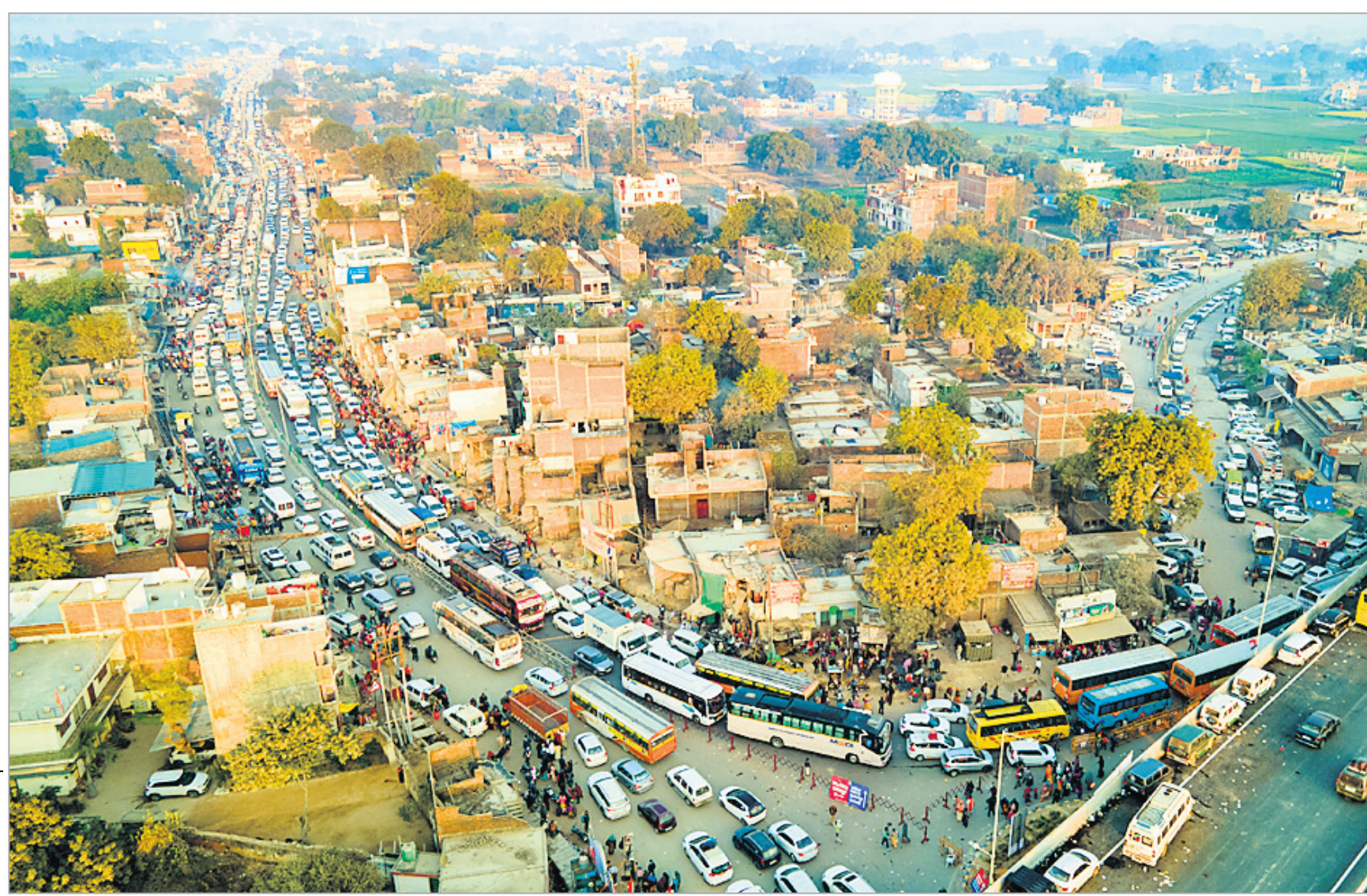


**Stern response**  
 Actor Saba Azad hits back at troll who said she doesn't need to work since she's Hrithik Roshan's girlfriend  
 LEISURE | P2

**Crackdown on the rise**  
 Action on Indian restaurants is a "UK-wide blitz" on illegal working in the country, UK Home Office says Monday  
 INTERNATIONAL | P10

**Gold hits lifetime high**  
 Gold prices zoom by ₹2,430 to hit a lifetime high of ₹88,500 per 10 grams in the national capital  
 BUSINESS | P11

**Tough task for India**  
 Without PV Sindhu, who's injured, India will face an uphill task to secure a gold medal at Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships  
 SPORTS | P12



**CHOCK-A-BLOCK:** Commuters had a harrowing time when an unprecedented congestion chocked several routes to Prayagraj, the Mahakumbh venue in UP, Monday

## Tomato distress sale hits farmers

First it was unseasonal rain and now a drop in prices – there seems to be no end to the miseries of farmers in Odisha. As if the December rain was not enough to spoil the Rabi paddy harvest, a bumper tomato production in several parts of the state has caused the prices to fall drastically, leading to distress sale of the perishable commodity. With farmers already grappling with lack of cold storage facilities and market access, middlemen are cashing in on the situation to make hay at the cost of the hapless peasants many of whom prefer to dump their produce in frustration, rather than selling the fruits of their labour at throwaway prices. If the government fails to intervene in this agrarian crisis, by establishing adequate number of cold storages and by providing easy market access, it will only result in worsening the rural distress

ol village in Ganjam block. On Friday, he sold around 15 quintals of tomatoes at ₹3 per kg. "In our area, some farmers even abandoned their crop after traders offered them just ₹2 per kg," said Pahan, who cultivated tomatoes on an acre of land. "Forget about profit, we cannot even recover the basic expenses on seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, and transportation," said Daya Pradhan from Math Mukundapur village of the district. Instead of selling tomatoes at such a low price, "I decided to feed the crop to my cattle," said Upendra Polai, a farmer from Shatrusola. Ganjam block is one of the major tomato-growing areas in the state. Kand Jena, deputy director of the Horticulture department, said tomato prices crashed in the district over the past week. "A bumper crop this year is one of the reasons behind the drop in prices," he said. Several farmers opted to grow tomatoes, a short-duration seasonal crop, leading to an oversupply and a price dip. "In Ganjam, tomatoes were grown on around 1,500 hectares this season," Jena said. Brundaban Khatei, a farmers' leader and former zilla parishad member, said tomato growers suffered due to lack of food processing industries and cold storages in the district. Meanwhile, reports also came in from Hatibari village in Karamula panchayat under Gondia block of Dhenkanal district where farmers have been selling tomatoes at ₹2 per kg to traders. They have resorted to distress sale owing to lack of cold storage facilities in the area, the reports said.

PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur/Dhenkanal, Feb 10:** Close on the heels of reports about distress sale of tomato in Keonjhar district, farmers cultivating the juicy vegetable in Ganjam and Dhenkanal districts are facing severe losses as prices have crashed to ₹3 to ₹5 per kg at farm level, despite being sold for ₹10 to ₹15 per kg in the market. Unable to recover even basic production costs, many farmers have been forced into distress sales, while some have abandoned their crops altogether. "After spending so much time and money on the crop for the last three months, we are not even recovering the labour costs," said Surath Pahan, a tomato grower from Satrush-

Washington, Feb 10: President Donald Trump said he will soon announce that the US will impose 25 per cent tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports from countries, including Canada and Mexico. "Any steel coming into the United States is going to have a 25 per cent tariff," he told reporters Sunday on Air Force One as he flew from Florida to New Orleans to attend the Super Bowl. When asked about aluminum, he responded, "aluminum, too" will be subject to the trade penalties. He reaffirmed that he would announce "reciprocal tariffs" – "probably Tuesday or Wednesday" – meaning that the US would impose import duties on products in cases where another country has levied duties on US goods. "If they are charging us 130% and we're charging them nothing, it's not going to stay that way," Trump told reporters.



Farmers dump tomatoes at Hatibari village in Dhenkanal district Monday

### SHORT TAKES

**Prez Murmu takes holy dip at Sangam**

**Mahakumbh Nagar:** President Droupadi Murmu took a holy dip at Triveni Sangam here Monday and said the huge gathering of faith and belief at the Mahakumbh is a living symbol of India's rich cultural heritage. After the dip at the Sangam, Murmu offered a coconut to River Ganga and prayers to the Sun god. Later, in a post on X, she said, "Today I had the good fortune of bathing in the holy confluence of Maa Ganga, Yamuna and the stream Saraswati in the divine atmosphere of Prayagraj Mahakumbh." The President said the Mahakumbh conveys the message of unity and spirituality to humanity. P9

**PM Modi embarks on France-US visit**

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who embarked on a five-day trip to France and United States (US), said Monday that his visit to US will be an opportunity to build upon the successes achieved during President Donald Trump's first term in the collaboration between the two countries. He arrived in France Monday on a three-day visit during which he will co-chair an AI Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron and hold bilateral talks with him. Modi was warmly greeted by the Indian community when he reached his hotel. On Tuesday, the PM will co-chair the AI Action Summit along with President Macron. Modi and Macron will also hold discussions in both restricted and delegation formats and address the India-France CEO's Forum. From France, the Prime Minister will travel to US on the second leg of his two-nation tour. P8

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No need to be outraged, sir. It was just hate speech, not a vulgar stand-up joke

## Govt seeks OCA reply in 10 days

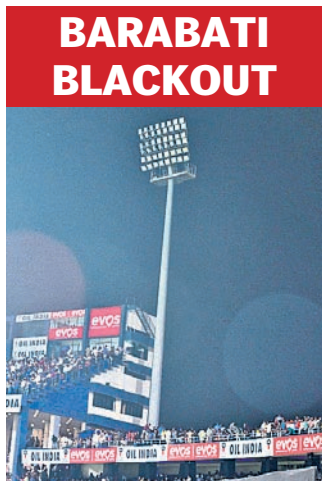
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** Embarrassed over floodlight failure leading to disruption in the second One Day International (ODI) between India and England at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack for around 30 minutes, the state government Monday issued a show-cause notice to Odisha Cricket Association (OCA), seeking a reply within 10 days.

In a letter to OCA secretary Sanjay Behera, state Sports Director Siddhartha Das said, "The OCA is hereby directed to submit a detailed explanation for the cause of disruption and identify the persons/agencies that were responsible for such lapses and outline the measures taken to prevent similar incidents in the future."

The findings must be submitted within 10 days upon receipt of this letter, the Sports department said.

Speaking to reporters, Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj



said stringent action would be taken against the persons responsible for the incident and even suggested the arrest of those found guilty. "This (match disruption due to floodlight failure) is a serious matter and has hurt the sports lovers across the state and pained us. Therefore, the Sports department has issued a show-cause notice to the OCA.

They have sub-committees to look after different aspects. Earlier, we had also reviewed the preparations twice to streamline the system. Still, it is yet to be found out as to which committee was in charge of the floodlight and why the backup generator could not reach the place at the appropriate time," the minister said. The minister, however, thanked the OCA for proper crowd management.

The OCA secretary had told reporters Sunday that the backup generators could not reach the floodlight tower immediately because the players' bus was parked near it.

"The driver was not in the bus and he was called up and asked to remove the vehicle after which the generators could reach the tower and the power was restored," Behera had said.

Meanwhile, Opposition Congress and BJD have strongly criticised the state government and stated that the incident has brought a bad name for Odisha.

## TRUMP'S NEW TARIFF THREAT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 10: President Donald Trump said he will soon announce that the US will impose 25 per cent tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports from countries, including Canada and Mexico.

"Any steel coming into the United States is going to have a 25 per cent tariff," he told reporters Sunday on Air Force One as he flew from Florida to New Orleans to attend the Super Bowl. When asked about aluminum, he responded, "aluminum, too" will be subject to the trade penalties. He reaffirmed that he would announce "reciprocal tariffs" – "probably Tuesday or Wednesday" – meaning that the US would impose import duties on products in cases where another country has levied duties on US goods.

"If they are charging us 130% and we're charging them nothing, it's not going to stay that way," Trump told reporters.

## Allahbadia's comment on 'parents & sex' sparks row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** Social media influencer Ranveer Allahbadia's distasteful comment on parents and sex led to massive outrage across the spectrum Monday, prompting the YouTube with almost 16 million followers on social media platforms to apologise and say comedy is not his forte.

The flip remark intended for quick laughs raised hackles instead with politicians, including Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, activists, social media users and others calling for a ban and slamming him for being crass, vulgar and offensive. The comment was made on the YouTube reality show "India's Got Latent" hosted by comedian Samay Raina, popular amongst some sections for its often offensive content.

Allahbadia, whose podcasts feature the rich and the famous, including top Bollywood stars, was one of the online content creators who received a National

Creators Award from Prime Minister Narendra Modi at an event in New Delhi last year. He had earlier partnered with the Digital India Corporation to interview a series of cabinet ministers, including S Jaishankar and Piyush Goyal. He has over 6,00,000 followers on X, 4.5 million on Instagram and 10.5 million subscribers on his YouTube channel.

Allahbadia said the comment, which cannot be reproduced here, was a "lapse in judgement".

"Comedy is not my forte. Just here to say sorry... Many of you asked if this is how I wish to use my platform... Family is the last thing that I would ever disrespect..." he said in a video statement on X.

In Mumbai, a BJP functionary lodged a police complaint against Allahbadia, Raina and participants of the show.

In mounting trouble for him, NHRC member Priyank Kanungo wrote to YouTube's head of public policy in India and asked for "urgent action".

## No water to drink, you daydream about cycle tracks: SC to petitioner

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** States do not have money to provide affordable housing and people don't have clean water to drink and you are daydreaming about cycle tracks, the Supreme Court said Monday while refusing to hear a plea.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing a plea filed by cycling promoter Davinder Singh Nagi for the creation of separate cycle tracks in the country when it told the petitioner that one needed to get their priorities right and underlined the need to give attention to other "more urgent issues".

"Go to any major city; go to the slums and find out in what condition the people are living. The states don't have money to take care of slum dwellers. States cannot afford to give affordable housing and now we are day-



**Petitioner Davinder Singh Nagi had sought nationwide creation of cycle tracks with his counsel contending that several states already have cycle tracks**

dreaming that ... when people don't have elementary facilities of residence and basic facilities of medical treatment ... we are daydreaming by saying that every city should have cycling tracks," Justice Oka remarked.

The bench went on to observe, "Our priorities are going wrong. We have to get our priorities right. We should be more worried about Article 21 of the Constitution. People don't have clean water to drink.

Government schools are closing down and you want cycle tracks?" The petitioner sought nationwide creation of cycle tracks with his counsel contending that several states had cycle tracks.

He said there was a cycle track even outside one of the gates of the apex court.

The petitioner's counsel referred to the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation scheme focusing on

development of basic infrastructure in selected cities and towns.

With regard to the prayer for footpaths, the court said some of the High Courts have already taken a view that it is the obligation of the state authorities to have footpaths/pavements in a reasonably good condition.

"Every state has different issues. There are certain states which have hilly areas. There are certain states which have large population of Scheduled Tribes, therefore the issue which are raised in this petition under Article 32 can be better addressed by the respective High Courts. By granting liberty to the approach different high courts, we dispose of this petition," the top court ordered.

However, the court directed the state governments to continue with the efforts they have already initiated with regard to footpaths and cycle tracks.



# leisure



## AMANDA PALMER ADDRESSES ALLEGATION AGAINST EX-HUBBY

American singer Amanda Palmer has finally broken her silence on the accusations against her and her ex-husband, Neil Gaiman who was sued Monday for sexual assault, human trafficking and battery by Scarlett Pavlovich, his former nanny. "I deny the allegations," Palmer said.

## NICOLE KIDMAN ON HER NEXT BABYGIRL

Aussie actress Nicole Kidman's erotic drama *Babygirl* is set for release in India. The Hollywood star, while talking about the film, said that she has made many sexual films, but this is different. The movie also stars Harris Dickinson, and Antonio Banderas.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You've finally realised that diet and exercise are a must, and you especially need to take good care. Today, you may wish to eat something different. Tried Mongolian cuisine? Ganesh suggests that you go out with some friends who you've not been paying attention to.

**TAURUS**  
There is a strong possibility of receptivity and sensitivity in your love life. On the down side, your negativity may lead to mediocre results. You are a fire-fighter when it comes to others' problems, but can forget digging a well for your own home, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Some of your personal belongings are very dear to you. You may have to grudgingly share them with someone else. A mild pang of jealousy may kick in. But, you are merely being protective of something very personal, so there is nothing wrong with that, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will be in high spirits today, foretells Ganesh. It is a favourable day to engage in household activities, like gardening, cooking or even washing laundry. In the evening, work will be eclipsed by the pleasures of love.

**LEO**  
Time is one thing that you have in short change today, says Ganesh. There is every possibility that you shall remain extremely busy. The tasks may be small – like writing a letter to revive old contacts – but it is important that you do them. Chances are that you may also end up giving a few interviews over the phone. Just remember that your ability to make things work and do your best make you the prime candidate for organising and conducting urgent meetings.

**VIRGO**  
Family matters will matter today. They hold more weight in your thoughts than everything else, says Ganesh. Business will be good today. Spend the evening relaxing and chilling out. On the cards is a visit to a place of worship.

**LIBRA**  
Your concern for your family surmounts all else, that much Ganesh knows. Today, you will fulfil your filial duties in all that you undertake. As Ganesh rightly points out: All good things begin at home, including your fortune and good luck.

**SCORPIO**  
A healthy and hectic day is in store for you today. You are likely to finish your pending tasks with new zeal. But the chaotic day will blossom into a fabulous evening when you hang out with your sweetheart, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Be set to capture the flag and sing the victory song in whatever task you take up today. Your subordinates will be the ones needing your support and motivation. At the end of the day, the icing on the cake would be the smile you take to bed.

**CAPRICORN**  
The achievements of the day may make you feel like you were born to succeed in life. Yes, you will be successful in whatever you do today, even if you don't try too hard for it, says Ganesh. But it's important that you at least take an initiative and not expect rewards to come for no reason. Make the most of the day for fortune may not be as favourable tomorrow.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will prove yourself today by staying ahead of your rivals in all ways. You will conquer your frustrations, and will soon be raring to go. Your pleasing demeanour endears you to others and you win admiration from all quarters, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
You probably jumped out of bed this morning itching to talk to someone. And why not, since all your latent power of expression will spring out like a jack-in-the-box today. The pearls of wisdom you shower on people who are down-in-the-dumps today will make them feel good about their bluesy, taciturn selves, says Ganesh.



## Saif calls his attacker poor guy

Mumbai: Saif Ali Khan opened up about the stabbing incident which took place in his Bandra residence. The actor shared that he feels the attack was not 'premeditated'.  
During the conversation, Saif talked about the incident and said he does not plan to keep any weapons for added security in his Mumbai residence. He reasoned, "Nothing will change. See, if you start doing that... because I don't feel I'm under threat. It was not a premeditated attack. I think it just was a burglary attempt gone wrong. That poor guy, his life is more screwed than mine."  
He went on to add if he would have done anything differently in that situation if he were in that room again with the intruder: "I would put on the light and firstly tell him, 'Do you know who I am?' And I think he would say, 'Oh s\*\*t! I'm in the wrong house.' And I'd say 'Right, put the knife down and let's talk about this.' I think I would have tried to reason. But it was a mixture of anger, outrage and a kind of defence. It was just too quick. And it was completely instinctive."



## Saba's stern reply to troll

Mumbai: Saba Azad and Hrithik Roshan have made their relationship official a few years ago, as they were spotted hand-in-hand at a restaurant and several other places. Hrithik and Saba have been together for over three years now but the actress has made sure to have her own individuality and niche. She also has a band *Madboy/Mink* with Imaad Shah, apart from being an actor.  
Recently, when Saba dropped the teaser of season 2 of her show *Who's Your Gynac*, a user commented, "@whokunalthakur I thought season 2 would never come, after all @sabazad Madam Ji is the official girlfriend of the Greek God. But now I am very excited for the next season."  
Saba shared this comment and she wrote, "Ok sumit ji!! Maybe in your world when people fall in love they become incapacitated and landlords stop asking for rent and the need to put food on one's own table magically evaporates!! Wah!!"  
She had earlier said, "When two strong independent people come together, their individuality and profession never go down. They hold on to their individuality and share from a place of freedom and strength."  
Saba will be seen next in *Crime Beat* along with Saqib Saleem, Saie Tamhankar.



**Mumbai:** Actress Kriti Kharbanda recently opened up about her struggle to regain motivation to work out after recovering from typhoid. The actress shared her challenge with fans, admitting that getting back into her fitness routine has been difficult following her illness. On Monday, the *14 Phere* actress took to her Instagram handle and shared a couple of her photos wherein she is seen wearing a stylish long blue dress. In the images, Kharbanda can be seen striking different poses for the camera.



Alongside the photos, the actress wrote in the caption, "I needed to look at these pictures to head back to the gym. Since typhoid happened, it's been hard to find motivation to get back and work out. Hoping to find some #mondaymotivation Bolo? How do you motivate yourself to workout on days you don't want to? Ps There are no wrong answers :) #mondaymood #gymshark #workoutmotivation."  
On January 26, Kriti informed her fans about her typhoid diagnosis. On the work front, Kriti will be soon seen in the upcoming season of the show *Rana Naidu*. The second season of the show will mark her OTT debut.

## Right in the middle, no need to budge(t) much!

What is the Indian 'middle-class'? Muddled interpretations of the middle-income bracket, multifariously defined by umpteen agencies and as many surveys has meddled with junta's senses to the extent that everyone (wonders!) feels they comprise the middle class. This until the Union budget 2025-26 played *Sensei* and doled out clear instruction to what it is - the class earning up to 12 lakh per annum that will now pay income tax (aka middle-class taxes) amounting to zilch. What draws a bigger sigh of relief, the zero tax or zero confusion is anybody's guess! Rumour has it that after an eternity, the 2025 budget is of, by (as our fond FM identifies with the class) and for the middle class. In fact, budgeting may be likened to a core value dictating the entirety of their lifetime, possibly making the word budget synonymous with this class. Considering the new budgetary definition and a personal working theory, are we at liberty to call the

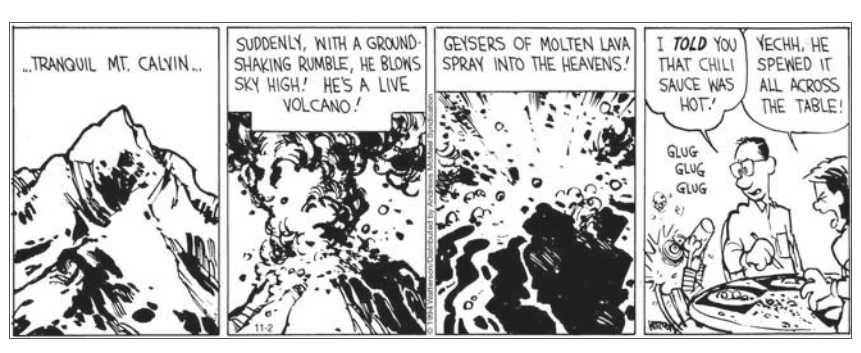


middle-order batsman as the budget-order batsman for he is expected to be smartly adaptable like a household budget, middle-age (generally allocated between 35-60) as the budgeted age, wherein budgetisation is maximum and of myriad nature (inclusive of minutes and mitochondria ATP). Could the ubiquitous middle-man be labelled the budget-broker for he gives a *taxing* time to the consumer be it real-estate deals or real-life deeds? Is the middle-seat of an airline better referred to as the budget-seat since the passenger neither gets the privilege of extending those legs a wee bit into the aisle nor gets to lean over a bit towards the airplane window? For those of middle-class, who may have raised the finger at past budget announcements, may be giving the current one a thumbs-up and enjoying their niche right in the middle, with less of a need to budge(t) for a year now.

### PEANUTS



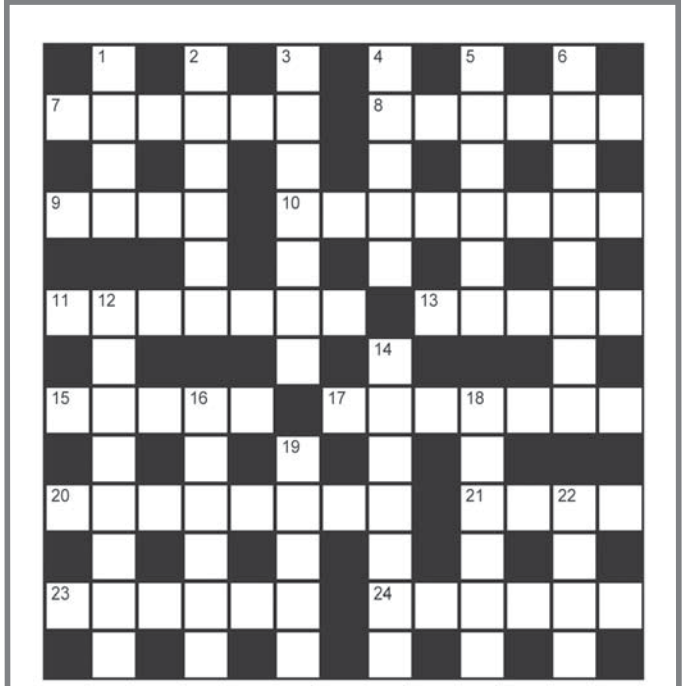
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



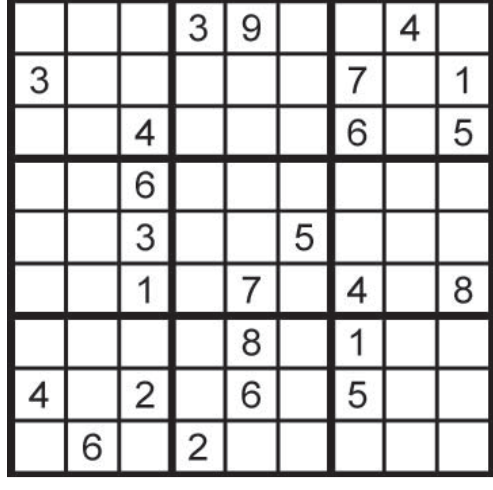
### FUN POST CROSSWORD



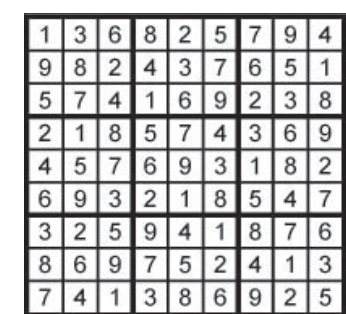
- Across**  
7 Capital of Alaska  
8 Rabbit warren  
9 Shocked reaction  
10 Box office take  
11 1944 Cary Grant comedy, \_\_\_ and Old Lace  
13 Overactive  
15 Disgrace  
17 Shimmy  
20 Field game  
21 Obligation  
23 Inuit  
24 Pinpoint  
5 Avaricious  
6 Not a good thing to have for a bride-to-be (4,4)  
12 Practice  
14 Lightning bug  
16 Border, of sorts  
18 Cut down  
19 Fancy tie  
22 Carotene starter
- Down**  
1 Brass wind instrument  
2 Parthenon, e.g.  
3 Type of pie  
4 Dislike, and then some

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



# Focus more on preparation: CM to students

## Nadda launches MDA campaign

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday advised students appearing for their Borad examinations to focus more on preparation rather than on the results. Noting that examination time often becomes a cause of anxiety for students and their parents, Majhi said, "A little stress before exams is good, but don't get stressed out too much, follow the advice of teachers, make proper

use of time and always have the desire to move forward." The chief minister who was a teacher in his youth, said, "Hard work with confidence leads to success." Majhi said this while participating in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Parikshya Pe Charcha" programme held at Unit-1 Government High School, here. On this occasion, the eighth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha'-2025, a video of Prime Minister Modi's direct interaction

with students, teachers and parents was screened. Majhi said that students should make good use of the time before the exam, keep themselves mentally strong and not get stressed during the exam, listen to the teacher and study with concentration. "Never be afraid of exams. When fear comes, concentration goes away from the mind. For concentration, one needs to relax a little. Therefore, to study with concentration for a longer

period, take a break for 5/10 minutes in between and study again," Majhi said. Noting that the examinations will come and go, Majhi said he firmly believes that a person definitely gets the value of his or her hard work at a certain point of time in life. "If you continue to work hard with confidence and a desire to always move forward, your efforts will not go in vain. You will achieve success only if you focus more on the exam preparation

rather than focusing on the exam results. You should pay attention to what is required during the exam without worrying about anything else," he said. The chief minister also asked students to keep a distance from mobile phones and electronic gadgets. He said that "Brahm Muhurat" (early morning) is the best time to study and memorise lessons. Majhi told the students that stress-free and well-prepared candidates could perform better

in examinations. As many as 168 students of Unit-1 Government High School, who were going to appear for the matriculation examination this year, attended the programme and directly spoke to the chief minister, asked questions about the pre-exam preparation and also participated in the discussion. The event was also attended by the Mass Education Minister Nityanand Gand and senior officers.


**New Delhi/Bhubaneswar:** Union Health Minister JP Nadda launched the annual nationwide Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign for lymphatic filariasis (LF) elimination through a video conference with state Health ministers and senior officers of 13 identified LF endemic states, including Odisha, Monday. The MDA campaign will continue till February 19 in six endemic districts - Bolangir, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Cuttack, Kandhamal and Nayagarh - of Odisha. Over 37 lakh beneficiaries from six districts will be given anti-filariasis drugs. While congratulating Uttar Pradesh and Odisha for their work on filariasis elimination, Nadda emphasised on roping in women associated with self-help groups for making the campaign successful.

# Govt lifts curbs on tubewell mining


POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** The state government has decided to lift curbs on mining of tubewells in rural areas to address the problem of drinking water during summer, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabi Narayan Naik said Monday. Briefing media about mega piped water supply projects in the state, Naik said new tubewells can be sunk against the defunct ones. "Additional tubewells can be sunk in new habitations without having any tubewell, or in habitations where the population ratio (of people not having piped water connections/private tube wells) is greater than 70:1," he said. Stating that providing clean drinking water to rural areas is the priority of the government, the minister said in the past years, many drinking water projects in rural areas were shut down due to non-payment of electricity bills. "Due to this, there was a problem in rural areas of various districts for clean water supply," he said, adding that various measures are being taken to address the problem before the summer. "The state government has planned to complete and put into operation 72 large drinking water projects by the end of March 2025, 54 by the end of December 2025 and 81 by the end of June 2026," Naik said. District administrations have also been directed to provide clean drinking water through tanks in remote and suburban areas. "Suggestions coming from the public through the hearing of complaints are also being worked on," Naik said.






INDIA ENERGY WEEK 2025



सत्यमेव जयते  
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS  
Government of India



"IEW is not just India's event but a reflection of 'India with the world and India for the world' sentiment."  
Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

## JAL JEEVAN MISSION

# Performance of Odisha below national average

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** Expressing concern over Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) missing its December 2024 deadline, the Standing Committee on Water Resources, chaired by BJP MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Monday noted that the performance of six states, including Odisha, is below the national average. In a report tabled in the Lok Sabha Monday, the panel urged the Centre to help underperforming states achieve their goals. Launched in August 2019, the JJM aimed to provide 55 litres of drinking water per person per day to all rural households by 2024. Earlier this month, the government announced an extension of the JJM until 2028. The panel said it is 'concerned and dismayed' that since the launch of JJM in 2019, only 11 states, including Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Puducherry, Punjab and Telangana have reached their 'saturation level' by achieving 'Har Ghar Jal' status. The committee noted with concern that the saturation timelines projected by states and UTs to achieve 'Har Ghar Jal' status would be till 2027, thereby extending the original 2024 timeline of JJM by three more years. It observed that the physical progress in the remaining states and UTs ranges from 96.42 per cent to 53.84 per cent. "However, the performance of six states - Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, and Rajasthan - is below the national average under JJM," it said. The Jal Shakti Ministry told the panel that long gestation period of multi-village schemes, lack of dependable groundwater sources in drought-prone and desert areas, geogenic contamination, and terrain challenges in hilly and forested areas have slowed down the pace of implementation for the programme in underperforming states. "Lack of technical capabilities in the states, delay in clearances from nodal agencies and availability of matching state share especially during Covid-induced lockdown as reasons for slow pace of implementation for the programme," the ministry also said. The committee asked the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation to play a more proactive role and provide all necessary assistance to all the states and UTs in achieving their set goals expeditiously, while focusing on underperforming ones. According to government data presented in Parliament earlier this month, 15.4 crore (79.5 per cent) of the total 19.36 crore rural households in the country have been covered under the mission so far. Around 46 per cent of households each in West Bengal, Rajasthan, Kerala, and Jharkhand await connections under the government scheme, the data showed.

## Grand opening of India Energy Week 2025







### Special video address by Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi

Tuesday, 11 February 2025  
at 10:00 am, Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi


<b>70,000+</b> Energy Professionals	<b>6,000+</b> Conference Delegates	<b>500+</b> Conference Speakers	<b>10+</b> Country Pavilions	<b>700+</b> Exhibiting Companies	<b>100+</b> Conference Sessions
--	---------------------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------


### Transforming Energy Landscape Through Bold Initiatives In Last 10 Years

- ✔ LPG connections increased by 127% to 33 crore to ensure universal clean cooking gas access
- ✔ PNG connections increased 6-fold to 1.33 crore, bringing convenience of households
- ✔ Surpassed 19% ethanol blending to reach target well before time, boosting forex savings and farmers' income
- ✔ Solar power capacity increased 32-times to 100 GW, advancing clean energy goals
- ✔ Tripled non-fossil fuel energy capacity, paving the path towards 500 GW by 2030
- ✔ Free solar power to 1 crore households by March 2027 under PM Surya Ghar Yojana


Connect with us:





Visit [www.indiaenergyweek.com](http://www.indiaenergyweek.com) or scan the QR Code to know more.

Watch live telecast of the event on DD News Youtube Channel





# STPI-BHUBANESWAR CLEANS DERAS DAM

The initiative underscores STPI Bhubaneswar's dedication to environmental responsibility and community involvement in promoting sustainable practices



promote cleanliness and ensure a greener future. He noted that the initiative aligns with the broader goals of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, India's national cleanliness mission. "These proactive steps not only set an example for responsible civic engagement but also inspire communities to take ownership of their surroundings," said Pattanayak.

STPI-Bhubaneswar reiterated its commitment to sustainable development and community initiatives, reinforcing its role in promoting environmental consciousness. The cleanliness drive is part of the ongoing Swachhata Pakhwada initiative, launched under the Swachh Bharat Mission. This nationwide campaign aims to raise awareness about cleanliness and engage citizens in the fight for a garbage-free India.

In 2025, the focus of Swachhata Pakhwada is on advancing sustainable practices, fostering innovative waste management strategies, and encouraging individuals to actively contribute to cleanliness efforts. Special attention is being given to rural areas and tourist destinations to ensure they remain clean and welcoming.

The theme of this year's initiative emphasizes sustainable development, aiming to make cleanliness a daily habit rather than a periodic task.

**STPI-Bhubaneswar reiterated its commitment to sustainable development and community initiatives, reinforcing its role in promoting environmental consciousness**

officials and local volunteers. It underscored the importance of collective responsibility in maintaining public spaces and fostering a cleaner environment.

Speaking on the occasion, Pattanayak emphasised the need for continuous efforts to



**RAISING VOICE:** Members of Non-government and Unaided Higher Secondary School and College Teaching and Non-teaching Association hold a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Monday, demanding a new grant policy

## NextGen sea turtle initiative launched at Astaranga

EMPOWERING YOUNG CONSERVATIONISTS TO PROTECT THE OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLES IN ODISHA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** The Sea Turtle NextGen Programme was launched at Astaranga Government High School in Puri district to educate and empower young conservationists.

A joint initiative of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Meridian International Centre, the programme aims to train 480 students from various Ecoclubs in the region. It focuses on the Devi River Mouth landscape, one of the world's largest nesting sites for the vulnerable Olive Ridley sea turtle.

The Olive Ridley, classified



as a Schedule-I species under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, has faced mass extinction threats since 1997. The initiative is led by Soumya Ranjan Biswal, an alumna of the International Visitors Leadership

Programme. Inspired by his visit to the USA, Biswal integrated global conservation education strategies into the programme.

At the inaugural event, students participated in interac-

tive sessions on marine turtle conservation, biodiversity, life-cycle, and environmental challenges. The event was attended by Headmaster Susant Kumar Parida and Ecoclub teachers Chinmay Kumar Pradhan, Mangala Gomango, Jagdish Khuntia, and Bipal Nahak.

The programme encourages students to take leadership roles in conservation, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By fostering community-led initiatives, the Sea Turtle NextGen Programme aims to create a lasting impact on marine conservation efforts in Odisha.

**WEATHER**

BBSR	CTC
Max Temp 33.5°	31.6°
Min Temp 17.9°	18.0°
Humidity 83%	83%
Rainfall Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
Dense Fog.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	77,311.80 ↓ 548.39
NIFTY	23,381.60 ↓ 178.35
DOLLAR	87.58 ↑ 0.00
EURO	91.64 ↓ 0.29
GOLD	₹83,848 ↓ ₹128
SILVER	₹95,277 ↓ ₹447

### 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 I, Sridhar Palai (40 yrs), Vill - Kathamunda, P.O. - Shyamsundarpur, P.S. - Dhusuri, Dist. - Bhadrak, PIN - 756119, declare that I have changed my name in my LIC policy bearing No. 587379157 from Dhaneswar Palai to Sridhar Palai. Henceforth he shall be known as Sridhar Palai for all purposes.

### SAFER INTERNET DAY

## EXPERTS WARN AGAINST RISING CYBER THREATS

RESHMI YADAV, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** With cybercrime and online harassment on the rise, experts have called for stronger awareness, digital safety measures, and stricter regulations to combat online threats. On the occasion of Safer Internet Day (February 11), cybersecurity professionals highlighted growing dangers such as AI-generated deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data breaches, stressing the urgent need for preventive action.

"The internet provides endless opportunities, but it also exposes users to serious risks like cyberbullying, sexting, job fraud, and cyberstalking," said Saloni Das, a student and social media user. "With AI-generated deepfakes, criminals manipulate images and videos for blackmail, harassment, and

misinformation, causing severe psychological effects like anxiety and depression," she added.

Cybersecurity researcher Akash Mishra pointed out that cybercrime has surged post-pandemic, with more people relying on the internet for work, shopping, and communication. "From social networking scams to online payment fraud, cybercriminals are evolving rapidly. Issues like identity theft, internet addiction, and misinformation also remain critical concerns," he noted.

Cyber expert and CEO of Suryanandan.net, Prashant Sahu, shared key safety tips: avoid clicking on unknown links, use antivirus software, refrain from sharing sensitive details like passwords and OTPs, and only visit legitimate websites for information.

## Cuttack station upgradation gains pace



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** The redevelopment of Cuttack railway station has taken a significant step forward with the successful removal of unauthorised shops from the Station Bazar area near Gate No. 01. This eviction is essential for executing the station's ambitious up-grade into a world-class facility. As part of the project, 32

shops in front of the station needed to be removed for the construction of the front road and circulating area. Monday, East Coast Railway (ECoR) coordinated a well-organised eviction drive, supported by GRP/ECoR and RPF/ECoR, with the presence of an executive magistrate. Of the 32 shops, 30 were evicted following all legal procedures, while two shops remain as they are under sub-judice.

The eviction enables the development of a new circulating area and the widening of the road, from the current 10 meters to 18 meters, which will improve traffic flow and passenger accessibility.

The redevelopment will introduce modern infrastructure, enhanced passenger services, and world-class amenities, positioning Cuttack railway station as a hub of comfort and efficiency. Indian Railways is committed to completing the project swiftly, with the station expected to serve lakhs of passengers more efficiently in the near future.

With this key milestone reached, the station's redevelopment is set to progress quickly, offering a more structured and passenger-friendly experience.

## Heritage fans decry Kuruma site neglect

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Feb 10:** The seventh edition of the Puri Heritage Walks (PHW) was held Sunday, aiming to promote awareness of Odisha's rich cultural heritage and educate the public about its historical significance.

The monthly heritage walk, organised on the second Sunday of each month, covered key historical sites, including the Buddhist Monastery at Kuruma, the Archaeological Survey of India Museum in Konark, the Indian Oil-funded Interpretation Centre near the Konark Sun Temple, and the Sun Temple itself.

During the visit, heritage enthusiasts expressed deep concern over the deteriorating condition of the Kuruma Buddhist Monastery and resolved to urge the government to take immediate preservation measures. Meanwhile, the Interpretation Centre impressed visitors with its well-curated research displays, and the intricate carvings of the Konark Sun Temple left participants in awe.

Approximately 40 heritage enthusiasts from Puri, Cuttack, Khurda, Dhenkanal, Jagatsinghpur, West Bengal, and Jharkhand took part in the walk.

Notable attendees included renowned photographer Kishore Bit, Subash Mahapatra, educationist Prakash Chandra Khato, and Rabindra Pradhan. The event was coordinated by Biswaranjan Dehury, Kumar Aurojyoti, Sanjay Baral, and Ashoka Manjari Nayak.



# IRRI, govt to boost women's rice entrepreneurship

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment (DAFE) and the Department of Mission Shakti (DMS), will establish a dedicated mini-factory to promote high-quality, nutritious rice products.

The initiative aims to empower women-led self-help groups (WSHGs) in Odisha by enhancing their skills, infrastructure, and market access for rice value addition.

The decision was finalised at the inception meeting of the project, titled "Promoting Self-Help Group-Led Entrepreneurship through Rice Value Addition," held in Bhubaneswar Monday.

The initiative focuses on producing and marketing low glycemic index (low-GI) and high-protein rice while promot-



ing Odisha's indigenous rice varieties as high-value products to boost entrepreneurship and economic growth.

Senior officials from DAFE, Mission Shakti, IRRI, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), and leading academic institutions participated in the event. The discussion centered

rural entrepreneurship.

"Value addition is key to unlocking Odisha's agricultural potential. This initiative underscores our commitment to empowering women-led Self-Help Groups, Farmer Producer Organisations, and agri-entrepreneurs," Padhee said. He emphasised that leveraging Odisha's unique rice varieties, along with IRRI's expertise, could transform raw grains—especially low-GI and high-protein rice—into high-value, nutrition-rich products."

The partnership, he added, will enhance farmer incomes, strengthen food security, and position Odisha as a hub for sustainable rice-based enterprises.

The event commenced with a video message from IRRI director general Yvonne Pinto, who reiterated IRRI's dedication to research-driven, market-oriented solutions that benefit both farmers and consumers.

"This project is about more than just rice—it is about creating opportunities, building livelihoods, and ensuring that women, farmers, and small-scale entrepreneurs in Odisha have the tools and knowledge to succeed," Pinto stated.

She highlighted IRRI's efforts to integrate scientific advancements with traditional knowledge to improve rice value addition and drive economic growth.

A key highlight of the event was the unveiling of the project roadmap by dignitaries, followed by a 3D model presentation of the upcoming rice and millet mini-factory by the Odisha Agro Industries Corporation (OAIC).

The state-of-the-art facility in Bhubaneswar will serve as a training and business incubation hub, providing WSHGs with hands-on training in rice processing, packaging, branding, and marketing.

### FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-909090404, 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-Cookiemann-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.



# NHRC asks CS to prepare SOP on lightning deaths

PNN & AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, Feb 10:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the state Chief Secretary to formulate a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for providing compensation and support to the families of those deceased and injured due to lightning and thunderstorm in the state.

Acting on a petition filed by human rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy, the NHRC passed the order last Friday. In its order, the NHRC observed that "Tripathy had suggested several steps in detail to reduce the fatalities and injuries from lightning."

The complainant also stressed to formulate an SOP for providing compensation and support to the victims' families.

"Since, the Odisha government has been working to reduce the fatalities, the NHRC is of the view that suggestions submitted by the complainant, may be considered by the Government of Odisha, for further policy framing in this regard," the directive said.

The petitioner raised the issue of death due to lightning and thunderstorm and



said incidents of death due to lightning and thunderbolt have been reported from Kendrapara, Balasore, Bhadrak and Dhenkanal districts.

He, however, regretted that the government has not yet made any action plan to minimise the lightning related deaths, he added.

Pursuant to the notice of the NHRC, the state government in its reply submitted, "Village level street play/folk dance on lightning awareness, rallies with banners on 'dos and don'ts' in Odia language are being taken out for raising awareness on lightning and thunderstorm."

"School and College level awareness programmes on lightning and thunderstorm, awareness meeting with SHG members and local youth club/association/NGO/CBO

are going on. Lightning and thunderstorm awareness meeting with ASHA and Anganwadi workers have been conducted to provide early warning on lightning and thunderstorm," it added.

"Lightning" per se has been recognised as Natural Calamity u/s 3 (1) of the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA).

Tripathy in his rejoinder suggested several steps in detail to reduce the fatalities and injuries from lightning such as public awareness creation and spread of education.

The petitioner further suggested formulating a clear and effective SOP for providing compensation and support to the victims' families.

## Youth beats father to death with lathi

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar/Joda, Feb 10:** A youth caned his father to death over a domestic dispute at a slum near the Banshani toll gate area of Joda in Keonjhar district Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Ajay Sethi, 50. The accused, his son Bikash Sethi, has been arrested by Joda police, who have launched an investigation into the matter. According to sources, Bikash was in love with a woman and insisted on marrying her. However, with two more siblings also living in the household, his family urged him to secure a job and become financially independent before marriage. His father repeatedly advised him to ensure a stable future before taking such a step. This ongoing disagreement often led to arguments between Ajay and his son. The incident occurred after Bikash once again insisted on getting married, leading to another heated altercation Sunday night. In a fit of rage, Bikash allegedly struck his father on the back of the head with a wooden lathi, rendering him critically injured.

Family members rushed Ajay to Tata Steel Hospital for treatment, but doctors pronounced him dead upon arrival.

Joda police registered a case (25/2025) over a complaint filed by the deceased's wife Gurubari Sethi and arrested the accused. Further investigation into the matter is underway.

# Mega drinking water project for Joranda Mahima Gadi launched



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar/Dhenkanal, Feb 10:** The much-awaited mega drinking water project, with a capacity of 35 lakh litres per day, has been launched at Joranda Mahima Gadi, a major cultural site in Dhenkanal district, under the Central government's Jal Jeevan Mission.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, in a video message on the occasion of the project's launch Monday, expressed joy over the commencement of the drinking water supply project. He stated that this initiative has fulfilled the long-standing demand of the Mahima society.

Extending his greetings

to the venerable saints and devotees of Joranda Gadi in Dhenkanal district, the holy pilgrimage site of Mahima Dharma, Pradhan remarked that Joranda Gadi was not just the centre of Mahima Dharma but was once renowned as a hub of education and knowledge in Odisha.

The great preacher of Mahima Dharma, Santhakavi Bhima Bhoi, initiated a remarkable movement of education and spirituality on this sacred land.

For this mega drinking water project, public sector enterprise ONGC has provided ₹10.34 crore under its CSR initiative.

The Union Minister stated

that about 10 lakh litres of water can be stored daily, ensuring a 24-hour supply of clean drinking water to 10 monasteries, public places, and pilgrimage grounds, including both small and large monasteries.

This system will benefit over 12,000 people from 13 villages of whom 20 per cent belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

He further noted that every year, around 2 lakh tourists and devotees from Odisha and neighbouring states visit Maghamela during this time. This mega water project will significantly help in addressing the need for clean drinking water in the local area.

Congratulating the devotees of Mahima Samaj on the launch of this developmental project, Pradhan expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the Dhenkanal district administration, and ONGC for their financial support.

The public and devotees had earlier approached the Union Minister regarding the acute shortage of drinking water at Mahima Gadi in Joranda.

Following this, the Union Minister directed ONGC to undertake a drinking water supply project at Joranda Mutt.



**FOLK CHARM:** Artists perform Sambalpuri dance at a cultural event Jet-20 held at Nari Seva Sadan in Sambalpur, Monday

OP PHOTO

## Man sentenced to life for killing lover

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, Feb 10:** A court in Ganjam district Monday sentenced a 34-year-old man to life imprisonment for killing her girlfriend and looting his gold and silver ornaments approximately valued at ₹2 lakh last year.

District and Sessions Judge Rupashree Choudhury also slapped a fine of ₹10,000 on the convict identified as Mithun Bisoi, a resident of Sindurpur.

Bisoi August 3 last year used a stone to kill his girlfriend, 26-year-old Saangeeta Pradhan, who was deserted by her husband. He then fled with her gold and silver ornaments and dumped the body near Tapapani. The police recovered the body after a few days and arrested Bisoi August 8, based on the complaint of the father of the deceased.

The gold and silver ornaments worth over ₹2 lakh were recovered from Dharampur near his village, where the convict had buried them.

# Bargarh MP meets Shah, demands nat'l heritage tag for Gandhamardan



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, Feb 10:** Bargarh MP Pradipto Purohit Monday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the Parliament in New Delhi and demanded national heritage status for Gandhamardan hills.

During the meeting, Purohit submitted two separate memorandums urging the government to grant national heritage status to the Gandhamardan hills and include the Kosli-Sambalpuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

One of the memorandums highlighted the cultural and religious significance of Gandhamardan hills in the Padampur Assembly constituency in Bargarh district. The region is home to ancient temples of Lord Nrusinghanath and Lord Harishankar, which attract thousands of devotees annually. The memorandum also referred to Chinese traveler Hsien Tsang's writings, which mention Gandhamardan hills' historical significance. It noted that the hills were once home to a Buddhist monastery and that renowned Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna served as its vice-chancellor.

The memorandum also emphasised Gandhamardan's rich mineral reserves including bauxite, limestone, and granite. It recalled how the previous Congress government had leased

the area's mineral resources to Balco for 47 years, a move that faced strong opposition from local communities.

Under Purohit's leadership, an outfit 'Gandhamardan Suraksha Sangharsh Samiti' successfully resisted mining activities in the hills' vicinity to safeguard the ecological and religious integrity of the region.

Highlighting the biodiversity, natural beauty, and historical importance, Purohit extended an invitation to Home Minister Amit Shah to visit Gandhamardan and witness its significance firsthand.

Purohit submitted another memorandum requesting the inclusion of the Kosli-Sambalpuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. In his statement, he noted that approximately 20 million people across 11 districts of Odisha speak the language. He emphasised that it is an ancient and rich language, serving as a significant symbol of literature, with the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavad Gita having been translated into Kosli-Sambalpuri.

The contributions of Padma Shri awardees Haldhar Nag, Mitrabhanu Gauntia, and Jitendra Haripal have been enormous in enriching the language. As an integral part of the identity and culture of western Odisha, the demand for official recognition has persisted for years.

## 6TH CENTURY IDOL DISCOVERED

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhandaripokhari, Feb 10:** A sixth century idol of Lord Vasudeva was discovered Saturday at Malda village under Bhandaripokhari block in Bhadrak district.

According to sources, Jitendra Samal of the village had brought sand for construction work. He noticed an idol inside the sand Friday afternoon and kept it safely at home. Upon receiving the news, INTACH member Bishwambar Raut visited his house. In the



presence of Samiti member Aritanjali Samal and scholar Ramachandra Mohanty, the idol was handed over for preservation at the Sholampur Buddhist Monastery Museum.

The idol, made of khondalite stone, stands one foot tall. Renowned archaeologist Dr Sunil Pattnaik stated that it is a rare sixth century artefact. The idol features four arms holding a discus (chakra), mace (gada), water pot (kamandala), and lotus (padma).

# 8 girl students fall ill after taking deworming tablets

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore/Malkangiri, Feb 10:** At least eight female students in Balasore and Malkangiri districts fell ill reportedly after being administered with the deworming tablets in their schools Monday, officials said.

Shortly after taking the tablets, they complained of vomiting, nausea and severe discomfort. Six girl students of Brahmananda Up-graded Upper Primary School at Thanesar were admitted to the Community Health Centre (CHC) at

Soro in Balasore district and later discharged for home after improvement in their health conditions.

Two other schoolgirls were taken to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in Malkangiri, officials said.

"There are no such side effects of deworming medicines. The two children had fever before or they may have fallen ill due to fear. They are now out of danger," Malkangiri district's CDM & PHO Dr CHM Jagannath Rao said.

Malkangiri District Educa-

tion Officer and Assistant District Magistrate, Umprasad Dash, said that students in all schools have been distributed deworming medicine.

The children were given the tablets under the National Deworming Day celebration Monday. Children in the age group of one to 19 years are provided with the pills in the campaign.

The drive is being carried out by the Directorate of Family Welfare of the state Health department in collaboration with the National Health Mission (NHM) and UNICEF.

# India's 1st Drone Centres of Excellence in Kalahandi

PNN & AGENCIES

**Kalahandi, Feb 10:** India's first-ever Drone Centres of Excellence (CoEs) under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) have been established in Sagada and Bhatangpadar gram panchayats of Kalahandi district.

These centres, representing a significant step toward empowering tribal youth and women through advanced skill development in drone technology, were established in partnership with leading drone technology company IG Drones.

For the first time, such CoEs have been launched under this flagship scheme of the Central government, which was introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014 to promote

inclusive rural development.

Under the SAGY initiative, Member of Parliament Sujet Kumar adopted Sagada and Bhatangpadar villages, bringing about remarkable transformations.

By allocating ₹10 lakh from his MPLADS fund, Kumar has introduced cutting-edge technological education to these underserved areas, aligning with the government's vision for Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat 2047.

This initiative also supports the Prime Minister's Drone Policy, which aims to expand drone operations in India from 27,000 to over 1 lakh.

Speaking about the initiative, MP Sujet Kumar highlighted its transformative potential, stating, "The Drone Centres



of Excellence are a testament to the power of technology in driving equitable development. By equipping tribal youth and women with cutting-edge skills,

we are opening up opportunities that were once out of reach and ensuring their participation in India's digital economy."

He further credited IG Drones for making this futuristic step possible, as the company is establishing similar CoEs in other parts of the country.

Founder & CEO of IG Drones, Bodhisattwa Sanghapriya, expressed his enthusiasm, saying, "We are happy to take yet another step in empowering tribal youth and positioning Odisha as a drone hub at the national level." He added that these centres aim to provide specialised training to rural students and unemployed youth, preparing them for roles as drone pilots and technicians.

As India's drone industry con-

tinues to expand rapidly, this initiative addresses the growing demand for skilled professionals in the sector. Additionally, these centres create employment pathways by facilitating placements through IG Drones' expertise and partnerships with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

By integrating Prime Minister Modi's "Drone Didis" initiative, these centres empower women to use drone technology in agriculture and other applications, fostering economic independence and breaking traditional gender barriers.

Beyond empowering women, these centres also tackle systemic unemployment in tribal regions by equipping youth with future-ready skills.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**R.W.S&S DIVISION, BHADRAK**  
E-mail: rwsdivisionbhadrak@gmail.com

**"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
Bid Identification No. RWSS (BDK)-03/2024-25

No. O-1435: Name of the Work: Supplying and Installation of all materials, labour, T&P with fitting, fixing for interior furniture laboratory Table, Radiance single sided rack, Glass door store well, Staff Chair etc. finishing to complete in all respect or NABL Purpose of District Laboratory, RWS&S Division, Bhadrak. 2. Total Number of Work: 01 No. (One). 3. Estimated Cost: Rs.12.21 Lakh. 4. Class of Contractor: Registered contractor of State Govt./Central Govt. 5. Period of Completion: 02 Month.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	
		From	To
Executive Engineer, RWSS Division, Bhadrak	RWSS (BDK)-03/2024-25	11.02.2025 (From 10.00 A.M.)	19.02.2025 upto 17.00 PM

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "www.tendersodisha.gov.in" Subsequent corrigendum if required shall be appeared in the website only.

**Sd./- Executive Engineer**  
**RWS&S Division, Bhadrak**

OIPR-25020/11/0005/2425





In sincerity is the certitude of victory. Sincerity! Sincerity! How sweet is the purity of thy presence?  
**THE MOTHER**

# Manipur: What Next

Finally, Chief Minister of Manipur N Biren Singh has resigned. He took an inordinately long time to step down as he was allowed to remain in power when the north-eastern state was literally burning with the worst ever clashes in recent times between ethnic groups. The resulting violence took a toll of 250 lives and displaced over 75,000 people from their homes, according to official sources. The resignation was long overdue. It took 21 months for Biren Singh to concede the demand made by some of his own party MLAs, people belonging to his majority ethnic Meitei group, and also the minority Kuki-Zomi. He remained unmoved after violence began in May 2023 and reprehensible rapes of Kuki women came to light a couple of months into the violence.

This is a sad reflection of the priority accorded by the Central leadership to this very important and sensitive region of the country. To the Kuki tribals especially, Singh was perceived to be the main culprit who allowed violence to continue on such a large scale and cause so much suffering. No one was in doubt that during the entire ethnic clashes, Singh acted in a partisan manner siding with his own Meitei community through many acts of omission and commission. These included Suspension of Operations agreement only with Kuki insurgent groups while excluding the Meitei groups who had a free run in the state. The armed group belonging to the majority community was virtually allowed to loot arms of security personnel which were used to target the rival community. No credible attempt was made to recover the arms. He also proactively opposed the extension of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) to the Valley area dominated by Meiteis. It is because of his ineffective handling of the situation that the peace committees have not been able to even start their work. What is even worse, very limited action was taken on over 10,000 FIRs registered.

Throughout the period of violence, killings and rapes, the Centre acted in a nonchalant manner as if nothing serious had happened. Biren Singh was not upbraided by the Centre for his patent failure to handle the situation. It was then believed that the BJP could not rein in Singh for pitting the majority community against the minority since communal divide has been the cornerstone of the party's policy.

There is speculation as to what has prompted Biren Singh to resign. The suddenness of the development could be attributed to the lack of confidence shown by the ruling party MLAs in Singh's leadership and the possible no-confidence motion from the Opposition which was likely to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly being convened from 10 February. There are reports of BJP MLAs from the state convincing the party's central leadership that the government would be toppled if the no-confidence motion was moved. The only honourable retreat left was Biren Singh's resignation and a likely attempt to replace him with another leader so that the government survives.

However, this may not be the likely scenario since there is no other leader in the party's state unit who commands respect of all the BJP MLAs. This is triggering speculation that imposition of President's rule is the only choice left with the Centre. Next Assembly elections in Manipur are due in 2027. In this backdrop, it is not the loss of 100s of lives of citizens. The very idea of a democratic government implies the system will go all out to protect lives and properties of every single citizen. That core idea also has been a victim in the game of power grabbing. Corruption is not only limited to making money. When a government turns a deaf ear and remains unresponsive at the most critical times, thereby permitting shedding of blood of citizens, it is the biggest corruption that can ever be imagined.

## WISDOM CORNER

Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves; vanity, to what we would have others think of us.  
**JANE AUSTEN**

I have seen many storms in my life. Most storms have caught me by surprise, so I had to learn very quickly to look further and understand that I am not capable of controlling the weather, to exercise the art of patience and to respect the fury of nature.  
**PAULO COELHO**

The 'morality of compromise' sounds contradictory. Compromise is usually a sign of weakness, or an admission of defeat. Strong men don't compromise, it is said, and principles should never be compromised.  
**ANDREW CARNEGIE**

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1753:** Pennsylvania Hospital, the first hospital in the United States, began admitting patients; it was cofounded by Benjamin Franklin.
- 1847:** American inventor Thomas Edison, who, singly or jointly, held a world record of 1,093 patents and who played a critical role in introducing the modern age of electricity, was born.
- 1929:** Benito Mussolini of Italy and Pietro Gasparri of the Vatican signed the Lateran Treaty, recognizing papal sovereignty over Vatican City, an enclave in Rome.
- 1929:** A committee met in Paris to devise the Young Plan, a revision of the Dawes Plan of 1924, that renegotiated Germany's reparations for World War I.
- 1938:** The BBC broadcasts Karel apek's "R.U.R.", the world's first science fiction TV program. The Czech play whose abbreviated title stands for "Rossum's Universal Robots" introduced the word "robot" to the English language.
- 1975:** British politician Margaret Thatcher was elected leader of the Conservative Party, replacing Edward Heath; she became Europe's first woman prime minister in 1979.
- 1979:** Ayatollah Khomeini seizes power in Iran. Few days after Khomeini's triumphant return from French exile, the Iranian army steps aside, making way for the creation of an Islamic theocracy.
- 1990:** After serving 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela was released, and he subsequently began negotiations with President F.W. de Klerk that ended apartheid in South Africa.

# DRAW A CLEAR LINE

## FOCUS DIPLOMACY



**It's too early to say if meeting Trump in the first flush of his disruptive Presidency will work as an opportunity for India or not. A proactive step on India's part amid wild turns in US policy can be a positive**



Jagdish Rattanani

## A BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS WOULD GREATLY STRENGTHEN INDIA'S NEGOTIATION WITH THE US

Prime Minister Narendra Modi heads to a dramatically different and somewhat unstable United States this week for a meeting with the newly elected President Donald Trump. He will be among the few leaders to have a direct meeting in the White House within a month of Trump taking office for a second term. It's too early to say if meeting Trump in the first flush of his disruptive Presidency will work as an opportunity for India or not. A proactive step on India's part amid wild turns in US policy can be a positive. It can help India gauge the mood and explore opportunities in the changed circumstances. But there are also downsides going into discussions this early, when limits are being tested, and long-standing structures are being torn apart. Without any meaningful challenge yet from institutions and sans any guardrails of the 237-year-old US constitution, Trump plays by his own rules. Some of these are simplistic ideas he set out in the book 'Art of the Deal' – a cocky real estate developer's manual stretched thin to apply to other fields, and to life itself.

Chapter 2 of the vintage 1997 book, republished in a mass market edition in 2005, is titled "Trump Cards: The Elements of the Deal" and it begins thus: "My style of deal making is quite simple and straightforward. I aim very high, and then I just keep pushing and pushing and pushing to get what I'm after. Sometimes, I settle for less than I sought, but in most cases I still end up with what I want."

There is no doubt that Trump will push India on multiple fronts, that he will have many levers to use in the process and that he will deploy the bulldozer to get Modi to sign up on deals that maybe of questionable value for India. American foreign policy has always been about American interests, marked by short termism and

an instrumentality that has many of its claims to principles of openness, democracy or peace sound hollow. Now, the mask is off, the pretence of values is gone, and naked power play is at work.

India will hopefully go prepared for these sets of meetings like never before, expecting to be pushed and ready with its own list of asks and redlines and non-negotiables. In short, the Trump playbook will have to be used against Trump, Modi, and India, would be helped in this if the nation had a foreign policy approach that all parties could sign up, own up and profess as the agreed Indian consensus cutting across political divides. The BJP needs the Congress and other parties on its side to make a set of strong, clear and specific demands on Trump.

Doing so with one voice requires the government of the day reaching out, establishing bonds across the aisle and coming together at least on this national task. But with Indian foreign policy itself marked by egoism, the so-called self-proclaimed march of the 'Vishwa Guru', blindsided by its own version of performative behaviour, this opportunity appears unavailable. A bipartisan consensus would greatly strengthen India's negotiation with the US. But political bit-

terness has been brought even to foreign affairs, the bureaucrat-turned-Foreign Minister S Jaishankar personally feeding into some of it with barbs against Opposition leaders that apparently secure his position in the BJP and with the Prime Minister at the cost of bipartisan support.

Without this forced injection of bitterness into foreign affairs, it should not have been difficult to have an all-party consensus to formally and publicly condemn the way the Trump administration has begun the process of deportation of unauthorised Indians in the US. The use of a military plane, with Indian citizens under deportation orders set in chains, and the act duly promoted in a video by the US agencies, is unwarranted, in poor taste and tries to showcase a negative image of India at the cost of dignity and rights of Indian citizens. It is shocking that Indians are being treated no different from migrants who have been called "high threat criminal illegal aliens" like some Venezuelan gang members who have been deported to the notorious US-run Guantanamo Bay prison camps in Cuba.

Stories emerging from those who were returned on the first military flight back to the safety of India tell us about the hazards faced by ordinary poor fellow

citizens, many of them from Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat, as they took enormous risks to look for a better life in a foreign land. These Indians need our support, help and rehabilitation, particularly to recoup losses in time and money spent in their attempt to escape poverty and lack of opportunities in India.

India should condemn the US for treating Indians thus. Instead, the foreign minister has been quoted as saying that this is normal procedure for the US. "The standard operating procedure for deportation by aircraft used by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the US), that is effective from 2012, I repeat to you, these are procedures in place from 2012, provides for the use of restraints," he said. How does this help at all?

The planned deportation of 20,000 Indians from the US will require an endless stream of flights, if all of them are to be sent back, not to speak of more who are being caught as raids by US immigration continue. None of them should be allowed to be detained without access to lawyers, medical aid and humane conditions in the facilities they are kept. None of them should be allowed to be sent back in chains.

This is not to speak of other issues on which Trump will push, like the demand that India buy military hardware at full American prices, or cut import tariffs even though Indian trade surpluses are not huge or perform other acts that can well imperil partnerships and long term ties with other nations – all to serve American interests. It is good to play along, to feed the ego but it is important to draw a clear line beyond which India will not give in. Modi must not bow before Trump.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.  
©THE BILLION PRESS

## SPECTRUM MULTILATERALISM

# Does globalization have a future?

As wildfires raged through Los Angeles in January, the infamous American conspiracy theorist Alex Jones posted on X that they were "part of a larger globalist plot to wage economic warfare & deindustrialize the [United] States." While Jones' suggestion of causality was absurd, he was right that the fires had something to do with globalization. Last year was Earth's hottest since record-keeping began – and likely the hottest in at least 125,000 years – eclipsing the record set in 2023.

Globalization refers simply to interdependence at inter-continental distances. Trade among European countries reflects regional interdependence, whereas European trade with the US or China reflects globalization. By threatening China with tariffs, US President Donald Trump is trying to reduce the economic aspect of our global interdependence, which he blames for the loss of domestic industries and jobs. Economists debate how much of that loss was caused by global trade. Some studies have found that millions of jobs were lost to foreign competition, but that is not the only cause. Many econ-

omists argue that the more important factor was automation. Such change can boost overall productivity, but it also causes economic pain, and populist leaders find it easier to blame foreigners than machines.

They also blame immigrants, who may be good for the economy in the long term, but are easy to portray as the cause of disruptive change in the near term. The migration of humans out of Africa is arguably the first example of globalization, and the US and many other countries are the result of the same basic phenomenon.

But can economic globalization be reversed? It has happened before. The nineteenth century was marked by a rapid increase in both trade and migration, but it came to a screeching halt with the outbreak of World War I. Trade as a share of total world product did not recover to its 1914 levels until nearly 1970. Now that some US politicians are advocating a full decoupling from China, could it happen again? While security concerns may reduce bilateral trade, the sheer cost of abandoning a relationship worth more than a half-trillion dollars per year makes decoupling unlikely. But "unlikely" is not the

same as "impossible." A war over Taiwan, for example, could bring US-China trade to a screeching halt.

In any case, trying to understand the future of globalization requires us to look beyond economics. There are many other types of global interdependence – military, ecological, social, health, and so forth. Similarly, scientists predict that climate change will have enormous costs as global ice caps melt and coastal cities are submerged later in the century. Even in the near term, climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and wildfires. The perverse irony is that we may be in the process of limiting a type of globalization that has benefits, while failing to cope with types that have only costs. Among the second Trump administration's first moves was to withdraw the US from the Paris agreement and the WHO.

So, what is globalization's future? Long-distance interdependencies will remain a fact of life as long as humans are mobile and equipped with communication and transportation technologies. After all, economic globalization spans centuries, with roots extending back to ancient

trade routes like the Silk Road. In the fifteenth century, innovations in ocean-going transportation brought the Age of Exploration, which was followed by the era of European colonization that shaped today's national boundaries. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, steamships and telegraphs accelerated the process as industrialization transformed agrarian economies. Now the information revolution is transforming our service-oriented economies. The widespread use of the internet began at the start of this century, and now billions of people around the world carry a computer in their pockets that would have filled a large building half a century ago. As AI progresses, the scope, speed, and volume of global communication will grow exponentially.

World wars have reversed economic globalization, protectionist policies can slow it down, and international institutions have not kept pace with many of the changes now underway. But so long as we have the technologies, globalization will continue. It just may not be the beneficial kind.

The writer is Professor Emeritus at Harvard University.  
©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

## TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE FUTURE OF GLOBALIZATION REQUIRES US TO LOOK BEYOND ECONOMICS

## Shameful incident

Sir, The Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) is facing backlash everywhere as the floodlights failed in the middle of the India-England second ODI match that was played at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack, on Sunday. As a result, players were forced to leave the field for about 35 minutes. At that time, Team India had scored 48 runs with zero loss in 6.1 overs in a chase of 305. This incident brought the OCA's mismanagement to the fore. Now, Odisha is making headlines for the wrong reasons. After a six-year gap, an international match was given to the OCA. Earlier also a few such incidents had happened at Barabati. In October 2015, the fans threw water bottles onto the field during a T20I match between India and South Africa. It is high time the authorities probe the latest fiasco and take stringent corrective actions. If a big sports event like an international cricket match is not being smoothly conducted, how can we expect more sports events in the state in the future?  
**Susant Pal, BHUBANESWAR**

## Remorseless stance

Sir, Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh should have resigned long back for the ethnic conflict that has gripped the north-eastern state since May 2023, exacerbating tensions between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities. In fact, in his resignation letter, following mounting pressure from all corners, Biren Singh has not stated that he quit "owning moral responsibility" for the communal violence that erupted in the state during his tumultuous tenure, which he ought to have done so. On the contrary, he has mentioned in the letter that "it has been an honour to serve the people of Manipur thus far." Is Biren Singh not ashamed to use such words, which he doesn't deserve by any means for the scale of violence that set the state on fire, resulting in so many people being killed and tens of thousands being displaced?  
**Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

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

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



## Controversies surround Biren's Manipur tenure amidst ethnic violence

*Biren Singh resigned as Manipur's chief minister after 21 months of crisis amid BJP discord and impending no-trust motion, following ethnic violence and Supreme Court scrutiny*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, Feb 10:** Nongthombam Biren Singh's tenure as Manipur chief minister has been marked by a number of controversies, primarily centered on his handling of ethnic violence, allegations of instigating conflict, and questions regarding his governance.

Singh, who started as a footballer, then became a journalist before entering politics, served as the chief minister for two terms — 2017 and 2022. He represents the Heingang Assembly constituency in Imphal East district.

Singh entered politics in 2002, when he joined the Democratic Revolutionary People's Party and won the assembly polls. He retained the seat five years later in 2007 while contesting on a Congress ticket after joining the party in 2003.

In a short time, Singh became one of the then chief minister Ibobi Singh's trusted lieutenant and was made the minister of irrigation & flood control, youth affairs and sports, and consumer affairs & public distribution.

Although he retained his seat in 2012 for a third consecutive term, Singh had a fallout with Ibobi Singh. Eventually finding it difficult to continue, he resigned from the Congress and joined the BJP in October 2016.

In the March 2017 elections, where the Congress emerged

as the single largest party but without a clear majority to swing sufficient numbers its way, saw BJP cobble together a coalition government with Biren Singh as the new chief minister.

In 2022, he managed to win the approval of his party to get a second term as chief minister.

The journey since then has been not without hiccups.

One of the most significant controversies of Singh's tenure was the ethnic violence that erupted in May 2023.

The ethnic strife, which saw brutal clashes between the majority Meitei community in the Imphal Valley and the Kuki-Zo tribal groups in the surrounding hills, resulted in over 250 deaths and displaced thousands of people. The state's inability to contain it raised serious concerns about Singh's leadership.

Singh's response to the violence, however, included a public apology in December 2023, where he expressed regret for the deaths and displacement caused by the unrest.

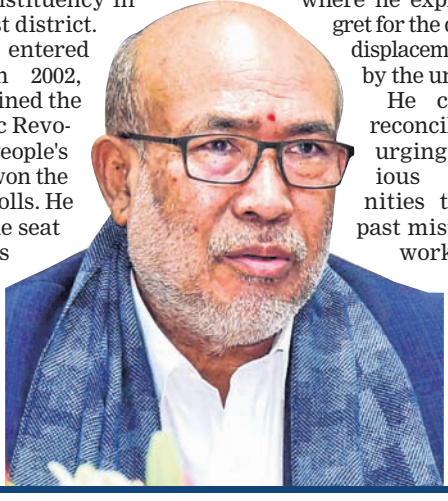
He called for reconciliation, urging the various communities to forgive past mistakes and work toward rebuilding a peaceful Manipur.

In February, a new con-

trovergency erupted when audio tapes allegedly featuring Singh were leaked, in which he was purportedly heard discussing how the ethnic violence was instigated with his approval.

The Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR), a vocal critic of Singh's handling of the ethnic conflict, sought a court-monitored investigation into the authenticity of the tapes.

This led to a Supreme Court ruling ordering the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) to verify the tapes' authenticity and submit a report.



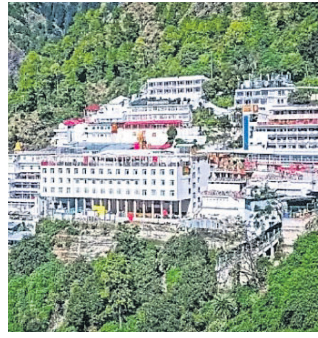
Tourists take 'shikara' rides at the Dal Lake on a sunny winter afternoon, in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

## Ban on liquor, non-veg food in Vaishno Devi shrine extended

*The extension of the ban is part of the authorities' ongoing efforts to preserve the spiritual atmosphere of the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage and ensure a serene environment for the thousands of devotees*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



**New Delhi, Feb 10:** In a move to maintain the sanctity of the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, the ban on the sale, possession, and consumption of liquor and non-vegetarian food in and around it has been extended for an additional two months, officials announced Sunday.

This prohibition affects Katra, the base camp for pilgrims visiting the holy shrine, situated in the Reasi district.

The ban will be enforced along the 12-kilometre track leading from Katra to the Vaishno Devi cave shrine, sit-

uated on the Trikuta hills. It will also cover the surrounding areas, including villages within a 2-kilometre radius on either side of the track.

Specific villages included in the banned area are Arli, Hansali, and Matyal villages.

Furthermore, the restriction will apply to the region along the Katra-Tikri road, which will also see a 200-metre ban on either side, impacting villages such as Chamba, Serli, and Bhagta.

In addition to these areas, the restriction will extend along the Katra-Jammu road,

which will include villages like Kundrorian, Kotli Bajallian, Nomain, and Maghal, within a 200-metre radius on both sides.

The ban will also be enforced along the Katra-Reasi road, covering the stretch from Katra to Nau Devian, as well as the Aghar Jitto and Nau Devian markets. The prohibition will be applicable within a 200-metre radius on both sides of the road.

Additionally, the areas around the Katra-Sool Road railway station and the Panthal-Domail road will be subject to similar restrictions. Specifically, the Katra-Sool Road will see a 200-metre restriction on either side, and the Panthal-Domail road will have a 100-metre restriction on both sides.

The order will remain in effect for two months unless revoked earlier. The extension of the ban is part of the authorities' ongoing efforts to preserve the spiritual atmosphere of the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage and ensure a serene environment for the thousands of devotees.

## NFR to start running electric trains in Assam, Tripura soon



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati/Agartala, Feb 10:** The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is continuing hectic efforts to start running the long-expected electric trains in southern Assam and Tripura at the earliest, officials said Monday.

An NFR official said that a trial run of the first goods train with an electric locomotive was successfully conducted Thursday between southern Assam's Badarpur station and Tripura's Jirania station, 15 km north of Agartala railway station.

"Necessary infrastructural works including electrification were completed recently in southern Assam and Tripura. After the successful operation of some more goods trains with electric locomotives, the running of passenger trains with electric locomotives would start on the route. We are frantically trying to start running passenger trains with electric locomotives within a month or a maximum of two months," the official told IANS.

Tripura is now well connected with Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ferozpur, Patna and other cities of the country by several express trains but passenger train services have been solely powered by diesel-powered engines.

A ₹46 crore electrification project was launched in 2022 to connect Tripura with the national railway grid with elec-

tric trains. The Tripura State Electricity Corporation Ltd (TSECL) would supply power to the railway electric transmission lines.

As the infrastructure with electric railway lines is getting ready, the iconic Vande Bharat Express trains will be extended up to Assam's Silchar and Agartala within the next few months, the NFR official said.

Rajya Sabha member from Tripura Rajib Bhattacharjee earlier said that infrastructure is almost ready to operate Vande Bharat Express trains up to Silchar and Agartala and the remaining minor works would be completed very soon.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi always gives priority to the development of northeastern states. Vande Bharat Express is one of his dream projects," he had said.

The Prime Minister flagged off Assam's first Vande Bharat Express May 29, 2023, connecting Guwahati with New Jalpaiguri (West Bengal). The Guwahati-New Jalpaiguri Vande Bharat Express train journey takes 5 hours and 30 minutes, as compared to the previous fastest train on the same route, which takes about 6 hours and 30 minutes.

The Guwahati-New Jalpaiguri Vande Bharat Express train operates six days a week.

The NFR operates in the northeastern states, seven districts of West Bengal, and five districts of north Bihar.

## INDIA'S FIRST ASSAM GOVT URGES CENTRE TO SET UP DIVYANG UNIVERSITY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** The Assam government has requested the Centre to set up India's first Divyang University in Assam.

The request was made by Assam Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Pijush Hazarika to Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Virendra Kumar here Saturday.

"Today, I had the privilege of meeting Hon'ble Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, @Drvirendrakumar13 Ji, in New Delhi. During our meeting, I requested the central government, led by our visionary leader, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji, through the Hon'ble Minister, to consider establishing India's first Divyang University in Assam," he wrote on 'X'.

Hazarika said that on behalf of the Assam government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, he conveyed that the state government believed this dedicated institution will empower the differently-abled through education, skill development and empowerment, making a significant contribution to nation-building and societal progress.

The Union minister gave a patient hearing to our request, he said. Attending the first meeting of the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) of the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY), Hazarika also requested the Union minister to set up hostels under the PM-AJAY for Assam and the northeastern region, an official release said.

## Rally for statehood restoration in Jammu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Feb 10:** A prominent Rajput outfit staged a march here Monday in support of the demand for early restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir with its leader threatening to intensify the agitation if the BJP-led Central government failed to keep its promise on the issue.

The activists of Yuva Rajput Sabha led by their president Vikram Singh took out the rally from the statue of Maharaja Hari Singh, the last Dogra ruler, at Tawi bridge near Jewel chowk in the heart of the city amid heavy deployment of po-



lice personnel. The participants, chanting slogans in support of statehood, crossed the Tawi bridge upto Bikram chowk and returned to the Maharaja's statue before

dispersing off peacefully. "This rally is part of our struggle for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Statehood is our birth right and directly linked to the future of

our youth and coming generations," Singh told reporters.

He said it is wrong on the part of some people who are saying that the National Conference is behind the rally.

"We have taken out rallies in support of statehood in the past and we will continue and rather intensify our struggle for restoration of our birth right. We want to remind the BJP leadership of its promise on statehood as more than three months has passed since the formation of the popular government in J&K," he said, adding they are not demanding any favour but restoration of the erstwhile Dogra state.

## GALWAN VALLEY Ladakh hot springs to open for battlefield tourism

*This initiative aims to boost border and rural tourism, benefiting local communities and showcasing historic military sites, including a new museum and infrastructure developments*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jammu, Feb 10:** Ladakh hot springs located in Galwan Valley area close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China are being thrown open for visitors as part of battlefield tourism from June 15.

Officials said Monday, "Hot springs in Eastern Ladakh will be thrown open for the tourists on June 15 this year, the fifth anniversary of martyrdom of 20 Indian soldiers in clash with People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China which lost its 42 jawans.

"At present, even the locals can't visit Galwan Valley. The requisite infrastructure is being generated to promote tourism."

The Ministry of Defence has

taken a decision to this effect and the Indian Army is on board. The Union Territory administration of Ladakh has been briefed about the decision and is making all arrangements for converting Galwan Valley into a battlefield tourism destination.

"The Hot Spring area which also falls close to the LAC in Ladakh is also being opened to tourists with infrastructure development and recce operations already underway."

Officials said, "The move is expected to boost border and rural tourism in the region, providing economic benefits to local communities. From establishing war memorials to commemorate the sacrifices of Indian soldiers to promoting



wildlife and cultural tourism, the initiative holds promise for Ladakh's tourism industry and regional development."

A recce of the Galwan area

was conducted January 19 by a 10-member team of Tourism Enablers representing ALTOA, Taxi Union, Tempo Union, Bike Union and ALGHA Tourism.

"The recce was organised by the GOC Kharu Division and initially, the plan is to open the area to domestic tourists. Pangong Lake already attracts a large number of tourists and the addition of Galwan as a destination is expected to give a significant boost to tourism.

"Two key infrastructure sites are planned, one at a midway point, 5 kms from Durbuk, where a cafeteria, souvenir shop, and accommodation for around 30 people are being built, and another at 12 kms from Durbuk. Shayok is the last settlement village along the route; beyond that, there are no further settlements. A museum is also being developed in Galwan as part of the 2020 memorial. Tourists will have

the opportunity to admire the breathtaking landscape," the officials said.

"In high risk border zones, visitors are required to coordinate with Army units for safety and clearances, facilitated via a single window, while in high-altitude areas, precautions have to be adopted and acclimatization protocols are also being advised," officials said.

It must be recalled that the Army has been working on transforming some of these historic and active battlefields into accessible tourist destinations.

The endeavour will allow Indian citizens to explore sites where soldiers are demonstrating exceptional valour, which will also foster a deeper appreciation for the defence forces.





I think the INDIA bloc needs to put its act together, its head together and realise that our personal political ambitions are overriding the interests of India

BOMB THREAT LETTER FOUND ONBOARD INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

A bomb threat letter was found on board an international flight that landed here Monday morning, prompting the authorities to search the aircraft, an official said.



of the day quote

The state government has taken numerous initiatives over the past 13 years to benefit the minority population, focusing on education, modernisation of madrasas, employment generation, skill development, and sustainable livelihoods



By showcasing folk traditions from Arunachal Pradesh, various states of India, and international participants from Bhutan and Thailand, the festival reinforces Arunachal Pradesh's role in global cultural diplomacy while celebrating the artistic brilliance of its people



A total of 15 AAP candidates had reached out to me. I thought that if the 'bow and arrow' symbol went to them, votes would be split between the BJP and Sena and others would benefit. So I declined



SHORT TAKES

Forest dept employee injured in tiger attack

Kolkata: A forest department employee was seriously injured Monday after being attacked by a Royal Bengal Tiger at Maipith in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, a senior forest official said.

Fire breaks out in Srinagar locality

Srinagar: Four houses were gutted in a fire in Noorbagh area of the city Monday, officials said here. The fire broke out in a house and spread to three more properties.

3 killed, 7 hurt in road accident

Hazaribagh (Jharkhand): Three persons were killed and seven injured in a road accident in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district Monday, police said. The accident occurred at Chathi valley on National Highway-33 under Charhi police station area around 6.30 am when the car carrying devotees from Mahakumbh in Prayagraj of Uttar Pradesh rammed into a stationary truck, they said.

4 held with drugs worth ₹2.41 cr

Palghar: Four persons were arrested in Palghar district for allegedly running a mephedrone manufacturing racket, a police official said Monday. Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil told reporters Amaan Nayeem Murad (29) was held February 8 after a raid at a room in Katkarpada in Boisar yielded 1.2 kilograms of mephedrone worth ₹2.41 crore.

'PROVOCATIVE' SONG ROW

SC questions Gujarat Police over FIR against Cong MP

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Gujarat High Court, which junked Pratapgarhi's petition to quash FIR, did not appreciate the meaning of the poem



The 46-second video clip, uploaded by Pratapgarhi on X, showed flower petals being showered at him as he walks waving his hands with a background song, the lyrics of which the FIR alleged were provocative, detrimental to national unity and hurting religious feelings

New Delhi, Feb 10: The Supreme Court Monday questioned the Gujarat Police over an FIR against Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi for allegedly posting an edited video of a provocative song.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Gujarat High Court, which junked Pratapgarhi's petition to quash FIR, did not appreciate the meaning of the poem.

"It's ultimately a poem. It is not against any religion. This poem indirectly says even if somebody indulges in violence, we will not indulge in violence. That's the message which the poem gives. It is not against any particular community," the bench said.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Pratapgarhi, said the high court order was bad in law as the judge did "violence" to the law.

The top court deferred the matter for three weeks after the state's counsel sought time to file a response.

The bench asked the counsel to "apply mind" and come back to the court.

The apex court January 21 stayed proceedings against Pratapgarhi in a case against him for allegedly posting an edited video of a provocative song

and issued notice to the Gujarat government and complainant Kishanbhai Deepakbhai Nanda on his appeal.

The Congress leader challenged the January 17 order of the Gujarat High Court which dismissed his petition for quashing the FIR filed against him saying the investigation was at a very nascent stage.

Pratapgarhi was booked January 3 for the alleged provocative song during a mass marriage function he attended in Gujarat's Jamnagar.

Pratapgarhi, national chairman of the Congress' minority cell, was booked, among others, under Section 196 (promoting enmity between different groups on the basis of religion, race, etc.) and 197 (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The 46-second video clip, uploaded by Pratapgarhi on X, showed flower petals being showered at him as he walks waving his hands with a background song, the lyrics of which the FIR alleged were provocative, detrimental to national unity and hurting religious feelings.

In his plea to quash and set aside the FIR, he claimed the poem being recited in the background carried "a message of love and non-violence".

Pratapgarhi said the FIR was used as a tool to harass him and lodged with a "malicious intent and mala fide motives".

Claiming his social media post did not in any way provoke enmity between groups and no case was made out, Pratapgarhi said he was being implicated due to his association with Congress.

SNIPPETS

Delhi HC allows custody parole to jailed MP Engineer Rashid

New Delhi: Clarifying it wasn't a precedent, the Delhi High Court Monday allowed a two-day custody parole to jailed J&K MP Rashid Engineer to attend the Parliament session. Justice Vikas Mahajan, however, clarified the order was passed on account of Rashid having no other remedy due to non-availability of a court to hear his bail plea and the relief should not be construed as a precedent.

How can convicted persons return to make laws, SC asks

New Delhi: Flaggng "criminalisation of politics" as a major issue, the Supreme Court Monday asked how could a person return to Parliament after being convicted in a criminal case. A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan therefore sought the assistance of the attorney general of India on the issue. It was hearing a PIL filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay seeking a life ban on convicted politicians aside from the expeditious disposal of criminal cases against MPs and MLAs in the country.

Misleading ads: SC summons Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, J&K chief secretaries

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday slammed several states, including Delhi, Andhra Pradesh and J&K, summoning their chief secretaries over the "failure" to act against illegal advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani drugs. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said there was hardly any implementation of its orders. The bench directed the chief secretaries to appear in court through video-conferencing to explain why these states were non-compliant.

Retd IPS officer gets 3 months jail term in assault case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhuj (Gujarat), Feb 10: A court in Gujarat Monday handed a three-month jail term to retired IPS officer Kuldeep Sharma after convicting him for assaulting and wrongfully confining a Congress leader when he was the Kutch superintendent of police 41 years ago.

The court of additional chief judicial magistrate BM Prajapati, Bhuj, also sentenced former police inspector GH Vasavada to three-month imprisonment.

The court imposed a fine of ₹1,000 each on Sharma and Vasavada who were convicted under section 342 of the Indian Penal Code for wrongfully confining Congress leader Abdul Haji Ibrahim (now deceased) in his office in 1984.

A complaint was filed in the Bhuj court by one Shankar Joshi seeking action against Sharma, Vasavada, and two other accused (who are now deceased) under sections 342 (wrongful confinement), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC.

Ittija Mufti alleges 2 of her PSOs suspended after Kathua visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 10: PDP leader Ittija Mufti alleged Monday that two of her personal security officers (PSOs) were suspended after she managed to give a slip and visit the family of a young man in Kathua district who died by suicide following alleged harassment by police.

Ittija, daughter of former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, has been claiming that the youth, Makhan Din, took his own life as he was unable to bear the torture of police for alleged links with terrorists.

Din, a Gujjar youth from Billawar who died Tuesday evening after consuming insecticide, had recorded a video before his death, claiming his innocence and denying any connection to terrorism.

The police and local administration have launched separate investigations into the incident.

Ittija has been demanding a judicial inquiry into the incident as well as into the death of a truck driver killed by army in Sopore in North Kashmir after he allegedly failed to stop at a checkpoint.

"Two of my PSOs (Hamid and Basharat) were suspended for no fault of theirs," the PDP leader told reporters outside her party office in Jammu.

"If they were suspended so quickly, why has no action been taken against the station house officer (SHO) who has spread terror in Kathua and extorted money from innocent youth. Locals told me those who fail to pay are labelled as over ground workers (of terrorists)," she said.

Modi arrives in France to attend AI summit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in France Monday on a three-day visit during which he will co-chair an AI Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron and hold bilateral talks with him.

"Landed in Paris a short while ago. Looking forward to the various programmes here, which will focus on futuristic sectors like AI, tech and innovation," Modi said in a post on X, attaching pictures of his arrival. The prime minister was warmly greeted by the Indian community when he reached his hotel.

"PM @narendramodi arrived in Paris to a special welcome. Warmly received by Minister of the Armed Forces @SebLe-cornu of France at the airport," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on X.

In the evening, Modi will attend a dinner hosted by President Macron at the Élysée Palace in honour of visiting Heads of Government and State.

The dinner is also likely to be attended by CEOs from the tech domain and a number of other

distinguished invitees to the summit. Prime Minister Modi will co-chair the AI Action Summit along with President Macron Tuesday.

"I look forward to co-chairing the AI Action Summit, a gathering of the world leaders and global tech CEOs, where we will exchange views on collaborative approach to AI technology for innovation and larger public good in an inclusive, secure and trustworthy manner," Modi said in his departure statement.

Modi and Macron will also hold discussions in both restricted and delegation formats and address the India-France CEO's Forum.

The prime minister said that the bilateral segment of his visit will provide an opportunity to review the progress on the 2047 Horizon Roadmap for India-France strategic partnership along with "my friend" President Macron.

The two leaders will visit Mazarogues War Cemetery Wednesday, maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Marseille, to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Indian soldiers in World War I



A young woman poses for photos with tulip flowers, at the Shanti Path in New Delhi, Monday

UK, India boost defence ties with new partnership

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 10: The UK-India strategic partnership took another major step forward with the formal launch of Defence Partnership-India (DP-I) and the signing of several defence agreements at the Aero India show Monday.

Announcing DP-I, UK Defence Minister Lord Vernon Coaker inaugurated the UK-India Defence Partnership Pavilion, establishing a dedicated programme office within the UK's Ministry of Defence to serve as a one-stop shop for strengthening bilateral defence collaboration between the two countries.

"The UK and India have today agreed to expand their collaboration on next-generation weapons with Thales and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL). Thales and BDL have signed a contract to deliver Laser Beam Riding MANPADS

(LBRM), with an initial supply of High Velocity Missiles (STARstreak) and launchers set for delivery this year," the British High Commission in India said.

This contract marks a significant step forward in UK-India defence cooperation, particularly in the critical area of air defence, the Commission added.

Lord Vernon Coaker, UK Defence Minister, said, "It was a pleasure to visit India and further strengthen our already robust defence relationship. Our defence partnership and the UK-India Defence Partnership Pavilion will enhance our cooperation, support economic growth in both countries, and align with India's Atmanirbhar ambition."

"This event highlights our collaboration on next-generation capabilities and the immense potential the UK and India can unlock by working

AERO INDIA 2025



together," Coaker added. According to an official statement, following the signing of

this initial LBRM contract, Thales and BDL will further collaborate to produce Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM).

This initiative will strengthen the partnership between Indian and British industries, positioning BDL and Indian firms as integral components of Thales' global supply chain. It will address mutual security concerns, generate jobs in both countries, and enhance interoperability between the armed forces.

"India is taking significant strides towards becoming Atmanirbhar in its defence capabilities. The UK looks forward to working with India as a partner of choice in achieving this ambition. Collaborating on defence technologies is central to this goal. These landmark agreements support economic growth and joint security," said Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India.



# national



From February 10 onward, these medicines will be made available free of cost to a population of over 17.5 crore across endemic districts. It is imperative that residents in these areas consume the medicines, protecting themselves and their families from this debilitating disease

7 ROCKET SHELLS FOUND FROM GARBAGE DUMP IN PUNJAB Seven rocket shells were found from a garbage dump in Punjab's Patiala district Monday, a senior police officer said. There was no explosive in the shells, Punjab Police's Deputy Inspector General (Patiala range) Mandeep Singh Sidhu said. He said the shells were found from a bag at the garbage dump on Patiala Road



## of the day quote

The Congress needs to clarify its political strategy. It has to decide whether it will do coalition politics or go it alone

TARIQ ANWAR | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

Just like in states, when the constitutional system fails, the command is given to someone else, similarly, seeing the chaos in Maha Kumbh, a capable person should be given the command of governance. Incompetent people can spread false propaganda, not true system

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

The biggest challenge for common people is the delay in securing permission to build homes on their land. The LIFE project, launched by the LDF government in 2016 to fulfill the dream of secure housing for the poor, has become a model for the entire country

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | CHIEF MINISTER, KERALA

## POST OF THE DAY

I will be raising the issue regarding the show called India's Got Latent as a member in the standing committee of IT& Communication for the kind of vulgar, blasphemous content that is passed off as comedy. We need to set boundaries since these platforms influence young minds and they are passing off absolute rubbish as content. The language used by Ranveer Allahbadia which was also actively encouraged by others on that 'comedy panel' is unacceptable.

@priyankac19

## SHORT TAKES

### Police busts terror module; 3 held

Amritsar: Punjab Police has busted a terror module with the arrest of a trio allegedly involved in carrying out an 'explosion' near a closed police post here February 3, officials said Monday. Police also recovered one AK-47 rifle, two pistols and cartridges from their possession, they said. After their arrest, the suspects allegedly tried to escape as one of them snatched a pistol from a police officer and opened fire. In retaliatory fire, two accused suffered bullet injuries and were admitted to a hospital, police said. The trio has been identified as Lovepreet Singh, Buta Singh and Karandeep Singh, all residents of Amritsar Rural having links with a Dubai-based man who helped in providing them with money and weapons.

### Property dispute: Man kills sister, niece

Etawah (UP): A man allegedly shot dead his sister and three-year-old niece over a property dispute here, police said Monday. The incident took place in the Mahera Chungi locality of the city late Sunday night when Harshvardhan, son of retired chief medical officer Lavkush Chauhan, fatally shot his sister Jyoti (40) and three-year-old niece Tashu, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sanjay Kumar Verma said. Jyoti was living at her maternal home with her daughter for the past three years, he said. On hearing the gun shots, the family members rushed to the room and found the mother and daughter lying in a pool of blood, the SSP said.

# SONIA ASKS GOVT TO COMPLETE CENSUS

In her maiden Zero Hour intervention in the Rajya Sabha, Gandhi said beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) are being identified as per the 2011 Census, and not the latest population numbers and thus many are deprived

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 10: Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi Monday asked the government to complete the population census at the earliest, claiming that around 14 crore people in the country are being deprived of their rightful benefits of free and subsidised foodgrains under the food security law. In her maiden Zero Hour intervention in the Rajya Sabha, Gandhi said beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) are being identified as per the 2011 Census, and not the latest population numbers and thus many are deprived. "For the first time in independent India's history, the decennial census has been delayed by more than four years, despite originally being scheduled for 2021. There is still no clarity on when the census will be conducted," she said in the Upper House.

Gandhi also claimed that the Budget allocations reveal that the updated census is unlikely to be conducted this year as well. "Around 14 crore eligible Indians are thus being deprived of their rightful benefits under the NFSA," she said. The senior Congress leader said the NFSA, introduced by the UPA government in September 2013, was a landmark



Around 14 crore eligible Indians are thus being deprived of their rightful benefits under the NFSA

SONIA GANDHI | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

initiative aimed at ensuring food and nutritional security for the country's 140 crore population. The legislation, Gandhi said, played a crucial role in protecting millions of vulnerable households from starvation, particularly during the Covid-19 crisis. She also said the quota for the beneficiaries is still determined based on the 2011 Census, which is now well over a decade old. The National Food Security Act, 2013, provides for coverage of up to 75 per cent of the rural and up to 50 per cent of the urban population for receiving highly subsidised foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), which, according to 2011 Census, comes to about 81.35 crore. At present, the government provides 5 kg free foodgrains per person per month under the food security law. "It is imperative that the government prioritises completion of the census as soon as possible and ensures that all deserving individuals receive the benefits guaranteed to them under the NFSA," she said. "Food security is not a privilege. It is a fundamental right," the former Congress chief asserted.

## Sambit Patra holds closed-door meetings with party MLAs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, Feb 10: A day after Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh tendered his resignation, state BJP in-charge Sambit Patra Monday held closed-door meetings with several BJP legislators at a hotel here to decide the next course of action, party sources said.

According to the sources, Patra met Speaker Thokchom Satyabrata, municipal administration housing development minister Y Khemchand, education minister Thounaojam Basanta Kumar Singh and BJP MLA Th Radheshyam. Three among them are known for their strained relationship with Singh.

The BJP legislators are expected to hold more meetings over the next 48 hours, either within the state or elsewhere, they added. Meanwhile, security has been tightened across the state capital, especially in sensitive areas such as Sanjenthong, Singamei, Moirangkhum, Keisampat, and Kangla Gate.

Manipur Congress president K Meghachandra welcomed Singh's resignation but opposed any move to impose President's Rule in the state.

"Congress wants a new leader and a new government. We oppose any plans to impose President's Rule in the state because people's mandate must be respected by the Union government," Meghachandra told reporters.



# BJP's Dubey demands probe of USAID-funded outfits in India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 10: BJP member Nishikant Dubey Monday demanded that the government probe organisations funded by USAID in India, alleging that most such outfits worked to create unrest in the country and had links with the Congress party.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, Dubey claimed the USAID funded organisations carried out protests against the Agniveer initiative of the government, backed caste census, and supported naxalism in the country.

Several Congress members rose in protest against Dubey's remarks and sought to raise a point of order in the Lok Sabha, but were disallowed by presiding officer Sandhya Ray who said such provisions do not apply to Zero Hour proceedings.

Dubey said US President Donald Trump has shut down USAID which spent money only to bring down governments all

over the world.

Later, Congress members met Speaker Om Birla to register their objections to Dubey being allowed to make unsubstantiated claims in the House.

Congress member Saptagiri Ulaka from Koraput raised the issue of railway connectivity in south Odisha.

Congress member Mohammad Jawed from Kishanganj in Bihar demanded that the Surjapuri community be included in the central list of OBCs.

Congress member Namdeo Kirsan from Gadchiroli-Chimur in Maharashtra demanded that the central pension scheme for old artistes be reinstated.

BJP member Bhartruhari Mahtab from Cuttack in Odisha demanded that freedom fighters be given free first class pass to travel in Vande Bharat trains.

Shiv Sena-UBT member Arvind Sawant demanded erecting a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji in the premises of the Central Railway Headquarters in Mumbai.

## TIRUPATI LADDU ADULTERATION ROW 4 arrested accused sent to judicial custody till Feb 20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 10: A Tirupati court Monday sent the four accused arrested in connection with the alleged adulteration of laddus offered as 'prasadam' at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple to judicial custody till February 20, officials said.

The CBI-led SIT arrested Vipin Jain and Pomil Jain, former directors of Bhole Baba Dairy, Apoorva Chawda from Vaishnavi Dairy and Raju Rajasekharan from AR Dairy which supplied dairy products to prepare the famed sweets, they said.

The arrested people were produced before a Tirupati court Monday which sent them to judicial custody till February 20, they said.

According to sources, the special investigation team (SIT) constituted on the Supreme Court orders had found serious violations at every step of ghee supply, leading to the arrests.

The officials alleged that Vaishnavi Dairy officials secured tenders under the name of AR Dairy to supply ghee to the temple and were also involved in creating fake records to manipulate the tender process.

The SIT unearthed that Vaishnavi Dairy had falsely claimed that it sourced ghee from Bhole Baba Dairy while the authorities noticed that the latter did not possess the capacity to meet the temple board Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam's demand, sources said.

## MAHA KUMBH Prez Murmu takes holy dip at Sangam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mahakumbh Nagar (UP), Feb 10: President Droupadi Murmu took a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam here Monday and said the huge gathering of faith and belief at the Maha Kumbh is a living symbol of India's rich cultural heritage.

After the dip at the Sangam, Murmu offered a coconut to the Ganga river and prayers to the Sun god.

Later, in a post on X, she said, "Today I had the good fortune of bathing in the holy confluence of Maa Ganga, Yamuna and the stream Saraswati in the divine atmosphere of Prayagraj Maha Kumbh."

The president said the Maha Kumbh conveys the message of unity and spirituality to humanity. "This huge gathering



of faith and belief is a wonderful and living symbol of India's rich cultural heritage. Maha Kumbh gives the message of unity and spirituality to humanity. I pray to Maa Ganga that she keeps her blessings on everyone and keeps spreading happiness and peace in everyone's life," she added. On her way to the Sangam, the president fed grains to

the migratory Siberian birds flocking the river. Officials said while going to the Sangam Ghat by boat, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath told Murmu that the green water coming from one side was that of the Yamuna, while the yellow-coloured water on the other side was that of the Ganga. "We are going to the confluence of these two rivers," the

chief minister said.

The president also offered prayers at the Akshayavat and Bade Hanuman temple.

After taking the holy dip, Murmu proceeded to the Akshayavat, a revered site in Sanatan culture symbolising immortality. The Puranas also highlight its spiritual significance. She then visited the Saraswati Koop, a sacred well associated with Maa Saraswati, the Uttar Pradesh government said in a statement.

At the Bade Hanuman temple, the president prayed for the country's well-being and prosperity. The temple's mahant and Peethadheeshwar of Baghambari Peeth, Balbir Giri, conducted ritualistic worship and presented Murmu with a replica of the temple as a token of reverence.

# Victory invites fulsome acclaim, defeat a lingering loss

The Delhi State Assembly is finally in the BJP's bag. Victor or vanquished, love and hate are being heaped a plenty depending on the side of the divide. Bouquets and brickbats are exchanging places with shameless singularity based on want, need and greed. Reactions, similarly, range from the pious to the profane. The desperation of the BJP for Delhi is akin to the lament of a direct recruit commissioner who missed being promoted to inspector. It has taken 27 years in the wilderness for the BJP even after helming India for a decade plus under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to get into the driver's seat in Delhi. Also pasted on the party has been the humiliation of being reduced to holding 3 and 8 seats respectively at the hands of a babe-in-the-woods Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the 2015 and 2020 Delhi Assembly elections. Delhi has a 70-member State Assembly. The party came to power at the Centre in 2014 on the slogan "minimum government, maximum governance" but has spared no effort thereafter to truncate the powers of the elected body including neutralising the Supreme Court judgment. Nevertheless, the BJP deserves its victory for the sheer elephantine effort of men, ma-



terial and 'manna' it marshalled in the just concluded polls. It outgunned and outmanoeuvred its principal opponents lock, stock and barrel, the Congress to a humiliating blank and AAP to a respectable Opposition's 22 seats. This, however is neither about the BJP nor it's numero uno, Modi. It is about AAP, the Congress and the Opposition front, Indian National Developmental Inclusive alliance, commonly known by as I.N.D.I.A. For starters, Arvind Kejriwal and his fledgling AAP deserve compliments for grinding to dust a Modi-powered BJP juggernaut in the Delhi Assembly elections in 2015-2020. It was a superb job efficiently executed. AAP achievements in Delhi need to be seen in the light of the fact that they were at the receiving end of the might of the Central investigative agencies with ministers and even the chief minister finding himself in jail. A simplistic analysis of the ensuing election results is that a city populace harassed by the constant tug-of-war between the Centre and the state chose discretion as the better part of valour. Morality issues can wait, same party governments will at least ensure frictionless functioning on basic issues. Just precisely what the BJP wants - total control and an Opposition-free India. Earlier it was Congress-mukt Bharat. Whether engrained or acquired both Modi and Kejriwal have a highly honed authoritarian streak. The former Gujarat chief minister earned his spurs in the rough and tumble of Gujarat politics. He put pawns into place and bided his time before making a jaguar-like final burst of speed to breast both the chief ministerial and prime ministerial tape. In the case of Kejriwal his treading hurry to spread his wings countrywide even before building the party network lies at the root of his troubles. After the success achieved in ousting and replacing the Sheila Dikshit-led Congress government in Delhi, Kejriwal was firing on all cylinders. In a political short-cut, he contested the Lok Sabha elections in 2014 against Modi from Varanasi and was

roundly defeated. Soon after, AAP moved to Gujarat in 2017 contesting 30 Assembly seats with its candidates losing deposits in most of them. The Congress fared very well bringing the BJP down to less than 100 seats in a 182 member House. However, Kejriwal's aggressive forays in Gujarat began to hurt the Congress and to the advantage of the BJP. In almost all cases AAP gained little and the Congress lost big while the BJP gained. The municipal corporation of the state capital of Gandhinagar had been a bastion of the Congress since its inception but the former lost to the BJP big time in 2021 after AAP turned it into a triangular contest. The BJP won 41 of the total 44 seats, the Congress 2 and AAP one seat. This continued in other states as well with the Congress losing its government to AAP in Punjab. It is this self-centred approach that has seen Kejriwal suffer in Delhi at the hands of the Congress. Highly placed sources say that Rahul Gandhi still favoured an arrangement of sorts but the Kejriwal orchestrated move of announcing candidates beforehand put paid to the move. The contradictions that the 28-party Opposition front, I.N.D.I.A. faces is that the regional parties in power

in the states want their cake and eat it too. They are reluctant to accommodate the Congress in their respective states while they would want it to spearhead their battle with the BJP. Like it or not, the Congress remains the only national party with the wherewithal and following to take on the Modi-led BJP. Interestingly he is one person who knows this very well and is therefore both ruthless and merciless in attacking it even as he goes about dismantling the Congress-era official structures and replacing them with his handpicked and selected choices. Modi's politics brooks no allies, he does not believe in sharing power. It is a very short term marriage of convenience. Election for him is war and Opposition is the enemy. And the enemy has to be annihilated by any and every means at ones disposal. Even before one election is over, preparation for the next one, howsoever distant it may be, begins right away. He has eyes, ears and errand boys marked out for specific work spread all over. All in all, he is a fearsome opponent to take on. And the Opposition has no national options except the Congress. Liberty for wolves is death to the lambs.



# international



**I think Canada would be much better off being the 51st state because we lose \$200 billion a year with Canada. And I'm not going to let that happen. Why are we paying \$200 billion a year, essentially a subsidy to Canada?**  
DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

## MARRIAGES PLUNGE IN CHINA

Marriages in China plummeted by a fifth last year, the biggest drop on record, despite manifold efforts by authorities to encourage young couples to wed and have children to boost the country's declining population



### of the day quote

**The relationship between China and the Cook Islands is not directed against any third party and should not be subject to or disrupted by any third party**  
GUO JIAXUN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

**The relocation of populations is unacceptable and against international law**  
OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

**The persistent restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles are preventing life-saving assistance from reaching those in desperate need**  
CLEMENSINE NKWETA-SALAM | UN PRESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR IN SUDAN

## CRACKDOWN AGAINST ILLEGAL MIGRANTS

# UK: Indian restaurants in the grill

*UK Immigration Enforcement teams had a record-breaking January as they descended on 828 premises -- a 48% rise compared to the previous January, with arrests surging to 609, and marking a 73% increase from the previous year*



**The immigration rules must be respected and enforced. For far too long, employers have been able to take on and exploit illegal migrants and too many people have been able to arrive and work illegally with no enforcement action ever taken**  
YVETTE COOPER | HOME SECRETARY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Feb 10:** Indian restaurants, nail bars, convenience stores, and car washes were among the targets of what the Home Office Monday described as a "UK-wide blitz" on illegal working in the country.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said her department's Immigration Enforcement teams had a record-breaking January as they descended on 828 premises -- a 48 per cent rise compared to the previous January, with arrests surging to 609, and marking a 73 per cent increase from the previous year.

The Home Office said that while its teams respond to illegal working intelligence in all sectors, a significant proportion of last month's activity took place at restaurants, takeaways and cafes as well as in the food, drink and tobacco industry.

A visit to one Indian restaurant in Humberside, northern England, alone led to seven arrests and four detentions, it noted.

"The immigration rules must

be respected and enforced. For far too long, employers have been able to take on and exploit illegal migrants and too many people have been able to arrive and work illegally with no enforcement action ever taken," said Cooper.

"Not only does this create a dangerous draw for people to risk their lives by crossing the Channel in a small boat, but it results in the abuse of vulnerable people, the immigration system, and our economy," she said.

It comes as the Labour Party government's Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill returns to Parliament for its second reading this week.

The new legislation aims to

"smash the criminal gangs" that Prime Minister Keir Starmer-led administration says undermines border security.

Further Home Office statistics claim that between July 5 last year and January 31 this year, illegal working crackdowns and arrests have soared by around 38 per cent compared to the same period 12 months prior. A total of 1,090 civil penalty notices have been issued during that phase, with employers facing a fine of up to GBP 60,000 per worker if found liable.

"These figures demonstrate the commitment of my teams to crack down on those who think they can flout our immigration system," said Eddy Montgomery, Director of Enforcement, Compliance and Crime at the Home Office.

"I hope it sends a strong signal that there is no hiding place from the law, and we will continue to ramp up our activity to ensure those involved face the full consequences. We also know that many people who end up working illegally are often subjected to extremely poor conditions, so we will continue

to do all we can to safeguard and protect the most vulnerable," he said.

As part of this activity, Immigration Enforcement said it also plays a critical safeguarding role in working closely with organisations to allow employees to report labour exploitation.

In January, it claimed to have smashed its target to drive the removal of foreign criminals and immigration offenders to the highest level since 2018, with 16,400 people removed since the July 2024 general election.

Bespoke charter flights have also removed "immigration offenders" to countries around the world, including four of the biggest migrant returns flights in the UK's history carrying more than 800 people.

Those removed on these flights are said to include criminals convicted of drug offences, theft, rape and murder.

"We're also working upstream to deter people from entering the UK illegally by launching a new international campaign to debunk people smugglers' lies. Social media adverts went live in Vietnam in December and Albania in January, highlighting real stories from migrants who entered the UK illegally, only to face debt, exploitation, and a life far from what they were promised," the Home Office said.

The Opposition Conservative Party has branded it a "weak bill that won't stop the boats" and called for tougher measures against access to permanent residency for all migrants.

"Under new leadership [of Kemi Badenoch], the Conservatives are coming up with effective and deliverable reforms to cut immigration. Our country is our home, not a hotel," said shadow home secretary Chris Philp.

## 'OPERATION DEVIL HUNT' Over 1,000 arrested in B'desh over vandalism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, Feb 10:** Bangladesh security forces arrested 1,308 people under "Operation Devil Hunt", launched overnight amid nationwide vandalism as unrest gripped the country for the past four days, with the interim government vowing to continue the crackdown until "all devils" were uprooted.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus-led interim government ordered "Operation Devil Hunt" Saturday after student activists were injured during vandalism at the house of an Awami League leader on the outskirts of Dhaka.

Major media outlets including the Daily Star said Sunday that joint forces comprising army troops, police and their specialised units arrested 274 people majorly in metropolitan cities and others in different parts of the country in the 24 hours since the operation was launched.

"The operation will target those who are desperate to destabilise the country... it will continue until all devils are rooted out," Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (Retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said.

According to mainstream media reports, 81 activists of the deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League were arrested from Gazipur on the outskirts of Dhaka, where the clash erupted and prompted authorities to order Operation Devil Hunt.

On Friday night, at least 14 individuals, all belonging to the mobs out to vandalise and destroy all signs of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party, were injured as they came under attack in Gaziur city's Dakshinkhan area.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Gambling racket: 23 Indians held in Nepal

**Kathmandu:** Nepal police arrested 23 Indians Monday in the Bagmati province of the Himalayan nation on charges of operating an online gambling racket. The arrests were made in a two-storey building located in Budhanilkantha Municipality, located 10 km north of Kathmandu, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police Apil Kumar Bohara. The 23 Indian nationals were arrested red-handed when the police raided the building based on a tip-off. Police also seized Rs 81,000 cash, 88 mobile phone sets and 10 laptops from their possession. They are being charged under the anti-gambling act, police said.

#### 51 dead after bus plunges off bridge

**Guatemala City:** At least 51 people are dead after their bus plunged off a bridge Monday on the outskirts of Guatemala's capital, said Hector Flores, who was helping coordinate the municipal government's response. Firefighting spokesman Edwin Villagran said a multi-vehicle crash sent the bus off the bridge before dawn. Others were seriously injured. The bus fell 115 feet (35 metres) into a sewage-polluted stream. It landed upside down and half-submerged. The bus had come from Progreso, northeast of the capital. Volunteer firefighting spokesman Oscar Sanchez said children were among the victims. President Bernardo Arevalo offered his condolences and declared a day of national mourning. Images shared by the fire department on social media showed the bus partially submerged in wastewater surrounded by victims' bodies.

#### SL imposes power cuts after plant fails

**Colombo:** Sri Lanka is scheduled to undergo a 90-minute power cut Monday and Tuesday following a breakdown in a coal power plant. Ceylon Electricity Board, the state power entity, decided Monday given the shortage of supply owing to the failure at the 900-megawatt Norochcholai coal power plant in the northwestern region. The Ceylon Electricity Board in a statement said the 90-minute rationing will be in two slots between 3 pm and 9.30 pm in different areas on both days. The statement said Sunday's sudden power outage forced the operations at Lakvijaya power station to shut. Sri Lanka Sunday experienced an island-wide power outage for nearly 6 hours due to a tripping of a Colombo suburb grid station when a monkey came in contact with it.

## MP objects to 'Bengali' signboard at station; Musk supports his views

**London:** A British MP has received support from tech billionaire Elon Musk after objecting to a signboard in English and Bengali at London's Whitechapel station and demanding it be in English only. Rupert Lowe, the Great Yarmouth MP, took to his official X account and posted a picture of the dual language signboard at the Whitechapel Station. "This is London - the station name should be in English, and English only," Lowe posted Sunday. Lowe's post received mixed reactions from the X users with some supporting his views while others saying it's ok to have bilingual signage. Musk, who owns X, also commented on the post. "Yes," Musk responded. Bengali signage was installed at the Whitechapel station in 2022 to pay tribute to the Bangladeshi community's contribution to East London. The area is home to the biggest Bangladeshi community in the UK.



## Pressure by populists: Romanian prez quits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bucharest (Romania), Feb 10:** Romanian President Klaus Iohannis announced his resignation Monday following mounting pressure from populist opposition groups, two months after a top court annulled a presidential election in the European Union country.

"To spare Romania from this crisis, I am resigning as president of Romania," he said in an emotional address, adding that he will leave office February 12.

Iohannis, 65, held the presidential role since 2014 and served the maximum of two five-year terms. But his presidency was extended in December after the Constitutional Court cancelled the presidential race two days before a December 8 runoff.

That came after the far-right populist Calin Georgescu unexpectedly won the first round, after which allegations emerged of Russian interference and electoral violations.



# Trump recognises Feb 9 as 'Gulf of America Day'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Feb 10:** US President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation recognising February 9 as "the first-ever Gulf of America Day" after a recent executive order by him to rename the Gulf of Mexico.

Trump signed the proclamation Sunday on his way to the Super Bowl in New Orleans, which sits on the gulf.

"We are flying right over it right now," Trump said, sitting aboard Air Force One with a pen in his hand. "So we thought this would be appropriate."

"Today, I am making my first visit to the Gulf of America since its renaming," Trump said in the proclamation published on the White House

**As my administration restores American pride in the history of American greatness, it is fitting and appropriate for our great Nation to come together and commemorate this momentous occasion and the renaming of the Gulf of America**  
DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

website. Trump had signed an executive order on his inauguration January 20, giving the Department of the Interior 30 days to take "all appropriate action" needed to facilitate the name change.

Just after Trump signed the executive order, the US Coast Guard started using the term Gulf of America, marking the US government's first official use of the term.

## Minting of new pennies halted

**President Donald Trump** says he has directed the Treasury Department to stop minting new pennies, citing the rising cost of producing the one-cent coin. "For far too long the United States has minted pennies which literally cost us more than 2 cents. This is so wasteful!" Trump wrote in a post Sunday night on his Truth Social site. "I have instructed my Secretary of the US Treasury to stop producing new pennies." Trump had not discussed his desire to eliminate the penny during his campaign. But Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency raised the prospect in a post on X last month highlighting the penny's cost. The US Mint reported losing \$85.3 million in the 2024 fiscal year that ended in September on the nearly 3.2 billion pennies it produced. Every penny cost nearly \$0.037 - up from \$0.031 the year before. The mint also loses money on the nickel, with each of the \$0.05 coins costing nearly \$0.14 to make.

# Most countries miss UN deadline for new climate targets

*The 2015 Paris climate accord commits nations to try to avoid global warming exceeding 1.5 C (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. Action to date has fallen far short of the deep emissions cuts that would achieve this. Last year was the first to breach 1.5 C of warming*

REUTERS

**Brussels, Feb 10:** Many of the world's biggest polluter nations have missed a UN deadline to set new climate targets as efforts to curb global warming come under pressure following US President Donald Trump's election.

The nearly 200 countries signed up to the Paris Agreement faced a Monday deadline to submit new national climate plans to the UN, setting out how they plan to cut emissions by 2035.

As of Monday morning, many of the world's biggest polluters - including China, India and the European Union - had not done so. Large economies that have



announced new climate plans include the US, Britain, Brazil, Japan, and Canada - although

to concerns that climate action has fallen down government agendas, with some officials signalling that the US U-turn on climate policy is disrupting other nations' efforts.

EU climate policy chief Wopke Hoekstra told Reuters last month the bloc's policymaking cycle did not line up with the UN deadline, but that Brussels would have its plan ready for the COP30 UN climate summit in November.

India has not yet finished the studies needed to design its climate plan, a government official told Reuters. China will publish its climate plan "in due course", a foreign ministry spokesperson said Monday.

Trump is expected to scrap the US's Biden-era contribution. Trump last month ordered

- EU, China, India among those to miss deadline
- Trump expected to ignore US Biden-era climate plan
- Australia's climate advisers assessing impact of Trump win

UN says plans from most nations still expected this year



# Business



**We issued tenders at the importation. Those tenders are open to any supplier. We buy from the cheapest source possible**  
**HARDEEP SINGH PURI**  
UNION OIL MINISTER

## INDO-ISRAEL TRADE

Top business leaders, policymakers, and industry stakeholders from India and Israel will meet here on Tuesday to discuss ways to further promote trade and investments between the two countries, an official statement said Monday. They will explore new avenues of economic cooperation, technological collaboration, and investment opportunities, the Union commerce and industry ministry said.



## of the day quote

**India is fast emerging as a preferred hub for global sourcing, and we are looking to broaden our partnerships here to support both our business growth and the government of India's vision to 'Make in India for the world'**



**NICOLA GRADY-SMITH** | ROLLS-ROYCE CHIEF TRANSFORMATION OFFICER

**With this USD 100 billion FDI, I personally believe that we could be catalysing overall investments of may be USD 400 or USD 500 billion in the Indian ecosystem**



**PIYUSH GOYAL** | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

**We remain optimistic about recovery basis concerted efforts on driving volume-based revenue growth, by offering affordability and freshness. We will continue to move ahead with cautious control on costs and focus on efficiency and productivity**



**GUNJAN SHAH** | BATA INDIA MD AND CEO

## SHORT TAKES

### NALCO net profit jumps 3x

**New Delhi:** State-owned National Aluminium Company Ltd (NALCO) Monday reported an over three-fold jump in its consolidated net profit at ₹1,566.32 crore in the December 2024 quarter, on account of higher income. It had posted a net profit of ₹470.61 crore during the October-December period of 2023-24, the company said in a regulatory filing. The company's total income increased 40 per cent to ₹4,761.31 crore against ₹3,397.87 crore in the year-ago period. NALCO trimmed its expenses to ₹2,639.41 crore compared to ₹2,729.66 crore in the corresponding period a year ago. The board of the company also approved payment of second interim dividend of ₹4 per share, 80 per cent on a face value of ₹5 each, on the paid-up equity share capital of ₹918.32 crore for financial year 2024-25. The company has fixed February 14, 2025, as the record date for payment of the dividend. Under the Ministry of Mines, NALCO is the country's leading manufacturer and exporter of alumina and aluminium.

### ONGC signs pact with BP

**New Delhi:** State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Monday said it has signed a pact with global oil major BP to explore collaboration in exploration and production, trading and other energy vectors, in India and internationally. The MoU comes within a month of ONGC selecting BP as a technical service provider for raising output from its flagship Mumbai High oil and gas field. "ONGC and BP have agreed to explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership across the energy industry in India and internationally, focused on oil and gas exploration and production, as well as trading and extending to other energy vectors," the firm said in a statement. The two companies signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), on the eve of India Energy Week, the premier energy event in India. The signing ceremony was attended by ONGC Chairman and CEO Arun Kumar Singh and BP Executive Vice President, William Lin, along with senior leadership from both organisations. "Under the terms of the MoU, BP will collaborate with ONGC to jointly explore and evaluate potential business opportunities in oil and gas projects both within India and internationally," the statement said.

# Stocks fall as Trump's tariff threats unnerve investors

**Sensex, Nifty drop for 4th day amid foreign fund outflows**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 10:** Stock markets closed with losses for the fourth consecutive day Monday with the benchmark Sensex falling by 548 points as fresh US tariff threats shook investor confidence and triggered selling in bluechip banking, metal and oil shares.

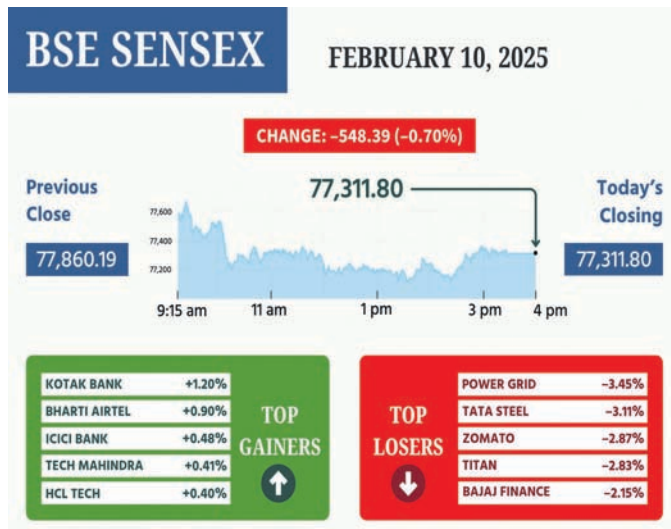
The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 548.39 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at a week's low of 77,311.80. Intra-day, it tanked 753.3 points or 0.96 per cent to 77,106.89.

The NSE Nifty declined 178.35 points or 0.76 per cent to 23,381.60 dragged by losses in Trent, Tata Steel and Power Grid.

"The US tariff threats continued to impact the market sentiment. Domestic yield is inching higher as investors stay cautious on riskier assets and navigate their investments to safe haven assets like gold," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Power Grid, Tata Steel, Zomato, Titan, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, NTPC and Tata Motors were among the major laggards.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, ICICI Bank and Tata



Consultancy Services were the gainers.

Sensex has dropped 1,272 points or 1.63 per cent while Nifty tanked 357 points or 1.51 per cent on the four-day decline since February 5.

"Indian benchmark indices witnessed a significant decline today following a statement by US President Donald Trump, who announced plans to impose new tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports into the US, along with additional reciprocal tariffs," Ameya Ranadive Chartered Market Technician, CFTe, Sr Technical Analyst, StoXBox, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge dropped 2.25 per cent and mid-cap index tanked 2.06 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended lower. Realty tumbled

the most by 2.69 per cent, followed by metal (2.63 per cent), consumer durables (2.61 per cent), utilities (2.49 per cent) and consumer discretionary (1.94 per cent).

As many as 3,032 stocks declined while 1,070 advanced and 123 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, Seoul settled lower while Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the positive territory.

European markets were trading higher. US markets ended lower Friday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹470.39 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.04 per cent to USD 75.44 a barrel.

# Rupee rises 5 paise to 87.45 against USD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 10:** The rupee Monday plunged 45 paise and moved closer to the 88 per US dollar-level, weighed down by the strength of the American currency tariff concerns, but eventually settled at 87.45, up 5 paise, following RBI intervention.

The American currency gained in the overseas market after US President Donald Trump's plans to impose 25 per cent tariffs on steel and aluminium imports, along with reciprocal tariffs targeting countries taxing US exports.

The move has added jitters over the global trade war with China's reciprocal duties coming into effect, they said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.94 and touched an all-time intraday low of 87.95 against the American currency during the session.

The local unit, however, pared the initial losses and finally at 87.45, higher by 5 paise from its previous close.

Friday, the rupee recovered 9 paise from its all-time low level to close at 87.50 against the US dollar.

The rupee touched an all-



time low closing level of 87.59 against the greenback February 6.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.14 per cent higher at 108.18.

"The Indian rupee touched fresh record lows in early trades on weak domestic markets and a strong US dollar index. However, the rupee recovered early losses on supposed intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

"Traders may take cues from inflation data from the US and India this week. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 87.25 to 87.80," Choudhary said.

# Reliance enters sports drinks segment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** Reliance through its FMCG arm Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL) has entered into the sports hydration drink segment with the brand 'Spinner', co-created with Sri Lankan cricket icon Muttiah Muralitharan.

Reliance, which has disrupted the Indian beverages market with aggressive pricing of its Campa Cola, is offering Spinner at a price of ₹10 for a

150 ml single-serve bottle.

This is relatively lower than other rival sports drinks available in the market such as PepsiCo's Gatorade and Coca-Cola's Powerade which are available at ₹50 for 500 ml. Decathlon's sports drink Aptonia costs ₹99 for a 400 ml bottle, though it is available at ₹69 on the portal.

Last month, RCPL launched RasKik Gluco Energy, entering into the energy drink segment.

Reliance, which entered the beverages market with the ac-

quisition of Campa in 2023, has now over 10 per cent market share in the sparkling beverage category in select states, the company stated in its latest quarterly report.

These launches reinforced RCPL's ambition to become a comprehensive total beverages and consumer products company.

Spinner has partnerships with top IPL teams, including Lucknow Super Giants, SunRisers Hyderabad, Punjab Kings, Gujarat Titans and

Mumbai Indians who will collaborate with RCPL to increase brand visibility nationwide.

"Uniquely positioned, Spinner will lead the movement in creating a sports beverage category of up to USD 1 billion in the next 3 years," said a joint statement.

Commenting on the development Muralitharan said: "Spinner is a game-changer that will empower every Indian to stay hydrated and active, no matter where they are or what they're doing."

# Adani setting up health infra with Mayo Clinic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** Adani Group will spend ₹6,000 crore in setting up two 1,000-bed multi-specialty hospitals and medical colleges in Mumbai and Ahmedabad in partnership with Mayo Clinic.

The expenditure is part of ₹10,000 crore that Gautam Adani, chairman of Adani Group, had pledged when his younger son Jeet got married last week.

Mayo Clinic, the world's largest integrated not-for-profit medical group practice, will provide technical expertise, Adani Group said in a statement.

"Adani Group will fully meet the cost of building affordable, world-class medical care and medical education to people from all strata of society pan India," it said. "The family will donate upwards of ₹6,000 crore to build the first two of these integrated health campuses in Ahmedabad and Mumbai."

Gautam Adani has plans for more such integrated Adani Health Cities in cities and towns across India, the statement said without giving details. Each of these integrated campuses will comprise 1,000-bed multi-specialty hospitals, medical colleges with an annual intake of 150 undergraduates, 80+ resi-

dents and 40+ fellows, step-down and transitional care facilities, and cutting-edge research facilities.

This "medical ecosystem aims to serve people from all socio-economic backgrounds, train the next generation of doctors and focus on clinical research, artificial intelligence and biomedical informatics," it said.

Adani Group has engaged USA's Mayo Clinic to provide strategic advice on organizational objectives and clinical practices at these establishments. Mayo Clinic will also offer expert guidance on the integration of technology, with a focus on digital and informa-

tion technology and healthcare quality enhancement.

"Two years ago, as a gift to me on my 60th birthday, my family committed ₹60,000 crore towards improving healthcare, education and skill development," said Gautam Adani. "The development of Adani Health City is the first of many major projects from this contribution, which will go a long way towards providing affordable, world-class healthcare to people from every section of the Indian society. I am confident that our partnership with Mayo Clinic... will help elevate healthcare standards in India, with a special emphasis on complex disease care and medical innovation."

# Gold surges ₹2,430 to hit lifetime high of ₹88,500

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** Gold prices zoomed by ₹2,430 to hit a lifetime high of ₹88,500 per 10 grams in the national capital Monday following firm global trends and a weak rupee, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal breached the record USD 2,900 an ounce level in spot markets globally after US President Donald Trump announced imposition of fresh 25 per cent tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports to the US.

Heavy buying by jewellers and retailers also boosted the prices.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at

₹86,070 per 10 grams last week. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity surged by ₹2,430 to hit a record high of ₹88,100 per 10 grams in the local markets.

Silver prices increased ₹1,000 to ₹97,500 per kg.

Investors are dumping riskier assets like stocks as they prefer safe haven amid global economic uncertainties, traders said.

In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for April delivery rallied ₹940 to hit a new lifetime high of ₹85,828 per 10 grams.

"Gold witnessed strong gains, surging above ₹85,800 in MCX and hitting USD 2,900 in spot markets as Trump's new round of tariffs on metal products intensified trade war



concerns." "With no specific clarity on

which countries are included or excluded, uncertainty in

global trade has driven significant bullion buying," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

The subsequent contract for June delivery surged ₹1,015 or 1.18 per cent to hit a fresh peak of ₹86,636 per 10 grams.

Silver futures for March delivery climbed ₹632 to ₹95,965 per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

Globally, Comex gold futures appreciated by USD 45.09 per ounce or 1.56 per cent to hit a record high of USD 2,932.69 per ounce. Meanwhile, spot gold in the global markets breached the psychological level of USD 2,900-mark.

"Gold climbed to a new re-

cord high on Monday as fund flow increased towards the safe haven asset in response to President Trump's latest declaration," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Comex silver futures in the Asian market hours rose nearly 1 per cent to USD 32.76 per ounce. According to a report by Dutch multinational ING Bank, gold has already hit a series of fresh record highs this year. Tariff concerns that risk higher inflation and slower economic growth are spurring demand for safe haven assets.

The precious metal prices will hit more record highs this year, with USD 3,000 per ounce now in sight, it said.



ASIA MIXED TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

FIH HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE

# India face uphill task without Sindhu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Qingdao, Feb 10:** Without the services of an injured PV Sindhu, India will face an uphill task in pursuit of an elusive gold medal at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships which get underway here Tuesday.

India hope to improve on their bronze medal finish from the previous edition where Sindhu played a key role in Dubai two years ago. Her absence this year due to an injury will be a significant setback as the team embarks on its campaign in the prestigious biennial event.

Sindhu sustained a hamstring injury during a pre-tournament training camp in Guwahati February 4, forcing her to withdraw from the tournament at the last minute. Her unavailability puts the onus on world No 29 Malvika Bansod to step up in women's singles.

Placed in Group D, India will open their campaign against Macau Wednesday, followed by a clash with a strong Korean outfit Thursday. A top-two finish in the group will secure a spot in the quarterfinals, and while India is likely to progress to the last eight, advancing further will require exceptional performances from the squad.

While India have never won the gold at the Asia Mixed Team Championships, they did secure mixed team gold and silver at the Commonwealth Games in 2018 and 2022.

India have had notable success in recent team events, including their first-ever Thomas Cup gold in 2022, the 2024 Badminton Asia Team Championships silver in Malaysia, and a historic men's silver at the Hangzhou Asian Games.

The team features many key players from those victories, including HS Prannoy, Lak-



shya Sen, Ashwini Ponnappa, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, and Chirag Shetty, with all eyes on them to put up an inspired performance.

While Satwik and Chirag have been consistent with semifinal finishes at the Malaysia Open and India Open, Prannoy has been troubled by niggles after returning to action following the Olympics, where he was affected by a pre-tourna-

ment chikungunya bout. Syed Modi champion Lakshya, on the other hand, has endured a few first-round exits this season and will need to regain his form quickly.

As expectations will be high for the men's singles and men's doubles, India also boasts strength in women's doubles, with Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly repeatedly showcasing their skills. The duo re-

cently broke into the world's top 10 on the back of their maiden super 300 title run at Lucknow and qualifying at the BWF World Tour event last year.

Adding to the experience is Ponnappa, who competed at the Paris Olympics alongside young Tanisha Crasto. The duo won the Guwahati Masters Super 100 last December and will look to put up a good show here. The mixed doubles pair of

Sathish Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath will also carry confidence into their first team event, coming off a gold medal at the National Games in Dehradun earlier this month.

In the last three editions of the tournament, China clinched the title in 2023 and 2019 while Japan emerged as champions in the inaugural edition in 2017. The event was not held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## German women's team arrives in Bhubaneswar



**Bhubaneswar:** The Germany Women's Hockey Team arrived at Biju Patnaik International Airport, Bhubaneswar, Monday ahead of their FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 fixtures in India. Led by Co-Captains Linnea Wiedemann and Sarah Strauss, Germany will take on Spain 15 and 16 February before facing hosts India 21 and 22 February. Germany finished runners-up in last season's Pro League behind the Netherlands, but they have struggled for form this year. With only two draws from four matches, they currently sit seventh in the standings with three points. Having conceded 13 goals already, they will be looking to tighten their defense ahead of the crucial upcoming games.

## Spanish men, women squads land in City

**Bhubaneswar:** Both the men's and women's teams of Spain have arrived together at the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar Monday as they gear up for the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 matches in India. The men's side faces host India February 15 and 16, followed by England February 19, while the women's team will take on Germany February 15 and 16 before facing India February 19. In terms of standings, both Spanish teams are struggling in their respective tables and will be eyeing to get wins under their belt early on in their Pro League campaign. The men's team is currently placed sixth with just one win and a draw in four games. On the other hand, the women's team is eighth with four games played and is yet to win a match.



### SHORT TAKES

#### 19-year-old Meena shatters record

**Dehradun:** Madhya Pradesh's Dev Kumar Meena smashed the national record in men's pole vault event while winning the gold medal with an effort of 5.32m on the third day of athletics competition at the National Games here Monday. Of the eight gold medals on offer on the day, Punjab secured three, while Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Services, Tamil Nadu and host Uttarakhand took one each. The 19-year-old Meena, who was defending the gold he had won in the 2023 edition, bettered the earlier national record of 5.31m set by Subramani Siva while winning the gold in the 2022 Games in Gujarat. Meena had won a bronze medal in the Asian U20 Championship last year with an effort of 5.10m.

#### Alcaraz clinches first indoor title

**Rotterdam:** Carlos Alcaraz secured his first indoor title by beating Alex de Minaur in the final of the Rotterdam Open Sunday. The top-seeded Alcaraz won 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 to become the first Spanish champion in the tournament's 52-year history. It was a 17th title for the 21-year-old Alcaraz but his first indoor one. "This week has been a really good week," Alcaraz said. "Putting in really good work. Coming here (not) feeling 100% well with the cold but after every day I'm feeling better and better. "It was the first time that I (was) playing here and you (fans) made it like I've been playing this tournament for a long time." De Minaur lost to Jannik Sinner in last year's Rotterdam final.

#### Gukesh bows out of Freestyle Grand Slam

**Hamburg:** World champion D Gukesh bowed out of Freestyle Grand Slam chess after losing his second straight quarterfinal game against Fabiano Caruana of the United States here Monday. Having lost the first game with white pieces, Gukesh did not last long against the American Grandmaster in a must-win tie with Caruana finishing the contest in a mere 18 moves. Gukesh will now fight for the last-four spots. The freestyle chess is built around 960 random positions, shifting the initial position of the pieces from the base rank while the pawns remain intact.

## OFC playoff hopes dim

10-men Odisha FC held to 1-1 draw by Punjab FC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** The Kalinga Warriors saw their playoff hopes take a hit as a resilient Punjab FC held them to a 1-1 draw at the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar. Despite a second-half equaliser from Isak Vanlalruatfela, Sergio Lobera's men are now dependent on other results going their way to stand a chance for the playoffs.

Odisha started the game on the front foot, eager for a win to boost their playoff chances. Early on, Saviour Gama and Rahul KP showed signs of intent, but Punjab's defence held firm. Punjab goalkeeper Ravi Kumar was called into action early, saving a couple of shots from Odisha players.

Though Odisha enjoyed more of the possession and defended well, disaster struck just before halftime. The talking point of the match would be Rahul KP's sending off for a challenge, leaving Odisha down to 10 players. Shortly after, Punjab capitalized, with Petros Giakoumakis scoring into the top corner to give Punjab the lead.

Odisha didn't back down in the second half, and their efforts paid off. In the 51st minute, Isak Vanlalruatfela made it 1-1 with



a calm left-footed shot, assisted by Diego Mauricio. Odisha kept pushing for the winner, with Isak working hard defensively and setting up a final chance in injury time, but Hugo's shot was saved by Ravi Kumar.

The draw leaves Odisha FC in 7th place with 26 points, and their hopes of making the playoffs are now hanging by a thread. They will face Hyderabad FC next February 14, at home, hoping to bounce back and keep their playoff dreams alive.

## Men in Blue urge people to join 'Donate Organs, Save Lives' campaign

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 10:** Ahead of the third ODI against England at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad Wednesday, the Indian team players including former captain Virat Kohli urged people to join the 'Donate Organs, Save Lives' campaign and pledge for organ donation.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah announced the launch of the initiative on the final ODI of the ongoing three-match series against England, Monday.

"On the occasion of the 3rd ODI between India and England in Ahmedabad on February 12th, we are proud to launch an awareness initiative - 'Donate Organs, Save Lives'. Sport has the power to inspire, unite, and create lasting impact beyond the field. Through this initiative, we urge everyone to take a step towards giving the greatest gift of all - the gift of life. One pledge, one decision, can save multiple lives. Let's come together and make a difference!" Shah wrote on X.

The BCCI also shared the video of Indian players appealing to the countrymen to join the initiative.

"Be the captain of life. Just



Score the ultimate century, your organs can help others live beyond your lifetime. Register as a donor and make every life count  
VIRAT KOHLI | BATTER, INDIA

like a captain leads the team to victory, you can lead someone to life by pledging to donate your organs," India vice-captain Shubman Gill remarked.

"One donor can save up to eight lives. Pledge today and hit a six for humanity," added Shreyas Iyer.

"Play the ultimate winning shot. Your decision to donate to donate your organs can be

the match-winning moment in someone's life. Be a hero off the field too," said KL Rahul.

"Be the captain of kindness," said all-rounder Axar Patel. "Pledge to donate and inspire others to follow."

"Lead by example. A single decision can be a winning shot for many," added Hardik Pandya. "Hit a six for humanity. One donor can save up to eight lives. Be the all-rounder world needs," asserted Ravindra Jadeja.

"Don't let lives bowled. Thousands wait for an organ transplant. Be the game changer and give them a second innings," said pacer Arshdeep Singh.

## Odisha clinch gold, 2 silver medals in Modern Pentathlon

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 10:** Odisha had a rich haul in Modern Pentathlon at the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand Monday.

Odisha athletes did a 1-2 in Biathlon individual event, with Raiguru Suryansh Mohapatra claiming gold and Pranab Das securing silver.

The team of Raiguru, Pranab and Pratik Das also earned the silver medal in the Biathlon Men's team event.

Odisha's overall tally went up to 9 gold, 12 silver and 11 bronze medals as they sit 12th in the medals tally.



# Trump attends Super Bowl with a complicated NFL relationship

REUTERS

**New Orleans, Feb 10:** Greeted with a mix of cheers and boos, U.S. President Donald Trump attended the Super Bowl Sunday, the first sitting president to do so in person, despite a complicated relationship with the National Football League and a controversial history of mixing politics and sports.

Trump watched the game between the Kansas City Chiefs and Philadelphia Eagles from a box in the Superdome in New Orleans, along with his daughter, Ivanka, and son, Eric, as well as several lawmakers who accompanied him on Air Force One to New Orleans. First lady Melania Trump did not attend.

The president's visit, some three weeks after he launched

his second term at the White House with executive orders to crack down on immigration and end government diversity programs, put the Republican at the scene of a classic American pastime that connects people of all political ideologies.

It also put a spotlight on divisions in the country and differing opinions about his policies.

When he entered the stadium, to meet briefly with families of the victims of the New Year's Day attack on Bourbon Street as well as police officers and emergency workers, he was greeted with a mix of cheers and boos from the crowd.

Trump's attendance also highlighted the contrast between his order to eliminate government diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with the



NFL's decision to stick with its own initiatives to promote inclusion.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said Monday he had no plans to scale back NFL di-

versity programs. Trump told reporters on Air Force One on the way to New Orleans that he was not familiar with the NFL efforts.

"I'd have to look at what he said he's happy with," Trump said of Goodell. "He was happy also with the flag and a lot of other things that didn't work out too well."

During his first term in office Trump criticized the league and its members after Black players knelt during the U.S. national anthem to bring attention to racial injustice.

For Sunday's game, the league did not put the phrase "End Racism" behind one of the end zones, something it has done since 2021, replacing that directive with another one: "Choose Love."

Trump order to stop diversity efforts contrasts with NFL policy  
NFL replaces "End Racism" slogan on field with "Choose Love"