



## 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



**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 migrants 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.

## 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.

## 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 to ₹1050. 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

**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 Nandankanan 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 in-

volving 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.

## 16th FC team begins 4-day visit to state

**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 government 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 Commission (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 under 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 Museum 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

**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 dedicated to fighting for democracy in authoritarian countries around the world. Among the groups that won't be receiving critical funding is an organisation that trained poll workers to detect fraud in

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 should not just be restored — 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,



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

# leisure



## 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.



### FORTUNE FORECAST



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#### ARIES

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.

#### GEMINI

It will not be hard for you to complete your tasks successfully and without any delays or obstacles in your path, only if you first seek to fully understand and acquire the learning required to perform 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.

#### LEO

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.

#### VIRGO

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.

#### LIBRA

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 inheritance.

#### 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.

## Tamannaah's moment of self-transformation



**Mumbai:** Actress Tamannaah Bhatia recently opened up about a powerful moment of self-transformation during a challenging time on set.

During her recent appearance on a podcast, the actress recalled an incident. The *Baahubali* actress shared, "I'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 make-up, and I was playing a character. I couldn't cry at that moment. 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 intense 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.

## 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 hurt her anymore.

"I don't even consider these people a part of my life. Personally, I wouldn't waste my time leaving either negative or positive comments on someone's post. It's pointless. But some people have so much time and energy to leave negative comments. I honestly don't understand why they're so free," Isha said.

The actress said that there are days when she feels low and that's when she prefers talking to her parents. "When it comes to feeling numb, I don't give anyone the authority to hurt me anymore. I'm the only person who can hurt myself now. In the past, I allowed people to hurt me, but that's not the case anymore."

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 spread like wildfire."

## Priyanka hurt by dishonesty in past relationships



**Mumbai:** Priyanka Chopra shared that she was not quite sure about dating Nick Jonas and had few non-negotiables in mind because of her failed relationships in the past.

Priyanka 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. The second was that he had to appreciate the value of family."

Third: he had to take his profession very seriously, because I take mine very seriously. Fourth: I wanted someone who was creative and 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.

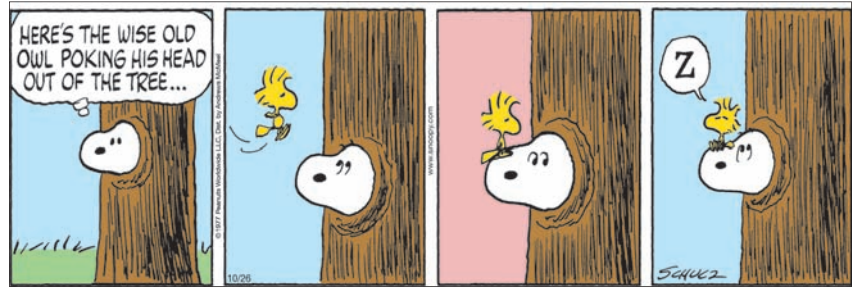
The actor then went on to add, "I wouldn't have married him if he didn't. You have to look for someone who respects you. Respect is different from love and affection... You've got to kiss a lot of frogs until you find your prince."

## VAGDEVI THEATRE FESTIVAL – DAY I



A scene from 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 the music.

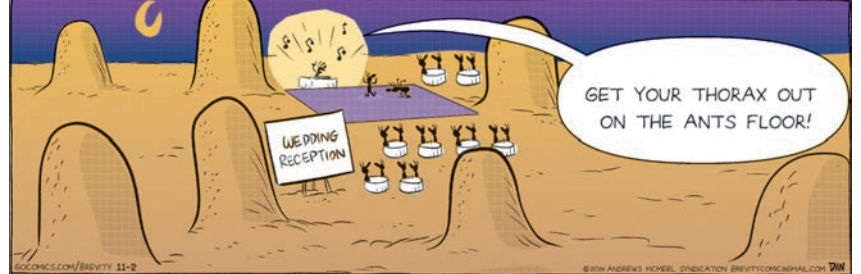
### PEANUTS



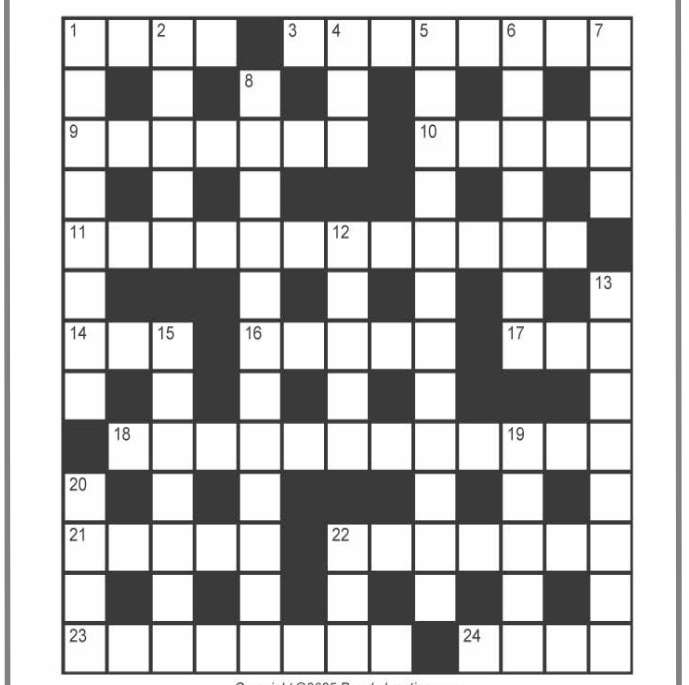
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



## CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Evict
  - 3 Disgraceful
  - 9 Type of rock
  - 10 Bedouins
  - 11 Inopportune
  - 14 Aardvark's tidbit
  - 16 Gallic goodbye
  - 17 Conclusion
  - 18 It borders Brazil and Suriname (6,6)
  - 21 Leave out
  - 22 Evil
  - 23 Shangri-la
  - 24 Winter toy
  - 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					
		8		7				5
	7			2				
	9	3						
	1	3	9				4	
	2		9		5	6		
3								4
5	7							1

## SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

T	H	E	R	M	A	L	P	I	N	T	O
A	R	A	E	A	I	V					
C	O	R	N	Y	M	E	L	A	N	G	E
I	A	F	A	L	J	R					
T	O	T	L	I	N	K	S	A	D	S	
I	O	S	E								
M	A	C	A	W	S	R	A	F	F	L	E
O	E	E	U								
N	A	P	R	O	G	E	R	R	I	O	
I	S		R	C	T	A					
T	R	A	M	P	L	E	H	O	I	S	T
O	L	R	S	I	V	H					
R	O	M	E	O	S	O	N	N	E	T	S

**SUDOKU**

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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



# downtown

## 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 commitment 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

**Our unwavering commitment fosters a pro-investment environment, providing robust support for businesses**

PRAVATI PARIDA | DY CM & TOURISM MINISTER

promising tourism markets, she said.

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

AGENCIES

**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 unattended. 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 receiving the consignments.

**सेंट्रल बँक ऑफ इंडिया** **Central Bank of India**

**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**

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

Due to the delay caused by pending legal proceedings, the Bank has decided to refund full application fees/ intimation charges to all eligible applicants.

**REFUND PROCESS:-**

- Dedicated Link:** A dedicated link for capturing complete account 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 DDMYYYYY format), the combination of above two credentials is mandatory for logging in the provided link.
- Required Details:** Name, Bank account number, IFSC code, Bank and Branch name.
- 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



AGENCIES

**Puri, Feb 4:** Thousands of people took a holy dip at Chandrabhaga beach at Konark in Puri district on the occasion of 'Magha Saptami' Tuesday.

Magha Saptami is observed as the 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 at Konark.

This year, the holy dip started at 4.37 am and the sadhus were given the first opportunity to take a dip.

Devotees take the dip at the confluence 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

AGENCIES

**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 special 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.

## 'Lathi' group to check obscene dance

AGENCIES

**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 Mela begins at Khandagiri Hills on 'Magha Saptami' 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.

## 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' journal.

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 world.

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, the authors wrote.

"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 wrote.

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

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

THE MOTHER

## Aid Freeze

What 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 its funding.

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 Israel and Egypt.

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.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

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.

CARL JUNG

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

BRUCE LEE

## 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.

## FOCUS AI

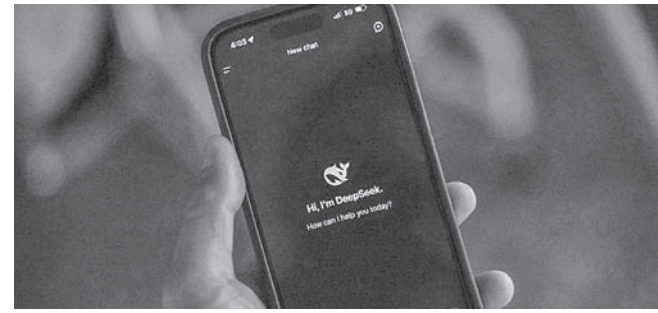
# IS DEEPSEEK A THREAT?

Thomas 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.

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 multi-billion-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 be 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 pro-

cess 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.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## IN JEST THIS

# Middle children are more humble

If you're a middle child, 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-

tries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Great Britain. As reported in *Psychology Today*, 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 agreeableness 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 Raj, 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, Priyanka is under her mom's shirt. When Anita is learning to jump and skip, Priyanka is learning to bump and trip. Not only is Priyanka 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." Priyanka 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 Priyanka 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 Raj? 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

to spoil their youngest child, 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."



Melvin Durai

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

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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

## 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.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH (JHARKHAND)

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



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.

CM Patel said his government is committed to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve of implement the UCC across the country. The panel will examine various aspects and take views of people from different walks of life, and an "appropriate decision" will be taken after perusing its report, the CM said.

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.

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

Ex-Army officer supports Manipur violence widows

In recognition of his efforts, Lt Col L Manongba (ret'd) 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 (ret'd) 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.

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

in the north-eastern state. "After retiring from the Army and spending some years in the corporate sector, I worked in Imphal as in-charge of the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (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 said.

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.

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 promoted 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.

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.

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.

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 contended 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 vehicle 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. 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 Dwarakesh 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 tip-off, 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 to communication, official signage, and documentation across the state. 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.

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 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.



BOBMC Rider Mania 2025, India's premier motorcycling event, being held for the first time in Gujarat at Dhordo, recognized as a 'Best Tourism Village' by UNWTO

BMC presents biggest-ever ₹74,427 crore budget

MUMBAI: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday presented a ₹74,427.41 crore budget, its biggest-ever, for financial year 2025-26 without any hike in taxes. Elections 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 surplus. "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 proposed in property tax or water tax, the administrator said.



It is shocking that the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has proposed property tax on small shops in slums

AADIYA THACKERAY | SENA (UBT) LEADER

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



of the day quote

We need to face the challenges of climate change and become resilient through understanding the problems, impacts of climate change, awareness, and adapting the changes. This will make our society climate literate

M K STALIN | TN CM

Why isn't Devendra Fadnis 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 to this

SANJAY RAUT | (SENA) UBT LEADER

As of now, the prime minister of Bhutan is coming to Kolkata on Wednesday. But I don't know 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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 'AAP-da' 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 talaq 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 jibe 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 Priyanka 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



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 of IIC-Bruegel here, Jaishankar, without naming any country, said that "in our continent, international law has been disregarded with significant consequences".

"Even on a question like democracy and military rule, different standards 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 connectivity, 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 fact very soon".

"Deeper India-EU collaboration is clearly in our mutual benefit," he said. Former foreign secretary Shyam Saran, and various diplomats and foreign policy experts, among others, attended the event.

"The world is currently witnessing 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 order unravelling", he said.

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 OF IIC-BRUEGEL HERE, JAISHANKAR, WITHOUT NAMING ANY COUNTRY, SAID THAT "IN OUR CONTINENT, INTERNATIONAL LAW HAS BEEN DISREGARDED WITH SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES"

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 deported.

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

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

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

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 before crashing into a roadside tree.

1 killed, 7 injured in road accidents

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 motorcyclist 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 back-to-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.

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 Mahajan 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 be 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 bytes 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.

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

New Delhi: President of the UN General Assembly Philomena 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."

BJD's Debashish Samantaray sought national festival status for Bali Jatra. The festival is held on the banks of Mahanadi river every year to mark the time of the year when mariners from the state set sail to Bali, Sumatra and Java in Indonesia, Borneo and Sri Lanka in ancient times for the expansion of trade and culture. 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 water recharging be used to solve the problem of flooding of railway line underpasses.

PT Usha (Nominated) sought setting up of AIIMS at Kinaloor in Kozhikode district of Kerala. Raising the issue of impact of climate change on agriculture, S Selvagabathry (BJP) said erratic weather patterns have impacted crop yield, causing great loss to farmers. He wanted new varieties of seeds that withstand weather vagaries to be tested.



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, RITABRATA BANERJEE SAID. "OUR STATE'S NAME NEEDS TO BE CHANGED. THE MANDATE OF THE PEOPLE OF WEST BENGAL NEEDS TO BE HONOURED"



# national



**We told the EC 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 due to fear**  
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP NATIONAL CONVENOR

## 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.



### of the day uote

There is no rise in any kind of tax or cess. It is a people-centric budget. The budget is the one that gives relief to a common man and has taken care of health, education, environment  
EKNATH SHINDE | MAHA DY CM

The Delhi government has confined the needy to Mohalla Clinics, which only provide first-aid, with no coverage under the Ayushman Bharat scheme for hospital admissions during health emergencies  
NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

There has been talk about one nation, one election, but in a small state like Delhi where there are institutions like Parliament, Supreme Court, and still incidents of hooliganism are taking place blatantly  
SANJAY SINGH | AAP LEADER

# 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, political, 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.

to figure out if Bangladesh will take these people out. Bangladesh is refusing. India says they are not Indians. Bangladesh says they are not Bangladeshis. 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.

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.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta expressed apology for the lacunae 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 near future.

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



A polling official carrying EVMs and other election materials arrives at a polling centre at Gole Market ahead of Delhi Assembly poll

## RG KAR FINANCIAL SCAM

# Sandip Ghosh, four others seek exemption from case

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, Feb 4:** The five accused 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-cum-bodyguard 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-

viduals by February 6. Recently, Ghosh also 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

AGENCIES

**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 Prasad 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.

## POST OF THE DAY

**Breaking!** Modi G's Fraand Doland Trump started deporting Indian migrants back to India, sent 200 people as first installment Hope all do Enjoy Amritkal created by Modi-G in India Meanwhile Rohingyas are laughing at Anhd Bhakts @DrJain21

## 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 the police to ask commuters 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 Berthina.

### 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.

# '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 out 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 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 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 AKFI - 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 appraised the court about the affairs of AKFI through their counsel senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan. Justice Surya Kant said if there was anything wrong with the election of the governing body of AKFI, then the court would not hesitate in ordering a fresh election 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.

# international

### of the day quote

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

**FU CONG | REPRESENTATIVE TO UN AMBASSADOR, CHINA**

**To secure our economic freedom, rather than succumbing to weakness in the global economic system and being overwhelmed by its every fluctuation, we must unite in our efforts for this motherland**

**ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE | PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA**

**Now, we are fully striving to head toward economic growth. This is the main challenge. All of our energies will be focused on economic growth. Just like other targets, we will achieve this too**

**SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PRIME MINISTER, PAKISTAN**

## China launches limited tariffs

REUTERS

**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 Trump.

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 UK-based 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 later



### EU wants early US talks to avert Trump tariffs

**Warsaw:** The European Union wants to engage swiftly with the United States over President Donald Trump's planned tariffs, trade chief Maros Sefcovic said Tuesday, while his boss Ursula von der Leyen stressed the bloc would protect its interests in 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, financier 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 Leyen, 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.

Additional 10% tariff takes effect 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 metals exports

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.

### 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 states who have paid their regular budget assessments in full and on time to the UN. According to the UN Committee on Contributions, as of January 31 2025, thirty-five 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.



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



## 10 killed in Swedish school shooting

REUTERS

**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 people 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 Robert 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

ATTACKER'S MOTIVE UNKNOWN, INVESTIGATION UNDERWAY

PRIME MINISTER KRISTERSOON 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 also 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

REUTERS

**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 Zelenskyy'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 elections
- Trump team suggests Ukraine hold elections by year-end
- Peace push spurs signs of growing political activity
- 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 Zelenskyy 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

operation last May.

Last week, Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko, a potential presidential challenger, accused Zelenskyy'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, Zelenskyy'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 Zelenskyy's camp and that politicians were probably jumping the gun if they saw an election looming.

"It's a false start in my opinion," he said.

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, say elections before the war ends could undermine national unity.

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.



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

## 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 Syed 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 document issued to registered Afghan 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 government 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 3,00,000 tourists.



"We are conducting it as a very big campaign. For the first time, we are targeting to hire a brand ambassador to advertise in the Indian mass media. We are also trying to hold cricket summer camps in Maldives," he said.

The MMPRC is also working

with airlines, both Indian and Maldivian, to bring tourists from more destinations in India, Ghiyas said. They are targeting to fly from newer destination cities such as Kolkata, 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.



**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.



**Business**

**of the day quote**

**The fiscal policy and the monetary policy need to work in tandem, not at cross purposes**

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

**We are working on multiple, actually three options, where we take a chipset which is at some reasonable level available in open source or available as a licensed thing, and then build upon that to build our own GPU. That's the approach the entire world has followed and that approach will be able to give us India's own GPU in the time frame of three to five years**

**While India's simple average tariff is 17 per cent, the actual duties on key US imports are much lower**

**Domestic demand to boost growth: S&P**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 underpending," 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, it added.

"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 FY31, roughly 7 per cent below the target in FY25.

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

**Sensex, Nifty buck global trade war fears**



Stock	Change
ADANI PORTS	+3.83%
INDUSIND BANK	+3.50%
TATA MOTORS	+3.38%
RELIANCE	+3.28%
ITC HOTELS	-4.16%
ZOMATO	-1.57%
NESTLE INDIA	-0.81%
MARUTI	-0.23%
TECH MAHINDRA	-0.11%

**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 in- stead 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 BSE-listed 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 market struggled to absorb the optimism generated by the good Union Budget due to heightened geopolitical risks stemming from 'Trump tariff war'. However, India could outperform in a weak global market, and as a rebound has been triggered 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 USD 75.16 a barrel.

**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 liquidity.

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 empaneled with exchanges.

The past study of Sebi in F&O trading revealed that around 97 per cent of PFI 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 amid geopolitical uncertainty**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**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 also 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 released 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.

**Freedom announces winners of gold offer**

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,

while two others won 10-gram gold coins. The promotional scheme received overwhelming participation, with a total of 5,500 winners across states, including Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh.

Chetan 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.



**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 data. The data was shared by Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Harsh Malhotra to the Rajya Sabha as part of a written reply Tuesday. As per the data, 17,654 companies have been shuttered in the current financial year till January 26. The figure includes companies that have been amalgamated, converted into LLPs, liquidated/dissolved and struck off from the official records. The count of shuttered companies stood at 22,044 and 84,801 in 2023-24 and 2022-23, respectively.

**Tata Power net profit up 10%**

**New Delhi:** Tata Power Tuesday posted a 10 per cent on-year 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 quarter 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 under review, from Rs 15,294 crore in the same period a year ago. "We have delivered a sustained PAT growth trajectory over the last 21 quarters and all our businesses have been contributing to this growth," said Praveer Sinha, CEO and Managing Director, Tata Power.

**NSE profit surges 94%**

**New Delhi:** Leading stock exchange NSE Tuesday reported a 94 per cent year-on-year surge in consolidated profit after tax to Rs 3,834 crore for three months ended December 2024. It posted a Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs 1,975 crore in the year-ago period. The exchange witnessed a 21 per cent year-on-year growth in total income to Rs 4,807 crore in the October-December quarter of the current financial year (FY25) against Rs 3,974 crore in the corresponding quarter of 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-on-year to Rs 9,538 crore.

**'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 history" 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



eight years after he founded it. 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 happy 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 otherwise," he said.

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 damning 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 factors 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."

# Varun in Indian ODI squad

**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 Chakravarty 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 Chakravarty 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 Chakravarty before the final squad is announced. A lot will depend on how he fares in the ODIs.

Chakravarty, 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.

Chakravarty was seen training and bowling in the nets Tuesday.

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

"The Men's Selection Committee has added Varun Chakravarty 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 Chakravarty 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-spin-

ner 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 the 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 ODI games."

"But if team management

wants Varun, it will certainly have to speak to the chairman of selection committee. Whether they intend to or not, is still not known."

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

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

**Yes, Varun Chakravarty 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 entity 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.

Chakravarty 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 Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohd Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Varun Chakravarty.

38TH NATIONAL GAMES

# Odisha eves 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 Munday—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 performances.

All the players and the entire Odisha contingent thanked Prof Achyuta Samanta, President, Odisha Volleyball Association, Honorary General Secretary, Odisha Volleyball Association, Government of Odisha, Department of Sports and Youth Services (DSYS), and the Odisha Olympic Association for facilitating 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-year-old 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 Iryna 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. Maaya 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 out persons who monopolised 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 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 and resolution of conflicts and recognition of sports associations, including the Kabaddi federation.

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.

# Satish, Aadya's mixed doubles glory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 4:** What happens when two singles players join forces in doubles? It could go either way, but for Satish Kumar Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath, 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 Rambhaya and Akshaya Warang



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 Jivnanathan 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.

Aadya added: "So, since last April, we have tried to train in KL. 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

The 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 long-term visa. We are trying, but 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 Malaysia 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," Satish said. So how does he balance the two formats? "I have been playing mixed doubles since U-17.

# 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 privately organised tournament, primarily featuring hand-picked elite players, rather than an open and transparent qualification process," the FIDE stated.