

EOW nabs ex-prez, secy of cooperative society

KEONJHAR: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police Saturday arrested Manas Ranjan Barik, former president, and Utkal Das, secretary of Gandhamardhan Loading Agency & Transporting Cooperative Society Ltd., on charges of large-scale fraud and misappropriation of funds worth crores. The accused were produced before a designated OPID court in Balasore Saturday.

Actor Uttam Mohanty critical; airlifted for advanced treatment

BHUBANESWAR: The condition of veteran Odia film actor Uttam Mohanty, who has been undergoing treatment at a private hospital here, worsened Saturday. The 66-year-old was admitted to the facility three days ago, but his condition deteriorated, and he was put on ventilator support Saturday, revealed hospital sources. Several actors and hundreds of his admirers rushed to the hospital as the news spread.



Speaking to the media, his son Babushan Mohanty, also a top actor in the Odia film industry, said his father is in critical condition and efforts are being made to restore his health.

By the time this report was filed, the actor had been airlifted to Delhi for advanced treatment.

He has been suffering from liver cirrhosis for some time, according to a report.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Trust us, there's no ghost here. But, you will hear that loud laughter for a few more days



NATURE'S WONDER: Tourists at the Solang Nala after fresh snowfall in Manali, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

State to implement Unified Pension Scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: The Odisha government has decided to implement the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), Antyodaya Gruha Yojana for economically weaker sections of society and another scheme for construction of block-level stadiums, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Saturday.

These decisions were taken at the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi held Friday night. The Cabinet also ap-



proved several other proposals on education, health, sports infrastructure, transportation and social security. Speaking to reporters Saturday, Majhi said the

state government is set to implement the UPS for its employees who are considered eligible for pension under the National Pension System (NPS).

He said under the provision of UPS, for a minimum qualifying period of 25 years, a pension of 50 per cent of the average basic pay or basic pay earned in the 12 months preceding retirement will be available.

Majhi said that a family pension of 60 per cent of the pension that the employee was drawing before death will be available and the minimum pension amount

will be ₹10,000 after retirement on completing a minimum period of 10 years of service. He said the employees under NPS can decide to opt for UPS or remain affiliated with NPS.

In UPS, there will be a guaranteed family pension benefit in case of death of a government employee after retirement, which was not available in NPS.

Under the Antyodaya Gruha Yojana, as many as 2.25 lakh houses will be constructed over the next three years, with an investment of ₹7,550 crore, the Chief Minister said. **P3**

CM disburses ₹900cr to 18L women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SUBHADRA YOJANA

Jajpur, Feb 8: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday disbursed ₹5,000 each to over 18 lakh women beneficiaries under Subhadra Yojana in the 4th phase of the first instalment in the state.

Accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida and Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Majhi disbursed about ₹900 crore through direct benefit transfer (DBT) system at a function held in Jajpur district.

With this, a total of over 98 lakh women have received ₹5,000 each under the Subhadra Yojana launched by the BJP government in Odisha. "Fulfilling the promise, the people's government has

provided direct assistance to the beneficiaries through DBT, which has played a significant role in strengthening their financial condition," he said.

The CM said this scheme is fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the mother power of the state and is helping to build a prosperous Odisha. "I believe that all the beneficiaries can empower themselves and strengthen their economic status through small businesses, which will also strengthen the economic status of the state. The government's vision for a 'developed Odisha' will surely succeed with the efforts and contributions of mothers, and the people's

government is committed to providing the necessary incentives," he said.

Though the 4th phase of Subhadra money was scheduled to be released December 25, it was later deferred in view of ongoing verification process. The 3rd phase money was disbursed to 20 lakh women beneficiaries on November 24, 2024.

The scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Odisha on September 17, 2024, after the BJP came to power. While 25 lakh women were covered under Subhadra Yojana in the first phase, around 39 lakh women were benefitted in the second phase October 9. The 3rd phase money was disbursed to 20 lakh women.

Two missing schoolgirls found hanging in forest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri/Kalimela, Feb 8: The bodies of two schoolgirls, who had gone missing since Thursday, were found hanging from a tree in a forest near Biliguda village under Motu police limits in Malkangiri district Saturday.

Both the deceased girls were students of Class VIII at MV 72 Nodal Upper Primary School. Their families had lodged a missing complaint at the local police station after they did not return home from school, Thursday. Based on the complaint, police registered a case (No 1/25) and launched an investigation.

Some local women Saturday morning spotted the bodies hanging from a mango tree with a stole, around 3km from the school.

They immediately informed the girls' families. The families have alleged that the girls were murdered and their death staged as suicide. The victims' bodies had injury marks on the faces.

Following the discovery, a police team and a forensic team reached the scene and began an investigation. The families have demanded an impartial probe and justice.

BJP's Capital gain

Ending a 27-year drought, the BJP wrested the power from the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party with most pollsters' predictions coming true. Among the giants those bit the dust were former CM Kejriwal himself and his trusted aide and deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia. The unprecedented loss may be attributed to a combination of factors. While the anti-incumbency factor played a significant role as voters grew disillusioned with issues like air pollution and poor infrastructure, other factors such as liquor policy scandal and the 'Sheesh Mahal' controversy, severely dented the party's image. Kejriwal's reputation as an anti-corruption crusader and a 'common man' was significantly tarnished by the corruption allegations and controversies. His arrest and subsequent resignation as CM further disrupted party leadership. The AAP's failure in forging an alliance with the Congress didn't help the cause either. Congress, on the other hand, was decimated, failing to open its account for a third consecutive time. For the BJP, its aggressive campaign, highlighting these issues and promising better governance, appears to have resonated with voters

shi and three ministers in the outgoing AAP government -- Gopal Rai, Mukesh Ahlawat and Imran Hussain -- managed to secure wins.

Atishi emerged victorious in Kalkaji, defeating BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri by a margin of 3,521 votes.

While the AAP dominated Delhi's political landscape for the last 10 years, the BJP was out of power in the city since 1998.

The Congress, which had ruled for 15 consecutive years under Sheila Dikshit from 1998, came a cropper in the Assembly elections failing to get even a single seat for the third straight

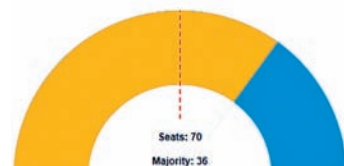
AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 8: The results of Delhi Assembly polls has gone as per the predictions made by several pollsters. The BJP has completely decimated the Opposition with its spectacular performance. It will form the government in Delhi after a gap of more than 26 years.

The party has won 48 seats, while the rest has gone to AAP, as per the ECI website. BJP's Parvesh Verma and Tarvinder Singh Marwah emerged as the biggest giant-slayers, defeating AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia from the New Delhi and Jangpura constituencies respectively.

After AAP's defeat, former Delhi CM Arvind, Kejriwal congratulated his

Delhi Assembly Election Results 2025



workers for "fighting very well" and said the party will play the role of a constructive opposition.

In a video message, the former Delhi Chief Minister said, "We accept people's mandate with humility and I congratulate the BJP for its victory and also hope that it will fulfill the expectations of the people of Delhi," he added.

Amid the BJP's sweeping victory, Chief Minister Ati-

time. Its candidates suffered crushing defeats with a majority of them even losing their deposits.

"People of Delhi today have enthusiasm and satisfaction. There is relief of liberating Delhi from 'AAP-da'. I thank all Delhiites for entrusting their faith in 'Modi ki guarantee'," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his address from BJP headquarters in the evening.

SPECIAL PAGE 9

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leisure



KANYE WEST SPARKS CONTROVERSY AGAIN

Kanye West (Ye) has once again made headlines for his controversial remarks, including antisemitic statements and praise for Adolf Hitler. His comments have sparked widespread criticism and concern due to their offensive nature and potential to spread harmful rhetoric.

JESSICA ALBA FILES FOR DIVORCE

Jessica Alba has officially filed for divorce from her husband, Cash Warren, after 16 years of marriage. According to court documents filed in Los Angeles County, Alba cited irreconcilable differences as the reason for their separation.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may get to share your ideas and opinions with like-minded people. Ganesha says you may finally have a heart-to-heart chat with your beloved, and express your deep commitment. You may even talk of your long cherished dreams.

TAURUS
Logic may be your forte today, but in the game of life, sometimes the heart wins and sometimes the head. Your analytical skills will help you understand things better, in turn, making you wiser. You may feel an urge to spend on music cassettes, CDs and electronic gadgets.

GEMINI
Your highly competitive nature will push you to perform better and better. You don't even know what being second best means. Getting in touch with like-minded people will only make you resolve stronger. Your desire to be the best will make you take interest in everything that can help you improve. You may even study new subjects. Your efforts will bear fruits, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Lack of support from family members will disable your efforts. Children also disappoint you. Discord or difference of opinion in family is indicated. Beware of neighbours. Yet, says Ganesha, face circumstances with a smile.

LEO
Motivating people through your own actions is one way; the other is to let your words do the talking. Both are equally effective, says Ganesha. With a bit of help from the stars, today, it is your words that shall hold more weight than your actions, as you make optimum use of your presentation skills. It seems like a good idea to keep an open mind and learn new things that will go a long way in improving your communication skills. So, reconsider taking another look at the latest that technology has to offer to you.

VIRGO
It is quite possible that you will love financial challenges that are thrown at you, as they whet your appetite for success. You will come up with innovative ideas and improved methods of problem-solving. Ganesha assures you that your current business ideas will work wonders.

LIBRA
Ganesha says the inner artist in you will come to the surface today and you will showcase your imagination powers too. You will be able to focus on topics of interest today. Those of you in the field of interest will find themselves moving ahead. There may be signing of beneficial legal deals today for you. Ganesha says today is going to be a very good and successful day for you.

SCORPIO
You will live the day in two dominant shades, feels Ganesha. One part of your day will be tinted in nostalgia and thinking, while the other will be spent in making up for the time you lost while star gazing and ignoring your work. Do not let the ghosts of your past haunt you because some things are best left behind while making a new beginning, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Suddenly, you discover that you are fully dedicated to your family. Kith and kins form the crux of your life, says Ganesha. Showing your love and affection to your kids will give you a feeling of satisfaction. Spend some quality time with your partner!

CAPRICORN
It will be one of those mundane days with nothing remarkable happening on any front. But don't be disheartened, advises Ganesha; planetary movements indicate there may be a change coming soon, most likely a good one. So, perk up and look forward to tomorrow.

AQUARIUS
You do have a way with words and today, you may succeed with your gift of the gab! But Ganesha says that your confused feelings may come in the way of your triumphant achievement. Also, sentiments may lead to a disastrous outcome. Sounds familiar?

PISCES
The fount of your creativity spurts today like there is no tomorrow. For lesser mortals, it takes inspiration, perspiration and a lot of desperation to come up with something creative. You, on the other hand, keenly remember the lessons from your past efforts, and use them today to scale new heights, says Ganesha.

Rashmi's aspirations



Mumbai: Rashmi Desai has been a part of numerous television shows during her tenure. However, just like any other TV actor, she also aspires to work with some of the best directors from Hindi film industry. Recently, she opened up about the directors she wants to work with during an exclusive interaction with the news agency.

Rashmi said, "I have said this many times and will say it again today. I want to work with Imtiaz Ali and Sanjay Leela Bhansali. I am ready to give auditions and I hope I get the opportunity in this life to work with them. The way they provide people with a new perspective towards life, it's very beautiful."

She was also asked if she believes Bollywood typecasts television actors. To this, she replied, "They do, difficulty is a part of life. When you work hard, when you do good work, you are bound to reap the fruits of your labor. Yes, you do face challenges, they do generalise you -television actor, OTT actor, film actor, but I feel, an actor is an actor. I also feel it is equally important to take a break as an actor."

Mumbai: Kareena Kapoor and family recently went through a tough time after Saif Ali Khan was severely injured during an attack at his Bandra residence. As the investigation in the case is still underway, the *Jab We Met* actress used social media to pen a cryptic note, stating how such incidences end up humbling you.

Kareena wrote in her Instagram stories, "You'll never truly understand Marriages, Divorces, Anxieties, Childbirth, Death of a loved one, Parenting until it actually happens to you. Theories and assumptions of situations in life are not realities. You think you are smarter than most until life humbles you when it's your turn."

Prior to this, the *Chameli* actress had penned another Instagram note, asking the media to respect their boundaries and provide them with the required space. She mentioned, "It has been an incredibly challenging day for our family, and we are still trying to process the events that have unfolded. As we navigate this difficult time, I respectfully and humbly request that the media and paparazzi refrain from the relentless speculation and coverage. While we appreciate the concern and support, the constant scrutiny and attention are not only overwhelming but also pose a significant risk to our safety."

Salman on his incarceration days



Mumbai: Superstar Salman Khan recently made his debut on his nephew Arhaan Khan's YouTube channel, *Dumb Biryani*, where he openly discussed various aspects of his life. In an honest and heartfelt conversation with Arhaan and his friends, Dev Raiyani and Arush Sharma, Salman shared valuable life lessons, career anecdotes and insights from his personal experiences.

One of the most memorable moments from the podcast was when Salman spoke about his time in jail and how he used it as an opportunity to rest. While discussing the significance of hard work and perseverance, the actor stressed that making excuses, like claiming to need sleep, only obstructs success. He revealed that he typically sleeps just one and a half to two hours a day, taking short naps whenever he can.

"I'm tired' No, get up. No matter how tired you are. I don't get sleep. Don't sleep. Do something and you'll automatically fall asleep," he advised. He then shared his experience in jail, saying, "In places where I couldn't do anything, like when I was in jail, I slept. I couldn't do anything about it."

In addition to discussing discipline and work ethic, Salman also reflected on his friendships, emphasising the importance of staying close to genuine friends who expect nothing in return.

Kareena shares cryptic post



I'm a very thirsty actor: Shreya

Mumbai: Shreya Chaudhry has had a remarkable two months. Following the successful premiere of the second season of *Bandish Bandits* on Amazon Prime Video in December, which earned her critical acclaim, she is now being praised for her performance in Boman Irani's *The Mehta Boys*. In a recent interview, Shreya reflects on her journey in 2024 and shares her hopes for 2025.

Looking back at her early career, Shreya describes herself as an ambitious actor with an insatiable thirst for improvement. "I'm a very thirsty actor. So, my thirst is never quenched. Even on a good day, I don't feel ok. I always believe I can do better," she said. This relentless drive has fueled her to headline two major critically acclaimed projects recently.

Shreya also opened up about her approach to auditions, which she views positively. "I've never seen auditioning as a negative thing," she shared. "That is my sole way to convince you to cast me in something I really want to do. If I enter a room, the first thing I say is, please test me, even if they say that they don't audition, which has happened, yeah. Sometimes, I don't use the word audition," she added.

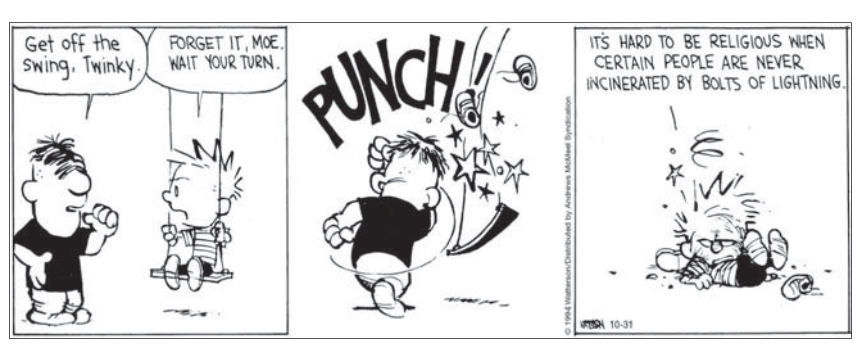
She believes the audition process works well for her at this stage. "With time, when I also become a little more experienced, maybe I won't need that because there are a lot of actors who don't audition," she explained.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



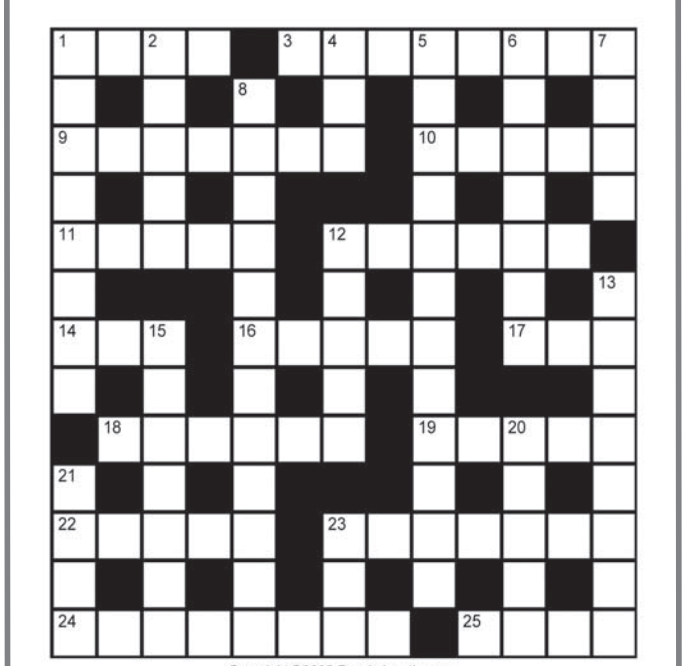
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Stopper
 - 3 Annoyance
 - 9 Cake ingredient, maybe (3,4)
 - 10 Food fish
 - 11 Bundle
 - 12 Guarnerius, for one
 - 14 Sea eagle
 - 16 Churchill Downs event
 - 17 Behold
 - 18 Juice source
 - 19 Bring together
 - 22 Dangerous bacteria (1,4)
 - 23 Kitchen set
 - 24 Impudent
 - 25 Shetland, e.g.
 - Down**
 - 1 Bishop and pawn, e.g.
 - 2 Scoundrel
 - 4 Caribou kin
 - 5 Lawrence of Arabia actor (7,5)
 - 6 Piano players tickle them
 - 7 Sundae toppings
 - 8 Private
 - 12 Sonnets and such
 - 13 Necropolis
 - 15 Uneasy
 - 20 Preface, briefly
 - 21 Persian spirit
 - 23 Hideout

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Twin city Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh speaks at a programme to spread awareness among Mo Bus drivers and CRUT members to prevent accidents



downtown

Cabinet okays ₹4,124 crore for stadiums in 314 blocks

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: In what would help strengthen the sports infrastructure at the grassroots, the state Cabinet has approved construction of stadiums in all 314 blocks with an outlay of ₹4,124 crore over five years.

Briefing the media about Friday's Cabinet decisions, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday said the initiative would address critical gaps in rural sports infrastructure, particularly at the block-level where facilities remain underdeveloped. "These disparities have long hindered the state's vision for rapid growth in sports," he added.

Majhi emphasised the government's commitment to bridging this gap by outlining key objectives, including providing enhanced opportunities for athletes, nurturing local talent, and organising



₹1,066.38cr projects for Hirakud Dam

The state Cabinet has approved a proposal to undertake three projects for Hirakud Dam under the DRIP-III at an estimated cost of ₹1,066.38 crore over a period of six years, starting FY2025-26. The projects will be executed with financial assistance from the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) under the Externally Aided Project (EAP).

Bridges to improve communication

The state Cabinet has approved construction of three bridges over rivers to ease traffic congestion and improve inter-district communication. Those are a second bridge over Kharasrota river at Bharigada on the Cuttack-Kharasrota route - parallel to the existing bridge connecting Aul to Chandbali - a high-level bridge over Mahanadi river at Pujaripalli Ghat, connecting to Jarimuli under CRIF on a turnkey basis and a second bridge over the Brahmani river at Patrapur on the Cuttack-Chandbali Road, parallel to the existing bridge.

more grassroots sports competitions. The initiative will fo-

cus on core sports disciplines in which Odisha has demon-

strated significant potential.

Apart from fostering competitive sports, these facilities will encourage rural youth to participate in physical activities, contributing to their overall development and long-term mental and physical well-being.

The CM highlighted Odisha's emergence as a rising sports hub in India, reaffirming the state's dedication to cultivating a vibrant sports culture. "The construction of block-level stadiums marks a significant step towards achieving this vision," he stated.

Each block-level stadium will be developed on 8-10 acres of land and will include key components such as a football/cricket field, a clay athletic track, courts for volleyball, kho kho, and kabaddi, an indoor hall for badminton and table tennis, and a common facility centre, Majhi said.



GOOD SHOW: Artistes perform during Dhauli Kalinga Mahotsav at Dhauli in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Labourer from Odisha held for killing colleague in Thane

AGENCIES

Thane, Feb 8: Police have arrested a construction worker from Odisha for allegedly killing his colleague by hitting him on his head with a bamboo following an argument over spilled food at Dombivli in Maharashtra's Thane district, officials said Saturday.

The incident took place during the intervening night of Thursday and Friday on Pandit Deendayal Road, Dombivli

(west), they said.

The accused has been identified as Jaysan Manjhi, while the deceased fellow worker, Gaurav Jagat, also a Odisha native.

"The labourers working at the construction site hail from the same village in Odisha. On Thursday evening, an argument broke out between Jagat, Manjhi and other laborers over spilled food. While the other workers managed to defuse the initial argument, tensions remained," Senior Inspector

Sanjay Pawar of Vishnunagar police station said.

"Later that night, while Jagat was asleep, Manjhi hit him on his head repeatedly with a bamboo stick, in which the victim died on the spot. The other labourers immediately alerted the police," he said.

Police arrested Manjhi in this connection and a case of murder was registered against him. The victim's body was sent to a hospital for post-mortem, he added.

No impact on Odisha politics: BJD

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: The BJD Saturday said the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) defeat in Delhi will not have any impact on Odisha politics and asserted that the regional parties continue to remain a formidable force in the Indian political space.

BJD's Coordination & Activities Committee Chairman Debi Prasad Mishra said the AAP losing polls in Delhi is "not the end of state-centric parties".

"The victory of BJP and the defeat of AAP in Delhi will have no impact on Odisha politics. Had a regional party lost polls in this region, it could have some impact on Odisha. But the case is not the same in the Delhi Assembly elections. The regional parties are still ruling our neighbouring Jharkhand and West Bengal. The BJD is the principal Opposition in Odisha by securing more votes than the

ruling BJP in the previous elections," Mishra said.

He said AAP's defeat should "not be a parameter to judge the influence of regional parties in India". Mishra's statement was also supported by former union minister and senior Congress leader Srikant Jena who pointed out that the AAP secured 43.57 per cent of votes while the winner BJP got 45.56 per cent. "This is despite the fact that the BJP has a stronghold in Delhi since Jan Sangha days," the Congress leader said.

Asked about the reasons behind Congress' poor performance, Jena said, "The Congress was sandwiched between the AAP and the BJP. The Congress vote share has gone up from 4.26 per cent to 6.36 per cent," he said rejecting the existence of "Modi magic" in elections.

Delhiites drove out AAP govt: BJP

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal Saturday claimed that the people of Delhi were 'dissatisfied' with the 'corrupt' AAP government and drove out the Arvind Kejriwal-led party from power in the national capital.

Samal, while addressing the party leaders, workers and supporters, who assembled to celebrate the BJP's return to power in Delhi after a gap of 27 years, termed the party's victory in the national capital as 'historic'.

"The victory of the BJP symbolises the explosion of discontent against the corrupt AAP government. Delhi was neglected for 27 years, and development was at a standstill," Samal claimed.

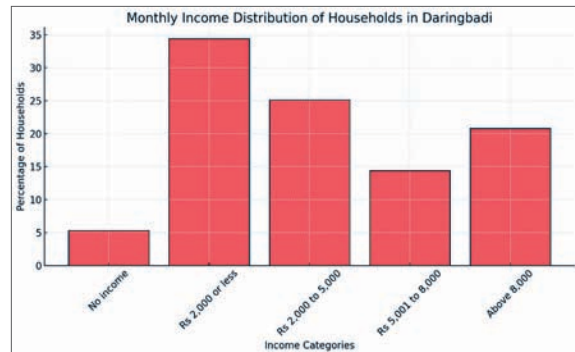
Samal said the people of Delhi expressed their faith

in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "The AAP government was mired in various corruptions for the last few years. Dissatisfaction among the people of Delhi had reached its peak. An explosion took place in the elections," he said. The BJP leader also said that the party's victory encouraged and inspired everyone.

Samal expressed his congratulations to all the workers, including BJP national president JP Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah, party's national vice president and New Delhi election in-charge Bajjayant Panda.

DELHI ELECTION RESULTS

40% DARINGBADI FAMILIES MIGRATING FOR SURVIVAL



DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: While rural Odisha strives to earn an average of ₹8,924 monthly per household, families in Daringbadi - known as the Kashmir of Odisha - grapple with a meagre income of ₹3,000 per month to fulfil their basic needs, revealed a recent report by Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID).

Such economic disparity, in return, forces nearly one member in four households in the tribal-dominated block of Kandhamal district to migrate outside Odisha to make a better living, it said.

The report titled 'Labour Migration from Rural Odisha' which paints a bleak picture of Daringbadi said one in every 12 households did not have any stable income, while 35 per cent of the households reported a monthly income of ₹5,000 or more. The stagnancy in income has been driving the families to borrow

money from loan sharks, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and banks, resulting in over one-third of households being liable to pay up to ₹10,000 in loans.

For the purpose of the survey - conducted by CMID in partnership with Gram Vikas - 440 households were randomly selected from 22 villages (with 20 households from each village). Out of that, 418 households were interviewed for ascertaining their income status, among others. Some of these migrants who were at home were interviewed on the spot, while those away over telephone.

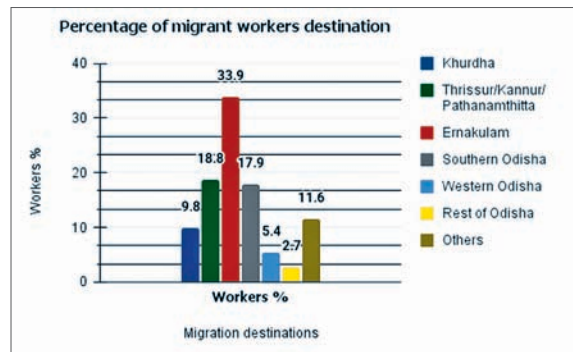
Inaccessibility of services Sandwiched between economic crisis and lack of opportunities, it was found that one in 10 households in the block did not have a ration card. The instances were as high as eight per cent among families belonging to various ST communities, while in SC and OBC households, it stood at 12.3 and 11.9 per cent, respectively. Howev-

er, things were better on NREGS front with 70 per cent households accessing the benefits.

Seventeen per cent of the households reported using UPI, while 82 per cent claimed almost zero utilisation of any online transactions in their daily life. The study revealed that the problem of accessing banking services is aggravated by scarce presence of banks in the region. It takes a journey of around five hours for availing simple customer services like getting a cheque issued, making remittances, or opening a fresh savings account in the nearest bank branch.

State of migrant workers

Kerala has emerged the most desirable destination for employment opportunities in the area,



with nearly seven of 10 migrant workers settled in the southern state at present. The respondents claimed Ernakulam, Thirissur, and Kannur are the districts where majority

opt to migrate. The study reported one-third of the workers earned a monthly income of ₹15,000 or more. However, their average monthly income stood at ₹10,750, with majority of them making a living by working at grocery stores or factories.

With a minimum of ₹3,000 monthly expense required for one's sustenance, Kerala has proved to be liveable with meagre income than any other state.

Sushant Tudu, who runs a grocery store in Kakkannad, Ernakulam shared his experience. "If situation in Daringbadi was better, I wouldn't have left. The pressure from loan sharks, lack of healthcare, and limited job opportunities pushed me to migrate. Now, I send ₹10,000 to my parents every

month. People here are friendly, and it feels like home," Tudu said.

He moved to Kerala four years ago, first working in restaurants and bars before opening his own shop.

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

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AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit by Notary dtd 25 Jan. 2025, my name which has been wrongly entered as "Mohammed Nadeem" instead of Mohammad Nadeem in my daughter's (Zaina Nadeem) Passport- Bearing No.- N5404152. Henceforth, Mohammad Nadeem is actual & correct which will be used for all purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Magistrate, dated 07.02.2025, I Pallavi Mahapatra, Address: A-51, Palaspalli, Bhubaneswar, Odisha declare that I have changed my name from Percy to Pallavi. Henceforth, I shall be known as Pallavi Mahapatra for all purposes.

Pallavi Mahapatra

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Aska my son's actual name is Manas Kumar Bisoyi and his date of Birth is 20.10.2014.

Sd./- Mamata Bisoyi

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, I, Khushi Gupta, D/o Atul Kumar Gupta, At - Sitaram chhak, P.O./P.S. - Jatani, Dist. Khordha, PIN - 752050 (Odisha) declared by this Affidavit No.370354, Dtd. - 27.01.2025, that in my Aadhaar Card No. - xxxxxxxx0295 my father's name is Atul Kumar Gupta but in my HSC Certificate vide S.No. - 1590956, Regd. No. - R117/08736/0235 issued in my favour dtd. - 03.06.2017 from CBSE. In my HSC Certificate my father's name was wrongly recorded as Atul Kumar Gupta. I hereby declare that Atul Kumar Gupta and Atul Gupta is one and same person who is my father. Henceforth, He shall be known as Atul Kumar Gupta for all future purposes.

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5BHK Duplex (2500 carpet area) near Pipli Toll Gate for Bank Guest House. Contact: 9938563607/ 9439991147.

Women can claim support from second husband: SC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: The Supreme Court has ruled that a woman can claim maintenance from her second husband, even if her first marriage is still legally subsisting. The bench, comprising Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma, emphasised that provisions for social welfare, such as maintenance, should be interpreted broadly to ensure their humanitarian purpose is fulfilled.

The case arose when a woman, who had separated from her first husband in 2005 after signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU), sought maintenance from her second husband. While no formal divorce was granted from the first marriage, the woman later remarried her neighbor in November 2005.

Following marital disputes, the second husband sought annulment of their marriage, which was granted by a family court in February 2006. However, the couple reconciled and remarried, registering their marriage in Hyderabad. They also

had a daughter in January 2008.

As their relationship again faced issues, the woman filed a complaint against her second husband and his family under the Dowry Prohibition Act. She subsequently sought maintenance for herself and her daughter under Section 125 of the CrPC. The family court allowed the request, but the Telangana High Court overturned this decision, stating that the woman could not be considered the second husband's legal wife due to her first marriage being legally subsisting.

The second husband argued that since the woman's first marriage had not been legally dissolved, she could not be entitled to maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC. However, the Supreme Court rejected this argument, highlighting that the primary objective of Section 125 is to prevent vagrancy and destitution, which aligns with social justice and welfare.

The Court further explained that interpreting the law narrowly would defeat its humanitarian purpose, allowing an individual to escape obligations while still benefiting from the privileges of marriage.

The Supreme Court set aside the Telangana High Court's order and reinstated the family court's ruling, directing the second husband to pay maintenance to his estranged wife and their daughter. In its judgment, the Court stressed that social welfare provisions must be given an expansive and beneficial construction, and that an alternate interpretation would undermine the law's intent.

This landmark judgment underscores the importance of protecting the rights of women and children in all circumstances, regardless of the legal status of previous marriages.



CAPTIVATING MOVE: Artistes perform traditional dance during *Ame Odia Ama Bhasha Odia* cultural programme organised by MD Creations and Group at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

PH: BIKASH NAYAK

3 players visit Srimandir ahead of 2nd ODI

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: On the eve of the second ODI against England, three members of the Indian cricket team Saturday took a spiritual detour, visiting the famous Srimandir in Puri to offer their prayers.

Washington Sundar, Varun Chakaravathy, and Axar Patel arrived early Saturday morning at the temple to seek the blessings of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra, ahead of their big match at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack.

The visit was carefully coordinated, with tight security measures in place to ensure the players' safety and smooth movement. The cricketers were escorted by a security detail



and provided with a clear path for their darshan of the deities. "The darshan was very good," said Washington Sundar, expressing his satisfaction with the experience.

After their temple visit, the players were scheduled to travel to Barabati Stadium in Cut-

tack for a net practice session in the afternoon, preparing for the upcoming match. The police authorities have implemented extensive security arrangements for the players' movements between Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Po-

Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh confirmed the deployment of around 50 platoons of forces for the security of the players

lice Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh confirmed the deployment of around 50 platoons of forces for the security of the players.

Additionally, a traffic advisory has been issued to manage public movement and ensure the cricketers' travel remains uninterrupted.

Nat'l phono surgery meet held in City

Bhubaneswar: The 20th national phono surgery conference, Phonocon 2025, was recently organised by the Association of Phono Surgeons of India (APSI) in the City, bringing together over 400 voice specialists, surgeons, speech therapists, and students from across the country. APSI president and KIMS ENT department head Kabikanta Samantaray, highlighted that Odisha is hosting the event for the third time. "The conference includes discussions, workshops, and live surgeries for ENT postgraduate students, focusing on voice disorders and their treatment," he stated. Samantaray cautioned against excessive talking, which can strain the vocal cords and alter voice quality. He stressed the importance of vocal hygiene, advising people to brush twice daily and gargle with warm water to maintain a healthy voice. Renowned phono surgeon and APSI founder president, V Phanindra Kumar from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, acknowledged Odisha as the birthplace of phono surgery, recalling that the first demonstration took place in Cuttack.

TRILOCHAN SAHOO'S INNOVATIVE EFFORT

Cycle rally promotes conservation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: In a bid to raise awareness about tree plantation, wildlife conservation, and forest fire prevention, social worker Trilochan Sahoo led an innovative cycle rally across the villages of Anandpur sub-division.

With the state witnessing a rise in temperature and an increase in forest fire incidents, this initiative aims to engage the local community in environmental conservation efforts.

The rally, inaugurated by Anandpur range officer Naba Kishore Nayak and forester Kedar Kumar Patra, saw over 10 volunteers cycling through vil-



lages such as Fakirpur, Shaalpada, Barigaon, Sudusudia, Khaparkhai, Ghashipura, Jaanra, Anandpur, Shalabani, and Mochinda.

The team held meetings at public places, market areas, and schools, encouraging people to take proactive steps in protecting their environment. Sahoo expressed his commit-

ment to visiting all the village panchayats in the Anandpur division to continue spreading conservation awareness. "We need to work together to prevent forest fires and encourage sustainable practices in our communities," he said.

The rally saw participation from students, social workers, and local intellectuals, including Raj Kishore Barik, Ranjit Nayak, Manoj Kumar Sahu, and others. Sahoo also launched the "I am the Tree Speaking" initiative, urging villagers to plant at least one tree on their birthday.

The event received a warm welcome from hundreds of students and volunteers.

FIR against Rahul Gandhi in Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: An FIR has been registered against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Jharsuguda district for allegedly making an 'anti-national' statement, a senior police officer said Saturday.

The FIR was registered Friday based on a complaint lodged by members of BJP, its youth wing, RSS, Bajrang Dal, of Jharsuguda district against Gandhi to IGP Northern Range, Himanshu Lal February 5, the officer said.

An FIR has been registered against Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, at Jharsuguda police station (case No 31) under section 152 (criminalises acts that threaten India's sovereignty, unity, and integrity), 197(1) (d) (for making

or publishing false or misleading information that threatens India's unity, sovereignty, integrity, or security) of BNS, the officer said. The complaint alleged that Gandhi has been deliberately making anti-national statements which hurt each and every Indian individual.

The IGP forwarded the complaint to Jharsuguda SP Parmar Smit Parshottamdas for inquiry and necessary legal action. As per the direction of the SP, an FIR has been registered against Gandhi at Jharsuguda police station (case No 31).

"I do not know the nature of the allegation against Rahul Gandhi, let me see it first. The Congress as a political party has been fighting against the ideology of BJP and RSS," former Union Minister and senior Congress leader Srikant Jena told.

IIMT hosts AI and finance conference

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: The Interscience Institute of Management and Technology (IIMT), Bhubaneswar, recently hosted the prestigious international conference on AI and Financial Innovation (AIFI-2025) at its campus. The event was inaugurated with a warm welcome to chief guest, BPUT Rourkela VC Amiya Kumar Rath and keynote speaker Valentina E Balas from Aurel Vlaicu University, Romania.

Principal Pramod Kumar Prusty delivered the welcome address, while IIMT chairman Srikanta Patnaik presented the institution's activity report for the academic year 2024-25, focusing on faculty development and upskilling initiatives.

As a Unesco UniTwin Insti-

tute, IIMT highlighted its ongoing "Economic Systems and Human Rights" lecture series and monthly online events through the ISTD-IIMT upskilling lecture series.

Balas captivated the audience with her insights on the role of AI in shaping sustainable and innovative financial solutions. The conference also underscored IIMT's commitment to fostering international collaboration, offering platforms for researchers to publish their work globally through its Interscience Research Networks (IRNet). The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dean (R&D) Himanshu Sekhar Moharana. Conference secretary Alok Arun was praised for ensuring the event's success, further solidifying IIMT's position as a hub for innovation and academic excellence.

Swayam workshop to boost digital learning

KISS event emphasises inclusive education and skill development under NEP-2020

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 8: The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), in collaboration with the Government of Odisha, successfully organised the Swayam outreach workshop to promote digital education.

The event saw participation from Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal, bringing together key dignitaries from the Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission (UGC), and leading academic institutions.

Higher Education department director Kali Prasanna Mohapatra highlighted the crucial role of education in shaping India's future. He emphasised the need to adapt the education system in line with the National Education



Policy (NEP).

Acknowledging challenges in education, employment, and environmental sustainability, he praised the Swayam initiative as a "brilliant idea" aimed at improving student employability. He urged universities and institutions to integrate Swayam into their academic frameworks as a natural extension of the NEP.

UGC joint secretary Avichal Raj Kapur underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in higher education. "The Swayam portal is essential because traditional education remains largely individual-based. To maximize its impact, we need to build resource networks and institutional clusters," he said. He cautioned that without such

collaborations, institutions would remain limited by their existing resources. He outlined four key NEP goals: transforming India into a knowledge superpower, ensuring quality higher education, increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), and integrating digital courses into mainstream curricula. "Academics must understand Swayam's offerings and incorporate them into courses to create an inclusive education system," he added.

KISS-DU vice-chancellor Deepak Behera reiterated KISS-DU's commitment to SWAYAM integration. "At KISS, over 1,200 students have already enrolled in SWAYAM courses. We are adopting the UGC Swayam Regulations 2021 and will soon conduct exams on campus for these courses," he said.

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Ex-prez, secy of cooperative society held over corruption



Manas Ranjan Barik

Utkal Das

The cooperative society reportedly charged an exorbitant ₹60 per tonne for iron ore loading—significantly higher than other agencies—generating massive profits

Keonjhar, Feb 8: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police Saturday arrested Manas Ranjan Barik, former president, and Utkal Das, secretary of Gandhamardhan Loading Agency & Transporting Cooperative Society Ltd., on charges of large-scale fraud and misappropriation of funds worth crores.

17-18 to 2023-24, the society's operations were allegedly monopolised by a small group of influential outsiders, including office bearers.

Investigations revealed that these individuals engaged in a criminal conspiracy, preparing fraudulent documents related to labour payments, peripheral development, infrastructure expenses, payments to affected members, and EPF deductions, misappropriating crores of rupees.

The cooperative society reportedly charged an exorbitant ₹60 per tonne for iron ore loading—significantly higher than other agencies—generating massive profits. Additionally, payments were made to various individuals and agencies without proper documentation such as tenders or work orders.

Many transactions were unaccounted for, with payments made in cash or self-issued cheques lacking acknowledgment or supporting records in financial registers like the cash book, day book, and ledger.

The EOW investigation found that crores of rupees were funneled out of the cooperative society without proper documentation. Payments were made without specifying the nature of the work, project details, or the identities of contractors. Office bearers allegedly diverted funds in violation of the society's bylaws.

The cooperative society had not undergone a financial audit since 2012, except for a special audit in 2022 prompted by local allegations. Despite uncovering serious irregularities, no action was taken against the accused office bearers at the time.

Most self-issued cheques lacked documentation explaining their purpose and were signed by Barik and Das. In labour payments, details of workers, proper signatures, and corresponding EPF deductions were missing, suggesting large-scale misappropriation. Many payments were acknowledged only with thumb impressions, raising further suspicions.

The accused were produced before a designated OPID court in Balasore Saturday. According to sources, the case was registered acting on a written complaint by Biswanath Roul, alleging that the office bearers of the cooperative society misappropriated about ₹40-50 crore.

The cooperative society, which was engaged in loading iron ore from the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) mines, reportedly used forged documents to carry out its operations, the EOW stated in a press release issued after the arrests.

Registered in 2006, Gandhamardhan Loading Agency & Transporting Cooperative Society Ltd. was established to load iron ore from Keonjhar mines with the objective of improving the economic well-being of local residents affected by mining activities. However, from



MATTER OF FAITH: Devotees taking a holy dip at Debarkund of Salandi river near Bhimpur village in Kaupur panchayat of Bhadrak district on the occasion of Bhaimi Ekadashi Saturday. The occasion witnessed a participation of over 10,000 devotees as the festivity is linked to 'Vanavasa' period of Ramayana

Jumbo carcass found in Ganjam forest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Feb 8: Forest department officials Saturday recovered the carcass of a 13-year-old female elephant from a forest in Ganjam district, officials said.

The animal might have died in Khandisara forest under Jagannathprasad range in Ghumusar North division three to four days ago.

The carcass was buried after getting the post-mortem examination, said Himansu Sekhar Mohanty, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Ghumusar North division.

It is suspected that the jumbo fell into a pit located in the border area of Ganjam and Nayagarh districts, leading to its death.

The exact cause of the elephant's death would be ascer-

tained only after getting the autopsy report, Mohanty said.

The Forest department has collected several samples from the carcass, which would be tested in the laboratory at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar, he said.

Forest officials suspected the female elephant might have migrated from Nayagarh area, as they did not notice

the movement of elephants in the area earlier.

It was the third death of elephants in the district in about a month and the second in a week.

Earlier, a female elephant died in Sadangipalli in Digapahandi forest range January 30, and another jumbo died January 2 due to electrocution in the same area under Berhampur forest division, sources said.

3 killed in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Morada, Feb 8: Three youths riding a motorcycle were killed in a road accident near Dimia village under Suliapada police limits in Mayurbhanj district Saturday.

The deceased, identified as Bipin Deo, Rabindra Deo, and Badal Nayak, were all residents of Dhatika village under the same police station jurisdiction. Police said that the three were traveling on a motorcycle to witness the Singda Bhima Mela in Baghada panchayat. On their way back

home, an unknown vehicle struck their bike near Dimia village at around 4:30 pm Saturday. All three of them were thrown off the bike under the impact of the collision.

Profusely bleeding, they died on the spot, Suliapada police IIC Aditya Prasad Jena said. Police sent the bodies for post-mortem and initiated an investigation. The heavy vehicle involved in the accident fled the scene, police said adding that further investigations are underway.



Guv appoints Dipak Sahoo as VSSUT VC

Bhubaneswar: Professor Dipak Kumar Sahoo, currently serving as a professor at the School of Engineering, Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), has been appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT), in Burla. Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati appointed Professor Sahoo to the post Saturday.

Professor Sahoo completed his BSc in Engineering from OTR, MTech from CUSAT, and PhD from IIT Roorkee. He also holds an LLB degree and has 14 years of teaching experience. Bringing a total of 24 years of academic experience, Sahoo has served as a professor for 14 years.



Man kills younger brother over past feud, arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Lanjigarh, Feb 8: A man shot dead his younger brother over a longstanding dispute at Deheda village in Beda panchayat under this block in Kalahandi district, Friday night. The deceased was identified as Purna Majhi, 35, and the accused, his elder brother Krushna Majhi.

The matter came to the fore after the deceased's wife Chumki lodged a complaint of murder at Biswanathpur police station accusing her elder brother-in-law to be responsible for her husband's death. Police registered a case (9/25) and launched an investigation. A scientific team visited the crime scene and Krushna was arrested. A firearm used in the murder was seized and fur-

ther investigations were underway. The incident occurred Friday night, but came to light Saturday after police registered a case and arrested the accused Krushna Majhi in this connection.

According to reports, Krushna and his younger brother Purna had been involved in a conflict last year. During the melee Purna had allegedly assaulted Krushna and left him injured. Nursing a grudge, Krushna entered Purna's house at around 8pm Friday and shot him dead with a country-made gun while he was sleeping. Purna died on the spot in his sleep.

Kesinga SDPO Ajay Das, Bishwanathpur police station in-charge Mamata Hembram, and SI Budheram Majhi visited the site and launched a probe.

Workers' stir disrupts OMDC mine's production

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 8: Production at Bagaburu Iron Ore Mines, operated by Orissa Minerals Development Company Ltd. (OMDC), has been disrupted since Thursday as employees staged a protest over unpaid salaries and benefits. OMDC, a subsidiary of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) under the Ministry of Steel, is located in the Joda mining sector of Keonjhar district.

Hundreds of workers gathered at the company's Thakurani office gate in Barbil, demanding payment of six months' pending salaries, four months' unpaid wages for contract workers, and overdue medical reimbursements. Protesters said financial hardships have made it difficult to support their families and

pay for their children's education. Despite OMDC earning approximately ₹50 crore in the past six months, employees claim the company has failed to disburse salaries to 450 employees totaling ₹6.2 crore. "We depend on our monthly wages and allowances like medical expenses and leave travel allowance (LTA)," said employee Jyoti Ranjan Mohanty.

Debakant Rath, general secretary of OMDC Karmachari Sangha, said multiple appeals to the ministry and higher authorities were ignored, forcing workers to strike.

OMDC General Manager BB Gomango stated that employees received December salaries but arrears remain unpaid due to unapproved funds. He assured payments would be made once funds are released from the head office.

Dhamnagar winter fest, Pallishree Mela from Feb 10

Dhamnagar: A five-day Winter Festival 2025 and Pallishree Mela will begin February 10 at Jaynagar Padia in Dhamnagar block of Bhadrak district. In preparation for the event, the district administration held a press conference at the Dhamnagar block conference hall Saturday at 4pm. The press meet was chaired by former tehsildar Deepak Kumar Das, with the presence of Sub-Collector Saurabh Chakraborty, BDO Banabihari Dinda, Minister's representative Ashok Kumar Puhani, MP's representative Manoj Mallik, and former Zilla Parishad member Ranjita Swain. The festival will feature renowned artists, vocalists, and film stars from across Odisha. Distinguished guests from the state will participate over the five days. The Pallishree Mela will host 30 stalls from within and outside the state and another 30 from the district only.

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Date and Venue:
Wednesday, 12th February 2025; 6:30 p.m. onwards.
at Suncity Hotel, NH-5, Inform of Sani Mandir, Patrapada, Bhubaneswar - 751 019, Odisha.

For registration, please contact: Fakir Mohan Jena, Mobile: 70080 74419.
Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
No walk-ins will be allowed.

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POSSESSION NOTICE
[Rule-8(1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Bhubaneswar SME Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Co-Borrower in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India, Bhubaneswar SME Branch for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. The Borrowers' attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

BHUBANESWAR SME BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Borrower	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of the Property
Borrower: Mr. Prakash Chandra Pradhan, S/o.: Basudev Pradhan / Co-Borrower: Mrs. Kunilata Pradhan, W/o.: Mr. Prakash Chandra Pradhan, Both are At: Baghamara, P.O.: Pahanga, Niali, Cuttack-754004	₹ 33,04,220.23 + interest & expenses thereon	01.11.2024 / 07.02.2025	Equitable Mortgage of All that part and parcel of Land bearing Khata No.: 219/53, Plot No.: 410/678, Area: Ac.0.150 Dec., Mouza: Baghamara, SRO: Niali, Thana: Gobindpur, Dist.: Cuttack, KISSAM: Gharabari, in the name of Mrs. Kunilata Pradhan, W/o.: Mr. Prakash Chandra Pradhan

Place: Bhubaneswar
Date: 09.02.2025

Authorised Officer
Bank of India

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India
A Government of India Undertaking

ROURKELA MAIN BRANCH
Rosy Shopping Centre, 1st Floor, Main Road, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh, PIN-769001

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Secured Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8(6) / 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/Co-Applciant that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, the symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor) will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on 11.03.2025 between 12.00 Noon to 5.00 P.M. for recovery dues as mentioned hereunder to the Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower/Co-Applciant. The Reserve Price and the Earnest money deposit also mentioned hereunder.

Sl. No.	Name & Address of Borrower / Co-Applciant	Description of Property to be Auctioned	Pending Litigation Related to property	Total Dues (in ₹)	Reserve Price/ EMD / Bid increment	Contact Person / Contact No.
1.	Borrower: Mr. Tushar Kanti Das, S/o.: Mr. Rasmay Das / Co-Applciant: Mrs. Sanchoita Das, W/o.: Mr. Tushar Kanti Das, Both are at Qtr. No.: EL-100, Basanti Nagar, P.O.: Udit Nagar, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh, PIN-769012	3-BHK Flat measuring 1400 Sqft super built up area at Flat No.: 102 in First Floor of Block-B of the apartment named "Maa Tarini Apartment" including one car parking space corresponding to Flat No.: 102, on still floor of Mouza: Chandama, Thana: Korai No.: 37, Tahasil: Vyasa Nagar, SRO: Dolipur, Dist.: Jajpur, Standing in the name of Mr. Tushar Kanti Das & Mrs. Sanchoita Das	NA	₹35,73,528.26 as on 10.01.2025 + further interest, costs and charges thereon	₹44,80,000/- / ₹4,48,000/- / ₹44,800/-	Mr. Saroj Mishra, Mob.: 8637248437

For registration and login and bidding rules please visit : <https://baanknet.com>

Place: Rourkela
Date: 07.02.2025

Sd/- Authorized Officer
Union Bank of India



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THE MOTHER

The AI Race

Last month, on 22 January, three companies and US President Donald Trump announced a \$500-billion project to build data centres and electricity plants and continue American dominance in artificial intelligence. Five days later, a Chinese AI chatbot named DeepSeek became the number one download on the applications stores. It has remained popular because it is excellent, as those who have used it know. DeepSeek's success was unexpected because for several years now, US presidents have restricted China's access to the most sophisticated computer chips. While the skills of the Chinese computer scientists were acknowledged, it was felt that denial of access to the best hardware would keep them trailing.

Someone likened the emergence of DeepSeek as artificial intelligence's 'Sputnik moment,' a reference to the space race. To understand whether this is a similar contest, this time between America and China instead of America and the Soviets, let's first take a look at the space race. Sputnik went into orbit in 1957, after a decade in which German scientists captured by Russians and Americans continued their work on rocket propulsion. The most important of these captured Germans was a man named Wehrner Von Braun, who came to the Americans. Despite this lead, the Soviets were able to go into orbit under the leadership of a talented designer named Sergei Korolev, whose essential design is still used by Russian rockets in 2025. After Sputnik began transmitting signals to earth round the clock, the Americans devoted an enormous amount of resource to try and catch up. The Russians remained ahead for years however and put up the first animal in orbit (1957), first human in orbit (Yuri Gagarin in 1961), first probe to Mars (1962), first woman in space (1963), first space walk (1965), first soft landing on the moon (1966) and even sent animals to orbit the moon and return safely in 1966.

However, the Americans came back with the most spectacular achievement of them all and that was the human landings on the moon in 1969. The budget of NASA, the US space administration body, was at this time 4 per cent of the total federal government's expenditure. After the Americans sent a few more crews to the moon, the public's interest waned. NASA's budget was cut and the enormous rocket developed by Von Braun, the Saturn V, was replaced by the space shuttle, which was less capable. The Soviets gave up on attempting to land on the moon after their own large rocket, the N1, failed and crashed a few times.

This was still a time before GPS and mobile phones and even television broadcasting was terrestrial. This meant that there were few people willing to invest in space and satellites and for decades this remained the case. So this then was the story of the space race. The artificial intelligence race has a few things that are difference. First, the primary drivers are not public interest, national pride or government spending. It is corporates who are pushing the advances here. The corporates competing against each other in the United States are the ones that have the most resource to do this: Google, Facebook, Elon Musk, Microsoft and Open AI. The goal is to achieve human level intelligence and then let that intelligence improve itself. The second step is thought to be achievable very rapidly once the first step, that of arriving at human level intelligence, is completed. This will give the company that gets there ahead of the others an enormous advantage. For this reason the spending on it will not be dependent on the things that ended the space race. The total spend on AI research is many times more than what was spent on NASA and the Soviet space programme combined.

The second difference is that there is a national security interest in this, because if China develops an AI that, like DeepSeek, is the first to get there, America will fear the loss of its global dominance. And for this reason the US, under whichever president, and of course China, will continue to push for further advances from their companies. Note that the European Union, while as economically powerful as the US and China, is not a serious competitor in this field. No other nation is, including Russia, which is a shadow of the technological giant it was 60 years ago. The race is between the US and its only peer competitor, China.

Unlike the space race, the race to develop superintelligence is not a side project. It touches the core interests of the companies and the countries in which the work is happening. All nations other than these two global rivals can only look on and hope that the outcome is in some way favourable to them or, to put it more accurately, is less unfavourable to them. In the last two centuries, the technological gap between nations had narrowed. The last time there was a significant gap, a major part of the world, including South Asia, North and South America, Australia and much of Africa, were colonised. Larger populations came into the control of smaller, more advanced ones. China suffered what it refers to as its century of humiliation, beginning in 1839 under the British. It is determined not to be forced into that position and has the capacity in 2025 to resist domination.

The AI race has one last difference over the space race. While both races were portrayed as being part of a larger rivalry between democracy and authoritarian systems, this current contest is also one between the West and the East. Democracies in developing nations like India might feel attracted to Trump's United States, but they will note that this is also a contest between America and Asia.



Aakar Patel
Democracies in developing nations like India might feel attracted to Trump's United States, but they will note that this is also a contest between America and Asia

ABOLISHING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

FOCUS DISARMAMENT

This will be a year of anniversaries linked to the end of World War II in 1945, with the most significant being the invention and first use of nuclear weapons. In fact, the development, testing, and use of nuclear weapons continue to shape our lives today, 80 years on.

After all, many people are still dealing with the damage from the Trinity nuclear test in New Mexico in July 1945, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a few weeks later, and the more than 2,000 nuclear test detonations carried out since then. Today, the world lives in the shadow of the 12,121 nuclear weapons held by China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were immoral, unnecessary, and unethical. Under current international law, these indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, which killed hundreds of thousands of civilians, including an estimated 38,000 children, would surely be considered a war crime.

Many of the hibakusha (as the Japanese survivors of the bombings are known) devoted their lives to campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons. By drawing on their personal experiences, they have raised global awareness of the devastation such weapons cause and helped establish the taboo against their use in conflict.

The majority of hibakusha alive today were young children at the time of the attacks, and continue to experience the effects in their old age. After Nihon Hidankyo, their grassroots organization, was awarded the 2024 Nobel Peace



The nine nuclear-armed states and a few dozen of their allies are blocking progress on disarmament while at the same time claiming to support a nuclear-free future. Whereas, the rest of the world - around 140 countries - supports the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force in 2021 and has since been signed or ratified by half of all countries

Prize for campaigning against nuclear weapons, co-chair Shigemitsu Tanaka, who was four years old when Nagasaki was bombed, gave moving testimony about how his grandchild died three days after being born. "Due to impacts on the internal organs," he said, "their lungs were not able to grow properly, there was an impact on their diaphragm as well [...] and when I held my grandchild, this baby, I knew that what we went through had been passed on, even to these future generations."

Despite the claims of nuclear-armed states, it was the taboo the hibakusha helped to establish and sustain, not the flawed theory of nuclear deterrence, that has prevented the further use of these weapons. In fact, deterrence doctrine increases the risk of nuclear war, as demonstrated by the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, which Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev

triggered by placing nuclear missiles in Cuba to deter the US from using the missiles it had deployed in Turkey.

To be sure, the shock of the near-miss in Cuba led to the first arms-control treaties, including the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But instead of rejecting deterrence, nuclear-armed countries have doubled down on it - a step widely seen as a cynical ploy to deflect attention from their failure to honor the commitment to disarm that they made when joining the NPT.

The continued emphasis on deterrence, rather than abolition of nuclear weapons, reflects a lack of political imagination and courage. Proponents of the doctrine argue that such arms, no matter how terrible, cannot be uninvented. But decisions can be made - and have been made - to control deadly technologies and end their use.

This includes chemical and biological weapons, as well as industrial chemicals that are harmful to human health and the environment. For example, the 1987 Montreal Protocol phased out chlorofluorocarbons to protect the ozone layer.

The nine nuclear-armed states and a few dozen of their allies are blocking progress on disarmament while at the same time claiming to support a nuclear-free future. Whereas the rest of the world - around 140 countries - supports the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which came into force in 2021 and has since been signed or ratified by half of all countries.

Instead of insisting that they must keep their weapons to deter potential adversaries, members of the nuclear club should listen to the survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks and their call for abolition. They know better than anyone the damage that nuclear weapons can inflict on people and the environment.

It is time for nuclear-armed states to accept that this existential threat has hung over the world for long enough. Rather than merely congratulating the hibakusha for their Nobel Peace Prize, they should honor these survivors - while they are still alive - by joining the TPNW and eliminating their nuclear arsenals before these weapons are used again in conflict.

The writer, a former Australian minister for international development, is Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.
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Melissa Parke
THE CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON DETERRENCE, RATHER THAN ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, REFLECTS A LACK OF POLITICAL IMAGINATION AND COURAGE

SPECTRUM COMMERCE

Whatever happened to free trade

American imperialism has historically employed both free trade and protectionism, depending on its own needs after the Second World War. American foreign policy is also strictly embedded with its trade policy. It is not a departure from American orthodoxy, but rather a continuation in a different form. Therefore, it is no surprise that President Donald Trump took a strong stance against free trade, implementing a wide range of protectionist tariff measures to safeguard the interests of American corporations, boost the domestic economy, and reduce the US trade deficit. Furthermore, the shift from taxing labour to taxing consumption is not a radical state intervention aimed at redistributing wealth. There is no progressive economic logic behind Trump's trade policies and tariff wars. The goal is to increase government revenue through tariffs without taxing the wealthy, high-income individuals, households, or corporations. This strategy aligns with conservative efforts to protect the interests of the rich. In essence, it also represents a form of imperialist bullying aimed at controlling global trade.

The Trump administration has imposed various tariff

measures, including universal tariffs of 10% on imports from all countries, aimed at protecting the domestic economy. Retaliatory tariffs have been imposed on countries like China, with the intention of securing 'Relief from Unfair Trade Practices' (up to 60% on Chinese imports). The objective is to undermine the competitive advantage of Chinese products and services in the American market. However, a study by the Federal Reserve Bank reveals that tariff hikes on Chinese goods and services increase costs for American households. Reciprocal tariffs, based on the tariff rate differences between the US and its counterpart, are designed to reduce American trade deficits. Specific sectoral tariffs, particularly on vehicles, have been directed at industries such as the Mexican automotive sector to protect American auto producers at the cost of consumers. Finally, targeted country tariffs, such as 25% on all imports from Canada and Mexico, focus on protecting American domestic markets at the expense of consumers. These measures primarily prioritise protecting American corporation, often at the cost of American and global consumers. These arbitrary tariff measures undermine the concept

of a free market and free trade.

The priest of free trade promoted the concept by linking it to democracy, freedom, human rights, and peace. Colonial and developed countries viewed protectionism as undemocratic and akin to dictatorship. Post-colonial countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were discouraged from pursuing independent economic development, while free-market mechanisms were imposed as the sole model for development, economic growth, poverty eradication, and prosperity. Trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the ASEAN Free Trade Area, the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement, the South Asian Free Trade Area, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation, and the Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Area, along with the European Union, have been branded as guiding lights of international trade and exemplary trading blocs in regional and global commerce under the guidance of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The WTO has consistently argued that free trade promotes

peace by resolving conflicts constructively through rules and regulations. It has also claimed that free trade reduces the cost of living while providing consumers with more choices in products, services, and quality. Furthermore, the WTO asserts that free trade stimulates economic growth, simplifies life, and encourages good governance. Under Trump, the free market meant the unrestricted mobility of American capital, corporations, goods, and services. The notion of democratic governance of global trade under the WTO remains a distant myth for the foreseeable future. American hegemony has undermined the concept of global free trade, prioritising the interests of powerful traders over those of producers and consumers.

As American imperialism creates havoc, it is time to reclaim free trade from the hegemonic practices of capitalist countries in order to protect the interests of producers and consumers. Let free trade truly be free—free from corporate control—allowing producers and consumers to interact with each other based on their needs and desires, without any form of interference.

The writer is a professor at London Metropolitan University.



Bhabani Shankar Nayak
AMERICAN HEGEMONY HAS UNDERMINED THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL FREE TRADE, PRIORITISING THE INTERESTS OF POWERFUL TRADERS OVER THOSE OF PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS

WISDOM CORNER

It is not often that idealism of student days finds adequate opportunity for expression in the later life of manhood.
CV RAMAN

If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.
ISAAC NEWTON

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

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1757 : The Treaty of Alinagar restored Calcutta (now Kolkata)—which Clive had recovered in January from Siraj al-Dawlah—to British control and served as a prelude to the seizure of Bengal.

1796: Qianlong, the fourth emperor of the Qing dynasty, abdicated and was succeeded by Jiaqing.

1940: South African novelist, critic, and translator J.M. Coetzee, who won the 2003 Nobel Prize for Literature, was born.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Balancing act

Sir, This refers to "RBI cuts repo rate, loans get cheaper," Orissa POST, Feb 8. The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee has cut its repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 percent. The decision to lower the rate—coming with the backdrop of moderating growth, rising global uncertainties and easing inflationary pressures—is expected to spur household consumption and investment. Headline inflation is hovering above the RBI's 4 per cent target and will likely stay above in the next fiscal too. But as Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted, the need to remain supportive of growth moved the rate cut needle. However, he maintained the policy stance at neutral, allowing himself flexibility to change rates in the future to suit the evolving macroeconomic conditions. Meanwhile, India's booming services exports are expected to remain a crucial growth driver. But, the global backdrop remains uncertain. Geopolitical tensions, rising trade protectionism, fluctuating commodity prices, and financial market volatility pose real risks to the outlook. While the domestic economy is showing resilience, external shocks could still disrupt the recovery path. Add to this, relentless selling by foreign investors and a weakening rupee are complicating RBI's job of managing inflation and growth.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Stupendous victory

Sir, The mass victory of the BJP and that too in a stupendous manner in the Delhi election goes to show that the people cast the vote after a lot of rethinking - whether to support a party alleged of high corruption and 'vain volatility' or support one that assured them of dreams that can be made into a reality. The results also expose the pathetic picture of the Congress, completely decimated. The oldest party didn't foresee such a plight as it thought that people still 'blindly' believed them. It is high time it goes for a mighty revamp or else go into oblivion forever. The BJP leadership, both at the national and regional level really worked hard to conquer the hearts of the people of the capital and now must fulfill the promise and pledges given to the masses.
M Pradyu, KANNUR

GBS enters Mumbai

Tally of nerve disorder Guillain-Barré syndrome rises to 180 in Pune

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Feb 8: The tally of suspected Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) cases in the Pune region has reached 180, with the detection of seven cases, while a 64-year-old woman became the first patient diagnosed with the nerve disorder in Mumbai, officials said.

The seven cases in Pune comprise four fresh cases and three from previous days, an official from the health department said on Friday.

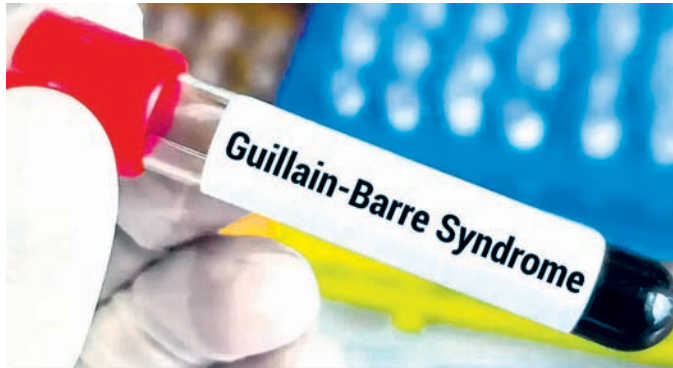
"Of the 180 suspected cases, 146 have been diagnosed with GBS. At least 35 patients are from Pune Municipal Corporation, 88 from newly added villages in the PMC area, 25 from the Pimpri Chinchwad civic limits, 24 from Pune Rural and eight from other districts. While 79 patients have been discharged, 58 are in ICU and 22 on ventilator support," a health department release said.

The number of deaths in the region stood at six, it added.

Mumbai reported its first case of GBS Friday after a 64-year-old woman was diagnosed with the rare nerve disorder, civic officials said.

Talking to PTI, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) commissioner and its state-appointed administrator, Bhushan Gagrani, said the patient was currently undergoing

RARE NERVE DISORDER



Several agencies such as an expert team from the Centre, World Health Organization and state health department are working in tandem on the various aspects of the disease and ensuring that such cases do not spread. Now, since it is confirmed that waterborne bacteria has triggered the outbreak, responsibility will be fixed and action taken

Prakash Abitkar | Health Minister, Maharashtra

treatment in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of a civic-run hospital. BMC officials said the woman, who resides in the Andheri (East) area of the city, was hospitalised with a history of fever and diarrhoea that was followed by ascending paralysis.

The woman was initially hospitalised January 21. Within three days, she developed difficulty in walking and progressive weakness in her lower limbs, they said.

A provisional diagnosis of Acute Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (AIDP), a variant of GBS, was made based on clinical findings and diagnostic tests, said the officials, and described her current condition as "moderate".

GBS is a rare condition in which a person's immune system attacks the peripheral nerves, resulting in muscle weakness, loss of sensation in the legs and/or arms, as well as problems swallowing or breathing.

Severe cases can result in near-total paralysis. GBS is more common in adults and males, though people of all ages can be affected.

Maharashtra Health Minister Prakash Abitkar Friday said the state government will bring a law to ensure people get clean drinking water and also fine entities that contaminate and pollute water.

The Pune Municipal Corporation, state health department,

GBS is a rare condition in which a person's immune system attacks the peripheral nerves, resulting in muscle weakness, loss of sensation in the legs and/or arms, as well as problems swallowing or breathing

etc, have worked very hard to ensure GBS cases are contained, he told reporters.

"We are also planning to bring a law with provisions of fines on those entities that contribute to the pollution and contamination of water. The new law will ensure common people get clean drinking water through their respective civic and local bodies. We will present a draft of the bill in the upcoming Budget session," Abitkar said.

He said the PMC has been directed to ensure proper chlorination of water in the Nanded village area, which has seen a high number of GBS cases.

"Proper monitoring is being done in Nanded village to ensure clean water is supplied. Various teams were tasked with collecting water samples from various sources, including sewage released by some resorts on the upper side of Khadakwasla dam. They are also verifying whether the contamination was triggered by poultry farms on the upper side of Khadakwasla," the minister said.

Fresh impasse hit Kolkata film industry

A drastic 70% drop in film production is witnessed as the cold war between the directors and technicians continue to shake up the industry and its workers

AGENCIES

Kolkata, Feb 8: A fresh impasse has erupted in the Kolkata film industry amid a drastic 70% drop in film productions within a year. This is the second such cease work within the last six months as the cold war between the directors and technicians continue to shake up the industry and its work.

The impasse started growing when soap opera director Srijit Roy heard rumours in the industry from February 1 that they would stop constructing his serial set inside the film studio. Roy added, "The rumour was that I have made comments in 2024 that have hurt some technicians, but there is no proof to that end. I mailed the technicians federation to ask about the cause but have gotten no response. Work has been stopped on other films and serial sets as well."

The director claimed that he has developed a great rapport with all technicians in the industry in his 25-year-long career and this cease work on his set was due to "external influences".

In a live video on social media site Facebook February 4, Roy described his ordeal. He added, "Me and my partner Souvik have borrowed money to make this serial after a lot of struggles. We do not come from wealthy families. Who will bear the losses that I am suffering every day?"

The aggrieved director also urged his colleagues to gather at the Dassani 1 Film Studio to show solidarity with his cause. He urged technicians to meet



him in person and start a conversation with him about his "alleged" faults. He also urged that if there is proof he will accept his mistakes.

As the day progressed, multiple directors and actors gathered around the studio to show their support. Sudeshna Roy, secretary of Directors' Association of Eastern India showed support and reached the spot.

Actor and director Parambrata Chatterjee said, "Even if Srijit has done something. Does he not deserve a response from the technicians' federation to tell him what his fault is. But they are silent. The technicians who work on the set are also losing pay, so is the director." He added that they are ready to discuss and

The number of films made in 2023 was 134, but it dropped to merely 39 in 2024. If these problems continues then in a few years, the number will be zero

Subrata Sen | Member of Directors' Association

reach a solution if the technicians' federation comes to the table.

Repeated deadlocks had been halted at the industry last July which resulted in a war of words between the stakeholders, which ended after the Chief Minister intervened.

The high-handedness of the technician's federation has been repeatedly questioned by the directors, producers, and actors alike.

The directors' association even filed a case against the Federation of Cine Technicians and Workers of Eastern India at the Competition Commission of India in Delhi to officially voice their concerns about the arm-twisting culture promoted by the federation.

Girls outnumber boys in Bengal's class 10 state board exams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 8: A substantially higher number of girl candidates, as compared to boys, will appear in this year's class 10 state board exams in West Bengal, which will begin February 10, a senior official said Friday.

West Bengal Board of Secondary Education president Ramanuj Ganguly said that the exams will be held in 2,683 centres under strict surveillance till February 22.

Ganguly said that out of the 9,84,753 candidates appearing for the exams this year, 5,55,950 are girls, which is a welcome sign indicating high rate of girl's education in the state.

Besides candidates, most of the officials assigned with the task of conducting exams will not be allowed to carry mobile phones or any other electronic gadgets in the exam halls, he said.

If any gadget is found in the possession of a candidate, he or she will not be allowed to write the paper.

This measure is necessary to prevent candidates from resorting to any unfair means, he said, adding special checks will be conducted in washrooms as some candidates are found to adopt malpractices outside the exam halls.

The board president said that 181 candidates will be enrolled before Monday's examination and authorities of 136 schools were responsible for the ordeal of these candidates whose details were not sent to the board in due course of time.

"It is an onerous process to issue fresh admit cards to so many students at the last moment as the schools failed to act on time. After verifying their request and processing them, finally, we are happy to facilitate the exam of these 181 candidates," he said, adding all these students will get their admit cards by Sunday.

The exams will begin at 11 am, with question papers being distributed at 10.45 am, and will continue till 2 pm.

Recalling the disqualification of 45 candidates last year for adopting unfair means, the senior board official said, "We have zero tolerance for unfair practices in the exams."

Detained in Iran for clicking pictures, man returns home after two months



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Feb 8: An engineer from Nanded in central Maharashtra has returned after spending the almost two months in detention in Iran for allegedly clicking photographs in a restricted zone.

Yogesh Panchal (33) was released earlier this week after an intervention by the Ministry of External Affairs, said Raja Sabha member and local BJP leader Ajit Gopchade. He returned to India February 4.

Panchal, who hails from Vasmat in Nanded district, told reporters that he visited Iran in the first week of December for exploring business opportunities.

"I landed in Tehran on De-

ember 7. I went for sight-seeing and shot some photos and videos like other tourists, and sent them to my family back home," he said.

"On the same day I was apprehended from my hotel room and taken to a detention centre," Panchal said.

He was accused of shooting videos and photos in a restricted zone.

He was treated well during the incarceration, Panchal said, adding, "The guards never even touched me. But they had their process, and I had to go through it."

The family, in the meanwhile, had approached MP Gopchade, seeking help for his release.

Shradha, Panchal's wife, said she managed to talk to her husband over phone only February 1.

According to Gopchade, when a lawyer engaged by the family visited the Iranian Embassy in Delhi, the officials there did not cooperate. "But when the Ministry of External Affairs intervened, they took up the case and a hearing was conducted, leading to his release," the MP said.

I was blindfolded all the time. They kept me in a local detention centre for 59 days

Yogesh Panchal | Engineer from Nanded



West Bengal Congress President Subhankar Sarkar, center, with party workers during a protest march against the recent deportation of Indian nationals from the US, in Kolkata, Friday

ECO-FRIENDLY MOBILITY

CNG yellow taxis to ply Kolkata's roads soon

Around 1,500 metered yellow taxis in West Bengal would be phased out by the end of next year as commercial vehicles older than 15 years are not allowed to ply the city roads

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 8: Around 150 eco-friendly CNG taxis painted in the classic yellow colour with blue border will soon ply the roads of Kolkata, a transport official said Friday.

An MoU in this regard was signed between the state government and the operator of the service on Thursday, the last day of the two-day Bengal Global Business Summit, he said.

The move is aimed at preventing yellow taxis from going off the city roads and providing all modern amenities keeping in mind the expectations and demands of the city commuters in an economical manner, the

official said.

"We want to sustain the drivers of metered diesel yellow taxis, the life expectancy of which is nearing deadline, by inducting them into this initiative," the official said.

A representative of the company told PTI, "While in the near future, 150 eco-friendly taxis running on green fuel (CNG) will hit the city streets, and will be available on Yatri Sathi app of the state government, the firm also plans to consistently add more vehicles to the fleet every month."

Transport Secretary Saumitra Mohan said four MoUs to the tune of ₹1,575 crore investment were inked at BGBS between the department and



four firms.

Apart from retaining the yellow taxis, the three other MoUs pertained to introducing 'pink taxis' -- driven by women

and meant for women commuters only -- and 'rent a bike' -- introducing a fleet of electric bikes -- and cruise tourism, Mohan told PTI.

The amount of investment for yellow taxis was not spelt out separately.

Around 1,500 metered yellow taxis in West Bengal

Apart from retaining the yellow taxis, the three other MoUs pertained to introducing 'pink taxis' -- driven by women and meant for women commuters only -- and 'rent a bike' -- introducing a fleet of electric bikes -- and cruise tourism

Saumitra Mohan | Transport Secretary

would be phased out by the end of next year as commercial vehicles older than 15 years are not allowed to ply the city roads, transport department sources said.

There are around 4,500 Ambassador metered yellow taxis in the state which will come down to 3,000 by the end of 2026, they said.

In 2008, Calcutta High Court had ordered that commercial vehicles older than 15 years would not be allowed to ply the city roads.



Central govt doing everything to weaken Constitution, democracy in India
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONG GENERAL SECY

RAJNATH SINGH TO INAUGURATE K'TAKA'S GLOBAL INVESTORS' MEET

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate the Global Investors Meet 2025 here on February 11, Karnataka Minister M B Patil said Saturday



of the day uote

Congratulations to the dedicated party officials and workers for the historic victory of the BJP in the Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections-2025!
YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

People of Delhi have put a stamp on the welfare policies and works of Modi ji and have shown the door to the AAP
NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

India has taken various initiatives to bridge the skill gap amid a rise in the global demand for skilled professionals, with over 1.5 crore youth trained in AI, robotics and digital technologies and equipped with industry-relevant skills and prepared for the future job market under the Skill India Scheme
MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION MINISTER



An aerial view of vehicles stuck on the Lucknow Highway during the Mahakumbh Mela, near Prayagraj
PTI PHOTO

Landslide victory for DMK in Erode East

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Erode (Tamil Nadu), Feb 8: The ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu extended its winning run in elections Saturday by emerging victorious in the Erode East bypoll with a massive margin against actor-politician Seeman's NTK, a victory that should come as a major boost to the M K Stalin-led party ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam candidate V C Chandhirakumar trounced Naam Tamilar Katchi's (NTK) M K Seethalakshmi by a margin of 91,558 votes. In the process, NTK, a Tamil nationalist organisation, forfeited deposit. Chief Minister and DMK president Stalin said his party registered a huge victory on Periyar's (rationalist leader E V Ramasamy) soil.



Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam candidate V C Chandhirakumar trounced Naam Tamilar Katchi's (NTK) M K Seethalakshmi by a margin of 91,558 votes

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Erode is the native district of Ramasamy, a Dravidian stalwart

AAP may face bigger BJP challenge in MCD

The reduced strength of the AAP in MCD comes in the backdrop of the party encountering cross-voting and managing to get its candidate Mahesh Kumar Khichi elected as mayor with great difficulty in November 2024



Members of the AAP and BJP are seen at a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. The AAP's two councillors getting elected as legislators, the party's position in the civic body is likely to again change and bring in additional instability in the municipal corporation. Aaley Mohammed Iqbal and Mukesh Goyal are the two AAP councillors who will leave the municipal House. In the 2022 civic elections, the AAP won 134 wards, the BJP won 104 wards and the Congress bagged nine wards. But the parties' tally has continued to change since then, primarily, due to defections.

tion, BJP's councillors have also won as legislators, including Neelam Pahalwan from Najafgarh and Gajendra Daral from Mundka.

"If a bypoll is ordered or more defections take place in the coming days, the BJP may come back to power in the MCD," said a former BJP councillor who was elected as a legislator Saturday.

In November 2024, Khichi, a Dalit candidate fielded by the Arvind Kejriwal-led party, defeated the BJP's Kishan Lal by a wafer-thin margin of three votes. While Khichi got 133 votes, Lal secured 130 votes. Two votes were declared invalid. The eight Congress councillors did not take part in the election.

The results of the Delhi Assembly elections were declared giving the BJP a massive victory after a gap of 27 years. In the 70-member House, the BJP won 48 seats and the AAP was reduced to 22.

New Delhi, Feb 8: The AAP's decisive defeat in the Delhi Assembly election Saturday is likely to impact its dominance in the Municipal Corporation in Delhi (MCD) where two of its councillors have become legislators and opened the door for the rival BJP to try and wrest power.

The reduced strength of the AAP in MCD comes in the backdrop of the party encountering cross-voting and managing to get its candidate Mahesh Kumar Khichi elected as mayor with great difficulty in November 2024

mar Khichi elected as mayor with great difficulty in November 2024.

Also, with the AAP's two councillors getting elected as legislators, the party's position in the civic body is likely to again change and bring in additional instability in the municipal corporation. Aaley Mohammed Iqbal and Mukesh Goyal are the two AAP councillors who will leave the municipal House. In the 2022 civic

elections, the AAP won 134 wards, the BJP won 104 wards and the Congress bagged nine wards. But the parties' tally has continued to change since then, primarily, due to defections.

During the past three years, the BJP narrowed the gap and raised its seats to 120 as against AAP's 122. One seat is vacant in the municipal House since BJP's Kamaljeet Sehrawat was elected as West Delhi MP.

In the current Assembly elec-

SHORT TAKES

Mild tremors in high ranges of Kasaragod

Kasaragod (Kerala): Mild tremors were reportedly felt in the high-range areas of northern Kasaragod district of Kerala in the wee hours of Saturday. Tremors lasted for a few seconds in Malom, Rajapuram, Konnakkad and nearby areas, Vellarikkund police said quoting villagers. "People said they felt tremors and heard some unnatural sounds from underneath the ground in these areas," a police officer said.

Five killed in two accidents in MP

Bhopal: Five persons, including a woman police constable and her husband, died in two separate car-truck collisions in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam and Ujjain districts Saturday, police said. While three persons were killed on Agar Road in Ujjain, two died on Jaora-Lebad Road in Ratlam, they said. "Three persons were killed and one injured after a truck and a car collided near Paat on Agar Road in Ujjain this evening," Makdaun police station in-charge Pradeep Rajput said. The car involved in the accident was coming from Rajasthan, while the truck bore the Haryana registration number, he said, adding that the victims were being identified.

Headmaster, teacher held in rape case

Nashik: Police Saturday arrested the headmaster and a teacher of a private school in Maharashtra's Nashik district over the alleged rape of a 13-year-old girl student, an official said. The alleged incident took place in Igatpuri taluka Friday, he said. According to the police, the Std VI student's class teacher, Gorakhnath Maruti Joshi, took her to the house of the headmaster Tukaram Govind Sable (53), who allegedly raped the teenager and sent her home.

Man beaten to death

Jaipur: A 65-year-old man died in Rajasthan's Pali district after he was allegedly beaten with sticks for objecting party on the road which caused traffic obstruction, police said Saturday. The deceased was identified as Mohanlal Bairwa, they added. According to the police, Madaram, who lives in Bairwa's neighbourhood was hosting a party outside his house with a DJ on his son's birthday on Friday, which was causing traffic issues. When Bairwa went to speak to him about the issue, Madaram, along with his two sons and others attacked him with sticks.

PIO arrested in US over sexual assault charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Feb 8: An Indian national is among four persons arrested by US immigration authorities over charges related to sexual assault. Jaspal Singh, 29, a citizen of India was arrested January 29 in Tukwila, Washington.

Singh is charged with "assault with sexual motivation", US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Seattle said in a release last week. The other individuals arrested are citizens of Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador. All four will remain in ICE custody pending removal proceedings. "Protecting our communities, and preventing further victimisation is of paramount importance to ICE throughout the Pacific Northwest," said ICE Enforcement

and Removal Operations Seattle Field Office Director Drew Bostock. President Donald Trump kicked off his second term in office with an ambitious immigration agenda, promising to deport millions of undocumented immigrants and seal off the US southern border.

Since then, Trump administration officials have swiftly moved to strip temporary protections for migrants and delegate more authority to federal and state partners. More than 8,000 people have been arrested by federal immigration authorities since Trump's inauguration. Administration officials have not shared exactly how many undocumented immigrants they're aiming to arrest this year, but daily apprehensions have already surpassed last year's daily average under President Joe Biden, CNN reported.

For us, country is family: Balkrishna

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 8: Events like World Book Fair are of public utility where world-class knowledge literature becomes accessible, Patanjali Yogpeeth General Secretary Acharya Balkrishna said at the World Book Fair, organised at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, under the aegis of National Book Trust, India.

He said that Patanjali has given prestige to yoga-Ayurveda at the global level. "It is a matter of pride that yoga has been accepted all over the world today. If people speaking different languages all over the world know the meaning of a word equally, then it is yoga. Even if one does not know the broader and deeper meaning of yoga, one knows that it is about some breathing exercises, physical exercises, some asanas and pranayama," Acharya added.

Regarding Patanjali's in-



digenous products, he said, "Patanjali's products are manufactured with a view that our families are consuming them. That is why our products remain true to all standards

of quality and purity. For us, country is not business, it is family." He called upon all the companies to make whatever products they make keeping their families in mind.

'Environment, carbon emission neglected in sustainable devpt'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: Environment, carbon emission, biodiversity and malnutrition are among the issues that remain neglected by certain groups of countries, according to a recent study that analysed the trajectories of 166 nations towards attaining sustainable development.

In 2015, member states of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Aimed at achieving human progress, economic prosperity, and planetary health, the framework outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including no poverty, zero hunger, quality education and gender equality.

Questions, however, remain as to how different nations navigate their own paths toward these goals, said an international

team of researchers from different countries, including Australia, China and Israel. Their study, published in the journal Nature Communications, found a "polarised global landscape" with systematically neglected SDG targets, potentially leaving behind millions of people.

"Our results reveal a polarised global landscape within the SDG space, with countries clustering into distinct groups, each specialising in different development targets," the authors wrote.

Asaf Tzachor, a lead author from Reichman University's School of Sustainability, Israel, said, "We found shifting national priorities over the past 20 years, as well as areas of chronic neglect, where action is urgently needed. Using network analysis, we further identified each country's comparative advantages and disadvantages



Using official and unofficial data collected between 2000 and 2022, the team calculated an SDG score for each country for 2000, 2015 and 2022

Countries with high SDG scores were found to specialise in reducing poverty and improving access to clean energy, air and water, along with good health, innovation and governance

across the main pillars of sustainable development." Using official and unofficial data collected between 2000 and 2022, the team calculated an SDG score for each country for

2000, 2015 and 2022. Countries with high SDG scores were found to specialise in reducing poverty and improving access to clean energy, air and water, along with good health, innova-

tion and governance.

On the other hand, countries with low SDG scores were noted to have relative advantages in the aspects of "overnutrition, embodied social and environmental impacts in international trade, and resource use, waste and emissions".

However, the team found a set of "orphaned" SDG indicators that remain neglected by certain groups of countries -- or "areas where certain country groups remain under-specialised". These gaps, primarily related to environmental quality, carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, or the impacts of malnutrition, represent urgent areas where targeted action is needed, the authors said.

For instance, nations like Ethiopia and India need to focus on basic sanitation and biodiversity respectively while

New York, Feb 8: A 36-year-old Indian-origin construction executive has been sentenced to up to 25 years for driving at 150 kmph while drunk and high on cocaine resulting in a crash that killed two teenagers in the US, according to media reports.

The wrong-way crash took place in 2023 on Long Island in New York. Amandeep Singh was sentenced Friday to eight-and-a-third to 25 years in prison for the deaths of 14-year-old Ethan Falkowitz and Drew Hassenbein in the drunk driving crash in Nassau County, the New York Post reported.

Singh appeared stonefaced and barely acknowledged the victims' family members as he entered the courtroom Friday in Mineola.

countries like China and the US face challenges related to greenhouse gas emissions and overnutrition, they explained. The study provides a detailed understanding of what holds countries back and where they might redouble their efforts to achieve balanced and inclusive progress, the team said.

"Understanding these disparities is crucial for (a) country's and global progress. By identifying where countries are underperforming, we can tailor development policies to address these gaps effectively," Tzachor said.

With the 2030 deadline approaching, the team also stressed on a comprehensive review of the SDG framework, calling for international cooperation in ensuring that no region or community is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development.

What Worked for the BJP

- A focussed campaign featuring leaders from across the country - Chief Ministers, Union ministers and NDA constituents reached out to specific regional groups in the national capital.
- Freebies offered by AAP were countered by "Modi's guarantee," which appeared to find favour with voters.
- Substantial ground work by RSS and like-minded organisations.
- Wooing the middle class with announcements of income tax relief in the Union Budget.
- BJP ran a localised campaign highlighting civic issues such as lack of roads, irregular water supply, air pollution, and non-functional mohalla clinics.

What worked against AAP

- The contradictions in its promises of being against corruption and belief in an austere lifestyle laid bare by the charges of lavish living of conventional political leaders.
- Attrition of Brand Kejriwal as charges of corruption and the allegations of liquor scam appeared to stick. He and several of his ministers were jailed in the liquor scam.
- Constant confrontation with the Centre over various issues of governance.
- Lack of civic amenities and perceived failure to come good on promises of good healthcare and education harmed the party.
- Better performance by Congress in at least 14 seats ate into AAP's vote share, leading to the defeat of its candidates. The Congress and AAP were coalition partners in the Lok Sabha elections.



BJP breaches Kejri-wall

INDIA BLOC LOSES STEAM

Union ministers, Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled states, and NDA partners Saturday showered praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and Home Minister Amit Shah's strategies for BJP's victory in the Delhi Assembly elections.



ing in Delhi.

Chief ministers Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Devendra Fadnavis (Maharashtra), Mohan Yadav (Madhya Pradesh), Nayab Singh Saini (Haryana), Pushkar Singh Dhami (Uttarakhand), Pramod Sawant (Goa), and Bhajanlal Sharma (Rajasthan) were seen camping in the national capital, addressing public meetings and holding roadshows for BJP candidates. Alliance partners Eknath Shinde (Shiv Sena), Ajit Pawar (NCP), K Rammoohan Naidu (TDP), and Chirag Paswan (LJSP-RV) also credited the "charismatic" appeal of Modi and "meticulous" strategising of Shah for BJP's victory in the national capital. Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar also congratulated Modi, Shah and BJP chief J P Nadda for BJP's success in Delhi polls.

falsely claimed that the Constitution and elections are all in crises, a complete defeat. Their lie has been defeated and the voters have fully supported the truth," Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said.

"BJP's landslide victory in Delhi is a victory of faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the policies of the BJP," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said. Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said the victory in Delhi elections was a stamp of approval on the policies of all-round development pursued by Prime Minister Modi.

The BJP had deployed several Chief Ministers, leaders from across the country, and NDA partners for election campaign-

With the defeat of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi, the number of INDIA bloc governments in the country has come down to eight -- Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and West Bengal

Arvind Kejriwal with jibes like "architect of the liquor scam" and "sheesh mahal" being a regular feature in their campaign speeches.

The INDIA bloc parties such as the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Trinamool Congress (TMC), though not having stakes in Delhi, threw their weight behind AAP on the grounds that it was best-suited to take on the BJP.

The distance between the Congress and smaller constituents of the INDIA bloc is growing as we saw in the Haryana polls when the Congress and AAP failed to strike an alliance and in Delhi where the two parties took on each other. Though the INDIA bloc seems to be intact for the Bihar polls, the West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh elections in the coming years would test the alliance again as all constituents would find it difficult to come together.

The unease in the bloc and the consequences of bickering were being felt with many leaders voicing their disappointment with the result. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah passed a snide remark on the Opposition parties over the Delhi Assembly polls. "Aur lado aapas mein!!! (Keep on fighting each other)," Abdullah posted on X with a meme.

Expressing strong disappointment, the CPI(M) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) said the differences in the INDIA bloc paved the way for the saffron party's good show in the national capital.



aged to stop the BJP from coming to power but preventing the saffron party from getting a majority on its own was no mean

feat. The INDIA bloc parties had repeatedly insisted that the alliance was for national polls and later it would be on a state-by-state basis.

However, it had not envisioned that the electoral fights in the states could get nasty, leading to cracks in the overall alliance. The Delhi polls have been a case in point.

The Congress, the largest constituent of the INDIA bloc, ran a high-decibel campaign against AAP, leading to a lot of bad blood between the two parties. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra launched a no-holds-barred attack on AAP and its convener

Cong's third consecutive drought in Delhi

New Delhi: The Congress was decimated in the Delhi elections Saturday, failing to open its account in the 70-member Assembly for a third consecutive time and its key candidates suffering crushing defeats. The only consolation, however, was a slight improvement in the party's vote share, with leaders proclaiming that they would win back the trust of the people and exuded confidence of forming its government in 2030. An early one segment lead in Badli was soon lost and the party, now a pale shadow of its glorious past under late chief minister Sheila Dikshit, failed to open its account once again. Her son Sandeep Dikshit finished third in New Delhi segment where BJP's Parvesh Sahib Verma defeated AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal by over 3,000 votes. While Verma polled 25,057 votes and Kejriwal 22,057, Dikshit gathered just 3,873, in a shock culmination of the Sheila Dikshit legacy. Sheila Dikshit was the chief minister of Delhi for three terms. A majority of Congress candidates lost their deposits and only three of them managed to save them. These include Abhishek Dutt from Kasturba Nagar, who was the only Congress leader to finish second, Rohit Choudhary from Nangloi Jat and Devendra Yadav from Badli. Most Congress candidates finished third after BJP or AAP, but in some even finished fourth after the AIMIM where they had put up its candidates in Muslim dominated segments.

TIDBITS

Atishi, 3 ministers save AAP's grace

Chief Minister Atishi and three ministers in the outgoing AAP government -- Gopal Rai, Mukesh Ahlawat and Imran Hussain -- managed to secure wins Saturday, offering a rare consolation for the party as its big guns, including Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia, suffered defeats. Atishi emerged victorious in Kalkaji, defeating Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Ramesh Bidhuri by a margin of 3,521 votes. In Babarpur, Rai retained his seat with a margin of 18,994 votes over BJP's Anil Kumar Vashisht. Hussain, the food and civil supplies minister, won from Ballimaran with the highest margin among the AAP's prominent faces, defeating BJP's Kamal Bagri by 29,823 votes.

Historic verdict: PM on BJP victory

Hailing the BJP's Delhi Assembly polls victory as "historic", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the people of the national capital have shown the door to 'AAP-da' and now a double-engine government will ensure development at a double speed. He said Delhiites are celebrating BJP's victory and respite from 'AAP-da', a term he used throughout the campaign to criticise the Aam Aadmi Party's rule. "People of Delhi today have enthusiasm and satisfaction. There is relief of liberating Delhi from 'AAP-da'. I thank all Delhiites for entrusting their faith in 'Modi ki guarantee'," the prime minister said in his address from BJP headquarters.

Party leadership will decide next CM: Parvesh

BJP's 'giant slayer' Parvesh Verma who defeated former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from the New Delhi constituency said the party's leadership will decide the next Chief Minister of Delhi. Verma, former Delhi Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma's son, thanked the people and called the result "the victory of the people of the national capital". "This is not just my victory, this is the victory of the people of Delhi who chose truth over lies, governance over gimmicks and development over deception. I humbly thank every voter who trusted me," he said.

Exit polls proven right

Most exit polls on the Delhi Assembly elections hit close to home as the BJP marched ahead with an insuperable lead over the ruling AAP in the national capital.

According to the Election Commission trends, by 3 pm, of the 70 Assembly seats, BJP had won 20 and was leading on another 27, while the AAP won 11, and was leading on 12. The Congress could not get any seats.

Among the key exit polls, the closest were Axis My India, which projected the BJP winning 45-55 seats, and AAP bagging 15-25, while Today's Chanakya had predicted 45-57 seats for the BJP, and 13-25 for the AAP. People's Insight exit poll gave the BJP and allies 40 to 44 seats, 25 to 29 to AAP;

P-Marq exit poll predicted 39-49 seats for the BJP and allies, and 21-31 seats for AAP; JVC exit poll said the BJP and allies would get 39-45, and AAP would get 22-31 seats; and Chanakya Strategies exit poll said the BJP and allies were likely to get 39-44 seats, and the AAP was likely to get 25-28. Some pollsters predicted a bigger share for BJP. CNX predicted a landslide for the BJP with 49-61 seats, and 10-19 seats for the ruling party.

The People's Pulse exit poll showed the NDA was likely to get 51 to 60 seats, while the AAP was said to get 10-19 seats. Two surveys predicted AAP's victory -- Wee Preside, which gave it 46-52 and 18-23 for BJP and Mind Brink Media, which predicted 44-49 seats for AAP, 21-25 for BJP, and 0-1 for the Congress.



Corruption allegations, governance issues haunt AAP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: Allegations of corruption against its leaders, constant bickering with the lieutenant governor over governance issues and a spirited campaign conducted by the BJP were enough to ensure a rout of the AAP in the Delhi Assembly polls, the results of which were declared Saturday.

What will be more hurtful for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is the fact that its top guns -- Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain -- suffered defeats in their constituencies, a major setback for the party that had come to power on the anti-corruption plank. The party will have a lot to introspect in the coming days as it will be for the first time since its inception that it will be serving as the Opposition in the national capital. The AAP was confident of retain-

ing power in Delhi but corruption allegations against its top leaders and a rampant campaign by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), tagging Kejriwal and other leaders as corrupt, dented its image.

The AAP that had won 67 and 62 seats in the 2015 and 2020 Assembly polls respectively was restricted to only 22 seats this time. The "kattar imandaar" image of the party took a major beating due to the arrest of its senior leaders in various corruption cases.

The BJP's constant attacks on AAP supreme Kejriwal over the issue of renovation of the Chief Minister's residence, which it referred to as Sheesh Mahal, also paved the way for the party's loss in the keenly-contested polls. Former Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal, former deputy Chief Minister Sisodia and AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh were arrested in

“Arrogance and pride of a person cannot survive for long, and what happened with Arvind Kejriwal is an example of this. Even Ravan's arrogance was shattered, then who is Arvind Kejriwal? Whenever a woman was attacked, the person who was responsible for this was always punished by God.”

Swati Maliwal
Rajya Sabha MP

“Today, the results of the Delhi elections have been announced, and we humbly accept people's verdict. The decision of the people is paramount, and we respect it. I congratulate BJP on this victory and hope that they will fulfill the expectations and aspirations of the people who have given them the mandate.”

Arvind Kejriwal
AAP National Convener

connection with the excise-policy case, while Jain was arrested in another money-laundering case by the ED. Even though the party and its leaders called these arrests the results of a conspiracy and witch hunt

by the BJP, the voters, it seems, were not convinced.

The arrests of Kejriwal, Sisodia and Jain not only hit governance in Delhi but also put a spanner in the political affairs of the AAP. Other

top leaders of the party also lost their seats in close contests. Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, who was the party's go-to person for firefighting and talking about the hindrances in governance, lost the Greater Kailash

seat. The defeats of Kejriwal, Sisodia and Jain mean that the AAP cannot even claim moral victory in the polls that have seen the BJP returning to power in Delhi after a gap of more than 26 years. Another factor that might have tilted the scales in favour of the BJP was the AAP government's constant tussle with Delhi LG V K Saxena over governance issues.

Right from the cleaning of drains to stopping schemes like the doorstep delivery of services, the AAP government would always lay the blame on the LG or the BJP-led Centre for creating obstacles in governance.

The arrests of Kejriwal, Sisodia and Jain brought governance to a standstill in the capital. Kejriwal did not resign from the Chief Minister's post after he was arrested by the ED in March last year, with the party saying that he did not cower before the Centre's witch hunt.

international



JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL PASSPORT

The Singaporean passport has emerged as the strongest passport in the world with visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 193 out of 227 countries across the globe, according to the 2025 Henley Passport Index. India found the 80th spot on the list, with easy access to 56 nations



of the day quote

I know that the Trump administration is very interested in it ... We're ready and willing to have contracts for LNG supplies to Ukraine. And of course, we will be a hub for the whole of Europe



VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

I will be leading the largest business delegation from our country to India next week to boost bilateral trade



NIR BARKAT | MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY, ISRAEL

We have been vocal in confronting the provocative and unlawful actions of the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea. We will continue to do so



DAVID HARTMAN | CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES

TRUMP'S DEPORTATION THREATS

Indian students in US quit part-time jobs

Students are leaving their jobs fearing run-ins with authorities with a sword of deportation hanging on their heads



AGENCIES

Washington, Feb 8: For decades, the United States has been the land of endless possibilities for young Indian students seeking world-class education and high-paying career opportunities. However, amid stringent immigration policies under President Donald Trump's administration, the American dream of many has become a challenging ordeal.

With visa rejection on the rise, increased scrutiny at workplaces and uncertainty over work permits under the Trump administration, many Indian students are forced to rethink their aspirations.

Judge blocks Trump from placing USAID workers on leave

Washington: A federal judge Friday dealt President Donald Trump and billionaire ally Elon Musk their first big setback in their dismantling of the US Agency for International Development, ordering a temporary halt to plans to pull thousands of agency staffers off the job. US District Judge Carl Nichols, a Trump appointee, also agreed to block an order that would have given the thousands of overseas USAID workers the administration wanted to place on abrupt administrative leave just 30 days to move families and households back to the US on government expense. Both moves would have exposed the US workers and their spouses and children to unwarranted risk and expense, the judge said.

been a notable decline in the number of F-1 student visas issued by the United States to Indian students. According to an analysis of US State Department data, 64,008 Indian students were granted visas from January to September 2024, which is a 38 per cent drop compared to 1,03,495 during the

same period in 2023. The figures marked the first significant decline after the surge in student enrollment following the pandemic. Students are also worried about the shrinking job market that now favours local hires with the new immigration system sidelining international students.

Students noted that since President Trump took office, his stress on localisation has made visa sponsorships by employers more difficult. "Jobs have become elusive. I never thought that things could turn this bad," Sai Aparna, who lives in Cleveland, Ohio said.

Aparna, who pursued a Master's in Information Systems in the US, has been actively looking for a job for the past year, but in vain.

INCREASED SCRUTINY AT THE WORKPLACE

Several Indian students studying in the US complained about the increased scrutiny from law enforcement agencies, with "officers in uniform" visiting their workplaces and demanding to see their students' IDs or check their work

authorisation documents - in case they are on Optional Practical Training (OPT).

An OPT - initially issued for a period of one year post-college - allows students to work for the stipulated period. Those on F1 visas are allowed to work for just 20 hours a week at on-campus jobs. But, youngsters living away from home often breach this time and place cap to earn extra bucks.

The recent restrictions imposed on off-campus part-time jobs have hit a major chunk of the international students hard.

"Last week, officers came in and began questioning the staff at the restaurant where I work six hours every day after college. They asked for my college ID. Fortunately, I was coming out of the restroom, so I told them I was just there to use the facility. My employer backed me. but the experience was so petrifying that I resigned the very next day," an Indian pursuing a master's in cybersecurity in Atlanta said.

The situation has become a cause of anxiety for many, especially those coming from less privileged backgrounds.

Curbing vandalism: Bangladesh launches 'Operation Devil Hunt'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 8: Bangladesh's interim government launched an operation Saturday after a student group gave a 24-hour ultimatum to track down "culprits" who assaulted their activists during a reported attack by protesters on an Awami League leader's house on the outskirts of Dhaka.

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement leaders claim their activists went to the ex-minister's house to prevent looting but were attacked by miscreants.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus's government ordered "Operation Devil Hunt" calling out army troops as a protest by the student organisation was underway in Gazipur, where their activists were assaulted Friday.

In a statement, the Home Ministry said the operation began across Gazipur and would extend nationwide to ensure public safety. It added that details about the coordinated security clampdown comprising army and law enforcement agencies would be announced Sunday.

SHORT TAKES

Pak urges China to reschedule debt

Islamabad: Pakistan has requested China to reschedule \$3.4 billion debt for two years to bridge a foreign funding gap identified by the International Monetary Fund, according to a media report Saturday. This is the second time in the past five months that Islamabad has requested Beijing to reschedule loans provided by its Exim bank. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar made the formal request during this week's visit to Beijing. The Express Tribune newspaper reported, quoting government sources.

Landslide in China: Search on for 30

Beijing: Chinese rescuers searched for some 30 people after a landslide Saturday in southwestern Sichuan province buried 10 houses. The Ministry of Emergency Management deployed hundreds of rescuers including firefighters following the landslide Junlian county. Two people were pulled out alive, state broadcaster CCTV said.

War-torn Lebanon forms first govt in over 2 years

The country is still in the throes of a crippling economic crisis, now in its sixth year, which has battered its banks, destroyed its state electricity sector and left many in poverty unable to access their savings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beirut, Feb 8: Lebanon's new prime minister Saturday formed the country's first full-fledged government since 2022.

President Joseph Aoun announced in a statement that he had accepted the resignation of the former caretaker government and signed a decree with new Prime Minister Nawaf Salam forming the new government.

Salam's cabinet of 24 ministers, split evenly between Christian and Muslim sects, was formed less than a month after he was appointed, and comes at a time where Lebanon is scrambling to rebuild its battered southern region and maintain security along its southern border after a devas-



tating war between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group. A US-brokered ceasefire deal ended the war in November.

Salam, a diplomat and former president of the International Court of Justice, has vowed to reform Lebanon's judiciary and battered economy and bring about stability in the troubled country, which has faced numerous economic, political, and security crises for decades.

Though Hezbollah did not endorse Salam as prime minister, the Lebanese group did engage in negotiations with the new prime minister over the Shiite Muslim seats in government, as per Lebanon's power-sharing system.

Khan's party observes 'Black Day', leaders held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 8: Several leaders of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf were arrested as the party Saturday held rallies to mark February 8 as 'Black Day' over the alleged rigging of the general elections last year.

The PTI held its main rally in Swabi, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where the party is in power. It also asked its workers and supporters to protest across the country.

Earlier, the party planned a rally at the historic Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore. The plan was, however, shelved because of the denial of permission from Punjab province authorities.

The Punjab government led by Maryam Nawaz imposed Section 144 across the province, banning all political assemblies, gatherings, sit-ins, rallies, demonstrations, protests and other such activities on February 8.

Hamas frees three hostages

REUTERS

Gaza, Feb 8: Palestinian militant group Hamas handed over three Israeli hostages Saturday, whose gaunt appearance shocked Israelis, while Israel began freeing dozens of Palestinians in the latest stage of a ceasefire deal aimed at ending the 15-month war in Gaza.

Ohad Ben Ami and Eli Sharabi, both taken hostage from Kibbutz Be'eri during the cross-border Hamas-led attack October 7, 2023, and Or Levy, abducted that day from the Nova music festival, were led onto a Hamas podium by gunmen.

The three men all appeared thin, weak and pale, and in worse condition than the 18 hostages who had previously been freed under the truce agreed last month.

"He looked like a skeleton, it was awful to see," Ohad Ben Ami's mother-in-law, Michal Cohen, told Channel 13 News as she watched the Hamas-directed handover ceremony, which included the hostages answering questions posed



- Israel to release 183 Palestinian prisoners in exchange
- Negotiations on second phase of ceasefire started this week
- Trump's call to move Palestinians from Gaza raised tensions

raeli forces. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the sight of the frail hostages forced into an apparent staged interview by Hamas militants was shocking and would be addressed.

PALESTINIAN PRISONERS FREED

Israel's President Isaac Herzog described the release ceremony as cynical and vicious. "This is what a crime against humanity looks like," he said.

In exchange for the hostages' release, Israel is freeing 183 Palestinian prisoners, some convicted of involvement in attacks that killed dozens of people, as well as 111 detained in Gaza during the war.

WEEK'S BEST PICTURES



Palestinians wait to buy bread, amid a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, in Gaza City, February 3. REUTERS



Giraffes groom at the Nairobi National Park, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in Nairobi, Kenya, February 4. REUTERS



Authorities inspect the wreckage of the Cessna 208B Grand Caravan aircraft operated by Bering Air, that suddenly lost altitude and went missing with 10 people on board, near Nome, Alaska February 7. REUTERS



Staff clean the floor next to robots during the Digital Almaty 2025 forum, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, February 2. REUTERS



A general view of performers rehearsing ahead of the opening ceremony of the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China, February 7. PTI



There is no change in RBI's approach. It does not look at any price level or band. It is our endeavour to curb excessive volatility. We should not be looking at daily movement or exchange rate

SANJAY MALHOTRA | GOVERNOR, RBI

23 INDIAN STARTUPS RAISE OVER \$138MN IN FUNDING

At least 23 Indian startups raised more than \$138 million in funding this week, which included five growth-stage deals and 20 early-stage rounds. Last week, 30 Indian startups secured a total of \$240.85 million in funding including five growth-stage investments and 20 early-stage rounds



of the day quote

After the Budget, the few inputs I've had from some business leaders is that the orders for fast-moving consumer goods for April-June are already getting booked, and the industry is clearly seeing signs of a possible recovery of consumption



NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

The transition from volume-based to value-led growth is essential for Indian pharma to secure its rightful place in the global market. Innovation, including the shift towards specialty generics, biosimilars, and novel products, will be the key to India's pharmaceutical future



SRIRAM SHRINIVASAN | PARTNER, BAIN & COMPANY

India is the 4th largest country after China, US, and Germany to cross the 100 GW milestone. While we are trailing Germany by a small margin, we will soon be the 3rd largest solar market in the world



SUBRAHMANYAM PULIPAKA | CEO, NSEFI

'Foreign investors set to make comeback'

Despite the geopolitical concerns under Trump, India is well poised and self-insulated by strong measures and timely rate cut measures taken by the RBI to boost domestic investments and consumption keeping the market buoyancy live

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 8: The foreign investors' fraternity is all set to take a plunge investing in the Indian stock market to get sound, effective net returns from a long-term perspective, according to experts Saturday.

With the sound and path-breaking reforms for making the financial services sector more robust, inclusive and enhance foreign participation, the government has clearly laid the roadmap for 'Viksit Bharat' vision on track.

"Though the foreign portfolio investment (FPI) inflows are still not turned fully green, the announcements made in the Budget last week followed by the Central Bank's policy release this week has made India back to forefront as the fastest emerging economies of the world," said Manoj Purohit, Partner and Leader, FS Tax, Tax and Regulatory Services, BDO India.

Despite the macro factors such as fear of potential tariff and trade curbs to be announced by the newly-elected US government under Donald Trump, rising inflation risk, currency depreciation, trade wars looming around, India is well poised and self-insulated by strong measures and timely rate cut measures taken by the RBI to boost domestic investments and consumption keeping the market buoyancy live.

"The government has echoed the sentiments by simplifying tax regime, clarifying anomalies on taxation, extending several tax holidays in IPSC Gift City by another 5 years to keep the door open for them," said



Though the foreign portfolio investment (FPI) inflows are still not turned fully green, the announcements made in the Budget last week followed by the Central Bank's policy release this week has made India back to forefront as the fastest emerging economies of the world

MANOJ PUROHIT | PARTNER AND LEADER, FS TAX, TAX AND REGULATORY SERVICES, BDO INDIA

ing an autonomous nation with long term growth trajectory. In January, FIIs offloaded ₹72,300 crore worth of stock, continuing their selling streak after a break in December (inflows of ₹11,000 crore). FIIs were sellers for 22 out of 23 trading days in January.

"FII shareholding in the Indian equities was 16.0 per cent as of January, which was similar to what was witnessed in October," according to a note by JM Financial Institutional Securities.

According to Purohit, given the volatile, subtle, and unpredictable market events, India still stands grounded well with the government taking all rightful measures to make it ready to face the global economic challenges that lies ahead.

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Purohit. Inviting 100 per cent FDI in insurance will deepen the budding insurance market with more penetration, competitive policy framework pushing to adopt the global best practices in the insurance sector with the entry of large offshore players. Keeping technology, youth's skill developments and infrastructure as primary areas to allot capex; the intention is very vivid to take India on be-

RBI hints further steps to ensure liquidity

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 8: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has always focused on ease of credit and will take further steps to ensure that enough liquidity remains in the banking system as there is "room for improvement", Governor Sanjay Malhotra said Saturday, adding that US-related tariff uncertainties will cool off in the coming months.

Addressing the media along with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the national capital, Malhotra also said the central bank is not targeting any price band for the rupee, while focusing more on curbing excess volatility.

"We have provided for liquidity and going forward too, we will be nimble, agile and watchful of the banking system's requirement on liquidity -- both transient and durable," said the Reserve Bank Governor.

Malhotra further stated that most of the rupee's depreciation is due to US tariff announcements and global uncertainties and hopefully, "that should settle down and help us with downward movement on rupee".

His comments came after the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on Friday re-

duced the policy rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent, while retaining the stance at neutral.

According to the RBI Governor, the central bank would continue to monitor the situation and take steps to ensure ease of credit as required. The growth-inflation dynamics open up policy space for the MPC to support growth, while remaining focussed on aligning inflation with the target.

The central bank has pegged the GDP growth at 6.7 per cent for next fiscal (FY26). The projection for retail inflation stood at 4.8 per cent for the current fiscal while it was cut to 4.2 per cent for FY26.

According to Malhotra, after the income tax cut, the repo rate cut should further help improve consumption. The RBI will also be watchful of any depreciation of the rupee that leads to inflation.

According to Morgan Stanley, it expects the RBI to take some additional liquidity measures before end-March and another cut of 25 basis points in the repo rate in April.

The RBI is supporting growth through easing rates, softer regulation (deferring new guidelines) and providing sufficient liquidity (expect additional steps).

Forex reserves rise to \$630.607 billion



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 8: India's forex reserves rose \$1.05 billion to \$630.607 billion for the week ended January 31, the RBI said Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had increased by \$5.574 billion to \$629.557 billion.

This is the second consecutive week of an increase in the reserves, which have otherwise been on a declining trend for the last few weeks due to revaluation along with forex market interventions by RBI to help reduce volatilities in the rupee.

The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of \$704.885 billion in end-September 2024.

For the week ended January 31, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$207 million to \$537.684 billion, the data released Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by \$1.242 billion to \$70.893 billion during the week, the Reserve Bank of India said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$29 million to \$17.889 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was down by \$14 million at \$4.141 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.



Q3 RESULTS

Godrej Properties net debt down 49%

New Delhi: Godrej Properties Ltd has reduced its net debt by 49 per cent to ₹3,848 crore during the latest quarter ended December on the back of strong internal cash flow and equity fund raising. Its net debt stood at ₹7,572 crore as on September 30, 2024, according to the company's latest investors presentation. Pirojsha Godrej, Executive Chairperson of Godrej Properties, said, "We raised ₹6,000 crore during the third quarter through Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) route for growth capital". The company's net debt-to-equity ratio has come down to 0.23, he added.

OIL profit drops 23%

New Delhi: State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) reported a 23 per cent drop in its third-quarter net profit as the price of crude oil produced and sold fell. Net profit was ₹1,221.80 crore in October-December 2024 - the third quarter of April 2024 to March 2025 fiscal (FY25) - compared with ₹1,584.28 crore earning a year back, according to a company statement. The nation's second-largest state-owned oil and gas producer got USD 73.82 for every barrel of oil produced and sold as against USD 84.14 per barrel realisation in October-December 2023. EBITDA came lower at ₹2,321.34 crore in Q3 when compared with ₹2,613.75 crore of the previous year. Lower oil prices led to turnover slipping to ₹5,239.66 crore from ₹5,815.02 crore in Q3 of FY24.

NHPC profit dips 47%

New Delhi: State-owned hydro power giant NHPC Friday reported a 47 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹330.13 crore in the December quarter primarily due to higher expenses. The company had posted a profit of ₹623.28 crore in the year-ago period, a BSE filing showed. Total expenses rose to ₹2,217.51 crore during the quarter from ₹1,733.01 a year earlier. Total income increased marginally to ₹2,616.89 crore in the quarter from ₹2,549.69 crore in the same period a year ago.

India on path to hit record \$800bn in exports in FY25

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 8: India is on the path to achieve \$800 billion in exports in the 2024-25 fiscal for the first time, according to the government, signalling a robust economy and continued growth across sectors.

According to the Union Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, exports have been growing and have risen significantly in the last four years.

"We will end the fiscal year with over \$800 billion exports for the first time," the minister said during the Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha.

However, certain imports



like petroleum products, coking coal, pulses and edibles oils are unavoidable owing to domestic shortages and high demand. The growth in imports is a good sign for the economy as domestic consumption rises.

According to the minister, it will take some years to establish and set up production units in those sectors.

Fresh dispute: About 500 Samsung workers hold protests

Chennai: About 500 workers at Samsung's in south India are holding a sit-in to protest against the suspension of three employees, and the company has deployed contract workers to fill the gap, two sources said. It was the second significant labour dispute in less than six months at the plant in Sriperumbudur near Chennai, which makes refrigerators, televisions and washing machines and accounted for a fifth of Samsung's \$12 billion India sales in 2022-23. The factory employs around 1,800 workers. In a statement, Samsung said that "most of our workers remain dedicated in ensuring that normal business operations continue". The two sources, who had direct knowledge, said there was no production impact for now as Samsung had brought in contract workers to manage the situation, while the workers boycotting work were sitting inside the facility and refusing to budge. The union disputed that account, saying there was some disruption, notably in the refrigerator-making unit. Last year, hundreds went on a five-week strike at the plant, seeking higher wages and union recognition. The strike ended in October after Samsung agreed to address workers' demands.



Infosys axes 300 freshers for not clearing internal assessment

New Delhi: IT services company Infosys has laid off over 300 freshers who underwent foundational training at its Mysuru campus but could not clear internal assessments after three attempts, according to sources. IT employee union NITES, however, said the number of freshers affected by the move was much higher, and threatened to lodge an official complaint with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, seeking urgent intervention and strict action against the company. In response to an email query, the Bengaluru-headquartered IT services company said, "At Infosys, we have a rigorous hiring process where all freshers, after undergoing extensive foundational training at our Mysuru campus, are expected to clear internal assessments." All freshers get three attempts to clear the assessment, failing which they will not be able to continue with the organisation, the company said, asserting that this clause "is also mentioned in their contract". "This process has been in existence for over two decades and ensures a high quality of talent availability for our clients," Infosys said.



ILLEGAL GAINS 'She Wolf of the stock market': Sebi bans fininfluencer Asmita

As per the complainants, Asmita has assets to the tune of ₹140cr using her proprietary system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: Markets regulator Sebi has banned six entities, including Asmita Patel Global School and fin-influencer Asmita Patel, from the capital markets for alleged unregistered investment advisory services and directed to disgorge over ₹53 crore collected as fees course participants for various courses.

Sebi through an interim order cum show cause notice passed Thursday prohibited six entities, including Asmita Patel Global School of Trading Pvt Ltd (APGSOT), Asmita Jitesh Patel, Jitesh Jethalal Patel, King Traders, Gemini Enter-

prise and United Enterprises, from the capital market.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has also asked the six entities to explain why another ₹104.63 crore should not be collected as fees for various programmes and should not be seized as well, according to a Sebi order.

The case pertains to individuals enrolling in trading courses provided by Asmita Patel Global School Of Trading. The Sebi order said that they were misled by exaggerated promises of profits and forced into paying high fees for minimal or ineffective trading education.

YouTuber and financial influencer Asmita Patel portrays herself as the 'She Wolf of the stock market' and the 'options queen' and claimed to have mentored over one lakh students/investors/participants worldwide. As per the complainants, she (Asmita) has assets to the tune of ₹140 crore using her proprietary system.



The regulator noted that each entity has played specific roles at various stages which have prima facie, been found to violate Sebi's rules.

Further, Sebi revealed that, prima facie APGSOT along with the Asmita and Jitesh devised a scheme wherein students/investors/participants were lured to trade in specific stocks and told to open a trading account with ABC Ltd. Recommendations of buy/sell of specific securities were

provided and uploaded on telegram channels owned by APGSOT. The acts of the entity make it evident that it was providing investment advice/research analyst services to students/investors/participants for consideration in the pretext of imparting education, the 129-page order said.

The regulator also pointed out that the APGSOT collected fees from course participants through King Traders, Gemini Enterprise and United Enter-

prises directing them to pay the course fees to the bank accounts of these entities.

According to Sebi, this was not a one-time arrangement but a regular practice followed by the Asmita Patel Global School of Trading to route funds through different entities.

Sebi noted that these six entities are jointly and severally liable for impounding ₹53.67 crore collected as fees from participants for courses such as, LMIT (Let's Make India Trade), MPAT (Master's in Price Action Trading) and Options Multiplier (OM) offered by the Asmita Patel Global School of Trading.

By indulging in these practices, APGSOT, its director Asmita, and Jitesh were directed by Sebi to cease and desist from offering unregistered investment advisory or holding themselves out to be as investment advisors/research analysts.

They have also been ordered to cease to solicit or undertake any other unregistered

or fraudulent activity in the securities market, directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever, Sebi said.

However, the markets watchdog clarified that findings in this order are prima facie findings and the entities have full opportunity to provide their defence and prove their innocence. This prima facie finding should also be viewed in that manner and should not be taken as a final verdict against anyone.

Sebi has examined APGSOT and its directors following a complaint from a group of 42 investors alleging unauthorised investment advisory activities.

The regulator conducted an examination covering the period from August 2019 to October 2023, focusing on APGSOT, its director Asmita -- who is also an authorised person of registered stockbroker ABC Ltd -- and Jitesh, along with proprietary firms King Traders, Gemini Enterprise, and United Enterprises.

BARABATI BATTLE TODAY

Rohit's lean run, fit-again Kohli in focus as India eye series win over England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Feb 8: The barren run of skipper Rohit Sharma and the selection conundrum that a fit-again Virat Kohli's return poses are the towering obstacles in India's quest for a series win against England in the second ODI at Barabati Stadium here Sunday.

India had taken a 1-0 lead after their four-wicket win at Nagpur and there was good news for the fans as batting coach Sitanshu Kotak confirmed that Virat Kohli is "completely fit and good to go" for Sunday's game.

India's batting megastar was in fact first to enter the nets during the optional session Saturday evening and batted close to an hour with no apparent signs of discomfort. Kohli was ruled out of the first game due to sore right knee.

The vice-captain Shubman Gill had indicated after the opening game that Kohli could be back for the second match, which will be played at a venue where the latter made a match-winning 85 against the West Indies in 2019.

The Indian team will certainly welcome that sign, but it also raises a challenge in terms of selection.

Who will Kohli replace?

Shreyas Iyer, who came in for Kohli at the last minute by his own admission, made a rollicking 36-ball 59 that has made dropping him an almost unthinkable act.

If the past norms are followed, then Kohli will walk in for Shreyas, but it is more likely that Yashasvi Jaiswal could be the one who will have to make for the batting icon.

"That's something for the head coach (Gautam Gambhir)



and captain (Rohit Sharma) to decide. Yes, the left-right combination is an important factor, but that's not a question for me to answer," Kotak said when asked about the possible rejigging of batting order.

It means that Gill might rejoin Rohit at the top, and Jaiswal did not have a blazing match either at Nagpur.

It remains to be seen how the team think tank led by Gautam Gambhir, which has shown a penchant for left-right combination, navigates this situation.

Combination questions apart, Kohli too is in need of runs, and he will need a good outing here if he indeed makes a return. Kohli's form has been under scrutiny in recent months, especially after his struggles in

Australia, where he repeatedly nicked deliveries to the slip cordon or wicketkeeper.

His last competitive outing — for Delhi in the Ranji Trophy — too was a low-yielding one, managing just six before getting bowled by Railways pacer Himanshu Sangwan.

But One-day cricket is Kohli's staple format, and the 36-year-old needs just 94 runs to become the third batter to reach 14,000 runs in the format after Sachin Tendulkar (18,426) and Kumar Sangakkara (14,234)

Having played 283 ODI innings, Kohli can also become the fastest to this milestone ahead of Tendulkar (350 innings) and Sangakkara (378).

Rohit's lean run

Rohit's struggles continued

as he perished for just two in the first ODI, failing to shake off the disastrous run in the Test series against Australia.

His dismissal — a mis-timed lofted shot off Liam Livingstone that ballooned to midwicket — reflected his desperation for runs.

The Mumbai man has not scored a fifty in any format since August last year when he made 64 against Sri Lanka in Colombo in the third match.

If Rohit fails to get going in these two ODIs against England, it could raise deeper concerns about his form and future.

Settled bowling attack

India's bowling attack looks settled with fit-again pacer Mohammed Shami gradually settling in following his inter-

SQUADS

INDIA: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill (v-c), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (WK), Rishabh Pant (WK), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohd. Shami, Arshdeep Singh and Varun Chakaravathy.

ENGLAND: Jos Buttler (c), Harry Brook, Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Philip Salt, Jamie Smith, Jacob Bethell, Brydon Carse, Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Saqib Mahmood, Adil Rashid and Mark Wood.

national comeback.

Having started off with a maiden, Shami slowly got into the scheme of things in Nagpur and dictated the terms in the middle overs, returning with a fine 1/38 from his eight overs.

Debutant Harshit Rana was taken apart by Phil Salt initially, and the young pacer ended up as the most expensive bowler at Nagpur, but he made crucial strikes, dismissing Ben Duckett and Harry Brook in the same over to turn the momentum in India's favour.

With fitness concerns lingering over lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah, Rana has an outside chance to push for his case with another fruitful outing.

For Jos Buttler's men this would be a make-or-break match as they might look to change their downright aggressive batting approach with a much more sensible one. England's success will depend on how their attacking template holds up against India's quality spinners, on a track here that could offer them appreciable help.

NATIONAL GAMES

Rising Odisha sprinter Animesh shines with gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Feb 8: Odisha's rising star Animesh Kujur clocked Games record-equalling time of 10.28 seconds to win the men's 100m gold medal in a top-class field on the opening day of athletics competitions at the National Games here Saturday.

Out of the 10 gold medals on offer on the day, Maharashtra and Services picked up two each, while Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Tamil Nadu claimed one each.

The 21-year-old Kujur, who has a personal best time of 10.27 seconds, equalled the Games record of 10.28 seconds set by Amlan Borgohain of Assam, while winning gold at the 2022 edition in Gujarat.

Kujur is the 100m silver medalist at both the Federation Cup and National Inter-State Championships in 2024.

Maharashtra's Pranav Gurav was the surprised silver winner with a time of 10.32 seconds, while Borgohain was third with 10.43 seconds.

National record holder Manikanta Hoblihdhar of Services finished fifth with a time of 10.46 seconds. His national record set in 2023 stands at 10.23 seconds.

One of the country's top 100m runners, Gurinderveer Singh, who won titles in the Federation Cup and National Inter-State Championships last year, failed to qualify for the final, finishing third in heat number 2 with a below-par time of 10.96 seconds. He has a personal best of 10.27 seconds.

Maharashtra's Sudeshna Shivankar ran away with the women's 100m gold, clocking 11.76 seconds, while Nithya Gandhe (11.79) of Telengana



and Giridharani Ravikumar (11.88) of Tamil Nadu were second and third respectively.

Sawan Barwal of Himachal Pradesh won gold in the men's 10,000m final with a Games record time of 28:49.93, bettering the earlier mark of 28:54.29 set by Gulveer Singh in the 2022 edition in Gujarat.

Kiran Matre (29:04.76) of Maharashtra and Vinod Singh (29:43.60) of Madhya Pradesh took the silver and bronze respectively.

Barwal was a bronze medal winner at the 2023 Asian Half Marathon race. He also won the 2024 Delhi Half Marathon title among the Indians.

SHORT TAKES

Man City sue Premier League

London: Manchester City has registered another legal challenge against the Premier League over rules about "associated party transactions." The British Press Association reported Friday that City is contesting amendments made to the APT rules voted by Premier League clubs last November. Those changes were forced on the league by an earlier legal challenge by the defending champion. APT rules are designed to ensure fair market value is applied to commercial deals with organizations closely aligned to club owners. The rules are intended to prevent deals such as sponsorships from being artificially inflated, which could undermine the league's financial rules. The league introduced the rules in December 2021 after Newcastle was bought by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. The new filing means there are now three legal cases between City and the league. City faces more than 100 charges of alleged financial breaches from the league.

Diksha tied-14th

Rabat: After an initial high, Diksha Dagar dropped two shots on the back nine and slipped to tied 14th after the second round of the Lalla Meryem Cup here. She has rounds of 71-73 and is 3-under after two rounds at the Par-73 course at Royal Golf Dar Es Salam. Also making the cut on her pro debut was the young Avani Prashanth, who added 74 to her first round 71 and is now 1-under 145. She is Tied-24th, while the third Indian in the field, Tvesa Malik missed the cut with cards of 79-76. With Top-60 and ties making the cut, 56 players made the cut which fell at 3-over.

Gukesh starts slow

Hamburg: World Champion D Gukesh began his campaign at the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam tour with three draws and a lone loss, signalling that he is gradually coming to terms with the new format. A brainchild of World's number one Magnus Carlsen and German entrepreneur Jan Henric Buettner, the freestyle chess event marks the beginning of what could be a permanent fixture for professional chess players despite a showdown with FIDE, the world's apex chess body.

Davis Cuppers get wild cards for Delhi Open



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: The organiser of the Delhi Open — an ATP Challenger event — Saturday announced wild card entries for three Davis Cuppers — Sasikumar Mukund, Ramkumar Ramanathan and young Karan Singh — in the men's singles main draw.

Youngster Chirag Duhan, Aryan Shah, who were part of the Davis Cup training camp have been given wild cards for the qualifying event, along with Aditya Govila, and Sidharth Rawat.

Former World No 31 Lloyd Harris and 2019 junior Wimbledon champion Shintaro Mochizuki will be among the top 8 seeds at the ATP Challenger

75 event, returning for its fifth edition at the DLTA Complex from February 10-16.

South African Harris, with his burgeoning trophy cabinet and list of notable scalps, including Rafael Nadal, will be the fourth seed in the singles main draw.

The 21-year-old Mochizuki, a rising sensation from Japan, has been seeded sixth.

Vit Kopriva from the Czech Republic will head the draw as the top seed, aiming to add to his five ATP Challenger titles.

The second and third seeds are the United Kingdom's Billy Harris and Australia's Tristan Schoolkate, who clinched his second Challenger title in Brisbane last week with the inaugural Queenstown International.

MGM T20 Championship kicks off



Cuttack: The inaugural MGM T20 Championship 2025 commenced from February 8 at MGM School of Sports—a high-performance cricket academy based in Kapursingh, Cuttack, Odisha—in collaboration with Coaching Beyond, a premier institute for cricket excellence founded by Ravi Shastri and his former team India coaching colleagues Bharat Arun and R Sridhar.

This premier cricket tournament, scheduled to run until February 11, aims to scout emerging cricket talent while fostering a stronger sporting

community in the region.

Shastri and Arun inaugurated the four-day T20 tournament, which features teams from the MGM School of Sports and the Coaching Beyond Cricket Excellence Centre from Chennai, Hyderabad, and Vadodara. These teams will showcase their cricketing prowess throughout the tournament.

The occasion was also graced by prominent cricketers, including former international bowler Venkatapathy Raju and Odisha's well-known international cricketer Debashish Mohanty.

Ramanathan-Myneni pair fails to defend title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 8: Defending champions Ramkumar Ramanathan and Saketh Myneni of India had to be content with runners-up finish at the Chennai Open ATP Challenger doubles event after going down to Japan's Shintaro Mochizuki and Kaito Uesugi in the title clash Saturday.

The unseeded Japanese duo of Mochizuki and Uesugi broke the serve of Ramanathan and Myneni once in each set to emerge 6-4 6-4 winners in an one hour and seven minutes contest. This was the second ATP Challenger doubles title for Uesugi and Mochizuki, who won the Wimbledon boys singles crown in 2019.

In the singles draw, unseeded Swede Elias Ymer stunned top seed Billy Harris of Great Britain in two hard-fought tie-breaks in their first clash on the pro circuit.

Sunday's final showdown will be the first clash between Ymer and Jacquet on the pro tour.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, Feb 8: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif says the real task for Pakistan is not just winning the ICC Champions Trophy but also defeat arch-rivals India in Dubai February 23. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the renovated and upgraded Gaddafi stadium Friday night, Sharif said the players must give their best against India.

"We have a very good side and they have done well in recent times but the real task now is to not only win the Champions Trophy but also defeat our arch-rival, India in the upcoming match in Dubai. The entire nation stands behind them," Sharif said.

Pakistan and India have a history of cricket rivalry and generally the Indian team has held the advantage in ICC events since the 90s.

Pakistan's last win in an ICC event against India came in 2021 when they won in Dubai in the T20 World Cup.

Revised Sports Ministry incentives: End of an era for junior athletes

E-SPORTS, BREAK-DANCING MADE ELIGIBLE BUT SPORTS MINISTRY ENDS CASH PRIZES FOR JUNIOR ATHLETES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: Medal winners from world and continental championships of malla-khamb, e-sports and even the much-criticised break-dancing have been made eligible for cash incentives by the sports ministry, which has decided to end such rewards for junior and sub-junior athletes in even Olympic disciplines.

The ministry has come out with a list of 51 sports that will be eligible for cash rewards, including all those which are a part of the Olympic Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and the World University Games roster.

Also included in this list are kho-kho, which had its maiden World Cup in Delhi last month, Kurash (a form of wrestling practised in central Asia), and Ju-Jitsu (a martial art discipline which has its origins in Japan).



The ministry continues to have cash rewards for para-athletes and has decided to hike prize money for medal winners of events featuring deaf, blind and intellectually-challenged athletes. From a maximum of Rs 10 lakh earlier, these athletes can now earn Rs 20 lakh for a gold at a world event.

However, no explanation has been offered by the ministry for doing away with the reward system for age group athletes,

Real task is to beat India: Pak PM



IT IS A BIG OCCASION FOR PAKISTAN THAT WE ARE HOSTING A BIG ICC EVENT AFTER NEARLY 29 YEARS SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

But with India refusing to send their team to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy and given the recent tense relations between the two cricket boards, the February 23-match has that extra edge to it.

Pakistan will enter the tournament as defending champions. It was last held in 2017 in England with Pakistan winning the final. Sharif expressed excitement about the opportunity to host the Champions Trophy

in Pakistan after 29 years. He was also thrilled with the new look stadium and the improved facilities and said the stadium now reflects the spirit of Pakistan's cricketing passion.

"I have full confidence that

CHAMPIONS TROPHY

our team will continue to make the nation proud in the upcoming Champions Trophy."

The inauguration ceremony was attended by several prominent figures, including politicians, government officials, PCB representatives, members of the national men's cricket team, PSL franchise owners, and former PCB chairmen Zaka Ashraf and Najam Sethi.

The ceremony celebrated the completion of Gaddafi Stadium's renovation in just 117 days. At the event, renowned singers Ali Zafar, Arif Lohar, and Aima Baig performed for the audience, followed by a stunning fireworks display, a vibrant drum show, and a unique light show.

In its circular, it said that the revision of the policy has been done "to simplify the disbursement of cash incentive to the medal winners in international sports events and their coaches". The new policy came into effect February 1.

Yogasana, malla-khamb (a combination of gymnastic and yoga poses on a pole or rope while using wrestling grips), and kho-kho are among the indigenous sports that the government is pushing for inclusion at international events.

Break-dancing made its Olympic debut at the Paris Olympics and was met with mixed response with some of the performances becoming a subject of international ridicule. The newly-designated sport will not be there in the 2028 Olympic roster.

E-sports, which is competitive video-gaming, made its debut as an exhibition sport in the Asian Games in 2023.