a national women's team because the country's laws forbid women from playing sport, studying and medical education, moves that have been criticized by world groups including the International Criminal Court.