

Beating negativity

Actor Isha Malviya says she never wastes her time in commenting on social media posts by trolls

LEISURE | P2



Ukraine politics heats up

US Prez Trump's team wants Kyiv to hold a presidential election by the year-end, especially if it can agree on a ceasefire with Moscow

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Gold extends rally

Gold prices extend the rally for the fifth straight session and rise ₹500 to hit a fresh peak of ₹85,800 per 10 grams

BUSINESS | P11



Carlsen accuses FIDE chief

Carlsen demands FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich's resignation over coercion of players, misuse of power and broken promises

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 5, 2025



FELINE FURBALLS: Two cubs born to cheetah Veera at Kuno National Park (KNP), in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district. With these births, KNP is now home to 26 cheetahs, including 14 cubs

Finally US calls

Hours after a US military plane departed to return deported Indian migrants to the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday received an invitation to visit the White House next week from US President Donald Trump. Such a move by Trump indicates he is likely to win some concession from India on the trade front, likely a further reduction of duty on American imports, and also in a major defence deal, which is widely expected to take place during their meeting. However, all eyes are now on the Indian Prime Minister, as to what bargain he will bring back from the US. The invitation comes shortly after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi claimed in the Lok Sabha that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was sent to the inauguration of Donald Trump as US President to ensure a US invite for PM Modi.

AGENCIES

Washington, Feb 4: US President Donald Trump has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the White House next week, a White House official said, hours after a US military plane departed to return deported illegal Indian migrants back home.

Trump spoke with Modi January 27, when he discussed immigration and stressed the importance of India buying more American-made security equipment and fair bilateral trading ties. The US president, who calls Modi his friend, had told reporters after the phone call



that the Indian PM was likely to visit the US in February.

The US is India's largest trading partner and two-way trade between the two countries surpassed \$118 billion in 2023-24, with India posting a trade surplus of \$32 billion.

Trump is keen on reducing the US trade deficit with India. In an apparent submission to his tariff threats, New Delhi had recently expressed its willingness to engage with Trump over trade issues as it reduced customs duties on key items such as Harley Davidson and Tesla automobiles in the annual Budget that may benefit the US companies.

India, a strategic partner of the US in its efforts to counter China, is keen to enhance trade relations with the US and make it easier for its citizens to get skilled worker visas. It is also keen to avoid tariffs that Trump has threatened in the past, citing India's high tariffs on US products.

Meanwhile, the first round of deportation of illegal Indian nationals from the US comes around two weeks after Trump became the president for a second term. The US is rigorously tightening immigration laws, the American embassy said Tuesday amid reports that a US military aircraft is bringing some illegal migrants to India.

Trump has promised a strict policy approach in dealing with illegal immigrants residing in the US and already signed a number of immigration-related executive orders

Asked about the deportation flight bringing back a group of illegal migrants to India, a US embassy spokesperson did not provide details, but asserted that Washington is removing illegal migrants.

"I can't share any details on those inquires, but I can share, on the record, the United States is vigorously enforcing its border, tightening immigration laws, and removing illegal migrants," the official said. These actions send a clear message illegal migration is not worth the risk, he added.

Following his phone conversation with Modi, Trump said India will do what is right on the deportation of illegal mi grants from the US.

Last month, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it is opposed to illegal immigration and would be ready to take back Indians staying illegally in the US provided their nationality is verified. According to estimates, around 18,000 illegal immigrants from India have been identified by American authorities for deportation.

16th FC team

begins 4-day

DELHI VOTES TODAY

New Delhi, Feb 4: The stage is set for the high-stakes Assembly elections in Delhi, where the Aam Aadmi Party is eyeing a third straight term, while the BJP and the Congress are looking at resurgence. Over 1.56 crore voters are eligible to cast their ballots from 7am onwards Wednesday.

Voting will take place across 13,766 polling stations in all the 70 Assembly constituencies to decide the fates of 699 candidates in a contest that could reshape the political landscape of the capital.

Led by Arvind Kejriwal, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is seeking a third straight term, banking on its governance record and welfare schemes.

On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is making a determined push to reclaim the capital after more than 25 years.

The Congress, which ruled Delhi for 15 years till 2013, is striving to stage a comeback after failing to win a single seat in the previous two elections.

Polling will begin at 7am Wednesday and continue until 6pm under tight security arrangements. The Election Commission has deployed 220 companies of paramilitary forces, 35,626 Delhi Police personnel, and 19,000 home guards to ensure peaceful voting.

China counters US with tariffs, probe

Beijing: China countered President Donald Trump's tariffs on Chinese products with tariffs of its own on multiple US imports Tuesday as well as announcing an antitrust investigation into Google and other trade measures. US tariffs on products from Canada and Mexico also were to go into effect Tuesday, though Trump agreed to a 30-day pause on his threats against Mexico and Canada as they acted to appease his concerns about border security and drug

HRA, hike in diet, mobility allowance for firefighters

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: The state government Tuesday announced that a house rent allowance would be provided to Fire and Emergency Service personnel who are staying in barracks and not provided with residential accommodation. The government also increased the diet and mobility allowances for firefighters and officers.

According to a notification issued by the Home department. the house rent allowance (HRA) will now be given to firemen, havildars and those in equivalent ranks of Odisha Fire & Emergency Service, who are staying in barracks and not provided with residential accommodation.

"The admissible rate shall be decided on the basis of place of posting of Odisha Fire & Emergency Service personnel, irrespective of the place of actual

deployment," it said. The special diet allowance to personnel in the rank of fireman, havildars and those in equivalent ranks has been enhanced from ₹900 to ₹1,400 per month.

Monthly motorcycle or mobility allowance was earlier given to station officers and assistant fire officers, and is now extended to assistant station officers and those in equivalent ranks, the notification said.

The mobility allowance for officers and assistant officers has been enhanced from ₹300

Monthly mobility allowance for fireman, havildars and those in equivalent ranks has been enhanced from ₹150 to ₹300 the notification said adding that the risk allowance to personnel from the rank of fireman to assistant fire officer has been increased from ₹400 to ₹1000 per month.

Girl dies in 'Mo Bus' mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Tension flared up following the tragic death of a minor girl in a road accident involving a bus of the Capital city's public transport bus service here, Tuesday.

The 12-year-old deceased identified as Kuni Juadi was staying at a nursery in the Raghunathpur area of the city along with her family

Locals claimed that the girl was going on her bicycle to buy some food items from a local shop when a speeding 'Mo Bus', the public transport bus service in the city under Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), crushed her to death at Raghunathpur under Nan-

dankanan police limits. The minor girl reportedly died on the spot. The onlookers said the bus dragged her for around 50 to 100 metres on the road after the accident.



The irate locals later staged a blockade by burning tyres on the Jaydev Vihar- Nandankanan Road demanding financial compensation for the family.

"The deceased girl's parents make their living by working as daily wagers in the area and they need adequate financial compensation from the administration for the tragic loss. We also demand the 'Mo Bus' authorities take action against drivers involved in reckless driving and also appoint experienced drivers as there are around 10 road accidents have taken place between Bhubaneswar and Cuttack in the last six months involving the Mo Bus vehicles," said an angry local. Upon being informed, police and the authorities of CRUT reached the spot and talked to the local residents protesting there. The protesters removed the blockade after getting assurances from the authorities.

Speaking to media persons, a CRUT official said, "This incident can't be reversed, we are making all the arrangements for providing financial assistance to the victim's family."

He also claimed that initial enquiry has confirmed that the vehicle involved in today's incident was under the prescribed speed limit and the actual cause behind the death can only be ascertained after further examination.

As per reports, police started the investigation into the matter by detaining the driver of the bus at the Nandankanan police station.

visit to state PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: An

eight-member team of the 16th Finance Commission headed by Dr Arvind Panagariya Tuesday began its four-day visit to Odisha to hold discussions with state government officials and receive memoranda from the administration.

The commission members will have detailed discussions with state authorities before finalising its report officials said.

According to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the state government has prepared a memorandum with a demand of Rs 12,56,148 crore during the next five financial years. The proposal regarding the state's demand was earlier approved by the state cabinet.

The Finance Commission will recommend the Union gov ernment on the share of taxes to be given to states, including Odisha, in the next five years beginning from April 1, 2026.

The 15th Finance Commis sion (FC) headed by NK Singh had recommended a transfer of Rs 2.22 lakh crore to Odisha for five years from 2021 to 2026. against the state's demand of Rs 8.24 lakh crore.

However, sources said the state this time is likely to urge the 16th Finance Commission to give special emphasis to Odisha to achieve the ambitious goals of 'Vikasit Odisha' by 2036.

The state is also likely to demand special allocation un der disaster management and capital outlay for creating vital infrastructures in Odisha, the officials said.

After their arrival, the Finance Commission chairman and members visited the State Tribal Mu seum and Kalinga Stadium. The members are scheduled to visit Dhauli Gram Panchayat, Konark and Puri Wednesday.

Dictators cash in on Trump's foreign aid freeze Trump, announcing the aid and doubling down on attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Miami, Feb 4: When President Donald Trump froze foreign assistance for 90 days, he argued that such a drastic step was needed to eliminate waste and block what he derides as "woke" spending that doesn't align with American interests.

Experts say the suspension has another, far more serious consequence emboldening authoritarian strongmen. Wrapped into the billions the US spends annually on foreign aid - more than any other nation — are hundreds of grants for grassroots groups dedicat-

Among the groups that won't be receiving critical funding is an organisation that trained poll workers to detect fraud in

ed to fighting for democracy in

authoritarian countries around

Venezuela's recent presidential vote, pro-democracy activists in Cuba and China and a group of Belarusian exiles behind a campaign to block the country's strongman from winning a sham election.

"Cutting funding to these essential efforts sends the wrong signal to dictatorships and undermines the brave individuals fighting for freedom," said Thor Halvorssen, founder of New York-based Human Rights Foundation, which does not receive US government funding. 'These particular investments

they should be prioritised." Congress budgeted at least USD 690 million on pro-democracy programmes this year to counter authoritarian rule in eight countries considered by experts among the world's least free Belarus, China, Cuba, Iran,

should not just be restored -



Nicaragua, North Korea, Russia and Venezuela.

Much of the pro-democracy funding is channelled through the US Agency for International Development, where hundreds of employees were laid off amid attempts by billionaire Elon Musk to shut down the decades-old agency as part of his campaign to slash spending.

freeze on his first day in office, said all foreign assistance would be evaluated as to whether it makes the United States safer, stronger and more prosperous.

To overhaul USAID, he's relying on Peter Marocco, a former US marine and conservative activist from Dallas who briefly worked for the agency USAID during the first Trump administration. Marocco didn't respond to an AP request for comment and The White House pointed to Trump's comments Monday slamming USAID as being run by "radical left lu-

natics. While funding for some of the programmes aligned with Trump's "America First" foreign policy could resume, strongmen throughout the world are already celebrating

against opponents. In Venezuela, Interior Minis-

ter Diosdado Cabello, the main enforcer of the ruling socialist party's security apparatus, boasted last week on state TV that the aid channelled by US-AID to the opposition was a "black box of corruption" that he vowed to investigate.

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on X that he hopes the "notorious Deep State doesn't swallow Musk" for pulling the plug on the agency

In Nicaragua, a TV network owned by President Daniel Ortega's sons declared that "Trump turned off the faucet" for the "terrorists". Media outlets aligned with the Islamic leadership in Iran joked that the US was treating its allies like "disposable tissues'.



KERRY KATONA WANTS TO STAY SINGLE FOR A YEAR

Former Atomic Kitten star Kerry Katona has no plans for another relationship any time soon following her split from Ryan Mahoney. The 44-year-old star has insisted despite recently being linked to celebrity chef Jameson Stocks, there is no romance and she isn't planning to get into another relationship.

CUMBERBATCH REGRETS PLAYING NON-BINARY ROLE

Hollywood star Benedict Cumberbatch has talked about a screen role, which he wouldn't do now. In Ben Stiller's 2016 comedy *Zoolander 2*, Cumberbatch played All, a character described as a non-binary fashion model. He wouldn't do such role again, quipped the actor.



Isha claps

back at trolls

Mumbai: Actress Isha Malviya has talked

about facing negativity on social media. She

clapped back at trolls by saying that she does

not even consider them a part of her life and

that she doesn't give anyone the authority to

"I don't even consider these people a par of my life. Personally, I wouldn't waste my

time leaving either negative or positive

comments on someone's post. It's point-

less. But some people have so much

time and energy to leave negative com-

ments. I honestly don't understand why

The actress said that there are days

when she feels low and that's when she

"When it comes to feeling numb, I don't

give anyone the authority to hurt me any-

more. I'm the only person who can hurt my-

Asked how she manages her personal life

with all the attention she gets from being in

the spotlight, Isha concluded by saying, "When

you're a public figure and constantly in the

public eye, your life is no longer private; it can

self now. In the past, I allowed people to hurt

they're so free," Isha said.

prefers talking to her parents.

me, but that's not the case anymore.

spread like wildfire.'

hurt her anymore.

accuracy • reliability • trust

If you are aiming to marry soon, you can start making preparations today. However, before you take the final decision, it would be better to look at both sides of the coin, advises Ganesha. Activities related to such an alliance will dominate today, and by the end of the day you may feel very elated.

TAURUS

This is one of those dreadful days when you could be unduly touchy and short tempered, fears Ganesha. Don't go around getting into fights and quarrels with anyone who seems unfriendly or ill mannered. You will only end up in spoiling some healthy relationships. Your moods are likely change from moment to moment.

It will not be hard for you to complete your tasks succesfully and without any delays or obstacles in your path, only if you first seek to fully understand and acquire the learning required to eprform it. The fruits of your labour will keep you happy and satisfied, says Ganesha

CANCER

You are known for your ability to set the ball rolling.
Once you set your mind to do something, it is generally considered done by your peers. Today, you are eyeing a few accomplishments on the monetary front. Most part of your day will go in dealing with financial transactions, and importing and exporting goods

Today there is a chance that you will meet that special someone that you have been waiting for all your life. You may possibly give your partner a beautiful gift. You will be more inclined towards the arts and will be able to exhibit this new-found appreciation to the max, says Ganesha.

A fear of the unknown will keep lurking in your mind today. The shadow will only grow larger as the day progresses. You may find yourself spending too much on your foreign friends. Ganesha advises you to be cautious in this regard today.

Ganesha says your children will gain achievements that will have you feel proud of them. You will get monetary benefit either by increment in salary or by

SCORPIO

Yet another mundane day in your life, as nothing exciting is on the cards. However, be cheerful and keep trying hard to bring in some spice in life. You never know when the planets change their mood and make an exciting future. Keep the hope alive, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Your leadership qualities are likely to bag compliments today. As you follow law and order and also make others follow it. You leave no stone unturned to get the work done, and that too systematically. However, make sure you also give them space and freedom to express themselves.

CAPRICORN

You are in hot water, but do not lose hope during these turbulent times. Maintain a calm head over your shoulders and deal with the problems, guides Ganesha. Also, do not jump to conclusions or be argumentative with the people around you, as you may end up being at the losing end.

AQUARIUS

You are in for a challenging day today. But, luck is by your side and you will be able to come out of the storm hale and hearty, assures Ganesha. If you are a businessman, you may enter into some major business venture, sign important contracts and take up new projects.

PISCES

A day of mixed fortunes awaits you, where taking risks could prove to be your undoing, or provide you with handsome returns, says Ganesha. This is because you could come out on top by treading cautiously, but uncalculated risks will probably throw your calculations out of gear. Your success rate is unlikely to be too high; hence it may be a tough day for you.



of self-transformation Mumbai: Actress Tamannaah Bhatia recently opened up about a powerful moment of self-transformation

uring a challenging time on set. During her recent appearance on a podcast, ne actress recalled an incident.

The Baahubali actress shared, T've been in my caravan, and something really bad happened. I was really upset; my eyes were swelling with tears—but I had mascara on, a full face of makeup, and I was playing a character. I couldn't cry at that moment.

Fourth:

I want-

ed some-

one who

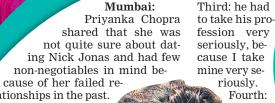
was cre-

ative and

So, I told myself, 'This is just one feeling, and I can turn it into whatever I want.' Right then, I chose to transform that in-

tense feeling into happiness. I've done this looking at myself in the mirror, and it works. On the work front, Tamannaah was recently

seen in the Netflix thriller-action film Sikandar Ka Muqaddar, which centers around a daring diamond heist and three main suspects. She played the role of Kamini Singh and shared the screen with Avinash Tiwary as Sikandar Sharma and Rajiv Mehta as Mangesh Desai. The film also featured Jimmy Shergill as Investigating Officer Jaswinder Singh.



lationships in the past. Chopra opened up about the time she had begun to think about the fact about dating singer Nick Jonas a few years ago. The actor opened up in a new interview with Harper's Bazaar where she said that she wished to be with someone who wanted a family. She also had her own list

of non-negotiables for the man she wanted to be with. "The first was honesty, because there were times in some of my previous relationships when I'd been hurt by dishonesty

Priyanka

The second was that he had to apvalue of

Priyanka hurt by dishonesty in past relationships

had the imagination to dream big with me. And fifth: I wanted someone who had drive and ambition, like I did," she was quoted

> in the interview. The actor then went on to add, "I wouldn't have married him if he didn't. You have to look for someone who respects you. Respect is different from love and affection... You've got to kiss a lot of frogs until vou find vour prince.

> > AGENCIES





Odia play Chitra Pratima, staged Tuesday on the inaugural evening of the three-day event being held at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar. Written by Gourahari Das, the drama was directed by Pabitra Mohanty. Apart from director Mohanty, other key performers of the play were Mamata Tripathy, Sarita Pradhan and Rajesh Pradhan. Shakti Prasad Mishra scored

A scene from

PEANUTS







PRETTY BAD.



CALVIN AND HOBBES

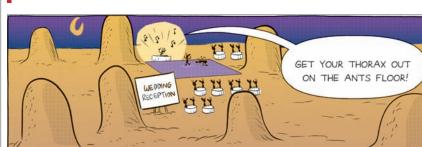








BREVITY



POST **CROSSWORD**

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Across

1 Evict

3 Disgraceful

9 Type of rock

10 Bedouins

11 Inopportune

14 Aardvark's tidbit

17 Conclusion

16 Gallic goodbye

18 It borders Brazil and Suriname

21 Leave out

22 Evil 23 Shangri-la

24 Winter toy

Down

1 One of a kind 2 Like some booms

Master's Voice 5 Never ending 6 Huge

7 Mount Olympus dwellers

8 Source

12 Writer Wharton

13 Moved along 15 Hunting dog 19 Horrible

20 Kind of breath 22 More, in Madrid

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.

1	8		2					9
				6			75	90
			8		7			5
	7				2			
	9	3			17			
	1		3	9			4	
	2		9		5	6		
3								4
5		7						1

SOLUTIONS

Т	Н	Е	R	M	Α	L		Р	1	Ν	Т	0
Α		R		Α		Е		Α		1		V
С	0	R	Ν	Υ		М	Е	L	Α	Ν	G	Ε
1		Α		F		Α				J		R
Т	0	Т		L	T	Ν	Κ	S		Α	D	S
		Ι		0		S		Е				Е
M	Α	С	Α	W	S		R	Α	F	F	L	Е
0				Е		Е		U		U		
Ν	Α	Р		R	0	G	Е	R		R	1	0
1		S				R		С		Т		Α
Т	R	Α	M	Р	L	Е		Н	0	1	S	Т
0		L		R		S		1		V		Н
R	0	М	Е	0		S	0	N	Ν	Е	Т	S
6		1	8	1	7	4	9)	3	5	1	2

SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

AIRING GRIEVANCES

Members of 'Sarat Bikash Mancha' stage a sit-in at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, to press for fulfilment of their 4-point charter of demands



owntown

Hyd roadshow to promote Odisha tourism

More than 40 travel operators and 20 tourism investors from Hyderabad engage in a series of **B2B** interactions

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: The state government Tuesday organised a roadshow in Hyderabad to promote its tourism by showcasing its diverse attractions, including cultural heritage monuments, waterfalls, wildlife, local cuisine, hills, and Buddhist circuits.

The event organised in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), witnessed more than 40 travel operators and 20 tourism investors from



Hyderabad engaged in a series of B2B interactions.

"Our unwavering commit-

ment fosters a pro-investment environment, providing robust support for businesses," Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who is in charge of the Tourism department, said.

Backed by unmatched destinations, serene landscapes and opportunities across diverse tourism sub-sectors, Odisha presents a golden opportunity for investors to build, grow, and thrive in one of India's most

commitment fosters a pro-investment environment, providing ro**bust support for businesses** PRAVATI PARIDA DY CM & TOURISM MINISTER

promising tourism markets,

Tourism Secretary Balwant Singh highlighted the state's extensive tourism potential and efforts to make Odisha a key destination for domestic travellers. Odisha has an excellent road network that connects neighbouring states, he said.

His presentation focused on opportunities for investors and tourism stakeholders, outlining the state's commitment to creating a seamless environment for collaboration and growth in the sector, with a special focus on strategic investments and infrastructure development.

One of the major highlights of the session was the proposal for Odisha's inclusion in prominent tourism plazas, which would enhance the visibility and accessibility of the state's rich tourism offerings, an official said.

The state also focused on the promotion of wellness tourism. With the increasing global interest in wellness and holistic travel experiences, the stakeholders suggested several ideas for leveraging Odisha's natural beauty, serene landscapes, and traditional wellness practices to establish the state as a top wellness destination.

Later in the day, the Odisha Tourism delegation met more than a dozen potential investors from the travel and tourism fraternity to discuss opportunities for investment in the state's burgeoning tourism infrastructure.

12 TNT explosive cylinders recovered from goods train

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Railway security personnel Tuesday recovered as many as 12 TNT explosive cylinders from a wagon of a goods train at Kantabanji railway station in Bolangir, police said.

The incident sparked security concerns, with top officials of the GRP and RPF rushing to the spot. "Twelve TNT explosive cylinders were found at the Kantabanji railway station. No case has been registered so far. The recovered items belong to the Ordnance Factory Badmal

(OFBL) in Saintala," ADG (Railway) Arun Bothra said. GRP sources said that two

wagonload items of OFBL came from Maharashtra. While the items from one wagon were unloaded by the OFBL officials and taken to the factory the other one remained unat tended. Bolangir SP Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo said the recovered items were returned to OFBL officials after they produced the required documents It may be a case of lapse on the part of the people who were re ceiving the consignments.



Human Capital Management, Central Office REFUND NOTIFICATION

REFUND OF APPLICATION FEES/ INTIMATION CHARGES FOR RECRUITMENT OF SAFAI KARMACHARI CUM SUB-STAFF AND/ OR SUB-STAFF 2024-25

vacancies for the post of Safai Karmachari Cum Sub-Staff and or Sub-Staff in two phases from the eligible candidates vide Recruitment notification dated 19.12.2023 and 06.06.2024

The Central Bank of India had invited applications for filling up the

Due to the delay caused by pending legal proceedings, the Bank has

REFUND PROCESS: -

1. Dedicated Link: A dedicated link for capturing complete accoun details of the candidates has been provided in the Refund Notification dated 01.02.2025 published on Bank's official website i.e https://www.centralbankofindia.co.in/en/recruitments. Through that link, the candidates has to log in using their registration credentials (Registration Number and Password/Date of Birth in DDMMYYYY format), the combination of above two credentials is mandatory for logging in the provided link).

2. Required Details: Name, Bank account number, IFSC code

3. Refund Timeline: 07.02.2025 to 22.02.2025 for providing complete account details. The refund process will leverage the same credentials used during registration to ensure authenticity.

The Bank has already intimated the applicants about refund process and their registration number via SMS and e-mail on registered mobile number and e-mail id separately.

Place: Mumbai Date: 01.02.2025

General Manager-HCM

MAGHA SAPTAMI

Thousands take holy dip at Chandrabhaga



birthday of the Sun God and is held on the seventh day of 'Magha' month of the Hindu calendar.

People offer prayer to 'Tri Mahadev' after taking a bath. Devotees also offer puja at 'Naba Graha' on the premises of the Sun temple

This year, the holy dip started at 1.37 am and the sadhus were given the first opportunity to take a dip. Devotees take the dip at the con-

fluence of Chandrabhaga River and the Bay of Bengal. As the river does not exist now, a large artificial pond has been dug on the river bed at the confluence with the sea and devotees take the holy dip there.

Tri Mahadev is represented by Triveniswar of Madhipur village, Tshaneswar of Santpur village and Dakhineswar of Kurujang village in Puri district. The idols were taken out on palanquins in a procession around midnight and worshipped at Konark temple

Devotees believe that the holy dip cures people of skin diseases and washes away their sins. According to mythology, Lord Krishna's son Shamba was cured of leprosy when he meditated and worshipped the Sun God at 'Arka Kshetra' for 12 days after taking a holy dip at Chandrabhaga River, which once flowed through the precincts of the Sun Temple at Konark towards the Bay of Bengal.

Devotees also offer cooked rice and dried fish (shukhua) dalma to mythological demon Arkasura in whose name Konark area has been named Arka Kshetra. The demon was slain by the Sun God.

The district administration of Puri has made elaborate arrangements at Chandrabhaga beach for the festival. Puri district Collector and Superintendent of Police remained present on the spot to monitor the arrangements. While around 33 platoons (one platoon comprises 30 personnel) of police were deployed to ensure smooth conduct of the event. 20 lifeguards were also engaged near the beach to prevent any untoward incident, a senior police officer said, adding that proper traffic arrangements were made.

Senior IAS officer for every district

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: The government has assigned one senior IAS officer in each of the state's 30 districts to supervise the implementation of important welfare measures.

Development Commissioner Anu Garg recently issued a circular to all senior IAS officers in which she encouraged each of them to visit the allotted district for at least two days once in the two months and spend one night in the district or sub-divisional headquarters.

During the visit, the officers will supervise the implementation of important government schemes and programmes to ensure the delivery of public services to the people in an effective manner, the circular said.

They have been advised to randomly select the areas of visit within the district, including inaccessible and tribal-dominated areas.

The officers were advised to visit at least one gram panchayat (GP) and assess the level of saturation in the coverage of various development and welfare programmes of the government for basic facilities in that particular GP

According to the circular, the officers will have at least one meal a day (on a payment basis) in either an ST/SC hostel or a school (mid-day meals) or an orphanage to check the quality of food and the ambience in those places.

In the eight mineral-bearing districts – Angul, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Rayagada and Sundargarh - the officers concerned will review the utilisation of funds under the district mineral foundation (DMF), Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) and also visit projects sanctioned under the two funds, it said.

Officers assigned to aspirational districts have been asked to specially review the progress under the Aspirational Districts Programme (ASP). The officers have been asked to submit their findings, after each visit, to the Chief Secretary.

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: An MLA of the ruling BJP has warned 'Jatra' troupes that action would be taken against them if they perform any obscene dance at the upcoming Khandagiri Mahotsav and Kharavela Mela in Bhubaneswar. The annual Khandagiri Mahotsav and Kharavela

'Lathi' group to check obscene dance

Mela begins at Khandagiri Hills on 'Magha Sapta mi' every year where 'Jatra' troupes from different parts of the state perform. This time around 13 'Jatra' troupes are scheduled to perform at the mela which will begin from Wednesday. BJP MLA Babu Singh and around 100 people including women took a pledge before Goddess Barabhuja (Maa Durga) at the Khandagiri Hills in the City to protest any kind of obscene dance during Jatra shows at the mela.

Singh said initially 100 people, including women, have taken the pledge to oppose obscene performance by certain jatra groups. "If required, we will use lathi against persons performing obscene dance in jatra shows," he told reporters.

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Lung cancer in never-smokers on rise

AIR POLLUTION COULD BE DRIVER, CLAIMS A LANCET STUDY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 4: Lung cancer among those who never smoked is on the rise and air pollution could be contributing to the increase, according to a new study published in 'The Lancet Respiratory Medicine'

Researchers, including those from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), World Health Organization, analysed data, including those from the Global Cancer Observatory 2022 dataset, to estimate national-level lung cancer cases for four subtypes - adenocarcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, small- and large-cell carcinoma.

They found that adenocarcinoma a cancer that starts in glands that produce fluids such as mucus and digestive ones – has become the dominant subtype among both men and women. The sub-type of lung cancer was also found to account for 53-70 per cent of lung cancer cases in 2022 among never-smokers around the

Compared to the other sub-types of lung cancer, risk of adenocarci-



noma is considered to be weakly related with cigarette smoking, the authors explained. "As smoking prevalence continues to decline in many countries worldwide, the proportion of lung cancer in people who have never smoked has increased," they wrote.

"Changes in smoking patterns and exposure to air pollution are among the main determinants of the changing risk profile of lung cancer incidence by subtype that we see today," lead author Freddie Bray, head of the cancer surveillance branch at IARC, said.

Lung cancer is the leading cause

of cancer-related deaths.

However, lung cancer in people who have never smoked is estimated to be the fifth leading cause of cancer-related mortality worldwide, occurring almost exclusively as adenocarcinoma and most commonly in women and Asian populations,

"In 2022, we estimated that there were 908,630 new cases of lung cancer worldwide among female individuals, of which 541,971 (59.7 per cent) were adenocarcinoma," they

Further, among the women diagnosed with adenocarcinoma, 80,378 could be traced to ambient particulate matter (PM) pollution in 2022

"The diverging trends by sex in recent generations offer insights to cancer prevention specialists and policy-makers seeking to develop and implement tobacco and air pollution control strategies tailored to high-risk populations," Bray said.

As of 2019, almost everyone in the world is estimated to live in areas not meeting the WHO air quality criteria.

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Chief Secy asks Collectors, SPs to check malpractices



Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja Tuesday directed all district Collectors and SPs to check malpractices during the upcoming Class X and XII state board exams.

During the day, Ahuja held a meeting through video conference with Collectors and the SPs on the smooth conduct of the two examinations

More than 3.93 lakh students are expected to appear for the Class XII theory examinations in 1,276 centres between February 18 and March 27.

The Council of Higher Sec-

set up 205 examination management hubs, where question pa-

pers will be stored, officials said. Over 5.2 lakh students will appear for the Class X board examination in 3.133 centres from February 21 to March 5.

The Class X examinations will be conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE).

The Chief Secretary asked the district authorities to ensure round-the-clock foolproof security at the examination centres and hubs.

Ahuja also directed officials to strictly implement the protocol set up for the smooth conduct of the two board examinations in the state.

He also asked them to ensure that no incident of question paper leak happens during the tests.

The government has imposed restrictions on entry with mobile phones and other electronic gadgets into the examination halls.

trate (ADM)-rank officer will remain in charge of the examina-

tions in each district, he said. Besides, the district Collec tors have been asked to person-

ally monitor the examinations. The CHSE and BSE authorities were also instructed to ensure foolproof arrangements for the exams.

Speaking to media persons after the meeting, CHSE 's controller of exams Prasanta Kumar Parida said, "This year, we have decided to deploy special squads at 35 places across 30 districts of Odisha in advance. Their identity would not be re vealed to anyone and they will conduct surprise visits at the



IN MEMORIAM: Students offer floral tributes at the 'Samadhi Pitha' of Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das on his death anniversary at Gora Kabar Cemetery i Tulasipur, Cuttack, Tuesday

Welspun New Energy's ₹13.5K-cr green deal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Welspun New Energy has signed a pact with the Odisha government to invest ₹13.500 crore for the development of two clean energy projects in the state, a statement said Tuesday.

Under the agreement, Welspun New Energy has committed investments worth ₹13,500 crore to develop a 1,200 MW pumped hydro project and a 1,000 MW floating solar power project in Odisha, its parent firm Welspun World said in

These projects are expected to enhance the state's energy storage capacity, support the integration of renewable energy into the grid, and contribute to India's overall target of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, it added.

"The projects, backed by our ₹13,500 crore investment in green technologies, mark a key milestone in our misenergy adoption in the state, highlighting our unwavering commitment to innovation and sustainability," Kapil Maheshwari, Executive Director & CEO of Welspun New Energy, said.

Empowering youth is shaping future: Padhy

Speaker Surama Padhy underscores the importance of fostering youth potential for the state's progress at the event

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy emphasised the importance of youth empowerment, stating that investing in young talent is key to the state's future. She made these remarks at the 'BRICS Youth Council Entrepreneurship Pre-Consultation Meet,' organised by KIIT-TBI Tuesday.

The event, supported by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and the Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC), brought together experts and aspiring entrepreneurs to discuss youthled innovation and economic growth. KIIT vice-chancellor Saranjit Singh announced the launch of an MBA programme in innovation, entrepreneurship, and venture development, aimed at nurturing future business leaders

Highlighting Odisha's po-

tential in the blue economy,

Singh noted, "With vast coastal resources and emerging industries, Odisha is poised to become a hub for sustainable tech entrepreneurship. Padhy also paid tribute to Utkal Gauray Madhusudan

Das on his death anniversary, recalling his contribution to Odisha's industrial growth. Over 700 students participated,

with 160 presenting start-up ideas.

ECoR GM inspects Balugaon-Palasa rail section

Five outstanding ideas received cash prizes of ₹20,000 each. Joining on the occasion,

GCTC executive member Lt Gen Kamal Jit Singh (retd) highlighted India's rapid growth in the start-up ecosys tem, with over 1.3 lakh start ups. Meanwhile, Delhi Univer sity professor Paramita Dutta stressed BRICS' role in shaping global economic perspectives

KIIT-TBI CEO Mrutyunjay Suar underlined the incubator's impact, noting that it has created over 10,000 jobs by promoting start-ups, strength ening India's innovation-driven

Workshop held on seagrass & salt marsh restoration

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar, in collab-Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) Project, organised an inception workshop on seagrass and salt marsh restoration and manage-

The event, held in hybrid mode, brought together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss ecosystem-based solutions for coastal resilience

The ECRICC project, supported by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented with Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and the state government, focuses on protecting coastal communities from climate change



A key aspect of the initiative is the scientific restoration of seagrass and salt marsh ecosystems, vital for biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, and coastal protection.

IIT Bhubaneswar has been assigned the technical consulting role and will collaborate with James Cook University, Australia, and other institutions to implement restoration strategies. Seagrasses, found in Chilika Lagoon, and coastal salt marshes play a crucial role in maintaining marine biodiversity and mitigating climate risks.

During the inaugural session, UNDP India's Energy, Environment, and Resilience head Ashish Chaturvedi provided updates on UNDP-GCF initiatives.

MoEF&CC GCF coastal project economic advisor and national project director Rajashree Ray emphasised the Centre's commitment to coastal ecosystem restoration, while project coordinator Sundeep highlighted the importance of ecosystem-based adaptation.

The workshop facilitated knowledge-sharing on best practices, policy recommendations, and innovative restoration techniques.

IIM Sambalpur brings Al to mgmt education



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: In a groundbreaking step set to transform management education in India, IIM Sambalpur has teamed up with Breakout Learning Inc. to introduce AI-driven digital case study solutions. The announcement, made Tuesday, follows the Union Budget's allocation of ₹500 crore for AI Centers of Excellence

The initiative aims to position India as a global leader in technology-driven management education. IIM Sambalpur will incorporate Breakout Learning's Al-enabled case platform into its MBA, Executive MBA, and PhD programs, setting a new benchmark for digital learning in India.

IIM Sambalpur's director Mahadeo Jaiswal called the collaboration a "game-changer" for Indian management education. He emphasised that

AI-driven case-based learning would equip students with advanced decision-making and analytical skills, helping India compete globally in business education. Jaiswal also noted that the integration of AI would support teachers, allowing them to focus more on research and innovation.

CEO and co-founder of Breakout Learning, Ramit Varma, explained that their AI-driven approach focuses on small-group discussions, encouraging critical thinking and engagement. "This method surpasses traditional approaches, like those at Harvard, by fostering student-driven learning and innovation," he said.

Through this collaboration, IIM Sambalpur will provide students with access to premium case studies from top institutions like Ivey and Harvard. Faculty and students will also have the opportunity to co-create AI-generated management cases.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: East Coast Railway (ECoR) general manager Parmeshwar Funkwal conducted an intensive inspection of the Balugaon-Palasa railway section to assess the progress of safety measures, traffic facilities, passenger amenities, and infrastructure development Tuesday.

The inspection was part of ECoR's ongoing commitment to enhancing rail services and en-

suring passenger satisfaction. During his visit, Funkwal

thoroughly reviewed various ongoing infrastructure projects, particularly focusing on the station redevelopment work under the 'Amrit Station Scheme'. He expressed satisfaction with the progress and emphasised the need for time ly completion of these essential upgrades to improve overall passenger experience.

He also paid special attention to the cleanliness and quality of food services provided at the running rooms. Funkwal also visited the bridges at Sompeta and Ichhapuram, where he

evaluated safety measures and infrastructure.

At Palasa Station, he visited the Railway Colony, running room for staff and the Route Relay Interlocking (RRI) building. Funkwal also presented the running room staff with cash awards for their outstanding maintenance and cleanliness

Additionally, he inspected the safety aspects of train operations at Palasa and Ichhapuram, including the bridge near Palasa, the Railway Colony at Ichhapuram Yard and the TRD depot. He also reviewed health services, passenger amenities and ongoing developmental works at Berhampur Railway

In the course of his inspection, Funkwal met with public representatives and members of various organisations, and sought suggestions for further improvements in the region's railway services.

Khurda Road divisional railway manager HS Bajwa, along with other senior railway officials from ECoR Headquarters accompanied Funkwal

Campaign urges India to make cancer notifiable

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: On the occasion of World Cancer Day. Apollo Cancer Centres, Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Indian Medical Association (IMA), and State Oncology Associations, launched the 'Unify to Notify' campaign, urging the Government of India to classify cancer as a notifiable disease.

Speaking on the initiative, COO and director of Medical Services at Apollo Hospitals, Alok Srivastava, underscored the importance of this move, saying, "Making cancer a notifiable disease will revolutionise cancer care in India. Proper documentation of every case will help us understand cancer patterns better and enable efficient resource allocation. We already have a robust can-

cer registry at Apollo Cancer Centres, which tracks cancer trends and outcomes. We now urge the government to support this crucial step for improved cancer care and research.'

Echoing similar sentiments, secretary of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Bhubaneswar, Pratyush Ray, stated, "This initiative will bridge gaps in our cancer surveillance system, allowing for better coordination between healthcare providers. With mandatory reporting, we can track cancer incidence and survival rates, ultimately leading to better care for patients across the country."

The campaign has also gained support from the ICMR. Scientist D at ICMR Jyotirmayee Turuk emphasised the importance of mandatory cancer reporting, saying, "Notifying cancer will provide critical epidemiological data to inform



evidence-based policies. It will help us design more effective prevention strategies and allocate research funding more effectively.

Professor Bhagyalaxmi Nayak of the department of Gynaecological Oncology, AHPGIC, Cuttack, highlighted the role of cancer data analysis at the state

level. "Apollo Cancer Centres has established a network of cancer centres across the country, which will play a critical role in collecting and analyzing cancer data. By analyzing this data at the state level, we can identify regions with high cancer incidence and develop tar-

geted interventions to address

these disparities," she said. With over 14 lakh new cancer cases reported annually in In-

dia and an estimated rise to 15.7 lakh by 2025, the country faces an urgent need for improved cancer surveillance. The campaign advocates for

real-time data collection and accurate reporting of all cancer cases, which would enhance understanding of the disease burden and facilitate better resource allocation and treatment protocols While 15 states in India have

already classified cancer as a notifiable disease, nationwide implementation remains crucial.

Experts believe that making cancer a notifiable disease in India will lead to improved cancer detection, better patient outcomes, and enhanced public health policies, ultimately strengthening the country's fight against cancer

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BeMC greywater mgmt project hits roadblock

Berhampur, Feb 4: The Berhampur Municipal Corporation's (BeMC) proposed greywater management project to treat wastewater of the city before releasing it into reservoirs has hit a stonewall after a survey team, deputed by the state government for assessment, left before completing its work.

According to reports, the new government in the state decided to withdraw the survey team.

Meanwhile, City residents have expressed concerns that BeMC's lack of commitment to urban development may hinder the project's successful implementation. Currently, faecal sludge from toilets is processed through a septage treatment plant. However, there is no system in place to treat wastewater from kitchens. bathrooms, laundry, and various institutions. As a result, the untreated wastewater is flowing into the sea through drainage channels.

According to a survey conducted by the BeMC, the City discharges approximately 64 million liters per day (MLD) of wastewater which reaches the sea via the Sapua and Bahana drainage systems, contributing to pollution. While greywater management is operational in four major cities in the state, Berhampur is yet to implement the system.

The plan originally proposed a four-phase treatment process. In the first phase, wastewater



from households would be treated at nearby filtration pits. Subsequent phases included neighborhood-level treatment. additional processing at drainage endpoints, and finally, the establishment of a central treatment plant to repurpose the treated water for other uses.

To ensure successful imple-

mentation, a city-wide household survey was conducted, assessing the presence and condition of septic tanks in each home. The survey began January 6, 2024, covering every Ward in the city. It involved the septic tanks installed in every households and whether they were properly covered or not.

Swachha Sathis and supervisors were engaged for the survey work. A provision was made to pay them ₹15 per household. So far, surveys have been completed in 46,353 households. However, it has been reported that the survey work is still incomplete in all the Wards. Additionally, the previous

state government had engaged an organisation named 'Tulip' to conduct a drainage lane survey in each Ward. However, according to information obtained from the BeMC, the new administration withdrew the organisation's contract following a change in government. As a result, the survey work remains stalled, delaying the grey water management project.

When contacted, BeMC Executive Engineer Nageshwar Subudhi said that 'Tulip' had submitted 75 per cent of the survey report to the state government, while the remaining 25 per cent is vet to be completed. "A request has been made to the state government to deploy a team for the survey's completion. Once the survey is finished, the project work will commence," he said



CULINARY COMPETITION: Guests and jury members appreciate an array of dishes prepared by the students during a food festival organised at Sambalpur Government Women's College Tuesday

Letter to PM for linking Rushikulya, Mahanadi

Berhampur, Feb 4: BJP MP Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to take steps for speedy implementation of the proposed linkage of Rushikulva river to Mahanadi.

The Berhampur MP said the linkage of the two rivers will not only create irrigation potential in Ganjam, Navagarh and Khurda districts but also mitigate the drinking water



problem in these areas, particularly in Berhampur Municipal

Describing the 165-km-long Rushikulya river as the lifeline of the people of Ganjam, he said residents of the district are dependent on the river and its tributaries for drinking water, irrigation and other activities.

The river, which flows through Ganjam district, remains dry for six to seven

The MP said the link-

long-standing demand of the people of Ganjam and recalled former deputy speaker of the Odisha Assembly and senior BJP leader Ram Chandra Panda had suggested the project to former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Panda had launched a week long 'Jala Sanjog Yatra' in 2010 from Kasinagar in Gajapati district to Bhubaneswar, de manding the linkage of the riv ers by constructing a dam at

Daspalla in Nayagarh district

Man gets 20 yrs, wife 7 yrs in jail for rape of minor



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonihar, Feb 4: The Fast Track Court (FTC) here Tuesday sentenced Madan Juang, 42, of Guptaganga village under Banshpal block to 20 years in iail and imposed a penalty of ₹2,000 on him after convicting him of raping a 15-year-old girl in 2021. Madan's wife Gelai Juang, 30, was also sentenced to seven years of imprisonment and fined ₹2,000 for helping Madan in committing the crime.

FTC Judge Bijay Kumar Mishra also handed down an additional six months imprisonment if the convict defaults in payment of the fine. Similarly, Madan's wife Gelai will have to serve an additional two months of imprisonment in case of default in penalty.

It was during 2021 Raja festival when Madan and his wife Gelai had taken the girl, one of their relatives, to his village for a visit. However, Madan had outraged the modesty of the girl at Basantapur before taking her to Guptaganga.

Since Madan and Gelai were issueless, the latter assisted the former in the heinous act to beget a child. Madan promised to marry her and take her home. Later, the victim's father took her back to Guptaganga. A few days later, the accused couple went to the victim's house and tried to take her to their native place. However, the victim informed her parents about the sexual assault by Madan.

Later, the victim lodged a complaint with Sadar police which registered a case and arrested the couple under sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The judge pronounced the order after examining the statements of 22 witnesses and the police investigation report.

The judge found the two persons guilty and handed down the punishment. He also recommended the District Legal Services Authority to pay a compensation of ₹ 5 lakh to the victim, said Special Public Prosecutor Gyanendranath Jena.

1,452 CONSTRUCTION WORKERS GET ₹5CR AID

Chhatrapur, Feb 4: The state government distributed ₹5.05 crore assistance to 1,452 registered construction workers during a special ceremony held by the district Labour office here Tuesday.

Attending the ceremony as the chief guest, Chhatrapur MLA Krushna Chandra Nayak distributed the funds to the

Nayak said there are many unregistered labourers working under several contractors and are deprive of the government support. After due scrutiny of the licences of the contractors, local labourers must get work in their respective areas, the MLA added.

During the ceremony, 792 labourers received ₹61.06 lakh education aid while 446 got ₹2.20 crore marriage assistance and about 17 pregnant women received ₹1.70 lakh government support.

Similarly, nominees of 109 de-



ceased persons received death benefits of ₹2.18 crore while ₹4.45 lakh post death ritual aid was given to 89 family members of the deceased persons.

This apart, 400 labourers received registration certificates from the department and 100 unorganised labourers got identity cards under social security scheme.

Zilla Parishad chairman Anjali Swain, ADM Sudhansu Kumar Bhoi, district labour officer Barsha Rani Jena and other departmental officers were among others present in the meeting.

Woman gets life term for killing son

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Feb 4: A court in Ganjam district Tuesday sentenced a 38-year-old woman to life imprisonment for killing her minor son by pushing him into a pond in 2023

The district and sessions judge, Ganjam, Rupashree Choudhury awarded life imprisonment to the woman, identified as S Gangsamma, a resident of Bijipur, after recording the statements of 15 witnesses and verifying the relative records, said pub-

lic prosecutor Trilochan Parida. The convict had pushed her eight-year-old son S Rohit Kumar into the pond October 27, 2023 over a family dispute. Locals rescued him from the pond and took him to MKCG Medical College and Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, the public prosecutor said.

The police had arrested the woman after a murder case was registered in Berhampur town police station, based on the report of her husband S Pappa Rao. The woman had been in jail since her arrest, sources said.

Class IX student hangs self near school hostel



The deceased was identified as Rigen Madkami, eldest son of Muka Madkami of Kambeda under Korukonda block in the district. He was studying at Gamphakonda Residential High School, which is run by the SC & ST Welfare department, and was staying in the school hostel.

According to reports, the deceased took the extreme step between 9pm and 10pm Monday by using a napkin tied to a Mohua tree. Family members including his father, uncle Subash Kirsani, and brother Ganga Madkami cried foul over the death. They alleged that the hostel authorities subjected him to mental harassment



and abetted the suicide. They further said he might have been murdered and the incident staged as a suicide

Police have launched an investigation after registration of a case but the exact reason behind the student's death remains unclear. A forensic team from Koraput was also pressed into service. Authorities have stated that further inquiry will determine whether it was a case of suicide or homicide.

After Saraswati Puja celebrations and the idol immersion, students returned Monday to the hostel for dinner but Rigen was found missing.

A search was conducted, and his body was discovered hanging from a tree by a teacher responsible for hostel supervision. Later, his family members were informed.

National seminar on 'Viksit Bharat' at FMU

Balasore: Fakir Mohan University will organise a two-day national seminar on 'The Role of Media in Shaping Viksit Bharat: Challenges and Opportunities' February 6. The seminar is being jointly hosted by the university in association with the ICSSR and UNICEF, according to Bharati Bala Patnaik, head of PG Department of Journalism and Mass Communication. Vice Chancellor Santosh Kumar Tripathy will inaugurate the event as the chief quest, while Biswaiit Das, founding director of Centre for Culture, Media and Governance at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, will deliver the keynote address. Other distinguished guests at the inaugural ceremony include Post Graduate Council Chairman Bhaskar Behera: AB Ota (retired IAS), former director of SCSTRTI, Odisha: Sanieev Bhanawat. former professor at the University of Rajasthan; and Anand K Pradhan regional director of IIMC, Dhenkanal who will attend as guests of honour. "The seminar will bring together reputable media academicians. iournalists, research scholars, and students from across the country to discuss the contribution of media in India's journey toward becoming a developed nation," said Patnaik, head of the J&MC department and convener of the seminar.

2-year-old Keonjhar prodigy enters India Book of Records

Shreyanshi's talent became evident at a very young age. By 10 months old, she showed a keen interest in colourful books, eagerly exploring new visuals and information

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, Feb 4: A two-year-old girl from Keonihar district has stunned everyone with her exceptional memory and intelligence, earning a place in the India Book of Records.

Shreyanshi Sahu, a two-yearand-two-month-old girl from Turumunga village in Patana block of Keonjhar district, has displayed remarkable cognitive abilities by memorising and reciting various topics, including mantras, general knowledge, national symbols of different countries, and family members' names.

Shreyanshi's talent became evident at a very young age. By 10 months old, she showed a keen interest in colourful books, eagerly exploring new visuals and information. Recognising her daugh-



ter's curiosity, her mother, Lipsa Sahu, began teaching her different subjects through playful methods. Her father, Tushar Ranjan Sahu, along with grandparents, uncles, and aunts, also contributed to her learning journey.

By the age of two, Shreyanshi had mastered 17 action words, the names of 20 fruits, domestic and wild animals, vehicles, professions, colours, shapes, the English alphabet along with words for each letter, more than 17 national symbols, days of the week, and rhymes. Impressed by her abilities, her family members decided to submit a video showcasing her flawless recitation of over 30 topics to the India Book of Records.

After a thorough evaluation, Shreyanshi was recognised as an Achiever of 2024. She received a medal, a certificate, a badge, an identity card, a pen, and a feature in the India Book of Records magazine as part of her award.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pati At- Chandipur P.o- Chhatrapada P.S- Manglapur Dist- Jajpur have lost Original Link Documents i.e. RSD No.10781201269 executed by Narayan Rout & Nrusingh Charan Rout in the name of Balaram Pati presently the said land has been recorded in the name of Mrs.Sisira Panda wife of Mr. Balaram Pati At- Chandipur P.o- Chhatrapada P.S- Mangalpur Dist- Jaipur who have applied for a housing loan to the LIC housing Finance limited Link Road Cuttack, by Offering Mortgage of the said property title documents. All concerned therefore having any claim over the property purchased under the said lost documents i.e. Original RSD No.10781201269 dtd.01.05.2012 in the name of Balaram Pati required to file their claim with under signed within 15 days from the date of Notice failing which it will be presumed that the property having links with the said documents is free from encumbrances and any claim in respect their of against Mrs. Sisira Panda as a mortgagor and the company and the mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the laps of 15 days of publication of this notice

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Let all circumstances, all happenings in life be occasions, constantly renewed for learning more and ever more.



THE MOTHER

Aid Freeze

hat was being feared about the widespread disaster that Donald Trump's presidency would cause has started to come true within days of his assumption of office. The Trump administration's freeze on foreign aid threatens to derail global efforts to fight disease outbreaks, counter terrorism and provide humanitarian assistance to people affected by conflict. President Trump's resolve to shape an "America first" foreign policy - a continuation of his first term- is set to impact countries and communities across the world. It may be noted that the US government is the single largest humanitarian donor in the world, according to the United Nations. President Trump had also signed an executive order pulling out of the World Health Organisation (WHO) membership, thereby affecting

The US State Department has for now enforced the freeze on all foreign assistance for 90 days, effectively implementing an executive order signed by Trump on his first day in office. The freeze also includes a review of all federal assistance programmes to ensure they align with Trump's foreign policy agenda. The only initial exemptions were for emergency food programmes and military aid to

The US action has already caused widespread chaos and confusion across the humanitarian sector. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been forced to sign an additional waiver for "life-saving humanitarian assistance." However, he specified that it would not include areas targeted by the Trump administration, such as activities involving abortions, family planning conferences, gender or transgender surgeries. The situation is so unclear that many organizations are still seeking clarity on what qualifies as "life-saving" assistance. This is because they fear massive disruptions following the freeze. Foreign aid is often distributed by the government in the form of grants to support projects implemented by NGOs, businesses, foreign governments, or even US government agencies. The US spent roughly \$70 billion in foreign assistance in the 2022 fiscal year, the latest year for which comprehensive data is available, the CRS report stated. This accounted for about 1 per cent of the total federal budget. According to statistics in 2024, the US provided over 40 per cent of the UN's humanitarian aid budget.

In the wake of the freeze, public health partners and contractors that work with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were ordered to halt the supply of critical drugs for the treatment of HIV and malaria. This includes programmes such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), created by former President George W Bush. Former USAID official A Gawande has stated in an X post that the freeze would do "serious damage to the world and the US." He has also expressed fear that it would impact global efforts to fight Malburg virus, monitor bird flu outbreaks, and eradicate polio.

In another perspective, it has become public knowledge that many of the big 'humanitarian' organisations have become riddled with corruption, red tapeism, bureaucratic delays, allegations of power abuse, misdirection and misuse of funds, overspending and inefficiency. It is here that the US freeze will help them- in identifying what's really important to them, in creating leaner more efficient systems and retain only the best employees and practises, to stop spending on fluff such as fancy overseas conferences and focus on their core values and deliver. UN agencies especially excel in these corrupt practises all over the globe, including in India. Most of these agencies operating in Orissa are nose deep in siphoning off huge funds with help of local collaborative bureaucrats

The upshot of all this is that Trump with his policy of withdrawal of US' traditional financial support to humanitarian programmes the world over and of course his new tariff wars is posing a threat to global stability in some crucial spheres. Some may say Trump needs to be reined in. That may be true. But it may also be questioned as to why the United States of America should be the only country which bears the biggest burden that befalls anyone and everyone across the world. The US itself is facing a troubled economic situation and has many domestic issues to resolve.

It is therefore important that, instead of questioning Trump and America, other countries must start making efforts to fend for themselves and also pitch in more for global humanitarian crises. In fact, US interference has many a times caused more pain than gain in a lot of countries that it actively funds. It has come to be that every country must solve their own problems or be prepared to perish.

WISDOM CORNER

The Real is ever-present, like the screen on which the cinematographic pictures move. While the picture appears on it, the screen remains invisible. Stop the picture, and the screen will become clear. All thoughts and events are merely pictures moving on the screen of Pure Consciousness, which alone is real.

Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word happy would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness. It is far better take things as they come along with patience and equanimity.

Notice that the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo or willow survives by bending with the wind.

IS DEEPSEEK A THREAT?

homas Edison, the autodidactic telegraph operator turned entrepreneur, is often considered the greatest inventor of all time, while Nikola Tesla, who worked for an Edison company in Paris before emigrating to the United States, is barely remembered, except through Elon Musk's electric-vehicle company. Yet it was Tesla's breakthrough with alternating current (AC), not Edison's direct current (DC) technology, that made mass electrification affordable. The prohibitive costs of DC would have kept Edison's urban electrification a plaything of the rich, like many of his other inventions. Could the Chinese investor

Liang Wenfeng's DeepSeek AI models represent a similar breakthrough in AI, or are they scams like cold fusion and room-temperature superconductivity? And if they are confirmed, should the US treat them as a mortal threat, or as a gift to the world? Like many transformative technologies, AI had evolved over many decades before OpenAI's release of ChatGPT in late 2022 triggered the current mania. Better algorithms, complementary devices such as mobile phones, and cheaper, more powerful cloud computing had made the technology's use widespread but barely noticed. Trial and error had shown where AI could or could not outperform human effort and judgment.

Amar Bhidé

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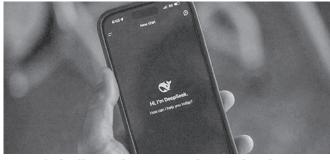
IN LATE 2022

TRIGGERED THE

CURRENT MANIA

The magical glibness of ChatGPT and other large language models (LLMs) created the illusion that generative AI was a brand-new breakthrough. ChatGPT had a million users within five days of its release, and 300 million weekly users two years later. High-tech behemoths like Microsoft, Meta, and Alphabet placed multibillion-dollar bets on AI products and data centers, quickly forgetting their earlier enthusiasm for virtual and augmented reality.

In 2024, Nvidia, which had invested \$2 billion in its Blackwell AI chip, became the world's most valuable company, with its



If vindicated, DeepSeek's technology could be to LLMs what Tesla's AC inventions were to electrification

market capitalization having risen ninefold in two years. Its chief executive, Jensen Huang, predicted that \$1 trillion would he invested in data centers using such chips in the next few years. All of this made Apple's cautious, wait-and-see approach to AI seem quaintly old-fashioned.

Never mind that the new AI did not provide value to end users remotely commensurate with the monumental investment (not to mention its insatiable demand for electricity). Investments continued to grow under the assumption that hyper-scaled data centres would reduce AI costs, and increased use would make the models smarter.

But underneath their shiny new hoods, LLMs, like many of the decades-old AI models, still use pattern recognition and statistical predictions to produce their output, which means that their reliability rests on the future being like the past. This is an important limitation. Humans can imaginatively interpret historical evidence to anticipate what might happen differently in the future; they can also improve their predictions through imaginative discourse with each other. AI algorithms cannot.

But this flaw is not fatal. Since processes that obey the laws of nature are naturally stable, the future is like the past in many ways. Given unambiguous feedback, AI models can be made more reliable through training, and even if the underlying process is unstable - or the feedback ambiguous - statistical predictions can be more cost-effective than human judgment. Wildly off-the-mark ads served up by Google's or Meta's algorithms are still superior to advertising blindly. Dictating texts to a mobile phone can produce howlers, but it is still quicker and more convenient than pecking away on a small screen.

Nonetheless, reports of DeepSeek's prowess have sent shock waves through financial markets. DeepSeek claims to have achieved OpenAI- and Google-quality AI performance using only low-end Nvidia chips and at a fraction of the training and operating costs. If true, demand for high-end AI chips will be lower than anticipated. That is why the DeepSeek news erased about \$600 billion from Nvidia's market capitalisation in a single day, as well as hammering the stocks of other semiconductor companies and companies that have invested in data centers or sell electricity to those centers.

To be sure, DeepSeek's claims may turn out to be inaccurate. Many of Tesla's claims about his inventions after his AC breakthrough were wildly exaggerated, even fraudulent, and the Soviet propaganda machine routinely fabricated scientific and technological breakthroughs alongside real advances. But frugal, out-of-the-box innovations can be transformative. Just look at Musk's low-cost reusable rockets. India's successful Mars

mission cost a mere \$73 million less than the budget of the Hollywood sci-fi movie Gravity.

If vindicated, DeepSeek's technology could be to LLMs what Tesla's AC inventions were to electrification. While it cannot overcome the unavoidable limitations of backward-looking statistical models, it could make their price performance good enough for wider use. Those developing LLM models will no longer have to depend on subsidies provided by large operators with an interest in locking them in. Less resource-hungry models could reduce demand for data centers or help direct their capacity toward more economically justifiable uses.

US President Donald Trump $thinks\,that\,the\,Chinese\,AI\,model$ is a "wake-up call for US industries," which should be "laser-focused on competing to win." He has announced plans to impose new tariffs on semiconductor imports from China, and his predecessor had imposed export controls on high-end AI chips.

In my book The Venturesome Economy, I argued that seeing transformational advances abroad as a threat to domestic well-being is misguided. Blindly pursuing technological or scientific leadership is a foolish enterprise. What matters most is the willingness and ability of businesses and consumers to develop and use products and technologies stemming from cutting-edge research, wherever it might come from. This is true of DeepSeek's open-source AI models as well. Of course, we need to control hostile regimes' menacing military uses of cutting-edge Western technologies. But this is a different and difficult challenge. If addressing it through export controls were possible, we would have stopped worrying about North Korean or Iranian nuclear weapons a long time ago.

The writer is Professor of Health Policy at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

IN JEST THIS

Middle children are more humble



Melvin Durai

AN ONLY CHILD ENJOYS THE FULL LOVE AND ATTENTION OF PARENTS AND HAS NO REASON TO BE HUMBLE **OR AGREEABLE**

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in

their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

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(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

you may want to keep the results of a recent scientific study to yourself. Your siblings may not want to hear that you're more honest, cooperative and agreeable than them. But perhaps they already know that.

The study, exploring whether personality traits are connected to birth order and family size, was conducted by two Canadian researchers, Michael Ashton of Brock University and Kibeom Lee of the University of Calgary

Disclaimer: I am not a middle child. As such, I have no vested interest in glorifying the personalities of middle children. My parents had two children. My sister was first and she was a delight. I was second and gave them a fright. When they took me home from the hospital, they also took home a pamphlet on birth control.

In their research, Ashton and Lee analysed data from two large samples, totalling almost 800,000 English-speaking participants from coun-

Canada, Australia and Great Britain. As reported in Psy-Post, an independent science news website, the research found that "middle-born participants scored highest on Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness, traits that reflect modesty, fairness, and cooperative behavior.'

I'm not a scientist, but this makes a lot of sense to me. To explore my theories on how humility, honesty and agreeability are instilled in middle-born children, let's imagine three children: Anita, the oldest child, is two years older than Priyanka, the middle child, who is two years older than Rai, the youngest.

Humility: Priyanka is humble because she is always behind Anita in development. When Anita is walking, Priyanka is crawling. When Anita is eating off a plate. Privanka is under her mom's shirt. When Anita is learning to jump and skip, Priyanka is learning to bump and trip. Not only is Privanka behind Anita in development, she's also behind

in style. She's always getting Anita's hand-me-down dresses.

Honesty: Before Priyanka learns to talk, Anita does all the talking. "Who broke the vase?" their mother asks and Anita is quick to respond: "Priyanka did. She's a bad girl." Privanka quickly learns what it's like to be on the receiving end of dishonesty. Even if she wants to be dishonest, she can't pull it off as easily as Anita, who has two more years of experience.

Agreeableness: When Privanka enters the world, she already has competition for her parents' attention and everything else in the household. While Anita did not have to cooperate with anyone for her first two years, Priyanka learns the importance of patience and cooperation.

At this point, you may be wondering: what about Rai? Well, Raj isn't as humble as Priyanka because he doesn't get any hand-me-down dresses. Even if he wore dresses, they'd be too old and worn by the time they reached him. Besides, Mom and Dad are eager

especially since they're both more advanced in their careers now and can afford to treat him like a prince. Raj quickly learns that he doesn't need to be agreeable. He just needs to learn how to manipulate his parents. But Raj doesn't get too full of himself, thanks to having two older sisters who keep him grounded by regularly making fun of him.

The Canadian researchers found that youngest children scored lower than middle children in the honesty, humility and agreeableness traits, but higher than oldest children.

Who scored the lowest? Only children (those with no siblings). An only child named Vinod, for example, enjoys the full love and attention of his parents and has no reason to be humble or agreeable. As for honesty, Vinod soon realizes that when his parents are not around, there are no other eyewitnesses to snitch on him. "Who broke the vase?" his mother asks and Vinod is quick to respond: "The dog did. He's a bad boy.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1852: The Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg opens to the public. It is one of the world's largest and oldest museums and was originally founded in 1764.
- 1869: The biggest gold nugget in history is found. The "Welcome Stranger" was found at Moliagul in Australia and had a calculated refined weight of 71.081 kg.
- 1900: The first of two Hay-Pauncefote treaties (named for U.S. Secretary of State John Hay and British Ambassador Lord Pauncefote) was signed between the United States and Great Britain over control of the proposed Panama Canal.
- 1909: The world's first synthetic plastic is developed. Belgian chemist Leo Baekeland announced his invention of Bakelite at a meeting of the American Chemical Society that day.
- 1924: The Greenwich Time Signal is broadcast for the first time. The 'BBC pips" are 5 short and 1 long tones that are broadcast by many BBC radio stations to mark the precise start of the hour.

VIP culture

Sir, Special passes that are issued to people at a premium price to get special entry into temples goes against the Right to Equality as it treats a section of people differently as they bypass the long queue of people waiting to pay obeisance to the deity. This whole 'special pass" culture should be abolished as it goes against the very principle of Hinduism which is 'all-encompassing' and not selectively encompassing. If you do not have the patience to see God then you are not blessed as He did not bestow you patience. Hinduism believes that every one of us is the same in the eyes of the Almighty then why do we create such divisions? This is also seen in the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela where the VVIPs and VIPs get special entry to take a dip in the Holy Ganges.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR (ASSAM)

Reckless brinkmanship

Sir, Donald Trump's tariff crusade imperils both America's economy and its global stature, casting aside decades of painstakingly cultivated trade relationships. His levies on Mexico, Canada, and China are less about rectifying genuine trade grievances than wielding economic warfare as a tool for domestic political posturing. By destabilising North American and global markets, these tariffs erode the foundation of American prosperity, leaving the US itself the greatest casualty of its leader's belligerence. His justification curbing illegal immigration and the narcotics trade—rings hollow. Canada, a minor player in these issues, has been unjustly entangled, while Mexico has already ramped up enforcement under previous diplomatic pressure. These tariffs, therefore, serve no functional purpose beyond coercion, attempting to force sovereign nations into submission under the weight of economic pain. Should this reckless brinkmanship persist, America's economy will bear the scars. Inflation will surge, industrial growth will falter, and retaliatory tariffs from affected nations will amplify the turmoil. Beyond economics, Trump's cavalier approach inflicts grievous harm on US diplomatic credibility. The painstakingly renegotiated USMCA is now laid to waste, signaling to allies and adversaries alike that America's words hold no weight.

 $\textbf{\textit{Amarjeet Kumar,}} \ \text{HAZARIBAGH} \ (\text{JHARKHAND})$



TWO STATES





Gujarat forms panel to draft bill for UCC

While the Opposition said the decision was aimed at diverting attention from pressing issues ahead of the upcoming local body polls, the government claimed rights of the tribal communities will be protected if the UCC is implemented

CM Patel said his govern-

ment is committed to fulfil

Prime Minister Narendra Mo-

di's resolve of implemen the

The panel will examine var-

ious aspects and take views of

people from different walks of

life, and an "appropriate deci-

UCC across the country

sion" will be taken after

perusing its report.

the CM said.

Minister

State for Home

Harsh Sangha-

vi said that the

UCC, if imple-

mented, will pro-

tect the rights of

"The UCC imple-

mented by Uttara-

khand presented a mod-

el before the country because

it protects the customs and

traditions of tribals. (Union)

Home Minister Amit Shah has

also clarified in Jharkhand that

UCC will protect the traditions

followed by tribals," Sanghavi

said. The committee will meet

religious leaders, including

Muslim leaders, to prepare the

Shroff and Thakar said the

state government's approach is

sensitive and shows it is com-

mitted to closing the loopholes in laws and ensuring justice

Leader of Opposition in the

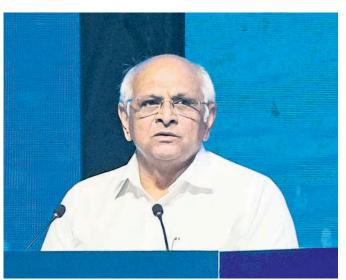
state assembly Amit Chavda

said the BJP is more interested

in the "politics of minority and

report, he added.

majority"



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gandhinagar, Feb 4: The BJP government in Gujarat Tuesday formed a committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to assess the need for the Uniform Civil Code in the state, and also draft a bill for the same.

While the Opposition said the decision was aimed at diverting attention from pressing issues ahead of the upcoming local body polls, the government claimed rights of the tribal communities will be protected if the UCC is implemented.

The five-member committee, to be headed by Justice (retd) Ranjana Desai, will submit its report within 45 days, following which a decision about implementation of the UCC will be taken, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel told reporters here.

The committee will meet religious leaders, including those from the Muslim community, for consultations.

"To assess the need for a Uniform Civil Code and to prepare a draft bill, we have decided to form a committee under a former judge of the Supreme Court," CM Patel said.

Other members of the committee are retired IAS officer CL Meena, advocate RC Kodekar, former vice chancellor of Veer Narmad South Gujarat University Dakshesh Thakar and social worker Gita Shroff.

Notably, the BJP-ruled Uttarakhand has already implemented the UCC.

cent tribals. The UCC will affect the culture, customs, religious rites and marriage system of the tribal society. Similarly, the Jain community of Gujarat, and the Devipujaks will also be affected," he claimed.

Even the Indian Constitution has given freedom to certain communities to pursue their customs and culture, the Congress leader said.

"Implementation of the UCC is in the jurisdiction of the central government, and not the state. But since there is internal fighting in the BJP all over Gujarat, and the government here has failed in every way, this announcement is an attempt to divert people's attention ahead of the local body elections," he claimed.

Aam Aadmi Party state head Isudan Gadhvi said the BJP raises the UCC issue whenever there is an election.

"Even today, 80 per cent of domestic disputes in Maldhari community are resolved by its own leaders. There is polygamy in the tribal society and all

these will end if the UCC is implemented. Therefore, we believe the UCC is going to be a hindrance for Christians, Sikhs, Muslims," he claimed.

It these will end if the UCC is implemented. Therefore, we believe the UCC is going to be a hindrance for Christians, Sikhs, Muslims," he claimed.

If the UCC is implemented.

plemented in Gujarat, the BJP will not be able to win a single tribal seat, he said. "I would also like to tell the BJP that it is not right to look at everything from the perspective of Hindu-Muslim or vote bank politics." Gadhvi said.

He claimed the issue has been raked up as local bodies polls are around the corner, it might be raised again before the assembly polls.

"BJP has done nothing about inflation or unemployment, it does not create jobs," he charged.

AIMIM leader Danish Siddique said the UCC was being used to target the Muslim community, and he does not have much hope from committee formed by the government to consider divergent views without a bias. If tribals are kept outside the proposed law, it would not be a UCC, he said.

Ex-Army officer supports Manipur violence widows

In recognition of his efforts, Lt Col L Manongba (retd) was honoured with the Veteran Achiever award by Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi at the Army Day Parade in Pune last month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Feb 4: Moved by the plight of people hit by the ethnic violence in Manipur, a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the Indian Army has taken on a mission to help widows earn their livelihood and fund the education of children affected by the strife.

In recognition of his efforts, Lt Col L Manongba (retd) was honoured with the Veteran Achiever award by Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi at the Army Day Parade in Pune last month.

He was lauded for empowering 35 widows to start small enterprises for their livelihood and supporting the education of 60 children who have lost their fathers in the strife-torn Manipur.

The north-eastern state is witnessing ethnic violence since May 2023 and hundreds have lost their lives.

"Through the Wings of Hope initiative, we continue our mission to rebuild lives and restore hope for those devastated by the ethnic violence in Manipur," Lt Col Manongba told PTI over phone.

A cadet of 56th course of the National Defence Academy (NDA) in Pune in 1979, he dedicated himself to the welfare of ex-servicemen from Manipur after retiring from the armed forecase.

He later established Wings of Hope, a charitable non-profit organisation, with the help of his batchmates and friends, aiming to uplift widows and children affected by the ongoing conflict in the north-eastern state.

"After retiring from the Army and spending some years in the corporate"

"After retiring from the Army and spending some years in the corporate"

"After retiring INTERVENTION, WINGS OF HOPE TOOK ON TWO MAJOR

(ECHS). During my tenure, I managed to galvanise a network of ex-servicemen living in the difficult, hilly terrain of Manipur and provided assistance through an association of veterans." he

Till April 2023, his association successfully reached out to ex-servicemen in remote areas, offering necessary aid.

sector. I worked in

Imphal as in-charge

of the Ex-Service-

ry Health Scheme

Contributo-

However, the outbreak of ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki communities made it increasingly difficult to maintain these con-

nections.

"As violence escalated in May 2023, communities living at the foothills of the valley were severely affected. Reports of young married men falling victim to the clashes were deeply distressing," the former Army officer

said

Determined to take action, he, along with his colleagues and fellow ex-servicemen, convened a meeting to devise a plan.

This led to the formal estab-

lishment of Wings of Hope, a charitable trust dedicated to improving the lives of those impacted by the ethnic conflict.

"The government has been making significant efforts to provide relief and assistance to displaced families. However, certain gaps remain, and we felt we could step in to bridge those gaps," he said.

After forming the trust, the team began visiting relief camps in affected areas.

"We found over 30,000 persons living in these camps under distressing conditions. During these visits, we identified 150 widows, all Meitei, aged between 25 and 40, who had lost their husbands in the violence. Additionally, more than 60 students were at the risk of dropping out of school due to financial constraints," he said.

Realising the urgent need for intervention, Wings of Hope took on two major projects—funding children's education and supporting widows in becoming financially self-sufficient.

The second initiative focuses on helping widows establish sustainable livelihoods.

"We identified 35 widows in dire need of support and provided them with soft loans to help them become self-reliant. For instance, a woman in her 30s, who lost her husband in the clashes, was given a ₹30,000 interest-free loan to start a poultry business," he said.

Another widow received a financial aid of ₹30,000 to start weaving muga silk.

Besides, groups of widows in the relief camps have taken up making handmade crochet dolls, incense sticks, handicrafts and other products.

"These items are being sold at flea markets in Kolkata and other regions, creating a sustainable source of income for the women," he added.

BMC presents biggest-ever ₹74,427 crore budget

MUMBAI: The Brihanmumbai Mu-

nicipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday presented a ₹74,427.41 crore budget its biggest-ever, for financial year 2025 to the country's biggest civic body, pending for three years, are expected to be held this year. The budget was presented to municipal commissioner Bhushan Gagrani, the state-appointed administrator of the civic body. "The Budget Estimates for the FY 2025-26 are proposed at 74,427.41 crore, which exceed the estimates of 2024-25, which were ₹65,180.79 crore, by 14.19 per cent," the budget document read. Civic officials presented a budget to the state-appointed administrator for the third time in a row as the term of the BMC's general body expired March 7 2022. The budget was ₹60.65 crore sur plus. "This is the biggest-ever budget of the BMC," noted Gagrani at a press conference afterwards, adding that it reflects the "dreams and expectations" of Mumbai citizens. No hike has been in proposed in property tax or water tax,



Dhordo, recognized as a 'Best Tourism Village' by UNWTO

Gujarat IPS officer resigns months before retirement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 4: Senior IPS officer Abhay Chudasama, who was due to retire in eight months, said Tuesday he has tendered his resignation but the Gujarat government has not accepted it yet.

Chudasama (59) was promot-

ed to the additional director general of police (ADGP) rank last year. He is posted as the principal of the Gujarat Police Academy in Karai, Gandhinagar. The 1999-batch officer was

earlier an accused in the Sohrabuddin Shaikh encounter case and was arrested by the CBI in 2010. The special CBI court later discharged him in the case.

The state home department did not respond to media queries about Chudasama's voluntary retirement.

Chudasama had joined Gujarat police as a state police service) officer in 1999 and was subsequently promoted as an IPS in 2004.

In 2010, the CBI arrested him in the Sohrabuddin Shaikh encounter case. The high court granted him bail in April 2014, and he was reinstated in August of the same year. In 2015, a special CBI court discharged Chudasama and others in cases related to the encounter of Shaikh and Tulsiram Prajapati. He served as the Inspector General of Gandhinagar Range before his transfer to Karai in 2023.

Court releases police SUV used in crime

MUMBAI COPS CITE SHORTAGE OF VEHICLES FOR VIP DUTY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 4: A special court in Mumbai has ordered the release of an SUV, used by a now dismissed cop in committing an alleged crime, to police after the law enforcement agency said they were facing a shortage of vehicles for VIP security in the metropolis.

Citing a dearth of vehicles for "VIP bandobast" (arrangements) in the metropolis, the Mumbai police recently approached the court, seeking the return of a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) used in an abduction and robbery case last year, leading to its seizure.

Special MCOCA (Maharashtra Control of Organised

Crime Act) Judge BD Shelke, presiding over the criminal case, Monday ordered interim return of the vehicle to police on execution of an indemnity bond of ₹10 lakh.

According to police, in May last year constable Babasaheb Bhagwat (now dismissed), along with a retired cop and four others, barged into Mysore Cafe owner Naresh Nayak's residence in Mumbai, posing as crime branch officials.

They allegedly threatened Nayak, saying he had black money stashed in his house, and took away ₹72 lakh in cash and some gold coins.

Recently, Additional Commissioner of Police (Mo-

tor Transport Department) Sachin Badhe approached the special court for return of the SUV, a TUV 300, used in the crime by the dismissed cop Bhagwat. The vehicle had been seized by the investigating officer of the case.

In their application, the police contented that vehicles are deployed for protection of VIPs living in Mumbai.

"Now, there is a shortage of vehicles in the motor transport department and vehicles are required for bandobast duties for arranging VIP bandobast," they submitted in the court and pleaded for release of the said government vehicle.

The prosecution said they have no objection if the vehi-

cle was released from custody.

The court said submission from both sides revealed the investigating officer has seized the vehicle only on grounds that it was used for abducting the victim.

If the vehicle is kept in stationary condition in the custody of the investigating officer, in the premises of the Sion police station, it will certainly be damaged and ultimately cause unnecessary loss to the government, the court observed.

court observed.

The court ordered that the interim custody of the SUV be handed over to Additional Police Commissioner Badhe on executing an indemnity bond of ₹10 lakh.

Food safety raid uncovers 1.5kg of adulterated paneer

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ahmedabad, Feb 4: Ahmedabad's Food Safety authorities have launched a crackdown on adulterated dairy products, seizing approximately 1,500 kg of contaminated paneer and raw materials used for its production from a local establishment.

A flying squad from the Food and Drug Control Administration (FDCA) conducted a raid at Dwarkesh Dairy Products, located in Ahmedabad.

During the operation, officials discovered adulterants, including palm oil and industrial-grade acetic acid, which were allegedly being used in the manufacturing process.

Authorities collected three

samples from the site for further testing, while the remaining stock—valued at ₹3.15 lakh—was confiscated in the interest of public health. According to the FDCA, the government is committed to ensuring safe and hygienic food for Gujarat's citizens. Officials reaffirmed that strict legal action will be taken against individuals or businesses involved in food adulteration or counterfeiting.

Acting on a confidential tipoff, the FDCA's special squad from Gandhinagar carried out the raid February 4, 2025, leading to the seizure. Further investigation is underway to determine the extent of the adulteration and its potential health risks.

PROMOTING LANGUAGE

MAHARASHTRA MAKES MARATHI MANDATORY

According to the notification, all government offices, municipal bodies, state corporations, and public institutions must display text in Marathi Devanagari script alongside Roman lettering

on computer keypads and printers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 4: The Maharashtra government Monday made it mandatory to use Marathi for communication in all its offices and semi-government establishments, and warned employees not following the directive will face disciplinary action.

The planning department issued a notification making the use of Marathi language mandatory in government and semi-government offices, and asserted the decision applies

signage, and documentation across the state. According to the notification, all government offices, munici-

to communication, official

pal bodies, state corporations, and public institutions must display text in Marathi Devanagari script alongside Roman lettering on computer keypads and printers.

Visitors to government offices are also required to communicate in Marathi, except for those who do not speak the language, such as foreigners or non-Marathi speakers from outside Maharashtra. Notices and signage inside offices also must be in Marathi, it said.

Government employees who do not follow these language rules will face disciplinary action. Complaints about non-compliance can be made to office heads or department heads, who will investigate and take action, if necessary, the order said.

All official documents, including proposals, letters, and circulars, must be in Marathi, as per the Maharashtra Official Language Act, 1964. Presentations and internal communications should also be in Marathi, the notification said. The state government direct-

The state government directed that nameplates and signage in its offices and public sector enterprises must be in Marathi. New businesses must register their names in Marathi without English translations, it emphasised.

The policy aims to promote the use of Marathi in the state administration and public life, and the government was committed to enforce the language rules across all departments and institutions, said the notification.

The Marathi Language Policy, approved last year, had recommended the use of Marathi in all public affairs to further the steps taken for the preservation, conservation, promotion, dissemination and development of the language.

In October last year, the Centre granted the status of classical language to Marathi, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the state. The Centre had then said the classical language status will lead to creation of significant employment opportunities, particularly in academic and research fields.

national

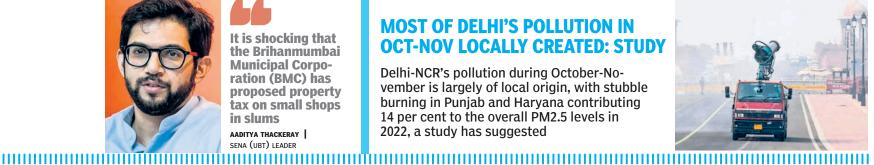


It is shocking that the Brihanmumbai **Municipal Corpo**ration (BMC) has proposed property tax on small shops

AADITYA THACKERAY

MOST OF DELHI'S POLLUTION IN OCT-NOV LOCALLY CREATED: STUDY

Delhi-NCR's pollution during October-November is largely of local origin, with stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana contributing 14 per cent to the overall PM2.5 levels in 2022, a study has suggested





to face the challenges of climate change and become resilient through under-

standing the problems, impacts of climate change, awareness, and adapting the changes. This will make our society climate

M K STALIN | TN CM

Why isn't Devendra **Fadnavis** not moving into 'Varsha'? The CM has said even if he moves there.

he will not sleep there. What is this? The 'limbu samrat, limbu mirchi' (a reference to those who practise black magic) of the Shiv Sena should respond

SANJAY RAUT | (SENA) UBT LEADER



whether Delhi (Centre) has

any problem with it or not... he (Bhutan PM) had confirmed in October last year regarding his presence at BGBS

MAMATA BANERJEE | WB CM

PM targets Oppn in LS speech

New Delhi, Feb 4: In a scathing attack on Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday said some people are openly speaking the language of urban naxals and asserted that those who

"declare a war" against the Indian State can neither understand the Constitution nor about the country's unity.

He also took a dig at Arvind Kejriwal and AAP a day before the Delhi Assembly polls, saying

"some parties are like 'AAPda' for the future of the youth". Modi asserted that while his government's schemes saved lot of money, it was not used to build 'Sheesh Mahal'.

Replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in Lok Sabha, he made several

veiled attacks at former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, saying those who entertain themselves by getting photo sessions done in huts of the poor will find the talk about the poor in Parliament boring.

"Those who walk around with Constitution in pockets, do they know how they forced Muslim women to live in hardship. We brought in the triple talag law to give right to them," Modi said.

'Today some people are openly speaking the language of ur-



Replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in Lok Sabha, he made several veiled attacks at former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, saying those who entertain themselves by getting photo sessions done in huts of the poor will find the talk about the poor in Parliament boring

ban naxals. The things that urban naxals say (are being said). These people who speak the language of urban naxals, who declare war against the Indian State, can neither understand the Constitution nor about the country's unity," Modi said. Though Modi did not name anyone, his remarks were an apparent reference to Gandhi's comments last month that "we

are now fighting the BJP, the RSS and the Indian State itself". In a veiled iibe at AAP convenor Kejriwal, Modi said some leaders focus on jacuzzi and stylish showers while his government's focus of providing water to every household.

He also said that "some parties are like AAP-da for the future of the youth" as they promise various kinds of doles at

the type of elections but never fulfil them. "Some government schemes saved lot of money, but we did not use it to build 'Sheesh Mahal'," Modi said.

Without naming Gandhi, Modi took a swipe at him for his reaction on the President's address, saying those who entertain themselves by getting photo sessions done in huts of the poor will find the talk about the poor in Parliament boring.

Soon after the President delivered her address to a joint sitting of Parliament January 31, Sonia Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Privanka Gandhi Vadra were seen discussing the speech in the Parliament complex. During the discussion, Rahul Gandhi was heard asking Sonia Gandhi if the President's speech was "boring". "We did not give false slogans, but real development to people," Modi said. "Till five decades, slogans of 'garibi hatao' were heard and now 25 crore poor have come out of poverty," he said in a statement.

"Pain of poor, troubles of common man, cannot be understood just like that: it requires passion and some just don't have it," he said in a swipe at the opposition. "We live by the spirit of the Constitution and do not resort to politics of poison," he said.

India-EU relationship more important than ever: EAM



JAISHANKAR ALSO

ASSERTED THAT THE

EVER BEFORE

ADDRESSING THE

OF IIC-BRUEGEL

HERE, JAISHANKAR,

HAS BEEN DISREGARDED

WITH SIGNIFICANT

CONSEQUENCES"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Tuesday said a stronger India-EU relationship can be an "important stabilising factor" in a world that promises to be 'so volatile and uncertain".

Jaishankar also asserted that the relationship between

the two sides is more important now than ever before. Addressing the inaugural session of an annual seminar IIC-Bruegel here, Jaishankar, without naming country. said that "in our continent, international law has been disregarded with significant consequences".

"Even on a like question democracy and military rule, different stan-

dards have been applied to our neighbours in the East and our neighbour in the West.'

"It is not my case that principles are dispensable or that we must be utterly into realpolitik. But the agenda can no longer be set by some, only to be observed by the rest. This applies to passing judgement on and interfering in the domestic politics of others as well," the external affairs minister (EAM) said. Jaishankar further stressed that "we can all feel intuitively that the world is on the cusp of a big change". "Politics is only the tip of the iceberg.

Whether it is energy or connec tivity, mobility or technology, major shifts await us," he said

Referring to the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks, the EAM said, "I think it is time we get along with it.' Jaishankar also said that in recent years, there has been a "more intensive engagement" with the European Commission

and "we expect that to be even more in the coming days, in RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN fact very soon".

THE TWO SIDES IS MORE "Deeper India-EU IMPORTANT NOW THAN collaboration is clearly in our mutual benefit," he said **INAUGURAL SESSION OF** Former secretary Shyam AN ANNUAL SEMINAR Saran, and various diplomats and for WITHOUT NAMING ANY eign policy experts COUNTRY, SAID THAT among others, at-"IN OUR CONTINENT. tended the event. INTERNATIONAL LAW

"The world is currently witness ing two major conflicts, and these are often presented as

matters of principle. We are told that the very future of the world order is at stake. Yet, record shows how selectively and unevenly these principles have been applied," Jaishankar said. "We, in India, are yet to see aggression on our territory vacated after so many decades Equally, terrorism has been overlooked when convenient. the minister said. In his address, Jaishankar also touched upon the aspects of trade and digital technology, climate action, and their interplay with geopolitics. Today there is much talk about the "world or-

der unravelling", he said.

Rajnath Singh slams

Rahul over claims

on China intrusions

New Delhi, Feb 4: Defence

Minister Rajnath Singh Tues-

day accused Congress leader

Rahul Gandhi of making "false

allegations" about the statement

of the Army chief on the situa

tion at the India-China border.

Army Chief by Shri Rahul Gand-

hi were never spoken by him at

any time. It is a matter of deep

regret that Shri Rahul Gandhi

should indulge in irresponsible

politics on matters of national interest," Singh said on X. In his speech Monday in Lok

Sabha during the discussion

on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, the leader

of opposition claimed that the

Chinese have intruded on In-

dian land but Prime Minister

Narendra Modi has denied it

The Army disagreed with the

Chinese forces are inside our

territory but for some reason

"The PM has denied that

prime minister, he had said.

"The words attributed to the

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SHORT **TAKES**

2 Indore schools get bomb threat emails

Indore: Two private schools in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city were evacuated after they received bomb threats through emails Tuesday, which later turned out to be hoax, police said. The police then registered two cases against unidentified persons for the bomb threats, they said. Due to the bomb threats and the resulting search operations an examination of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) being conducted in one of these schools was affected and a practical exam in another school was postponed, the police and school authorities said.

SI, bank employee killed in accident

Karimnagar (Telangana): A woman sub-inspector and a bank employee died after their vehicles collided with each other Tuesday morning in Jagtial district, police said. Sub-inspector Kokkula Shwetha (30) was travelling back to Jagtial from her native village, Arnakonda, when the accident occurred, they said. At around 8.30 am, on the outskirts of Chilvakodur village under Gollapalli police limits, Shwetha's car collided with a motorcycle

1 killed, 7 injured in road accidents

before crashing into a

roadside tree.

Kolkata: A motorcyclist was killed and seven others were injured in two separate road accidents in Kolkata Tuesday, police said. The motorcyclist was killed in Chinar Park area in the northern part of the city when a private bus first dashed against the motorcycle and then ran over the rider while trying to overtake the two-wheeler near Loknath Mandir, a senior officer of Bidhannagar Police said.

Three back-to-back robberies in Jammu

Jammu: In three backto-back dacoities in J&K's Jammu division, armed robbers looted 1.5 Kg gold from a jewellery showroom, ₹50,000 cash from a shop and ₹19 lakh from a bank. On Saturday, two armed robbers entered a jewellery shop in Greater Kailash area of Jammu city.

Punjab govt to receive deported Indians as **US plane set to land**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 4: Amid reports that a US military plane carrying around 200 illegal immigrants would land at the Amritsar airport Wednesday, a top Punjab Police officer has said the state government authorities will receive the deported Indians.

Punjab NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal expressed disappointment over the United States' decision to deport these people, saying they have contributed to the US economy and should have been granted permanent residency, instead of being

There are reports that a US C-17 military aircraft, carrying 205 illegal immigrants hailing from Punjab and neighbouring states, will land in Amritsar

US law-enforcement agencies launched a crackdown against illegal immigrants after Donald Trump became the

Many people from Punjab had entered the US through the "donkey route" or other illegal means by spending lakhs of rupees and are now facing deportation.

Asked about the reports of the US plane carrying illegal immigrants landing in Amritsar, Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said on Tuesday that the issue was discussed at a meeting here.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck take a dip at Sangam during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela, in Prayagraj

Delhi HC official writes to SC over Rashid's bail plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court registrar general has written to the Supreme Court over the issue of jurisdiction of the court which should ideally hear jailed J&K MP Rashid Engineer's bail plea in a NIA case. Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, representing the NIA, informed Justice Vikas Mahaian that the senior high court official sought the Supreme Court's indulgence over the issue of jurisdiction. The issue arose after a NIA court said it couldn't hear the bail plea of the jailed MP, facing terror charges, as it lacked jurisdiction. On the other hand, the statute doesn't allow courts designated to try MPs and MLAs to hear cases probed the National Investigation Agency.

Delhi court junks defamation case against Shashi Tharoor

New Delhi: A Delhi court Tuesday dismissed a criminal complaint filed by BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar against Congress MP Shashi Tharoor accusing him of defamation. Additional chief judicial magistrate Paras Dalal refused to summon Tharoor saying "not once did Tharoor in any of the three interviews/ news bytes published" made a reference to the BJP, NDA or Chandrashekhar. "The proposed accused (Tharoor) cannot been seen to impute that Chandrashekhar has bribed any voter. The proposed accused has not even mentioned that his opposition candidate had bribed the voters... Proposed accused in further interviews/news byte even clarifies that chasing such allegations would be futile as none would come forward to accept that they received any money or were promised as such.

sia,

neo

Prez of UN General Assembly Yang on four-day India visit

New Delhi: President of the UN General Assembly Philemon Yang is paying a four-day visit to India beginning Tuesday. Yang, who assumed the responsibility at the global body in September, previously served as the prime minister of Cameroon. The President of the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly (PGA) is visiting India at the invitation of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, according to an official readout. Under his presidency, the United Nations adopted 'A Pact for the Future' -- a vision document for realising "multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow". "During the visit, the external affairs minister and the PGA will discuss key multilateral and regional issues of mutual interest," the readout said.

TMC seeks renaming of West Bengal as 'Bangla'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: The Trinamool Congress Tuesday demanded renaming of West Bengal as 'Bangla', saying this carries the signature of the state's history and culture.

Raising the issue through a Zero Hour mention in the Rajya Sabha, party MP Ritabrata Banerjee said the West Bengal Assembly had in July 2018 unanimously passed a resolution for renaming the state but the Centre has not yet agreed to it. He said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had written to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying the "re-christening will be in consonance with the history, culture, and identity of our state and will reflect the aspirations

of our people" The 1947 partition divided Bengal -- the Indian side was



called West Bengal and the other side was named East Pakistan. In 1971. East Pakistan declared independence and a new nation of Bangladesh was formed. Today, there is no East Pakistan, he said. "Our state's name needs to be changed. The mandate of the people of West Bengal needs to be honoured."

The name of any state was last changed in 2011, when Orissa became Odisha. Many cities have seen name changes over the years. These include Bombay, which was changed to Mumbai in 1995, Madras to Chennai in 1996, Calcutta to Kolkata in 2001, and Bangalore to Bangalore in 2014.

BJD's Debashish Samantaray sought national festival status for Bali Jatra. The festival is held on the banks of Ma-

to mark the time of the year when 1947 PARTITION mariners from **DIVIDED BENGAL -- THE** the state set **INDIAN SIDE WAS CALLED** sail to Bali, WEST BENGAL AND THE OTHER SIDE WAS NAMED EAST PAKISTAN Sumatra and Java IN 1971, EAST PAKISTAN DECLARED in Indone-

INDEPENDENCE AND A NEW NATION OF Bor-BANGLADESH WAS FORMED. TODAY, and HERE IS NO EAST PAKISTAN, RITABRAT Sri Lanka BANERJEE SAID. "OUR STATE'S in ancient NAME NEEDS TO BE CHANGED. THE times for the MANDATE OF THE PEOPLE OF expansion of VEST BENGAL NEEDS TO BE trade and cul-**HONOURED**"

Saket Gokhale of TMC wanted the benefit of cheaper ethanol in petrol be passed to consumers while his party colleague Sushmita Dev wanted river Barak in Assam

to be dredged and the waterway to be used for movement of goods. BJP's Kavita Patidar demanded water conservation methods such as ground wa-

ter recharging be used to solve the problem of flooding of railway line underpasses

ed crop yield, causing great loss

to farmers. He wanted new va-

rieties of seeds that withstand

weather vagaries to be tested.

(Nominated) sought setting up of AIIMS Kinaloor in Kozhikode district of Kerala. Raising the issue of impact of climate change on agriculture, S Selvaganabathy (BJP) said erratic weather patterns have impactbeen restored to their tradition-

disengagement.

our army keeps talking to the Chinese about their entry into our territory and our chief of army staff has said that the Chinese are inside our territory, Gandhi had said. "Rahul Gandhi in his speech in Parliament on 03 February 2025 made false allegations about the statement of the Army Chief on the situation on the India-China border. The senior BJP leader said the Army chief's remarks referred only to the disturbance of tradi tional patrolling by both sides Singh noted that he also mentioned that these practices have

al pattern as part of the recent

national



We told the EC how Delhi Police is being misused for violence and intimidation. Many people are scared, and it is possible that they may not come out to vote

INDIA INKS CONTRACT WITH RUSSIA

India Tuesday inked a contract with Russia for procurement of anti-ship cruise missiles, a move that will significantly augment the combat capabilities of the Indian Navy's submarine fleet. The Defence Ministry made the announcement in a post on X platform.





ple-centric budget. The budget is the one that gives relief to a common man and has taken care of health, education, environment

The Delhi government has confined the needy to Mohalla Clinics, which only with no coverage under the Ayushman Bharat scheme for hospital admissions

NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM There has been talk about one

are institutions like Parliament. Supreme Court, and still incidents of hooliganism are taking place

SANJAY SINGH AAP LEADER





Hope all do Enjoy Amritkal created Meanwhile Rohingyas are laughing

T'gana passes resolution asking Centre to conduct caste survey

Hyderabad, Feb 4: The Telangana Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution Tuesday, urging the Centre to emulate the comprehensive household socio-economic, employment, nolitical, and caste survey conducted by the state government.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy moved the resolution stating that the state government is committed to the welfare of Backward Classes, SCs and STs and other weaker sections in the state. The Centre

should conduct such a survey across the country to understand the conditions of various castes, the resolution said.

Speaker G Prasad Kumar announced that the resolution was adopted unanimously. During the one-day special session convened to debate the caste survey and also the report of a judicial commission on SC categorisation, Revanth Reddy made a statement on the survey conducted by the Congress government. He outlined the details of the survey, shared by state minister N Uttam Kumar



Reddy, two days ago.

Observing that a constitutional amendment is required to provide 42 per cent reser-

vations to Backward Classes as per law (which leads to breaching the 50 per cent cap on quotas), Reddy said the Congress would provide a 42 per cent quota for Backward Classes in the upcoming local body elections in the state. He asked whether the Opposition BRS and BJP would follow suit. Before the 2023 Assembly polls, the Congress had promised to increase the backward class reservations in local bodies to 42 per cent. On AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi's assertion that the caste sur-

vey report itself has not been tabled in the house with only the Chief Minister's statement being shared with the members, Revanth Reddy said the report is in four volumes and that the fourth volume cannot be made public as it deals with personal data of citizens. Noting that the government is transparent, he said it is ready to table the data after legal vetting and that it has nothing to hide. Referring to the data of an Intensive Household Survey (IHS) conducted during the previous BRS government, he said the population of Muslims according to the IHS was 11 per cent, while it grew to 12.56 per cent as per the caste survey. The population of backward classes according to IHS was 40 per cent, while it is 46.25 per cent as per the latest survey. It is the population of Other Castes (OC) which declined from 21 per cent of IHS to 15 per cent (including OCs in Muslims) in the caste survey, he said. In a sharp attack on BRS, Reddy said the data of IHS was neither approved by the cabinet nor by the Assembly then.

SC slams Assam govt for not deporting foreigners

Observing Assam was suppressing facts, a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said once the detainees were identified as foreigners, they ought to be deported immediately



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: "Are you waiting for some muhurat", the Supreme Court Tuesday asked the Assam government, which was censured for keeping persons declared foreigners in detention centres indefinitely and not deporting them.

Observing Assam was suppressing facts, a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said once the detainees were identified as foreigners, they ought to be deported immediately. "You have refused to start deportation saying their addresses are not known. Why should it be our concern? You deport to their foreign country. Are you waiting for some muhurat (auspicious time)? the bench asked.

The top court expressed surprise at Assam government's explanation that it was not sending nationality verification forms to the Ministry of External Affairs as detainees' addresses in the foreign country were unknown.

"Once you declare a person foreigner, then you have to take the next logical step. You cannot detain them till eternity. Article 21 of the Constitution is there. There are many foreigner detention centres in Assam. How many have you deported?" the bench questioned the Assam government counsel.

The top court directed the Assam government to initiate the deportation process of 63 declared foreign nationals. whose nationality was known, and file a status report in two

weeks. "We direct the state to file a proper affidavit reporting compliance with this order. If the state government finds that nationality verification forms have been sent two months back, the state will immediately issue a reminder to Ministry of External Affairs. As soon as such reminder is received by the ministry, effective action shall be taken by the Ministry on the basis of nationality status verification," it said.

The bench grilled Assam Chief Secretary Dr Ravi Kota, who was directed to appear through video-conferencing, for the delay in deporting detainees to their respective countries. 'Even without address, you can deport them. You can't continue to detain them indefinitely," the bench told the chief secretary.

The Assam government counsel expressed helplessness in deporting the foreigners without addresses. "You deport them to the capital city of the country. Suppose the person is from Pakistan, you know the capital city of Pakistan? How can you keep them detained here saving their foreign address is not known? You would never know the address," the bench responded.

The state exchequer is spending on the persons detained for so many years and it was surprising that this does not bother the government, it added. Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for the petitioner, submitted Bangladesh had refused to accept the detainees as its citizens. "My information is that, attempts are being made

to figure out if Bangladesh will take these people out. Bangladesh is refusing. India says they are not Indians. Bangladesh says they are not Bangladesh is. They have become stateless. They are in detention for over 10 years. Bangladesh says they won't accept anyone who lived in India for many years," he informed the bench. Claiming the detainees were Rohingyas, Gonsalves said the Centre and the state must disclose the truth to the court. Solicitor general Tushar

Mehta expressed apology for the lacunaes in the affidavit filed by Assam government and assured he would speak to the highest executive and furnish all details in court.

The top court directed the Centre to also give details of those were deported till now and further apprise how it proposed to deal with detainees whose nationality was unknown. The matter would be heard February 25.

Calling it a "defective" affidavit, the top court January 22 slammed the Assam government for not giving in its reply reasons for detaining 270 foreigners at the Matia transit camp.

The top court directed Assam State Legal Services Authority to conduct surprise visits at the Matia transit camp for foreigners to check the facility's hygiene and food quality.

The bench was hearing a plea concerning the deportation of persons declared foreigners and facilities at the detention centres in Assam. While hearing the matter May 16 last year, the apex court observed that the Centre must take immediate steps for deporting 17 foreigners at the detention centre in Matia. It said priority should be given to deport those who spent more than two years in the detention centre.

The plea also sought a direction to the Assam government not to detain any person declared a foreigner by the tribunal until it could show proof of a possible deportation in



Sandip Ghosh, four others seek exemption from case

Kolkata, Feb 4: The five ac cused in the multi-crore financial irregularities case at state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, including the former and controversial principal of the institute Sandip Ghosh, Tuesday, sought exemption from the case.

Besides Ghosh, four others who have sought similar exemption from the case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), are his assistant-cumbodyguard Afsar Ali, private contractors Biplab Sinha and Suman Hazra and a junior doctor Ashish Pandey. All of them are in judicial custody now.

The hearing for framing of charge in the case is likely on Wednesday at a special court in Kolkata. It is learnt that the hearing on exemption petitions by the five accused will be conducted simultaneously with the hearing on charge-framing.

On January 28, the Calcutta High Court's single-judge bench of Justice Tirthankar Ghosh directed the CBI, which is investigating the case, to complete the process of framing charges against the five accused indi-



A polling officials carrying EVMs and other election materials arrives at a polling centre at Gole Market ahead o

viduals by February 6. Recently. Ghosh

approached the bench of Justice Ghosh with a plea seeking more time before the framing of the charges could begin. However, Justice Ghosh summarily rejected the petition.

As per the chargesheet filed by CBI in the financial irregularities case, the main charges are manipulations in the tendering process, getting infrastructure-related work at RG Kar done by private outsourced agencies bypassing the state Public Works Department, "smuggling" bio-medical wastes from the hospital and selling the organs of the unidentified bodies coming to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Mahakumbh: PM to take holy dip in Sangam today

New Delhi, Feb 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to visit the Mahakumbh Mela in Prayagraj Wednesday to take a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam

PM Modi is expected to arrive in Prayagraj at around 11 a.m. where he will be given a grand welcome. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Deputy CMs Keshav Prasac Maurya as well as Brajesh Pathak are likely to accompany the Prime Minister during his visit to the Sangam.

PM Modi will take a holy dip at the Sangam, the confluence of three rivers, Ganga Yamuna and Saraswati and will offer prayers to Maa Ganga.

PM Modi's reverence for the Maa Ganga is not new as he has exhibited it on multiple occasions earlier. As Prime Minister arrives in the temple town and heads to Triveni Sangam February 5, the TV cameras will be scrambling to cover the sacred bath.

Earlier, during his visit to Prayagraj on December 13, the Prime Minister had inaugurated 167 development projects worth ₹5,500 crore, improving connectivity, amenities and services for the general public

'Strong steps needed to bring purity, fairness in sports bodies'

Office-bearers of sports associations must be genuine people with a sports background and such people should be given the independence, space and respect due to them, the court said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: The Supreme Court Tuesday said "strong measures" were required to infuse purity, fairness, autonomy and independence in Indian sports federations and oust persons who "monopolized" such bodies with vested interest.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh asked solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, to take instructions on a CBI probe and a letter written by the "so-called" president of Asian Kabaddi Federation to the administrator of the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI).

"Taking into the considerinterest," it said.

The bench asked Mehta to take instructions on ensuring domestic Kabaddi players or other sports persons were allowed to participate in the



explore diplomatic channels for the resolution of conflicts and recognition of sports associations including the Kabaddi fed-

eration. The court asked Mehta to see whether the electoral roll of the AKFI was valid and the state associations were represented by genuinely elected or nominated persons, who were entitled to participate in the national federation elections.

"Firstly, we will get this information and if the need arises, we will order for fresh elections of AKFI," the bench said and posted the matter February 6." The top court was hearing a plea of two national Kabaddi players Priyanka and Pooja seeking direction to AK-FI -- unaffiliated by the International Kabaddi Federation -- for sending them to Asian Kabaddi Championship scheduled to be held in Iran from February 20 to 25.

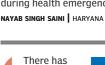
Two former players, who are Arjuna Awardees, have also intervened in the matter and apprised the court about the affairs of AKFI through their counsel senior advocate Gopa Sankaranarayanan. Surya Kant said if there was anything wrong with the elec tion of the governing body of AKFI, then the court would not hesitate in ordering a fresh elec tion and this time it wouldn't depend on any administrator. The top court underscored

the need to develop democratic culture in these sports bodies but said it wasn't possible with a stroke of a pen.



EKNATH SHINDE | MAHA DY CM





nation, one election, but in a small state like Delhi where there





SHORT **TAKES**

Mild snowfall in higher reaches of Himachal Shimla: The higher reaches of

Himachal Pradesh, including the North Portal of Atal Tunnel in Rohtang, received fresh snowfall Tuesday prompting to avoid unnecessary travel as the roads turn slippery and visibility is reduced. Kalpa in Kinnaur district received 0.2 cm of snow and 4 mm rain. Reports of snowfall in Sissu. Jispa and sarchu in Lahaul and Spiti and Dalhousie in Chamba district are also coming in. Dharamshala and Kangra received 2 mm of rain each while Shimla, Sundernagar and Bhuntar received drizzle. In the past 24 hours since Monday evening, shallow fog was witnessed in Mandi while cold wave was observed in Una and Berthin.

Over 50 injured as bus overturns

Kozhikode (Kerala): Over 50 people were injured, one seriously, when a private passenger bus overturned at Arayidathupalam in this city Tuesday evening, police said. Police said that 42 of the injured have been admitted to a private hospital, while nine were taken to the Government Medical College Hospital. The condition of one person remains critical. According to passengers, the bus hit a motorbike and then collided with a median before overturning.

Naxals kill two

Bijapur (Chhattisgarh): Naxalites hacked to death two men, one of them their former colleague, at a village in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on the suspicion of being police informers, an official said Tuesday. The incident took place Monday night in Bugdicheru village under the Tarrem police station area, he said. A group of unidentified Naxalites stormed into the village and dragged Karam Raju (32) and Madvi Munna (27) out of their houses.

ation the oral submissions, and having taken cognisance of the offensive language used by one so-called president of the Asian Kabaddi federation, it seems to us that some strong measures are required to be taken in or der to infuse purity, fairness and autonomy and independence in the election process particularly to oust such persons who have monopolised the sports federations with vested

international competitions including Asian Kabaddi championship in Iran. The Centre was further directed by the court to

international



Mass migration is one of the great tragedies in the modern era. It impacts countries throughout the world. We recognize that many of the people who seek mass migration are often victims and victimized along the way, and it's not good for anyone

MARCO RUBIO US SECRETARY OF STATE

US, PHILIPPINE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT JOINTLY PATROL

US and Philippine fighter aircraft staged a joint patrol and training Tuesday over a disputed South China Sea shoal where Chinese fighter jets fired flares last year to drive away a Philippine aircraft, Philippine officials said



We are firmly opposed to ranted increase and we do believe that this is in violation of the WTO (World Trade Organisation) rules



FU CONG | REPRESENTATIVE TO UN AMBASSADOR, CHINA



system and being overwhelmed hy its every fluctuation, we must unite in our efforts for this motherland ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA



be focused on economic growth. Just like other targets, we will

SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PRIME MINISTER, PAKISTAN

SHORT **TAKES**

Trump, Netanyahu set for pivotal talks

Washington: President Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu are set to meet Tuesday as the Israeli prime minister faces competing pressure from his right-wing coalition to end a temporary truce against Hamas militants in Gaza and from war-weary Israelis who want the remaining hostages home and the 15-month conflict to end. Trump is guarded about the long-term prospects for the truce, even as he takes credit for pressuring Hamas and Israel into the hostage and ceasefire agreement that went into effect the day before he returned to office last month.

India pays \$37.64mn to UN regular budget

United Nations: India has paid \$37.64 million dollars to the United Nations Regular Budget for 2025, joining the "honour roll" of 35 member regular budget assessments in full and on time to the UN. According to the UN Committee on Contributions, as of January 31 2025, thirtyfive member states have paid their regular budget assessments in full within the 30-day due period specified in UN financial regulations. India contributed \$37.64 million to the 2025 United Nations Regular Budget and made the payment January 31, 2025.

■ Pak to defer \$1.2bn payment for Saudi oil

Islamabad: Pakistan government signed an agreement with the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) to defer by one year a \$1.2 billion payment on oil imports, Radio Pakistan reported that Pakistan and SDF Monday signed two financing agreements worth over one billion dollar. These agreements include "Deferred Payment for Oil Import from Saudi Arabia" worth \$1.2 billion for one year and "Construction of Gravity Flow Water Supply Scheme" at Mansehra amounting to \$41 million.

Heavy snow hits northern Japan

Tokyo: Record-breaking snowfall fell on Japan's northern main island of Hokkaido, disrupting traffic, causing airport closures and delaying deliveries Tuesday. The Hokkaido prefectural government said record-breaking snowfall has been observed especially in the eastern regions of the island, including Obihiro and Kushiro, whose city offices received dozens of calls for help from drivers whose vehicles had stalled in the snow.

China launches limited tariffs 10 killed in Swedish

Washington/Beijing, Feb 4: China imposed targeted tariffs on American imports Tuesday and put several US companies, including Google, on notice for possible sanctions, in a measured response to the sweeping duties on Chinese imports imposed by President Donald

Beijing's limited reply to Trump's imposition of a 10% tariff on all Chinese imports underscored the attempt by Chinese policymakers to engage Trump in talks to avert an outright trade war between the world's two largest economies.

Capital Economics, a UKbased research firm, estimated that China's additional tariffs would apply to about \$20 billion of annual imports, compared with the \$450 billion worth of Chinese goods subject to the Trump tariff that took effect at 12:01 am Tuesday.

"The measures are fairly modest, at least relative to US moves, and have been calibrated to send a message to the US, Julian Evans-Pritchard, the firm's head of China Economics, said in a note.

Trump Monday suspended his threat of 25% tariffs on Mexico and Canada at the last minute, agreeing to a 30-day pause in return for concessions on border and crime enforcement.

Trump plans to speak to Chinese President Xi Jinping lat-



EU wants early US talks to avert Trump tariffs

President Donald Trump's planned tariffs, trade chief Maros Sefcovic said Tuesday, negotiations. Sefcovic, speaking before a meeting of EU ministers to debate trade and EU competitiveness, said he wanted "early engagement" and was awaiting confirmation of the appointment of Trump's pick for Commerce Secretary, financie Howard Lutnick. "We are ready to engage immediately and we hope that through this early engagement, we can avoid the measures which would bring a lot of disturbance to the most important trade and investment relationship on this planet, he told reporters. Von der Leven, the European Commission president, said the EU executive's first priority was to work on the many areas where EU and US interests converge, such as critical supply chains and emerging technologies

er in the week, a White House spokesperson said.

China's new measures, announced as the Trump tariff took effect, include a 15% levy on US coal and LNG and 10% for crude oil, farm equipment and a small number of trucks as well as big-engine sedans

shipped to China from the US China said it was starting an

anti-monopoly investigation into Alphabet Inc's Google. It put PVH Corp, the holding company for brands including Calvin Klein, and US biotechnology company Illumina on a list for potential sanctions.

on China exports to US

- China imposes limited tariffs on smaller set of US imports
- China starts anti-monopoly investigation into Google
- Beijing imposes controls on
- Trump pauses tariffs on Mexico
- and Canada for one month Google declined to comment

on the investigation. PVH and Illumina did not respond to requests for comment outside regular US business hours.

EXPORT CONTROLS ON SOME METALS

China said it was imposing export controls on some metals. including tungsten, that are critical for electronics, military equipment and solar panels.

The 10%-duty China announced on electric trucks imported from the US could apply to Elon Musk's Cybertruck, a niche offering Tesla has been promoting in China. Tesla had no immediate comment.

China's new tariffs will not take effect until Feb 10, giving Washington and Beijing time to try to seek a deal that Chinese policymakers have indicated they hope to reach with Trump as China's domestic demand sputters.

school shooting

Orebro, Sweden, Feb 4: Around 10 people have been killed in a shooting at an adult education centre, Swedish police said, the deadliest attack to take place in Sweden on what the prime minister said was a "painful day" for the country.

The gunman is believed to be among those killed and a search is continuing at the school for other possible victims, the local police chief told a press conference. The perpetrator's motive was not immediately known. 'We know that 10 or so peo-

ple have been killed here today. The reason that we can't be more exact currently is that the extent of the incident is so large," local police chief Roberto Eid Forest told reporters.

Forest said police believed the gunman had acted alone and that they did not currently suspect terrorism as a motive, though he cautioned that much remained unknown. He said the suspected gunman had not previously been known to police.

"We have a big crime scene, we have to complete the searches we are conducting in the school. There are a number of investigative steps we are taking: a profile of the perpetrator, witness interviews ... Obviously, it's a significant amount of work," he said.



GUNMAN BELIEVED TO BE AMONG ROUGHLY 10 DEAD, SAY POLICE

INVESTIGATION UNDERWAY PRIME MINISTER KRISTERSSON CALLS

IT 'PAINFUL DAY' FOR SWEDEN SWEDEN FACES WAVE OF SHOOTINGS **BUT SCHOOL ATTACKS RARE**

Police said they had opened an investigation into murder arson and an aggravated weapons offence and that the search for possible further victims had continued into the evening.

The shooting took place in Orebro, some 200 km west of Stockholm, at the Risbergska school for adults who did not complete their formal education or failed to get the grades to continue to higher education. It is located on a campus that al so houses schools for children. "It is a very painful day

for the whole of Sweden, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on X.

US FOCUSES ON WAR'S ENDGAME

Ukraine's politics warms up

Kyiv, Feb 4: After Russia's 2022 invasion. Ukraine's normally febrile political life was becalmed under martial law. But there have been growing signs of activity picking up, as the United States has set its sights on finishing the war with Russia quickly.

In the past week, one Ukrainian political camp has accused President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's team of caring more about elections than the war, Kyiv's mayor has said a presidential appointee is sabotaging his work and opposition figures have been travelling overseas.

"It's to do with Trump, the expectation that there will be negotiations. The activity has increased, there's clearly more domestic political nervousness, said Volodymyr Fesenko, a Kyiv-based political analyst.

In what could fuel a sense of a looming return to politics, Reuters reported Saturday that US President Donald Trump's team wants Kyiv to hold a presidential election by the year-end, especially if it can agree on a ceasefire with Moscow

Petro Poroshenko, a former president and leading opposition figure, has been pictured shaking hands with numerous foreign officials in recent weeks.

He denies it has anything to do with elections, which he says would work in Russian



- Ukraine's martial law prohibits
- Trump team suggests Ukraine hold elections by year-end
- Peace push spurs signs of growing
- Kyiv says wartime elections would play into Russia's hands

President Vladimir Putin's favour and destabilise Ukraine at a dangerous moment.

"Our task is to win the war," Poroshenko told Reuters.

Yet his European Solidarity Party has accused Zelenskiv of trying to bar him from parliament and of focusing on "upcoming elections instead of handling the war". A former prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, has become more visible of late, meeting European Union officials abroad and protesting about Ukraine's detention of a

general over a botched defensive

Last week, Kyiv mayor Vitali

Klitschko, a potential presidential challenger, accused Zelenskiy's entourage of political intrigue, saying the city's military administrator, appointed by the president, had deliberately derailed the work of his civilian administration.

Asked to comment, Zelenskiy's team referred the matter to the city administrator, who has dismissed Klitschko's allegations as unsubstantiated.

Fesenko said some political groupings were assembling activists and working on election campaign teams. He said he had seen no such activity in Zelenskiv's camp and that politicians were probably jumping the gun if they saw an election looming. "It's a false start in my opin-

US officials say no policy decisions have been made and their strategy on Ukraine is evolving. Ukrainian politicians, both from the ruling bloc and Opposition,

There are also logistical challenges. Serhiy Dubovik, deputy head of Ukraine's Central Election Commission, told Reuters it would take at least four to six months to prepare so that campaigning could start ahead of an election, given the displacement of voters and widespread destruction.

ion," he said.

say elections before the war ends could undermine national unity.



A demonstrator holds a sign that reads "don't bite the hands that feed you" during a rally for immigrant rights

Pak to send back Afghan refugees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 4: The Pakistan government has devised a plan to move registered Afghan refugees out of Islamabad and Rawalpindi and gradually repatriate them back to their country.

Authorities have also been directed to implement the plan without making any public announcement, Dawn newspaper reported quoting sources.

It reported that the plan was

finalised in a series of meetings presided by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last week.

One of the meetings was also attended by Chief of Army Staff Gen Sved Asim Munir, a source in the prime minister's office confirmed. Under phase I of the relocation plan, Afghan nationals having the Afghan Citizens Card (ACC) will be "immediately" moved out of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

They will then be sent back

to Afghanistan alongside illegal and undocumented refugees. ACC is an identification doc-

ument issued to registered Af ghan nationals by Nadra. According to the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM), ACC gives temporary legal status to Afghans

during their stay in Pakistan. However, the federal gov ernment makes the decision on the duration for which the

ACC would remain valid

Maldives sets target to woo 3L Indian tourists in 2025

As the number of Indian tourists to the **Maldives continues to decline, the Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators held discussions with India's High Commissioner on enhancing travel and tourism** cooperation between the two countries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Male, Feb 4: The Maldives government has set a target of attracting 3,00,000 Indian tourists in 2025 after their numbers slumped from the top place in 2023 to sixth in 2024 following strained relations between Male and New Delhi.

Maldives' Ministry of Tourism's statistics showed that Maldives received 20,46,615 visitors in 2024 compared to 18,78,543 tourist arrivals in

2023; China occupied the top slot followed by Russia in 2024. Indian tourists' visits to the archipelagic nation declined from January till about October last year with the number slowly rising thereafter. Maldives Marketing and

Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) chairman Abdulla Ghiyas told a local news portal Adhadhu Monday that monthly events will be held in India to achieve the goal of attracting he said. The MMPRC is also working 3,00,000 tourists.



"We are conducting it as a with airlines, both Indian and very big campaign. For the first Maldivian, to bring tourists time, we are targeting to hire a from more destinations in Inbrand ambassador to advertise dia, Ghiyas said. They are tarin the Indian mass media. We geting to fly from newer destiare also trying to hold cricket nation cities such as Kolkata, summer camps in Maldives,' Pune, Chennai too, he added.

Post Covid-19 pandemic, Indian tourists occupied the top slot

Indian tourists boycotted Maldives, travel agencies blacklisted the country and even after efforts by the tourism industry here, there were no improvements

> of arrivals to Maldives continuously from 2020 till 2023. However, Maldives faced a backlash from Indian tourists following derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi on social media by three Maldivian ministers. Their comments came after Modi posted photos and video of the pristine Lakshadweep Islands on India's

west coast January 6 on his X handle.

Indian tourists boycotted Maldives, travel agencies blacklisted the country and even after efforts by the tourism industry here, there were

no improvements. Following the diplomatic row between the two countries the number of Indian tourists went down from 2,09,193 in 2023 to 1.30,805 in 2024 with the numbers per month rising very slowly only in the last two months after both India and the Maldives decided to reset the relations and President Mohamad Muizzu visited India in October.

The Maldives in the Indian Ocean is barely 70 nautical miles from the island of Minicoy in Lakshadweep and 300 nautical miles from the mainland's western coast.

Business



To be fair to the GST and the ministers who are all in the council, the work on rationalizing and simplifying GST rates has already commenced. In fact, it had commenced nearly three years ago

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

82,000 OFFERS UNDER PMIS

The second round of the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) pilot project started from January 9 and in the first round, partner companies made 82,077 offers to 60,866 candidates, the government said Tuesday.







... Because a lot more benefit will come also with monetary easing, if we are able to maintain inflation control

TUHIN KANTA PANDEY | FINANCE SECRETARY





ASHWINI VAISHNAW | UNION MINISTER





US imports are much lower AJAY SRIVASTAVA | GTRI FOUNDER

SHORT **TAKES**

Over 17,600 firms

shuttered this fiscal

New Delhi: As many as 17,654

companies have been closed

down till January 26 in the

current financial year and a

total of 1,38,027 firms were

registered during the same

period, according to official

Affairs Harsh Malhotra to

the Rajya Sabha as part of a

the data, 17,654 companies

have been shuttered in the

companies that have been

LLPs, liquidated/dissolved

■ Tata Power net

profit up 10%

New Delhi: Tata Power

Tuesday posted a 10 per cent

on-vear rise in consolidated

net profit to Rs 1.188 crore in

the quarter ended December

31, 2024 on higher revenues. It

had reported a Rs 1,076 crore

consolidated net profit in the

guarter ended December 31.

2023, the company said in a

statement. The company's

total income also rose to Rs

15,793 crore in the quarter

crore in the same period a

a sustained PAT growth

trajectory over the last 21

under review, from Rs 15,294

vear ago. "We have delivered

quarters and all our businesses

have been contributing to this

growth," said Prayeer Sinha.

CEO and Managing Director,

NSE profit surges 94%

exchange NSE Tuesday reported

New Delhi: Leading stock

a 94 per cent year-on-year surge in consolidated profit

after tax to Rs 3,834 crore for

2024. It posted a Profit After

three months ended December

Tata Power.

current financial year till

written reply Tuesday. As per

January 26. The figure includes

amalgamated, converted into

and struck off from the official

records. The count of shuttered

companies stood at 22,044 and

data. The data was shared by

Minister of State for Corporate

boost growth: S&P

New Delhi, Feb 4: S&P Global Ratings Tuesday said the Budget for 2025-26 will boost India's growth over the next few years via domestic demand through income tax cuts and the country will achieve the targeted 4.4 per cent fiscal deficit despite hiking I-T rebate.

S&P said India's union Budget is in line with its expectation of gradual fiscal consolidation and that undergirds the positive outlook on India's sovereign ratings 'BBB-'. The deficit targets are also consistent with S&P's projections.

"We believe India will hit its deficit targets despite revenue loss from lifting the threshold for minimum taxable income and slower economic growth. Support will stem from continued large dividends from the central bank and potential capital underspending," S&P said in a statement

The fiscal 2026 budget will boost growth over the next few years via domestic demand through tax cuts for households,

"We anticipate consumer spending and public investments will maintain real GDP growth at 6.7 per cent in fiscal 2025 and 6.8 per cent in fiscal 2026. These growth rates continue to place India above sovereign peers at similar income levels and should continue to support fiscal revenue increase despite the income tax cuts." S&P said.

In its post-budget comments, Fitch Ratings said the government's clarification of medium-term debt reduction targets. if adhered to, could improve India's credit profile over time.

Fitch rates India at the lowest investment grade 'BBB-' with a stable outlook.

The government aims to maintain central government debt on a gradual downward trend, reaching close to 50 per cent of GDP by FY'31, roughly 7 percentage points lower than in FY'25.

The focus on a medium-term debt target should give greater flexibility to manage fiscal deficits, depending on economic

Domestic demand to Sensex, Nifty buck global trade war fears



Mumbai, Feb 4: Indian shares posted their biggest one-day gain in a month Tuesday, shrugging off the China-U.S trade war fears that weighed on global stocks and focusing instead on the chance for a trade truce with the U.S., similar to Mexico and Canada.

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded nearly 2 per cent Tuesday in line with a recovery in Asian peers after US President Donald Trump delayed tariffs on Mexico and Canada for a month. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,397.07 points or 1.81 per cent to settle at a month's high of 78,583.81. During the day, it surged 1,471.85 points or 1.90 per cent to 78.658.59. The NSE Nifty soared 378.20 points or 1.62 per cent to 23,739.25, a level not seen since January 3.

Asian and European stocks

Investors' wealth surges ₹5.95 lakh cr

New Delhi: Market investors added Rs 5.95 lakh crore to their wealth Tuesday as benchmark indices rallied nearly 2 per cent after US President Donald Trump delayed tariffs on Mexico and Canada for a month. Following the sharp rally in equities, the market capitalisation of BSElisted firms surged Rs 5,95,996.51 crore to Rs 4,25,50,826.11 crore (USD 4.88 trillion). As many as 2,509 stocks advanced while 1,410 declined and 154 remained unchanged on the BSE.

were hauled back by fears of a global trade war after the US and China slapped retaliatory tariffs on each other, rekindling fears that were doused on Monday after U.S. President Donald Trump suspended tariffs on Mexico and Canada. Trump has also threatened

to impose 100% tariffs on the BRICS member countries, which include India, if they replaced the dollar as a reserve currency. The Nifty started February

on a weak note after a mixed federal budget and the trade war fears, threatening to extend a four-month losing streak. That, however, has made stock prices relatively cheaper. From the 30-share blue-chip

pack, Larsen & Toubro rallied nearly 5 per cent. Adani Ports, IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors,

Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement and Asian Paints were also among the major gainers.

ITC Hotels, Zomato, Nestle and Maruti were among the laggards. In Asian markets Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended significantly higher. "Yesterday, the Indian mar-

ket struggled to absorb the op timism generated by the good Union Budget due to height ened geopolitical risks stem ming from 'Trump tariff war' However, India could outper form in a weak global market and as a rebound has been trig gered in the global sentiment it has fuelled a sharp surge in domestic equities," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dropped 1.05 per cent to

SEBI sets track and trace rules for retail investors' algo trading

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Capital markets regulator SEBI Tuesday facilitated the participation of retail investors in algorithmic trading (algo trading), which provides advantages of faster order execution and improved At present, only institutional

investors are allowed to put in algo trading, which provides significant advantages of timed and programmed order execution. Also, the regulator came out with a regulatory framework aimed at spelling out the rights and responsibilities of the main stakeholders of the trading ecosystem such as investors, brokers, algo providers/vendors and Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) so that the retail investors can avail algo facilities with requisite safeguards.

The move will be applicable from August 1, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in a circular.

"In order to facilitate safer participation of retail investors in algo trading, with stock brokers and stock exchanges playing the required roles in risk management, it has been decided to review and refine the existing regulatory framework to ensure proper checks and balances, to safeguard investor interest as well as integrity of the market," SEBI said.

Under the framework, retail investors will get access to the approved algos only from the registered brokers, which will safeguard the interests of these investors. SEBI said the facility of algo trading would be provided by the stock broker only after obtaining requisite permission from the stock exchange for each algo.

"All algo orders shall be tagged with a unique identifier provided by the exchange in order to establish audit trail and the broker shall seek approval from the exchange for any modification or change to the approved algos,' the regulator added.

Brokers will be solely responsible for handling investor grievances related to algo trading and the monitoring of APIs for prohibited activities.

For better oversight, any algo provider, providing the facility to place algo orders with brokers, through API, will require to be empanelled with exchanges. The past study of Sebi in F&O

trading revealed that around 97 per cent of FPI profits and 96 per cent of proprietary trader profits were generated from algo trading in FY24.

For the purpose of provision $\,$ of algo trading through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), brokers would be the principal, while any algo provider or fintech/vendor would act as its agent while using the API provided by the broker.

Gold moves closer to ₹86k-mark Freedom announces amid geopolitical uncertainty

New Delhi, Feb 4: Gold prices extended the rally for the fifth straight session and rose Rs 500 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 85,800 per 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday amid robust demand from jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per

cent purity closed at Rs 85,300 per 10 grams in the previous session.

In this year, gold has surged Rs 6,410 or 8.07 per cent to Rs 85,800 per 10 grams from Rs 79,390 per 10 grams January 1. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity al-

so climbed for the fifth straight session and gained Rs 500 to hit another record high of Rs 85,400 per 10 grams Tuesday. Silver prices, however,

snapped a five-day winning streak and fell Rs 500 to Rs 95,500 per kg against Monday's closing level of Rs 96,000 per kg.

In futures trade, gold on the MCX for April delivery declined Rs 208 or 0.25 per cent to Rs 83,075 per 10 grams.

"Gold's positive rally took a slight pause as MCX gold traded near Rs 83,000 with a minor Rs 200 dip. This weakness came as tariff discussions between the US, Canada, and Mexico gained traction." Jateen Trivedi, VP



Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Silver futures for March delivery also slipped Rs 35 to Rs 94.222 per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

Comex gold futures for April delivery fell USD 17 per ounce or 0.60 per cent to USD 2,840.10 per ounce.

Monday, the yellow metal futures had hit a fresh high of USD 2,872 per ounce.

According to Abans Holdings' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta, gold hit record highs Monday amid fears of a global trade war, driving investors toward the safe-haven metal at high premiums.

"Geopolitical uncertainty continues to rise as Trump's tariffs on Canada and Mexico

are paused for a month following negotiations on stricter border enforcement. Meanwhile, China's central bank increased its gold reserves for the second consecutive month in December, as central banks worldwide continue to hedge against economic volatility," Mehta said.

Comex silver futures in the Asian market hours decreased 0.71 per cent to USD 32.20 per ounce.

Investors will focus on US macroeconomic data, such as the release of JOLTS (Job Openings and Labour Turnover Survey) numbers and factory orders data to be release later Tuesday. The data release might provide some impetus to the US dollar and the gold price, Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

winners of gold offer while two others won 10-gram

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Freedom Healthy Cooking Oils, a leading edible oil brand, has announced the winners of the bumper draw for the 'Go for Freedom Gold Offer 2024'. The offer, which was launched to engage customers during the festive season, covered multiple states, including Odisha. As part of the campaign, 100 consumers won 1-gram gold coins daily, with the chance to enter the bumper draw. In Odisha, one lucky winner

received a 50-gram gold coin,

gold coins. The promotional scheme received overwhelming participation, with a total of 5.500 winners across states including Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnata ka and Chhattisgarh. Pimpalkhute,

GM, Marketing at Freedom Healthy Cooking Oils, congratulated the winners and expressed gratitude to all participants, stating that the scheme successfully spread happiness and strengthened the brand's connection with its consumers.



'Stand by Adani report, closure not due to threat'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Activist short-seller Nathan Anderson, known for his high-profile campaigns against the likes of Adani Group, said the decision to shut his firm, Hindenburg Research was not because of any legal or any other threat, but due to workload. And that he stands by all its reports including the one against Adani Group

Anderson told PTI that Hindenburg's January 2023 report accusing Adani Group of "the largest con in corporate historv" was a result of following "red flags" raised against the conglomerate in media reports. Adani Group had repeatedly

denied all allegations in the report. He termed as "goofy conspiracy" the attempts by some to link Hindenburg with alleged anti-India groups like OCCRP and George Soros, saying his outlet never commented on them as it followed the policy of not feeding into "silly conspiracy theories".

Anderson, who came to be known for meticulously detailed reports against companies he alleged were committing fraud, last month announced shutting down his forensic research firm nearly



Asked why he chose to shut down Hindenburg when he could have stepped back and passed on the reins of the company to someone else, he said there is "no way to separate me from the brand."

"Hindenburg is basically synonymous with me," he said. "If it was a software application or a bicycle factory you can sell the application or the factory. But when it's research driven by me, you can't really just hand that off, and so I would not actually be 'done'. But I am hap-

py to support the team if they

want to launch a new brand, which I expect they will."

The interview with Anderson, who is based in New York. was done over phone calls and text messages. Anderson, who first shot to fame with a report against electric truck company Nikola and had gone after the companies of major financial figures, including Carl Icahn's Icahn Enterprises LP, had last month blamed the "intensity and focus" of the job for the decision to wind up.

He had spent much of the last eight years either in fights or preparing for the next fight. Many times during this period, he was often trailed and attempts were made to infiltrate his system.

"As to why I retired - it is all in the letter (released on January 16 that announced shutting down of Hindenburg) - it is not based on any threat, health issue, personal issue or other-

Conspiracy theories like being on the verge of an investigation by the US Department of Justice and/or US SEC to "concoct a counter-narrative about my retirement is a great example of why I am happy to instead be enjoying more time with family, friends and good music," he said. Hindenburg has said it is not under investigation by the US SEC over anonymous reports linking its founder to a hedge fund for preparing reports targeting companies. Asked if he stood by Hindenburg's reports, particularly against the Adani group, Anderson said, "We 100 per cent stand by all of our research findings.

Hindenburg had alleged that Adani Group had used a web of companies in tax havens to inflate its revenue and manipulate stock prices, even as debt piled up. The conglomerate vehemently denied all claims but the damn-

ing report at one point sheared

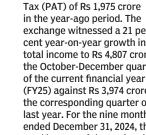
over USD 150 billion off its value, losses it eventually recouped in over a year's time. This, as it slashed debt, pared share pledges and won new investors.

The issue was agitated before the Supreme Court which did not find any need for a probe other than the one markets regulator Sebi had initiated into certain issues prior to the Hindenburg report.

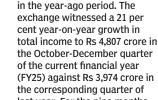
On some seeing the Hindenburg report as against India and India's growth story, Anderson said, "We have always believed in India's potential and view market transparency and strong corporate governance as key fac tors that can fuel India's growth story." He did not elaborate.

"We initially saw media articles outlining red flags, took a closer look, and just kept following the evidence," he said on why the Adani group was chosen.

On allegations of being in cohorts with OCCRP and George Soros, he said, "Of course not, but we have a policy of not feeding into silly conspiracy theories. When the main response to 100+ pages of evidence (presented in the report against Adani Group) is a goofy conspiracy, we view it as a sign that we were right on the mark."



of the current financial year last year. For the nine months ended December 31, 2024, the total income of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) grew by 30 per cent year-on-year to Rs 14,780 crore and net profit



jumped 64 per cent year-onyear to Rs 9,538 crore.

Orissa POST

Varun in Indian ODI Squad Odisha eves

THE SPINNER WAS **INDUCTED TO** THE TEAM FOR **ENGLAND ODI'S ON COACH GAMBHIR'S INSISTENCE**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Feb 4: In-form mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy was Tuesday included in the Indian ODI squad after his heroics in the just-concluded T20I series against England as the team management wants the KKR mystery spinner to "keep up the momentum".

There is a fair chance that Chakravarthy might just replace one of the four specialist spinners in the Champions Trophy squad. It could be one among Kuldeep Yadav or Washington Sundar, who could be axed to accommodate Chakravarthy before the final squad is announced. A lot will depend on how he fares in the ODIs.

Chakravarthy, who got 14 wickets in five T20Is against England and was adjudged the 'Player of The Series', wasn't initially picked for the three ODIs against England and the Champions Trophy later this month.

Chakravarthy was seen training and bowling in the nets Tuesday.

Later in the evening, the BC-CI too said the in-form spinner has been added to the squad.

"The Men's Selection Committee has added Varun Chakaravarthy to India's squad for the upcoming three-match ODI series against England." the BCCI said in a statement.

It is understood that head coach Gautam Gambhir wants Chakravarthy to remain in



rhythm and bowl to the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and Rishabh Pant.

With the deadline for squad changes for the Champions Trophy set for February 12, he remains a strong candidate for selection. However, it is unlikely that he will be added to the CT squad without playing a single ODI.

India have got three finger spinners -- two left-armers (Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel) and one right-arm off-spinner in Washington Sundar. Kuldeep Yadav, who is returning to the Indian team after undergoing a sports hernia surgery in October 2024, is the lone wrist spinner in the squad

"As of now, the team management wanted Varun to bowl in ODI squad nets ahead of England series. Varun doesn't play red-ball cricket," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"With domestic white ball season already concluded, he

doesn't have any assignments till start of IPL end March. He is in good rhythm and they want him to continue that, he added.

When asked if there is a possibility of him being selected for the ODI series and subsequent Champions Trophy based on current form, the source replied: "The selectors have already picked four spinners and you only have three

"But if team management

have to speak to the chairman of selection committee. Whether they intend to or not, is still

The Men in Blue don't have a second wrist spinner and Chakravarthy's strong form could work in his favour.

not known."

When he last played on the flatter tracks in Dubai during the 2021 T20 World Cup, Chakravarthy struggled to make an impact.

Yes, Varun Chakravarthy is part of the squad SHUBMAN GILL | INDIA VICE-CAPTAIN

However, he has significantly improved since then, focusing more on over-spin to refine his variations.

The English team has not read him well and in Champions Trophy, one of the opposition is Bangladesh, which was bamboozled by him in October during the T20I series. He could also be an unknown entitv for most of the New Zealand and Pakistan teams.

Additionally, he has performed consistently on batting-friendly surfaces in the recent T20I series against England, finishing as the leading wicket-taker at an impressive average of 9.85. India are set to play all their league matches in Dubai.

Chakravarthy picked up 18 wickets for Tamil Nadu in the National One Day Championship.

India's updated squad for ODI series against England: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (WK), Rishabh Pant (WK), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yaday, Harshit Rana, Mohd Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Varun Cha-

advance to QF

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Media report in an exhilarating display of skill and teamwork, the Odisha women's beach volleyball team secured their spot in the quarter-finals of the 38th National Games 2024-25 at Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. The team achieved a decisive victory over Karnataka, winning by 2-0 sets.

The Odisha team, represented by many talented players with Ms Shibani Priyadarshini and Ms Asha Mundary both are talented students of KIIT University-showed remarkable coordination and resilience on the sandy courts. Under the guidance of their coach, Ms Sangita Toppo, who also hails from KIIT University, the team demonstrated impressive strategic play and agility.

The much-anticipated quarter-final match is scheduled for February 5th 2025, promising another thrilling encounter as Odisha aims to advance further in the competition.

Prof Achyuta Samanta President, Odisha Volleyball Association and Founder of KIIT & KISS University, congratulated the entire team for their outstanding perfor

All the players and the entire Odisha contingent thanked Prof Achyuta Samanta, President, Odisha Volley ball Association, Honorary General Secretary, Odisha Volleyball Association, Government of Odisha, Department of Sports and Youth Services (DSYS), and the Odisha Olympic Association for facil itating their participation and preparations for the National Games for his all kinds of help provided during their coaching camps and his continuous support for the development of sports at the grassroots level.

SHORT **TAKES**

Anmol wins gold in National Games

Dehradun: Rising shuttler Anmol

Kharb continued her impressive run, defeating top seed Anupama Upadhyaya in straight games in the women's singles final to claim the gold medal at the 38th National Games here Tuesday. The 18-yearold from Haryana, a member of the gold medal-winning Indian team at the Asia Team Championships, showcased her skill and determination by outclassing world number 43 Anupama 21-16, 22-20 to secure the top prize. The gold medal marked another milestone in Anmol's rising career, following her runner-up finish at the Guwahati Masters Super 100 tournament last December and her victories at the Belgian and Polish Internationals last year.

Maaya shines as Indian players dominate

Mumbai: India's rising tennis star, 15-year-old Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi delivered a stunning performance at the L&T Mumbai Open WTA 125, defeating Belarusian Irvna Shymanovich 6-4 6-1 to advance to the Round of 16 here Tuesday, Displaying remarkable maturity, the young sensation outplayed her more experienced opponent with precision and composure. Maava set the tone early in the opening set, regaining control after a 2-2 tie with powerful serves, including four aces, to secure the opening set 6-4. Her aggressive baseline play kept Shymanovich on the defensive.

Ramanathan, Singh, Sasikumar knocked out

Chennai: Third seed Duje Ajdukovic and the trio of Indian players, including Ramkumar Ramanathan and Mukund Sasikumar, were knocked out in the men's singles opening round of the Chennai Open ATP Challenger here Tuesday. However, the tournament's top seeds Billy Harris and Lloyd Harris started their campaigns on a winning note. Ajdukovic, ranked No 158 in the world, was defeated in three sets 2-6 -7-6 2-6 by Sweden's Elias Ymer, ranked No 332 in the world. It was not a good day for Indian singles players at the SDAT Tennis Stadium either with all the three local players in the main draw exiting in the first round.

Strong steps needed to bring purity, fairness, autonomy in sports: SC PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: The Supreme Court Tuesday said strong measures were required to infuse purity, fairness, autonomy and independence in Indian sports federations and oust persons who monopolised such bodies with vested A bench of Justices Surya

Kant and N Kotiswar Singh asked solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, to take instructions on a CBI probe and a letter written by the so-called president of Asian Kabaddi Federation to the administrator of the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI).

Taking into the consideration the oral submissions, and having taken cognisance of the offensive language used by one so-called president of the Asian Kabaddi federation, it seems to us that some strong measures are required to be taken in order to infuse purity, fairness and autonomy and independence in the election process particularly to oust such persons who have monopolised the sports federations with vested



interest, it said.

The bench asked Mehta to take instructions on ensuring domestic Kabaddi players or other sports persons were allowed to participate in the international competitions including Asian Kabaddi championship in Iran.

The Centre was further directed by the court to explore diplomatic channels for the resolution of conflicts and recognition of sports associations including the Kabaddi federa-

The court asked Mehta to see whether the electoral roll of the AKFI was valid and the state associations were represented by genuinely elected or nominated persons, who were entitled to participate in the national federation elections.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, Feb 4: What hap-

pens when two singles players join forces in doubles? It could go either way, but for Satish Kumar Karunakaran and Aadva Varivath, the move worked wonders as they are now Indian badminton's top mixed doubles pair.

They have risen to world number 33 in just a year and a half. Satish and Aadya clinched the Iran International Challenge title, February 4, 2023. Exactly a year later, the duo secured their maiden gold at the National Games in Dehradun Tuesday

Tamil Nadu's top seed Satish later also claimed the men's singles title, beating Suryaksh Rawat of Uttarakhand 21-17 21-17 with a dominating performance.

In between their triumph in Iran and at the Games here, the young pair bagged titles in Azerbaijan and Uganda and also made a bid for the Paris Olympics. Though that goal didn't materialize, the Indian duo made a remarkable leap from world No 432 in 2023 to the 33rd spot. Satish and Aadya fought hard to defeat Deep Rambhiya and Akshaya Warang



Satish, Aadya's mixed doubles glory

21-11, 20-22, 21-8 in a thrilling mixed doubles final to win gold at National Games.

While they tasted plenty of success since teaming up, their journey has also seen its share of challenges.

Since last April, the duo has been training in Kuala Lumpur under Malaysian coach Jiyananthan Nair. However, they can't stay there for more than a month due to visa restrictions, meaning they frequently fly in and out of the country.

"It has only been one and a half years together. I had some family issues in India, so I had to move to Malaysia.' Satish, who started as a swimmer and turned to badminton aged 12 after following his elder brother Arun Kumar, told PTI recently.

Aadva added: "So, since last April, we have tried to train in KI. If it's more than two weeks, we travel to KL. Otherwise, we manage a week of training at one of the centres in India.

Seeking long-term

Malaysian visa he 23-year-old Aadya said they

are trying for a long-term visa so that they can train in Malaysia without having to worry about travelling frequently. "We train mostly in Bangalore because my home is in Bangalore. Sometimes he'll go to Coimbatore, so we take turns. "If we can move to KL fully, that would be the ideal situation. We're working towards getting a haven't managed yet. Because the only option is a work visa, and with a work visa, we can't travel for tournaments like that because you can only be outside of Malay-sia for 90 days." While Aadya only plays mixed doubles now, Satish has been managing both singles and doubles, and with some success too. The 23-year-old from Chennai secured his maiden Super 100 title at the Odisha Masters in 2023 and clinched another Super 100 crown last December at the Guwahati Masters. "I should give credit to my team. I am playing two events, which is not easy, but they are taking care of me. My coach Jiva and my trainer Varun Suresh have been taking care of me. We are training at the Asia Badminton Academy in Malaysia," Sathish said. So how does have been playing mixed doubles since U-17. he balance the two formats? "I

Carlsen accuses FIDE chief of coercion of players

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: World number one Magnus Carlsen has demanded that International Chess Federation President Arkady Dvorkovich resign for "coercion of players, misuse of power and broken promises" after talks to thrash out an agreement between the world body and the Freestyle Tour co-founded by him collapsed.

The 34-year-old Norwegian superstar was reacting to FIDE's statement on Monday in which it declared that efforts to work out a consensus with the Freestyle Chess Tour, co-founded by Carlsen and German entrepreneur Jan Henric Buettner, had failed over the use of the term world championship.

FIDE also asked players wanting to participate in the

Tour's events to sign a waiver to remain eligible for the official World Championship cycle.

The Freestyle Tour reacted by lambasting FIDE but at the same time, agreed to postpone the use of term world championship for its grand finale this year. The decision means that players will not be required to sign a FIDE waiver anymore.

Sharing a few personal messages from Dvorkovich, Carlsen said the Russian had promised to leave players out of this tug of war in a text to his father before the world rapid and blitz championship in New York last month.

...to convince me to play the Rapid & Blitz in New York, you wrote Dec 19th to my 'Just want to pass a message to you and Magnus that whatever happens between FIDE and Freestyle in



terms of recognition, players will NOT be affected in any way. They can decide on their own and FIDE will not take any negative action'," Carlsen revealed.

"You added later that day: 'I

will step down if my word will be undermined by the Council. By forcing players to sign an unacceptable waiver you have reneged on your promise. Will you resign?" Carlsen asked.

Neither FIDE nor Dvorkov-

ich did not immediately respond to Carlsen's sharp statement. The first leg of the five-round Freestyle Tour, featuring classical games, starts February 6 in Germany.

Tournaments will then be planned in Paris (April), New York (July), New Delhi (September) and Cape Town (December). Reigning world champion D Gukesh is among the players listed to compete in the Tour's events.

"Freestyle remains committed to protecting players from FIDE's questionable tactics. To ensure that no player is forced into a difficult position, we have decided -- effective immediately, as of February 3 -- to postpone the decision to award the title of 'World Champion' to the winner of the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour for an additional 10

months," Buettner said in an open letter to FIDE president. "This decision ensures that no player is forced to choose between signing the unlawful letter FIDE is coercing them into or facing its threatened consequences. The current cycle is officially titled The Grand Slam Tour," he added.

This was after FIDE said no agreement was reached with the Tour despite several concessions from its side.

"The Freestyle Chess Tour has chosen not to acknowledge FIDE's existing authority over the World Championship title and has opted to remain a pri vately organised tournament primarily featuring hand picked elite players, rather than an open and transparent qualification process," the FIDE

stated.

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