

Actress Shraddha Kapoor has once again caught fans' attention with her latest Instagram post

LEISURE | P2



#### **Forces withdraw**

Israeli military withdraws from an area of Gaza known as the Netzarim corridor that bisects the enclave, according to Hamas

INTERNATIONAL | P10



### **Incessant selling**

Exodus of FPIs from equity markets continues unabated, as they withdraw over ₹7,300cr in the first week of this month

BUSINESS | P11



#### Animesh on streak

Top sprinter Animesh Kujur picks up his 2nd gold in the 38th edition of National Games as he anchors Odisha to men's 4x100m relay gold

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**BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY | FEBRUARY 10, 2025** 

# India crush England

#### **Rohit's splendid** ton helps Men in Blue seal ODI series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Feb 9: Fuelled by a sparkling hundred by skipper Rohit Sharma, India defeated England by four wickets in the second ODI to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series here Sunday.

Rohit (119, 90b, 12x4, 7x6), who struck his 32nd hundred in ODIs, helped India mow down the target of 305. The hosts made 308 for six in 44.3 overs. This is India's seventh successive bilateral ODI series win against England.

During the knock, Rohit also reached 49 international centuries to move past Rahul Dravid's count of 48.

Rohit was also involved in a deflating 136-run stand with his opening partner Shubman Gill (60, 52, 9x4, 1x6), the sixth such occasion of them engaging a 100-plus alliance.

Earlier, veteran batter Joe Root (69, 72b, 6x4) and opener Ben Duckett (65, 56b, 10x4) scored fifties to lead England make 304 all out. For India, leftarm spinner Ravindra Jadeja (335) was the most successful





In a major embarrassment for the BCCI, a floodlight failure interrupted play in the second ODI between India and England for about 35 minutes at the Barabati Stadium, here Sunday.

India were cruising at 48 for no loss in 6.1 overs in a chase of 305 when one of the eight floodlights near the clock tower failed, forcing players out of field. The issue first surfaced

around 6:15pm when some floodlights briefly went off but the power supply was restored as England pacer Saqib Mahmood was about to bowl

However, moments later,

pletely, leaving the players frustrated. "The generator attached with the floodlight malfunctioned, so the lights were off on that particular stand behind the clock tower. We got the back-up generator on. It took time to change the connection from one generator to the other, which caused the delay," the official added.

But before that the players had to leave the field frustrated as the lights went out completely. Skipper Rohit Sharma, looking in sublime touch, was batting on 29 off 18 balls, having struck three sixes and a four, while Shubman Gill was on 17 off 19 balls with three boundaries.

Meanwhile, state Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj Sunday said the government will seek an explanation from Odisha Cricket Association (OCA). Suraj, who was present along with CM Mohan Charan Majhi and other senior ministers at the stadium, said, "An explanation will be sought from the OCA over the floodlight glitch. It happened despite taking all precautions and making elaborate prior arrangements by the OCA."

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL

India and England, at Barabati Stadium, in Cuttack, Sunday



No matter how they perform, they never cancel their orders... that's why I love the Congress

# 31 NAXALITES, 2 COPS KILLED

STAR CHASERS: India openers captain Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill during the second One Day International (ODI) cricket match of a series between

Uniform clad bodies of all neutralised Red rebels, including 11 women, recovered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bijapur (Chhattisgarh). Feb 9: In one of the deadliest blows to Naxalites in Chhattisgarh, security forces Sunday gunned down 31 rebels, including 11 women, in a fierce encounter in the state's Bijapur district, police said.

Two security personnel were also killed and as many injured in the face-off, they said.

More than 650 security personnel entered the Indravati National Park area from different sides and eliminated 31 Naxalites in their den. Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said.

With this success, 81 Naxalites have been neutralised by security forces in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh so far this year, compared to 219 in 2024

CM Vishnu Deo Sai said the end of Naxalism in Chhattisgarh and the country is certain. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra

Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the state will get rid of Naxalism by March 2026, he asserted.

The latest gunbattle took place on a forested hill along the border of Madded and Farsegarh police station areas when personnel from different security forces during an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj P said.

Acting on inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to their national park area committee, personnel from state police units District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF) and Bastar Fighters had launched the operation February 7, he said.

At around 8am Sunday, an intense exchange of fire broke out on the hill, a part of the Indravati National Park. The intermittent gunfight lasted till around 4pm, he said.

"So far, bodies of 31 Naxalites, including 11 women, clad in 'uniform' have been

#### **End of Naxalism by March 31: Shah**

**New Delhi:** Hours after the security forces killed 31 Naxals in Chhattisgarh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Sunday said that Naxals will be eradicated by March 31, 2026 and no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it. 'I also reiterate my resolve that before 31 March, 2026, we will completely eradicate Naxalism from the country so that no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it," he wrote on 'X' in Hindi. The Home Minister said in the direction of making India Naxal-free, the security forces have achieved a big success in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh. He said that 31 Naxalites were killed in this operation and a huge amount of arms and explosives were also recovered. Shah said the security forces have also lost two of its brave soldiers in the effort to end anti-human Naxalism and the country will always be indebted to these heroes. "I express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred soldiers," he said.

recovered from the encounter site. Besides, a huge cache of weapons, including AK-47, IN-SAS, SLR and .303 rifles and Barrel Grenade Launchers (BGL), and explosives have also been seized from the

scene," the official said. DRG Head Constable Naresh Dhruv and Constable Vasit Ravte from the STF were killed in the gunfight and their mortal remains have been brought to Bijapur district headquarters, he said. While Dhruv was a resident of Balodabazar-Bhatapara district, Rayte hailed

from the Baldo district in the

Constables Jaggu Kalmu (DRG) and Gulab Mandavi (STF) suffered injuries during the encounter. They were airlifted to Raipur and admitted at a hospital there, Sundarraj said, adding that their condition was stated to be out of danger.

Reinforcement of DRG, STF, Bastar Fighter and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been rushed to the spot and a search operation is underway in the area,

### Manipur CM steps down PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



The governor accepted Singh's resignation, along with that of his council of ministers and requested that he continue in office until alternative arrangements are made.

The development comes hours after he returned from Delhi.

Earlier this week, a new controversy erupted after the Supreme Court sought a sealed-cover forensic report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips alleging the role of Singh in the ethnic violence.

The tapes reportedly included conversations where Singh allegedly suggested that Meitei groups were allowed to loot arms and ammunition from the state government during the unrest, which has so far claimed 250 lives.

In his resignation letter, Singh said, "It has been an honour to serve the people of Manipur thus far. I am extremely grateful to the central government for time actions, interventions developmental work and imple mentation of various projects for safeguarding the interests of every single Manipuri."

On Saturday, Singh convened a meeting with BJP-led ruling alliance MLAs at the CM Sec retariat. The meeting was held in the wake of the opposition Congress seeking to move a no-confidence motion against the government led by Singh during the Assembly session starting February 10.

It was not immediately clear whether the BJP will appoint a new CM. Top BJP leader Sambit Patra is camping in Manipur.

The Congress was prompt to react that the resignation was "belated" and said people of the state were now awaiting a visit by "our frequent-flier Prime Minister" Narendra Modi.

## Police stop Ed Sheeran's street show over permit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Police Sunday morning halted British musician Ed Sheeran's live street performance in the city, citing lack of permission by the popular singer-songwriter.

The police stopped the gig, which was underway at Church Street, when the Grammy winner was midway into the performance of his chartbuster

Saturday night and was set to once again take the stage in the city Sunday evening -- can be seen arriving with his security personnel at the venue when he was greeted by cheering

asked to play one song," he said

Just before he could finish the refrain of the song, a policeman

Cubbon Park police station said Sheeran was performing without any permission so they had to stop. The police got there because someone had complained

Also known for tracks like 'Perfect Duet', 'Thinking Out Loud' and 'Shivers'. Sheeran is currently on the India leg of his Mathematics  $(+-=\div x)$  Tour.

#### Over the last few days, the controversy around Oscar-nominated films 'The Brutalist' and 'Emilia

Perez' has taken over with many questioning whether the usage of AI in films is fair

Los Angeles, Feb 9: The use of artificial intelligence, better known as AI, in films is increasing at a fast pace and the makers whose films make it to the Oscars will now reportedly have to disclose the details of the same.

Over the last few days, the controversy around Oscar-nominated films 'The Brutalist' and 'Emilia Perez' has taken over



with many questioning whether the usage of AI in films is fair.

According to a report by entertainment news outlet Variety, the makers will now have to mention all the changes that are made with the help of AI in their projects

The Academy currently

offers an optional disclosure form for AI use, but Governors and Branch Executive Committees are now investigating how AI is used in each branch with an eye toward making disclosure mandatory in the 2026 Oscars rules, which are expected to be published in April. The Academy's SciTech Council is working on recommended language, the report

'The Brutalist' faced massive backlash after it was identified that the makers used AI in post production. Soon, film's director Brady Corbet issued a statement saying the film had limited usage of AI and the actors had practised with the Hungarian dialect coach prior. He noted that the sketches of the buildings in the film were hand-drawn.

For Jacques Audiard's directorial 'Emilia Perez', AI was used to clone the voices of the actors, it read.

Other Oscar contenders, including 'A Complete Unknown' and 'Dune Part 2', have also relied on AI to an extent, the report added.

SHORT **TAKES** Last date to update ration card Feb 15 Bhubaneswar: Odisha Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra Sunday said there will be no further extension of the deadline for e-KYC update, and those who do not upgrade their data will be denied benefits under the Public Distribution System (PDS). Stating that the deadline for the e-KYC

(know your customer) verification

of ration cards ends February 15, the minister said. There will be

no further extension, and strict action will be taken against the fraudulent beneficiaries who hold

ration cards.

#### **Industrialist stabbed** 73 times by grandson Hyderabad: Andhra industrialist

Velamati Chandrasekhar Janardhan Rao's grandson Keerthi Teja has been arrested for his brutal murder over a property dispute, police said Sunday. Janardhan Rao, the head of the Veljan Group of Companies, was murdered at his residence in Hyderabad Thursday night. The incident came to light late Saturday after police arrested the accused kin. His US-returned grandson Keerthi Teja allegedly stabbed him with a knife 73 times after a heated argument over property, police said. Janardhan Rao, 86, who hailed from Eluru in Andhra Pradesh, had been living at his residence in Somajiguda here for the last few months.

Bangalore, Feb 9: Bangalore

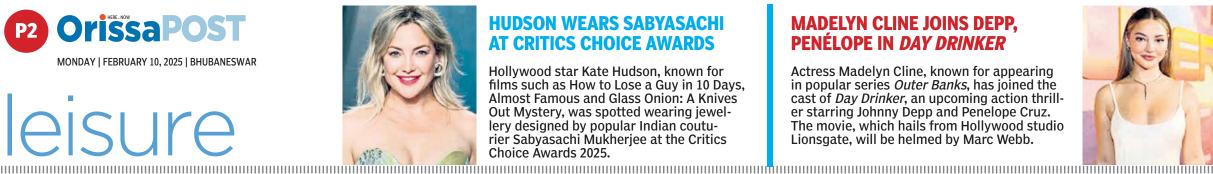
'Shape of You'. In one of the clips, Sheeran -- who performed in Bangalore

onlookers.

"We were going to play more than one song but we're being on the microphone, before he started strumming the interlude of 'Shape of You' on his guitar.

stepped in and pulled the cables attached to the microphone and musical instruments. A senior police official of the

of public nuisance, he told PTI.



#### **HUDSON WEARS SABYASACHI** AT CRITICS CHOICE AWARDS

Hollywood star Kate Hudson, known for films such as How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days, Almost Famous and Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery, was spotted wearing jewellery designed by popular Indian couturier Sabyasachi Mukherjee at the Critics Choice Awards 2025.

#### MADELYN CLINE JOINS DEPP, PENÉLOPE IN DAY DRINKER

Actress Madelyn Cline, known for appearing in popular series *Outer Banks*, has joined the cast of Day Drinker, an upcoming action thriller starring Johnny Depp and Penelope Cruz. The movie, which hails from Hollywood studio Lionsgate, will be helmed by Marc Webb.

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Instagram,



The artist in you seeks expression today. Thus, you could decide to paint your house in attractive colours, or repair a piece of old furniture in modern style. You may become sentimental about a forgotten matchbox collection, and decide to replen-ish it. Ganesha is in full agreement with all such activities that give you fulfilment.

A good day for money and love (you need more?). A quality, professional approach will help you shine out in business today. Be it launching a product or marketing it, you will win yourself hearts, smiles and a bundle of green. Let the leader in you take over during the day and the lover in you return by night, says Ganesha.

#### **GEMINI**

There are indications that your aggressive spirit and antagonistic trait will come to the fore today, says Ganesha. This may have a negative effect, but today you can even get away with murder! You will, in fact, get much-awaited good news at the workplace. At home, you will be at your playful and imaginative best.

#### **CANCER**

The health of a kin may cause anxiety, says Ganesha. Your lack of enthusiasm will influence you on family matters. So you will have to focus on family members. New ties and contacts are in the offing. Over-all, a hectic and profit-able day

#### **LEO**

You will be in the mood to express your thoughts and opinions unabashedly today. You will try your utmost to make gains in your proféssion. You will be able to clear off your debts. You should make the most of this beneficial time to end your financial troubles, says Ganesha

Perhaps, your artistic talents will shine out today, savs Ganesha. You will be very happy with your personal belongings, which you have preserved for years. Later in the day, you may beautify your house by adding furniture and artefacts at appropriate places.

Ganesha says today you will like to do something special in a subject that interests you. Past incidents or memories will flash in your mind today. Today you will be able to tell what is in your heart and mind to a special person. Ganesha wishes you a happy and joyous day.

#### SCORPIO

It's time for soiree and merry making with family, predicts Ganesha. You never know, you may even bump into some one special today, who may become an integral part of your life in future. Your friends are your extended family, call them over for the celebrations.

#### **SAGITTARIUS**

Ganesha foresees a gradual weakening in your position. You are most likely to bring troubles upon yourself as the day progresses. Good economic gains are expected if you change the hub of your activities.

#### **CAPRICORN**

Nothing in the world can be as comforting as the suppor of your family members, and you will have that in plenty today, especially if you're setting out to refur bish your house, says Ganesha. With their support, you can win the world and achieve the impossible, but since everything comes with a price tag even happiness- get ready to pay for a fat bill; the support of your loved

#### AQUARIUS

ones won't come cheap.

Fame and fortune woo you today! And along with recognitions and rewards, you eceive encouragement to do even better. Your bosses are pleased, but feel that you haven't really given your 100%. Head on your shoulders and feet on the ground, says Ganesha, is the best policy.

PISCES For professionals as well as businessmen, today promises to be a progressive day. For those looking for new opportunities, interesting positions may be offered. You will have harmonious relations with your family, friends and co-workers. A progressive period for you begins from today, says Ganesha.



MUMBAI: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently met TV personality Uorfi Javed at a restaurant in Mumbai, marking a special in-person meeting after an online friendship. Both took to their Instagram stories to share the delightful moment. Uorfi posted a picture of them together on her Instagram stories, writing, "Blurry

but (rose emoji). Fav girls @samantharuthprabhuoffl @kreshabajaj." Samantha reshared the post and wrote, "@urf7i Finally I meet you (heart emoji)." For the unversed, the two have always supported each other online, with Samantha frequently sharing Uorfi's unique outfits on her Instagram stories.

In a heartwarming video message earlier this year, Uorfi spoke about their friendship, saying, "Hi Samantha, I am your biggest fan. You are such a girl's girl, and even though we've never met. I know

> how supportive you are. You're one of the nicest people I've never met." Samantha's close friend. designer Kresha Bajaj, was also present during their meeting.

On the professional front, Samantha was last seen in the Prime Video series Citadel: Honey Bunny with Varun Dha wan. She is currently working on Rakt Brahmand: The Bloody Kingdom with Raj & DK. Meanwhile, Uorfi's recent appearance was on the Prime Video reality show Follow Kar



MUMBAI: Superstar Salman Khan has shared his advice on how to move on from a breakup and said that "Go to the room, cry, then forget about it and come out and say 'what's up, how's it going'.'

haan Khan on his podcast Dumb Biryani, Salman shared his pearls of wisdom to the Gen-Zs on love, career and family.

vice. So I guess that if it's for you then it is for the younger generation. I think you should just go after something. If you want to do something, don't look here and there and just go for it.

ing, head is hurting, haven't slept .. just go for it man."

up, how's it going'," he shared.



# **SALMAN SHARES**

Then came the advice on breakups.

During a chat with his nephew Ar-

"Me as an uncle giving my nephew ad-

He went on to say: "If your leg is hurt-

"Girlfriend broke up and went away, it's okay, go. Bye bye. When you have to take out a bandaid how do you do it, you pull it out. Go to the room, cry, then forget about it and come out and say 'what's

#### **SHRADDHA'S** post triggers buzz rang nahi" (Change the angle, MUMBAI: Shraddha Kapoor not the color). While some saw has once again caught fans' attention with her latest Instait as just playful wordplay, othgram post. While it may seem ers speculated that she might

like a casual selfie moment, be throwing shade at someone her caption has sparked curiosity, leaving many wondering if there's a deeper meaning behind her words.

who frequently changes their stance but not their true na-Last month, Shraddha gave a great idea for a Valentine's gift. She took to her Instagram handle, and posted a video, suggesting a Valentine's Day gift idea. Basking in the success

contrasting of Stree 2, Shraddha will reportedly star in the uppictures of coming installment of the popular Dhoom franchise. She is likely to share the screen with her Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar co-star Ranbir Kapoor in her next. However, an official announcement is still awaited.

differently while spending friends. the cap-

time with her furtion, she wrote, "Angle badlo,



#### Special screening of *Naali Cha: The Taste of Life held* POST NEWS NETWORK intersection of their day to day life in

**PEANUTS** 

WELL, ANOTHER

AND GONE

HALLOWEEN HAS COME

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: A special screening of Naali Cha: The Taste of Life, a new web series directed by Snehasis Das was held at Odissi Research Centre here Sunday. The six episodes web series will be available at *The Naked Eye* YouTube channel Sunday onwards for public.

The web series, set in rural Odisha where tradition and simplicity have long defined everyday life, a quiet revolution is unfolding. The arrival of smart phones and widespread access to social media has brought changes into the fabric of village life, both visible and subtle. The story follows the lives of several villagers as they navigate the

DID YOU

EVER SEE

PUMPKIN"

THE GREAT

NO, AND

JUST DON'

UNDERSTANI

IT...



HER PARENTS

CAME AND GOT

HER .. SHE'S BEING

DEPROGRAMMED!

this digital age.

The web series stars Abhisek Giri, Anubha Sourya Gargi Mohanty, Somesh Mohanty, Himanshu, Shruti Subhashree, Dharitri Khandual, Prasanna Manjari Das, Pranah Prasanna Rath, Bhokrai Nayak and others in key roles.

Talking with Orissa POST, Das said that the core of the story is set in rural area, where life goes for a toss when changes start to occur and how it affects the environment of the village.

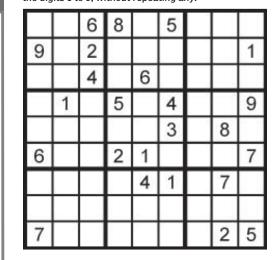
Das, whose work often focuses on important social and environmental issues, said that he wanted to make something similar to Malgudi Days and decided to make a web series

POST

#### SUDOKU

**SOLUTIONS** 

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.



#### CALVIN AND HOBBES



I THOUGHT MARCIE WAS WITH YOU ...

WHAT HAPPENED TO

MARCIE?

#### **BREVITY**



19 Yarn spinner

order

22 Assistance

(7,4)

20 Creamy coffee

Across 7 Absolute zero.

e.g **8** Road test (5,3)

9 Eyebrow shape

10 Give to in marriage

12 Road construction

14 Logic 16 Birthmark,

maybe?

Down

one 2 Damage

4 Spa feature

1 Antares, for

3 Author's chore,

at times

18 Bypass 21 Scotch's partner

5 Anxious or

(3,5)

11 Vision

13 Cause of

sneezing

possibly

17 How-to book

15 Saunter

nauseated

6 Relief provider

**CROSSWORD** 

SUDOKU

# ORKVEXATION INSOLENT PONY

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

#### **FINE ACT**

Artistes from Ame Natua, Rourkela perform 'Simarekha' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



# wntown

## CRICKET FEVER GRIPS FANS

Cuttack, Feb 9: Thousands of fans who stood in queues for long hours to get a ticket for the One Day International (ODI) cricket match be tween India and England a couple of days ago, started flocking to the venue, Barabati Stadium, here early Sunday morning to witness the much awaited tie.

Before entering into the stadium, many of the cricket enthusiasts gathered outside well before the designated time. As the day progressed, jersey vendors and merchandise sellers filled the area, offering cricket gears and team-related items.

Fans were also seen waving Indian flags and displaying posters supporting Team India. The excitement was palpable as the crowd rallied behind their team, preparing for an intense day



Brahmanan-Acharya from Kabisurjyanagar Ganjam district was seen spread ing message of peace and compassion outside stadium. Wearing a yellow T-shirt, cap draped and in vines and flowers, Achaencouraged fans to embrace peace

and love. His efforts to raise awareness evoked enthusiasm as fans eagerly joined in, thanks to



Many fans showcased patriotism by painting the national flag on their faces. Ranjan Choudhury, a local artist was busy painting faces, encouraging fans to support India. He charged ₹20 for the artwork

Among the crowd was cricket enthusiast Orchid from London who had painted the Indian flag on his face to cheer for Team India during the match. Orchid, who came to watch his first cricket match in a stadium, was all excited and extended best wishes to the Indian team, hopeful for a strong performance.



Samaranjan Mohanty, a cricket merchandise collector from VSS Nagar in Bhubaneswar, displayed his collection outside the stadium. He showcased over 1,000 tickets from various stadi-

ums where

Team India

had played, along with

currencies

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amined the items and remembered the past matches

Groups of fans were seen frantically buying posters featuring Team India players and their favourite cricketers. They cheered for the team by displaying posters with images of stars like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and other popular players.



Abinash Sahu and Rajkishore Maharana from Dhenkanal sold posters with personalised designs, featuring player images, inspirational slogans, and well-wishes. The posters were priced between ₹100-300. Through these posters, fans continued to show their support and excitement for the Indian team and their favorite players





Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi greets Kosali poet Haldhar Nag and Sambalpuri singer Jitendra









# Rising crimes in Chauli Kalinga Mahotsav concludes Khurda: Residents Dhauli Kalinga Mahotsav concludes performances by eminent artistes from across the country. The event was organised by the Department of Odia Language, Literature & Culture, government of Odisha and to approach CM



PRABHATA PANIGRAHI, OF

Khurda, Feb 9: With law and order situation in and around the district headquarters town here fast deteriorating, local residents are now planning to approach Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and higher authorities for redressal on account of the alleged failure of the police to contain the rising crime graph

Sources said there has been a surge in robberies across police station areas including Sadar, Baghamari, and Begunia. Several incidents of armed robberies have occurred during daytime, with criminals also targeting homes at night.

Over the past eight months, six families in these areas have lost jewellery, cash, and other valuables worth over ₹60 lakh to robberies and burglaries. The miscreants have managed to evade police surveillance as no arrests have been made in connection with these cases.

In one such incident, Rina Behera, a bank employee, was robbed at gunpoint by two men while she was returning home with a substantial sum of money collected from customers. The incident occurred June 6, 2024 near Gudum road. The robbers made off with ₹1.7 lakh cash, a laptop, and a biometric machine from Behera. A case (No. 140/24) was filed with Sadar Police Station. However, no arrests have been made so far in connection with the case.

Other cases of robberies in the area were reported from Barapada and Panasbas villages where valuables worth lakhs of rupees had been burgled from the houses of the residents. Despite several complaints, police action has been sluggish, the alleged.

The police inaction has led to resentment and frustration among residents. Technical issues have allegedly been cited by police officials as the reason for their inability to catch the suspects. Several victims of these robberies have expressed concerns in public, demanding

Expressing his frustration, Pradeep Sahu, one of the victims, said despite repeated complaints, the police have not taken effective steps to nab the criminals.

Though the sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) has assured of taking steps to bring the culprits to justice, the victims are not satisfied with the progress of the cases so far.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: The three-day 21st Dhauli Kalinga Mahotsav concluded Sunday with brilliant classical dance

Orissa Dance Academy, in association with Art Vision.

The first programme on the concluding evening was a fusion of Odissi, Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Mohiniyattam presented jointly by Orissa Dance Academy, Khanak Institute of Performing Arts, Pavitra Art Visual Institute and International Academy of Mohiniyattam. The presentation began with Ganesh Vandana followed by Sri Krishna Sharanam Namah - the journev of Krishna's life.

The last programme in the evening was Mayurbhanj Chhau by Mayur Art Centre, Bhubaneswar. The dancers presented Sumbha - Nisumbha Badha. The dance was choreographed by Guru Achintva Kumar Behera.



#### Jena urges PM for new railway division

**BHUBANESWAR:** Strongly opposing the recent Union Cabinet decision to operationalise the South Coast Railway (SCoR) zone by bifurcating the Waltair Division, senior Congress leader and former Union minister Srikant Jena Sunday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to create a railway division in Odisha and inte-grate four districts presently under the South Eastern Railway (SER). In a letter to the Prime Minister, the Congress leader expressed concern over Waltair division merging its core area with SCoR. "This decision reflects a state-centric approach to railway restructuring, prioritising the interests of Andhra Pradesh at the cost of Odisha," Jena, also a member of the steering committee of Odisha Congress said in the letter

# DeepSeek gives different answers about kimchi's origin

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, Feb 9: The Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) model DeepSeek provided different answers to sensitive questions depending on the language -- for example, defining kimchi's origin as Korea when asked in Korean, but claiming it is Chinese when asked in Chinese, Seoul's spy agency said Sunday.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) said it has also found the AI service provides its advertisers with unlimited access to users' personal data and such information is subject to submission to the Chinese government upon its request under Chinese law, reports Yonhap news agency

The NIS released its assessment of the technological verification of DeepSeek amid growing controversy over secu-

rity concerns surrounding the service, which has prompted South Korean authorities to block access to the site.

When the NIS asked where kimchi originates, DeepSeek responded, "It is a signature Korean food imbued with its culture and history," according

But when asked the same question in Chinese, it said, "The origin is not Korea, but China," and "It is related to Korea," when asked in English, the NIS said.

On a question in Korean about China's Northeast Project, a history initiative criticised by South Korea as distorting regional history, DeepSeek pointed to "various perspectives" among neighbouring countries due to historical differences.

However, in English or Chinese, it said the project is a "legitimate initiative for revitalising China's northeastern region in line with its national interests.' Asked in Korean about South Korea's Dano festival, DeepSeek answers that it is a Korean tradition, while it responds in Chinese and English that it is a Chinese

**Seoul's spy agency found that** 

DeepSeek collects users' keyboard

input patterns, which could

potentially be used to identify

individuals and user data it collects,

like chat records, could be sent to

certain servers in China

traditional holiday. Other commonly used AI services, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and CloverX, developed by South Korea's Naver, all provided the same answers regardless of the language, the agency said.

DeepSeek also collects users keyboard input patterns, which could potentially be used to identify individuals and user data it collects, like chat records, could be sent to certain servers in China.

It is designed to store all user inputs, share user data with advertisers without restrictions and there is no clear limit on how long the data can be stored. raising concerns about user

privacy, the NIS said. The agency also pointed out that DeepSeek's terms of service indicate that users' personal information and input data can potentially be accessed by

the Chinese government. The NIS has sent notices to all government agencies in South Korea calling for caution regarding security when

using generative AI tools, such as DeepSeek.

# downtown



### Middlemen control **GK Bhattar Hospital**

Jaleswar: Despite the government's efforts to provide free healthcare services, a troubling issue has emerged at GK Bhattar Hospital. The hospital, which offers essential services like X-rays, ECGs, and ultrasounds, is allegedly being manipulated by middlemen. Doctors are reportedly directing patients to private medical stores and nursing homes for additional tests. where they incur high charges for services that should be covered by government schemes, Middlemen are believed to be profiting from commissions received from both patients and private facilities. Critical patients are often referred to private nursing homes instead of government hospitals, worsening the financial strain on families. This exploitation undermines the government's efforts to provide affordable healthcare to the underserved.

#### WEATHER

CTC Max Temp 32.5° 29.8° Min Temp Humidity 78% 75%

Rainfall **FORECAST** 



#### **CLASSIFIED**

#### ACCOMMODATION

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

#### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an Affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Sadar, Cuttack that I, Ansh Agarwal, (20 yrs), S/o Ramdev Agarwal, Resident of Manisahu Chhak, P.O. - Buxi Bazar, Dist. - Cuttack, Odisha and Aadhaar No. XXXX XXXX 4524. My name wrongly mentioned as Ansha Agrawalla in my Passport. I declare that Ansh Agarwal and Ansha Agrawalla is one and same person.

# 'No e-KYC, no ration cards after Feb 15'



**Benefits under the** ther extension, and strict action will be PDS will be revoked taken against the fraudulent benefifor those who fail to ciaries who hold update their details, ration cards.' minis-The

ter said so far, 37,85,496 people have not updated their e-KYC. "Failing to update the e-KYC by

February 15 will be considered as surrendering the ration cards," Patra said, expressing wonder and mentioning that around 8 lakh income tax payers had obtained ration cards in their names

He also said some people had obtained the ration cards to be eligible for the free health service being provided by the state government. "After the cancellation of the ration cards, their health cards will also be rejected." the minister said.

around 8 lakh people had obtained ration cards fraudulently, including government employees and influential people. "Around 20,000 such people have so far surrendered their ration cards," he said.

While urging the ineligible beneficiaries to surrender their ration cards and others to update and verify their e-KYC by February 15, the minister said around 6 lakh people

far, 37,85,496

people have not

obtained ration

meanwhile, have, applied for fresh ration cards. He said the updated their e-KYC

beneficiaries have been urged Around 8 lakh people to complete their e-KYC at local cards fraudulently Electronic Public Service (EPS) outlets or ration distribution centres. The new ra-

tion cards will be issued after all eligible beneficiaries under the PDS complete the e-KYC process. Earlier, the government had extended the deadline for e-KYC update from December 31 to January 31 and later till February 15.

A total of 3.26 crore people are beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and 10.03 lakh people have been covered under the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS), officials said.

### Min reviews Bhagabati **Temple devpt work**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: A review meeting was held here Sunday, chaired by Law, Works and Excise Minister Prithivira Harichandan towards developing Maa Bhagabati Temple in Banapur to an attractive religious tourism site.

"State government is committed to develop Maa Bhagabati Temple in Banapur, a shrine built in the ninth century, and establish it as an attractive religious tourism area. Special attention will be paid for development of facilities for the devotees, like 'parikrama' of the temple and multipurpose hall. Development of roads and river banks will be the main focus of the master plan," the minister said. He also said that the state government aims to preserve the long-standing heritage of the temple and make it a vibrant, spiritual and cultural centre.



Ongoing development works at the temple premises and surrounding area were discussed at the meeting. The minister has directed the officials concerned to take necessary steps to coordinate the safety, security and drainage system.

# Therubali-Gunupur rly line set to transform Rayagada



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Feb 9: Rayagada district will turn into a business hub following the establishment of Rayagada Railway Division and construction of new rail routes.

Therubali-Gunupur railway line is poised to become a key transportation lifeline in Rayagada district, promising significant business growth and regional development. Under the supervision of Rayagada Railway Division, construction of the much-awaited railway line has officially commenced.

The matter came to the fore at a district-level meeting chaired by Koraput MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka Tuesday. Officials disclosed that this 73.62-km railway line will require an investment of more than ₹1,165 crore. The project, funds for which were sanctioned August 19, will include the construction of 121 bridges including eight major and 113 minor ones, along with eight overbridges and three underbridges

The railway line will have nine stations, enhancing connectivity across the district. The state government has take en steps to expedite land acqui sition, appointing a dedicated officer to facilitate the process A total of 269.52 hectare private land in 60 villages, 133.43 hectare government land, and 70.82 hectare forest land will be ac quired for the project and will be handed over to the railway

authorities after conversion. For years, residents and loca stakeholders have demanded the construction of this rail way line, even by organising protests to push the agenda The East Coast Railway Zone will oversee the implementa tion, with the state government ensuring the availability of all required land.

The Therubali-Gunupur railway line is expected to serve as a critical infrastructure project, positioning Rayagada as a major business hub in the coming years.

### BCAC hosts cycling championship



with strict action

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

against fraudsters

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: Food

Supplies and Consumer Wel-

fare Minister Krushna Chandra

Patra Sunday said there will be

no further extension of the dead-

line for e-KYC update, and those

who do not upgrade their data

will be denied benefits under

the Public Distribution System

the e-KYC (know your custom-

er) verification of ration cards

ends on February 15, the minis-

ter said, "There will be no fur-

Stating that the deadline for

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: The Bhubaneswar Cycling and Adventure Club (BCAC) hosted the 7th edition of the golden triangle cycling championship (GTCC) here Sunday, attracting a record number of over 100 professional cyclists from 11

The race kicked off from the Ashoka Pillar at the foothills of Dhauli Peace Pagoda, with BCAC president Sanjeeb Panda, Odisha Cycling Association

president Minati Mohapatra, and HDFC Bank vice president

cyclists from diverse states, including West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand, along with international participation from Austria. Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja graced the prize distribution ceremony as the chief guest, where he commended BCAC's efforts in organising this prestigious event and assured government suptition to an international level

The winners were awarded significant cash prizes, with Siddhesh Ajit Patil from Maharashtra clinching the first prize of ₹1,00,000, completing the race in 2 hours, 51 minutes, and 37 seconds. Mandeep Singh from Puniab secured second place with a time of 2:51:37, winning ₹50,000, while Sumit Kumar from Haryana took third place with a time of 2 hours, 52 minutes, and 13 seconds, earning



NOBLE CAUSE: Social organisation Prayas organised the 11th Samuhika Bibaha Mahotsav at Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar, Sunday, where around 25 couples exchanged vows

#### LEGAL NOTICE

C.C EXECUTION CASE NO. 47 OF 2024

Smt.Sanjukta Sahoo, aged about 64 years W/o - Late Arakhita Sahoo

P.O. & P.S. - Brahmagiri, Dist. - Puri

1. The Manager

Reliance Commercial Finance Limited,

At - Plot No.9-B, Wood Street, Floor, Kolkata-700016 (West Bengal)

Compound, S.B Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013 ----- Judgement Debtors

issued could not be served on the Judgement

Therefore the JDRs are directed to appear before this Commission in person or through Advocate on 25.02.2025 at 11.30 A.M. failing which the case will

Sd./- President District C.D.R Commission,

BEFORE THE DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL COMMISSION, PURI (ODISHA)

(Arising out of C.C Case No. 85 of 2021)

At - Baisibati, Near Government Hospital, Brahmagiri,

---- Decree Holder

- Versus -

Reliance Commercial Finance Limited,

At - Commercial Finance Division-5, Janpath, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurdha - 751003 2. The Regional Manager,

3. The Chief Manager, Reliance Commercial Finance Limited,

At - 7th Floor, B-Wing, Trade World, Kamala Mills

Notice

Where as in the aforementioned Case, the notices Debtors in the ordinary process.

be decided in your absence in merit.

Puri

#### Anant Pattnaik flagging off the participants. This year's edition saw

port for expanding the compe-

# Workshop explores global impact of Lord Jagannath

*Scholars* and experts examine the historical. cultural, and global impact of Lord Jagannath at a three-day workshop in Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: The Odisha Research Centre, Bhubaneswar, hosted a three-day international workshop titled Timeless Threads: Jagannath at Home and The World at the CSIR-IMMT, beginning Sunday.

The workshop was designed to delve into the rich, multifaceted heritage of Lord Jagannath, shedding light on His profound historical, cultural, and global impact, and offering fresh insights into His enduring legacies.

A diverse gathering of eminent scholars, experts, and academics participated in the event, all focused on exploring



Lord Jagannath from critical, interventionist perspectives. The aim was to highlight the deity's far-reaching influence across different time periods and cultures. Odisha Research Centre director Chandi Prasad Nanda, emphasised the need for a deeper understanding of the ever-evolving cultural significance of Jagannath, recognising Him not just as a religious figure, but as an enduring symbol of Odisha's rich heritage and global influence.

The workshop was not only a scholarly pursuit but a broader exploration of Jagannath's role in the development of cultural identities, faith, and societal survival. National Monuments Authority chairman Kishor Basa spoke passionately about Lord Jagannath, describing Him as more than a symbol or cultural marker. He portrayed Jagannath as a "beacon of faith, development, and survival,' stressing the importance of experiencing His significance at a societal level. Basa urged that research on Lord Jagannath should be accompanied by efforts to make this knowledge accessible to the wider public, ensuring that His cultural legacy reaches all corners of

One of the central themes of the workshop was to examine the relationship between tradition and change in Jagannath culture. This unique culture, rooted in the fusion of tribal customs, classical Hindu practices, and the regional traditions of Odisha, forms the very essence of the state's socio-cultural identity. Jagannath's heritage, marked by its diversity and adaptability, continues to be a living testament to Odisha's cultural resilience.

The first day of the workshop kicked off with a thought-provoking session on the Historical Evolution of Jagannath Culture: Sources and Interpretations. This session explored various historical sources-epigraphs, puranas, and legendsthat have contributed to shap ing the narrative around Lord Jagannath. Scholars critically analyzed the way these sources have influenced political and historical perceptions of the deity, as well as their impact on public engagement with Jagannath culture. The discussion provided new perspectives on how these ancient texts continue to shape and inform modern

understanding. The second session, titled Diaspora and Global Influence: Jagannath Beyond the Borders, shifted the focus to Jagannath's far-reaching influence beyond Odisha and India. Over the years the deity's impact has spread to different parts of the world, with numerous temples and car festivals dedicated to Him established across the globe.

The global expansion of Jagannath culture serves not only to strengthen the cultural identity of the Odia diaspora but also to introduce key aspects of Odisha's traditions to an international audience.

#### **ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT BOOKING STATIONS** OUR

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

# CM: DD Med College to be No 1 in state Rice mills violating pollution norms

People of Keonjhar district will get world-class healthcare, says Majhi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 9: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday said Dharanidhar Medical College will soon become fully functional and become the No. 1 medical college in the state. The CM said this while addressing the closing ceremony of the two-day 74th State Annual Conference of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) at the college auditorium here.

The CM reached the DD Medical College auditorium at 11am where he first garlanded the statue of freedom fighter Dharanidhar before joining the conference.

During the event, the IMA members stood up to take an oath of providing quality healthcare to the people. A two-minute silence was observed for the departed IMA

In his address, Majhi said doctors are the protectors of life and are regarded as "second to



God". Majhi noted that while Keonjhar is rich in minerals and natural resources, it lags in healthcare. He expressed concern over the high number of mining-related accidents and pollution-induced illnesses in the district. Despite having a medical college, he said it is not fully functional.

According to sources, four OPDs have so far been made functional at the DD Medical

The CM called for collective efforts to make it the state's Number 1 institution. He said all efforts will be made to open a trauma care centre and referring of patients to Cuttack will be stopped. He also expressed disappointment non-execution of his direction to this effect.

Majhi pointed out that the medical college was built using the district's own mineral fund and had not received any government funds. However, he assured that future improvements would be made through government grants. He vowed that Dharanidhar Medical College would soon become fully functional.

Exuding confidence that Odi-

#### **₹50K-cr investment** in healthcare sector

CM Mohan Charan Majhi announced that the state has proposed an investment of ₹50,000 crore in the healthcare sector as part of the Ut karsh Odisha initiative. This is part of a broader ₹13-lakh crore investment plan. The investment is expected to generate 25,000 new jobs. The CM emphasised that while a significant portion of the state Budget is allocat ed to healthcare, lack of awareness continues to make people vulnerable to various diseases. He stressed that Odisha's vision for development cannot be achieved without improving healthcare infrastructure. Highlighting Ayushman Bharat scheme which covers 60 crore people across India, Majhi said the programme will enhance healthcare services for the people of Odisha. The government has allocated ₹21,000 crore for health sector in 2024-25 fiscal.

sha will become the Number 1 state in the country, Majhi urged IMA to strengthen hospitals and serve those in need. He departed for Cuttack's Barabati Stadium at 12:30pm to watch the India-England ODI.

Bargarh, Feb 9: Bargarh district, known as the rice bowl of Odisha, has seen a surge in number of operational rice mills. However, some mills continue to violate the pollution control regulations as mandated by the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB). Several mills have reportedly failed to implement proper smoke exhaust systems and waste management remains inadequate.

In response, the SPCB's Sambalpur regional office issued show-cause notices last month to five rice mill owners of the district. The notices warned of legal action against the mills in case they fail to provide satisfactory explanation within the stipulated time.

One such notice (Letter No. 336), dated January 31, 2025, was issued to Lath Industries in Jhankarpali, Bargarh, The notice states that the mill's pollution control permit is valid until March 31, but certain conditions set at the time of approval have been violated. An SPCB inspection team vis-



ited the mill December 11 last year and found that both smoke emission and waste disposal practices were non-compliant.

Additionally, rice husk waste was being dumped on open fields without proper containment measures, the notice mentioned. The notice also observed that no water was being sprayed to prevent the ash emanating from the mill from spreading. These findings have sparked concerns regarding the enforcement of norms by the

The notice states that waste was being discharged from the mill without proper treatment. A directive has been issued requiring a clarification within 15 days of the notice. If no clarification is received within 21

days, legal action will be taken the notice warned.

Similarly, the SPCB regional office, Sambalpur issued a notice (Letter No. 41), January 2 to Ghanteshwari Rice Mill at Bhurshipali under Attabira block. Additionally show-cause notices were also issued to Shrikrishna Foods at Dhanger under Bargarh block (Letter No. 280, dated January 27); Shri Mahalaxmi Rice In dustries at Barpali (Letter No 38, dated January 20); and Shy amji Foods at Dhanger under Bargarh block (Letter No. 277, dated January 27).

Issuing such notices to rice mills and other industrial es tablishments is not new for the SPCB. Every year such notices are issued by the pollution regulator on discovery of norm violation.

However, despite repeated notices, the pollution board has not been taking further ac tion against the rule violators Since action remains limited to issuing notices, questions have been raised about the effective ness of the pollution board's role in enforcing regulations.

## Studio owner killed over past enmity



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur Road, Feb. 9: A 30-year-old man was brutally murdered over suspected past enmity inside his studio at Sobar area under Jajpur Road police limits in Jajpur district late Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Deepak Kumar Sahu, son of Dharanidhar Sahu, under ward no-7 of Vyasanagar Municipality.

Police recovered his body from a pool of blood inside his studio and sent it for post-mortem. A forensic team and sniffer

into service for investigation after Deepak's elder brother Pradeep lodged a complaint at Jajpur Road police station alleging murder. Prima facie, it appears to be a murder over long-standing enmity, police said.

The victim had deep wounds on his head and body. The exact motive behind the killing remains unclear, sparking widespread speculation among locals.

According to the victim's family, Deepak had an ongoing land dispute with some persons in the area. He went to sleep at his studio after having dinner at home Saturday night. His mother tried calling him over phone Sunday morning that went unanswered. Apprehending something amiss, she went to the studio, found the door open, and the body of her son lying in a pool of blood. Hearing her screams, neighbours rushed to the spot and informed the police.

## Woman burnt alive as shop catches fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pattamundai, Feb 9: A woman was burnt alive after fire broke out at her puja supplies shop in Baktharpur under Pattamundai Model Police Station limits in Kendrapara district, Sunday morning. The deceased was identified as Kamala Sahu, 47.

Sources said all items in the shop were reduced to ashes.

The incident occurred when she lit up incense sticks before the deity at her shop around 8:30am. According to locals, the sparks of the incense stick accidentally fell onto a petrol bottle stored inside the shop, causing the blaze.

Kamala reportedly ran inside to retrieve some items after the fire broke out but was unable to escape as the flames spread

rapidly. Witnesses said the shop stocked with flammable materials like ghee, dry coconut, and oil, was quickly engulfed in flames. Efforts by locals to contain the blaze failed. Later, Fire department personnel reached the spot and brought the inferno under control. However, by then, Kamala had been burned.

Police sent her body for post-mortem and launched an investigation after registration of a case.

Locals alleged that Kamala had been illegally storing and selling petrol bottles along with puja materials. Additional District Magistrate Nilu Mohapatra assured that the victim's family would receive government assistance and stated that action would be taken against the illegal sale of petrol.









He who chooses the infinite has been chosen by the infinite

**SRI AUROBINDO** 



## **Delhi Lessons**

"t is an irony of fate that the party that had stormed into power on the promise of fighting against corruption finally fell under the weight of allegations of corruption and its failure to fulfil its electoral pledges. Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) drubbing at the hands of the BJP in the Delhi Assembly elections is a lesson for all parties which go against their core ideology and are seen as inconsistent with their perceived image. It would be a facile explanation to attribute the defeat to an anti-incumbency factor alone since what has happened is a loss of voters' faith in a leadership that promised to selflessly work for the people, but ended up getting mired in allegations of corruption and perennially engaged in a blame game accusing its main adversary, the BJP, of not letting it function.

Having lost Delhi, which served as the party's foundation and its main source of political energy, the AAP is currently grappling with its most significant existential crisis. With Kejriwal's defeat in New Delhi and the losses of prominent leaders like Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain, and Saurabh Bharadwaj, the party's leadership now stands at a pivotal moment. Kejriwal lost to BJP's Parvesh Verma, son of former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, by 4,089 votes. Verma is now a top contender for the CM's post. The party's governance model, which focused on providing free electricity, water, and educational reforms, appears to have failed to connect with the city's residents. Additionally, Kejriwal's attempt to appeal to voters through a soft Hindootva approach, including promises of monthly stipends for temple priests, did not resonate with the electorate. Apart from charges of corruption in the liquor licence case for which several top AAP leaders, including Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia, were arrested, the allegation that Keiriwal spent over ₹40 crore to refurbish his chief ministerial residence, termed as "Sheesh Mahal" by the BJP, seems to have proved to be the last straw. While he could not convincingly defend himself, the public perception of a clean leader getting involved in alleged corruption for his personal comfort sealed the AAP's fate.

At the same time, credit goes to the BJP for playing its cards well and defeating the AAP in the game of voters' perception. The party ended its political drought in Delhi after 26 years, surpassing the majority mark and ending the AAP's 12-year rule. Coming close on the heels of its success in the Assembly elections of Maharashtra and Haryana, the Delhi victory would help the party regain ground it lost in the Lok Sabha polls last year where it failed to secure a majority on its own. The BJP focused its Delhi campaign on local issues, such as poor road conditions, inconsistent water supply, air pollution which has earned the national capital worldwide infamy, and non-operational mohalla clinics. While the AAP's promises of freebies were met with 'Modi's guarantee,' which resonated with voters, considerable groundwork was laid by the RSS and allied organisations. RSS volunteers conducted a silent voter awareness campaign and organised thousands of "drawing room meetings" throughout Delhi to address urgent public concerns such as access to potable water, inadequate healthcare services, air pollution, and the cleaning of the Yamuna.

The Congress, which had been in power for 15 consecutive years under Sheila Dikshit starting in 1998, faced a significant setback in the Assembly elections, failing to secure a single seat for the third consecutive time. Many of its candidates faced devastating losses, with most even losing their deposits.

The failure of the AAP and the Congress to put up a common front against the BJP caused great damage to the ruling party as in over a dozen seats in the Delhi Assembly the BJP could win because of split in the Opposition votes. The main lesson for the Opposition parties from the outcome of the Delhi Assembly election is that if they cannot sink their differences for capturing power in states and project a united front, their main agenda to dislodge the BJP from power at the Centre would look like chasing a mirage.

#### WISDOM CORNER

basically because you feel good, very good, when you are near or with them

Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood. All is riddle, and the key to a riddle is another

There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other, wings

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

#### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1763: The Treaty of Paris was signed, ending territorial conflicts between France and Britain in the Seven Years' War, the North American phase of which was called the French and Indian War.
- 1846: The British conquered the Sikhs in northwestern India in the Battle of Sobraon, the most decisive engagement of the First Sikh War
- 1962: US airman Francis Gary Powers, who was the captured pilot of the U-2 plane that had been downed by the Soviet Union in 1960 and who was later convicted of espionage, was exchanged for jailed Soviet informant
- 1964: Bob Dylan's album "The Times They Are A-Changin'" is released. The title track is one of Dylan's best-known songs.
- 1990: The spacecraft Galileo flew past Venus on its way to Jupiter. Galileo was placed into Earth orbit on October 18, 1989, by the space shuttle Atlantis. It then was boosted into a roundabout trajectory toward Jupiter along which it benefited from a series of gravity-assist, or slingshot, procedures during flybys of Venus (February 10, 1990) and Earth (December 8, 1990, and December 8, 1992).
- 1996: Deep Blue becomes the first computer to win a chess game against a reigning world champion. Despite his defeat in the first game, Russian world champion Garry Kasparov proceeded to win the match by 4-2

#### **CALMING THE BABY**

In the supermarket was a man pushing a cart which contained a screaming, bellowing baby. The gentleman kept repeating softly, "Don't get excited, Albert; don't

scream, Albert; don't yell, Albert; keep calm, Albert.

A woman standing next to him



for trying to soothe your son,

The man looked at her and said, "Lady, I'm Albert."

**US POLICIES** 

# IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE

onald Trump has wasted no time clarifying what "America First" - the dominant idea driving his election campaign - means in practice. So far, it means a 90-day freeze on most foreign aid spending, as well as the withdrawal of the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Paris climate

The ostensible purpose of the foreign aid freeze is to review the efficacy of US programmes. I am a strong advocate for getting the best value for every dollar available to assist people in poverty. I founded The Life You Can Save to promote that idea and enable individual donors to find the most cost-effective charities combating extreme poverty.

But reviewing aid programmes takes time and expertise. It is not possible to conduct an adequate review of all the aid programmes that the US funds in three months, and to freeze spending while waiting for the review to be completed is an irresponsible way to manage aid that is often life-saving.

Peter Singer

**TAKEN AS** 

A WHOLE,

**TRUMP'S** 

DAMAGE,

**PERHAPS** 

**WHATEVER** 

**CLAIMS THE** 

**BE LISTENED** 

**TO IN GLOBAL** 

**US HAD TO** 

**FORUMS** 

**POLICIES WILL** 

IRRETRIEVABLY,

The freeze has already disrupted programmes that prevent deaths from AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in many poor countries. Thousands of health-care and aid workers have been placed on leave without pay. Many will have to find other work to support themselves, so even if programs survive the review and funds are restored, their expertise may be lost.

Ongoing clinical trials have had to stop, which means that months or even years of work have been wasted. An administration that had any real concern for the well-being of those assisted by US aid would have left funding in place, pending the outcomes of the reviews.

It is not as if there was an urgent need to cut official US



Of all the decisions made by Trump thus far, the most catastrophic are likely to be those related to climate change, including pushing for more oil and gas production; removing tax credits for electric vehicles; and, above all, withdrawal from the Paris agreement

foreign aid for fiscal reasons. When Americans are asked what proportion of US government spending goes to foreign aid, the average answer is 25%, and when asked what they think an appropriate level would be, they say 10%. The truth is that official foreign aid amounts to only around 1% of the US budget.

The United Nations' target for wealthy countries' official foreign-aid spending is 0.7% of gross national income (GNI), or 70 cents of every \$100 that the country earns. In 2023, the most recent year for which data are available, only Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark surpassed that figure. The US gave only 0.24% of its GNI in official aid, below several less affluent countries. including the United Kingdom, Japan, and Poland.

Likewise, withdrawing from the WHO will save very little money. The WHO's annual expenditure is roughly half that of the health department of the US state of Rhode Island, which has a population of 1.1 million, and US contributions amount to only 15% of the WHO budget.

The US withdrawal will significantly reduce international cooperation on health issues, and will deprive US health authorities of information about disease prevalence abroad, which could mean that Americans are less informed about risks when they travel. But pharmaceutical companies outside the US may benefit, because withdrawal will remove America's voice from discussions within the WHO on evidence and quality standards for new drugs – a voice that American pharmaceutical companies have previously used to give themselves a competitive edge over international rivals.

Of all the decisions made by Trump thus far, the most catastrophic are likely to be those related to climate change, including pushing for more oil and gas production (even allowing this to override the Endangered Species Act); removing tax credits for electric vehicles; and, above all, withdrawal from the Paris agreement. US per capita greenhouse-gas emissions are 50% higher than China's, and almost seven times those of India. Those countries' leaders will now be able to argue that there is no reason why their own. less affluent, economies should forego fossil fuels if the US is not going to be bound by

the targets it accepted in Paris and at subsequent international climate conferences. Other, smaller countries will then say that their emissions are insignificant compared to those of the US, China, and India. Why should they do what the world's largest emitters are not doing?

Ironically, given that these actions have been taken in the name of "America First," they are contrary to America's true long-term interests. Over the coming decades, Americans will swelter through hotter summers, struggle with more severe storms and floods, battle even worse wildfires than those that recently gutted swaths of Los Angeles, and retreat inland as rising sea levels inundate low-lying coastal areas, including Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort and much of South Florida.

The US has greater capacity to cope with the effects of climate change than poorer countries. Still, the outcome will be far worse for Americans than the much more limited costs of complying with international agreements to mitigate the se-

verity of climate change. Taken as a whole, Trump's policies will damage, perhaps irretrievably, whatever claims the US had to be listened to in global forums. His decisions will only confirm the views of those who have been saying for decades that the US government is a short-sighted,

self-seeking plutocracy. None of this will make America great again. On the contrary, Trump's return to the White House has given a giant boost to China's claims to world leadership.

> The writer is Emeritus Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and Visiting Professor at the Centre for Biomedical Ethics at the National University of Singapore.

**PRODUCTIVITY** 

# Balancing efficiency and well-being



SPECTRUM

Debabrata Dash

THE SCIENCE OF **WORK HOURS** AND EMPLOYEE **EFFICIENCY REVEALS THAT** WORKING LONG **HOURS IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH HIGH PRODUCTIVITY** 

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in

their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

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B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

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(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

n today's rapidly evolving workplace, the relationship between work hours and employee efficiency is more complex than ever before. The 6-day work week model, which was designed during the industrial age, is increasingly being questioned as new research and real-world examples reveal that longer hours do not necessarily lead to higher productivity. Instead, the science of work hours points to a more nuanced understanding of how time, energy, and well-being intersect to drive efficiency.

While many developed countries have laws or cultural practices that encourage a balance between work and personal life, there are still variations, particularly in emerging economies. For example, countries like France, Germany, and Sweden tend to have shorter workweeks, whereas countries like Mexico, India, and China tend to have longer workweeks. The global trend is toward recognising the importance of work-life balance, but the average workweek still varies widely by region. The US has a relatively flexible work culture, with many employees working full-time (40 hours),

but often with significant overtime in certain industries, leading to a lower average. The UK has a trend of shorter working hours, with part-time work being common. Work hours in India vary widely by industry, with many industries working 6 days a week, often exceeding 8 hours a day.

For decades, many believed that the more hours an employee worked, the more they would accomplish. However, research consistently shows that this assumption is false. Working long hours without adequate breaks can lead to cognitive fatigue. The brain's capacity to focus and make decisions diminishes after extended periods of work, leading to diminishing returns in productivity. According to a study by the University of California, Berkeley, after about 50 hours of work a week, employee efficiency significantly drops. A study conducted by Stanford University found that after working more than 50 hours a week, productivity per hour sharply declined, and those working beyond 55 hours achieved almost no additional output.

One of the key principles in maximising efficiency is the concept of deep work, popularised by author Cal Newport. Deep work refers to periods of intense focus where employees work without distractions. Study shows that employees can accomplish more in a shorter time if they engage in deep work rather than multitasking. Ulric Neisser, a cognitive psychologist, suggests that the brain can focus intensely for only about 90 minutes at a time. After this, a brief period of rest is required to maintain high cognitive performance. The science of workhours also highlights the importance of rest and recovery. Taking breaks throughout the day not only improves focus but also prevents physical and mental exhaustion, leading to improved overall performance. Sleep is a crucial component in the science of work hours and employee efficiency. Lack of sleep leads to cognitive decline, decreased attention, and increased susceptibility to mistakes, all of which hurt productivity. Encouraging employees to get adequate sleep and rest improves overall job performance and reduces the risk of hurnout, ultimately leading to better efficiency at work. One

of the most important aspects of maximising employee efficiency is recognising that one size does not fit all. By recognising the diverse needs of employees and business priorities, organisations can create schedules that cater to different working styles, balancing the needs of all team members while maximising output.

The science of work hours and employee efficiency reveals that working long hours is not synonymous with high productivity. Instead, a balance of focused work, adequate rest, mental well-being, and flexibility is essential for achieving sustainable performance. Organisations that prioritize employee well-being, understand the cognitive limits of their employees are more likely to foster an efficient, productive, and engaged workforce. As businesses continue to adapt to modern work environments, incorporating scientific insights into work-hour policies can lead to a more innovative, motivated, and ultimately successful workforce.

> The writer is a senior HR professional.

#### Historic victory

Sir, This refers to "BJP's capital gain." The BJP's victory in Delhi elections is undoubtedly historic, but the outcome would be cited more for an overconfident Aravind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party being unseated. After all the allegations of corruption regarding the liquor policy, his "Sheesh Mahal," and many AAP ministers being arrested, the basic edifice on which Kejriwal's entire politics built came crumbling down. On the other hand, PM Narendra Modi's popularity refuses to wane. Not to forget a well-oiled election machinery led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah fighting every battle tooth and nail. Since AAP was winning the polls on the vote bank of Congress, the grand old party in a cameo role waged a frontal attack against Keiriwal, who was already under pressure of anti-incumbency. In 2013, it was uniqueness of the AAP's anti-corruption plank, and in 2020, it was freebies to Delhi voters that worked in its favour. In 2025 AAP had nothing to offer new. But, BJP's victory will have long-term implications for national politics. Meanwhile, Kejriwal and his team will have tough time ahead as Modi thundered corrupt will not be spared and he will take back the looted money, even as goalposts are likely to change in Delhi..

### Daunting challenge

Sir, The catastrophic defeat the AAP suffered in the Delhi elections has caused a crisis of immense proportions in the party. People voted the party to power in Delhi thinking that it would live up to their expectations. But it failed. A party that came to power as a crusader against corruption faces the challenge of corruption charges against its main leaders. Now Kejriwal has to address the daunting challenge of keeping his MLAs together as they may succumb to the temptation of crossing over to the BJP. The party has to face a vindictive BJP-led government. Given that the party has lost control of the capital and its expansion beyond Delhi is slow, it risks further decline. The party's survival is based on its ability to restore its credibility. If it fails to do so, it risks vanishing into political obscurity.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Venu GS, KOLLAM



# TWO STATES





# 'CRPF GURUKUL'

**CRPF** sets up schools for kids in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, erstwhile Naxal hotbed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sukma, Feb 9: Four villages in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, which had been a Naxal stronghold, have now seen a turnaround with school bells replacing the sound of guns, thanks to an initiative by the Central Reserve Police Force

The CRPF, which is engaged in anti-Maoist operations in Chhattisgarh, has set up schools for primary children in the four villages as part of an aim to bring education to the people's doorsteps and wean away locals from the outlawed armed movement, officials said.

The facilities, named 'CRPF Gurukul', have been set up in Duled, Mukrajkonda, Tekalgudiyam and Puvarti villages, which were considered as strongholds of Naxalites till January last year when police camps were established there.

While Tekalgudiyam witnessed a deadly attack on security personnel in the past, Puvarti is the native of place of dreaded Naxalite leader Hidma, believed to be behind various deadly attacks on security Fighting guns with pen



places where once slogans of 'Lal Salaam' and bullets reverberated, now the ringing of school bells and chatter of children can be heard

INSPECTOR GENERAL (SUKMA RANGE), CRPI

As of now, the schools have classes till standard 5th. Initially, students have been enrolled for classes 1 and 2 and efforts will be made later to upgrade these facilities till class 12

forces in Bastar region.

"The places where once slogans of 'Lal Salaam' and bullets reverberated, now the ringing of school bells and chatter of children can be heard," Deputy Inspector General, CRPF (Sukma Range) Anand Singh Rajpurohit told PTI over phone.

The four villages were once dominated by Naxalites, but after security camps were

opened there in January-February last year, development started reaching these areas.

he said. On April 3, 2021, 22 security personnel were killed in a Maoist ambush in Tekalgudiyam area. On January 30 last year, three CRPF personnel were killed and 15 others injured in an encounter with Naxalites when a police camp was being

set up in Tekalgudiyam.

"As these villages did not have schools, we decided to open them to cater to the primary school children," the DIG

The CRPF's 150th battalion has been stationed in Puvarti and Tekalgudiyam camps, and the 2nd battalion in Mukrajkonda and Duled camps.

A one-room set up with tinshed roof has been laid out for schools adjacent to the camps at the four places and one civilian teacher has been hired for each school having a strength of 50 to 60 students, the official said.

Honorarium is paid to the teachers through a fund under the civic action programme provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs, he said.

Special arrangements have been made for providing uniforms, books, bags, shoes, socks and various types of games like volleyball, football and basketball for physical and mental development of the children in the premises, Rajpurohit said.

Various types of charts and boards have been installed on the school walls, and a big television set with a projector is also proposed for each of the facilities, he said.

The local administration's support will be sought for further expanding infrastructure like setting up buildings, toilets and hand pumps in the gurukul premises and introducing the facility of mid-day meal provided in government schools, he said.

Asked about any problem

faced by the CRPF in enrolling children to these schools. the DIG said villagers have been sending their children "suo-motu" (on their own).

But, there was bit of a problem in hiring teachers as Naxalites killed a man, who worked as 'shiksha doot' (temporary visiting teacher) at a government school in Jagargunda area of Sukma in September last year, and locals were scared, he said.

On the idea behind the initiative, the DIG said, "The priority was to first secure the area and then facilitate development. Extending better education facilities to deprived tribal children will help them in getting a dignified livelihood and developing a better understanding about society and the

Nearly 40,000 personnel of CRPF, the largest paramilitary force, are deployed extensively in south Bastar for counter-insurgency operations.

Following the setting up of police camps, development works were being carried out in these four villages, a district administration official said.

Murum (a type of soil) work of the roads connecting Duled, Mukrajkonda, Tekalgudiyam and Puvarti has been completed and the construction will be over soon, he said.

While Duled and Mukrrajkonda have electricity supply lines, it is under progress in the two other villages, he said.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, pipelines have been laid to provide tap water in all the four villages, the official added.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Feb 9: The women self-help groups (SHGs) have successfully delivered over 1,050 online orders across the country, including Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan in almost a month since January 3, following the launch of the official e-commerce platform Himira, an official statement said.

With integration into e-commerce, products crafted by women of the SHGs are now automatically listed on platforms like Pavtm and Mystore, making them accessible to buyers across the country, the statement issued here said.

"Through this digital platform, nearly 30,000 SHG women across the state have gained direct access to livelihood opportunities that were previously not accessible," Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said Sunday.

"The website features a diverse range of nearly 30 products, from hand-woven Himachali textiles to pure and natural food items", he said.

Sukhu said that he also gifted Himira products to Union Ministers and other dignitaries.

"Women associated with SHGs are enthusiastic about the government's initiative to enhance market access through the e-commerce platform. SHGs across the state have welcomed this step wholeheartedly", he added.

For Jaswinder Kaur of Nalagarh in Solan district, joining



associated with SHGs are enthusiastic about

the government's initiative to enhance market access through the e-commerce platform. SHGs across the state have welcomed this step wholeheartedly

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU I CM, HIMACHAL PRADESH

the Sainath SHG became a life changer.

Along with financial support and ₹60,000 loan for livestock and non farming activities, she ventured into producing cow dung products. Her monthly income has now increased from ₹1000 to ₹20,000.

Megha Devi from Sullah of Kangra district started a small enterprise in 'Dona-Pattal' (leaf plate making) after getting as sociated with Shree Ganesh SHG. Her monthly income has increased from ₹5000 to ₹20000.

"Transforming my passion into livelihood has been a journey of resilience and growth. With every sale from my retail shop and each pattal I create, I don't just see profit but my children's dream coming to life", Megha said.

## Spurious liquor a concern for Ch'garh village

Probe ordered as Chhattisgarh village sees 7 deaths in 4 days; killer spurious liquor, says Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bilaspur, Feb 9: The authorities Saturday launched a probe after at least seven persons died in a village in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district in past four days, with opposition Congress linking spurious liquor to the The sarpanch (village head)

said nine persons died during this period, claiming that they were heavily dependent on liquor and used to consume country-made alcohol illegally sold in the area. After learning about the

deaths in Lofandi village under the jurisdiction of Koni police station, a team of administration and police officials visited the area, an official statement said.

The villagers told the police some locals had died in the last 4-5 days, while a few others were hospitalised after taking ill, it said. According to the release,

Devkumar Patel (45) and Shatrughan Dewangan (40) died in the village February 5. The Koni police registered a case concerning Patel's death.



with his son attributing it to

Five more villagers - Ramuram Sunhale (59), Komal Prasad Lahare (56), Kanhaiya Lal Patel (60), Baldev Patel (52) and Kunnu Devangan (35) - died February 7-8. Baldev died at a private hospital and the death certificate mentions cardio and respiratory as the cause, it said.

When the administration and police officials reached the village, the residents had already performed the final rites of all the deceased except

Sunhale without informing the authorities.

Sunhale's body was sent to the Chhattisgarh Institute of Medical Sciences (CIMS) Bilaspur for post-mortem, the official release said.

"According to the preliminary PM report, no specific cause of death could be ascertained. Confirmation on the cause of death can be established after the arrival of viscera, histopathology and blood analysis reports," it said.

Villagers said a marriage cer-

emony was held between February 3 and 6 at the house of a local wherein people joined for a community feast. They also said some residents had consumed fish caught from a nearby river on February 6, it said.

Those who died had complained of pain in the abdomen, vomiting and dizziness. A few of them were reported to be already ill, the statement added.

The Health and Food Safety departments have set up a special health camp in the village to screen the ailing residents and a door-to-door survey is also being conducted, the re lease said.

Meanwhile, the opposition Congress has claimed that eight villagers died in Lofandi after consuming spurious liquor and blamed the ruling BJP for the deaths.

"Eight people died in Lofandi and some others fell ill after consuming illegal spurious alcohol. Of the ailing persons, four are said to be critical. Vishnu Deo Sai government and BJP are responsible for these deaths," said Sushil Anand Shukla, state Congress' head of communication wing.



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Dev Sai with BJP Mayor candidate Sanju Devi Rajput being garlanded during the 'Vijay Sankalp Rally' for upcoming municipal elections, in Korba

### HP govt school students embark on first-ever foreign exposure trip



Shimla, Feb 9: Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu flagged off a week-long international exposure trip for students of government schools in Shimla Friday.

This marks the first-ever foreign exposure trip for government school students in the state, with 50 students being sent

to Singapore and Cambodia. "This is one of several initiatives we have taken to improve our education system. Several decisions have already been taken, and many more are in the pipeline," said Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.

Twenty students each have been selected from Class XI and XII based on their performance in the Class X board examination. Ten spots have been allocated to students who have excelled in sports and cultural activities.

'We had never thought that we would ever be sent on a foreign trip by the education department. We are so excited and happy to go on this trip,' said one of the students going on the tour.

Education Minister Rohit Thakur said the idea was to reward children who excelled in academics and other co-curricular activities and offer them global exposure.

Bundi, Feb 9: A prolonged dry spell has got Shimla farmers worrying about the apple crop, which is now threatened by a hampered production.

Desired cooling hours (1,200 to 1,600 below 7 degrees Celsius) for traditional varieties and 600 hours for early varieties have not come by this season.

Farmers were also restricted from new plantations due to unfavourable weather conditions, Fruit Vegetable Flower Growers Association President Harish Chauhan told PTI

About 90 per cent of apple orchardists in the state are still on traditional varieties, while the remaining have adopted high density plantations.

'Snow during winter months also kills insects and diseases but we are witnessing a onemonth shift in weather for the past three years which has affected apple production," Chau-

The state saw a rain deficit of 97 per cent in October last year, 99 per cent in November, and 84 per cent this January, the ninth lowest since 1901, Meteorological expert Sandeep Sharma said.

In all, the rain deficit was 41 per cent in the post-monsoon season (October to December), with December the only exception with 21 per cent of excess

Rain deficit from February 1 to 9 was 38 per cent, with the state receiving 16.2 mm of precipitation against a normal of 26.3 mm, the Met said.

Sufficient chilling hours and moisture during winters is essential for a good apple crop, while hailstorms at flowering stage prove harmful.

The temperature has to remain below 7 degrees for appropriate chilling, which varies with latitude as the apple



'DROUGHT-AFFECTED

growing area falls mainly in the temperate zone, according to scientists.

Dry spell sends Shimla apple farmers to state of worry

Sufficient chilling hours and moisture during winters is essential for a good apple crop, while hailstorms at flowering stage prove harmful

An increase in temperature tends to harm the apple production, while early spouting in stone fruit in low hills could affect the yield and the crop, said Sujaat Chauhan, an apple orchardist from Sandhu village.

Farmers had dug pots in several areas for new plantation but a dry spell that led to less moisture in the land halted the process, says Sushil Dhalta, an-

other apple grower. The cost of plantation is high as one plant costs between ₹150The state saw a rain deficit of 97 per cent in

October last year, 99 per cent in November, and 84 per cent this January, the ninth **lowest since 1901** 

SANDEEP SHARMA METEOROLOGICAL EXPERT

200, he said.

'We were unable to sow the peas crop due to dry spell and are hoping to see rain and snow in February," another farmer, Rajhubeer said.

On Friday, the former Shimla deputy mayor urged the gov ernment to consider declaring the state as "drought-affected.

"I urge you to ensure that the necessary protocols and Stan dard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are implemented so that the looming drought crisis can be addressed proactively, Tikender Panwar said in a letter addressed to Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena.

# nationa



The ST (MSRTC) employees should work with the mindset that passenger service is God's service

EKNATH SHINDE

#### **UP PRISON RECEIVES FAKE PRESIDENT'S ORDER**

An FIR has been registered at the Janakpuri police station here after the Saharanpur district jail received a forged order, purportedly issued in the name of the president of India, to release a murder accused, officials said Sunday





contradictions of is disintegrating fast, if not disintegrated already. INDIA bloc partners are facing defeat in different parts of the country as they do not have any com-

coalition has all but ceased to **DHARMENDRA PRADHAN** I UNION MINISTER

mon agenda. The reactionary

Starting tomorrow, I will be in Singapore for the next two days to promote Advantage





hotel. This will be a gamechanger for the state as it proposes to have four to five exclusive rooms apart from hundreds of royal rooms

MANIK SAHA | CHIEF MINISTER, TRIPURA

#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### Man travelling to **US illegally dies**

Amritsar: A man from Punjab's Ajnala died of cardiac arrest in Guatemala during a journey to the US illegally, the state's NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal said Sunday. Expressing grief over Gurpreet Singh's death, the minister advised youths not to make attempts to travel abroad through unauthorized routes and to instead earn skill education in India. He said that Singh died of cardiac arrest while travelling to the US along with a group of people through a 'dunki' route -- an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to enter America. It is learnt that Gurpreet's family paid Rs 16.5 lakh to agents for taking him to

#### 3 militants held in Manipur

Imphal: Manipur Police arrested three militants from Imphal West district, an officer said Sunday Police arrested two militants of the banned United **National Liberation Front** (UNLF-Pambei) group from Narankoniil area of the district Saturday. The two militants were involved in extortion activity and also in illegal smuggling of arms and ammunition, the officer said. One .32 pistol and Rs 3.120 in cash was seized from their possession, he

## 4 killed as dumper

Palanpur (Gujarat): Three women labourers and a toddler were crushed to death when a dumper truck carrying sand overturned and fell on them in Gujarat's Banaskantha district, police said Sunday. The incident occurred at Khengarpura village in the district Saturday evening when a group of labourers was engaged in road construction work, they said. The dumper tried to make its way through a narrow passage and overturned, falling on three women engaged in the road construction work, Deputy Superintendent of Police SM Varotariya said. A child belonging to a labourer's family also died in the incident, he said.



# Ham radio users detect coded signals

The development comes amidst ongoing unrest in Bangladesh and growing anti-India rhetoric in the neighbouring country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 9: Amateur Ham Radio operators have picked up suspicious late-night radio signals in coded Bengali, Urdu and Arabic along the Indo-Bangladesh border in South Bengal over the last two months, raising concerns about possible extremist activities, officials said.

The development comes amidst ongoing unrest in Bangladesh and growing anti-India rhetoric in the neighbouring country.

The incident first came to light in December last when Ham radio operators detected unauthorised communications in coded Bengali, Arabic, and Urdu from Basirhat and Bongaon in North 24 Parganas, as well as from the Sunderbans in South 24 Parganas.

Alarmed by these transmissions, the operators informed the Ministry of Communications. The matter was subsequently forwarded to the International Monitoring Station (Radio) in Kolkata for tracking.

Ham radio operators have also been asked to monitor and report if similar signals are detected again.

"These suspicious radio



**Ham or amateur** radio operators are licenced under the **Union Ministry of Communications** and are authorised to communicate using specific radio frequencies

signals have been picked up between 1 AM and 3 AM. The transmissions are in coded Bengali (with a Bangladeshi accent), Urdu, and Arabic. Sometimes, there are signals in another language that we couldn't identify. Whenever we asked those communicating to identify themselves, they went silent," Ambarish Nag Biswas, secretary of the West Bengal Radio Club, told PTI.

According to Biswas, the first such signal was detected by a Ham radio operator in Sodepur in North 24 Parganas district in mid-December. "Initially, we did not attach much importance to it. But then similar signals were detected from Basirhat, Bongaon, and later from South 24 Parganas district, Even during the Gangasagar Mela in mid-January, several Ham radio users reported hearing these suspicious signals," he said.

Asked why these signals seemed suspicious, Biswas explained that their pattern and language usage were unusual.

"The global norm among Ham radio users is that if a third party enters an ongoing communication; they must identify themselves using a radio identification code or radio call sign. But in these cases, whenever we asked for identification, the signals went silent. The pattern remained the same in all instances," he said.

Ham or amateur radio operators are licenced under the Union Ministry of Communications and are authorised to communicate using specific

### Delhi polls: BJP's vote share up 13%

New Delhi, Feb 9: The BJP's vote share in Delhi has grown by nearly 13 percentage points in the last 10 years while the AAP's vote share has declined by nearly 10 percentage points during the same period.

In the keenly contested Assembly polls in Delhi, there was a difference of only two per cent between the vote shares of the BJP and AAP. The saffron party has stormed to power in the national capital by winning 48 of the 70 seats restricting AAP to 22 seats.

The BJP was out of power in the national capital for over 26 years but riding on a spirited campaign, it not only swept the AAP but also ensured that its heavyweights, including chief Arvind Kejriwal, had to taste defeat. Congress drew a blank for the third time in a row in Delhi

AAP secured a vote share of 43.57 per cent, down from 53.57 per cent in the 2020 polls. In the 2015 Assembly elections, it had secured 54.5 per cent of the votes. This is probably the first time that a party even after getting 40 per cent vote share lost the polls.

Meanwhile, the total number of registered voters in Delhi increased by 4.16.648 in four vears between the 2020 Assembly election and the 2024 Lok Sabha election. However, an estimated 3,99,362 people were added to the rolls in just seven months between the May 2024 Lok Sabha election and the Feb ruary 2025 Assembly election.

The incumbent AAP, during its campaign in the run-up to the polls, raised several obiections to the Election Commission's exercise of addition and deletion of names from the voter rolls. In multiple letters written to the poll body, the party alleged that voter rolls were being "manipulated" to favour BJP candidates.

## Cong calls Manipur CM's resignation 'belated'

**Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge described** Singh's resignation as 'shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 9: The Congress Sunday described N Biren Singh's resignation from the post of Manipur chief minister as "belated", and said "our frequent-flier" Prime Minister Narendra Modi must visit the state immediately and share with the people his plans to restore normalcy.

The Opposition party's attack came shortly after Singh tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge described Singh's resignation as "shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted".

He also blamed Modi as the real culprit of "disdain and apathy" towards the strife-torn state.

"It is painful to say that for 21months, the BJP ignited a fire in Manipur and left the people across communities to fend for themselves," Kharge said in a post on X.

"Their rank incompetence and utter disregard for Rajdharma resulted in at least 258 people having died, more than 5,600 arms and 6.5 lakh rounds of ammunition were looted from police armouries, more than 60,000 people displaced and thousands still forced to live in relief camps," he added.

Further slamming the prime minister. Kharge said Modi had forgotten that Manipur was a part of India. "It is high time he rejigs his memory and locate the state of Manipur on the map of India!"

Former Congress president



Rahul Gandhi said Singh was forced to resign due to mounting public pressure, the Supreme Court's (SC) intervention and his party's plan to move a no-confidence motion in the Assembly.

"For nearly two years, the BJP's Chief Minister Biren Singh instigated division in Manipur. Prime Minister Modi allowed him to continue despite the violence, loss of life, and the destruction of the idea of India in Manipur," the Opposition leader in the Lok Sabha said in a post on X.

"The resignation of Chief Minister Biren Singh shows that mounting public pres sure, the SC investigation and the no-confidence motion by the Congress have forced a reckoning," Gandhi added.

AICC general secretary incharge communications Jairam Ramesh said the Congress was all set to move a no-confidence motion against Singh and his council of ministers in the Ma nipur Assembly on Monday.

"Sensing the climate, the Ma nipur chief minister has just resigned. This was a demand that the Congress has been making since early May 2023, when Manipur erupted," he said in a post on X.

# There won't be any impact of Delhi polls in Bihar: Tejashwi

Yadav, who is now the leader

of the opposition in the state As-

sembly, briefly replied to ques-

tions from journalists about the

verdict in Delhi where INDIA

bloc partner Aam Aadmi Party

"In a democracy, the peo-

ple are supreme (janta maalik

hai). The BJP has been voted

to power after nearly 26 years.

Hopefully, promises made to

the people will be fulfilled and

was voted out of power.



Patna, Feb 9: RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav Sunday dismissed suggestions that the BJP's stupendous victory in the Delhi Assembly polls will have

tions are due later this year. The former deputy chief minister of Bihar also said that a return to power "after nearly 26 years" made it incumbent upon the BJP to fulfil the promises

an impact in Bihar where elec-

(jumlebaazi)," Yadav said. The RJD leader, whose party

has won the highest number of seats in the last two Assembly polls in Bihar, was also asked about the claim of the BJP and its allies that upcoming elections in the state will benefit the NDA as there was a momentum in favour of the ruling coalition.

The young leader remarked dismissively, "Bihar is Bihar. It needs to be understood (Bihar Bihar hai... samajhna padega)."

The NDA is headed in Bihar by JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar who has been the chief minister since 2005, except for a brief period when the reins were handed over to Jitan Ram Manjhi.

The tenure of Kumar, who will run for a fifth consecutive term in office this year, has also been marked by two short-lived



Tulips bloom at the Dandi March Statue, commonly known as 'Gyarah Murti', as part of the 'Delhi Tulip Festival organised by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Sunday

truck falls on them

#### 'Aero India' is a biennial air show and aviation exhibition, which is held in Bangalore, organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 9: The Yelahanka Air Force Station here is decked up for the biennial Aero India show which will be inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Monday.

Themed as 'The Runway to a Billion Opportunities', the five-day extravaganza will showcase India's aerial prowess and indigenous cutting-edge innovations alongside state-ofthe-art products of global aero-



space companies.

The key highlight among the impressive aerial displays on the inaugural session will be the Tejas Formation comprising Air Chief Marshal AP Singh in one of the aircraft, IAF sources told PTI.

It will be followed by 'Naari Shakti' formation led by women pilots in Rafale, they said. The interesting aspect of this

event is that the US combat aircraft Lockheed Martin F35 and Russia's Sukhoi-SU-57 are taking part in the Aero India show.

For the first time in history, Aero India 2025 will witness the participation of two of the world's most advanced fifth-generation fighter aircraft - the Russian Su-57 and the American F-35 Lightning II," a government statement said.

hemed as 'The Runway to a Billion Opportunities', the five-day extravaganza will showcase India's aerial prowess and indigenous cutting-edge innovations alongside stateof-the-art products of global aerospace companies.

Aero India showcases 'strength, resilience, self-reliance' of new India

he key highlight among the The key myninging among impressive aerial displays on the inaugural session will be the Teias Formation comprising Air Chief Marshal AP Singh in one of the aircraft

It marks a milestone in global defence collaboration and technological advancement, offering aviation enthusiasts and defence experts an unparalleled prospect to witness these stateof-the-art warplanes, it added.

'To our knowledge, this is the only event where both these aircraft are coming together. F35 will be on the static display on the inaugural day and there could be a flyby event on some later days," an IAF officer said.

Addressing a press conference in Bangalore on the eve of the event, Rajnath Singh described Aero India as a crucial platform, which will drive forward the government's vision of a strong, capable, secure and

self-reliant India. "Aero India is a platform that showcases the strength, resilience, and self-reliance of New India. It is not just crucial for India's defence preparedness, but it also plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of our na-

tion," Singh said in his address. The biennial event will demonstrate India's defence capabilities and forge global

partnerships, he opined. "Our goal is to enhance collaboration in areas of common interest with our friendly na-

event is not just a showcase of

tions, fostering deeper cooperation and shared progress. The

Organised in a total area of over 42,000 sq m and with the confirmed participation of over 900 exhibitors, including 150 foreign companies, the event is set to be the biggest-ever Aero India till date, he noted. According to the officials, the

technology and innovation, but

will also serve as a source of

inspiration for our youth, fos-

tering scientific temperament

and a spirit of innovation," the

Defence Minister said.

Aero-2025 will have business days from February 10 to 12, while February 13 and 14 have been set as public days for people to witness the show.

The event comprises Defence Ministers' Conclave; CEOs Roundtable; inauguration of India and iDEX Pavilions; Manthan iDEX event; Samarthya In digenisation event; valedictory function: seminars: breath-tak ing airshows and an exhibition of aerospace companies.



The people of **Delhi endorsed Prime Minis**ter Narendra Modi's guarantees, With this historic victory, Delhi will now stride forward firmly towards a 'Viksit Bharat"

#### PRESIDENT MURMU TO VISIT MAHA KUMBH MELA TODAY

President Droupadi Murmu will visit the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj Today and take a holy dip at the Sangam, her office said. During her day-long visit to Prayagraj, the President will take holy dip and perform Pooja at Sangam, perform Pooja and Darshan at Akshayvat and Hanuman Mandir, and also visit the Digital Kumbh Anubhav Centre





It is unfortunate that despite such a situation, the Indian government has not yet deemed it appro-

priate to make any statement on global platforms, or put pressure on Bangladesh

ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER CM. RAJASTHAN

When the economic situation of farmers improves, the country's situation improves. After all, farmers are the providers and they should

not look to anyone or depend on anyone for help because farmers with their strong hands possess political strength and economic capability JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

Maha Kumbh is not a crowd of people, it is a unique conflu-

ence of devotees This is not just a Mela of Sanatan culture, it is a great festival of

DATTATREYA HOSABALE





5 things BJP should do immediately in hal' to BJP Party Office 2. Abolish Free Electricity, Give power

contracts to Adani and restore bills. 3. Abolish subsidy on Water.4. Abolish Mohalla Clinics. Ayushman

Yojana everywhere.
5. Give free hand to private schools to increase fees like other BJP ruled states, Slowly close Gov schools.

@RoshanKrRaii

### SHORT **TAKES**

#### Fire at Maha Kumbh tent, no casualties

Mahakumbh Nagar: A fire broke out in a 'kalpvasi' tent in Sector 19 of here at the Maha Kumbh Sunday due to a said. Firefighters managed to extinguish the blaze within 10 minutes and no casualties were reported. Chief Fire Officer (Kumbh) Pramod Sharma told PTI that the fire was reported in a tent set up by Om Prakash Pandey Seva Sansthan and belonged to Rajendra Jaiswal, resident of Karma, Prayagraj. Upon receiving the alert, three fire tenders were immediately dispatched to the scene.

#### Fire breaks out in slum, 1 dead

Kolkata: One person died in a blaze that gutted at least 30 shanties in Narkeldanga area of the metropolis, a fire brigade official said Sunday. Seventeen fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames. which were first spotted around 10 pm Saturday, he said. The fire left around 200 people homeless. officials said. The charred body of Habibullah Mollah (65) was recovered from a godown adjacent to the shanties, after fire brigade personnel managed to douse the blaze around 3 am. they said.

## Delhi murder victim

Walkar's father dies Mumbai: Vikas Walkar, the father of Shraddha Walkar whose brutal murder in 2022 had caused a nationwide sensation, died Sunday at his residence in Vasai city of Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said. Vikas Walkar was found motionless by his family members in the morning, following which he was rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him dead, a police official said. The preliminary investigation suggests cardiac arrest caused the death.



# Panel urges security assessment for Indian missions

*In its report, the* Committee on External Affairs has also noted that India currently lacks resident missions in 42 countries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 9: A parliamentary panel has recommended that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) should conduct a "comprehensive security assessment" of all missions and posts of India taking into account the geopolitical situation, potential threats and vulnerabilities in host countries.

In its report, the Committee on External Affairs has also noted that India currently lacks resident missions in 42 countries.

While acknowledging the challenges involved in establishing new missions, the committee recommended "accelerating efforts to bridge these gaps, particularly in countries where India has significant economic or strategic interests or a large diaspora presence".

The 'Fourth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (2024-25) on Demands for Grants (2024-25) of the Ministry of External Affairs' was presented in Parliament last week. The panel is headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor.

The committee further said in its report that it has also "taken note of the criteria" for establishing new missions, focusing on economic partnerships, strategic cooperation, diaspora engagement and multilateral diplomacy.

"The committee have also been informed about ongoing efforts to operationalise missions in other strategic locations such as Fukuoka (Japan), Kazan (Russia) and Yekaterinburg (Russia) and future plans for opening five missions in Europe and Latin America and Caribbean regions," it said.

The parliamentary panel

has made a slew of other recommendations including on the security of Indian missions abroad in view of the geopolitical situation and other factors.

"In view of recent developments, the committee feels that the security of Indian missions and posts abroad is paramount for ensuring the safety of personnel, the protection of sensitive information and the continuity of diplomatic functions, the report said.

The MEA has informed the

panel that the safety and securitv of Indian missions and posts is "continuously reviewed".

The committee has recommended that "the ministry should conduct a comprehensive security assessment of all missions/posts taking into account the geopolitical situation, potential threats and vulnerabilities in host countries", the report said.

Adequate resources should also be allocated for the protection of physical and digital

infrastructure of the Indian missions, it added.

The recommendations assume salience given the situation in countries like Bangladesh as also in

parts of West Asia. and with New Delhi flagging in the last several months the issue of space being provided to anti-India activities in Canada that has affected the bilateral ties.

On the operationalisation of new missions abroad, the committee noted that the MEA is

'leveraging concurrent accreditation arrangements" effectively in countries where resident missions have not been operationalised. The panel has emphasised in

its report that India's "growing stature on global arena' requires consistent and predictable investments in diplomatic, economic and cultura engagements.

"Budgetary instability and fluctuations undermine India's

credibility as a partner in bilateral and multilat eral initiatives.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS
ASSUME SALIENCE it said. **GIVEN THE SITUATION** The stressed the need **BANGLADESH AS ALSO** for "consistent and N PARTS OF WEST ASIA AND WITH NEW DELHI predictable" financial allocations to FLAGGING IN THE LAST the MEA and rec SEVERAL MONTHS THE ommended that

key areas should be protected from budgetary cuts. The committee has also acknowl-

edged the "sig-

nificant strides" made by the MEA in enhancing passport services through the expan sion of the Passport Seva Pro gramme, including the establishment of 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 434 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) in collaboration with the Department of Posts

#### **LG ASKS HER TO CONTINUE TILL FORMATION OF NEW GOVT**

# **ATISHI RESIGNS AS CM**

New Delhi, Feb 9: Delhi Chief Minister Atishi handed over her resignation to Lt Governor VK Saxena Sunday, a day after her Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) faced a crushing defeat in the Assembly polls.

Atishi, who retained her Kalkaji seat, handed over her resignation to Saxena at Rai Niwas, officials said.

The LG's office said that Saxena has asked the outgoing CM to continue on the post till formation of a new government. The BJP is expected to stake

claim to power next week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from a foreign visit, party leaders said.

"Hon'ble Lt Governor, Shri VK Saxena today received the resignation of Hon'ble CM, Ms Atishi. He asked her to continue in her position till the formation of the new government," Raj Niwas, Delhi posted from its official X handle.

The LG dissolved the Delhi Assembly effective from Saturday, February 8.

A notification by the Assembly secretariat issued a day before read. "In exercise of the power conferred upon me by sub-section (2)(b) of section 6 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, I, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. hereby dissolve the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from February 8, 2025."

The BJP returned to power in



#### **Kejriwal meets newly elected AAP MLAs**

Aday after AAP was ousted from power in Delhi, party supremo Arvind Kejriwal met its 22 newly elected MLAs at his Ferozshah Road residence here Sunday and asked them to work for the people. Addressing reporters after the meeting, outgoing chief minister Atishi, who is among the 22 AAP leaders who weathered the BJP storm, said the party will play the role of a constructive Opposition and ensure that the saffron party delivers on its promises. Kejriwal directed the newly elected MLAs to serve the people and solve their problems, she said. She added that the party's MLAs will ensure the BJP does not discontinue the free services and facilities that the AAP government provided in the past 10 years. Later in the day, Kejriwal also met AAP candidates who lost the elections. After the meeting, senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia said, "When the government machinery was being misused and the code of conduct was being violated, everyone fought the election brilliantly. Whether the BJP MLAs work for the public or not, AAP candidates have to work for the public."

Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 Assembly seats. The AAP won 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank

in the polls held February 5. Atishi took oath as chief minister in September last year after AAP convenor and her predecessor Arvind Kejriwal resigned from the post amid corruption allegations against him.

AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar Sunday said the party will play the role of a "construc-

tive Opposition" in Delhi. 'We accept the people's mandate with all humility. AAP is a party which understands, recognises and works on its mistakes. We will definitely look

into the reason our vote share has reduced," she said. "We will play the role of a constructive Opposition and will make sure that we will hold the BJP accountable to the promises they have made for

the people of Delhi," she added.

#### for smuggling cocaine worth ₹40 crore PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

3 foreigners held

New Delhi, Feb 9: Three foreign nationals have been arrested for smuggling cocaine worth nearly Rs 40 crore at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport here, the customs department said Sunday. The accused -- two Brazilian

women and a Kenyan man -who had ingested cocaine-filled capsules were arrested in separate cases, it said. In the first case, a 26-year-old

Brazilian passenger was intercepted after her arrival from Sao Paulo via Paris January 28. During questioning, the pas-

senger informed the officers that she had secreted capsules containing narcotics or psychotropic substances, the customs department said in a post on X.

The passenger was then taken to Safdarjung Hospital for medical procedures. During her stay at the hospital, she eased out 98 capsules which resulted in the recovery of 866 grams of cocaine, estimated to be valued at Rs 12.99 crore, it said, adding that the passenger has been arrested.

Customs officials had January 24, intercepted another female passenger from Brazil. She too had arrived via Paris from Sao Paulo.

"Upon interrogation, the passenger confessed to ingesting drug capsules. She was immediately taken to hospital, where she eased out 100 ovalshaped capsules over the next few hours. When these were cut open, they contained white powder suspected to be cocaine," the customs said in another post.

## eradicate Maoism SHAH'S REACTION COMES AFTER THE SECURITY

Amit Shah vows to

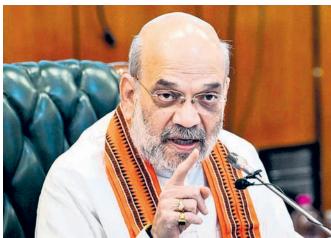
PROVIDED TO ANTI-INDI

ACTIVITIES IN CANADA

THAT HAS AFFECTED THE

**BILATERAL TIES** 

**FORCES KILLED 31 NAXALS IN CHHATTISGARH** 



I also reiterate my

resolve that before

31 March, 2026,

we will completely

eradicate Naxalism

from the country so

that no citizen of the

country has to lose

his life due to it

AMIT SHAH

UNION HOME MINISTER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 9: Union

Home Minister Amit Shah said Sunday that Naxals will be eradicated by March 31, 2026 and no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it. Shah said this

after the security forces killed 31 Naxals in Chhattisgarh.

"I also reiterate my resolve that before 31 March,

2026, we will completely eradicate Naxalism from the country so that no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it," he wrote on 'X' in Hindi.

The home minister said in the direction of making India Naxal-free, the security forces

> have achieved a big success in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh. He said that 31

Naxalites were killed in this oper ation and a huge amount of arms and explosives were also recovered.

Shah said the security forces have also lost two of its brave soldiers "in the effort to end anti-human Naxalism'

and the country will always be indebted to these he

"I express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred soldiers," he said.

## 'Beef biryani' on lunch menu triggers row in AMU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aligarh, Feb 9: A notice to serve 'beef biryani' for lunch Sunday at the Sir Shah Sulaiman Hall in Aligarh Muslim University has triggered a row after it went viral on social media. The notice, purportedly is-

sued by two "authorized" individuals, read, "Sunday's lunch menu has been changed, and beef biryani will be served instead of chicken biryani as per demand." Following an uproar in the

university over the notice, the AMU administration clarified that it contained a "typing error" and assured that those responsible had been issued a show-cause notice. The controversy erupted

after students at the Sir Shah cial media.

Sulaiman Hall found the notice, which was shared widely on so-Initially, the AMU administration refrained from making

a statement. However, as the



matter escalated, it distanced itself from it, calling it an "unintentional mistake'

"The matter was brought to our attention. We found that the notice was regarding food menu. However, it contained a clear typing error. The notice was immediately withdrawn as it had no official signatures, raising doubts about its authenticity.

"Our provost has issued a show-cause notice to the two senior students responsible (for issuing the notice). We are taking this issue seriously to ensure strict adherence to university regulations," she said. Reacting to the incident, BJP

leader and AMU alumnus Nishit Sharma criticised the university's handling of the matter.

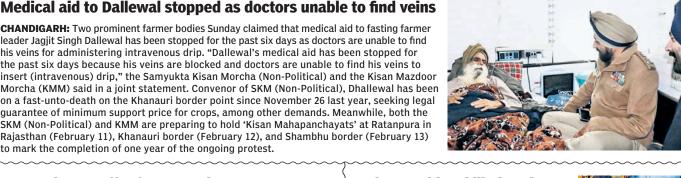
### **SNIPPETS**

CHANDIGARH: Two prominent farmer bodies Sunday claimed that medical aid to fasting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has been stopped for the past six days as doctors are unable to find his veins for administering intravenous drip. "Dallewal's medical aid has been stopped for the past six days because his veins are blocked and doctors are unable to find his veins to insert (intravenous) drip," the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) said in a joint statement. Convenor of SKM (Non-Political), Dhallewal has been on a fast-unto-death on the Khanauri border point since November 26 last year, seeking legal guarantee of minimum support price for crops, among other demands. Meanwhile, both the SKM (Non-Political) and KMM are preparing to hold 'Kisan Mahapanchayats' at Ratanpura in Rajasthan (February 11), Khanauri border (February 12), and Shambhu border (February 13) to mark the completion of one year of the ongoing protest.

#### 150 students suffer from cough, fever; 18 girls hospitalised

SURAT: As many as 150 students of three government residential schools located within one campus in Gujarat's Surat district suffered from a viral infection and 18 of them, all girls, were hospitalised with fever, officials said Sunday. Wadi village in Umarpada taluka has a cluster of three residential schools with over 650 male and female students. Chief District Health Officer

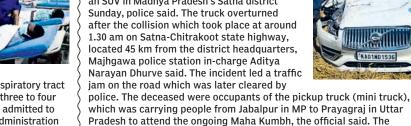
Dr Anil Patel said 150 of these students contracted upper respiratory tract infections with symptoms of cough and fever over the past three to four days. As many as 18 girl students suffering from fever were admitted to a community health centre Saturday, he said. The district administration deployed a team of more than two dozen health personnel to screen the students at the school campus and take care of their health, he said.



Maha Kumbh: 3 killed, 10 hurt as mini truck collides with SUV SATNA (MP): Three persons were killed and ten

others injured when a mini truck carrying people to Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh collided with an SUV in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district Sunday, police said. The truck overturned after the collision which took place at around 1.30 am on Satna-Chitrakoot state highway, located 45 km from the district headquarters Majhgawa police station in-charge Aditya

which was carrying people from Jabalpur in MP to Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh to attend the ongoing Maha Kumbh, the official said. The people in the sports utility vehicle (SUV) were going to Damoh after returning from Prayagraj via Chitrakoot, he said.



# international



**Every day people** are dying. This war is so bad in Ukraine. I want to end this damn thing

DONALD TRUMP

#### NAMIBIA'S 'FOUNDING FATHER' NO MORE

Sam Nujoma, the activist and querrilla leader who became Namibia's first democratically elected president after it won its independence from apartheid South Africa, died aged 95 Saturday. Nuioma rose to head the thinly populated southern African country March 21, 1990 and was formally recognised as "Founding Father of the Namibian Nation" through a 2005 act of parliament





everywhere and



POPE FRANCIS | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER





PREMIER, PAKISTAN

We're in such uncharted waters that anyone who claims to know what in



### SHORT TAKES

#### SL Navy arrests 14 **Indian fishermen**

Colombo: Sri Lankan authorities have arrested 14 Indian fishermen and seized their trawlers for allegedly venturing into the territorial waters of the island nation, the Navy said Sunday. The arrests took place during a special operation conducted in the sea area north of Mannar Saturday, the Sri Lankan Navy said in a statement. "The Sri Lanka Navy seized 2 Indian fishing boats and apprehended 14 Indian fishermen while they were poaching in Sri Lankan waters," it said. The Navy continues to conduct regular patrols and operations in Sri Lankan waters to curb illegal fishing practices of foreign fishing boats, taking into account the impact of those practices on the livelihood of local fishermen, the statement said.

#### Chinese cargo ship runs aground

Moscow: The governor of Russia's Pacific island region of Sakhalin has declared an emergency after a Chinese cargo ship ran aground off its southwest coast. There was no danger to the crew of the An Yang 2, which is carrying coal and heavy fuel oil, Gov Valery Limarenko said in a post on Telegram Sunday. Russia's emergencies ministry said 20 crew were aboard. Limarenko said that no fuel spillage was recorded, but local authorities had to be prepared for any scenario. Bad weather has prevented access by rescue teams to the bulk carrier, which is stranded in shallow waters off Sakhalin's Nevelsky district, he added. Regional authorities said they were preparing to pump fuel out of the damaged vessel. Earlier this year, hundreds of volunteers in southwestern Russia spent weeks trying to contain a massive fuel oil spill from two storm-stricken tankers in the Kerch Strait

## 7.6 magnitude quake

shakes Caribbean Mexico City: A magnitude-7.6 earthquake shook the Caribbean Sea southwest of the Cayman Islands Saturday, according to the US Geological Survey, and some islands and countries urged people near the coastline to move inland in case of a tsunami. The guake struck at 6:23 pm local time in the middle of the sea and had a depth of 10 kilometers, the USGS said Its epicenter was located 130 miles (209 kilometers) south-southwest of George Town in the Cayman Islands. The US National Tsunami Warning Center said there is no tsunami alert for the US mainland but issued a tsunami advisory for Puerto Rico and the US Virgin

#### RAHMAN'S RESIDENCE DEMOLITION

# India's remarks unexpected, unwarranted: Bangladesh

Violence has erupted in Bangladesh since last Wednesday night over a live online address by Hasina, with mobs targeting her supporters, vandalising their homes and businesses across the country



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 9: Asserting that the demolition of the residence of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the country's internal matter, the interim government on Sunday said India's remarks on the incident was "unexpected and unwarranted".

Thousands of protesters on Wednesday last set fire to the 32 Dhanmondi residence of Rahman in Dhaka. Rahman had spearheaded the country's autonomy movement and independence struggle from this residence, which was later transformed into a memorial. This historic residence was where Rahman proclaimed Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971.

India Thursday voiced anguish over the destruction of the historic residence and said the "act of vandalism" should be strongly condemned.

"It is regrettable that the historic residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a symbol of the heroic resistance of the people of Bangladesh against the forces of occupation and oppression, was destroyed

Bangladesh does not

any state, and it expects the same

level of conduct from others

officially comment on

the internal affairs of

MOHAMMAD RAFIQUL ALAM | FOREIGN

on February 5. All those who value the freedom struggle that nurtured Bangla identity and pride are aware of the importance of this residence for the national consciousness of Bangladesh," external affairs ministry spokesperson Rand-

hir Jaiswal had said. Reacting to India's remarks, Bangladesh foreign ministry Sunday said the incident at Dhanmondi pertains to the country's internal affairs, staterun BSS news agency reported.

"A statement from India's Ministry of External Affairs on this matter, issued on February 6, 2025, has come to the attention of the interim government. Such remarks from India's foreign ministry on Bangladesh's internal affairs are unexpected and unwarranted," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mohammad Rafigul Alam was

quoted as saving by BSS. "Bangladesh does not official-

ly comment on the internal affairs of any state, and it expects the same level of conduct from others," he said.

by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has blamed deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's "provocative" speech for sparking "unintended and unexpected' violence in Bangladesh.

> er's office said the demolition of Rahman's residence was "unintended and unexpected", but added that the vandalism was the outburst of public

anger created due to Ha-

"The government hopes that India will not allow its territory to be used for destabilising purposes in Bangladesh and will not allow Sheikh Hasina to

Alam said ousted Prime Minister Hasina, while staying in India, has been making political statements from time to time, which are not being received well by the people of Bangladesh. He said the interim government has already clarified its position on the situation that arose at Dhanmondi 32 February 5.

Violence has erupted in Banher supporters, vandalising their homes and businesses at least 35 districts across the country since Wednesday.

Hasina, 77, has been living in when she fled Bangladesh fol lowing a massive student-led protest that toppled her Awami League's 16-year regime.



The interim government led

In a statement Thursday, the Chief Advis-

sina's provocative statements" against the July uprising from

speak. The interim government does not want such incidents to happen again in the future," it

gladesh since last Wednesday night over a live online address by Hasina, with mobs targeting across the country. Some media tallied about 70 attacks in

India since August 5 last year,



Nadia Ramirez, 7, stands with her mom during the 'Stop The Attacks on Immigrants' protest in Chicago, Saturday PTI PMI

### Israeli military withdraws from Gaza's key corridor

**Netzarim Corridor had** cut off Gaza's north from south

REUTERS

Cairo, Feb 9: The Israeli military has withdrawn from an area of Gaza known as the Netzarim corridor that bisects the enclave, Hamas said Sunday, a move that was expected under the ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Palestinian militant group.

An Israeli security source, requesting anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly, confirmed the Israeli military was withdrawing from its positions in central

Israeli forces had already reduced their presence there.

Hamas celebrated the with drawal as a victory and the Hamas-run police force deployed to the area to manage the flow Palestinians crossing through. The Israeli military had no immediate comment.

Reuters footage showed what appeared to be Israeli military vehicles moving away from the coast and towards the Israeli

Since the early months of the war Israeli forces had oc-



cupied the roughly 4 mile-long corridor south of Gaza City that stretches from the Israeli border to the Mediterranean Sea.

The corridor cut off Gaza's northern communities, including its largest metropolitan area, from the south. Thousands of Palestinians

have streamed through the corridor in recent weeks, returning to their homes in the north from southern Gaza where they had sought shelter Some who crossed over have

described their shock after seeing the destruction of communities and discovering what they said were human remains in areas where Israeli forces had withdrawn. Much of northern Gaza has

become a wasteland following Israel's devastating campaign. After finding their homes destroyed, some Gazans have gone back to the south, while others have set up tents where their homes once stood.

### Kim vows to further develop N-forces as US, Japan, SK meet

Seoul, Feb 9: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un criticised trilateral military cooperation among the United States. Japan and South Korea for raising tensions in the region and vowed countermeasures. including the further development of nuclear forces.

Kim said US deployments of nuclear strategic assets, war exercises and military coop eration with Japan and South Korea were inviting military imbalance in the region and raising a grave challenge to the security environment, state media KCNA reported

Sunday. "The DPRK does not want unnecessary tension of the re gional situation but will take sustained countermeasures to ensure the regional military balance," Kim said during a visit to the defence ministry on Saturday to commemorate

the founding day of its Army. DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official

name. President Trump, after a meeting Friday with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, said he would have relations with North Ko rea, as they expressed concern over its nuclear program.

But during the visit, Kim clarified once again the un shakable policy of more high ly developing the nuclear forc es," according to the report.

On Russia's war with Ukraine, Kim said: "The army and people of the DPRK will invariably support and encourage the just cause of the Russian army and people to defend their sovereignty, se curity and territorial integri ty in keeping with the spirit of the treaty on the comprehen sive strategic partnership be

Last month, South Korea said it suspected North Korea of preparing to send more troops to Russia, in addition to about 11,000 soldiers who had been dispatched for the three-year-long war.

tween the DPRK and Russia.

## Baltic states switch to EU power grid, ending Soviet ties

The move comes a day after Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania severed decades-old energy ties to Russia and Belarus

Vilnius, Feb 9: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania said Sunday they had successfully synchronised their electricity systems to the European continental power grid, one day after severing decades-old energy ties to Russia and Belarus.

Planned for many years, the complex switch away from the grid of their former Soviet



imperial overlord is designed to integrate the three Baltic nations more closely with the European Union and to boost the region's energy security.

"We did it!," Latvian Presi-

dent Edgars Rinkevics said in a post on social media X.

After disconnecting Saturday from the IPS/UPS network, established by the Soviet Union in the 1950s and now run by

Russia, the Baltic nations cut cross-border high-voltage transmission lines in eastern Latvia, some 100 metres from the Russian border.

handing out pieces of chopped wire to victory for enthusiastic byfreedom and standers as keep-**European unity** sakes. KAJA KALLAS | FOREIGN EUforeign

policy chief Kaja Kallas, herself an Estonian, earlier this week called the switch "a victory for freedom and European unity"

The Baltic Sea region is on high alert after power cable, telecom links and gas pipeline outages between the Baltics and Sweden or Finland. All were believed to have been caused by ships dragging anchors along the seabed following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia has denied any involvement.

Russia has denied any involvement.

Poland and the Baltics deployed navy assets, elite police units and helicopters to monitor the area after an undersea power link from Finland to Estonia was damaged in December, while Lithuania's military began drills to protect the over land connection to Poland.

Analysts say any further damage to links could push power prices in the Baltics to levels not seen since the invasion of Ukraine, when energy prices soared.

# UK shadow mins join protest against China's mega embassy plan

### **Shadow ministers are** members of the opposition who

scrutinise the work of the government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Feb 9: UK shadow ministers and fellow Opposition Conservative Party parliamentarians were among hundreds of protesters who descended upon the proposed

site of China's so-called mega embassy in east London. Shadow justice secretary

the Tower of London Saturday. According to UK media re-

ports, the protesters wanted to register their opposition against a much-larger new embassy which they fear could be used as a "spy hub" if it is allowed permission to go ahead as one of China's largest diplomatic missions in Europe.

"We do not want this great historical building behind us in the shadow of the Tower of London — to become a mega embassy of the Chinese Community Party," Jenrick told the gathering. This is the wrong site. It

is the wrong process and it is wrong for the national security housing minister.

bassy with offices and homes, with slogans such as "Stand with Hong Kong" and "Mega Embassy, Mega No" ringing out. its current location at Portland Place, near Baker Street. The council had first rejected

a planning application to develhad again refused at an extraor-Development Committee in De

cerns over the impact on resident and tourist safety, heritage, police resources and highway safety given the "congested nature of the area"

nal decision now rests with Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner after a 'call-in" by her Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

(MHCLG) as the

ultimate decision

However, the fi-

maker. "The Council has

been notified by the Metropolitan Police that it has

Council spokesperson said.

"The process now being followed is that a public inquiry will be held in front of a Planning Inspector from February 11-18. Following the

inquiry, the Inspec-We do not want tor will recommend this great historical to the Secretary o building behind us State whether per - in the shadow of mission should be the Tower of London granted or not. The - to become a mega embassy of Secretary of State the Chinese will then make the **Community Party** final decision," the

> The MCLG Secretary of State can "call in" planning ap

spokesperson added

plications where they consider there may be issues of national significance, having regard to

ROBERT JENRICK | SHADOW

JUSTICE SECRETARY

is believed to have raised the is sue directly with British Prime

of our country," said the former Robert Jenrick, shadow securi-China bought the 20,000 op the site in 2022 before it was formally removed its objection ty minister Tom Tugendhat and square metres of land at Royal resubmitted last year, which it to the planning application as The Metropolitan Police Mint Court in 2018 for GBP 225 it feels there is sufficient space former Tory leader Ian Duncan published government policy. Smith joined groups representclashed with the protesters, who million and submitted plans to dinary meeting of the Strategic for future protests to be accom-Chinese President Xi Jinping ing Hong Kongers, Uyghurs had gathered in large numbers the local Tower Hamlets Counmodated without significantly impacting the adjacent road to demonstrate the site's disrupand Tibetans at the site of the cember last year. cil to turn the site into a much Its rejection is due to connetwork," a Tower Hamlets historic Royal Mint Court near tive potential as a massive emlarger London embassy than Minister Keir Starmer.

# Business



The employability of India's graduates has shot up from 33.95 per cent in 2013 to 54.81 per cent in 2024 driven by various skill-building initiatives launched by the government

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA

#### 9 IPOs TO HIT MARKET

Nine new initial public offerings (IPOs) are scheduled to open for subscription next week, with three mainboards -- Ajax Engineering, Hexaware Technologies, and Quality Power -- and six SMEs to hit the market.





are some states like Karnataka, **Tamil Nadu** and Telangana which say they

should get back the amount of taxes they have paid. There can't be more petty thinking than this. There cannot also be anything more unfortunate than this

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION COMMERCE MINISTER

The growing power requirements of Indian Railways are likely to be met with clean and reliable nuclear power, for





#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### **Maruti Suzuki to** boost charging infra

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India aims to bolster charging infrastructure in the country before it drives in e VITARA with plans to establish the model as a primary vehicle in a household, according to a senior company executive. The auto major also plans to boost after-sales support, bring in a leasing model and more finance options to encourage customers to buy the model. One of the major concerns for the customer is the adequacy of the public infrastructure in terms of the chargers. So we are planning to have a fast charger at a frequency of 10 kilometers in the top 100 cities," Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Senior Executive Officer (Marketing & Sales) Partho Banerjee told PTI in an

#### Bajaj Auto to ride into e-rickshaw

New Delhi: Bajaj Auto is gearing up to enter the domestic e-rickshaw segment by the end of this fiscal to tap a 'sizable opportunity' in a fast-growing but highly unorganised market, according to a top company official. The company expects to get regulatory clearances towards the end of the ongoing quarter for its e-rickshaw that will enable it to enter the segment which is about 45,000 units a month, Bajaj Auto Executive Director Rakesh Sharma told analysts. "By the end of this financial year, we also intend to launch a modern 'e-rick'. which will set an absolutely new standard in the segment and bring a very high level of satisfaction to both owners and passengers," he said.

#### OYO PAT rises nearly 6 times

New Delhi: Travel tech unicorn OYO recorded a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹166 crore in the third quarter ended December, up nearly six times from ₹25 crore in the year-ago period, sources said. The company's revenue in the third quarter rose to ₹1,695 crore, growing almost 31 per cent from ₹1,296 crore a year earlier, marking a turnaround from the flat topline growth seen in FY24. According to documents accessed by PTI, the company achieved an adjusted EBITDA of ₹249 crore in the October-December period of FY25, registering a 22 per cent increase from ₹205 crore a year ago.

# FPIs' incessant selling continues

New Delhi, Feb 9: The exodus of FPIs from the Indian equity markets continued unabated, as they withdrew over ₹7,300 crore (about 840 million) in the first week of this month due to global trade tensions, with the US imposing tariffs on countries such as Canada, Mexico, and China.

This came following an outflow of ₹78,027 crore in the entire January. Before that, they invested ₹15,446 crore in December, data with the depositories showed.

Going forward, experts believe that market sentiment will likely take cues from global macroeconomic developments, domestic policy measures, and currency move-

According to the data, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) offloaded shares worth ₹7,342 crore from Indian equities so far this month (till February 7).

Srivastava, Himanshu Associate Director-Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said that a key driver of the outflow was global trade tensions, as the United States imposed tariffs on countries including Canada, Mexico, and China, heightening fears of a potential trade war.

This uncertainty triggered a risk-averse sentiment among global investors, prompting capital flight from emerging



Further exacerbating the situation, the Indian rupee depreciated sharply, breaching ₹87 per US dollar mark for the first time. A weaker rupee erodes returns for foreign investors, making Indian assets relatively less attractive and adding to the pressure on FPI lows, Srivastava added.

"The strength in the dollar index and the high US bond vields continue to force the FPIs to sell. Going forward, FPIs are likely to reduce their selling since the dollar index and US bond yields are indicating a softening trend," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

He further said that the sentiments in the Indian market would slowly improve in response to the Budget announcement and Bank of India (RBI).

Going forward, experts believe that market sentiment will likely take cues from global macroeconomic developments, domestic policy measures, and **currency movements** 

The victory of the BJP in the Delhi elections is likely to positively impact the market in the short run. However, the medium to long-term trend in the market will depend on the recovery in GDP growth and earnings recovery, he added.

"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," Manoj Purohit, Partner & Leader, FS Tax, Tax & Regulatory Services, BDO India, said.

On the other hand, FPIs were buyers in the debt market. They put in ₹1,215 crore into debt general limit and ₹277 crore in debt voluntary retention route.

The overall trend indicates a cautious approach by foreign investors, who scaled back investments in Indian equities significantly in 2024, with net inflows of just ₹427 crore.

This contrasts sharply with the extraordinary ₹1.71 lakh crore net inflows in 2023, driven by optimism over India's strong economic fundamentals. In comparison, 2022 saw a net outflow of ₹1.21 lakh crore amid aggressive rate hikes by global central banks.

## Markets to track inflation data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 9: Investors would track a host of macroeconomic data announcements scheduled this week, including inflation numbers, and also monitor global market trends, and trading activity of foreign institutional investors, analysts said.

The ongoing quarterly earnings announcements and the rupee-dollar trend would also influence the markets.

'This week is set to be dynamic for global and Indian markets, driven by key macroeconomic data releases and corporate earnings. Market sentiment will be shaped by inflation figures, industrial production data, and major earnings announcements," Master Trust Group Director Puneet Singhania said.

On Wednesday, the US inflation data for January will be in focus. Later in the day, Fed Chair Jerome Powell's testimony will be closely watched for insights into interest rate expectations, Singhania said.

"For India, inflation and industrial production data will be released February 12." he said.

On Thursday, the UK's GDP growth data will be released and on Friday the US retail sales data for January will provide insights into consumer spending, Singhania said.

Corporate earnings will also drive market sentiment. Major companies reporting earnings



include Eicher Motors, Grasim Industries, Vodafone Idea Steel Authority of India, he

The BJP Saturday trounced the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi and returned to power in the city after more than 26 years extending its saffron imprint and dealing a body blow to the Arvind Kejriwal-led party whose top leadership crumbled or barely made it. "The sentiments in the Indi

an market are slowly improving in response to an excellent Budget and the rate cut by the MPC. The victory of the BJP in the Delhi elections is a ma jor achievement for the ruling dispensation. This is likely to positively impact the market in the short run. However, the medium to long-term trend in the market will depend on the recovery in GDP growth and earnings recovery," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 354.23 points, or 0.45 per cent, and the Nifty went up by 77.8 points, or 0.33

## SEBI proposes stricter India's pharma exports to reach rules for listed firms

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 9: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed new rules to improve corporate governance at listed companies.

These proposals focus on revising the format of the Annual Secretarial Compliance Report (ASCR), setting eligibility criteria for appointing auditors, and introducing monetary limits for approvals of Related Party Transactions (RPTs).

The SEBI aims to ensure that listed companies follow strict compliance and maintain transparency in their operations.

In a consultation paper, the regulator has suggested changes to make the ASCR more detailed.

The new format will provide clearer confirmation of whether a company is following securities laws. Additionally, the SEBI has

proposed making ASCR a mandatory part of the annual report, which would enhance accountability

For auditor appointments, it has suggested incorporating provisions from the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014, into the Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) Regulations.

This will ensure that statutorv auditors have the necessary qualifications and experience suited to a company's size and

The SEBI has also proposed that audit committees should carefully evaluate the qualifications of signing partners before



To improve transparency in auditor appointments, it has recommended that key details about the selection or re-appointment of statutory and secretarial auditors should be disclosed to the audit committee, board of directors, and shareholders. It has also suggested introducing a standard format for such disclosures.

The SEBI has further proposed monetary limits for RPTs conducted by subsidiaries of listed companies.

It has suggested two approval thresholds for these transac-

For subsidiaries with a financial track record, the approval threshold will be the lower of either 10 per cent of turnover or a monetary limit -- ₹1,000 crore for main-board companies and ₹50 crore for SMEs.

For subsidiaries without a financial track record, the threshold will be based on 10 per cent of the subsidiary's net worth or the same monetary

If the subsidiary has a negative net worth, share capital plus securities premium will be considered instead.

# \$350 billion by 2047: Report

New Delhi, Feb 9: India's pharmaceutical exports are projected to double from approximately \$27 billion in 2023 to reach \$65 billion by 2030, and can further grow to an estimated \$350 billion by 2047, accord-

While India is the largest supplier of generic drugs globally, accounting for one in five generic drugs sold worldwide, the nation currently ranks 11th in terms of export value.

ing to a new report.

By innovating and diversifying its export basket to include specialty generics, biosimilars, and innovative products, the report emphasizes how India can potentially secure a position among the top five nations in export value by 2047, according to the report by Bain & amp; Company in collaboration with the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA), Indian Drugs Manufacturers Association (IDMA)

and Pharmexcil. "India has long been the pharmacy of the world. Now we want to change the narrative to 'India as the healthcare custodian of the world'. The government is fully committed to achieving this goal by fostering innovation, boosting R&D, and ensuring seamless regulatory processes," said Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry

By strengthening collaboration between academia, industry, and government, we will continue to build a globally competitive sector that



While India is the largest supplier of generic drugs globally, accounting for one in five generic drugs sold worldwide, the nation currently ranks 11th in terms of export value

drives growth and contributes to healthcare worldwide," the minister added.

According to Sriram Shrinivasan, Partner, Bain & Company, 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. With the right focus on quality, regulation, access to global markets.

talent, and entrepreneurial innovation," he mentioned.

India's API export market is projected to grow from \$5 billion currently to \$80-90 billion by 2047. While Indian players currently hold less than 5 per cent of the global biosimilars market, green shoots are visible, driven by increasing R&D investments, an expanded pipeline of 40+ products and planned capacity addition over the next 3-4 years.

Indian biosimilar exports, currently valued at \$0.8 billion, are projected to grow 5x to \$4.2 billion by 2030, capturing 4 per cent of the global market, and reach \$30-35 billion by 2047, the report said.

Îndia's pharma exports at 70 per cent and valued at \$19 billion, are projected to grow to \$180-190 billion by 2047.

"India can become one of the leaders in pharma exports, but needs strategic interventions. said Dr. Viranchi Shah, National President at IDMA

### Mcap of 6 of most-valued firms surges ₹1.18 lakh cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 9: The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most valued firms surged ₹1,18,151.75 crore last week, with HD FC Bank and Bharti Airtel emerging as the biggest gain ers, in-line with firm trend

Last week, the BSE bench mark climbed 354.23 points, or 0.45 per cent, and the Nifty went up 77.8 points, or 0.33

While Reliance Industries HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel ICICI Bank, Infosys and Baiai Finance were the gainers from the top-10 pack, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) State Bank of India, Hindu stan Unilever, and ITC faced erosion from their valuation. Together these four firms lost ₹1.15 lakh crore from their

valuation. The market valuation of HDFC Bank jumped ₹32,639.98 crore to ₹13,25,090.58 crore.

Bharti Airtel added ₹31,003.44 crore taking its valuation to ₹9,56,205.34 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bajaj Finance surged ₹29.032.08 crore to ₹5.24.312.82 crore and that of Infosys rallied ₹21,114.32 crore to ₹7,90,074.08

The mcap of Reliance Industries climbed ₹2,977.12 crore to ₹17,14,348.66 crore and that of ICICI Bank went up ₹1,384.81 crore to ₹8.87.632.56 crore.

However, the valuation of ITC tanked ₹39,474.45 crore to ₹5,39,129.60 crore.

The mcap of Hindustan Unilever tumbled ₹33.704.89 crore to ₹5,55,361.14 crore.

## Meta likely to lay off 3,000 employees, says leaked memo

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 9: Tech giant Meta is expected to lav off around 3,000 employees, which is about 5 per cent of its total workforce, as per a leaked internal memo, a report said

According to the report, the memo, posted by Janelle Gale, Meta's Vice President of Human Resources, was shared on the company's internal workplace forum.

The memo states that affected employees will receive an email Monday morning inform-

ing them about their job status. For some international employees, the layoff process will begin on Sunday at 2.30 am IST. In the US, employees will be

notified at 6.30 pm IST Monday. Within an hour of receiving the email, they will lose access to company systems. The email will also provide details about

severance packages. Gale acknowledged the difficulty of the situation, especially for teams losing a manager or colleague.

She mentioned that Meta offices will remain open, but employees who prefer



to work remotely on Monday

Since Meta follows a hybrid work model, requiring employees to be in the office three days a week, working from home on Monday will still count as an

in-person workday. The company has not disclosed the names of the employees being laid off.

Some of these roles may be refilled in the future, but there

reporting heads.

is no set timeline. Employees whose managers

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg

are laid off will be assigned new

cuts, stating that the company was raising performance stan-

had previously hinted at job

Typically, Meta phases out low performers over a year, but this time, the layoffs are happening on a much larger scale based on recent performance reviews.

Meanwhile, Amazon recently laid off dozens of employees while Salesforce cut about 1,000 jobs earlier this year.

The trend of job cuts in the tech industry continues as com-

panies focus on efficiency and cost-cutting.

total, but Jadeja's

disciplined bowl-

ing stifled their

#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### **Dhamne wins maiden Pro ITF singles title**

New Delhi: Promising Indian youngster Manas Dhamne Sunday clinched his maiden ITF singles title with a come-frombehind win over Italy's Lorenzo Carboni in the summit clash of the M15 tournament in Monastir, Tunisia. Dhamne, who trains in Italy under renowned coach Riccardo Piatti, overcame the firstset deficit to come out a 2-6 6-0 6-2 winner against Carboni, who had reached the junior French Open semifinals last year. The 17-yearold had entered the main draw as a qualifier, thus winning eight matches on the trot in as many days.

#### Military, paramilitary rangers in charge

Lahore: The Pakistan government has given its go-ahead for using the military and paramilitary rangers to shore up security for the forthcoming ICC Champions Trophy in the country. According to media reports, the federal cabinet okayed plans to have top security for the mega-event and gave approval to use military and rangers for this purpose. The government has already earmarked over 10,000 policemen including elite commando units to provide security at the grounds and team hotels in Lahore. Karachi and Rawalpindi when the tournament begins February 19 in Karachi.

#### **Madrid derby** ends in draw

Madrid: Kylian Mbappé scored in his first capital derby against Atletico Madrid as Real Madrid fought back for a 1-1 draw and kept its slim lead of the Spanish league Saturday. Next up for Mbappé and Madrid is a trip to Manchester City Tuesday for the first leg of their Champions League knockout round playoff. Julián Álvarez put Atletico ahead from the penalty spot in the 35th minute. Mbappé equalized in the 50th for the hosts, which stayed one point ahead of Atletico in the standings.

# HITMAN SHOW

The skipper's century comes as a much-needed relief for cricket fans before Champions Trophy



India's Ravindra Jadeja, center, celebrates with Virat Kohli, left, and Harshit Rana after taking the wicket of England's Ben Duckett during the second One Day International (ODI) cricket match of a series between India and England, at Barabati Stadium, in Cuttack, Odisha, Sunday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Feb 9: Under pressure with questions over form and mounting retirement speculations, skipper Rohit Sharma silenced it all with a vintage 32nd century, firing India to a dominant four-wicket series-clinching victory over England in the second ODI, here Sunday.

Opting to bat on a belter, England were bowled out for 304 in 49.5 overs with left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja (3/35) continuing his stranglehold over the visitors

The 37-year-old Indian skipper made the chase a lopsided affair, returning to his World Cup 2023 best with impeccable timing and

effortless strokeplay en route to his 90-ball 119 -- his century No 32 in ODIs that came just in time ahead of the Champions Trophy in less than two weeks.

90-ball masterclass. studded with seven sixes and 12 fours, set the tone as India cruised to the target in 44.3 overs to take an unbeatable 2-0 lead going into the final ODI in Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

Shubman Gill also made a fluent 60 off 52 balls (9x4, 1x6) but it felt overshadowed in comparison to Rohit in their solid opening partnership of 136 runs -- their sixth century-plus stand

Back after missing out the

knee, star batter Virat Kohli (5) fell cheaply edging a Adil Rashid leg-break. Rashid has now got Kohli four times in ODIs.

Rohit then had a fruitful 70run stand with Shreyas Iyer (44) before he was dismissed off a full toss with Rashid taking a fine backward running catch.

Iyer soon departed following a runout, while KL Rahul (10) and Hardik Pandya (10) also fell

But there was hardly any runrate pressure and Axar Patel (41 not out) held his ground as he along with Ravindra Jadeja (11 not out) completed the formalities with 33 balls to spare.

Rohit's knock also saw him

10,889 runs to enter the top-10 ODI run-scorers' list. He now requires 13 runs to complete 11,000 ODI runs.

His pull shots had precision, his cuts carried flair, and there were no mishits. He even unleashed a cool reverse sweep off Rashid, pure dominance written in his innings

He signalled his intent early, charging down to Gus Atkinson for a four before flicking a six over mid-wicket with ease that had the Rohit-esque flair.

Against Saqib Mahmood, he opened the bat face to loft a stunning six over cover as he seemed to have got his mojo back.

A 35-minute floodlight failure when Rohit was on 29 couldn't It was good and really enjoyed being out there, scoring some runs for the team. It was an important game with the series on the line but I broke it down to pieces about how I wanted to bat

ROHIT SHARMA | CAPTAIN

disrupt his rhythm.

Resuming with the same intensity, he glanced Mahmood for a fine boundary and then took charge of Mark Wood's 140-plus deliveries with disdain.

Luck also played its part -- on 36, he survived

LBW call against Wood on the umpire's call, with the ball clipping the top of leg stump.

The very next delivery, he responded in style, launching an overpitched delivery over mid-on for a six as he raced to a 30-ball fifty.

Against Rashid, he was equally assured, cutting and sweeping the leg-spinner for boundar-

He brought up his three figures in 76 balls, spanking Rashid over long-off -his first in 14 innings.

This was also his second fastest hundred. His fastest was a 63-ball hundred against Afghanistan in the 2023 World Cup. Earlier. left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja continued his stranglehold over English batters with brilliant figures of 3/35 as India bowled out the visitors for a sub-par 304 after opting to bat.

On a belter, Jadeja's crucial breakthroughs came against the run of play as he dismissed an aggressive Ben Duckett (65 off 56 balls) and a well-set Joe Root (69 off 72 balls), preventing England from building on their strong start.

England laid a solid foundation with contributions from Duckett, Root, and skipper Jos Buttler (34 off 35 balls).

At 200/3 in 35 overs, England seemed on course for a 330-plus



**BRIEF SCORES** 

ingland: 304 all out in 49.5 overs Ben Duckett 65, Joe Root 69, Liam Livingstone 41; Ravindra Jadeja ers (Rohit Sharma 119, Shubma Gill 60, Shreyas Iyer 44; Jamie Overton 2/27) by 4 wickets

**Gukesh takes on** 

Hamburg, Feb 9: World cham-

pion D Gukesh will take on Fabi-

ano Caruana of the United States

in the two-game quarterfinal af-

ter the latter picked the Indian

in a unique format typical of

Finishing eighth among 10

participants, Gukesh just about

made it to the knockout stage

edging out Vladimir Fedoseev

of Slovenia and Levon Aronian

of United States, the last two

finishers in the round-robin

stage that was played under

As per the tournament rules

the top three have the right to

decide their opponents in the

quarterfinal and Firouzja picked

Vincent Keymer of Germany as

his opponent. Sindarov sur

prised everyone by going for

Hikaru Nakamura of the Unit

ed States -- a formidable name

in chess 960 -- while Caruana

opted for Gukesh, leaving out

Norwegian Magnus Carlsen

rapid-chess rules.

Freestyle Chess Grand Slam.

Caruana in QF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

### **TO GLORY**

### Odisha sprinters bag more golds eration Cup National Cham-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Feb 9: Top sprinter Animesh Kujur picked up his second gold in the 38th edition of National Games as he anchored Odisha to men's 4x100m relay gold Sunday, adding to the yellow metal he had pocketed in the 100m dash with a meet record-equalling time in a top-class field here Saturday.

Another Games record fell when the Odisha men's 4x100m relay team of Lalu Prasad Bhoi, Animesh Kujur, Mrutyam Jayram and Amiya Kumar

Malclocked 39.47 seconds win the gold. The earli

After winning the 100m dash Saturday, the rising sprinter Animesh Kujur anchors Odisha

> In the men's 400m, the 18-year-old Bapi Hansda of Odisha won the gold in the absence of the country's top quartermilers, clocking a personal best of 46.82 seconds

to men's 4x100m relay gold

record was in the name of Services team which had clocked 39.94s in 2011.

Tamil Nadu (40.08s) and Kerala (40.73s) took the silver and bronze respectively.

Former national record holder and 2015 edition gold medallist Siddhanth Thingalaya, representing Maharashtra, did not finish the final race.

In the men's 400m, the 18-year-old Bapi Hansda of Odisha won the gold in the absence of the country's top quarter-milers, clocking a personal best of 46.82 seconds. His earlier best time was 46.90s he had clocked while winning the 400m race during the U-20 Fed-

pionships in 2024. Vikrant Panchal (46.92s) of Haryana and Manu TS (47.08s) of Kerala won the silver and bronze respectively. In the women's corresponding race, 2023 Asian Championships silver medallist Aishwarya Mishra of Maharashtra bettered her Games record to clinch the gold. She clocked 51.12 seconds, bettering the 52.50s she nad clocked in 2022

Vithya Ramraj of Tamil Nadu, who was defending the gold medal, finished second with a time of 54.43s while Devyaniba Zala (54.44s) of Gujarat took the bronze.

Paris Olympian Kiran Pahal and another top quarter-miler Rupal Chaudhary had pulled out of the heat races Saturday, taking some sheen off the women's 400m competition.

Out of the 10 gold medals on offer on the day, Maharashtra and Odisha won two each, while Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Harvana, West Bengal and Karnataka pocketed one each.

## Odisha FC to host Punjab FC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: Playoffs contenders Odisha FC and Punjab FC will look to avoid consecutive losses as they face off in their Indian Super League match here Monday.

The Juggernauts will pursue recovering from their 2-1 setback to FC Goa in their previous match, whereas Punjab FC will have their sights set on a league double over the opponents, since they had clinched a 2-1 win in the reverse fixture last September.

A win here could mark the first time that Punjab FC defeats an opponent twice in the same season. Odisha FC have been on a turbulent ride of late, losing and drawing thrice each in their previous seven matches, struggling for consistency. They have netted 12 times in these seven games, and in the entirety of the season, the team has struck the woodwork on 13 instances – the most by any

The hosts will bank on Diego Mauricio to produce the hero-



away from completing 10 goals for the fourth time in his ISL

In their most recent away game, Punjab FC was dealt a 0-3 loss by the Mohun Bagan Super Giant. If they are unable to score again, it will be only the second time when they fail to find the back of the net in consecutive games in the ISL.

Both these sides are out of the top-six positions presently. Odisha FC are seventh in the standings with 25 points from 19 games due to six victories and seven draws, trailing sixthplaced Bengaluru FC by three points (28).

#### and Nodirbek Abdusattorov ics upfront, as he is one strike of Uzbekistan to battle it out. England women's team arrive in City

# TTLER SINDHU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 9: Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu has pulled out of the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships in China due to a hamstring issue, dealing a huge blow to the country's chances of improving the colour of their

medal in the prestigious edition. The tournament is set to be played in Qingdao from February 11-16 with the Indian shuttlers currently undergoing training at a camp in Guwahati. Besides Sindhu, the other leading players in the camp are Lakshya Sen, and HS Prannoy, along with the formidable doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty.

Sindhu was a part of the squad that won bronze in the previous edition of the tourna-

### ASIA MIXED TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS



ment. "It is with a heavy heart that I share I won't be travelling with the team for BAMTC 2025. While training on the 4th (February) in Guwahati, I felt a twinge in my hamstring. Despite my efforts to push through with heavy taping for our country, an MRI has revealed that

my recovery will take slightly longer than I initially expected,' said the 29-year-old Sindhu in a post on 'X'. Sindhu has grappled with injuries since winning her maiden women's singles gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

However, the star shuttler sustained a left foot stress fracture injury during the Games, which kept her out of all remaining tournaments in 2022, including the World Championships and the World Tour Finals.

India are placed in a tough Group D alongside runners-up South Korea and Macau. They will begin their campaign against Macau February 12, which will be followed by a tough outing against South Korea February 13.

#### **FIH PRO LEAGUE**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Feb 9: The England women's hockey team arrived at the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar, Odisha Sunday ahead of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 India leg matches.

The World No 7 side will face the hosts India and current World No 1 Netherlands in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 India leg, scheduled to take place in Bhubaneswar from February 15 to 25.

With one win and three losses so far, England have made a rocky start to their FIH Pro League campaign and will be hoping to turn things around despite facing challenging opponents.



is nothing like I have ever seen so I am extremely excited." Despite struggling at the World Cups recently, England

is the current Commonwealth champions after the gold medal win in 2022. With big names in the squad this year, England is one of the teams to watch out for. Head coach David Ralph too

echoed the excitement and stated, we are expecting the matches to be very challenging but we are excited. It is going to be wonderful for the girls to play in front of the Indian crowd. In hockey, this is one of the best things you can experience.

Currently, China lead the chart with 13 points in seven matches followed by Neth erlands, Australia, Belgium and Argentina, respectively to complete the top 5. Indian women's team will begin their FIH Hockey Pro League 2024 25 campaign against England February 15.

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