

Candid take

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu says actors are 'narcissistic' by nature but they never admit it

LEISURE | P2



Plane crash kills 4

A US military-contracted plane crashes in a rice field in southern Philippines Thursday, killing all four people on board

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Gold's new peak

Continuing the record-setting trend, gold prices climb ₹270 to hit a new lifetime high of ₹86,070 per 10 gram

BUSINESS | P11



India beat Eng

India defeat England by four wickets in the opening ODI to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series

SPORTS | P12

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CLASS X EXAM

Stringent measures to check paper leaks

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, Feb 6: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE) in the state is set to introduce stringent measures to prevent question paper leaks and malpractices in the upcoming Class X examination, an official said Thursday. Also known as the High School Certificate (HSC) examination, the fortnight-long test in the state's academic calendar is scheduled to begin February 21.

Addressing a press conference here, BSE president Srikant Tarai said the Board has incorporated advanced security features such as QR codes, watermarks, and unique serial numbers on question papers to maintain integrity and confidentiality.

SHORT **TAKES**

Gwalior: A Mirage-2000 fighter aircraft of Indian Air Force (IAF) crashed in an agriculture field in Madhva Pradesh's Shivpuri a snag, a Defence spokesperson were being airlifted to Gwalior by a helicopter, he said. The twinseater trainer aircraft caught fire after crashing in a farmland near Barheta Sani village at around 2:40pm, said the Central Air Inquiry has been ordered into the incident, he added.

Rupee hits another low of 87.59 against USD

Mumbai: Rupee plunged 16 paise to close at an all-time low of 87.59 against the US dollar Thursday, as rising odds of a rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India in its monetary policy meeting Friday pressurised the rupee. Forex traders said the Indian rupee plunged to fresh record lows amid weak domestic markets and

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



out of 32 exit polls, 18 are in our favour

IAF Mirage fighter jet crashes in MP

district Thursday after developing said. Both pilots ejected safely and Command spokesperson, adding a snag led to the accident. A Court of

Hours after a US Globemaster aircraft carrying 104 deported migrants landed in Amritsar, marking the first mass deportation of Indians by the Donald Trump administration, a united Opposition launched a scathing attack on the Modi government. Raising the issue of humiliation importer demand for dollars. meted out to the Indian nationals during the journey, Opposition MPs lamented the government's stoic silence over the US highhandedness. With India lacking a law to ensure the safe and humane deportation of immigrants, the Opposition demanded a de-

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 6: Opposition parties Thursday forced repeated adjournments in Lok

tailed statement from External

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar,

who later clarified that India is

currently working on a new leg-

islation for safe deportation of its

citizens. The NDA government is,

however, yet to explain as to why

India did not send its own plane

to bring back the citizens with

dignity and respect

NEW LAW FOR SAFE MIGRATION

In the wake of deportation of 104 illegal immigrants by US, the Centre is considering enactment of a new legislation to establish an enabling framework that will promote safe, orderly and regular migration for overseas employment. The proposed legislation on Emigration (Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) circular mobility of people intending to emigrate for overseas employment. P9

ans living illegally in US, even as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar asserted India is engaging the Trump administration to ensure that deportees are not mistreated during Lok Sabha was adjourned on four occasions as Opposition

members trooped into the Well

of the House and raised slogans

Sabha over deportation of Indi-

to bolster border enforcement efforts, at Cancun International Airport

over handcuffing of deportees from US during their journey to India. Jaishankar read a statement in Lok Sabha amid noisy protests by the Opposition. The Lok Sabha was scheduled to take up a discussion on the

nance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman February 1. Several Opposition lead-

Union Budget presented by Fi-

ers, including Congress' Deputy Leader in the Lower House Gauray Gogoi. had submitted notices to move an adjournment motion over the mistreatment of deportees from the US. Lok Sabha was first adjourned during Question Hour and later at 12 noon when the presiding officer allowed the tabling of parliamentary papers.

TIGHT VIGIL: Members of Mexico's National Guard queue up to board a plane bound for the northern border after Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum agreed with US President Donald Trump

Similar scenes were witnessed when the House reconvened at 2pm, leading to an adjournment till 3:30pm.

Amid the sloganeering, Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal informed the Lower House that Jaishankar would make a statement on the deportations at 3:30pm, raising exwould resume after the external affairs minister's statement.

Jaishankar said US policy on dealing with immigration had provisions to use restraints during deportations and the government would engage with the US to ensure that there was no mistreatment of returning deportees.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the proceedings for the day as the Opposition protests continued after Jaishankar's statement.

Earlier in the day, Opposition MPs protested the treatment meted out to the Indians by US authorities by staging a demonstration in Parliament complex.

"We, the INDIA parties, shall not tolerate the humiliation of Indian nationals, Modi Government must come out with a detailed statement on the deportation and why did we not send our own planes to bring back the Indians, with dignity and respect, instead of a military plane landing on our soil." Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X.

preserve marsupial eggs and

State places ₹12.59L-cr demand before 16th FC POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: The state government Thursday placed a demand of ₹12.59 lakh crore before the 16th Finance Commission headed by Aravind Panagariya.

The demand was placed before the 16th Finance Commission team at a meeting with the state government team led by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi here.

Giving breakup of the state's demand of ₹12.59 lakh crore, Majhi said Odisha sought ₹9,88,422 crore as the pre-devolution revenue deficit, ₹1,10,434 crore towards state specific bodies, ₹1.00.036 crore towards grant to local bodies, ₹31,004 crore for State Disaster Re sponse Fund (SDRF) and ₹29,252 crore towards State Disaster Mitigation Fund.

The commission is on a four day visit to the state.

Different states will get grants from the Centre based on the recommendation of the 16th Finance Commission.

have

demanded

₹12,59,148 crore for the next five years from 2026 to 2031. Odisha government has also demanded enhancement of the state's share in central devolution pool to 50 per cent from the existing 41 per cent," Majhi told reporters. The state also asked the Finance Commission to make provision of 100 per cent grant under SDRF from the Centre and to increase the state's share in central tax from 4.528 per cent to 4.964 per cent.

Humanity, not cuff: Oppn 'National fair' tag Hours after a US Globemaster aircraft currying 101 departed. NEW LAW FOR SAFE MICRATION Pectation that the proceedings would resume after the external would resume after the external open and the company of the proceedings aircraft currying 101 departed. NEW LAW FOR SAFE MICRATION

The Centre's decision to accord 'national fair' status to Bali Yatra will put the famous event on par with fairs like India International Trade Fair (IITF) which will promote the country's industries and products on a large scale, attracting both domestic and international participants. The fair may receive additional support from the government in terms of promotion, logistics, and infrastructure. However, such promotion may result in diluting the historic and cultural significance of the majestic fair which symbolises ancient Kalinga's maritime prowess that not only set traditions across seas but also drew participation from the hinterlands of eastern and central India since time immemorial

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: Bali Yatra, the ancient maritime fair organised in Millennium City of Cuttack every year, has been accorded the much awaited 'national fair' tag.



Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat informed about this in a written reply in Raiva Sabha Thursday. According to sources, the

move will attract more exhibitors and increase its visibility. Moreover, the fair may re

ceive additional support from the government in terms of promotion, logistics, and in frastructure. Earlier, Biju Janata Dal's

Rajya Sabha MP Debashish Samantaray had requested the Union government to accord 'national fair' status to the his toric Bali Yatra.

Man dies at de-addiction centre; family cries murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: Death of a 24-year-old man at a de-addiction centre under mysterious circumstances here Thursday morning sparked controversy after his family members levelled murder charges against the authorities, reportedly over non-payment of fees.

The deceased was identified as Prashant Navak, a native of Nayagarh district.

Laxmisagar police station IIC P Shyam Sundar Rao said, Prashant was lodged at the facility near Mahadev Nagar by his family members around five months ago. Police enquiries revealed that a tiff ensued between the authorities and Prashant's family after the latter failed to settle a bill of ₹27,000. A few days ago, authorities thwarted Prashant's release when his father approached them to take him home.

Meanwhile, medical reports suggested that Prashant's BP shot up to 195/105, Wednesday night when he was administered pills that brought down his BP. "However, some inmates said he collapsed when he sat down for breakfast. He was then taken to Capital Hospital where doctors declared him dead on arrival", said a cop, citing the CCTV footage of the facility. His family, however, alleged that he was beaten to death. A probe is underway.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sydney, Feb 6: In a first, a team of scientists from University of Queensland in Australia have produced kangaroo embryos through in vitro fertilization (IVF), in a development they said could help conservation of endangered animals. The researchers made the eastern grey kangaroo embryos using intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), a technique widely used in human IVF, in which a sperm is injected into a mature egg, according to a study published Thursday.

Lead researcher Andres Gambini said that the groundbreaking achievement could support the conservation of Australia's endangered iconic

marsupials, including koalas, wombats, possums and Tasmanian devils. "We aim to safeguard the genetic material of these unique and precious animals for future use to ensure their conservation," he said in a media release.

'While it's difficult to provide an exact timeline, with sustained collaboration, funding and continued technical advancements, we are hopeful the birth of a marsupial through IVF could become a reality within a decade, Gambini added. Eastern gray kangaroos were chosen as the subject of the research because of their overabundance.

Unlike artificial insemination, ICSI does not require abundant live sperm cells, with



only one being injected directly into the egg. Gambini said that reported In 2022, the Australian govthe team is now refining techniques to collect, culture and

sperm, Xinhua news agency

ernment unveiled a decade-long initiative aimed at preventing plan encompasses strategies to conserve over 30 per cent of the nation's land area and to safeguard 110 priority species throughout the country. A 2023 report from the

additional extinctions. This

non-profit organisation Australian Conservation Foundation indicates that over 2,200 species and ecosystems in Australia are currently recognised as being at risk of extinction.

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) is one of several techniques avail able to help people with fertility problems have a baby. During IVF, an egg is removed from the woman's ovaries and fertilised with sperm in a laboratory. The fertilised egg, called an embryo. is then returned to the woman's womb to grow and develop.

eisure



DE NIRO TO STAR IN THE WHISPER MAN

Hollywood legend Robert De Niro has been signed for The Whisper Man. The film is an adaptation of Alex North's crime thriller novel. James Ashcroft is set to direct the film with Ben Jacoby and Chase Palmer adapting the screenplay, reports Female First UK.

AFFLECK TO STAR, DIRECT CRIME THRILLER ANIMALS

Ben Affleck's crime thriller Animals has been revived, with the Hollywood star now set to take on the lead role in the movie. Affleck had initially considered Animals as his next project last year but had only planned to direct.



UNE FORECAST

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Today, you will crave total freedom in whatever you are doing, says Ganesha. And sheer entertainment is on the cards for teenyboppers, like mall-hopping or going for a film. The kids will demand a Jumbo Berry ice cone. All in all, it will be a family day for you.

TAURUS

In all probability, it is a favourable day to begin financial planning, says Ganesha. You will focus on your relations and leave no stone unturned to make them prosper. You may yearn for a quiet getaway and end up spending a small fortune to get what you want.

GEMINI

You will spend the day safeguarding sentiments of others and it is in your own interest. For most part of the day, probably the entire day, you will be away from your family, mostly on a trip for business or leisure purposes. Today, having a successful career will be only thing on your mind.

CANCER

You are a master of deception, and your sugar-coated comments play a pivotal role in your methods. Today, you will be able to smell trouble from a distance, and will know when to take a U-turn. Your methods may not make you very popular with the so-called moral brigade working with you, but you may think that this is the easiest way to the top.

Ever been surprised at your own abilities? Today you shall be, says Ganesha. With the perfect blend of amicable gestures and lack of inimical actions, you are poised to become the cynosure of all occasions. The day will bring to the fore your flexible nature, moderate views, and your mature mannerisms in a cocktail that is as heady as the best blend.

VIRGO

You will shine exceedingly well in all the activities that you undertake today. Your dream of starting business operations on foreign shores will fructify today, says Ganesha. You may pay more attention to your personal appearance, which will boost your morale considerably.

LIBRA

Some days are full of new ideas. Today is one such day as you radiate diligence and intelligence. Consider it an auspicious moment to begin new business schemes, especially if you happen to be self-employed. Today, able to think at a level and clearer than the rest. But, as happens when you focus more on work, it comes at the cost of family time. Maintain a balance, advises Ganesha.

SCORPIO

Dig in deep and keep yourself in the hunt, says Ganesha. Karma matters, but don't give much thought to the outcome. In matters of joint ventures, adopt a wait-and-watch approach today.

SAGITTARIUS

To do or not to do? That will be the question for most of today as you find yourself pulling out of one dilemma only to trip into the next one. Controversy will surround you and you may find yourself at the crossroads, where you are unsure of which direction to take. Turn to the wisdom of the experienced for proper guidance, advises Ganesha.

CAPRICORN The most intimidating of ventures can prove successful if fortune favours you; you will be fortunate today, says Ganesha. Those of you dealing in stocks and shares can expect a profitable day ahead, but don't forget to give credit to your spouse; it will be their luck working wonders for you.

AQUARIUS

Bursting with new ideas, you want to make the world a better place! You will give your best in a team and will come up with great schemes and solutions. At gatherings, says Ganesha, you Bulls remain your charming self

PISCES Home is where the hearth is. in which the troubles you need to deal with today are smouldering. Running away from your problems will simply have you out of breath; it would be wiser to take a stand and find solutions to petty conflicts without losing your perspective. Make no mountains out of mole hills, says Ganesha.



Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna recently took to social media to share a powerful message about kindness.

The actress, known for her roles in films across various languages, posted a series of her photos along with a thoughtful caption that read, "Kindness is so underrated these days. I choose kindness and everything that comes with it. Let's all be kind to each other." The post was accompanied by serene, cheerful photos of the actress, adding a personal touch to her meaningful

Meanwhile, danna is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film Chhaava, where she stars alongside Vicky Kaushal. The

> recently attended promotional event in Hyderabad, where Vicky was seen helping the actress climb a staircase.

The Pushpa actress sustained a severe injury to her right foot during a gym session. Rashmika also shared a heartwarming photo

featuring them on her Instagram, captioning it, "You as Vicky Kaushal and as Raaje are most definitely a toofan. You truly have a way of making all of us feel very special. It was so lovely to have you in Hyderabad... and next time, please do allow me to host you properly.



Loveyapa. While he's all out promoting this love story, it seems like a new love story has begun for Aamir in his personal life. The actor who announced divorce from his wife Kiran Rao in 2021 seems to have found love again. Aamir is in a relationship with someone and a few days ago, it was also reported that he made his new ladylove meet his family, thus is quite serious about her.

The actor who is about to turn 60-years old in March, is reportedly dating a woman from Bangalore. Pinkvilla has now reported that this mystery woman's name is Gauri and she has no connection to Bollywood.

While Aamir has not yet confirmed this news, he had recently said that he's quite emotional and romantic when he's in love. The actor had said at the trailer launch event of his son's film Loveyapa, "I'm very romantic, it may sound funny to you, but please ask both my wives. So, all my favourite films are romantic. I get lost in ro-

I'm a believer of true love. As we grow in life, our understanding of love evolves. AGENCIES



Mumbai: Pun-

Diljit's tips to bust stress

bat ten sion in routine life.

took to his Instagram, and shared a video in which he can be seen giving advice to people on how to keep tension at bay. The video shows Diljit treating the tension of different people with one slogan, "Tension mitra nun hai nahi". He wrote in the caption, "Tension, ye

The actor-singer

(Tension - Who all have this disease?)".

One of the instances in the video also shows Diljit poking fun at the government advisories on his shows when international music artists don't get issued any such advisory. Diljit appeared to me making a backhanded comment on the recently concluded Coldplay shows in

Earlier, the actor-singer had shared the first look from his upcoming movie Punjab 95. He took to his Instagram, and shared an array of pictures in which he can be seen in his character from the film.

The film is based on the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra. He was the director of a bank in the city of Amritsar in Punjab during the militancy period in Punjab.

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

9

5

3

9

SUDOKU

Samantha said

Hyderabad:

Ruth Prabhu

is known for

sharing her

health updates

and mental

health journey

with her fans and followers.

In a recent

interview, the

ing mechanisms.

actress stated that actors are 'narcissistic' by

difficulty of coping with these challenges.

Speaking to GQ India, Samantha shared that the

entertainment industry often amplifies self-doubt and

insecurities, making it even more important to find cop-

The Kushi actress mentioned that she initially felt im-

mense pressure to conform and seek validation in the film

industry. She highlighted how the nature of the profession,

with constant travel and living out of suitcases, adds to the

feeding into your worst insecurities, your biggest demons...

actors are narcissistic. Let's admit it. So just imagine: you're

narcissistic and then surround yourself with people who only

tell you what you want to hear. It's a recipe for self-sabotage.

Before you know it, you could be spiralling out of control,

"It gets really, really lonely, and this job has a way of

nature but they never admit it.

Samantha



'Actors are narcissistic'

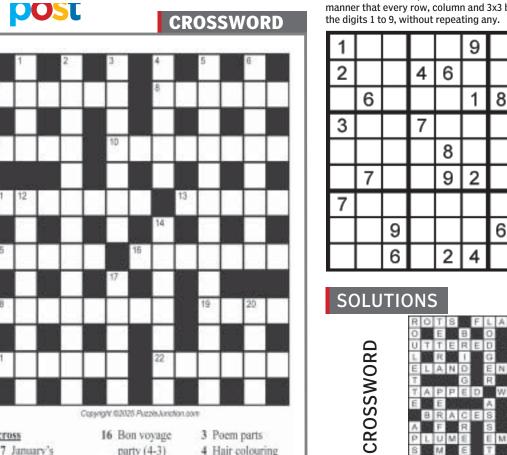
CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



Bimari Kis Kis Ko Hai?



Copyright 62025 Puzzle Amotion com

16 Bon voyage

Acr	OSS	
_	January's	
	birthstone	

9 Plant fibre

freshness

- party (4-3) 18 Go-between
- 8 Give a pep talk 19 Basilica area
 - 21 Amati
 - 22 Tibetan guide
- 10 Hogwash
- 11 Paving material
- 13 Hunter's lure Down 15 Symbol of

 - 1 Stopping point 2 Tireless

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

- 17 British guns

12 Pedagogue

3 Poem parts

(7,6)

(5-3)

4 Hair colouring

6 Cold-shoulder

14 Doc's order (3,4)

5 Shrewd operator

- 20 Gullible sorts

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

SUDOKU

owntown

HONOUR

Singer Manmath Mishra receives Nadabrahma Samman 2025 at an event in Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



Residents, stakeholders welcome 'national' status to Bali Yatra

Cuttack, Feb 6: The Central government's grant of 'national' recognition to Bali Yatra has triggered excitement among residents of the City and various stakeholders.

The festival, rooted in the Odisha's maritime trade heritage, has long been seeking this acknowledgment, with formal demands dating back to 2019 under the previous BJD dispensation in the state. The recognition has finally been made after a five-year wait

Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Mayor Subhas Singh said the Central government provides financial assistance of ₹2,000-3,000 crore for the Kumbh Mela, "Now, Bali Yatra is expected to receive similar Central funding. This recognition is expected to elevate Bali Yatra to a national-level fair, attracting visitors from across India and beyond. Businesses from different regions and international delegates, including ambassadors, are also likely to participate,' he said.

Cuttack (Barabati) MLA Sofia Firdosh said she had earlier raised the issue of granting national recognition to the Bali Yatra in the Assembly. 'Thanks to everyone's efforts. this has become possible. However, it is necessary to consider how small businesses can benefit from it. Promotion of Bali Yatra at the national level should be carried out more extensively," she said.

Sasmita Rath, a writer who lives in Darghabazar area said such commercial fairs are not



seen elsewhere in the country. "The Bali Yatra has been intrinsically connected with the people of Cuttack for centuries. There has been a long standing demand for it to receive national recognition. This will undoubtedly contribute to the development of Odisha," she

"The national recognition of Bali Yatra by the Centre is a significant step. This recognition brings pride and joy to the people of Odisha as it now appears on India's map. Odisha is sure to progress even further," said Abha Kanungoo, president, Odisha Nari Seva Sangha, Cuttack.

Senior railway workers union leader Utkal Bhusan Routray said the national recognition of the historic Bali Yatra is deeply appreciated. "As a resident of Cuttack, I am filled with immense joy and satisfaction with the Central government's announcement,

Previously organised on

a 10-acre site, Bali Yatra has already expanded to 34 acres, thanks to the state government support. With national recognition, the festival is set to grow even further, poten-

tially covering 100 acres. The

event duration is also likely

to extend from the usual eight

or nine days to 15 days, CMC

sources said. The district administration and CMC have been jointly organising the festival. But with national status, Central government officials will now be involved in its management. Unlike other large-scale events, Bali Yatra faces no environmental restrictions from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) as it does not involve any permanent construction.

Nevertheless, with this transformation, Bali Yatra will no longer remain just Odisha's festival, it will become a grand national celebration, drawing visitors and commercial interests from all corners of the

Mumbai duo held for ₹32.81L fraud

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: The Cyber Police Thursday arrested two Mumbai residents for allegedly siphoning off ₹32.81 lakh from a city businessman who mistakenly transferred the money to the formers' bank account.

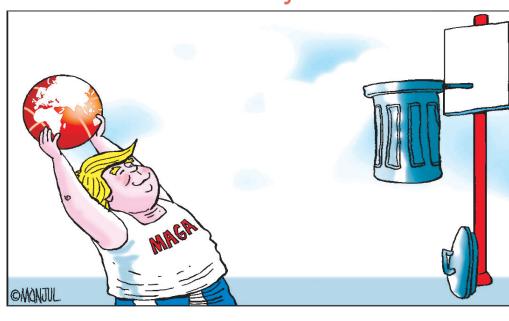
The duo managed to evade arrest for over a month before being apprehended, said Cyber Police Inspector-In-Charge (IIC) Tereskova Mohapatra.

Mohapatra identified the arrested duo as Neha Naresh More and Prashant Shivbahadur Ya dav, residents of Mulund (west) and Ghatkopar (west), respectively. Investigations revealed that the duo had transferred the money to another account before withdrawing a minor chunk for their immediate needs

According to the complaint, the victim, a business executive at Fortis Chemicals Private Limited, had accidentally transferred ₹32,81,894 to Arya Logistics December 20 while attempting to make a payment to his business partner. Mohapatra said after receiving the amount, Neha, who is the proprietor of Arya Logistics allegedly took her partner Prashant's help in transferring the amount to his personal account. Meanwhile, upon realising the mistake, the victim reached out to Prashant to return the money. However, Prashant allegedly refused and blocked the victim's phone number. Thereafter, the victim lodged a complaint at Cyber Police station. Mohapatra said when the Cyber police personnel reached at Neha's residence in Mumbai they found her missing. The same was observed in Prashant's case, she said.

Subsequently, the police served a notice under Section 35 (3) of the BNSS Act, resulting in their arrest

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CENTRAL DIVISIBLE POOL

Many states demand rise of share to 50pc: Panagariya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: Many states have demanded enhancement of their share from the existing 41 per cent to 50 per cent from the Central Divisible Pool, 16th Finance Commission Chairman Aravind Panagariya said here Thursday.

Several states also wanted a portion of the cess and surcharge being imposed by the Central government, he said.

The divisible pool is that portion of gross tax revenue which is distributed between the Centre and the states. Surcharges and cess are not part of the pool.

"The commission has visited several states and held consulta-

tions. Maximum states demanded an increase in the share in the Central pool to 50 per cent. Only one or two states have demanded a 45 per cent rise," Panagariya said. Panagariya was talking to reporters after a discussion with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. The Commission is on a four-day visit to the state.

He said that the Odisha government is also in favour of making cess and surcharges collected by the Union government a part of the divisible pool for distribution among the states. On the demand for Special Category status for the natural calamity-prone Odisha, he said the subject is not coming under the purview of the

Finance Commission, Earlier the Planning Commission used to provide such status but NITI Aayog came into its place and no state has got the tag, he said.

Panagariya said, "The Central government is imposing cess and surcharges and 100 per cent of those funds directly go to the budget of the Centre But, the Odisha government demanded that the cess and surcharges be brought to the divisible pool so that states can also get a share."

The Odisha government has also raised its demand for revis ing the weightage fixed under different criteria while distrib uting the divisible pool funds among the states, he said.



Every person's resolution Filariasis (elephantiasis) free India

Our resolution is-Healthcare for All "



Shri Narendra Modi (Prime Minister)

February 10 is an important day for the country's fight against filariasis.

Filariasis is spread by mosquito bites; its symptoms appear 5-15 years after the bite; it can cause elephantiasis and swelling in the hydrocele.

Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign will run for 2 weeks from 10 February 2025 in 111 districts of 13 states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal)

From this day onwards, health workers will come to your home and give you medicine to prevent filariasis, you must take it.

These medicines are also available free of cost at your nearest MDA booth by the government.

For more information, contact your nearest Health center and Asha Didi



Let us all together make **India Filariasis Free**







For more details, visit https://rbikehtahai.rbi.org.in/ul For feedback, write to rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in



downtown



Govt intensifies efforts to curb road accidents

enforcement, upgrade infrastructure, and minimise road accidents

A three-year action

plan by IIT Madras

road security force

comprising retired

dent-prone areas, commonly

known as black spots. They

identified several engineering

flaws in the road infrastructure

that contribute to accidents.

These issues will be reported

to the relevant departments

for immediate rectification.

To further enhance road safe-

ty, awareness campaigns will

be intensified in high-risk ar-

eas to encourage responsible

A key area of discussion was

the role of citizen participation

in road safety initiatives. The

administration is looking at

ways to involve the public more

of a specialised

soldiers and

ex-servicemen

includes the creation



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: The Odisha government has intensified efforts to curb road accidents in the state by strengthening enforcement, improving infrastructure, and enhancing public awareness. As part of this initiative, a team from IIT Madras, in collaboration with the state government, recently with Director General of Police (DGP) YB Khurania to discuss road safety measures.

Following this meeting, the IT Madras team visited Berhampur in Ganjam district Thursday, where they held discussions with Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M and IIT Madras Professor Venkatesh Balsubramanian.

The discussions primarily focused on identifying the root causes of accidents in the district, including overspeeding and drunk driving, and formulating effective countermea-

During their visit, the IIT Madras team inspected acci-

actively in promoting road discipline. To strengthen enforcement, authorities have decided to increase traffic monitoring. particularly during peak accident hours, to deter reckless The Odisha government has

reaffirmed its commitment to reducing road accidents through a multi-pronged approach that includes strict enforcement, infrastructure improvements, and awareness campaigns. DGP Khurania has stressed the need for comprehensive measures, prioritising strict enforcement by the police and transport departments.

A three-year action plan was presented by IIT Madras, which has been engaged by the state to improve road safety. The plan includes the creation of a specialised road security force comprising retired soldiers and ex-servicemen.

Additionally, a proposal has been put forward to observe 'Zero Accident Day' in Bhubaneswar, aiming to promote safe driving practices.

Beyond enforcement and awareness, the government is also focusing on post-accident care. Special measures, in collaboration with the health department, are being explored to improve trauma care services for accident victims. Plans include upgrading trauma care centres and ensuring better medical response times.

Also, road engineering improvements will be carried out in partnership with road construction companies. A comprehensive road signage audit will be conducted, and accident-prone areas will be systematically identified and



SPORTS FERVOUR: Adjacent streets of Barabati Stadium dazzle with lights ahead of India-England ODI cricket match to be held in Cuttack, Sunday

BJD opposes draft UGC regulations

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) opposed the draft UGC Regulations, 2025 and rejected proposed provisions for appointment of vice-chancellors and other academic staff.

In a letter to University Grants Commission (UGC) chairman Wednesday, the BJD Coordination & Activities Committee chairman Debi Prasad Mishra, said: "The party express concerns regarding the anti-federal nature of the draft UGC Regulations, 2025 on selection and appointment of vice-chancellors and other academic staff.

It said that the BJD did not accept the draft UGC regula-

tions due to different reasons. "We register our strong objection to the draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic staff



in universities and colleges and measures for the maintenance of standards in Higher Education Regulations) 2025 proposed by UGC, which grants absolute power to governors of states and hence, through them to the Central government, to appoint vice-chancellors and other academic staff of higher education institution like universities including state universities without any participation by the state government," the BJD letter said.

Mishra in the letter said that

mines the principles of federalism which forms a part of the "basic structure" of the Constitution and makes a mockery of co-operative governance between Centre and states. "It hits at the root of the autonomy of our institutions of higher learning," he said.

The party urged the UGC to reconsider the draft regulations and ensure that the appointment of vice-chancellors and other academic staff in the case of state universities is done in a transparent, participatory, and inclusive manner involving the state government in the best traditions of cooperative fed-

The BJD said that the constitution of the search-cum-selection committee for appointment of VCs should include representatives from state governments and the concerned universities. The state government should play a significant role in the selection and appointment pro cess of all academic positions in state universities, colleges and institutions of higher education set up under a state act.

This apart, the regional party wanted that the UGC regu lations should ensure the appointment process is transparent, and the search committee and appointing authority are accountable for their actions.

The BJD in the letter sug gested the UGC to encourage consultation and collaboration between the UGC, state governments, and universities at all times and in all steps to foster a spirit of cooperative governance.

"We hope the UGC will consider our concerns and make necessary amendments to the draft regulations before final notification to honour federalism, protect the autonomy of state universities and protect the interest of all stakeholders,' the party said in the letter.

NABARD's 'Export Pathshala' for FPOs

Bhuhaneswar: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), in collaboration with Palla dium Consulting India Pvt. Ltd. (PCIPL) exports of fresh fruits and vegetables from Odisha by equipping Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and agri-entrepreneurs with global trade knowledge, Experts from APEDA, the World Trade Centre, the Spices Board and exporter associations from Odisha and West Bengal will guide partici-

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ACCOMMODATION

Free Accommodation for Senior Citizens, Mentally ill person & **Drug addicted Person** with all facilities. Contact: 9337160036, 7325991853, 9439928693.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Bhawanipatna, dated 03.02.2025, I Abhimanyu Beshra, R/o. At.- Turkel, P.S.-Chahagaon, P.S.- Sadar Bhawanipatna, Dist.-Kalahandi, Odisha declare that I have changed my name from Abhimanyu Harijan to Abhimanyu Beshra. Henceforth I shall be known as Abhimanyu Beshra for all future purposes. Abhimanyu Beshra

Odisha Vig probes officer for fund misuse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

driving behaviour.

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: A day after recovering over ₹2 crore in cash from an officer of the watershed department, the Odisha vigilance department Thursday launched a separate inquiry into alleged misappropriation of funds by the officer and his associates.

Wednesdav, vigilance offi cials raided the house of Santanu Mohapatra, the deputy director and project director of the watershed department in Malkangiri, for possessing disproportionate assets and recovered ₹2.06 crore in cash.

Gold jewellery weighing



422 grams, bank, insurance, other deposits worth ₹91 lakh, four high value plots in Bhubaneswar and Jeypore town, a four wheeler, two two-wheelers and household articles worth ₹29 lakh during the search operation, Further, ₹2 lakh cash. sale deeds and other land docthe bank locker of Mohapatra, a vigilance official said.

"The officer and his colleagues are suspected of misappropriating government funds by falsely reporting completed work and making payments to labour accounts, which were then withdrawn and stolen," a vigilance official said.

Several passbooks of labourers were also found during searches at the homes of Biswaiit Mandal, a data entry operator, and Amiyakanta Sahu, a

contractual employee It appears these functionar-

ies were operating the labourers' bank accounts to facilitate the withdrawal and misappropriation of government funds. A separate inquiry has been launched, and files related to works shown as completed in the last two years are being scrutinised, the official added.

During the investigation, the anti-corruption wing also found that one Alekh Chandra Pradhan, operating a Jan Seva Kendra at Jagannath Prasad in Ganjam district, was acting as a conduit of Mohapatra in bribe collection. Pradhan had transferred more than ₹1 crore since 2019 till 2024 to Mohapatra, the official said.

IITs, iVP partner for semiconductor tech to develop products that serve

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: In a major step towards advancing India's power semiconductor technology, IIT Bhubaneswar, IIT Bombay, and iVP Semiconductor have recently signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The collaboration aims to design and develop highly customised silicon power MOSFETs for electric vehicles (EVs) and other applications.

"iVP is proud to collaborate with India's top academic institutions to transform advanced research into impactful, market-ready power semiconductor solutions. Through innovative yet scalable designs, we aim

both India and global markets,' said iVP Semiconductor COC Ponni Carlin.

IIT Bhubaneswar director Shreepad Karmalkar said, "This collaboration marks a milestone for India's semicon ductor R&D ecosystem. We anticipate that the synergy between academia and industry will lead to the indigenous development of market-leading

"IIT Bombay, through its semiconductor center SemiX is pleased to partner with iVF Semiconductor and IIT Bhu baneswar to drive advance ments in power semiconductor technology," said IIT Bombay R&D dean Sachin Patwardhan

ELIMINATION OF LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS

Media sensitisation workshop held for MDA campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: A state-level media sensitisation workshop was organised by the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department in collaboration with Global Health Strategies Thursday.

The workshop aimed to disseminate accurate information about Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) and raise awareness about its debilitating effects, ahead of the upcoming Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign.

The H&FW Department has scheduled the MDA campaign from February 10 to 19 to eliminate LF in six endemic districts-Bolangir, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Cuttack, Kandhamal, and Navagarh.

Speaking at the workshop.

Special Secretary and Director of Health Services, Bijay Kumar Mahapatra, stated, "During the MDA round, anti-filarial drugs will be administered to eligible beneficiaries in the presence of health workers. Except for children below two years, pregnant women, and seriously ill persons, everyone must take the prescribed dosage."

He emphasised the crucial role of community participation in the programme. "Public representatives, officials, health workers, and the community must work together to turn this campaign into a public movement. With widespread participation, we can break the transmission cycle and eliminate LF," he added.

Public Health Director Neelkantha Mishra highlighted the

severity of filariasis, which is transmitted through mosquito bites and is a leading cause of long-term disability. "The disease, usually acquired in childhood, manifests in adulthood and damages the lymphatic system, leading to irreversible

swelling of body parts," he said. Mishra explained that common symptoms of LF include Hydrocele (inflammation of the scrotum), Lymphedema (swelling of the limbs), and Chyluria (milky

white urine). He assured that the anti-filarial drugs are safe and have undergone multiple tests. "Side effects are rare, but to address any adverse reactions, rapid response teams led by medical doctors will be deployed in each block," he informed.

H&FW Additional Director and State Programme Officer for Vector Borne Diseases, Pravakar Sahoo, reiterated India's commitment to eliminating LF by 2027. "As part of this commitment, the state government is conducting MDA rounds in 47 blocks of six districts. Beneficiaries will receive a combination of three drugs—Diethylcarbamazine (DEC), Albendazole, and Ivermectin," he said.

To ensure smooth implementation, around 15,000 trained drug administrators, including Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), will visit every household in the targeted districts, reaching approximately 38 lakh beneficiaries. Additionally, 1,500 supervisors will be deployed to monitor and maintain the quality of the campaign.

The government urges media and community members to actively support the initiative and contribute towards the complete elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis in the state.

WEATHER

power devices

BBSR CTC Max Temp 30.8° Min Temp Humidity Rainfall **FORECAST**



Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488 Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347 Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point-9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

KARATALI TAMPARA LAKE

Andhra fish traders take over as admin sits pretty

Chhatrapur, Feb 6: Karatali Tampara, a major water body under the Bipulingi panchayat in Chhatrapur block of Ganjam district, is battling for survival after the government land near the lake was reportedly taken over by fish traders from Andhra Pradesh. Encroaching upon the land, the traders from the neighbouring state have been carrying out fish cultivation. Despite repeated complaints from local representatives, authorities have not taken any action, locals lamented.

Tampara lake in Karatali village is spread over approximately 1,575 acre land. The lake has come to be known as Karatali Tampara lake due to its presence in Karatali village. This is another freshwater lake in Ganjam district about 10 km away from the better known Tampara freshwater lake, which is spread over 300 hectare of land near the right

Patient jumps off

hospital roof, dies

Anandapur, Feb 6: A patient

suffering from kidney ailment

iumped off the Anandapur

Sub-Divisional Hospital building

rooftop in Keonjhar district and

The deceased, identified as Bi-

jay Barik of Kantipal Mathasahi

village, is assumed to have taken

the extreme step after being un-

able to bear the pain any longer.

dialysis at the hospital for over

a year and a half. His deteriorat-

ing health, coupled with wors-

ening family circumstances,

made his suffering unbearable.

jay arrived at the hospital for dialysis Thursday morning. While

waiting for treatment, he reported-

ly sent his wife, Shantilata Barik,

to bring some breakfast. In her

absence when no medical staff

was nearby, he climbed onto the

hospital's roof and jumped off the

building, his wife later recounted.

The incident occurred after Bi-

Bijay had been undergoing

committed suicide Thursday.

POST NEWS NETWORK



bank of Rushikulya river here in Ganjam district.

However, the lake is now facing survival threat after the adjacent government land was encroached upon by Andhra traders, who are allegedly using chemical fertilisers and other substances for fish farming, contaminating the water that flows into Karatali Tampara lake. Residents have alleged that the polluted water is causing skin diseases, while runoff water from the contaminated lake is damaging agricultural fields.

Karatali Tampara was once a key irrigation source for

Ganiam blocks, However, locals claim that the unauthorised occupation by Andhra traders has led to a gradual reduction in irrigation facilities. As the encroachment further expands around the lake, the water body is shrinking, affecting both irrigation and local ecosystems.

Local farmer Nilakantha Dash and Simanchal Nahak have demanded immediate eviction of Andhra traders and the restoration of irrigation systems. They warned that if the issue is not addressed, large scale protests will be launched.

Despite discussions in panchayat meetings, district council sessions, and even the state Assembly, no concrete action has been taken so far in this regard. Residents fear that if authorities, including the Irrigation department and pollution control board, fail to act soon, Karatali Tampara may disappear from the geographical map altogether.

Blackbuck population in Ganjam rises to 8,789

Berhampur, Feb 6: The blackbuck population in Ganjam district has increased to 8,789, an official said citing the latest

The total number of blackbucks, locally called 'Krushnasar Mruga', was 8,789 in the biannual census conducted by the Forest department January 29 in all three forest divisions in the district. Their number was estimated at 7.745 in 2023 and 4.082 in 2018, the official said.

Out of the total blackbuck population in the latest census, 5,241 were females, 1,765 males and 1,783 young. The blackbuck

Railways suspends 5 for train derailment

goods train derailment near the Basanti Colony slum in Rourkela. Railway

derailment of four wagons, which crashed through the track end barrier and

brought down a part of the perimeter wall of Rourkela station. Fortunately,

authorities declined to reveal the names of those suspended in relation

to the accident near the Malgodam Siding. They are still investigating

the cause of the mishap. Several theories have emerged regarding the

the wagons came to a halt after falling into a pit beside the road. This

prevented a major mishap from occurring, as the wagons stopped just a

few metres away from a nearby house in the slum. The derailment caused

traffic disruption on the busy Malgodam-Basanti Colony roads. In a separate

incident, another goods train got derailed on Track No. 10 at around 4,30pm

Thursday, However, train services were unaffected, as the derailment took

place on a dedicated track for freight trains. Only one wagon was involved

in the mishap, and services were restored on the track by 7.00pm.

ROURKELA: Railway authorities have suspended five employees and

transferred the station superintendent in response to Wednesday's



is a Schedule-1 animal as per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended in 1992) and is considered as vulnerable as per the Red Data Book.

The highest number of blackbucks was sighted in Ghumusar South division (5,627), and the lowest number of 404 was counted in Ghumusar North division. A total of 2,758 blackbucks were found in Berhampur forest division.

tection given by the local people and forest staff are some of the reasons for the increase of the population of the blackbuck in the district every year, said BK Acharya, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Ghumusar South.

People in the district protect the mammal religiously over the years. "The people of the region believe the sighting of blackbuck in the paddy field is a harbinger of good luck for them," said the president of the Blackbuck Protection Committee (Ganjam) Amulya Upadhyaya.

Ganjam district is the only habitat of blackbucks at present. Blackbucks sighted in the Balukhand-Konark wildlife sand tuary in Puri district till 2012-13 vanished from the area. The Forest department has taken initia tives to regain their lost habitat in the sanctuary area in Puri by translocation of blackbucks.

DFO Ghumusar North divi sion Himanshu Sekhar Mohanty said they have already shifted four blackbucks-three females and one male from their area to Puri. Another four animals would be translocated soon, as per the decision of the govern ment, he added. The government has taken the decision to shift the animals from Ganjan district, as they are overcrowd ed in the district, sources said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

'E' PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS

Tender Notice No. PCMM/EP/ 2024-25/129, Date: 03.02.2025

SL. NO. 01: TENDER NO. 02241133A, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: IOH MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE SUB KIT,

SL. NO. 02: TENDER NO. 05255015 SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM GREEN ASPECT MAIN LED SIGNAL

LIGHT UNIT, QUANTITY: AS PER TS.

SL. NO. 03: TENDER NO. 05255025
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM
RED ASPECT MAIN LED SIGNAL
QUANTITY: AS PERTS.

SL. NO. 04: TENDER NO. 01244866A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: OVER HAULING FOR EDG-4 / WDP-4 QUANTITY: 50 NOS.

QUANTITY: AS PER TS.

E-Tender Notice No.: Sr.DMM/SBP/Stores/ Fender Publication/2025, Date: 04.02.2025

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: ELECTRIC POINT MACHINE 143MM NON TRAILABLE TO OPERATE ON 110DC COMPLETE WITH LOCK DETECTOR. Tender Value : ₹54,79,920/-, EMD @ 2%

Tender Closing Date & Time: At 1500 hrs. of 28.02.2025.

E-Tender is not transferrable and the same is to be submitted with DSC by the pre authorized personnel of the tenderer who are already registered in the website.

The Railway deserves the Right to cancel the tender or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Woman bludgeoned to death in Bargarh

Bargarh, Feb 6: A woman was allegedly bludgeoned to death with a hammer by his nephew inside her house near Maharaja Lane at Ward No-10 in this town, late Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Subasini Seth, 53. The accused Ramakrushna Seth, 45, was arrested by the police. The murder came to the light after the woman did not come out of her house till late in the morning, Thursday. Neighbours opened the door and found the body of the woman lying in a pool of blood with a deep wound on her head.

Informed, police rushed to the spot with a scientific team and launched an investigation. They sent the body for post-mortem to the Bargarh district headquarters hospital and arrested the accused.



Police said the accused is the deceased woman's nephew in relationship and was staying with her in the house. Police also seized the murder weapon and registered a case in this connection. Preliminary inquiry suggested that the murder might have taken place over domestic dispute.

The accused was questioned in this connection at the police station where he admitted to have murdered the woman. He will be produced in the court Friday, Town police IIC Satyajit Kandankel said. Locals said that the accused is not in a stable mental condition.

FM varsity holds nat'l symposium on 'Viksit Bharat'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Feb 6: A two-day national symposium on 'Viksit Bharat' was inaugurated Thursday at the Fakir Mohan University here. Organised by the university's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, the event is being held under the guidance and chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Santosh Kumar Tripathy.

The theme of the symposium is "The Role of Media in Shaping Viksit Bharat: Challenges and Opportunities," head of the department Bharati Bala Patnaik said. In his address, Tripathy emphasised the responsibility of every individual,

including the media, to contribute to the realisation of 'Viksit Bharat-2047' goal.

The symposium is being organised in collaboration with the ICSSR and UNICEF, The keynote speaker, Vishwajit Das, founding director of the Department of Journalism at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi, discussed the use of the term 'development' in democracy, its various aspects and colonial influences.



DISTRICT FISHERIES OFFICE,

Email - malkangirifisheries@gmail.com No.235 / Date: 06.02.2025

Short Tender Call Notice

Sealed tenders are invited from interested reputed Firms/ Agencies/ Bidders for construction of 2.5 MT Ice plant and 5.00 MT Cold Storage at Swabhiman Anchal Janbai, Chitrakonda, Malkangiri District. The tender completed in all respect should reach the undersigned on or before dt. 25.02.25 by 5.30 PM through Speed Post/ Courier only and it shall be opened on dt.28.02.25 at 11.00 A.M. at CDO cum EO, Zilla Parishad Chamber, Malkangiri. The tender document may be downloaded from the

website : https://malkangiri.odisha.gov.in or received from the Office of District Fisheries Officer, Malkangiri by depositing Rs 200/- only. Interested firms/ bidder may submit their sealed tender

in two bid systems i.e. Technical Bid and Financial Bid as per terms and condition of the tender documents. The filled in tenders with Tender fee- Rs. 10,000/- and Earnest Money of Rs. 1,50,000/- in shape of Demand Draft only in favour of District Fisheries Officer, Malkangiri, must reach to the Office of District Fisheries Officer, Malkangiri through Speed Post / Courier only by dt. 25.02.25 time 5.30 P.M. enclosed in a single envelope super scribed Tender for 2.5 MT Ice plant and 5.00 MT Cold Storage"

Sd./- District Fisheries Officer, Malkangiri

CAD-2499

Complete details available at ww.ireps.gov.in

SL. NO. 05: TENDER NO. 05255022 SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM YELLOW ASPECT MAIN LED SIGNAL LIGHT UNIT, QUANTITY: AS PER TS. SL. NO. 06: TENDER NO. 06245011, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: HVN-66 INSULATING LINER, QUANTITY: AS SL. NO. 07 : TENDER NO. 05255028

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM SHUNT LED SIGNAL LIGHTING UNIT QUANTITY: AS PER TS. SL. NO. 08 TENDER NO. 02241630 SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM SPHERI BLOCK FOR AXLE GUIDE LINK, QUANTITY: AS PERTS.

SL. NO. 09 TENDER NO. 06235715A
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM
METALLINER FOR USE WITH ERC MK.
V ON CONCRETE SLEEPER

QUANTITY; AS PER TS.

SI. NO. 10: TENDER NO. 03251126,
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:
COUPLER BODY WITH SHANK WEAR
PLATE, QUANTITY: 741 NOS.

SL. NO. 11: TENDER NO. 03251034, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: K TYPE HIGH FRICTION COMPOSITE BRAKE BLOCK, QUANTITY: AS PER

SL. NO. 12: TENDER NO. 03251328, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: HEAD STOCK COMPLETE WITH 8MM OUTER HEAD STOCK, QUANTITY: 144 NOS.

SL. NO. 13: TENDER NO. 03241992.
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:
MODIFIED ELASTOMERIC PAD,
QUANTITY: AS PERTS.

<u>UNANTITY:</u> AS PER 1S.

<u>Tender Opening Date:</u> For Sl. No. 01, 04

dt. 17.02.2025, for Sl. No. 02, 06, 08 dt.
24.02.2025, for Sl. No. 03 dt. 25.02.2025,
for Sl. No. 05 dt. 27.02.2025, for Sl. No. 07 dt. 28.02.2025 and for SI. No. 09 to 13 dt. 03.03.2025.

Regarding detailed notice, EMD Purchase restrictions and detailed tende conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in and www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in.

Principal Chief Materials Manage PR-959/P/24-25 Bhubaneswa

Sudden heat spike may bring down pulses yield



Risida, Feb 6: An unexpected spike in temperatures ahead of the onset of summer season has impacted pulses farming in Karlamunda block of Kalahandi district, with farmers fearing a disappointing yield.

Dav temperatures have shot up across the state quite early this year. According to reports, Kalahandi district recorded a maximum temperature of 34°C February 1, 35°C February 2, 34.5°C February 3, and 34°C February 4. An unseasonal heat ary, the month of Magha as per the Odia almanac, has impacted cultivation of pulses such as arhar, green gram, black gram, and horse gram on farmlands under this block. The rise in temperature has withered and wilted

the crops. Typically, crops begin flowering in January and February. However, due to the prevailing intense dry conditions, farmers fear a reduction in yield. Many residents of the block, apart from growing paddy, depend on pulses cultivation for their livelihood. This sudden increase in temperatures has left farmers in Karlamunda, Risida, Gajbahal, Pourkela, Teresiha, Rajpur, Rinja, Joradrabra, Regeda, Sapalahara, and Malpada deeply concerned about their pulse crops.

RSP constructs crematorium

ROURKELA: Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has constructed a crematorium at Bhalulata village in Bisra block under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. Tarun Misra, ED (HR) inaugurated the facility and dedicated it for the service of the people. Present on the occasion were BK Jojo, CGM (town engineering & horticulture), Munmun Mittra, GM in-charge (CSR), Bivabasu Mallick, GM (CSR), TB Toppo, AGM (CSR), and AN Pati, AGM (CSR). Community leaders such as Bicha Minz, sarpanch of Bhalulata and Sunita Minz, zilla parishad member were also present on the occasion. The crematorium, built at a cost of Rs 18 lakh, features a concrete-roof platform for burning pyres, an open rest area equipped with benches, and ghats near the river to facilitate the performance of last rites and rituals. This facility will benefit the residents of 14 GPs of Bisra block, providing an essential infrastructure for the community. The crematorium addresses a long felt need of the local populace, especially in rural areas where proper facilities for last rites are lacking.

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସ୍ଥାବର ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ନିୟାମକ ପ୍ରାଧିକରଣ



Odisha Real Estate Regulatory Authority

ଆପଣ ଜାଣନ୍ତି କି ?ି

- 🁚 କୌଣସି ପୁଟେଡ ସ୍କିମ୍ ୫୦୦ ବର୍ଗ ମିଟରରୁ ଅଧିକ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ରେରା ଅଧୀନରେ ପଞ୍ଜୀକୃତ ହେବା ବିଧେୟ ।
- 🁚 ଉଭୟ ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳ ଓ ଗ୍ରାମାଞ୍ଚଳରେ କରାଯାଉଥିବା ପୁଟେଡ ସ୍କିମ୍ ପାଇଁ ଏହି ନିୟମ ପ୍ରଯୁଜ୍ୟ ।
- 🁚 ରେରା ପଞ୍ଜୀକରଣ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଏହା ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ପ୍ଲାନିଂ ଅଥରିଟିଙ୍କର ଅନୁମୋଦନ ଲାଭ କରିବା ବାଞ୍ଚନୀୟ ।
- 🁚 ରେରା ପଞ୍ଜୀକରଣ ନ ଥିଲେ କୌଣସି ପୁଟେଡ ସ୍କିମ୍ବର ବିଜ୍ଞାପନ କିନ୍ୟା ବିକ୍ରି ଏବଂ ଖର୍ଦି କରନ୍ତି ତେବେ ତାହା ଆଇନତଃ ଦଣ୍ଡନୀୟ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ରେରା ଆଇନରେ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ମୂଲ୍ୟର ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ୧୦% ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜରିମାନାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।
- 🁚 କୌଣସି ପ୍ରଲୋଭନର ବଶବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହୋଇ ଅଣପଞ୍ଜୀକୃତ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପରେ ସର୍ବଦା ଜମି କିଣିବାରୁ କ୍ଷାନ୍ତ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ ।
- 🅋 ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଯଦି ଏପରି ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ନଜରରେ ଆସେ ତେବେ ସେ ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ତଥ୍ୟ ରେରା କର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୱପକ୍ଷଙ୍କୁ ନିମ୍ନ ଠିକଣାରେ ଜଣାନ୍ତୁ ।

Secretary, Odisha Real Estate Regulatory Authority

Block-A1, 3rd Floor, Toshali Bhawan, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007

E-Mail: rera.odisha@gmail.com

ନିଜ ସ୍ୱପୁର ଘର କିୟା ଜାଗା ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଅଧିକ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ଲଗଇନ କରନ୍ତୁ https://rera.odisha.gov.in

"ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଅଧିକାର, ଆମ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ"[`]

OIPR-13223/11/0007/2425

BUILDINGS AT KHARIAR ROAD (01) HIRAKUD (01), SAMBALPUR CITY (01), AND RAIRAKHOL (01) OVER SAMBALPUR DIVISION UNDER SUGAMYA BHARAT ABHIYAN.

Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 2,03,98,659.31, EMD: ₹ 2,52,000/-, Completion Period of the Work: 12 (Twelve) Months from the date of issue

At 1530 hrs. of 04.03.2025.

Fax or in person shall be accepted agains such e-tenders even if these are submitte on firm's letter head and received in time All such manual offers shall be rejecte summarily without any consideration Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: www.ireps.gov.in

Note: The prospective tenderers are
advised to revisit the website fifteen (15)
days before the date of closing of tender

days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/ bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering. Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/ PR-955/P/24-25

SBP-ELECT-2025-T-233 NAME OF WORK : PROVISION OF 10 NO. 13 PASSENGER LIFT IN THE 12M

NO. 13 PASSENGER LIFT IN THE 12M WIDE FOOT OVER BRIDGE AT HIRAKUD (02 NO.), BARGARH ROAD (02 NO.), BALANGIR (02 NO.), TITLAGARH (02 NO.) & KANTABANJI (02 NO.) OVER SAMBALPUR DIVISION UNDER AMRIT BHARAT STATION SCHEME.

Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 5,22,00,764.38, EMD: ₹ 4,11,000/-, Completion Period of the Work: 12 (Twelve) Months from the date of issue

Fax or in person shall be accepted agains such e-tenders even if these are submitte on firm's letter head and received in time All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in Note: The prospective tenderers ar ed to revisit the website fifteen (15

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Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/ PR-952/P/24-25 Sambalpur PR-952/P/24-25





The flame of the aspiration must be so straight and so ardent that no obstacle can dissolve it.





A Sputnik Moment?

fter the release of DeepSeek-R1 on 20 January triggered a some declared this a "Sputnik moment" in the Sino-American race for supremacy in artificial intelligence. While America's AI industry arguably needed shaking up, the episode raises some

The US tech industry's investments in AI have been massive, with Goldman Sachs estimating that "mega tech firms, corporations, and utilities are set to spend around \$1 trillion on capital expenditures in the coming years to support AI." Yet for a long time, many observers, including me, have questioned the direction of AI investment and

playbook (though Meta has differentiated itself slightly with a partly open-source model), the industry seems to have put all its eggs in the same basket. Without exception, US tech companies are obsessed with scale. Citing yet-to-be-proven "scaling laws," they assume that feeding ever more data and computing power into their models is the key to unlocking ever-greater capabilities.

Before 20 January, US companies were unwilling to consider

alternatives to foundation models premixture-of-experts methods (using maat a fraction of the cost.

yes, but only time will tell.

control hampers innovation, as Robinson and I argued in Why Nations Fail. While DeepSeek's success appears to challenge this claim, it is far from conclusive proof that innovation under extractive institutions can be as powerful or as durable as under inclusive institutions. After all, DeepSeek is building on years of advances in the US (and some in Europe). All its basic methods were pioneered in the US. Mixture-of-experts

research institutions decades ago; and it was US Big Tech firms that introduced transformer models, chain-of-thought reasoning,

did. It remains to be seen whether Chinese firms and research institutions can take the next step of coming up with game-changing techniques, products, and approaches of their own

firms, which generally produce technologies for the government or with government funding. If the company (which was spun out of a hedge fund) was operating under the radar, will its creativity and dynamism continue now that it is under the spotlight?

at innovation. DeepSeek trained its latest models (V3 and R1) on older, less powerful

Nonetheless, it is clear that America's zero-sum approach was unworkable and ill advised. Such a strategy makes sense only if you believe that we are heading toward artificial general intelligence (models that can match humans on any cognitive task), and that By clinging to these assumptions – neither of which is necessarily warranted – we have prevented fruitful collaboration with China in many areas. For example, if one country produces models that increase human productivity or help us regulate energy better, such innovation would be beneficial to both countries, especially if it is

Like its American cousins, DeepSeek does aspire to develop

Even if we do not yet know all the details about how DeepSeek developed its models or what its apparent achievement means for the future of the AI industry, one thing seems clear: a Chinese upstart has punctured the tech industry's obsession with scale and may have even shaken it out of its complacency.

> Institute Professor of Economics at MIT. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Daron Acemoglu

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HOW DEEPSEEK

massive drop in chipmaker Nvidia's share price and sharp declines in various other tech companies' valuations,

development in the United States.

With all the leading companies following essentially the same Some even assert that "scale is all you need."

trained on massive data sets to predict the next word in a sequence. Given their priorities, they focused almost exclusively on diffusion models and chatbots aimed at performing human (or human-like) tasks. And though DeepSeek's approach is broadly the same, it appears to have relied more heavily on reinforcement learning, ny smaller, more efficient models), distillation, and refined chain-of-thought reasoning. This strategy reportedly allowed it to produce a competitive model

Although there is some dispute about whether DeepSeek has told us the whole story, this episode has exposed "groupthink" within the US AI industry. Its blindness to alternative, cheaper, more promising approaches, combined with hype, is precisely what Simon Johnson and I predicted in Power and Progress, which we wrote just before the generative-AI era began. The question now is whether the US industry has other, even more dangerous blind spots. For example, are the leading US tech companies missing an opportunity to take their models in a more "pro-human direction"? I suspect that the answer is

Then there is the question of whether China is leapfrogging the US. If so, does this mean that authoritarian, top-down structures (what James A. Robinson and I have called "extractive institutions") can match or even outperform bottom-up arrangements in driving innovation?

My bias is to think that top-down

models and reinforcement learning were developed in academic

What DeepSeek has done is demonstrate success in engineering: combining the same methods more effectively than US companies

Moreover, DeepSeek seems to be unlike most other Chinese AI Whatever happens, one company's achievement cannot be taken as conclusive evidence that China can beat more open societies

Another question concerns geopolitics. Does the DeepSeek saga mean that US export controls and other measures to hold back Chinese AI research failed? The answer here is also unclear. While chips, it may still need the most powerful chips to achieve further

whoever gets to AGI first will have a huge geopolitical advantage.

AGI, and creating a model that is significantly cheaper to train could be a game changer. But bringing down development costs with known methods will not miraculously get us to AGI in the next few years. Whether near-term AGI is achievable remains an open question (and whether it is desirable is even more de-

The writer, a 2024 Nobel laureate in economics, is

FOCUS EMPLOYMENT

FOSTER GENERATIONAL EQUITY

of KBC (Kaun Banega Crorepati) 16, the show's host, Amitabh Bachchan became surprised to witness the decision of Dr. Neeraj Saxena, a contestant to voluntarily quit after winning ₹3,20,000/- which was a rare and commendable act of selflessness. He chose to step back, allowing younger contestants to take centrestage, emphasising that the amount he won was sufficient for him and that others deserved an opportunity to benefit. This noble gesture, as noted by Amitabh Bachchan, was almost unprecedented in the show's history. It serves as a stark reminder of the need to prioritise the younger generation's aspirations and opportunities, a principle that seems to be lacking in certain government policies. In sharp contrast to Dr. Saxena's actions, the Indian government's increasing practice of reengaging retired personnel in various public sector and administrative roles has drawn significant criticism. This practice undermines the prospects of the country's youth, who already face a severe unemployment crisis. Instead of fostering generational equity, these policies exacerbate the challenges for

ny disillusioned and sidelined. India's unemployment crisis has reached alarming proportions. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the unemployment rate as of December 2024 stands at 7.45%. Among the youth aged 15-29, the situation is even bleaker, with unemployment exceeding 28%. This staggering statistic highlights the systemic issues in providing gainful employment to the younger population. Coupled with this is the failure to meet the government's 2014 electoral promise of creating two crore jobs annually. Such unfulfilled commitments have left millions grappling with uncertainty about their future. Adding to the crisis is the government's widespread practice of reemploying retired personnel across multiple sectors. Re-

young job seekers, leaving ma-



Critics argue that the government's approach to reemployment is driven more by convenience and cost-efficiency than genuine necessity

ports suggest that over 50,000 retired employees have been rehired between 2020 and 2024 in Central and state government departments. This trend is most pronounced in critical sectors such as defence, public administration, education, and public sector enterprises (PSEs). In the defence sector. for instance, retired officers are frequently reappointed to advisory and operational roles. Public administration sees retired IAS and IPS officers rehired for consultancy and other responsibilities. Similarly, educational institutions often bring back retired professors.

While the government justifies these practices on grounds of retaining expertise and ensuring continuity, the broader socio-economic realities challenge this narrative. The claim of a skill gap, often cited to defend reemployment, appears tenuous when juxtaposed against the fact that India produces over 8 million graduates annually. Among these are a significant number of engineers, doctors, and management professionals who remain underutilised. The persistence of reengagement policies in such a context not only stifles innovation but also deprives the youth of opportunities to contribute their fresh perspectives to the workforce.

The constitutional provision mandating retirement at the age of 60 aims to ensure periodic rejuvenation of the workforce. Overriding this mandate undermines its intended purpose and perpetuates an inequitable system where younger aspirants are left to fend for themselves in an already competitive job market. Furthermore, reemployment often disregards the economic and emotional toll on the unemployed youth, many of whom are the primary breadwinners for their families. India's labour force participation rate (LFPR) reflects a worrying trend. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023, the overall LFPR stands at just 39.5%, significantly lower than the global average. Among women, the participation rate is even more dismal at 24.6%, indicating a severe underutilisation of the country's poten-

tial workforce Critics argue that the government's approach to reemployment is driven more by convenience and cost-efficiency than genuine necessity. Contractual reengagements are often perceived as a less expensive alternative to recruiting new, permanent employees. However, this approach neglects the long-term socio-economic consequences of excluding younger individuals from the workforce.

The government must adopt a multi-faceted strategy. Strict regulation of reemployment practices is essential. Reengagement of retired personnel should be limited to critical sectors where skill shortages are genuinely evident, and even then, it should be accompanied by a clear timeline for transitioning to younger

departments and public sector enterprises must develop robust strategies to groom internal talent for higher roles through targeted training programmes, mentorship initiatives, and opportunities for skill enhancement which would ensure that younger employees are adequately prepared to take on leadership responsibilities, reducing the reliance on retired professionals. Accelerating public sector recruitment drives, particularly in high-demand areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development, can significantly alleviate unemployment pressures. Intellectuals and civil society have a crucial role to play in addressing these issues. By advocating for policy changes and raising public awareness about the adverse effects of reemployment practices, they can drive meaningful change. Academics and researchers can contribute by conducting studies on unemployment trends and providing data-driven insights to inform policy decisions. Opposition political parties must also step up to hold the government accountable for its employment policies. By demanding transparency and proposing viable alternatives during legislative debates and public campaigns, they can highlight the gaps in current practices and advocate

replacements. Government

The youth, as the backbone of the nation, deserve nothing less than a system that values their potential and supports their aspirations. The practice of reengagement, while justifiable in specific cases, has become increasingly common, raising concerns about its impact on the country's unemployed youth. By curbing the practice of reemployment and implementing inclusive policies, the government can not only address the current challenges but also lay the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous society.

for a fairer system.

The writer is a service union representative and a columnist.

SPECTRUM EDUCATION

Bruhaspati Samal

CONSTITUTIONAL

PROVISION

MANDATING

RETIREMENT

OF 60 AIMS TO

ENSURE PERIODIC

REJUVENATION OF

THE WORKFORCE

AT THE AGE

Insights on school performance indicators



Suiit Kumar Mishra

ONLY 57.2% OF STUDENTS IN CLASS V IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS CAN READ A CLASS II TEXT WHEREAS THE **SAME IS 82.3% FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted school-going children in various ways, particularly in the rural areas. It created a digital divide among various socio-economic groups, leading to a decline in students' learning levels. The status of the learning level of school students in rural areas in Odisha is examined here, based on the recently released report-The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 (Rural).

The report shows the reading ability of students of Class III. V and VIII who can read Class II level text. For Class III students of government schools, it has dropped from 34.9% to 26.7% and then improved to 37.7% - a more than 10 percentage point recovery. However, in the case of private schools, a declining trend (65.2% to 58.2%) has been observed since 2018. Class V or VIII students not being able

read a Class II text needs immediate policy intervention. As per the 2024 data, only 57.2% of students in Class V in government schools can read a Class II text whereas the same is 82.3% for private schools. In both categories, the increase is minimal over six vears (2018-2024). Around onefourth of students in Class VIII in government schools could not read a Class II text in 2024.

The report also shows the performance of students in Class III, V and VIII in arithmetic. The performance of government school children is quite low as compared to that of private schools. The percentage of class III students who can do at least subtraction declined from 28.1% to 26.8% during the pandemic but subsequently, it has increased to 34.6% during 2024. The base for school-going students in government schools is very low even in

the absence of any external shock and the recovery rate is also found to be very slow. Although the performance in the private schools is relatively better, it is not satisfactory. For instance, in 2024, for Class V students, around 38% were unable to do division in private schools whereas the same was 70.3% in government schools.

A crucial indicator for a healthy schooling environment is the availability of and accessibility to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. which aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal - 6 which deals with improving water, sanitation and hygiene situation for all by 2030. For girls, availability of separate functional toilets not only determines their health and hygiene but many a time it is also one of the important indicators influencing their enrolment, attendance

and retention rate. As per AS-ER 2024, 31.2% of the schools do not have usable toilets for girls - 9% have no separate provision for girls' toilet; 4.8% have separate but locked provision; while 17.4% have separate, unlocked but not usable provision. Often these factors are found to be instrumental in increased vulnerabilities of adolescent school-going girls. As far as drinking water is concerned, it is an issue in 14.5% of the schools in rural Odisha.

The above mentioned aspects need urgent government intervention to establish a robust education system based on equity and equality, irrespective of the students' socioeconomic background.

> The writer is Professor, Social Development, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.

Trump's back-pedalling

are most welcome to contribute letters requested to send their contact address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

Sir, US President Donald Trump's announcement of his country's withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO) presents significant challenges to global health governance and international cooperation, and the retraction could lead the US to isolate its health system considerably. As one of the world's largest funders of global health through both international and national agencies, Trump's back-pedalling may curtail efforts to provide lifesaving health care and combat deadly outbreaks, especially in lower-income countries without the means to do so alone. As for India, key programmes, such as tuberculosis eradication and vaccine distribution could entail significant delays and reduced funding if the global health body's resources are stretched thin. Moreover, the absence of the US support might slow down collaborative efforts between Indian organizations and the WHO, potentially impacting initiatives aimed at tackling antimicrobial resistance, improving maternal and child health care, and strengthening the general health systems.

 ${\it Ranganathan~Sivakumar,~CHENNAI}$

Dangling danger

Sir, Erecting banners and hoardings is the favourite pastime of political leaders and their sycophants. Shockingly, the footpaths and the medians that divide the roads are the favourite areas for the small-time politicians to show-off their sycophancy. It is also observed that most of these posters and advertisement hoardings are illegal with no proper permission taken from the civic bodies. The danger of these hoardings is that they are unscientifically constructed. The loose, oversized and hanging banners cause perennial danger to lives. The tragic Mumbai billboard collapse incident that claimed the lives of 17 people in May 2024 is a stark example. Courts have regularly banned hoardings or have taken states to task for disregarding rules. But barefaced politicians are adept at ignoring such court orders. Moreover, the states which have laws in place to prevent illegal hoardings are lax in their implementation. Uniform rules and regulations across the country for the erection of banners and hoardings would be in the fitness of things. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



TWO STATES





CRUSHING DEBT AND SHATTERED HOPES

Price of American dream

A US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal immigrants from various states landed at Amritsar airport Wednesday, the first such batch of Indians deported by the Donald Trump government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 6: Family members of the illegal immigrants from Punjab who are among the 104 Indians deported from the US Wednesday said they took huge loans to facilitate their travel to America hoping for a bright future but now feel it is impossible to break free from the crushing debt.

The families alleged that the travel agents adopted unfair means to facilitate the youths travel to the US without their knowledge. They now seek strict action against those agents.

A US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal immigrants from various states landed at Amritsar airport Wednesday, the first such batch of Indians deported by the Donald Trump government as part of a crackdown it resolved to carry out when it was sworn in last month.

Of the deportees, 33 each are from Haryana and Gujarat, 30 from Punjab, three each from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, and two from Chandigarh, sourc-

Among the illegal immigrants hailing from Punjab, six are from Kapurthala, five from Amritsar, four each from Patiala and Jalandhar, two each from Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, SBS Nagar and one each from Gurdaspur, Tarn Taran, Sangrur,

SAS Nagar and Fatehgarh Sahib. Harwinder Singh (41), who hails from Tahli village in Hoshiarpur district, was among the deportees from Punjab.

He had left home for the United States around eight months ago. His wife Kuljinder Kaur claimed that a travel agent charged ₹42 lakh, promising to send Harwinder to the US in a

However, the agent facilitated his journey through treacherous "donkey routes", illegal and risky pathways used by migrants to enter the United States, she claimed.

Harwinder last contacted the family January 15, informing them that he had crossed the

US border. "Since then, there has been no communication. We came to know about his deportation today," she said.

His father,

school teacher,

told PTI that all

necessary documents

for Sukhpal's visa had been

arranged by their relatives in

"As far as we knew, he was

working legally in Italy as a chef

and had all valid documents. We

last spoke with him about 20-22

days ago when he was still in It-

aly. He did not mention anything

about travelling elsewhere.

Since then, we have had no con-

media about his deportation.

We do not know how or why he

reached the United States," said

his father, baffled by the unex-

Sukhpal's family, including

his parents, wife, and two chil-

"Today, we learned from the

tact with him," Saini said.

pected turn of events.

government

Saini,

retired

Prem

"We sold whatever little we had and borrowed money on high interest to pay the agent, hoping for a better future. But he deceived us," said Kaur.

"Now, not only has my husband been deported we are also left with a huge debt," she said, appealing to the government for help and strict action against the travel agent.

Harwinder has a wife, a son, a daughter, and his elderly parents. In Hoshiarpur's Darapur village, the family of Sukhpal (35) stare at a bleak future saddled with a mountain of debt. A chef by profession, he had gone to Italy on a one-year work permit in October 2024.

However, the family is completely unaware of how he ended up in the United States.

ing his return. "Only after he reaches home will we learn the real story behind his journey to the United States," Saini said. In Kapurthala's Behbal Ba-

dren, are now anxiously await-

hadue, Gurpreet Singh's family had mortgaged their house to send him abroad 'We took loans, mortgaged

the house and also borrowed money from relatives. We spent ₹45 lakh to send him to the US. Now we came to know from media reports that he has been deported,'

Donald Trump said one of his assumed office as the family mem-US President last month, bers. the country's law enforcement Same agencies have launched a the case with crackdown against illegal immigrants Jaswinder

Singh from Many Indians, who entered the US Fatehgarh through "donkey routes" or other Sahib. illegal means by spending lakhs family of rupees, are now facing ₹50 lakh -- took deportation loans on high in-

> brrowed from relatives -- to facilitate his travel to the US a few days before last Dussehra. "We had thought that he

terest rates and also

His

spent

would earn some money there," said one of his family members. Jaspal Singh (36) of Hardorawal village in Gurdaspur district had gone to the US just last month. "We came to know about his deportation through the media Wednesday morning,'

said his cousin Jasbir Singh. About the deportations, he said, "These are issues of governments. When we go abroad for work, we have big dreams for a better future for our families. Those have now been shattered.

NAPA urges Punjab to set up rehabilitation fund for youths

This move comes amid reports that a US military plane carrying 205 illegal immigrants hailing from Punjab and neighbouring states is likely to land at the Amritsar airport Wednesday afternoon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jalandhar, Feb 6: The North American Punjabi Association (NAPA) Wednesday urged the Punjab government to establish a rehabilitation fund to support young boys and girls being deported from the United States.

In a statement, NAPA Executive Director Satnam Singh Chahal said lack of

support and resources for these returnees could lead to severe social and economic challenges for the state. He warned the Puniab government that negligence in addressing this growing crisis would only create more problems for the state. exacerbating unemployment, mental health issues and potential

involvement in il-

legal activities. This comes amid reports that a US military plane carrying 205 illegal immigrants hailing from Punjab and neighbouring states is likely to land at the Amritsar airport Wednesday afternoon.

US DEPORTEES



"Many of these young in dividuals leave their homes with dreams of a better fu ture but find themselves de ported due to immigration challenges. They return with shattered hopes, financial distress, and psycholog ical trauma.'

"It is the government's responsibility to ensure their proper rehabilitation and reintegration into society, Chahal said.

He urged the state government to allocate

funds for skill development In a statement, programmes. **NAPA Executive** employment op portunities and **Director Satnam** mental health Singh Chahal said counselling to lack of support help these individuals rebuild and resources for their lives. these returnees

could lead to

severe social

and economic

challenges for

the state

He also urged policymakers to engage with organisations like NAPA to create comprehensive strategies to address the issue effectively.

"This is not just an individual problem but a societal one," Chahal said. "If we fail to act now the consequences will be dire not just for the youth but for Punjab's social fabric and economy as a whole," he said

UP approves inland waterways authority

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 6: The Uttar Pradesh government has approved the formation of an inland waterways authority to boost water transport and tourism in the state. The decision to implement the Ut-

tar Pradesh Waterways Authority Rules, 2025, was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Aditvanath late Wednesday. Parliamentary Affairs Minister

Suresh Khanna told reporters Thursday that the Cabinet discussed 12 proposals, of which 11 were approved. India has declared 111 national

waterways, including 11 in Uttar Pradesh, covering the Ganga and the Yamuna. The establishment of this authority aims to make transportation via waterways more economical and convenient, he said.

The government believes that an efficient water transport system will



reduce the pressure on other modes of transport and promote commercial activities, he added.

The authority will be headed by the transport minister or an expert in inland waterways, shipping, navigation, ports and maritime affairs, as nominated by the chief minister.

The vice-chairperson will also be appointed from among subject-matter experts. Principal secretaries or additional chief secretaries from the departments of finance, public works. tourism and culture, irrigation and water resources, and forest and environment will be ex-officio members.

Inland Waterways Authority of India chairperson will also be a member of The Uttar Pradesh transport com-

A representative nominated by the

missioner will serve as its chief executive officer.

Alongside water transport, the government is focusing on promoting water tourism. Efforts will be made to connect various tourist destinations through waterways, enhancing their appeal, Khanna said.

This initiative is expected to provide visitors a unique experience and strengthen the state's economy. The move is seen as a crucial step towards expanding water transport and accelerating economic growth in Uttar Pradesh, according to an official statement.

Bank of India BOI

Bank of India Zonal Office: Baripada, Bank of India Building, Lal Bazaar, In front of MKC School, PIN-757001

Vehicle Details/ Outstanding (in Lakh)

OF VEHICLES

AUCTION SALE

S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: S Manchabanda, P.O.: Budhikhamari, Pin- 756003,

Applications are invited from interested bidders for purchase of following vehicles, seized by the Bank on "As is where is & As is What is basis" as per terms and conditions listed below. This public notice will be treated as a notice to the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of the loans. They are hereby advised to pay their entire dues before the auction date, failing which the vehicles will be auctioned and balance Reserve Price / SI. Branch Name Name of the Borrower / **Parking Yard**

No.	Dianch Manie	Loan Account No.	Vehicle Details/ Outstanding (iii Lakii)	Deposit (EMD)	
1.	SULIAPADA	Ganeswar Hansda / A/c No.: 546276110000040	Make: Atul, Model: Elite Passenger Engine No.: LM0703, Chassis No.: MCG43R4EHL2104014, Regd. No.: OD11Y8895 / O/s : ₹1.82 Lakh	₹47,250/- / ₹ 5,000/-	
2.	PODA ASTIA / Contact No.: 9853523410	Bikasini Nayak / A/c No.: 551276210000101	Make- PIGCPL, Model- Atul Rik Plus BS-6 Engine No CMS22B06528 Chasis No MCG68R3CMB2203143 Regd. No.: OD11Z4190 / O/s : ₹ 2.50 Lakh	₹ 71,100/- / ₹ 7,500/-	
3.	PODA ASTIA / Contact No.: 9853523410	Chunuram Bindhani / A/c No.: 551276210000102	Make- Atul, Model- GEM 3p 200 CNG, Engine No CGS22G09148, Chasis No MCG61R3CGG2205435, Regd. No.: OD11W9266 / O/s : ₹2.65 Lakh	₹1,49,000/- / ₹ 15,000/-	
4.	PODA ASTIA / Contact No.: 9853523410	Bhagat Hansdah / A/c No.: 551276210000103	Make- Atul, Model- GEM PAXX, Engine No S2B9196745, Chasis No MCG37R3DBC2297229, Regd. No.: OD11Z5744 / O/s : ₹2.54 Lakh	₹1,49,000/- / ₹ 15,000/-	
5.	RANDIA / Contact No.: 7001369955	Manoj Kumar Jena / A/c No.: 535676210000008	Make- New Holland, Model- New Holland 3037, Engine No F62321, Chasis No NH6282451, Regd. No.: OD22B7487 (Engine), OD22B 7488 (Trailer) / O/s: ₹5.70 Lakh	₹1,26,000/- / ₹ 13,000/-	
6.	MURGABADI / Contact No.: 9437289318	Somanath Sahu / A/c No.: 545072310000035	Make- PIGVPL, Model- D3S, Engine No R6J2817227, Chasis No MBX0000ZFUK365564, Regd. No.: OD11H5124 / O/s : ₹0.79 Lakh	₹35,000/- / ₹ 3,500/-	20
7.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Suresh Soren / A/c No.: 550376210000160	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model-Alfa DX Diesel BS6, Engine NoS2H9220919, Chasis No MA1LE2NR9N3J20021,, Regd. No.: OD11W9818 / O/s : ₹2.88 Lakh	₹1,49,000/- / ₹ 15,000/-	Solutions
8.	BANGIRIPOSI / Contact No.: 9861277365	Binaya Kumar Giri / A/c No.: 545372310000077	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- SUPRO LX Engine No HLG6K31825, Chasis No MA1FM2HLWG6K33262, Regd. No.: OD11K2930 / O/s : ₹5.12 Lakh	₹2,27,500/- / ₹ 23,000/-	Enfo
9.	MURGABADI/ Contact No.: 9437289318	Srimat Murmu / A/c No.: 545060510000099	Make- Maruti Suzuki, Model- DEZIRE VXI, Engine No K12NP1160935, Chasis No MBHCZFBSMM188584 Regd. No.: OD11Z4189 / O/s : ₹5.14 Lakh	₹4,37,500/- / ₹ 44,000/-	Tack
10.	UDALA / Contact No.: 7978631137	Mitarani Singh A/c No.: 547760910000025	Make- Hero Electric vehicles, Model- Photon LP, Engine No HEMI2308R0354, Chasis No MEPHELP0008BL9936, Regd. No.: OD11AC3577 / O/s : ₹0.82 Lakh	₹13,000/- / ₹ 1,300/-	
11.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Jaga Kalia Nath A/c No.: 550373210000155	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- Mahindra Jeeto, Engine No.: UGN3HD1059, Chasis No MA1KP2UGEN3H65835, Regd. No.: OD11W8468 / O/s : ₹3.98 Lakh	₹2,66,478/- / ₹ 27,000/-	
12.	ICHINDA / Contact No.: 7008955087	Tusharkanti Mohanta / A/c No.: 550860510000018	Make- Maruti Suzuki, Model- IGNIS Zeta Engine No.: K12MN4304154 Chasis No.: MA3NFG81SHG143955 Regd. No.: JH05BY5574 / O/s : ₹1.67 Lakh	₹ 1,88,000/- / ₹ 19,000/-	
13.	BANGIRIPOSI / Contact No.: 9861277365	Chhatish Chandra Sethi / A/c No.: 545372310000035	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- Maxi Truck STD , Engine No.: GLD1C49584, Chasis No MA1ZP2GLKD3C32468, Regd. No.: OD117050 / O/s : ₹1.00 Lakh	₹ 1,49,000/- / ₹ 15,000/-	
14.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Jumla Sirka / A/c No.: 550376210000185	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- Alfa DX Diesel BSVI, Engine No.: S2L9231158, Chasis No MA1LE2NR9P3C16471, Regd. No.: OD11AA3008 / O/s : ₹1.63 Lakh	₹ 1,66,000/- / ₹ 17,000/-	

Date of Auction: 25.02.2025 From 11.00 A.M. to 2.00 P.M.

Auction Venue: Zonal Office, Baripada, Bank of India Building, Lal Bazaar, In front of MKC School, PIN-757001

Terms and Conditions: Interested bidders can inspect the vehicle at above mentioned parking yards from 10.02.2025 to 21.02.2025 from 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. Application & quotes to participate in the auction would be supplied by the Concerned Branch. The application along with earnest money, mentioned against above vehicle to be submitted well before 24.02.2025. The EMD & other payments should be in form of DD and in the favour of Bank of India, Zonal Office & payable at Baripada. The bidders are informed to be present at the venue positively. The successful bidder has to deposit 25% of bid amount within one day after bid is successful and the balance amount within **7 days** failing which the money deposited by the successful bidder would be forfeited. The cost of transfer of ownership and statutory dues/all misc. charges, if any is to borne by the successful purchaser. Vehicle will be auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS & AS IS WHAT IS" basis. However the Bank reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel the auction sale process of the vehicle at its own discretion at any point of time. There will be bidding in the auction and the highest bidder will be declared as successful bidder.

Place: Baripada Date: 06.02.2025 Zonal Manager Bank of India

60 devotees from Pak take holy dip



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mahakumbh Nagar, Feb 6: Drawn by the grandeur of the Maha Kumbh they had seen on social media, a group of 68 Hindu devotees from Pakistan' Sindh province arrived at the holy gathering Thursday.

For nearly 50 of them, this is their first experience of the Maha Kumbh. Speaking to PTI at the Shri Gu-

rukrishna camp in Sector Nine, Gobind Ram Makhija, one of the visitors from Sindh, shared, "For the past two to three months, ever since we heard about the Maha Kumbh, we have been eager to come here. We simply

He recalled that in April last year, a group of 250 people from Pakistan had visited Prayagraj to take a dip in the Ganga. This time, the visitors hailed from six districts of Sindh -- Ghotki, Sukkur, Khairpur, Shikarpur, Karzakot, and Jatabal -- many of whom are experiencing the Maha Kumbh for the first time. Expressing his joy, Makhija said, "This is an incredible expe-

rience. I have no words to describe it. Tomorrow. we will take a dip in the Ganga. Being here makes me feel proud to have been born into Sanatan Dharma." Surbhi, an 11th-grade

student from Ghotki, shared that this is her first time visiting India and attending the Kumbh.

MAHA

KUMBH

"This is the first opportunity I've had to truly explore and understand my religion in depth. It feels amazing," she said.

Priyanka, another first-time visitor from Sindh, echoed similar sentiments. "I am a homemaker, and coming

to India and witnessing this Maha Kumbh is the greatest blessing of my life. We were born and raised in a Muslim-majority society. Contrary to what the media often portrays, there isn't as much discrimination against Hindus in Sindh. However, seeing our culture in its full glory here is a divine

experience," she said. Niranjan Chawla, a construction worker from Sukkur, shared his thoughts on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

"The situation in Sindh is such that people do not feel the need to apply for Indian citizenship. However, in some areas like Rajasthan (in Pakistan), Hindus do face challenges," he explained. Chawla urged the Indian government to simplify the visa process. "It currently takes six months to get a visa approved. However, we appreciate that our group was granted visas smoothly this time, and we thank the Indian government for that," he said.

Detailing their travel plans, Chawla mentioned, "We arrived at this Maha Kumbh camp last night. We will leave for Raipur February 8, followed by a

visit to Haridwar. Several members of our group have brought six urns containing ashes of deceased loved ones, which they will immerse in Haridwar." Chawla added that later in the evening, the group would visit the Akharas to seek blessings from the saints and explore the fair.

The Maha Kumbh, which started January 13, will continue until February 26. There are still two more special bathing dates: February 12 (Maghi Purnima) and February 26 (Mahashivratri).

By 12 PM Thursday, over 57 lakh pilgrims had taken a dip at the Maha Kumbh Mela. So far, nearly 39 crore people from across the globe have had the holy bath here, according to the Uttar Pradesh government, which is hosting the mega fair.



With folded hands and a heart full of devotion, I pray for the peace, prosperity, and well-being of our great nation and the beloved people of Manipur

INDIA HAS RECEIVED \$1.16BLN IN CLIMATE FINANCE SO FAR: GOVT

India has so far received \$ 1.16 billion for climate projects through the financial mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the government informed Parliament Thursday. This amount includes \$803.9 million from the Green Climate Fund, \$346.52 million from the Global Environment Facility (for climate change focal area), and \$16.86 million from the Adaptation Fund, according to a written reply in the Rajya Sabha by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav





tradition of is very rich. Whenever the need arose, the saint tradition in

India played its role in protecting the country's culture. The saints have created knowledge and kept the country united AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

The Shiv Sena is not owned by anyone, it belongs to the workers. Balasa heb Thackeray always treated party workers like companions

J&K will never be

EKNATH SHINDE MAHA DY CM

completely normalised and free of terror

without the cooperation of & partnership with the local population. Incidents like these risk alienating the very people who we need to carry with us on the road to complete normalcy

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

SHORT **TAKES**

TN: Two killed as **Omni bus overturns**

Tiruppur (Tamil Nadu): Two persons were killed and several others injured when an omnibus overturned in this district Thursday, police said. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin condoled the deaths and announced a solatium of Rs three lakh each to the families who lost their kin in the mishap. Also, he ordered the officials to provide a relief of Rs 1 lakh each to the grievously injured and Rs 50,000 each to those who sustained minor injuries and were undergoing treatment in the hospital.

Snowfall continues in Himachal Pradesh

Shimla: Minimum

temperatures plummeted by 3 to 11 degrees Celsius across Himachal Pradesh Thursday as snowfall continued in the state's higher reaches, the Met office said. Keylong in the tribal Lahaul and Spiti district was the coldest in the state, recording a night temperature of minus 12.2 degrees Celsius. Snowfall continued in the higher reaches and highaltitude tribal areas of the state since Wednesday evening. Gondla recorded 9 cm of snow, followed by Keylong at 6 cm, Kalpa at 3.6 cm, and Kothi at 2.5 cm. Intermittent rain also lashed some parts of the state. Manali received 20 mm of rain, followed by Dalhousie at 7 mm, Kataula at 6.1 mm, and Bharmaur at 5 mm.

Man dies in police custody

Patna: A man, accused of bike theft, died under mysterious circumstances in Kanti police station in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district Thursday. The deceased, Shivam Kumar Jha (35), a resident of Kalwari village was taken into custody by Kanti police station Tuesday. Tragically, Thursday morning, he was found dead in the police lock-up, with authorities suggesting suicide

Bangalore gears up for Aero India 2025

Bangalore: The Silicon Valley of India, Bengaluru, is all set to host Asia's premier aerospace and defence exhibition, the prestigious Aero India 2025 between February 10-14. The breathtaking event showcasing aerial performances and aviation technology will be held at Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru.

US DEPORTS INDIAN MIGRANTS

'Punjab given step-motherly treatment'

Chandigarh, Feb 6: The Puniab ruling Aam Aadmi party has accused the Centre of treating the state "step-motherly' and asked why the US aircraft that brought back 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed in Amritsar and not Delhi. Congress MP Gurieet Singh

Aujla slammed the Centre for not protesting the deportation of the Indian citizens. A US military plane landed at the Shri Guru Ramdas Ji International Airport in Amritsar at 1.55 pm Wednesday. Of those deported, 33 each are from Haryana and Gujarat, 30 from Punjab, three each from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, and two from Chandigarh.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Punjab AAP president and cabinet minister Aman Arora accused the Centre of meting out "step-motherly" treatment to Punjab at every step. "Deportees were from across the country. (Deportees) from other states were more than those from Puniah ... (but) it (plane) landed in Amritsar. I am not objecting to them coming here but by leaving the national capital and landing it (plane) in Amritsar ... there is substance in what you are saving," he said when asked if there

was a conspiracy to defame Punjab by landing the plane in Amritsar. NRI Affairs minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal condemned the "mistreatment" of

Of those deported, 33 each are from Haryana and Gujara 30 from Punjab, three each from Maharashtra and Uttar

cial flight? Why didn't the plane

land in Delhi? This is an insult

to our people & our sovereignty.

The govt must answer," Aujla

said in a post on X. Congress

MLA Pargat Singh too slammed

the Centre for landing the US

plane at Amritsar. "To protect

deportees, terming it "gross human rights violations." He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Jaishankar must communicate to the US government that deported Indians should be handed over to Indian embassies for their safe return. He also termed the choice of Amritsar airport for deportation as "politically motivated." Amritsar MP Auila echoed similar sentiments Thursday. "Shameful & unacceptable! The Modi govt allowed Indian immigrants to be deported in shackles on a foreign military aircraft. Why no protest? Why not a commerlanded in Amritsar, Punjab even though most deportees were from Gujarat and Haryana," Jalandhar Cantt MLA said in a post on X. He alleged that when Punjab

the fake #GujaratModel and

defame Punjab, the U.S. depor-

tation flight was deliberately

demanded international flights, it was not granted permission "to keep it away from its economic benefits.' "The way they were hand-

cuffed and deported, as if they were hardcore criminals, is extremely sad and condemnable. Immigration is a global phenomenon, and people often migrate in search of better opportunities. "Treating them like criminals not only tarnishes the image of our country but also leaves these individuals humiliated," the lawmaker said in a statement. He also questioned the Prime Minister's "silence" on the matter, pointing out the "supposed camaraderie" between Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump. "Modi claims that Trump is his friend. Then why is he not raising this issue with him? Why is he allowing Indians to be treated in such an undignified manner. as if they are criminals?" Kang said. AAP leader Neel Garg criticised the BJP-led Centre for its "apathy" toward the deported individuals

PM attacks Congress for 'family first' policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Congress in the Rajya Sabha accusing it of adopting a policy of 'family first' and appeasement, and said the BJP government only believed in the policy of 'nation first' and 'sabka saath, sabka vikas'.

Replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address, he criticised the Congress for having "hatred and anger" towards B R Ambedkar and said this was reflected in not giving due recognition like the 'Bharat Ratna' to the architect of India's Constitution.

Accusing the grand old party of not respecting Ambedkar, he said the Congress is now forced to speak out 'Jai Bhim' and also they get choked while speaking so. Modi also hit out at the economic policies of the Congress government and the 'Licence quota raj' that gave rise to corruption and affected the country's economic progress and growth.

He also said the entire Hindu community was blamed and its image tarnished across the world for the economic mismanagement and wrong policies of the Congress 'royal



'Modi's speech full of lies, half-truths'

New Delhi: The Congress Thursday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his speech in the Raiva Sabha, saying he kept the "river of lies flowing and "twisted" history but did not speak on the real issues of the peo ple. The Opposition party also claimed that the Prime Minister's speech was "full of lies and half-truths". Modi Thursday accused the Congress of practising appeasement politics to get Union government was working on the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' The Prime Minister said the Congress policies had been focused around it

family' that led to slow growth which was coined as the 'Hin du rate of growth'. Modi also targeted the Congress govern ment for imposing Emergency in the country during which the entire Opposition was put behind bars and hand-cuffed He also cited several examples of film stars, singers and writers against whom action was taken for not lauding the Congress during that time.

RAGGING NORMS

UGC notices to 18 medical colleges



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued show-cause notices to 18 medical colleges for not complying with anti-ragging regulations, officials said Thursday.

The defaulter colleges in clude two each in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Pondicherry; three each in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar; and one each in Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

"It was found that these colleges had not complied with the mandatory requirements set forth in the Anti-Ragging Regulations, 2009 for curbing the menace of ragging. Specifically, it has come to our notice that the institutions failed to obtain the anti-ragging undertakings from students as required by the said regulations," UGC Secretary Manish Joshi said.

The Anti-Ragging Regulations, 2009 mandate that every student and their parents and guardians must submit an anti-ragging undertaking at the time of admission and at the beginning of every academic year. man Mahavir Medical College and Safdariung Hospital and Hamdard Institute of Medical Sciences and Research in Delhi: Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences in Uttar Pradesh; Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research in West Bengal and Osmania Medical College in Telangana.

Lakhimpur Medical College and Nagaon Medical College and Hospital in Assam; Government Medical College(Bettiah), Katihar Medical College (Kati har) and Madhubani Medical College in Bihar; and Andhra Medical College (Vishakhapatnam), Guntur Medical College and Kurnool Medical College in Andhra Pradesh are also on the list. Other medical colleges which have been issued showcause notices are Bundelkhand Medical College and Hospital (Madhva Pradesh): JIPMER and Mahatma Gandhi Medical Research Institute in Pondicherry besides Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences and Christian Medical College in Tamil Nadu.

The colleges have been directed to submit a written explanation within seven days from the date of receiving the notice, detailing the reasons for the lapse and the steps they intend to take to immediately rectify this situation.



A boy watches the final rehearsal of IAF aircrafts for Aero India 2025, at Yelahanka Air Force Station, in Bangalore,

CMs of Manipur, Haryana take dip at Sangam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal. Feb 6: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, along with three cabinet ministers and four other BJP MLAs, Thursday took a holy dip at Triveni Sangam in Uttar Pradesh during the ongoing Maha Kumbh and prayed for peace and prosperity of the country and the people of the state.

In a post on X, Singh said, "Standing at the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mystical Saraswati at Triveni Sangam, one feels the embrace of divinity itself. As the cool waters touch the soul. they wash away not just the dust of the body but the burdens of countless lifetimes.'

'With folded hands and a heart full of devotion, I pray for the peace, prosperity, and well-being of our great nation and the beloved people of Manipur," Singh added. Singh shared a video which showed him taking a dip. PWD Minister Gov

indas Konthouam, Forest and Environment Minister Thongam Biswajit, Consumer Affairs Minister L Susindro Meitei and four BJP MLAs -- Karam Shyam, Sanasam Premchandra, Kh Ibomcha and Sapam Kuniakeshwor - were with the chief minister. In another post, Singh said, "At Triveni Sangam, where sacred rivers unite, the waters cleanse both body and soul. I pray for our nation and Manipur, seeking peace, strength, and prosperity.

governor's delay over assent to Bills PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SC questions TN

New Delhi, Feb 6: The Supreme Court Thursday questioned the delay on the part of Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi over his assent to the bills passed by state legislative assembly and said "he seems to have adopted his own procedure"

A bench comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said, "He (the governor) seems to have adopted his own procedure. He says. 'I withhold assent, but I will not ask you to reconsider the bill' It does not make sense to keep withholding assent and not send it to the legislature thereby frustrating the provision of Article 200.'

The bench therefore framed several key questions for adjudication on the dispute between the state government and the Gover nor over withholding of assent to bills. The first one, for instance reads, "When a state legislative assembly passes a bill and sends it to the Governor for assent, and the Governor withholds assent but the bill is passed again and resubmitted, does the Governor have the authority to withhold it once more?" Another one asks, "Is the discretion of the Governor to present a bill to the President lim ited to specific matters, or does it extend beyond certain prescribed subjects?" The bench would deal on what considerations influ enced the Governor's decision to present the bill to the President instead of granting assent.

'Exposure to air pollution can affect one's daily task performance'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Shortterm exposure to air pollution can cloud one's judgment, affecting emotional intelligence and focus and potentially making routine activities more challenging, according to a new

Researchers, including those from the University of Birmingham, UK, compared the performance of 26 adults divided into two groups -- one exposed to high levels of air pollution, using candle smoke, and the other to clean air. The team found that brief exposure to high levels of particulate matter (PM) pollution could affect the participants' higher-order cognitive functions, including

self-control and sustained at-

tention, which are critical for

work and other aspects of life. Air pollution has been studied as a major risk factor for neurological diseases, including Alzheimer's and dementia, where cognition and memory are affected. Long-term exposure to PM2.5 pollution has also been linked with poor learning

However, the study, published in the journal Nature Communications, showed that "even short-term exposure to particulate matter can have immediate negative effects on brain functions essential for daily activities, such as doing the weekly supermarket shop, co-author Thomas Faherty from the University of Birmingham said. For the study, the cognitive abilities of the participants, including attention and emotion recognition, were

and memory among children.

risk factor for neurological diseases, cognition and memory are affected tested before exposure to polluted air and four hours after. "Results showed significant reductions in selective attention

Air pollution has been studied as a major including Alzheimer's and dementia, where

and emotion expression dis-

crimination after enhanced PM (particulate matter) exposure versus clean air exposure." the

authors wrote. Working memory, which

Long-term

exposure to PM2.5

pollution has also

been linked with poor

learning and memory

among children

serves as a 'temporary workspace' for storing and manipulating just-learned information, was also measured and found to be unaffected. Therefore, the researchers suggested that inflammation in the brain triggered by pollution could be responsible for the deficits in focusing and recognising emotions.

The results also indicated that certain brain functions could be more resilient to shortterm exposure to pollution, they added. Cognitive functioning, including attention and controlled behaviour, is crucial for accomplishing everyday tasks both at work and in other aspects of life.

For example, selective attention -- focusing on what is important and ignoring what

is not -- is known to help with

decision-making and achieving goals. Recognising one's own and others' emotions helps in understanding how to behave in a socially acceptable manner.

"Poor air quality undermines intellectual development and worker productivity, with significant societal and economic implications in a high-tech world reliant on cognitive ex cellence," co-author Francis Pope from the University of Birmingham said.

"Reduced productivity impacts economic growth, fur ther highlighting the urgent need for stricter air quality regulations and public health measures to combat the harmful effects of pollution on brain health, particularly in highly polluted urban areas," Pope said.

national



We have received investment proposals worth ₹ 4, 40,595 crore during this event. This will create thousands of job opportunities in **West Bengal**

CSR FUND SCAM: ACCUSED SENT TO POLICE CUSTODY

A local court in Muvattupuzha near Thursday remanded 26-year-old Anandu Krishnan to five days of police custody for further investigation into the case of allegedly duping multiple people by falsely promising scooters and laptops at half price with the help of CSR funds





Just like the script of the speech the NDA government wrote for the Hon President, PM Narendra Modi's script

in Rajya Sabha today had the same 10 words/phrases missing

DEREK O'BRIEN | TMC LEADER

The SEIL programme, launched in 1965, has created bridge between the youth of the



MANOJ SINHA | J&K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

We want to invite Rahul Gandhi for Survapet and AICC president Mallikar jun Kharge for the Medak meeting.



A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM





Propaganda: Modi is the most popular leader in the world, Today, India is respected because of him Reality: Indian

migrants were chained like Dogs on a Military Aircraft and deported like North Korean Prisoners. Pin Drop Silence in Mainstream

@RoshanKrRaii

'BJP offered 7 AAP candidates ₹15 crore'

New Delhi, Feb 6: AAP leader Sanjay Singh accused the Thursday of offering money to seven of his party candidates to switch sides, ahead of the Delhi Assembly poll results February 8, prompting the saffron outfit to demand his apology and threaten him with legal action.

Singh alleged at a press conference here that Bharativa Janata Party (BJP) leaders made phone calls to seven AAP MLAs, who also contested the Delhi Assembly polls, offering them ₹15 crore each to join the saffron outfit.

"Some were even offered (money) at face-to-face meetings," the Rajya Sabha MP said. This clearly shows that the BJP has accepted its defeat before the results and that is why it is trying something like this," he added. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said in a statement that Singh should either retract his allegations and tender an apology or face legal action.

Singh's allegation is an indication of his frustration over the imminent defeat of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidates in the Delhi election, he said. "Singh should not forget that his party leader and the Delhi chief minister is facing a defamation case over her false allegations, similar to those levelled by him,' Sachdeva said.

Singh said the AAP has advised its candidates to record such calls and use spy cameras to document what transpires at any face-to-face meeting, if such offers are made. Polling across Delhi's 70 Assembly constitu-



encies took place Wednesday to decide the electoral fate of 699 candidates.

The results, scheduled to be announced Saturday, will

determine whether the ruling AAP can secure a third consecutive term in the capital or if the BJP's 27-year wait to return to in power in Delhi ends.

Three exit polls predict BJP victory in Delhi Assembly

 $\mathbf{T}^{ ext{hree}}$ exit polls Thursday predicted a sweep for the BJP in the Delhi Assembly elections with vote share in the range of 48-49 per cent and 45-61 seats in the 70-member House. Axis My India, which got its numbers right in the 2020 Delhi elections, has given a 48 per cent vote share for the BJP-led alliance as against 42 per cent for the ruling AAP. In terms of seats, the Axis My India has projected the BJP winning 45-55 seats, the AAP 15-25 seats and the Congress 0-1. It also shows others winning 0-1 seats. Today's Chanakya has projected the BJP winning a 49 per cent vote share with 45-57 seats (51 with an error margin of six), while AAP may get 13-25 seats with 41 per cent vote share. Others are projected to get 0-3 seats. CNX has predicted a landslide for the BJP with 49-61 seats and 49.05 per cent vote share, while it said the AAP could get 10-19 seats with 41.52 per cent vote share. The Congress could open its account in the Assembly after a gap of 10 years with 0-1 seats and a vote share of 5.37 per cent.

Erode East bypoll: Voter turn out dips by 6.72 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Erode (Tamil Nadu) Feb 6: The voter turn out in the byelection held for the Erode East Assembly Constituency February 5 has decreased by 6.72 per cent compared to the 2023 bypoll, according to Election officials.

In 2023, the constituency witnessed 74.69 per cent polling, where Congress candidate EVKS Elangovan was declared elected, defeating his nearest rival K S Thennarasu (AIAD-MK) by 66,233 votes. In 2025, the bypoll was nesseciated following the death of Elangovan.

A total of 67.97 per cent of voting was recorded in Erode east Assembly bypoll, authorities said late Wednesday. There were 46 candidates, including 44 independents, in the fray and the contest was only between the ruling DMK's VC Chandirakumar and Tamil nationalist party, Naam Tamizhar Katchi's (NTK) M K Seethalakshmi.

Opposition parties, including the main Opposition AIADMK, have boycotted the polls. All the EVMs from 237 polling stations were sent to the Institute of Road and Transport Technology. Chitode where the counting of votes will be held February 8. A four-tier security has been provided in the strong room where Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are kept, police said.



DEPORTATION NOT NEW: EAM

Jaishankar's statement in the Rajya Sabha came as Opposition parties stepped up their criticism over the treatment meted out to 104 illegal Indian immigrants who landed in Amritsar Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: The process of deportation is not new and been ongoing for several years, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Thursday and added that the government is engaging with the US to ensure that deported Indians are not mistreated.

Jaishankar's statement in the Rajya Sabha came as opposition parties stepped up their criticism over the treatment meted out to 104 illegal Indian immigrants who landed in Amritsar Wednesday in a US military plane - many deportees saying they were shackled

He stressed that the focus should be on the strong crackdown on the illegal migration industry while taking steps to ease visas for legitimate travellers. According to the minister, it is the obligation of all countries to take back their nationals if they are found to be living illegally abroad. This is naturally subject to an unambiguous verification of their nationality, he said.

"This is not a policy applicable to any specific country nor indeed one only practiced by India," he said in the Upper

Jaishankar said the standard operating procedure for deportation by aircraft provides for the use of restraints as per the US' policy since 2012. However, the SOPs do not include restraining women and children, he said. "Further need of deportees during transit re-



lated to food and other necessi ties, including possible medical emergencies, are attended to. During toilet breaks deportees are temporarily unrestrained if needed. This is applicable to chartered civilian aircraft as well as military aircraft,' he said. "There has been no change from past procedures for the flight undertaken by the US February 5, 2025.'

On the issue of several deportees having properties in the US, the minister said authorities here are working with those deported and getting details to work out a solution "The process of deportation is not a new one, I repeat not a new one, and has been ongo ing for several years," the min ister said. "We are of course engaging the US government to ensure the returning deportees are not mistreated in any manner during the flight,'

SHORT **TAKES**

Eight dead after bus rams into car

Jaipur: Eight people died and six got injured after a roadways bus rammed into a car in Dudu town near Jaipur Thursday afternoon, police said. Deputy Superintendent of Police Deepak Khandelwal said the bus went out of control and hit the car after one of its tyres burst. Eight people travelling in the car died on the spot. The accident took place in Mokhampura area on Jaipur Aimer Highway, According to the police, a Jodhpur depot roadways bus was going to Ajmer from Jaipur.

Husband, in-laws get death sentence

Bareilly (UP): A local court has sentenced a man and his parents to death in a dowry death case. Additional District and Sessions Judge Fast Track Court-I Ravi Kumar Diwakar delivered the verdict Thursday, strongly condemning the dowry system and warning society of its devastating consequences. Assistant District Government Advocate Digambar Singh said 19-year-old Farah was killed May 1, 2024, just one year after her marriage.

JD(U) leader shot dead; three held

Gaya (Bihar): A JD(U) leader was shot dead by armed men near his residence in Bihar's Gaya district, and three persons were arrested in this connection, police said Thursday. The incident took place Wednesday night when armed assailants shot at local leader Mahesh Mishra in Churihara village in Belaganj area, a senior officer said. Mishra was block secretary of JD(U) and deputy 'mukhiya' of the Chiraila panchayat under the jurisdiction of Belaganj Police Station. Deputy Superintendent of Police Ravi Prakash Singh said, "Mishra was shot at by armed assailants near his house last night. He was immediately taken to the nearest government hospital, where he was declared dead.'

SNIPPETS

Rajnath, Hegseth agree to boost defence ties NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his American counterpart,

Pete Hegseth, agreed Thursday to work on a 10-year comprehensive framework to bolster the India-US defence partnership, especially in the spheres of intelligence. logistics, operational and industrial engagement. Singh said Hegseth reviewed various aspects of the bilateral defence ties in a phone conversation that came less than a week before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned trip to Wash ington. It was Singh's first phone conversation with Hegseth after the latter was confirmed as the US defence secretary January 25. An Indian readout of the conver sation said India and the United States have agreed to work together to draft a comprehensive framework on defence cooperation, aimed at structuring the bilateral collaboration for the 2025-2035 period.

Centre to seek Cabinet nod for gig workers' pension

NEW DELHI: The labour ministry will soon seek the Union Cabinet's approval for a pension scheme for one crore gig workers engaged with online platforms, where social security contribution will be made from their income for every transaction, said an official source. This assumes significance in view of the Budget announce ment earlier this month by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman about rolling out of a social security scheme for one crore gig workers engaged with online platforms. Sithraman had said in her Budget speech that the government will provide them identity cards and facilitate their registration on the e-Shram portal. She had further said that these workers will be provided healthcare under the PM Jan Arogya Yojana. This measure is likely to assist nearly 1 crore gig workers, she had said.

New I-T Bill may come up in Cabinet today

NEW DELHI: The new income tax Bill, to be introduced in Parliament next week, will not have long sentences, provisos and explanations, Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said Thursday. The new Bill, which will replace the six-decade-old Income Tax Act, is likely to be discussed at the Cabinet meeting Friday, sources said. The new bill, which was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech, will also incorporate the changes made in income tax rates, slabs and in TDS provisions made in the Budget for 2025-26. "When you see next week a new income tax Bill, you will see a very different Bill. The way we write laws is undergoing a change... You will see very less of those long sentences you will not see probably the proviso, explanations....," Pandey said at a PHD Chambers event here. Pandey said the new bill will not put any new taxes, or any new burden.



LoP in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacts with students from Nagaland

Centre proposes Diwali for UNESCO heritage status

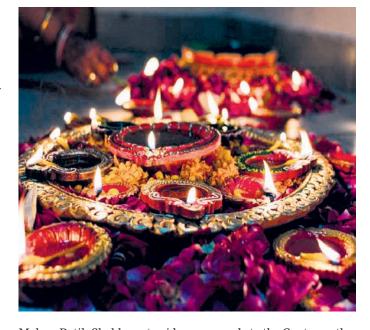
AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 6: India has sent a proposal to UNESCO for inclusion of the Diwali festival in its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity, Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said Thursday.

Replying to supplementaries in the Rajya Sabha, Shekhawat said the Central government had sent the proposal to include the Diwali festival in the list of ICH of UNESCO in 2023. He said the proposal is expected to be examined by UNESCO this year.

Shekhawat said the Centre has not received any proposal for inclusion of Pandharichi Vari, the annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur, of Maharashtra in the ICH list of UNESCO.

Responding to a question by BJP member Dhairyasheel



Mohan Patil, Shekhawat said the state government sends

proposals to the Centre or the Sangeet Natak Akademi, which

REPLYING TO SUPPLEMENTARIES IN THE RAJYA SABHA, CULTURE MINISTER GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT SAID THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAD SENT THE PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE THE DIWALI FESTIVAL IN THE LIST OF ICH OF UNESCO IN 2023

HE SAID THE PROPOSAL IS EXPECTED TO BE EXAMINED BY UNESCO THIS YEAR

SHEKHAWAT SAID THE CENTRE HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF PANDHARICHI VARI, THE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO PANDHARPUR, OF MAHARASHTRA IN THE ICH LIST OF UNESCO

is the nodal agency to examine the ICH proposals.

He said for inclusion of an element in the UNESCO's Representative List of ICH, the state parties are required to submit a nomination dossier on the relevant element for evaluation and examination by the UNESCO Committee.

"No proposal in prescribed format has been received," Shekhawat said. He said the Ministry of Culture, through Sangeet Natak Akademi and the support of the Solapur district administration and the Shri Vitthal Rukmini Temple Trust, Pandharpur, had organised Kala Pravah, a temple festival at Shri Jagadguru Sant Tukaram Maharaj Bhavan last year.

The festival, held June 23-24 last year, included performances of Bharud, Warkari Kirtan, Sapta Khanjiri Bhajan, Dashawtar and Warkari Dindi procession, Shekhawat said.

CBI books IRS officer, 6 CAs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaishankar said.

New Delhi. Feb 6: The CBI Thursday conducted search es at 18 locations across the country after registering a case against an IRS officer and other officials of the Income Tax department who were allegedly sharing sensitive data on pending assessment with a group of chartered accountants by sidestepping the faceless as-

sessment system, officials said. In its FIR the CBI has booked Deputy Commissioner Income Tax Vijayendra R posted at Jhandewalan office in New Delhi, purported CA Dinesh Kumar Agrawal, Income Tax inspectors Dinesh Kumar Verma and Binayak Sharma besides five more chartered accountants, they said. The other CAs booked in the case are Shivratan Mangelal Singrodia, Bhavesh Parshottambhai Rakholia, Prathik Lenin, Malik Gi

"Recently the government of India has introduced a series of futuristic reforms in Direct Tax administration for the benefit of taxpavers and the economy 'Faceless Scheme of assessment is one such reform where there is no human interface between taxpayers and tax officials, CBI's spokesperson said in a statement.

rish Anand and Sushil Kumar

The racket of CAs, in active assistance and criminal conspiracy, with some income tax officials were unauthorisedly and clandestinely disclosing the names of assessing officers and appellate officers to the assessees and also unauthorisedly using the sensitive income tax data pertaining to pending assessment or appeal cases and high refund cases to approach the assessee concerned or his CA for pecuni ary benefits, it said. The CBI conducted searches in Delhi, Mumbai, Thane, West Champaran (Bihar), Bangalore, Kottayam (Kerala), etc in which incriminating documents, evidences of payment of undue gratification and some digital electronic evidences have been recovered during searches, the

statement said.

international



The president has made it clear that they need to be temporarily relocated out of Gaza KAROLINE LEAVITT

IRAN INAUGURATES FIRST DRONE-CARRIER WARSHIP

Iran has inaugurated its first drone-carrier warship, saying the vessel is capable of operating in oceans far from its mainland, the official IRNA news agency reported Thursday. The report said the vessel, manned by the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's navy, can carry several squadrons of drones as well as helicopters and cruise missiles





Thailand's to combat online gambling fraud. cooperation

continue to strengthen law en forcement, security, and judicial XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

We have agreed to increase by 40 per cent the number of flights of deportees both of our nationality as well as deportees from other nationalities

BERNARDO ARÉVALO I



make the problem worse. It is vital to stay true to the bedrock of international law. It is essential to avoid

any form of ethnic cleansing ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

SHORT TAKES

After US, Argentina pulls out of WHO

Buenos Aires: Argentina's president has ordered the country's withdrawal from the World Health Organization due to "profound differences" with the UN agency, a presidential spokesperson said Wednesday. President Javier Milei's decision echoes that of his ally. US President Donald Trump, who began the process of pulling the United States out of WHO with an executive order on his first day back in office January 21. The loss of another member country will further fracture cooperation in global health, though Argentina was expected to provide only about \$8 million to WHO for the agency's estimated \$6.9 billion 2024-2025 budget.

New type of bird flu detected in US

Carson City: Dairy cattle in Nevada have been infected with a new type of bird flu that's different from the version that has spread in US herds since last year, Agriculture Department officials said Wednesday. The detection indicates that distinct forms of the virus known as Type A H5N1 have spilled over from wild birds into cattle at least twice.

3 policemen killed in check post attack

Peshawar: At least three policemen were killed and six others injured when heavily armed militants attacked a police check post in the restive northwest Pakistan Thursday morning, police said. The attackers launched a barrage of gunfire at the Bahadur Khel check post in the Karak district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, bordering Afghanistan. "Unknown terrorists opened fire from all sides at a check post in Karak's Bahadur Khel area, targeting police personnel using light and heavy weapons in an attempt to capture the check

Fire at school kills 17 children in Nigeria

Abuja: At least 17 children were killed in a fire that broke out in an Islamic school in northwestern Nigeria, the country's emergency response agency said, as authorities launched an investigation into the cause Thursday. About 100 children were at out Wednesday in the Kaura Namoda district of Zamfara

SHEIKH HASINA'S **SPEECH**

While Hasina was delivering the speech Wednesday night, protesters vandalised and set on fire her father and Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's residence in Dhaka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka/New Delhi, Feb 6: Bangladesh Thursday lodged a protest with India's acting envoy saying that "false and fabricated comments" by deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina are a "hostile act" against Dhaka, a day after she delivered a virtual address to her supporters from exile in India.

While Hasina was delivering the speech Wednesday night, protesters vandalised and set on fire her father and Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's residence in Dhaka. Similar cases of vandalism also took place at several other places, targeting Awami League leaders.

"We called India's deputy high commissioner (Pawan Badhe), as the high commissioner was not here, and handed him our protest note," Foreign Affairs Adviser M Touhid Hossain told reporters at a briefing at his office.

He described Hasina's recent statements as "highly

B'desh summons Indian envoy



of India over the

false fabricated

made in different

con-

prime minister Sheikh Hasina,

instigating instability in Ban-

The protest note, handed

over to the Indian diplomat,

conveyed the "deep concern,

disappointment and serious

reservation" of Bangladesh, as

such statements are "hurting

the sentiments" of the people in

the country, the statement said.

sised that such activities by

her, are considered as a "hos-

tile act towards Bangladesh and

are not conducive to the efforts

at establishing a healthy rela-

The ministry also empha-

social media, by the former

being

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gladesh".

aggressive", suggesting that they could have offended the sentiments of the younger gen-

Hossain said Dhaka previously urged New Delhi to prevent her from engaging in such activities, "but we did not receive any response"

He said that the foreign ministry Thursday once again conveyed its objections. "We will observe what actions India takes," he added.

Separately, the foreign ministry in a statement said it asked India "to immediately take appropriate measures, in the spirit of mutual respect and understanding, to stop her from making such false, fabricated and incendiary statements using social media and other communications while she is in India"

The foreign ministry said it lodged a "strong protest with

tionship between the two coun-

Hasina, 77, has been living in India since August 5 last year, when she fled Bangladesh following a massive student-led protest that toppled her Awami League's 16-year regime.

In her speech, Hasina called upon the countrymen to organise a resistance against the current regime.

Just before her speech, protesters rallied outside Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's

house

Dhaka fol-

social me-

dia call for

a "bulldozer

lowing

the house on fire.

her speech, Dhanmondi **Hasina called upon** the countrymen to organise a resistance against the current procession". regime The mob set

> The building in the adjacent plot, which had housed the offices of several Awami League outfits, was also demolished. The violent demonstrators also defaced murals depicting Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

> Hasina, in a slightly emotion-choked voice, said Pakistani troops too looted the house during the 1971 Liberation War but did not demolish or set it on fire.

'Today, this house is being demolished. What crime had it committed? Why were they so afraid of the house... I seek justice from the people of the country. Didn't I do anything for you?" she said.

They can demolish a building, but not the history... but they must also remember that history takes its revenge," Hasina said.

"They are yet to have the strength to destroy the national flag, the constitution and the independence that we earned at the cost of lives of millions of martyrs with a bulldozer," she said in an apparent reference to the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government.

The residence of Hasina' late husband Wajed Mian known as 'Sudha Sadan' on Road 5 in Dhanmondi was also set on fire

Protesters also demolished the home of her cousins -Sheikh Helal Uddin and Sheikh Salauddin Jewel - in Khulna

Protesting students removed the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Bangabandhu Sheikh Muiibur Rahman Hall of Dhaka University.

In Chattogram, protesters defaced Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's murals at Chittagong Medical College and in the city's Jamal Khan area.

Protesters also vandalised murals of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman near the Circuit House ground in Mymensingh city and at the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam University

US military plane crash claims 4 in Philippines



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manila, Feb 6: A US military-contracted plane crashed in a rice field in the southern Philippines Thursday, killing all four people on board, US Embassy and Philippine officials said.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines confirmed the crash of a light plane in Magu indanao del Sur province. It did not immediately provide other details. The plane that crashed in the southern province was contracted by the US military. US Embassy spokesperson Kanishka Gangopadhyay told The Associated Press, adding that the US Indo-Pacific Command will issue a more detailed statement on the plane crash. The bodies of four people who appeared to be foreign nationals were retrieved from the wreckage in Ampatuan town, said Ameer Jehad Tim Ambolodto, a safety officer of Magu indanao del Sur.

Windy Beaty, a provincial disaster-mitigation officer told the AP that she received reports that residents saw smoke coming from the plane and heard an explosion before the aircraft plummeted to the ground less than a kilometre from a cluster of farmhouses

SNIPPETS

Mexico deploys 10,000 troops near US border

Ciudad Juarez (Mexico): A line of Mexican

National Guard and Army trucks rumbled along the border separating Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, Texas Wednesday, among the first of 10,000 troops Mexico has sent to its northern frontier



following tariff threats by President Donald Trump, Masked and armed National Guard members picked through brush running along the border barrier on the outskirts of Ciudad Juárez, pulling out makeshift ladders and ropes tucked away in the trenches, and pulling them onto trucks. Patrols were also seen on other parts of the border near Tijuana. It comes after a turbulent week along the border after Trump announced he would delay imposing crippling tariffs on Mexico for at least a month. In exchange, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum promised she would send the country's National Guard to reinforce the border and crack down on fentanyl smuggling.

Deepseek curbs: China cries foul

Beijing: After several countries, including India, clamped restrictions on officials accessing the newly-released Chinese Al tool DeepSeek, China Thursday said such actions amounted to politicisation of trade and tech issues and vowed to protect the



interests of its firms. China has all along opposed moves to overstretch the concept of national security or politicise trade and tech issues, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here while replying to a question on several countries either banning the use of DeepSeek or restricting its use by officials over suspicions of data leaks. "We have never asked and will never ask any company or individual to collect or store data against laws," Guo said, referring to apprehensions concerning China's 2017 national intelligence law which gave the Chinese government powers over private companies. "China has all along opposed moves to overstretch the concept of national security or politicise trade and tech issues. We will firmly protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies," Guo said.



Several hundred demonstrators rally against President Donald Trump outside the California State Capitol Wednesday

Protesters rally against Trump's policies, Project 2025, Musk

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Feb 6: Demonstrators gathered in cities across the US Wednesday to protest the Trump administration's early actions, decrying everything from the president's immigration crackdown to his rollback of transgender rights and a proposal to forcibly transfer Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

Protesters in Philadelphia and at state capitols in California, Minnesota, Michigan, Texas, Wisconsin, Indiana and beyond waved signs denouncing Presi-

dent Donald Trump; billionaire Elon Musk, the leader of Trump's new Department of Government Efficiency; and Project 2025, a hard-right playbook for American government and society.

"I'm appalled by democracy's changes in the last, well, specifically two weeks — but it started a long time ago," Margaret Wilmeth said at a protest outside the Statehouse in Columbus. Ohio. "So I'm just trying to put a presence into resistance."

The protests were a result of a movement that has organized online under the

and #50501, which stands for 50 protests, 50 states, one day. Websites and accounts across social media issued calls for action, with messages such as "reiect fascism" and "defend our democracy." Outside the state Capitol in Lansing, Michigan, a crowd of hundreds gathered in freezing temperatures.

hashtags #buildtheresistance

Catie Miglietti, from the Ann Arbor area, said Musk's access to Treasury Department data was especially concerning. She painted a sign depicting Musk puppeteering Trump from

his outraised arm — evoking Musk's straight-arm gesture during a January speech that some have interpreted as a Nazi salute. "If we don't stop it and get Congress to do something, it's an attack on democracy. Miglietti said. Demonstrations in several cities piled criticism on Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency.

"DOGE is not legit," read one poster on the state Capitol steps in Jefferson City, Missouri, where dozens of protesters gathered. "Why does Elon have your Social Security info???"

Taliban suspends Afghanistan's only radio station run by women

Kabul-based Radio Begum was educating Afghan women on health, psychology, and spiritual programmes

AGENCIES

Kabul, Feb 6: The Taliban has suspended Afghanistan's women's only radio channel after raiding it Tuesday, its information and culture ministry said.

The hardline Islamist group has accused the channel of "unauthorised provision" of content and programming to an overseas TV channel, further cracking down on the last few pockets of employed Afghan women which are already under scrutiny and pressure to

operate under Taliban rule. Radio Begum, a broadcast station based in Kabul, launched five months before the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021, confirmed the raid and said the Taliban's officials from the information and culture ministry searched the premises of the office and restrained the staff.

The Taliban officials "seized computers, hard drives, files and phones from Begum staff, including Begum female journalists, and took into custody two male employees of the organisation who do not hold any senior management position", it said in a statement Tuesday.

Radio Begum's content is produced entirely by a team of Afghan women. While the Taliban did not mention which foreign TV channel, Radio Begum's sister satellite chan-

nel Begum TV operates from France and broadcasts educational programmes on Afghan school curriculum from seventh to 12th grade.

In Kabul, Radio Begum broadcasted at least six hours of lessons a day, including topics of health, psychology and spiritual programmes tailored for

women across parts of Afghanistan before its shutdown Tuesday.

According to the Taliban's claims, Radio Begum was violating broadcasting policy and improperly used its

"This decision comes after

several violations, including the unauthorised provision of content and programming to a foreign-based television channel," the Taliban's information

According

broadcasting policy

and improperly

used its license

and broadcast ministry said without disclosing when the radio station will be to the Taliban's allowed to claims, Radio function **Begum was violating** normally.

The ministry said it will review all necessary

documents to determine station's future.

Taliban-controlled Kabul, Radio Begum is known for broadcasting the voices of women across Afghanistan

Radio Begum has denied

being involved in any political activity and said it was "committed to serving the Afghan people and more specifically the Afghan women".

This is the second time the Taliban has shuttered an outlet by accusing them of working with a foreign media. In May last year, the Taliban warned iournalists and experts in Af ghanistan to end their collabo ration with Afghanistan International TV, an independent broadcast service in exile re porting on the war-hit country

Human rights groups have called on the Taliban to revoke the radio station's suspension Afghanistan ranks 178 out of 180 countries, according to the 2024 press freedom index from Reporters without Borders, a further slip from 2023 when it ranked 152.

the school when the fire broke state, the National Emergency Management Agency said in a statement.

Business



India is a key strategic growth market for Rolls Royce and we are confident that our industry-leading marine gas turbine generators are an ideal choice to power the Indian Navy's **future fleet**

JOHN SHADE | EVP FOR US BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROGRAMMES, ROLLS-ROYCE DEFENCE

CHATGPT FACES GLOBAL OUTAGE

ChatGPT, one of OpenAI's most popular Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools Thursday faced a global outage as millions of users were unable to access the service. Many frustrated users took to social media platforms like X Thursday to report that ChatGPT was not working for them. The complaints indicate that the issue is widespread, with reports coming in from different countries





mobile

phone subscribers. Today there are 116 crore mobile phone

subscribers. If we talk about internet penetration, there were 25 crore subscribers in 2014 and today the number is 97.44 crore JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA UNION COMMUNICA-

TION & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MINISTER

We are strongly committed to expand our engagement in the renewable energy sector,



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BANK OF BARODA

The India and South Asia region continues to be the world's commercial avi-



rising household incomes and investments in infrastructure and development ASHWIN NAIDU | MD OF COMMERCIAL MAR-KETING FOR INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA, BOEING

Q3 **RESULTS**

Airtel profit soars 5X

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel Thursday reported more than five-fold jump in consolidated net profit to ₹16,134.6 crore boosted by consolidation of the Indus Tower business and benefits of tariff hikes flowing into the quarter. The company had posted a consolidated profit of ₹2,876.4 crore in the year-ago period. India's secondlargest telecom company posted quarterly revenue from operations of ₹45,129.3 crore, about 19 per cent higher than ₹37,899.5 crore it posted in the year-ago period.

SBI profit zooms 84%

New Delhi: The country's largest lender SBI on Thursday reported an 84 per cent jump in standalone net profit to ₹16,891 crore in the December quarter, State Bank of India (SBI) had earned a standalone net profit of ₹9,164 crore in the year-ago period. The bank's total income rose to ₹1.28.467 crore in the third guarter of the current fiscal against ₹1.18.193 crore in the same period a year ago, SBI said in a regulatory filing.

PVR INOX net up 3X

New Delhi: Multiplex firm PVR INOX on Thursday reported nearly three-fold jump in consolidated net profit at ₹35.9 crore for the third quarter ended December, supported by record-breaking average ticket prices and food and beverage spend. The company, earlier known as PVR Ltd, had posted a net profit of ₹12.8 crore in the October-December period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations stood at ₹1,717.3 crore, up 11 per cent in the December quarter of the current fiscal. In the yearago period, the same was at ₹1,545.9 crore. "Blockbuster movies propelled Q3 to the highest box office earnings of the year," said PVR Inox in its

■ ITC profit down 7%

earnings statement.

New Delhi: Diversified entity ITC Ltd Thursday reported a decline of 7.27 per cent in consolidated net profit to ₹ 5.013.16 crore for the December quarter. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹5,406.52 crore in the yearago period, ITC said in a regulatory filing.

SAFE-HAVEN DEMAND

Gold continues record bull run

GOLD & SILVER



CLIMBS ₹270 TO IIT FRESH PEAK O

₹86,070 PER 10 G

HAVEN DEMAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Continuing the record-setting trend, gold prices climbed ₹270 to hit a new lifetime high of ₹86.070 per 10 grams in the national capital Thursday as the rupee slid to all-time low levels and stock markets closed with losses. Gold of 99.5 per cent

purity gained ₹270 to hit a new high of ₹85,670 per 10 grams. The metal had finished at ₹85,400 per 10 grams Tuesday. Bullion markets were closed Wednesday due to Delhi Assembly elections. Sustained buying

by local jewellers, a weak rupee and loss-

es in equity market aided the rally in the yellow metal, traders said. In this year, the yellow metal has soared by ₹6.680 per 10 grams or 8.41 per cent on safe-haven demand and firm global trends. However, silver prices re-

mained flat at ₹96,500 per kg.

On Thursday, the rupee plunged 14 paise to close at an all-time low of 87.57 (provisional) against the US dollar as rising odds of a rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India in

its monetary policy meeting Friday pressurised the rupee. A weak rupee makes the dollar-priced gold imports dearer. The precious metal, however.

dropped in futures trade. The April month contract of gold fell ₹41 to ₹84,526 per 10 grams on MCX, retreating from record levels hit Wednesday.

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said, "Market participants remain N 2025, GOLD HAS focused on the upcoming RBI monetary policy and the US non-farm payrolls and unemployment data scheduled for release on Friday.

> "Rupee movement and Comex gold trends will play a crucial role in determining the next price action for gold." Trivedi added.

Silver futures for March delivery declined ₹934 or 0.97 per cent to ₹95,031 per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). In the global markets, Comex gold futures for April delivery decreased by \$12 per ounce or 0.41 per cent to \$2,881 per ounce. On Wednesday, the Comex futures surged to hit another high of \$2,906 per ounce.

Zomato to rebrand as 'Eternal', unveils new logo

Eternal will comprise four major businesses as of now -- Zomato, Blinkit, District, and Hyperpure

Mumbai, Feb 6: Indian food and grocery delivery platform Zomato said Thursday it will rename the company to "Eternal" and unveiled a new logo. a move that comes more than two years after it began using the new name internally.

Eternal would comprise its four major businesses - food delivery vertical Zomato, quick-commerce unit Blinkit. live events business District and kitchen supplies unit Hyperpure, the company said.

'We thought of publicly renaming the company when

We also thought that we would publicly rename the company to Eternal, the day something beyond Zomato became a significant

driver of our future. Today, with Blinkit, I feel we are there. We would like to rename Zomato Ltd, the company (not the brand/app), to Eternal Ltd DEEPINDER GOYAL | FOUNDER, ZOMATO



@eternal

something beyond Zomato became a significant driver of our future," Founder Deepinder Goyal said in a letter to share holders. "Today, with Blinkit, I feel we are here," Goyal said.

The move marks a shift for

the company, from when investors were skeptical about Zomato's acquisition of Blinkit in mid-2022, to quick commerce-led growth drawing increasing investor interest. Blinkit as well as early bird

Swiggy's Instamart have driven a shift in the way Indians shop and forced retailers such as Reliance Industries' JioMart as well as Amazon and Walmart's Indian business to launch their own quick-commerce services

PROFIT TAKING

Sensex, Nifty slide

for 2nd straight day

Mumbai, Feb 6: Benchmark

indices Sensex and Nifty slid

for the second consecutive day

Thursday amid caution ahead

of the RBI's monetary policy

decision and fresh foreign fund

The 30-share BSE Sensex

dropped 213.12 points or 0.27

per cent to settle at 78,058.16

due to profit-taking in blue-

chip shares such as Bharti

Airtel, ITC and SBI. The index

opened higher but slipped into

the red in morning deals due to

selling by investors. During the

day, it tumbled 427.29 points or

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

outflows.

Foreigners step up bond buys before anticipated rate cut

RBI'S MONETARY POLICY DECISION IS DUE FRIDAY AND MARKETS WIDELY EXPECT A 25-BASIS-POINT RATE CUT AFTER A GAP OF NEARLY FIVE YEARS

Mumbai, Feb 6: Indian government bonds are seeing increased buying interest from foreign investors ahead of an anticipated interest rate cut from the Reserve Bank of India this week.

Foreigners have net bought ₹182 billion (\$2.09 billion) worth of debt in the past seven days, surpassing the aggregate purchases from these investors in the previous 19 weeks, clearing house data showed. "I would expect the central

bank to start with a token rate cut of 25 basis points this week," said Ashhish Vaidya, managing director and treasurer of global financial markets at DBS Bank India.

Portfolio managers that are underweight on Indian bonds have started rebalancing their portfolios, as they might not want to miss out on the rally and underperform the global bond indexes, Vaidya said.

Overall foreign purchases of Indian bonds with no investment limit have surpassed the sis points in the same period. \$20 billion mark since JPMorgan announced the inclusion of

Indian debt in September 2023. Expectations were further bolstered by the central bank's announcement of a mega li-

quidity infusion package and its bond purchase in the secondary market. The 10-year benchmark bond

yield has eased 20 basis points from its highs hit three weeks ago, while overnight index swap rates have dipped by over 30 ba-

improvea, aropping by

days, suggesting improved

supply-demand balance

around five days to 50-55

con-

Investors point to the risk of reversal of these flows, especial-

ly from shorter-term bonds, if the central bank does not deliver a rate cut. "RBI's inaction could lead to

disappointment and a sell-off in bond markets, pushing bond vields higher. The lack of a rate cut could increase volatility in bonds as investors reassess their positions," said Manish Bhargava, CEO at Straits Investment Management.

0.54 per cent to 77.843.99. The NSE Nifty declined 92.95 points or 0.39 per cent to 23,603.35 with 30 of its constitu-

ents closing lower. Among Sensex scrips, Bharti Airtel fell by 2.47 per cent to emerge as the biggest loser. Air tel after the market hours re

ported a five-fold jump in profit for the third quarter of 2024-25 Adani Ports, Infosys, Axis

Bank, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra and IndusInd Bank were among the gainers.

"The benchmark indices ex perienced a moderate decline as investors awaited the RBI's decision on a potential rate cut amidst the ongoing trade war The broader market remained cautious and in a consolidation phase despite the government's focus on boosting consumption to cushion lower growth." Vi nod Nair, Head of Research. Geojit Financial Services, said.

As many as 2,030 stocks declined while 1,908 advanced and 125 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The BSE barometer gauge declined 312.53 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at 78,271.28 Wednesday. The Nifty dropped 42.95 points or 0.18 per cent to 23,696.30. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned net sellers Wednesday offloading equities worth ₹1,682.83 crore.

PSBs see all-time high profit of ₹1.29L-crore in April-Dec period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Public sector banks (PSBs) have posted highest-ever net profit of ₹1.29 lakh crore in the April-December period of the current fiscal year, marking an annual increase of 31.3 per cent.

In a statement, the finance ministry said the performance of PSBs has shown significant improvement on key financial parameters, like record net profit growth, improved asset quality, and build-up of adequate capital buffers, during the period under review.

The 12 state-owned banks recorded net profit growth of 31.3 per cent (year-on-year) to achieve highest-ever aggregate net profit of ₹1,29,426 crore and aggregate operating profit of ₹2,20,243 crore in the nine months of the financial year.

Further, improved asset quality is also visible from significantly low net NPA ratio at 0.59 per cent (aggregate net NPA outstanding of ₹61,252

They posted aggregate business growth of 11 per cent (year-on-year), with improved aggregate deposit growth at 9.8 per cent. Total aggregate business of PSBs reached ₹242.27 lakh crore during the period. The banks also reported robust

credit growth of 12.4 per cent, led by retail credit growth of 16.6 per cent, agriculture credit growth of 12.9 per cent and MSME credit growth of 12.5 per cent. The PSBs are Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Bank of

Maharashtra, Canara Bank, Central Bank of India, Indian Bank Indian Overseas Bank, Punjab National Bank, Punjab UCO Bank.

Auto retail sales rise 7% in Jan: FADA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Automobile retail sales in India rose 7 per cent year-on-year in January at 22,91,621 units, driven by robust demand across segments, dealer's body FADA said Thursday.

Overall retail sales stood at 21,49,117 units in January 2024. "Our observations indicate

that each vehicle category --2W, 3W, PV, tractor and CV-witnessed positive momentum. pointing toward sustained consumer confidence and steady market recovery," the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) President CS Vigneshwar said in a statement.

Passenger vehicle retail sales jumped 16 per cent year-on-year to 4,65,920 units last month.

Many dealers noted improved demand but also point-



ed to last year's heavy discounting, which helped clear older models and shift registrations, Vigneshwar said.

Two-wheeler at retails stood 15,25,862 units last month, an increase of 4 per cent, as compared with 14,65,039 units in same month last year.

Sales in urban areas outpaced rural on a Y-o-Y basis, growing by 5 per cent compared to 4 per cent.

Dealers cite new model launches, marriage season de-

CS VIGNESHWAR | PRESIDENT, FADA mand and improved fi-RETAIL nancing as key growth SALES JUMPED drivers, Vigneshwar **16% YOY** stated.

CV SALES SURGE 8% However. YEAR-ON-YEAR cerns about rising interest rates, rura **RETAILS RISE** liquidity challenges and market uncertainty still linger, he added.

Commercial vehicle sales rose 8 per cent year-on-year in January to 99,425 units

While higher freight rates and passenger carrier demand provided a boost, many dealers cited low cash flow, strict

industries (like cement and coal) as major hurdles, Vigneshwars said

Tractor sales rose 5 per cent year-on-year to 93,381 units in January while three-wheeler retail sales rose 7 per cent to 1,07,033 units last month.

FADA noted that riding on the momentum of a promising start to 2025, the auto retail sector enters February with cautious optimism.

According to a latest survey. nearly half of dealers (46 per cent) anticipate growth this month, while 43 per cent expect sales to stay flat and 11 per cent foresee a dip, the industry body

This blend of sentiments underscores the industry's complex landscape, where bright spots are tempered by ongoing challenges, it stated.

INDIGO PLANS DIRECT FLIGHTS TO

The airline signs pact with Norse Atlantic for Boeing 787-9 lease

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 6: Domestic carrier IndiGo Thursday said it has entered into a pact with Norse Atlantic Airways for the damp lease of one Boeing 787-9 aircraft, amid its reported plans to fly directly to Europe. The widebody aircraft will

arrive in the country in the coming weeks and is expected to start operations in March 2025, IndiGo said in a state-

This would be the first time IndiGo will induct a Boeing 787 aircraft in its fleet. As of now, Tata Group-owned Air India has these planes in operation

Our vision is to transform into a global player by 2030 while having strong roots and continuous expansion in India, and we are strategically moving ahead in that direction PIETER ELBERS | CEO, INDIGO

which the Gurugram-based airline operates to Istanbul from Delhi and Mumbai

Wet lease of an aircraft by an Indian carrier involves the leasing of foreign aircraft, along with crew, maintenance, and

insurance. The plane is also under the operational control of the foreign operator (lessor) and subject to regulatory requirements provides the maintenance along with the aircraft but not the crew and insurance.

The pact is initially for a period of six months, which can be extended by up to 18 months subject to regulatory approvals IndiGo said, adding the two partners remain "committed" to exploring opportunities to further extend this period, subject to regulatory approvals.

IndiGo said it is committed to expanding its international footprint to cater to the growing demand for international travel to and from India.

To support and accelerate its long-haul expansion, Indi-Go has placed a firm order for 30 Airbus 350-900 wide-body aircraft with an option for an additional 70 aircraft, with deliveries expected to commence from 2027, it said.

It also said that both IndiGo and increase their collaborafleet of 352 operational aircraft, & Sind Bank, State Bank of Inand Norse Atlantic will contion further. wet-leased from Turkish airof the foreign civil aviation audia, Union Bank of India, and tinue exploring opportunities IndiGo currently has two lines with whom it has a codethority concerned. to contract additional aircraft widebody B777 aircraft in its share arrangement in place, In a damp lease, the lessor

INDIA OUTPLAY ENG

Gill anchors Men in Blue to 4-wicket win over England, Harshit impresses on debut in ODI series opener

Nagpur, Feb 6: Vice-captain Shubman Gill orchestrated India's chase with grace, while debutant Harshit Rana dazzled with the ball as the hosts registered a four-wicket win against England in the series opener here Thursday

Gill (87), Shreyas Iyer (59), and Axar Patel (52) rose to the occasion, guiding India to a commanding chase after Rana (3/53 from 7 overs) and the seasoned left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja (3/26 from 9) shared six wickets between them, dismantling England for a below-par 248

Rana's fourth over, which claimed the twin wickets of Ben Duckett and Harry Brook, decisively stifled the England innings, putting India firmly in control as the visitors never managed to rebuild despite fifties by skipper Jos Buttler (52) and Jack Bethell (51).

Chasing a below 250 score, Gill anchored the innings, forging key partnerships with Iyer and Axar that became the backbone of India's chase.

He adapted perfectly to the match situation, playing the perfect foil to Iver when the Mumbai batter was in full flow, then stepping up as the mainstay, steering India towards

Iyer, walking in at 19/2, unleashed a counter-attacking knock, filled with sizzling shots, including back-to-back sixes -- one a pull shot over deep mid-wicket off Jofra Archer and the other a reverse switchhit four off Adil Rashid.

On the back of a stellar domestic season, Iyer played with confidence, finding gaps effortlessly and taking on the aggressor's role, with Gill remaining steady at the other end.

But once Iyer, trapped LBW by Bethell after being struck

SHORT **TAKES**

Real Madrid reach

Madrid: Gonzalo Garcia scored

in stoppage time as Real Madrid

of the Copa del Rev. Madrid had

with Luka Modric and Endrick

the match in the second half.

"B" team, sealed the victory

before the hosts rallied to even

The 20-year-old Garcia, a striker

who usually plays with Madrid's

with a header three minutes into

would have been troublesome for

Madrid after it lost 1-0 at Espanyol

in the Spanish league Saturday for

Gaddafi stadium ready

for int'l cricket: PCB

Lahore: The Pakistan Cricket

upgradation work at Lahore's

completed in record time of 117

days and it is now ready to host

international matches, including

the ICC Champions Trophy. The

the new-look stadium now has

better facilities, new floodlights, hospitality boxes, increased seating capacity, electronic

scoreboards and top of the line LED towers. It was reported recently that PCB was running behind by at least five weeks in completing

the work. PCB is required to handover the stadiums to the ICC by February 12 as the tournament

begins a week after.

Oz to tour WI for

Test after a decade

St John's (Antigua): Australia

will tour the Caribbean in June and

July for a three-Test series and five

Twenty20 internationals, the West

Indies Cricket Board announced

Wednesday. It will be Australia's

first Test tour of the West Indies

since 2015 and the first three-Test

series between the countries since

the West Indies tour of Australia in

2015-16. The first Test in the Frank

beginning June 25. The second Test

Worrell Trophy series is set to be played at Bridgetown, Barbados

is scheduled to start July 3 in St

George's, Grenada and the third

July 12 in Kingston, Jamaica.

PCB said in a statement said that

Gaddafi stadium has been

that the renovation and

Board (PCB) Thursday announced

its second defeat in 15 matches

across all competitions.

stoppage time after a cross by $% \left\{ \left(1\right) \right\} =\left\{ \left(1\right)$

Brahim Díaz. Another setback

taken a two-goal lead at half-time

Leganes 3-2 to reach the semifinals

avoided an upset by defeating

Copa semifinals





flush on the front pad, was dismissed, Gill seamlessly took charge, with an able ally in Axar, who was promoted up

Gill continued to exude confidence, as he smashed 14 fours, while Axar too brought up a memorable fifty.

England took a flurry of wickets, causing some nervous moments for the hosts but India managed the win with 68 balls remaining

Earlier, England blazed out of the blocks with electrifying intent after opting to bat, but India's disciplined bowling and razor-sharp fielding orchestrated a remarkable fightback.

endured a baptism by fire. His

first over proved costly, as the explosive Phil Salt (43) feasted on his deliveries, plundering 26 runs in a ruthless display of power-hitting.

Three sixes and two fours rained down upon the young pacer, prompting Rohit Sharma to swiftly turn to spin, summoning Axar Patel (1/38) in an attempt to stem the flow of runs.

However, England's charge remained relentless, with Ben Duckett (32) unfurling an array of strokes, including a beautifully executed reverse sweep, to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Just when the visitors seemed poised for an onslaught, India struck back in sensational fashion. Shreyas Iyer produced a moment of brilliance in the field, running out the dangerous Salt with a bullet throw to KL Rahul following a mix-up between the two openers.

BRIEF SCORES

England: 248 in 47.4 overs (Jos Buttler 52, Jacob Bethell 51; Harshit Rana 3/53, Ravindra Jadeja 3/26) lost to India: 251 Patel 52; Adil Rashid 2/46).

BWF set to test new 3x15 scoring system

THE EXISTING FORMAT OFFERS 21-POINT BEST-OF-THREE-GAME MATCHES (3X21)

New Delhi, Feb 6: With an aim to attract new audience to the sport and make the matches shorter, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) is set to trial a new 3x15 scoring system in selected competitions for at least six months, starting April this vear.

The existing format offers 21-point best-of-three-game matches (3x21).

The BWF Council, the decision-making body of the world governing body, endorsed the 3x15 scoring system, which is already part of the Alternative Laws of Badminton, to replace the current scoring system during its meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November.

"As part of its due diligence, BWF Council approved a plan to practically test the 3 x 15 (setting to 21) system at selected Continental Championships Grade 3 tournaments, national and international leagues, and national tournaments from approximately April to September/October 2025," BWF said.

International Challenge, International Series and Future



Series competitions fall under Grade 3 tournaments.

Explaining the reasons behind selecting the new scoring system, BWF said: "Compared to the current system, 3x15 has fewer points per game, which increases the probability that each point will be more exciting. Compared to the current sys tem, 3x15 reaches the end points in games faster and strikes the best balance of excitement, both in each game and in the overall number of games.'

The BWF also stated that the 3x15 system will lead to shorter matches, better scheduling, maintain fan interest, and benefit player health and longevity.

"The 3x15 system shows the greatest probability for the lowest number of rallies, and compared to 5x11, 3x15 provides a more consistent length of games.

The BWF said it will survey key stakeholders at each tournament as well as an overall survey of all Members, Athletes' Commissions (players), technical officials, and commercial partners near the end of the testing period.

"Pending an outcome of test ing and survey results, BWF Council will make a final decision whether to propose this new system to the BWF Annu al General Meeting 2026." BWI added that "a proposal could go forward to the BWF Annual General Meeting in April 2026 for a decision, pending the outcome of testing and stakeholder surveying this year."

BWF has been experimenting with scoring systems, leading to the evolution of the badminton scoring system from 15x3 to 7x5 to 21x3 over the years.

Under the original scoring system, matches were decided in a best-of-three format-15 points for men's and all doubles fixtures, and 11 points for women, with only the person serving winning a point.

In 2002, the 7x5 scoring sys tem was briefly introduced before shifting to the current rally point system - 21x3 - in 2006. In between, the BWF also introduced an 11x5 scoring sys tem on an experimental basis in 2014. It was again proposed in 2021 but failed to gain the required votes during the 82nd

Real Madrid great Marcelo retires

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Feb 6: Marcelo, the former Real Madrid and Brazil left back, announced his retirement Thursday at the age of 36.

In a video on X, Marcelo said: "My journey as a player ends here, but I still have so much to give to football. Thank you for everything."

An attacking left back. Marcelo had one of the most trophy-filled careers in soccer history thanks to his time at Madrid from 2007-22 and his return to boyhood Brazilian club Fluminense across 2023-24

At Madrid, he won the Cham-



pions League five times, the Spanish league six times and 25 titles in total.

"Marcelo is part of the history of Real Madrid and is one of the great legends of our club

My journey as a player ends here, but I still have so much to give to football. Thank you for

and of world football," Madrid

After a brief spell with Olympiakos in Greece, Marcelo moved to Fluminense — where he started his career — and won the Copa Libertadores.

Marcelo played for Brazil at the World Cup in 2014 and '18, and won Olympic medals in 2008 (bronze) and 2012 (silver).

Odisha FC Women aim to maintain winning momentum



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 6: Odisha FC Women will look to continue their winning ways as they travel to Bangalore to face Kick start FC in the Indian Women's League (IWL) 2024-25 February 7, at the Bengaluru Football Stadium, with the match kicking off at 9:00 AM.

OFCW come into this match in strong form, having secured two consecutive wins. They are heading into this fixture with a positive mindset and high confidence. The defending cham pions are currently sitting in 3rd place in the league with 10

Kickstart FC, on the other hand, have had a shaky start to their season. They are still winless and are placed in 7th position with just 2 points.

Ahead of the match, Odisha FC held a pre-match press conference with Head Coach Crispin Chettri and player Ar-

When asked about the upcoming fixture against Kickstart FC, Coach Chettri em-

phasized: "This is an important match for us. Not just this one, every game is crucial. Kick start FC may not have had the best start, but they are a strong team, and I believe this match is vital for both sides.

Regarding injury updates, Head Coach Crispin Chettri confirmed: "Grace is out for this match, which is unfortunate as this is an important game for us. However, there will always be such challenges. and I'm happy to say that the rest of the players are fit and ready to go.

for 6 in 38.4 overs (Shubman Making his ODI debut, Rana Gill 87. Shrevas Iver 59. Axar

FC Goa win over Odisha FC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, Feb 6: FC Goa produced an impressive performance to outwit Odisha FC 2-1 in the Indian Super League here Thursday.

The Gaurs jumped to the second spot, replacing Jamshedpur FC (34), as a result of this triumph, having 36 points to their name.

Manolo quez-coached side took six shots on target as opposed to the two of Odisha FC, also making 15 interceptions vis-à-vis the seven by the Juggernauts, reflecting their superiority in both ends of the field.

Odisha FC had a brilliant chance to take the lead on the back of a free-kick effort by Ahmed Jahouh, who was making his 150th ISL appearance, in the 28th minute. Stepping up to lead the set-piece wide down the left flank, Jahouh's accuracy and the weight on the ball meant that his kick took the entire FC Goa backline by surprise.

The duo of Herrera and Brison came back to mount problems on Odisha FC in the second half. As Iker Guarrotxena won a free kick from distance, Herrera's long ball was directed towards Sandesh Jhin-



gan deep into the box.

Mourtada Fall made a hasty clearance and the ball landed at Brison's feet. The attacker hurled in a powerful shot, which took a deflection off Lalthathanga Khawlhring, resulting in an own goal on the Odisha FC player's name.

The Juggernauts dragged their way back into the game as they caught the FC Goa midfield in a slightly disoriented shape in the 54th minute.

Odisha FC hit the Gaurs on a quick counter, with Hugo Boumous unlocking their defence with an impeccable through ball finding Rahul KP on the

right side of the box.

Rahul hammered the ball into the bottom left corner with an instinctive finish that could have opened the gateways for their comeback in the game.

To their credit, Odisha FC did engage in a fruitful period causing troubles to the FC Goa backline post this goal, but their run was halted with Ahmed Jahouh getting sent off in the 73rd minute.

Odisha FC struggled to create meaningful chances because of FC Goa's numerical advantage after this, as the Gaurs held their lines together and notched their 10th win of the season.

Indian Navy's Niraj stuns Olympic bronze medallist

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Feb 6: Indian Navy's Niraj Kumar stunned Paris Olympics bronze medallist Swapnil Kumar and Aishwarv Pratap Singh Tomar to win gold in the men's 50-metre rifle 3 positions event at the National Games here Thursday.

Representing Sports Control Board (SSCB). the 25-year-old Niraj, who is no stranger to winning medals in top competitions, shot a remarkable score of 464.1 to secure the top spot.

Madhya Pradesh's Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar secured the silver with a score of 462.4, while Maharashtra's Swapnil, who made history as the first Indian shoot-

er to win an Olympic medal in this event with his bronze at the Paris Games last year, settled for third place (447.7). Nirai has un-

dergone training at the Elite Shooting Acadat the Padukone

Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence (CSE) in Yelahanka, Meanwhile, in the 10-metre

air pistol mixed team event, Haryana's Suruchi Singh and Parmod defeated Rajasthan's Anjali Shekhawat and Umesh Choudhary 17-7 to clinch the gold medal. The bronze went to the Ma-

harashtra combine of Rahi Sarnobat and Pranav Arvind Patil after the pair crushed Uttarakhand's Abhinav Deshwal and Yashasvi Joshi 17-3. These two events marked

titions at the ongoing Games. In the mixed event qualification, 19 teams fought

the end of the shooting compe-

for slots in the medal rounds. In the 3P final, Niraj, who has 1 World Championship, 1 World Cup

and 2 Asian Championship medals under his belt, maintained his lead through the competition to pip his more fancied oppo-

Commonwealth Games 2026 to have record medal tally

PARA SPORT, SWIMMING AND TRACK CYCLING TO OFFER MOST MEDALS WHILE MILE RACE IS MAKING A COMEBACK FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1966

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Glasgow, Feb 6: More than 200 gold medals will be up for grabs across 10 days of the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, the 23rd edition of the event, with para sport, track cycling and swimming boasting highest medals.

The competition will be held from July 23 to August 2 next year and will feature a "10-sport concentrated programme across four venues within an eight-mile corridor of the city".

While mixed 4x400m relay has been added to the schedule, Commonwealth Mile will make a comeback for the first time since 1966.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said in a release, "The mile is the quintessential Commonwealth athletics event whose return to the Games in Glasgow 2026 I very much welcome." "From 1930 through to 1966, the mile was the blue riband event of each Games and the magic of the mile continues to resonate with sports fans," he added.

The para sport program will consist of six of the 10 sports and will have a record 47 medal events. The Games will be held at the Commonwealth Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, Scottish Exhibition Centre (SEC), Scotstoun Stadium and Tollcross International Swimming Centre.

The 10 sports on schedule of the CWG 2026 are artistic gymnastics, athletics and para athletics, 3x3 basketball and 3x3 wheelchair basketball, boxing,

swimming and para swimming. bowls and para bowls (indoor), judo, netball, track and para track cycling, and weightlifting

and para powerlifting. "The track cycling programme will see 26 medal

events in total across para and non para disciplines," the organisers said in a release.

commonwealth

games

"The para track cycling programme has doubled in size from Birmingham 2022, with eight medals available, including the C1-C3 (men) and C4-C5 (women) Time Trials and Individual Pursuits for the first time," it added. The swimming competition in both para and non para categories will have 56 medal events.

800m Freestyle and women's 1500m Freestyle races will be included," the release said. The para athletics will also

"In a Games' first, the men's

have athletes competing in jumping, throwing and track events for the first time whereas the athletics programme will be held across "all 74 territories". Chief Executive of Glasgow

2026 Phil Batty said, "The huge track cycling and swimming programmes, alongside the return of the Mile in athletics, a wealth of disciplines introduced across the para ath letics, para track cycling and para swimming programmes makes the Glasgow 2026 sporting programme a really exciting prospect for fans and athletes alike.'

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