



Film & fashion

Actor Jacqueline Fernandez says cinema always plays a major role in setting trends in the fashion world

LEISURE | P2



Netanyahu's warning

Israel's military calls for a possible resumption of fighting in Gaza if Hamas fails to meet a Saturday deadline to release more hostages

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Inflation subsides

Continuing the downward trend, retail inflation falls to a five-month low of 4.31 per cent in January

BUSINESS | P11



India dominate

Gill's attractive century heralds India's 142-run hammering of England in final ODI as the hosts complete a 3-0 clean sweep

SPORTS | P12

Simplified I-T Bill to be tabled today

New Delhi: A crispier and simplified Income Tax Bill 2025, having 536 sections, and 23 chapters running into 622 pages, is likely to be introduced in the Lok Sabha Thursday. The Bill once enacted will replace six-decade old Income Tax Act 1961, which over the years became bulkier and complex with amendments. The proposed law replaces the term 'previous year' as mentioned in the Income Tax Act, 1961 with 'tax year'. Also, the concept of assessment year has been done away with. **P8**

Second conviction for Sajjan Kumar

New Delhi: With a Delhi Court finding former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar guilty, it is his second conviction with respect to 1984 anti-Sikh riots and he faces two more cases. Kumar's conviction came in a case over the murders of two persons, namely, Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh during the violence in Delhi's Saraswati Vihar November 1, 1984. The judge would hear February 18 the arguments on the quantum of punishment. **P8**

Ayodhya Ram temple head priest no more

Lucknow: Mahant Satyendra Das, the chief priest of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, died at a hospital here Wednesday. The 85-year-old was admitted to the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI) earlier this month after he suffered a brain stroke. The mortal remains of Das were later taken to his residence in Ayodhya. His successor Pradeep Das said, "We are waiting for all his disciples to arrive. It is expected that he will be given a 'water burial' Thursday afternoon." Condoling the demise of Das, PM Narendra Modi said his entire life was dedicated to the service of Lord Ram. CM Yogi Adityanath termed the death of Das as an irreparable loss to the spiritual world.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, crack down on abusive language—just don't touch anyone except stand-up comics!



ONLY IN INDIA: For the first time in history, Russian Air Force 5th-Gen fighter aircraft SU-57 and US Air Force 5th-Gen fighter aircraft F-35 are seen together during the Aero India 2025, at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bangalore, Karnataka, Wednesday

SC slams freebies

The promise of freebies before elections in India has become a common political strategy, with parties offering cash giveaways, free utilities like power and water, grain distribution, and loan waivers to gain voter support. More than a third of India's 36 states and Union Territories have announced or are currently running various handout programmes. With six more states due to vote over the next two years, analysts expect the practice to gain ground in the coming months. While these initiatives may reflect a welfare state's intention to support vulnerable populations, they often prioritise short-term political gains over long-term economic stability. Though the PM and the RBI have earlier warned against the detrimental impact of such giveaways on the country's financial health by pushing fiscal deficit, the political parties, including the ruling party, are turning a blind eye to the consequences while vying for power. The apex court, citing schemes such as Maharashtra BJP's 'Ladki Bahin', called the practice a creation of a "class of parasites" unwilling to work, further highlighting the negative impact of these freebies. The top court called for a balance, without which the practice of free giveaways could perpetuate a cycle of dependency, rather than promoting sustainable growth and prosperity



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Supreme Court Wednesday deprecated the practice of political parties promising "freebies" just ahead of elections and asked "are we not creating a class of parasites" instead of bringing people into the mainstream and contribute towards national development. A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih also observed that people were not willing to work as they were getting free ration and money. "Rather than promoting them to be a part of the mainstream of the society by contributing to the development of the nation, are we not creating a class of parasites?" Justice Gavai asked. Justice Gavai then went on to add, "Unfortunately, because of these freebies, which just on the anvil of elections are declared, like 'Ladki Bahin' and other schemes, people are not willing to work."

Hearing a matter concerning the right to shelter of homeless persons in urban areas,

the bench said people got free rations and money without working. "We quite appreciate your concern for them but would it not be better to make them a part of the mainstream of society and permit them to contribute to the development of the nation?" the bench said. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said there was hardly anybody in the country who did not want to work, if they had work.

To this, Justice Gavai said, "You must be having only one-sided knowledge. I come from an agricultural family. Because of the freebies in Maharashtra which they just announced prior to elections, agriculturists are not getting labourers." The court, however, said it did not want to enter into a debate on this matter.

It said everybody, including Attorney General R Venkataramani, was on the same page that providing shelter to the homeless merited due attention. "But at the same time, should it not be balanced?" the bench asked.

Venkataramani said the Centre was in the process of finalising the urban poverty alleviation mission, which would address various issues, including the provision of shelter for the urban homeless. The bench asked him to verify from the Centre the time frame within which the scheme would be applicable and also place on record the aspects covered by it.

Junior teachers' wage up by ₹5K

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The state government Wednesday increased the monthly remuneration of junior teachers working in the state's elementary schools under the 'Samagra Sikshya' programme.

According to a resolution issued by the School and Mass Education department, the monthly remuneration of junior teachers (under various schemes) has been increased from ₹11,000 to ₹16,000 per month.

The revised rate of remuneration will be effective from the

date of issue of the resolution, the department said. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi approved a proposal in this regard January 17. Besides the monthly remuneration hike, their EPF (Employees' Provident Fund) contribution will be increased from ₹1,443 to ₹1,950 per month.

At present, around 13,740 junior teachers (under the Samagra Sikshya scheme) are employed in the state.

The state government will bear an additional annual expenditure of ₹89.15 crore for the enhanced remuneration of the junior teachers.

Modi wraps up France visit, heads to USA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, Feb 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday left for the US after wrapping up his France visit that included co-chairing a summit on Artificial Intelligence and bilateral talks with French President Emmanuel Macron on trade, defence and energy. President Macron came to see off Modi at the airport in Marseille.

"Thank you France!" Modi said in a post on X and added, "A productive visit concludes, where I attended programmes ranging from AI, commerce, energy and cultural linkages." He also expressed gratitude to "President Macron and the people of France."

During the bilateral talks, Modi and Macron Wednesday called for enhancing trade and investment ties between the two countries and committed to further deepening their engagement in the Indo-Pacific and various global forums and initiatives.



Modi and Macron jointly inaugurated India's new consulate in France's Marseille.

Modi will be the fourth foreign leader to visit Trump in the weeks after the American leader's inauguration as the 47th President of the US in January.

Assembly goes paperless

ALL-PARTY MEETING HELD; BUDGET SESSION STARTS TODAY

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday inaugurated the 'Digital House' under the e-Vidhan Application, transforming the Odisha Assembly into a paperless institution where members will now use tablets to access documents and other information during proceedings.

Majhi inaugurated the facility in the presence of Speaker Surama Padhy and her deputy Bhabani Shankar Bhoi.

The 'Digital House', developed by the National Informatics Center (NIC), is part of

the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) project, aimed at reducing paper usage and enhancing transparency in the legislative process. The Assembly has installed tablets for all 147 members to use during sessions. This digital shift will begin just before the start of the Budget session Thursday, where legislators will participate in question-and-answer sessions and proposals via digital platforms.

In his address, Majhi said, Odisha Assembly is now part of the digital revolution in the country. It is a historic day for the state, adding that Odisha Assembly is now one of the

few paperless legislative bodies in the nation. Odisha is the 17th state to implement NeVA after Gujarat, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar (Council), Nagaland, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and Sikkim.

Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik welcomed the initiative, stating it would enhance the efficiency of the members. However, Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam stressed the importance of training for the 84 new MLAs, saying, "Members should be properly trained to use this facility." **MORE P3**

All videos of India's Got Latent deleted from YT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Comedian Samay Raina Wednesday said he has removed all episodes of India's Got Latent from his YouTube channel, days after the show landed in a controversy over a remark by influencer Ranveer Allahbadia.

In his first response since the controversy erupted earlier this week, Raina said he will fully cooperate with all the investigating agencies in their probe.

"Everything that is happening has been too much for me to handle. I have removed all 'India's Got Latent' videos from my channel. My only objective was to make people laugh and have a good time. I will fully cooperate with all agencies

'MAKE CALIFORNIA GREAT AGAIN'

Danes dream of buying golden state

"Let's buy California from Donald Trump!" the site Denmarkification.com says, in a nod to "Californication", a word the Red Hot Chili Peppers band immortalised with its 1990s hit song

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Copenhagen, Feb 12: In the wake of US President Donald Trump's threats to take control of Greenland, some Danes are California dreaming, offering to buy the golden state and infuse it with a Nordic vibe and universal health care.

A satirical website has launched a petition for Denmark to buy America's most populous state, with more than 200,000 people signing up to the idea so far. Greenland is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.

Mocking Trump's favourite slogan, the tongue-in-cheek petition urges Denmark to "Make California Great Again", re-writing the phrase with letters from the Danish language.

"Let's buy California from Donald Trump!" the site Denmarkification.com says, in a nod to "Californication", a word the Red Hot Chili Peppers band immortalised with its 1990s hit song.

"Let's be honest - Trump isn't exactly California's biggest fan. He's called it 'the most ruined state in the Union' and has feud-ed with its leaders for years."



"We're pretty sure he'd be willing to part with it for the right price," it says. "We'll send our best negotiators - Lego executives and the cast of Borgen," it mused, referring to the Denmark-based global toy behemoth and the Danish-produced drama series, respectively.

"We'll bring hygge to Hollywood, bike lanes to Beverly Hills, and organic smorrebrod to every street corner. Rule of law, universal health care and fact based politics might apply."

"Hygge" is a word in Danish that describes a cozy atmosphere while "smorrebrod" is

a multi-ingredient sandwich ubiquitous in the Nordic country and its neighbours.

Why would the Scandinavian country want the US state? For its sunny climate, tech industry and wealth of avocados, the site says. And of course Disneyland, which it proposes renaming "Hans Christian Andersenland", in reference to Denmark's famed fairy tale writer. "Mickey Mouse in a Viking helmet? Yes, please."

Whether Americans would want to offload the state is not much of a concern. "Let's face it - when has that ever stopped him? If Trump wants to sell California, he'll sell California."

At 11:45 am (0945 GMT) Wednesday, almost 207,000 people had signed the petition.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will focus your attention today on your beloved. You will feel very energetic, but your commitment to work will falter. So don't be surprised if your superiors are annoyed. However, Ganesha says today is a day for romantic pursuits.

TAURUS
Professionals in all spheres of work are due for a field day today. The day will be particularly outstanding for Administrators and executives are likely to get richer by the end of the day. Even if you are engaged in some other work, you will stand out and get noticed for your overall excellence. Businessmen can expect to get into new partnerships and joint ventures. This is a very auspicious day for launching new projects.

GEMINI
A hectic and busy day awaits you, which will probably leave you feeling bored and listless. Find creative ways to beat the boredom, or take a break and do things which appeal to you today, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You wish to display your social prestige and monetary clout in front of your relatives. But you have to pay a heavy price for that. Your past experience will teach you something, which will stand in good stead for future dealings.

LEO
You will see some change in your daily schedule today. It is a good day to start a new job or business activity. You will focus more attention on your personality today. You will try to improve yourself and bring your hidden talents to the fore. Make the most of this opportunity to implement your plans, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Today you will feel monetarily much stronger than you have ever felt, says Ganesha. You will realise the need to make monetary arrangements for some unforeseen financial instability that may occur in the future. Your leadership qualities will be appreciated by people around you. Ganesha warns that there may be wild fluctuations in monetary transactions.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today you may be able to undertake travel for business or pleasure purposes. It may be a busy day for you work wise and you may not be able to completely focus on your family or family issues. Try your luck in the stock market today, as it may prove beneficial to you.

SCORPIO
Your sixth sense would work wonders today, as per to what Ganesha has to say. Trust your instincts and work accordingly. Work enthusiastically and dedicatedly. When the pressure of work mounts on you, take a break and unwind with the help of soft music.

SAGITTARIUS
Ganesha foresees a day full of promises. People in the creative field, especially artists are going to benefit more. Radio jockey and television anchors can make a note of this day in their diary, as it may serve as a memorable day, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Opportunities don't knock on the door twice. Today, you'll answer the door and utilise the opportunity to the most, predicts Ganesha. Positive results will be visible and you'll stand a chance to overtake your competitors. Even if the competition is fierce and opponents try everything to pull you down, you'll not let them win the battle. Socially, you will be very popular today.

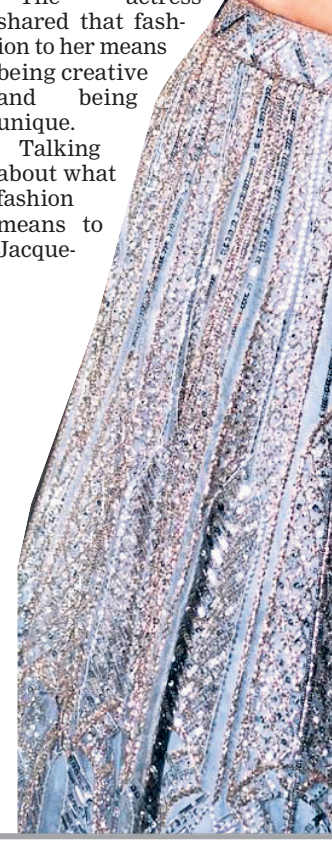
AQUARIUS
The game is set; you are put up against those who are holding a grudge against you and are waiting for an opportunity to pull you down. But, the Lion - the King of the jungle doesn't fear anyone. You are confident, skilful, and know your strengths very well.

PISCES
You will find yourself in a philosophical state of mind today. You will be able to see things for what they really are, rather than what they appear to be. You are unlikely to try and swim against the flow today, given your mental state. You will take things as they come to you, one at a time. Some bad news could come your way and likely keep your mind convulsed with stress, says Ganesha.

JACQUELIENE DEFINES FASHION

Mumbai: Sri Lankan beauty and Bollywood star Jacqueliene Fernandez agrees cinema plays a major role in setting trends in the fashion world. Jacqueliene told this agency: "Does cinema play an important role? Of course, yeah, it does. Because certain roles, figures and certain characters are so fashionable and stylish that they've exploded or once people have, like, taken a liking to them or once their style has kind of been liked. She shared that films do influence people when it comes to fashion. "Yeah, it influences so many people so it's the same with style, people like to Copy the style of their favorite characters," said the actress, who turned muse for designer Kanika Goyal at the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour in Chandigarh.

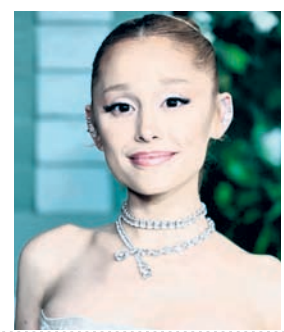
The actress shared that fashion to her means being creative and being unique. Talking about what fashion means to Jacqueliene, she said: "I think fashion means, you know, being creative and being unique. It's a gateway to that, you know align your person to the one and only So you're one and only personality, which you have." She added that fashion is a celebration of "who you are every day. So it's a beautiful thing." **IANS**



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ZELLWEGER 'ALMOST DIED' DURING AUDITION

Hollywood actress Renee Zellweger has confessed she thought she was going die during her first acting audition after lying about her ability to rollerblade in a bid to land a starring role in a beer commercial.



ARIANA GRANDE: THERAPY HAS HELPED ME TO NAVIGATE FAME

American singer and songwriter Ariana Grande has explained how she's coped with the stresses and strains of fame. "Therapy has helped me to navigate fame" shares the 31-year-old singer.



Boney, Arjun meet CM over Celebrity Cricket League

The top filmmaker and his son invite Majhi to the event, scheduled for February 16 at Barabati Stadium

BHUBANESWAR: Bollywood film producer Boney Kapoor and his actor son Arjun Kapoor paid a courtesy visit to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the Odisha Assembly Chamber Wednesday. The duo extended an invitation to the CM for the Celebrity Cricket League (CCL) event, which is set to take place at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack February 16.

Boney highlighted that Odisha boasts vast natural beauty and adequate facilities for film shooting. He emphasized that with proper promotion, the state could become a preferred location for many filmmakers, thereby boosting the local tourism sector. Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singhdeo, along with members of the Council of Ministers and MLAs, were



present during the meeting. The CCL is set to bring its star-studded cricketing action to Cuttack on February 16, 2025. The tournament features two exciting fixtures: Punjab De Sher vs. Bhojपुरi Dab-
bangs and Mumbai Heroes vs. Bengal Tigers. Several movie stars, including Sonu Sood, Manoj Tiwari, Riteish Deshmukh, Jisshu Sengupta, and others, are expected to participate in the event. PNN

Rakul connects with on-screen character

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film *Mere Husband Ki Biwi*, says her character Antara is a very headstrong girl and someone who has a lot of self-love as well. Talking about her character, she shares, "So my character of Antara is a very headstrong girl, someone who has a lot of self-love as well... She's an adventure-loving girl, you know, and a lot into sports."

She added: "And I think the aspect that I connect with Antara is the headstrong part and very certain of what she wants in life and doesn't get distracted. And I think that's something that I really connect with."

The light-hearted entertainer, produced under the banner of Pooja Entertainment by Jacky Bhagnani, Vashu Bhagnani, and Deepshikha Deshmukh. The film is about a Delhi professional, who navigates through a complicated love triangle when his old flame returns to his life just as he begins falling for someone new, leading to a series of comedic misunderstandings.

Rakul has her dates full as after *Mere Husband Ki Biwi*, she has *De De Pyaar De 2* and *Ameeri*. While *De De Pyaar De 2* brings

back the charm of the hit rom-com, *Ameeri* promises a fresh and intriguing narrative. **IANS**



Chiranjeevi draws flak for his 'sexist' remark

HYDERABAD: Telugu superstar Chiranjeevi has sparked controversy with his comments about wanting a grandson to continue his family's legacy.

The popular star is facing a backlash on social media for his comments seen as 'sexist' by many. The megastar, as the top actor is popularly known, made the remarks at a pre-release event of the Telugu movie *Brahma Anandam*. He expressed his desire for a grandson to carry forward his legacy.

The critics accused him of implying that only a male heir could carry forward his family's legacy. The veteran actor also said that he is scared his son Ram Charan might have another daughter. "I keep wishing and telling (Ram) Charan, at least this time, to have a boy so that our legacy continues, but his daughter is the apple of his eye... I'm scared that he might again have a girl. Lovely kids," he added.

Meanwhile, YSR Congress Party spokesperson Syamala expressed surprise over Chiranjeevi's remarks. "Will only a son carry forward the legacy, not a daughter," she asked.

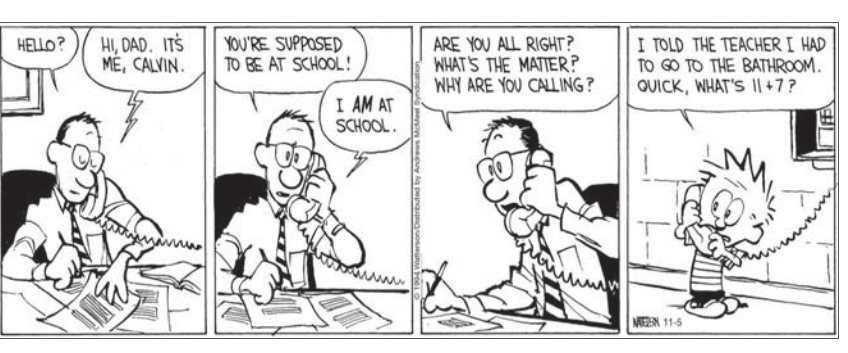
The YSRCP leader said those who believe that only sons can become successors should come out of this mentality as women have made tremendous achievements in all fields. **IANS**



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBES

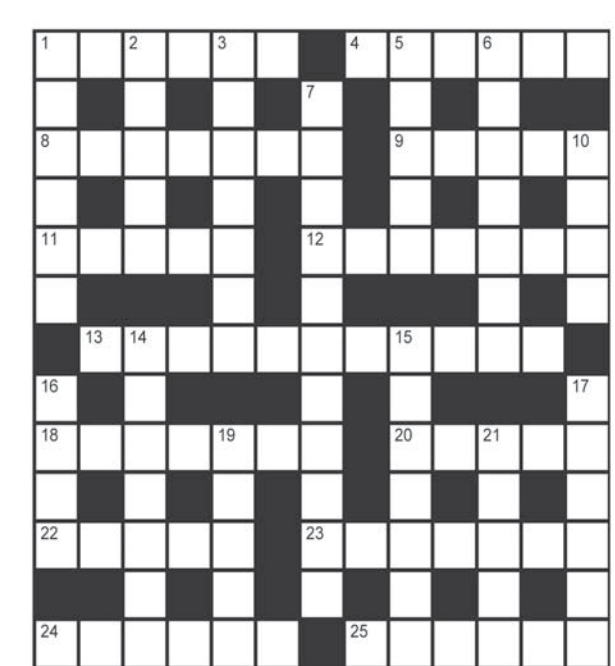


BREVITY



FUN POST

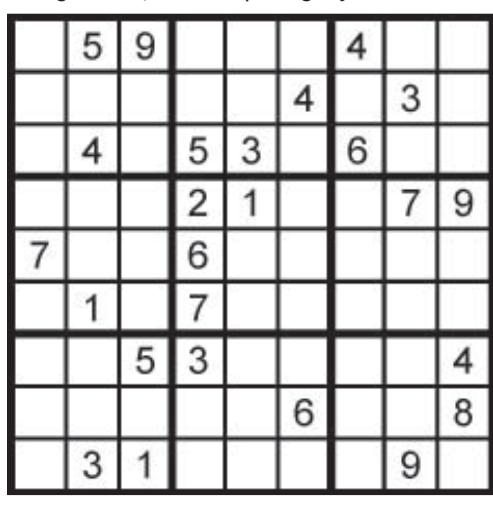
CROSSWORD



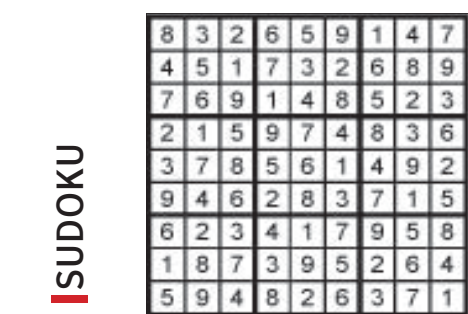
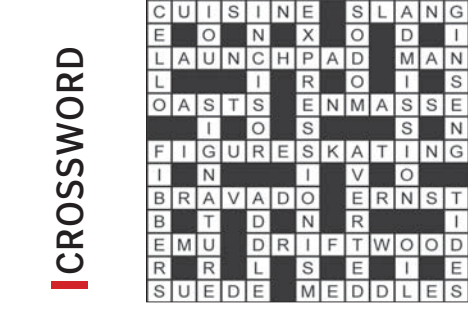
- Across**
- 1 Garden flora
 - 4 Seafood dish
 - 8 Insult
 - 9 Fortified
 - 11 Deprive of by deceit
 - 12 Movie genre
 - 13 Friendly rivalry, in sports
 - 18 Instinctive
 - 20 Weather watcher?
 - 22 Make into law
 - 23 Biological science
 - 24 Spotted wildcat
 - 25 Garment part
- Down**
- 1 Hematologist's study
 - 2 Abominable
 - 3 Ballroom dance (3-4)
 - 5 Great divide
 - 6 Reminder of past events
 - 7 Fabulist
 - 10 Title
 - 14 Indignation
 - 15 Upheaval
 - 16 Fairy tale opener
 - 17 Sock pattern
 - 19 Sine or cosine
 - 21 Pilotless plane

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

RICH TRIBUTE

Artistes perform during 'Antardrishti' organised by Sujan Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Nrityabasa in collaboration with Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre on the birth anniversary of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra at Utkal Rangamancha in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



downtown

Govt plans organic Mahaprasad



KEY TAKEAWAYS

A SPECIAL PROJECT CALLED 'AMRUTA ANNA' WILL BE IMPLEMENTED UNDER WHICH MAHAPRASAD PREPARED FROM ORGANIC RICE WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO DEVOTEES THROUGH A SPECIAL COUNTER AT ANANDA BAZAAR... STATE GOVT HAS SET A TARGET TO BRING 100 TO 200 ACRES OF LAND UNDER ORGANIC PADDY CULTIVATION

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: In what would provide a major fillip to organic farming in the state, the government has decided to launch a special project called 'Amruta Anna' under which the Mahaprasad at Puri Srimandir will be prepared by using organic rice and vegetables. This was revealed during a consultation meeting at Krushi Bhavan Conference Hall here Wednesday.

Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department Arabinda Kumar Padhee.

The meeting revealed that the state government has already taken steps to make Lord's Mahaprasad chemical-free. The decision to use organic rice and vegetables in Srimandir Mahaprasad was welcomed by Suara-Mahasuara Nijog and SJTA as well.

According to Padhee, "Organic rice will be used in 'Kotha Bhoga' of the 12th-century shrine in the initial phase. A proposal was also presented regarding use of organic rice and vegetables in preparation of the 'Bhoga' during Rath Yatra. A

special project called 'Amruta Anna' will be implemented under which Mahaprasad prepared from organic rice will be made available to devotees through a special counter at Ananda Bazaar."

Initially, organic rice varieties like Kalajeera, Pimpudibasa and Jubaraja being produced in the state will be used in the Mahaprasad under 'Amruta Anna' project, the SJTA chief added.

Significantly, Koraput Kalajeera rice has already been accorded GI (Geographical Indication) tag. And, this year, Kalajeera rice has been cultivated in 1,365 acres of land in Koraput district while a Kalajeera rice mandi has been opened in Kotpad for the first time.

In order to promote organic farming, measures like organic certification and subsidies were proposed at the meeting. Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) will be encouraged to produce organic rice through cluster approach. A steering committee will be formed to implement the entire process smoothly. The committee will have representatives from SJTA, Surara-Mahasuara Nijog, other producer groups, NGOs and other departments.

In initial phase, the government has set a target to bring 100 to 200 acres of land under organic paddy cultivation. Seeds will also be saved for further promotion of organic paddy production.

Organic farming will not only help people get healthy food, but will also help protect the livestock as use of cow urine, cow dung and other organic fertilisers are intrinsic to this alternative method of cultivation.



All-party meeting ahead of Budget Session

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: An all-party meeting was held Wednesday under the chairmanship of Speaker Surama Padhy ahead of the Budget Session of Odisha Legislative Assembly which is scheduled to commence Thursday.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandran, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling, senior BJD leader Pramila Mallik, and Congress Legislative Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam were present during the meeting at the

Speaker's chamber on the Assembly premises.

Speaking to media after the all-party meeting, Mallik said, "Discussions were held for the smooth functioning of the Assembly during the Budget Session. The Governor will address the House and the Budget will be tabled in Assembly. The House will function as per the procedures."

Mallik also welcomed the move to ensure the paperless functioning of the Assembly. Notably, all 147 MLAs have been provided with tablets to carry out their legislative duties by replacing paper documents. "This session marks a signif-

icant transition as the Odisha Assembly adopts a paperless approach, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'One Nation, One Application' vision through the e-Vidhan Application," Mahaling said.

He added that members can now digitally record their attendance, and all data, including questionnaires, answers, and their work, will be tracked digitally within the Assembly.

Meanwhile, the CM called on Governor Hari Babu Kam-bhampati at Raj Bhavan here ahead of the Budget Session.

The third session of the 17th Odisha Legislative Assembly

will begin with the Governor's address Thursday.

"Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, called on me at Raj Bhavan this morning. During our meeting, we engaged in a comprehensive discussion on various developmental initiatives, the state's achievements, and the roadmap for future progress," the Governor wrote on his X handle.

The Budget Session is scheduled to have 28 working days and will continue till April 5. The annual Budget for 2025-26 will be tabled in the House February 17.

Bodies under bridges

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack/Bonai, Feb 12: In separate incidents, two bodies were discovered under bridges in Cuttack and Sundargarh districts, sparking investigations by local police.

Police recovered the body of a Plus II student, identified as Prateek Das, from the bank of Kathajodi river under Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose bridge in Cuttack, Wednesday morning. Prateek, a resident of Niladri Vihar in Bhubaneswar, had been missing since Tuesday. His family had been unable to trace his whereabouts despite extensive searching. The body

While the body of Prateek Das was recovered from Kathajodi riverbank under Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose bridge in Cuttack, police were yet to identify the woman whose half-burnt body was found under Kumakela bridge in Sundargarh

was spotted by locals, who immediately alerted the authorities. Police are probing the circumstances surrounding his death.

In a separate case later in the day, the half-burnt body of a woman was found under Kumakela bridge in Chandiposh police limits of Sundargarh district. Preliminary investigations indicate the woman was murdered by slashing her throat and then set on fire using petrol. The charred remains were discovered by locals, who informed the police. A team from Rourkela, along with Chandiposh police, is conducting an investigation. Police have registered a murder case and are working to identify the victim. If the body remains unclaimed within 72 hours, it will be cremated. The identity of the victim is yet to be established.



3-day MPSO 2025 starts Feb 14

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The Fisheries and Animal Resources Development (F&ARD) department is all set to organise Matsya-Pranee Samavesh Odisha (MPSO) 2025 from February 14 to 16 at Biju Patnaik Stadium in Baramunda here.

F&ARD Minister Gokulananda Mallik unveiled the logo and mascot for MPSO 2025 at Veterinary College Auditorium and said, "The three-day state-level event will go a long way to help fish farmers and animal rearers."

Mallik also highlighted the steps being taken by the state government to make Odisha self-reliant in milk, meat, egg and fish production.

The theme for this year's MPSO is 'Fisheries and animal husbandry for life, livelihood and climate resilience'.

According to the F&ARD department, as many as 8,164 fish farmers and animal rearers from across the state will participate in the event.

"10 interactive panel discussions will be held. There will be



an interactive session - Ask the Minister - wherein fish farmers and animal rearers will ask questions and the F&ARD Minister will respond," they said.

As many as 200 stalls in two hangars will showcase products related to fisheries and animal husbandry. Animal and fish of different species will also be displayed in two open hangars. Cultural pro-

grammes will also be held every evening, they added.

"Successful animal rearers and fish farmers from each subdivision will be felicitated on the occasion. This apart, 24 officers of the department will be felicitated for their outstanding contribution. Prizes will also be given to the winners of quiz and debate competitions," they said.

MAN ARRESTED IN HIT-AND-RUN CASE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Lingaraj police Wednesday arrested a 32-year-old pick-up truck driver for allegedly knocking down a man near Balakati Market, leading to his death. The accused, identified as Anshuman Mohanty, a resident of Balakati, was absconding after the mishap that took place under Baliaanta police station.

Baliaanta inspector-in-charge (IC) Rabindranath Meher said, "Chhabina Sahoo had stepped out to purchase some grocery items January 26 night when Anshuman rammed him.

Chhabina sustained grievous injuries on his neck and face. Instead of attending to Chhabina, Anshuman fled the spot after a heated exchange with locals. Chhabina was rushed to Capital hospital where doctors declared him 'dead on arrival'.

IIC Meher said Anshuman surrendered before the cops Wednesday, along with his pick-up truck. He was booked under Sections 281 and 106 (1) of BNS and produced before a local court Wednesday.

Oram writes to CS over absence of private secy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Jual Oram Wednesday wrote a letter to Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja for initiation of disciplinary proceedings against his private secretary Parag Harshad Gavali for his 'unauthorised' absence from duty.

In the letter, the minister said, "Dr Parag has been absent from duty without authorisation since January 23, 2025. His continued unauthorised absence is in violation of the service rules and has caused disruptions in the functioning of the office."

"In light of the above, I have requested secretary of Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to initiate appropriate disciplinary action against Dr Parag Harshad Gavali as per the relevant provisions of the All

India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules," the letter reads.

Last year, the Centre had appointed Gavali as private secretary to the Union Tribal Affairs Minister.

The 2013-batch Odisha cadre IAS officer was appointed the private secretary to Oram at the level of Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for five years, according to an official letter issued by Personnel & Training department's Deputy Secretary to Odisha Chief Secretary.

Gavali was appointed the Collector of Sundargarh in June 2022. Earlier, he was posted as the Kalahandi Collector.

Meanwhile, Orissa POST tried to contact Gavali on his mobile number 8280066880 and also sent him a message but there was no response from him till going to print.

THE 2013-BATCH ODISHA CADRE IAS OFFICER WAS APPOINTED THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO ORAM AT THE LEVEL OF DEPUTY SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS FOR FIVE YEARS

Rapper Abhinav found dead; dad alleges torture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 12: Odia rapper and engineer Abhinav Singh was found dead at his Bangalore apartment under mysterious circumstances Sunday night, sources said Wednesday.

Abhinav reportedly ended his life by consuming poison, with his father, Bijayananda Singh, blaming the 32-year-old Cuttack resident's wife, Utkal Deepika, for his suicide.

"Deepika used to harass him (Abhinav). Unable to bear the stress, he resorted to the extreme step," Bijayananda said, demanding a thorough probe into the incident.

Bijayananda approached the Lalbagh police demanding stringent action against five persons, including Deepika and her parents, Tuesday night. Lalbagh police registered a case (56/25) and began a probe.

Sources said Abhinav and Deepika entered into wedlock in 2022. The couple frequently



quarrelled and Deepika had even approached the Infocity police in Bhubaneswar alleging dowry torture by Abhinav in August last year. Since then the two stayed separately. Deepika again approached Lalbagh police in January this year alleging that Abhinav was not returning their wedding gifts.

PropEquity: Housing sales up 20% in Bhubaneswar, 14 other tier-II cities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Housing sales across 15 top tier-II cities, including Bhubaneswar, rose 20 per cent in value terms last calendar year to more than Rs 1.52 lakh crore on higher volume and price appreciation, according to PropEquity.

Real estate data analytics firm PropEquity Wednesday released the data for 15 major tier-II cities where total housing sales rose 4 per cent to 1,78,771 units in 2024 from 1,71,903 in the preceding year.

In value terms, the sales increased 20 per cent to Rs 1,52,552 crore in 2024 from Rs 1,27,505 crore in 2023.

Other 14 cities are - Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Gandhinagar, Nashik, Jaipur, Nagpur, Mohali, Visakhapatnam, Lucknow, Coimbatore, Goa, Bhopal and Trivandrum.

As per the data, housing sales



rose the most in Coimbatore at 36 per cent and fell maximum in Visakhapatnam by 21 per cent in 2024.

Bhubaneswar recorded the highest growth in sales value at 47 per cent, while Nashik recorded a 2 per cent decline in sales value.

Samir Jasuja, Founder &

CEO, PropEquity, said, "Sales value rose by 20 per cent even as sales volumes increased by only 4 per cent in 2024. It points to a rapid increase in price of homes in these cities owing to factors like rise in cost of raw materials and speculative investments which may impact the real estate market."

Jasuja said the Budget announcements will give a boost to housing demand in tier-II cities and create opportunities for employment.

Ahmedabad was at the top in sales value among 15 tier-II cities. The city sold homes worth Rs 49,421 crore in 2024, a 17 per cent rise from Rs 42,063 crore in the preceding year.

Commenting on the report, Madhur Gupta, CEO, Hero Realty, said, "The influx of employment opportunities, lower cost of living, and affordable housing are key factors driving real estate demand and supply in tier-II cities."


Yashank Wason, MD, Royal Green Realty said the housing demand in tier II has risen.

"With hyper-congestion and dwindling quality housing supply in tier-I cities, the next generation of homebuyers are increasingly looking towards tier-II cities," he added.

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.8°	33.2°
Min Temp	21.2°	20.0°
Humidity	85%	87%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST
Fog/mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later.


MARKET WATCH| INDEX | VARIATION | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SENSEX | 76,171.08 | ↓ 122.52 |
| NIFTY | 23,045.25 | ↓ 26.55 |
| DOLLAR | 87.04 | ↑ 0.08 |
| EURO | 90.34 | ↑ 0.62 |
| GOLD | ₹83,848 | ↓ ₹128 |
| SILVER | ₹95,277 | ↓ ₹447 |

City AIIMS collaborates with RAH for advanced burn care



The initiative aims to enhance burn treatment through technology, innovation and cutting-edge research to improve patient outcomes globally

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: In a significant step toward advancing burn care management, AIIMS-Bhubaneswar is set to collaborate with Marcus Wagstaff, a renowned burns care expert and head of the adult burns service at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH), Australia. Wagstaff's visit to the Burn Centre at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Wednesday marks the beginning of a transformative partnership aimed at improving the treatment of burn injuries through research, innovation,

and the development of new medical techniques. During his visit, Wagstaff was warmly welcomed by Institute's executive director Ashutosh Biswas who expressed enthusiasm for the collaboration. Biswas emphasised the potential of this partnership to raise the standards of burn care, not only in India but globally. The collaboration is part of Wagstaff's ongoing efforts to improve burn care worldwide by fostering international collaborations. Alongside Burns and Plastic Surgery head Sanjay Kumar Giri, medical superintendent Dillip Kumar Parida, Manoj Kumar Mohanty, and Prabhakar Ranjan Tripathy, Wagstaff discussed various ways to integrate advanced technologies, share best practices, and begin joint research projects aimed at improving patient outcomes. Wagstaff praised the facil-

ities at the institute's Burn Centre, stating, "This collaboration will pave the way for groundbreaking advancements in burn care, allowing both institutions to work together and tackle the challenges faced by burn victims using innovative and cutting-edge approaches." The partnership will focus on the development and implementation of advanced care strategies, new clinical protocols, and collaborative research projects. These initiatives are expected to have a global impact, benefiting patients not only in India but around the world, and setting new standards for precision, efficacy, and compassion in burn treatment. Giri highlighted the importance of global partnerships in advancing medical care, stating, "Dr. Wagstaff's visit marks a crucial step in our shared mission to improve burn care worldwide. We are excited to see the long-term effects of this collaboration will have on burn patient rehabilitation and treatment, ensuring every patient receives the care they deserve." The collaboration between AIIMS-Bhubaneswar and RAH is a testament to the power of global cooperation in addressing complex medical challenges. By combining expertise, research, and technological advancements, both institutions are positioned to set new benchmarks in burn care management.

IIT-BHUBANESWAR'S 17TH FOUNDATION DAY Create knowledge to transform world: Guv



The event highlighted the institute's growth, future vision, and the importance of fostering innovation and leadership in students

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: "Let us create knowledge that will inform and transform the world, and prepare students to be technically grounded leaders who will change the world," said Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati during the 17th Foundation Day celebration of IIT-Bhubaneswar here Wednesday. The ceremony saw IIT-Bhubaneswar director Shreepad Karmalkar deliver the welcome address, where he recounted the institution's growth since its establishment and outlined its recent initiatives in teaching, research, industry collaborations, and entrepreneurship.

In his address, Governor Kambhampati lauded the institute's journey since its founding in 2008 and praised its multidisciplinary curriculum and strong industry ties. He emphasised the importance of fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, which aligns with India's growing influence in the global startup ecosystem. The Governor also urged students to lead with conviction, courage, and compassion, stressing the need for bold ideas and projects that contribute to the national goals of 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. He highlighted that IIT-Bhubaneswar's role in creating knowledge and building a culture of lifelong learning is essential for preparing students to take on leadership roles in an evolving world. Governor Kambhampati also visited key research facilities at IIT-Bhubaneswar, including the Research and Entrepreneurship Park, SiCRIC, Microfabrication Lab, Renewable Energy Systems, VARCoE, and Systems on Chip Lab.

Over 500 kidney transplants by Bhub Manipal Hospitals

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, celebrated a major achievement—performing over 500 successful kidney transplants. The event, held Wednesday, highlighted the resilience of the patients and the hospital's commitment to exceptional care. The gathering included patients, medical professionals, and key stakeholders, and featured emotional recovery stories, valuable medical discussions, and the presentation of the Manipal Sathi Privilege Card to kidney transplant recipients. The chief guest on the occasion was Additional director of Medical Education & Training and state nodal officer of SOTTO Umakant Satpathy while renowned Indian actor and founder of Smile Force Sabyasachi Mishra was the guest of honour. The event saw around 50-60 kidney transplant patients in attendance, including a series of talks from hospital director Saktimaya Mahapatra, and unit head of Medical Services Siddhartha Mishra., Transplant recipients shared their personal experiences of overcoming kidney failure and embracing a renewed life. Senior consultants in urology and nephrology Manas Ranjan Pradhan, Sai Prasad Sahu, Subodh Kumar Das, and Sukanto Kishore Das also addressed the attendees, offering insights into the medical aspects of kidney transplantation. Mahapatra expressed pride in the hospital's achievement, stating, "This is a celebration of hope and resilience." Satpathy emphasised the critical role of organ donation, while Mishra praised the transformative power of healthcare. The event concluded with a focus on increasing organ donation awareness, reaffirming the hospital's dedication to excellence in healthcare and transplant services.

The event highlighted the resilience of the patients and the hospital's commitment to exceptional care

NCW chairperson emphasises training for safer workplaces

Vijaya Rahatkar says safe and respectful workplace needed for working women to balance their homes and jobs

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The National Commission for Women (NCW) Wednesday underscored the need for proper training for committee members for effective enforcement and capacity-building initiatives to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplace. NCW chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar said this while reviewing the implementation of the 'Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act' (POSH Act) in the state. The meeting was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the NCW. Rahatkar said working women can balance both their



homes and jobs effectively, as long as they are provided with a safe and respectful workplace. She stressed that sexual harassment can only be prevented through the proper implementation of the POSH Act and widespread public awareness about it. The POSH Act, officially known as the 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013', is designed to protect women from sexual harassment at work and provides a structured mechanism to address such complaints. Rahatkar emphasised the

formation of internal committees in workplaces and regional committees in every district of the state. She also proposed organising training programmes for committee members and called for greater public awareness of the law through advertisements and hoardings in public spaces. Clarifying that the law aims to prevent injustice and is not against men, Rahatkar said those found guilty of harassment should face strict punishment under the law. In a post on X, NCW highlighted the recent seminar on anti-human trafficking held in Odisha, where Rahatkar addressed key aspects of the issue, including its concepts, dimensions, and prevention strategies such as awareness campaigns and community engagement. The meeting was attended by Women and Child Development department principal secretary Shubha Sharma, IG S Saini, divisional director Monisha Banerjee, and senior officers of various departments and nodal officers from the state government.

Job fair in City for ex-servicemen

Bhubaneswar: The Directorate General Resettlement (DGR), under the Ministry of Defence, will organise a job fair for ex-servicemen at 120 Infantry Battalion (TA) Grounds February 14, official sources said, Wednesday. Registration for all ex-servicemen will take place at the venue from 7am to 10am. To register, applicants should bring their ex-servicemen identity card and five copies of the latest CV with a photograph, they said. According to DGR sources, the initiative aims at providing employment opportunities to ex-servicemen in corporate roles by connecting them with leading employers. Various companies will conduct interviews and offer placements for roles ranging from senior supervisors and managers to strategic planners and project directors, they added. Applicants can contact Lt Col Rajendra Singh, Adm Comd on 91-6398463478 for further queries and assistance. Similarly, employers can register online - www.dgrindia.gov.in - and book their stalls. For further queries, they may contact Joint Director (SE and CI), DGR West Block IV, RK-Puram, New Delhi-110066 on 011-20862542.

Odisha boosts aviation infrastructure for growth

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: In a strategic move to strengthen the state's aviation sector, Odisha held the 3rd High Power Committee (HPC) meeting Wednesday at Lok Seva Bhawan, under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja. The meeting focused on expanding regional connectivity, modernising existing airports, and developing new aviation infrastructure, in alignment with the state's vision of becoming a global leader in aviation and realising the vision of Viksit Odisha. A key highlight was the development of the Shree Jagannath International Airport (SJIJA) at Puri, a critical step in boosting connectivity for religious tourism and regional access. The committee reviewed progress on the expansion of other vital airports, such as Jeypore, Amarda Road, and Utkela, and emphasised resolving pending land acquisition and forest clearance issues. The Works department was appointed as the nodal agency to expedite the development of these facilities. A significant agenda was the implementation of the revised Small Aircraft Scheme (SAS) aimed at improving air connectivity between underserved regions, including Jeypore, Malkangiri, and Jharsuguda. The scheme will provide affordable travel options for remote communities, supporting economic growth and better access to



services. The committee also discussed the proposal for a new greenfield airport at Paradip, focusing on the identification of land and feasibility studies for the project. This new airport is expected to further strengthen Odisha's infrastructure, enabling easier access to the port city and surrounding areas. Further bolstering the avia-

tion sector, the Commerce and Transport department led by Principal Secretary Usha Padhee stressed the need for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to support airline operators such as IndiGo, Alliance Air, and IndiaOne Air. The funding will encourage operators to increase domestic and international air traffic to and from Odisha.

ECOR diverts three trains for a month

Bhubaneswar: The East Coast Railway (ECOR) has decided to divert three long-distance trains for one month in view of the construction of an air concourse and other safety-related modernisation works at the Cuttack railway station, an official said. The temporarily diverted trains will run via Barang-Naraj Marthapur-Kapilas Road instead of the scheduled route via Barang-Cuttack-Kapilas Road. Stoppages of these trains at the Cuttack station will be skipped and temporary stoppages will be provided at Naraj Marthapur railway station from February 16 to March 17, 2025. Khurda Road Division of ECOR will provide free bus service between Cuttack Railway Station and Naraj Marthapur Railway Station for the passengers of temporary diverted trains for this modernisation and safety-related works, the official said. The Coimbatore-Silchar Weekly Super-Fast Express arriving at Cuttack Tuesdays, the Ernakulam-Patna bi-weekly Express arriving at Cuttack Wednesdays and Thursdays and Bengaluru-Guwahati Tri-Weekly Express arriving at Cuttack Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays will provide stoppages at the Naraj Marthapur railway station instead of Cuttack railway station from February 16 to March 16, 2025, an official statement said. Passengers who are supposed to entrain or detain at Cuttack railway station for the above trains will be provided with free bus service facilities by the ECOR at Naraj and Cuttack railway stations in both directions during the period.

Vedanta hosts Annual Mines Safety Fortnight

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, recently hosted its Annual Mines Safety Fortnight (AMSF) at the Jamkani coal mine in Sundargarh district. The two-week programme, organised in collaboration with the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS), saw the enthusiastic participation of over 500 employees and business partners. Focusing on the theme, "Aapka Pariwar Aapka Intezar Kar Raha Hai" (Your family is waiting for you), the event emphasised the critical importance of safety protocols to prevent accidents and ensure the well-being of employees. Director of Mines Safety at DGMS Bhubaneswar Prafull Ranjan Thakur, praised the Jamkani team for their commitment to safety, highlighting their regular safety drills, awareness programmes, and the implementation of a secure access road for heavy machinery. CEO (Coal Mines) of Vedanta Aluminium David Stone reiterated the company's focus on a safety-first culture, stating, "Safety is integral to our core values, and ensuring a zero-harm workplace is our key objective."



Throughout the fortnight, Vedanta raised safety awareness through workshops, including mock drills, fire safety training, first aid programmes and road safety sessions.

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FOCUS DRAFT UGC RULES

INFRINGING ON FEDERALISM



The autonomy of universities is steadily being lost due to political interference, leading to decline in standards of teaching and performance

The recent draft guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) have come in for criticism as it's seen as a blatant attempt of the Centre to take control of universities across the country.

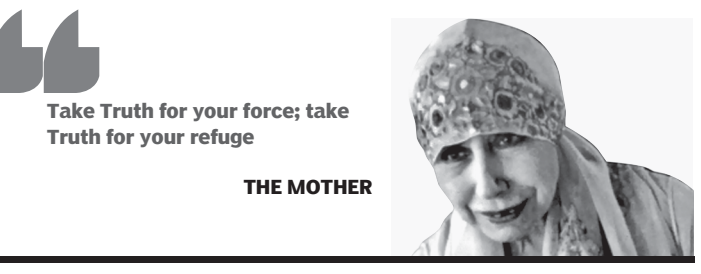


Dhurjati Mukherjee

THE EDUCATION BUDGET OF THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO BE HIKED IN TUNE WITH OTHER EMERGING ECONOMIES

A recent conclave in Bangalore was attended by ministers from Karnataka, Telangana; Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala and Tamil Nadu where it was unanimously resolved to withdraw the rules and call for a meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education.

It may also be pointed at the very outset that whether a university is a Central or a state one, political interference has increased over the years, and this is especially manifest in the last decade or so.



Trade & Geopolitics

The global economic landscape is changing rapidly, and developing countries are now facing three major constraints: the resurgence of protectionism, shrinking macroeconomic policy space, and profound technological disruption.

In recent years, free trade, once a cornerstone of international cooperation, has given way to rising tariffs, large-scale industrial subsidies, and economic "decoupling."

Moreover, countries have increasingly pursued industrial strategies as a means of bolstering strategic sectors. Of course, China, with its state-led economic model, has long relied on industrial policy, which is the basis of its Made in China 2025 plan.



Karim El Aynaoui & Hinh T. Dinh

In recent years, free trade, once a cornerstone of international cooperation, has given way to rising tariffs, large-scale industrial subsidies, and economic 'decoupling'

Such initiatives are designed to bolster economic security, but they also fuel geopolitical tensions and lead to value-chain fragmentation. For developing countries, this presents both challenges and opportunities.

Meanwhile, developing countries' ability to mount fiscal and monetary-policy responses is severely constrained. Successive crises - including the 2008 global economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and various commodity-price shocks - have eroded fiscal buffers.

Moreover, high global interest rates are forcing developing countries to raise their own interest rates to mitigate capital outflows and currency depreciation.

All this is happening while rapid technological change is disrupting traditional growth models. Developing-economy growth has historically been driven by structural transformation - the reallocation of resources from low- to high-productivity sectors.

But as Dani Rodrik and Joseph E. Stiglitz have observed, structural transformation can no longer be achieved through export-oriented industrialization, not least because manufacturing has become more skill- and capital-intensive.

The alternative strategy Rodrik and Stiglitz propose focuses on a comprehensive green transition and increased productivity in labor-intensive services. But while this approach holds promise, considerable public-sector capacity is required to support private-sector innovation and policy experimentation.

First, developing economies must bolster their macroeconomic resilience. To this end, they should strengthen fiscal frameworks, in order to build up more robust macroeconomic buffers.

Second, countries should leverage technology to boost productivity, with a focus on the private sector. In addition to increasing the efficiency and transparency of government services, digital technologies can expand access to education, support innovation by facilitating research and development, and transform critical sectors, such as health care and agriculture.

Lastly, governments should continue to promote growth through structural transformation. While the services sector holds promise for job creation, it alone cannot absorb the millions of young people, particularly the unskilled and semi-skilled, entering the workforce in developing countries each year.

Green manufacturing and the pharmaceutical sector also offer promising pathways for industrialization. Special economic zones, strategic land use, and more dynamic startup ecosystems can stimulate industrial growth and job creation.

None of this will be possible with the "every country for itself" mentality that seems to be taking hold worldwide. While the Washington Consensus had a decidedly mixed track record, it emphasized international engagement and cooperation.

Karim El Aynaoui is Executive President of the Policy Center for the New South. Hinh T. Dinh is a former chief economist of the World Bank.

SPECTRUM WORLD RADIO DAY

The enduring power of radio

Radio, the age-old medium of communication, continues to be a vital thread that connects people across geographies, cultures, and generations. Although new-age media outlets are growing at an extraordinary pace, radio is still a vital information, education, and entertainment medium.



NA Shah Ansari

THE FUTURE OF RADIO DEPENDS ON ITS CAPACITY FOR INNOVATION WHILE MAINTAINING ITS ORIGINAL CHARACTERISTICS

Radio has served as a faithful friend of common people for more than a century. Its reach to the masses, including the most remote places in the world, is unparalleled.

Radio has served as a faithful friend of common people for more than a century. Its reach to the masses, including the most remote places in the world, is unparalleled.

Moreover, radio is a lifeline during emergencies. It has indeed emerged as the

most trusted medium for real-time information, during natural calamities, health emergencies or any other unpredictable incident.

Radio remains strong in spite of the introduction of digital media. One of the primary reasons is its mobility. Listeners can listen to radio while driving, working, or relaxing.

Community radio is one of the special sections of the radio world. In contrast to commercial radio stations that usually deal with entertainment and advertisement, community radio is motivated by the requirements and aims of community groups.

Community radio stations are usually located on a small scale, and they are run by local groups and organisations. They deal with hyper-local problems like agriculture, health, education and culture, which are typically downplayed by traditional media.

Community radio's real power lies in its ability to complete the last mile. It is a medium that is both personal and understandable to the audience. Community radio in Odisha has played a crucial role in tackling issues such as health awareness, disaster readiness and women's empowerment.

as a force for good. Because the future is, indeed, radio.

It is the call of the hour for broadcasters to uphold the trust of listeners by delivering accurate, relevant, and engaging content. They need to constantly innovate to sustain and grow the medium.

As we celebrate World Radio Day, let us acknowledge the enduring power of radio and its unparalleled ability to touch lives. Radio is one of the unifying forces in a world increasingly divided, by the common bonds of narratives and lived moments.

The writer is a senior broadcaster, media educator & rights activist.

Missing the deadline

Sir, India's delay in submitting an enhanced climate action plan raises concerns about its commitment to complying with the Paris Agreement. While India has made progress in going green, missing the deadline weakens India's importance in global climate diplomacy.

Business over ethics

Sir, Recent developments suggest that the Trump administration's decision to suspend enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) may be influenced by business interests, notably those of Elon Musk.

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.



Venu GS, KOLLAM

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

IN PRE-POLL YEAR

Mamata govt tables ₹3.89 lakh cr budget



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 12: West Bengal Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya Wednesday presented a Rs 3.89-lakh crore budget for 2025-26 with a significant focus on social welfare, and announced a four per cent hike in dearness allowance (DA) for state government employees.

The government also unveiled a series of infrastructure and agricultural development projects in its budget, allocating significant funds for rural connectivity, river erosion control, and agrarian support initiatives.

In the last full-fledged budget of the Mamata Banerjee government before the 2026 Assembly elections, Bhattacharya tabled in the Assembly a Rs 3.89 lakh crore budget.

In the previous budget, the state saw an allocation of Rs 3.67 lakh crore, marking an 8 per cent increase from the previous year 2023-24.

Bhattacharya announced that the state government would increase the Dearness Allowance (DA) by four per cent from April 1, 2025.

This would bring the total DA to 18 per cent for over 10 lakh state government employees and pensioners. The move is aimed at addressing ongoing concerns raised by the employees who have been agitating for better compensation.

"With this four per cent increase in DA, we are reaffirming our commitment to the welfare of our employees," Bhattacharya said, underlining the state's focus on the well-being of its workforce.

In the budget speech, Bhattacharya announced an allocation of Rs 44,000 crore for rural development and Panchayats. A major highlight of the budget is the Rs 1,500 crore allocation for the improvement of rural roads across the state. This is aimed at enhancing connectivity and boosting economic activity in remote areas.

In a bid to address the persistent issue of river erosion, the government set aside Rs 200 crore, which would provide much-needed relief to vulnerable riverine communities.

Further strengthening its focus on infrastructure, the government sanctioned Rs 500 crore for the construction of a 4.75 km-long bridge over the Ganga river at Gangasagar, which is expected to facilitate smooth access for pilgrims and boost local economies.

In a bid to address the persistent issue of river erosion, the government set aside Rs 200 crore, which would provide much-needed relief to vulnerable riverine communities

Under the 'Banglar Bari' housing project, the state plans to construct 16 lakh new houses in the upcoming financial year, and a proposal of Rs 9,600 crore has been allocated for the initiative.

In an attempt to enhance housing support for the underprivileged, the state had allocated Rs 14,000 crore under the scheme last year.

This initiative aims to provide financial assistance for the construction of homes for the poor and marginalised sections of society.

In the budget announcement, Bhattacharya stated that the state would continue with the development of roads and infrastructure under the 'Pathshree' project.

An additional Rs 1,500 crore has been allocated for this project in the next financial year.

For the 'Ghatal Master Plan', a mega project to dredge riverbeds and strengthen embankments of at least 10 major rivers in the state, the government has allocated Rs 500 crore this year. The total cost of the project is Rs 1,500 crore.

A new project called 'Nadi Bandhan' was announced for river-centric areas in the state. The project has been allocated Rs 200 crore, and it will focus on measures to prevent riverbank erosion.

Additionally, Finance Minister Bhattacharya announced that 70,000 ASHA workers will be provided with smartphones as part of the budget's welfare measures.

MP sets up high-power committee to oversee Bhopal GIS preparations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Feb 12: The Madhya Pradesh government has constituted a high-level committee to oversee the preparations for the upcoming Global Investment Summit (GIS), which will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi February 24 in Bhopal, an official said Wednesday.

The committee under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has included Ministers, MPs, MLAs, and senior bureaucrats, including Chief Secretary Anurag Jain as members.

Along with Deputy Chief Ministers Jagdish Devda and Rajendra Shukla, ministers -- Chaitanya Kashyap, Krishan Gaur and Vishwas Sarang -- have been named as the members of the committee.

Madhya Pradesh unit BJP chief and Khajuraho MP VD Sharma and Bhopal MP Alok Sharma along with Bhopal Mayor Malti Rai and MLA Bhagwandas Sabnani are the other members beside senior IAS officers.

The committee members will be responsible to monitor and fulfill the task assigned to them, such as travel, food arrangement, accommodation and other logistics for the investors who will be coming from across the country and different parts of the world, the Madhya Pradesh government said in a statement Wednesday.



A fisherman rows a boat across the Hooghly river during sunset, in Nadia, West Bengal

PTI PHOTO

PROTEST THROUGH STILLNESS

'Shavasana' to oppose carbide waste disposal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhar (MP), Feb 12: A group of people Wednesday performed 'Shavasana' (corpse pose) to protest against the proposed disposal of Union Carbide waste, connected to the Bhopal gas tragedy, in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district.

Protests have been going on in the district, where 337 metric tonnes of waste have been brought from Bhopal for incineration at the industrial town of Pithampur.

Twelve persons, including members of Pithampur Bachao Samiti, Pithampur Raksha Samiti and yoga expert Pradeep Dubey, performed Shavasana at the bus stand around noon as part of their demonstration.

"I have been associated with

yoga for a long time. We realised Shavasana was the best way to express our feelings peacefully," Dubey told reporters.

He said the authorities should take the matter seriously and not be in haste to dispose of the Union Carbide waste.

"Because of this (waste disposal plan), everyone is fearful today. Therefore, to demonstrate the last limit of fear, we performed Shavasana."

President Pithampur Bachao Samiti Dr Hemant Hirolo said they have been holding a public dialogue since 12 containers carrying the waste reached Pithampur last month. "But we have not received answers to our technical questions," he claimed.

Wednesday's protest through the yogic pose of Shavana



was a message to the people of Pithampur that the matter should be presented before the court, he said. In January, protests had rocked Pithampur, around 50 km from Dhar district headquarters, after the waste was brought to a private facility in the industrial town for incineration. Those objecting to the move claim it would harm the locals' health and the environment.

Meanwhile, the local administration has launched an intense awareness campaign to allay the "misconceptions" about the waste disposal.

According to the state government, the waste comprises soil, reactor residues, Sevin (pesticide) residues, naphthol residues and semi-processed residues. The

MP Pollution Control Board has said "scientific evidence suggests the chemical effects of Sevin and naphthol in the waste have now become nought".

On the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, highly toxic methyl isocyanate gas leaked from the Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, killing at least 5,479 persons and leaving thousands with serious health problems and long-term disabilities.

BSF-BGB HOLD INFORMAL TALKS TO STRENGTHEN BORDER PEACE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 12: The BSF and BGB Tuesday held an informal meeting at the Sona Masjid Border Outpost (BOP) in Bangladesh to enhance coordination and cooperation between the two border-guarding forces, an official statement said.

The meeting was attended by Inspector General (IG) of BSF South Bengal Frontier, Maninder PS Pawar and Brig-

adier General SM Zahidur Rahman, the Regional Commander of BGB North West Region.

The deliberation took place amid reports of objections by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) over the Border Security Force's (BSF) attempts to erect fence in certain areas along the India-Bangladesh border.

"Constructive discussions were held on curbing cross-border crimes, intensi-



fying joint efforts, overseeing development initiatives in border areas, and implement-

ing effective measures to prevent illegal movement," the BSF statement said.

The IG of South Bengal Frontier emphasised the importance of strong mutual cooperation between the BSF and BGB for maintaining border security and regional

stability. "Seamless coordination between the two forces will not

only reinforce border security, but also elevate bilateral relations to new heights," it said.

Both commanders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration and addressing security challenges together.

They agreed that the BSF and BGB would continue joint efforts to uphold the spirit of cooperation and work towards a shared vision of peace and progress, the statement added.

BOOSTING AGRI-SUSTAINABILITY

Revolutionary gene technique targets Fruit flies

Fruit flies (Tephritidae) pose a significant threat to global agriculture, impacting crop yields, food security, and international trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 12: Researchers of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and University of Calcutta have jointly developed a novel technique for Fruit fly control which can potentially revolutionise global efforts to combat these pests, an official said.

Fruit flies (Tephritidae) pose a significant threat to global agriculture, impacting crop yields, food security, and international trade.

A ZSI spokesperson said the research study, which was published in 'BMC Genomics', focused on Fruit flies collected from various districts in West Bengal, where agriculture is an important livelihood source.

The team sequenced gene regions from the Fruit fly species found on crops like pumpkins,



cucumbers and gourds.

Analysis revealed 30 uniquely variable sites at nucleotide positions thereby offering a crucial target for species-specific interventions.

Highlighting the importance of this research, ZSI Director

Dhriti Banerjee said, "Fruit flies are devastating pests and in West Bengal, where over 70 per cent of rural households depend on agriculture, our work is critical. This new method will not only protect crops but also reduce our dependence on chem-

ical pesticides."

By enabling targeted pest-control measures, we can minimise environmental damage and empower agricultural professionals with precision tools, moving away from broad-spectrum approaches that can harm non-target species, she said.

The research offers a promising path towards sustainable and effective fruit fly management.

The damage by Fruit flies is caused either directly from the larvae of the fruit flies or indirectly from harmful microorganisms or decomposers that enter the fruits and vegetables through the egg-laying holes made by the female fruit flies, thereby leading to fruit rot, premature dropping and massive economic losses amounting to billions annually.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.B-1000
e-Procurement Notice, ANGUL (R&B) DIVISION
Bid Identification No.42 of 2024-25
 e-mail ID- angulrbddivision@yahoo.co.in

1. Number of Works : 08 (Eight) number of Road works
2. Approximate estimated cost : Varies from Rs.41.00 Lakh to Rs.49.99 Lakh.
3. Period of completion : 01 (One) Calendar month
4. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : Dt.15.02.2025 at 10.00 A.M.
5. Last date / Time for receipt of bid in the portal : Dt. 24.02.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.
6. Date of opening Bid : Dt. 25.02.2025 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name and address of the Office Inviting Bid : Superintendent Engineer, Angul (R&B) Division, Angul
8. The bidders must participate in ONLINE bidding only.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sd./- Superintendent Engineer
 Angul (R&B) Division
 OIPR-34074/11/0019/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
PODAGADA DAM DIVISION, AT/PO: KHATIGUDA,
DIST-NABARANGPUR (ODISHA) PIN-764085
 E-Mail Id: eepodagadadamdivision@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.-EEPDD-05(02)/2024-25, Dt.11.02.2025
 No.A-1054: Bid documents consisting of work, Estimated Cost of bid document, Time of Completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

1. Name of the Work	: Civil Works
2. No. of Works	: Two Number
3. Estimated Cost	: Rs.15.25 Lakhs to Rs.13.03 Lakhs
4. Eligibility of the bidders	: Ranging from 'D' Class to 'C' class contractors (Odisha P.W.D. or equivalent class of other licensing authority) as per Detail Tender Call Notice
5. Period of Completion	: Two Calendar Months
6. Date of Clarification	: 13.02.2025 to 15.02.2025 Only during office hour
7. Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal	: From 13.02.2025 11.00 A.M. to 25.02.2025 (upto 5.00 P.M.)
8. Date of Opening of the bids Online	: 27.02.2025 (11.30 A.M.)
9. Name and address of the Office Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, Podagada Dam Division, At/PO: Khatiguda, District. Nabarangpur

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>

Sd./- Executive Engineer
 Podagada Dam Division, Khatiguda
 OIPR-32095/11/0012/2425



Narendra Modi, you have endangered national security at our borders in order to benefit private billionaires
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

SC DENIES INDRANI PLEA TO TRAVEL ABROAD

The Supreme Court Wednesday dismissed the plea of Indrani Mukerjea, accused of killing her daughter Sheena Bora, against a ruling denying her permission to travel abroad. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal directed the trial court to conduct the proceedings in the case within a year and upheld the Bombay High Court order refusing her plea



of the day uote

Aero India has reached heights that are not only unparalleled but historic



RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

I highlighted Assam's endeavours to be at the core of India-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic partnership through greater collaboration in the emerging knowledge economy, semiconductor, skilling and green energy



HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

I salute the supreme sacrifices of the rank and file of our armed forces who have protected India since its independence



NEIPHIU RIO | NAGALAND CM

SHORT TAKES

Mumbai reports first GBS fatality

Mumbai: A 53-year-old man has died of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) at a hospital in Mumbai, the first fatality here due to the nerve disorder, officials said Wednesday. The patient, resident of Mumbai's Wadala area and working as a ward boy in a civic-run hospital, had sometime back visited Pune, which has witnessed the GBS outbreak, they said. He was admitted to another civic-run hospital here January 23. The man was in a critical condition for several days and died Tuesday, the officials said.

Meat found inside temple; protest held

Hyderabad: A protest was held Wednesday after pieces of meat were found in a temple premises at Tappachabutra in old city here. According to police the incident happened in the early hours of Wednesday inside the temple complex housing Hanuman and Shiv mandir under Tappachabutra Police Station limits and four teams were investigating the incident. A temple committee member said someone threw meat near the Shiv Lingam and devotees who came for puja noticed it and informed about it.

Methamphetamine tablets seized

Aizawl: Methamphetamine tablets worth ₹173.73 crore have been seized along the India-Myanmar border in Mizoram's Champhai district, an Assam Rifles statement said Wednesday. Acting on a tip-off, Assam Rifles and Mizoram Police jointly seized 57.9 kg of Methamphetamine tablets at a border crossing point in Zokhawthar February 9, it said. The joint team spotted suspected individuals carrying the illegal consignment and intercepted them, it said. The suspects, however, became alert and ran away, leaving behind the consignment.

3 militants nabbed

Imphal: Three militants allegedly involved in extortion have been nabbed in separate operations in Manipur's Imphal West district, police said Wednesday. Two insurgents belonging to the banned Peoples' Revolutionary Front of Kangleipak (PREPAK PRO) outfit were apprehended on Namdulong Khuman Lampak Main Stadium Road Tuesday. They were identified as Ashem Dinesh Meetei (41) and Huidrom Tomba Singh (36) and were involved in extortion activities in Namdulong area. A leaflet of PREPAK (PRO), along with other articles, was recovered from their possession.

New I-T Bill to be tabled today



The Income Tax Bill, will replace 298 sections and 14 schedules in the six-decade old voluminous legislations, with a 622-page new law enshrined in 526 sections, 23 chapters and 16 schedules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The much-anticipated new income tax bill will replace terminologies like assessment and previous year with easier to understand 'tax year' as part of move to simplify language while removing provisos and explanations.

The Income Tax Bill, 2025, which is likely to be introduced in Parliament Thursday, will replace 298 sections and 14 schedules in the six-decade old voluminous legislations, with a 622 page new law enshrined in 526 sections, 23 chapters and 16 schedules.

The Bill introduces a new concept of 'tax year' as the 12-month period beginning from April 1. This would replace the present concept of assessment and previous year. Currently, income earned in the previous year (PY), say in the year April 2024 to March 2025, will be assessed in assessment year (AY) 2025-26.

The new Bill will come into effect from April 1, 2026, after it is vetted by Standing Committee and cleared by Parliament. The new bill has omitted redundant sections, like those relating to Fringe Benefit Tax. The Bill is free from 'explanations or provisos', thereby making it easier to read and comprehend.

Also, the word 'notwithstanding', which was used extensively in the Income Tax Act, 1961, has been done away with in the new Bill and almost everywhere replaced with the

term 'irrespective'. The Bill uses shorter sentences and has been made reader-friendly with the use of tables and formulae. Tables have been provided for provisions relating to TDS, presumptive taxation, salaries, and deductions for bad debt.

The 'Taxpayer's Charter' has been included in the Bill which outlines the rights and obligations of the taxpayers. The Bill replaces the term 'previous year' as mentioned in the Income Tax Act, 1961 with 'tax year'. Also, the concept of assessment year has been done away with. Currently, for income earned in the previous year (say 2023-24), tax is paid in assessment year (say 2024-25).

This previous year and assessment year (AY) concept has been removed and only tax year under the simplified bill has been brought in. Once introduced in the Lok Sabha likely Thursday, the Bill will be sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance for further deliberations.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the new I-T Bill said that the Income-tax Act passed in 1961 has been subjected to numerous amendments since its passage 60 years ago.

"As a result of these amendments the basic structure of the Income-tax Act has become overburdened and language has become complex, increasing cost of compliance for taxpayers and hampering efficiency of direct-tax administration," it said.

Tax administrators, practitioners and taxpayers had also raised concerns about the complicated provisions and structure of the Income-tax Act.

Therefore, the government in the budget in July 2024 announced that a time-bound comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act, 1961 would be undertaken to make the Act concise, lucid, easy to read and understand. Accordingly, the Income-tax Bill, 2025 has been prepared, which proposes to repeal and replace the Income-tax Act, 1961.

The Income Tax Bill, 2025 comprises 536 sections, higher than 298 sections of the current Income-Tax Act, 1961. The existing law has 14 schedules which will increase to 16 in the new legislation.

Mizoram village, local council elections held

Aizawl: Polling for 110 local councils (LC) within two urban local bodies and 534 village councils (VC) across nine districts concluded peacefully Wednesday, a senior official said. State election commissioner H Lalithlangliana said voting, which commenced at 7 am, continued beyond the 4 pm deadline. According to data provided by the state election commission (SEC) in its official website, 64.76 per cent voter turnout was recorded in VC polls and 33.24 per cent in LC elections till 8:30 pm. Lalithlangliana said the voting percentage may increase as detailed reports are awaited. There are 544 VCs in nine districts, excluding three autonomous district councils in south Mizoram's Lawngtlai and Siaha districts.

1984 ANTI-SIKH RIOTS

Court convicts Sajjan Kumar in murder case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: A Delhi court Wednesday said former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar was part of an unlawful assembly that killed the victims and is guilty of murder in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots' case, in which he now faces a maximum of death penalty and a minimum of life term in prison.

Special judge Kaveri Bawera aside from saying that a mob took part in rioting and killed the victims, held, "It has further been established that Kumar, being a member of such



Indian Air Force aerobatic team 'Surya Kiran' performs aerobatic maneuvers during the Aero India 2025, at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bangalore, Karnataka

HC seeks govt's response on plea to block DeepSeek

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Delhi High Court observed Wednesday that artificial intelligence is a "dangerous tool" in anybody's hand, whether Chinese or American.

The court's observation came while it was hearing a petition seeking a direction to the Centre to block access to DeepSeek, an AI chatbot developed by Chinese entities, in all forms in India.

"AI is a dangerous tool in anybody's hand, whether it is Chinese or American, it does not make any difference. It is not that the government is unaware of these things. They are very well aware...," a bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said. The Centre's counsel submitted that the issue requires consideration and urged the court to grant some time to get instructions in the matter. The court listed the matter for February 20 to enable the Centre's counsel to get complete instructions. The petitioner's counsel urged the court to issue notices to authorities in the matter and said it pertains to a direct infringement of the right to privacy.

To this, Justice Gedela said, "You are in the dark web 97



The court's observation came while it was hearing a petition seeking a direction to the Centre to block access to DeepSeek, an AI chatbot developed by Chinese entities, in all forms in India

per cent. What are you saying? You are next generation youngsters. You know about it more than us. You think this data, any data is safe? Are you aware of the dark web? Are you aware that 97 per cent of the iceberg is tilted around? Are you aware of that? So therefore, they are saying consideration. We are giving them an opportunity, please wait."

Petitioner Bhavna Sharma, a lawyer, said the plea seeks to protect the personal data of

citizens as well as the data in government systems and devices from cyber attacks and data breaches, and uphold the confidentiality of government data and documents.

The plea said within a month of the DeepSeek application's launch on play stores, various vulnerabilities were discovered in it, causing a large-scale leak of sensitive personal data online, including chat history, back-end data and log streams.



The case relates to the killings of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh November 1, 1984

unlawful assembly, is guilty of having committed the murder of Jaswant Singh and Tarundeep Singh, the husband and son of the complainant, during the incident."

The conviction judgment further said, "The complainant who witnessed the brutal killing of her husband and son

can certainly not be expected to forget the face of the person who was instigating the mob to carry out the said killings and looting and her deposition in court fortifies her stand that it is accused who was not only present during the alleged incident but also instigating and leading the mob which resulted

in commission of the aforesaid offences." Kumar was convicted under IPC Sections 147 (rioting), 302 (murder), 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) 395 (dacoity), 397 (robbery, or dacoity, with attempt to cause death or grievous hurt), 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees), 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house, etc), and 440 (mischief committed after preparation made for causing death or hurt) aside from other provisions.

Victim of sexual assault has right to terminate pregnancy: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, Feb 12: The law provides the right to a victim of sexual assault to terminate her pregnancy medically, the Allahabad High Court has observed while allowing a 17-year-old woman to choose whether she wants the child or not.

A two-judge bench comprising Justices Mahesh Chandra Tripathi and Prashant Kumar was hearing a petition of a 17-year-old rape victim seeking medical termination of pregnancy. It said section 3(2) of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act provides the right to a victim of sexual assault to terminate her pregnan-

cy medically.

The court further observed, "In the case of sexual assault, denying a women right to say no to medical termination of pregnancy and fasten her with responsibility of motherhood would amount to denying her human right to live with dignity as she has a right in relation to her body which includes saying 'Yes' or 'No' to being a mother."

"Section 3(2) of the MTP Act reiterates that right of a woman. To force the victim to give birth to the child of a man who sexually assaulted would result in unexplainable miseries." The petitioner said she was lured by the accused



to elope with him. Later, upon a complaint by her father, she was found.

Subsequently, when the petitioner was medically examined for acute stomach ache, she was found to be three months and

fifteen days pregnant. The counsel for the petitioner alleged that she was raped multiple times, and investigation on this has been requested before the session court.

Since the petitioner is now

A two-judge bench comprising Justices Mahesh Chandra Tripathi and Prashant Kumar was hearing a petition of a 17-year-old rape victim seeking medical termination of pregnancy

It said section 3(2) of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act provides the right to a victim of sexual assault to terminate her pregnancy medically

nineteen weeks pregnant, her counsel submitted that the pregnancy was causing her anguish and was detrimental to her mental health. It was al-

so pleaded that the petitioner, being a minor, did not want the responsibility of a child.

The court observed that Rule 3 B of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy, Rules 2003 (as amended by Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Rules, 2021) provides for termination of pregnancy of up to 24 weeks for survivors of sexual assault or rape or incest or if she is a minor. Giving an example of the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court allowing medical termination of pregnancy in similar circumstances, the court observed that the victim has the right to say yes or no to keeping the child conceived due to sexual assault.

(AAP convener) Arvind Kejriwal is holding continuous meetings with the organisation, Punjab leaders, winning MLAs and the candidates who lost the polls, to gather feedback and improve our approach. But the BJP should prioritise governance and ensure Delhi does not face unnecessary hardships

PRİYANKA KAKKAR | AAP'S CHIEF SPOKESPERSON

EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS CLAIM 80K LIVES

India ranked as the sixth-most severely-affected country by extreme weather events in the 1993-2022 period, recording 80,000 fatalities and economic losses of around \$180 billion, according to a new report



of the day quote

It was a big fraud. The Congress and the BJP were involved. It was a massive scam orchestrated by all of them together



M V GOVINDAN | CPI(M) STATE SECY

What is the government doing? So many power centers have been formed in the government and no one knows what is happening



SACHIN PILOT | CONGRESS LEADER

India will surpass Japan and Germany to become the world's third-largest economy by 2027 under PM Modi. The Congress should turn the pages of history before commenting about him and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government



JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER

POST OF THE DAY

BREAKING NEWS
Congress will change Assam PCC Chief
Congress will change Himachal PCC Chief

Congress will change Tamil Nadu PCC Chief
Congress will change Haryana PCC Chief
Congress will change Maharashtra PCC Chief
INC is also set to replace atleast 6 AICC in charges this month

@Amockx2022

SHORT TAKES

Young man killed in wild elephant attack

Wayanad (Kerala): A 27-year-old man was killed in a wild elephant attack in this hill district in the early hours of Wednesday, police said. The incident was reported from a tea estate in Attamala near Chooramala where landslides claimed several lives in July last year. The victim has been identified as Balakrishnan, a member of the tribal community, police said. He is a resident of a paddy village, adjacent to the tea estate. The incident is believed to have occurred around 3 am Wednesday, they added. Meanwhile, residents protested against the alleged lack of initiatives from the authorities to protect them from wild animal attacks.

Three MLAs submit Bills for liquor ban

Jammu: Three MLAs have submitted private bills to the Speaker to be tabled in the forthcoming session of the Assembly seeking to declare J&K liquor-free. Three MLAs, who submitted the Bill are Mir Mohammad Fayaz of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad of the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) and the ruling National Conference (NC), MLA, Ahsan Pardesi. The Bills will be tabled in the forthcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, which will meet in Jammu for the budget session March 3.

3 of family killed in road accident

Jaipur: Three people of a family were killed after their bike was hit by an unidentified vehicle in Rajasthan's Dholpur district Wednesday, police said. The victims were identified as Vikas (22), his sister-in-law, Natho (21) and his cousin, Anushka (8).

PM, Macron discuss ways to deepen defence ties



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, Feb 12: Emphasising on "deep and long-standing" defence cooperation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron Wednesday commended the progress in collaboration in construction of Scorpene submarines in India as the two countries welcomed the ongoing discussions on missiles, helicopter engines and jet engines.

Modi invited the French Army to "take a closer look" at the Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launch (MBRL) system, emphasising that "an acquisition of this system by France would be another milestone in Indo-French defence ties," according to a joint statement issued during Modi's just-concluded France visit.

The two leaders held bilateral discussions on the entire gamut of the "exceptionally strong and multifaceted" bi-

lateral cooperation apart from global and regional matters. "In order to deepen the research and development partnerships in defence, both the leaders stressed on the early launch of an R&D framework through a Technical Arrangement for cooperation in defence technologies between DGA and DRDO," it said.

The Direction Generale de l'Armeement (DGA) coordinates the armament programmes with industry in France and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is the premier R&D organisation of India. They also held extensive discussions on long-term global challenges and current international developments and agreed to intensify their global and regional engagement, including through multilateral initiatives and institutions. Both leaders had a "detailed conversation on

The two leaders held bilateral discussions on the entire gamut of the "exceptionally strong and multifaceted" bilateral cooperation apart from global and regional matters

international issues, including on the Middle East and the war in Ukraine." The two leaders also underlined their common commitment to a "free, open, inclusive, secure and peaceful Indo-Pacific region," the statement said.

Both leaders commended progress in collaboration in construction of Scorpene submarines in India, including indigenisation, and in particular the work carried out with a view to the "integration of DRDO developed Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) into P75-Scorpene submarines and the analyses conducted regarding the possible integration of the Integrated Combat System (ICS) into the future P75-AS submarines," it added.

The two leaders welcomed the commissioning of the sixth and final submarine of the P75 Scorpene-class project, INS Vaghsheer, January 15. "Both sides welcomed the ongoing discussions in missiles, helicopter engines and jet engines. They also welcomed the excellent cooperation between the relevant entities in the Safran group and their Indian counterparts," it added.

Briefing the media in France, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri Wednesday said they reviewed the bilateral cooperation in areas of defence, space and civil nuclear cooperation, health and people-to-people ties.

"In addition, President Macron welcomed the decision to include India as an observer to the Eurodrone MALE programme managed by OCCAR, which is another step forward in the growing strength of our partnership in defence equipment programmes," the statement said.

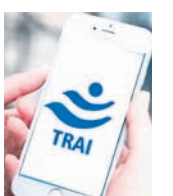
TRAI tightens rules to curb spams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Telecom regulator TRAI Wednesday intensified its crackdown on pesky calls and messages with new rules that prescribe fines ranging from ₹2 lakh to ₹10 lakh for recurring and repeated instances of violation, in cases where telcos misreport the count of such spams.

The regulator has mandated all telecom operators to analyze call and SMS patterns based on parameters such as unusually high call volumes, short call durations, and low incoming-to-outgoing call ratios to flag potential spammers in real-time.

The amendment in the regulation in Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations come with graded penalty that will be imposed on telecom operators in case they fail to implement the provisions of the rule.



UPSC brings changes in online application process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has introduced certain changes in its online application system for this year's civil services preliminary exam after aspirants complained of technical glitches while applying through it, according to an official notice.

It said that some entries have been made "editable" in the one-time registration for filling up of the online application. "In view of the queries/difficulties raised by the candidates in filling up the online application form for the civil services examination, 2025, the Commission has decided the following changes in the



one-time registration (OTR) for filling up of the online application," the UPSC said.

Accordingly, editable entries in the OTR profile "until the final submission of application and thereafter during the correction window" include "Have you ever changed name?", "Gender", "Minority Status" and "Class 10th Board Examination Roll No.," said the notice issued by the Commission. If a candidate has lost access to his/her

In view of the queries/difficulties raised by the candidates in filling up the online application form for the civil services examination, 2025, the Commission has decided the following changes in the one-time registration (OTR) for filling up of the online application **UPSC**

5 senior students held for ragging juniors at Kerala nursing college

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kottayam (Kerala), Feb 12: Five third-year students have been arrested for allegedly ragging first-year students at the Government Nursing College here, police said Wednesday.

A case was registered after three first-year students lodged a complaint, alleging that the ragging had been ongoing for nearly three months at the nursing institute, which functions under the Government Medical College. The accused students have been suspended, college authorities said. The action was taken following an inquiry conducted under the anti-ragging law, they added.

The arrested students have been identified as Samuel Johnson (20), Rahul Raj (22), Jeev (18), Rijil Jith (20), and Vivek (21). According to the complaint, the ragging began in November last year.

The students reported that the incidents involved extreme brutality. They alleged that they were forced to stand naked and subjected to severe physical abuse using dumbbells, including tying them to their private parts. Further allegations include injuries inflicted using compasses and similar objects, followed by the application of lotion on the wounds.

Additionally, they were forced to have cream applied to their faces, heads, and mouths. The complaint also states that senior students regularly extorted money from juniors on Sundays to buy alcohol and frequently assaulted them. On November 16, the accused allegedly forced a first-year student to transfer ₹300 via Google Pay and hand over ₹500 in cash under threats.

Police revealed that the money was used for alcohol consumption. On December 13, a first-year student endured extreme physical torture. That night, the accused allegedly entered his room, tied his hands and legs, and restrained him. They then poured lotion all over his body and inflicted injuries using a divider. They also forced another first-year student in the room to record the incident on a mobile phone.

Unable to endure the harassment any longer, three students finally lodged a complaint with the Kottayam Gandhinagar police.



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Calling a woman illegitimate wife violates her rights: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Supreme Court Wednesday took exception to a Bombay High Court order which used "illegitimate wife" and "faithful mistress" to describe a woman and said it amounted to the violation of her fundamental rights and was misogynistic.

Observing the use of such words was against the ethos and ideals of the Constitution, a full bench (three judges) of Justices Abhay S Oka, Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Augustine George Masih took note of the "objectionable language" used by the Bombay High Court.

"Unfortunately, the Bombay

High Court went to the extent of using the words 'illegitimate wife'. Shockingly, in paragraph 24, the high court described such a wife as a 'faithful mistress,'" it added.

The apex court said calling the woman, who was in a marriage that was declared void, as an "illegitimate wife" was "very inappropriate" and affected her dignity.

The bench notably observed the high court did not use similar adjectives for husbands of void marriages. Under Section 21 of the Constitution, said the bench, every person had a fundamental right to lead a dignified life. "Calling a woman an 'illegitimate wife' or 'faithful



mistress' will amount to a violation of the fundamental rights of that woman under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Describing a woman by using these words is against the ethos

and ideals of our Constitution," it said.

The court said no one could use such adjectives while referring to a woman who was a party to a void marriage. The

top court was hearing a reference in a matter over conflicting views on the applicability of Sections 24 and 25 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

While Section 24 of the Act deals with maintenance pendente lite (pending the suit) and expenses of proceedings, Section 25 relates to permanent alimony and maintenance.

"A spouse whose marriage has been declared void under Section 11 of the 1955 Act is entitled to seek permanent alimony or maintenance from the other spouse by invoking section 25 of the 1955 Act," held the bench. It said whether such a relief of permanent alimony could be granted or

not would always depend on the facts of each case and the conduct of the parties.

Even if a court came to a prima facie conclusion that the marriage between the parties was void or voidable, pending the final disposal of the proceeding under the Act, the court was not precluded from granting maintenance pendente lite provided the conditions mentioned in Section 24 were satisfied, said the bench. The court opined when it came to deciding the prayer under Section 24, a court would always consider the conduct of the party as the grant of relief under it was "always discretionary".

international



Syria's relations with Iran and Russia remain an open wound for its people after those nations backed autocratic President Bashar Assad during the long civil war, the country's new...

CHINA DENIES COVID-19 ALLEGATIONS

China has said its bio-lab in Wuhan, which faced allegations of leaking the COVID-19 causing the global pandemic, has never engaged in "gain-of-function studies" on coronavirus amid allegations that the USAID has funded the study of the infectious disease



of the day quote

I chose India as the first destination for my overseas trip after entering office as the Speaker of the Knesset. The first trip is also a reflection of the importance of a place in our relationship. It was also the first visit of any Knesset speaker to India

NASA's 2 stuck astronauts may return to Earth sooner

The space agency announced Tuesday that SpaceX will switch capsules for upcoming astronaut flights in order to bring Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams home in mid-March instead of late March or April

The space agency announced Tuesday that SpaceX will switch capsules for upcoming astronaut flights in order to bring Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams home in mid-March instead of late March or April.



The test pilots should have returned in June on Boeing's Starliner capsule after what should have been a weeklong flight demo. But the capsule had so much trouble getting to

- Then SpaceX delayed the launch of their replacements on a brand new capsule that needed more prepping, which added more time to Wilmore and Williams' mission
With even more work still anticipated for the new capsule, NASA opted for its next crew to fly up on an older capsule, with liftoff now targeted for March 12

and Williams' mission. With even more work still anticipated for the new capsule, NASA opted for its next crew to fly up on an older capsule, with liftoff now targeted for March 12. This older capsule had already been assigned to a private crew awaiting launch this spring.

crew arrive before sending the old one back, in this case Wilmore, Williams and two others up there since September. The new crew going up includes two NASA astronauts as well as one from Japan and one from Russia.

The government notified the European Union's executive commission of the extension to September 15. With the border controls, we are pushing irregular migration down successfully. The figures prove this

NATO membership for Ukraine was unrealistic and in sweeping remarks suggested that the way forward for Ukraine was for the country to abandon hopes of a return to its pre-2014 borders and prepare for a negotiated settlement with Russia

CONCERN OVER GAZA CEASEFIRE MOUNTS

Israel calls up reservists

Under the ceasefire deal in force since January 19, Hamas agreed to free three more hostages Saturday



hell break out". Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu then warned Tuesday that his country would resume "intense fighting" if Hamas did not meet the deadline, but did not say how many hostages should be freed.

Netanyahu says he may end ceasefire if Hamas does not free hostages
Egypt to host Arab summit to address Palestinian issues
Trump's disputed plan for Gaza escalates Middle East tensions

on the way, God willing,' said Lofy Abu Taha, a resident of Rafah in southern Gaza. "The people are suffering. The people are the victims."

A Hamas official told Reuters mediators Egypt and Qatar had stepped up efforts to end the current impasse. The standoff threatens to reignite a conflict that has devastated the Gaza Strip, internally displaced most of its people, caused shortages of food and running water, and pushed the Middle East to the brink of a wider regional war.

UN reports grave rights violations in B'desh protest response

Geneva, Feb 12: Officials from Bangladesh's former government and security apparatus systematically committed serious human rights violations against protesters staging mass demonstrations last summer, the UN human rights chief said Wednesday.



- Protests toppled former PM Sheikh Hasina
Crackdown left more than 1,000 people dead
UN calls for further criminal investigation

Testimony from senior Bangladesh officials and other evidence showed an official policy to attack and violently repress anti-government protesters and sympathisers, the report said. The UN called for urgent further criminal investigation into the violations.

Hasina, who had ruled Bangladesh since 2009, is being investigated there on suspicion of crimes against humanity, genocide, murder, corruption and money laundering and Dhaka has asked New Delhi to extradite her.

SHORT TAKES

Indonesia, Turkiye hold talks on defence

Bogor (Indonesia): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto Wednesday for talks aimed at strengthening economic and defence ties between the two Muslim-majority nations.

1 dead, 25 hurt as train, truck collide

Berlin: A collision between a high-speed train and a truck on the outskirts of the German city of Hamburg left one person dead and 25 injured, six of them seriously, police said.

Terrorist sentenced to 31-year imprisonment

Lahore: A Pakistani court has awarded a 31-year imprisonment to an ISIS terrorist who was arrested last year over his involvement in a terror incident.

Jerusalem/Dubai, Feb 12: Israel's military has called up reservists in preparation for a possible resumption of fighting in Gaza if Hamas fails to meet a Saturday deadline to release more Israeli hostages and a nearly month-old ceasefire breaks down.

Concern that the ceasefire will collapse is growing as fury mounts in Arab countries over President Donald Trump's plan for the United States to take over Gaza, resettle its Palestinian inhabitants and build an international beach resort.

Trump responded by saying all hostages must be freed by noon Saturday or he would "let

SNIPPETS

UK tightens citizenship rules

London: The UK government has tightened rules around British citizenship applications to block migrants arriving illegally on small boats across the English Channel or crossing the border by road or other illegal means.

IMF supports Pak PM's decisive actions for betterment of economy

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said the International Monetary Fund chief is positive about Pakistan's proposal regarding lowering electricity prices.

China slams Vance's 'authoritarian regimes' jibe on accessing AI

Beijing: China Wednesday hit out at US Vice President JD Vance's caution to global leaders against striking deals with "authoritarian regimes" on Artificial Intelligence saying that it is opposed to drawing lines on AI accessibility on ideological lines and politicising trade and tech issues.

Trump discusses Ukraine war with Putin, Zelenskiy

Washington/Moscow/Kyiv, Feb 12: Donald Trump discussed the war in Ukraine Wednesday in phone calls with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the new US president's first big step towards diplomacy over a war he has promised to end.



Zelenskiy's office said Trump and Zelenskiy had spoken by phone for about an hour. The Kremlin said Putin and Trump had agreed to meet, and Putin had invited Trump to visit Moscow.

We want, like you, a sovereign and prosperous Ukraine. But we must start by recognising that returning to Ukraine's pre-2014 borders is an unrealistic objective

he would accomplish this. Earlier Wednesday, Trump's Defense Secretary, Pete Hegseth, said a return to Ukraine's pre-2014 borders was unrealistic and the US administration did not see NATO membership for Kyiv as part of a solution to the war.

livered the clearest and bluntest public statement so far on the new US administration's approach to the nearly three-year-old war. "We want, like you, a sovereign and prosperous Ukraine. But we must start by recognising that returning to Ukraine's pre-2014 borders is an unrealistic objective," Hegseth told a meeting of Ukraine and more than 40 allies at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Western leaders held no direct discussions with Putin after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Russia occupies around a fifth of Ukraine and has demanded Kyiv cede more territory and be rendered permanently neutral under any peace deal.

India whitewash Eng

All-round Men in Blue demolish England by 142 runs to complete 3-0 clean sweep in ODIs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Ahmedabad, Feb 12: A robust batting show led by the Shubman Gill's attractive century heralded India's 142-run hammering of England in the third and final ODI as the hosts completed a dominant 3-0 clean sweep to culminate preparations for the Champions Trophy, here Wednesday.

India ticked all the remaining boxes with vice-captain Gill (112) following up his twin fifties earlier in the series with a seventh ODI ton of his career while middle-order mainstays Virat Kohli (52) and Shreyas Iyer (78) pushed India to a formidable 356 in the first half. Indian bowlers then took over the mantle to complete the England demolition job, bundling out the visitors for a mere 214 in 34.2 overs to complete a comprehensive victory — their second largest in ODIs in terms of runs against a familiar opponent. There was no change in the script for England, who came crashing down against spin after a sparkling start against pace. The slowness of the sur-

face aided Indian bowlers as strike-making became difficult as the match progressed. Gill led the way with a fluent 112 while Kohli and Iyer also cashed in on ideal conditions in their last outing before the Champions Trophy, helping India set a 357-run target. Gill anchored India's innings en route to his seventh ODI ton — 112 off 104 balls (14x4s, 3x6s) which also took his average past 60 in the format — while putting on two century stands with Kohli and Iyer to consolidate for India.

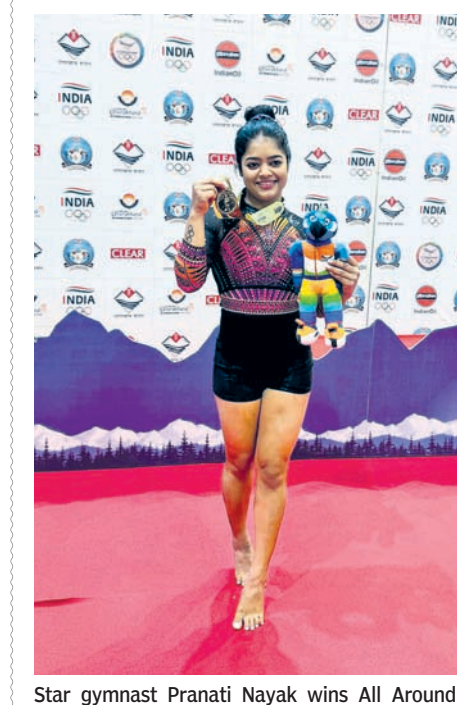
The India vice-captain Gill also achieved the unique feat of scoring a century each across the three international formats at the same venue. Gill, meanwhile, has also scored an IPL hundred here at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Attacking

the fast bowlers and spinners alike, Gill's knock was replete with rich strokes particularly down the ground. The opener displayed immaculate footwork at the crease early on to take the attack to the opposition and remained resolute to score off spin, until he was cleaned up by Adil Rashid (4/64). On his part, Kohli took his time to find the rhythm and when he did, the batting mainstay looked hitting his strides. Kohli made the most of a juicy over-

pitched delivery from Mark Wood which he drove through the covers for his first four, then got on top of the ball from Saqib Mahmood to swat it for another boundary through mid-wicket and punished the England pacer for being wayward as he cut him for his third four. While his stroke play was compelling in the run-a-ball fifty for his 73rd half-century, there were elements of struggle against leg-spinner Rashid. Rashid continued wood over soon after he raised his bat for the England spinner had him behind with a loopy outside edge before settling in the wicketkeeper's gloves. This was the fifth time Rashid has dismissed Kohli in ODIs. Kohli was stranded 37 runs short of becoming only the third batter ever to make 14,000 ODI runs, missing a personal landmark like his teammate Rohit Sharma earlier in the innings. It is expected to be completed during Champions Trophy. Coming off a terrific century in second ODI, Rohit (1) could not even get a start as a delivery from Wood which was angled in, straightened enough to take the outside edge and Phil Salt collected a sharp catch.

BRIEF SCORES
India 356 all out in 50 overs (Shubman Gill 112, Virat Kohli 52, Shreyas Iyer 78, Adil Rashid 4/64) beat England: 214 in 34.2 overs (Tom Banton 38, Arshdeep Singh 2/33, Harshit Rana 2/31, Axar Patel 2/22)

ODISHA AT NATIONAL GAMES



Star gymnast Pranati Nayak wins All Around Gold in the Women's Artistic Gymnastics event at the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand



Kayaking duo Sagar Kumar and Salam Kishan Singh bag the Bronze medal in the K2M- 500m event at the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand



Kayaking duo Oinam Bidya Devi and Oinam Binita Chanu clinch a bronze medal in K2W- 500m event at the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand



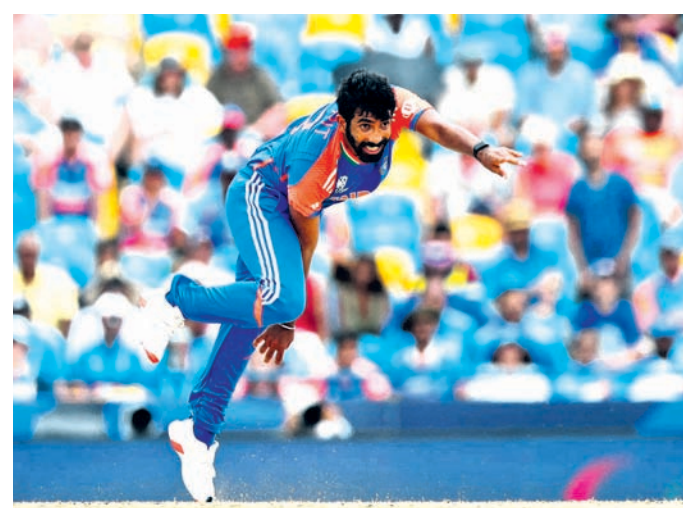
Canoeists Rasmitha Sahoo and Achoibam Sanatombi Devi secure silver medal in C2W- 500m event at the ongoing National Games

FIFA staffer arrested in underage sex case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Miami, Feb 12: A staffer at FIFA has reportedly been arrested in Miami on suspicion of having sex with an underage boy while on a work trip from Zurich. "FIFA is aware of ongoing legal proceedings in Miami in relation to a private matter of a person that is employed by FIFA," the world soccer body said in a statement Wednesday. "FIFA has no further comment at this stage." The Miami Herald reported Jack Coles was detained Friday by federal agents from Homeland Security Investigations at a hotel near FIFA's offices in the Coral Gables neighborhood. Coles is a project leader with FIFA Sound, the department that organizes music for the soccer body's events and broadcasts. Coles, who is British and reported to be aged 39, is alleged to have met a 14-year-old boy through a men's dating app last October, and allegedly tried to meet with him again last week. The boy reportedly told the FIFA staffer he was 16, and was later in contact with federal investigators.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY BUMRAH BLOW FOR INDIA

Pace spearhead ruled out of upcoming Champions Trophy due to lower back injury, Rana named replacement
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, Feb 12: India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out of the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy due to a lower back injury, the BCCI said Tuesday, putting to rest all the speculation over his participation in the premier tournament. The senior men's team selection committee has named Harshit Rana as Bumrah's replacement for the mega event starting February 19 in Pakistan. India will open their campaign against Bangladesh in Dubai February 20. The selectors have also included Varun Chakaravarthy in the team, the mystery spinner replacing batter Yashasvi Jaiswal, who was named in the provisional squad. India will play all their matches of the tournament in Dubai under a hybrid model



agreement. Bumrah, who has already undergone a lower back surgery in 2022, sustained another stress-related injury while bowling in the final Test against Australia at Sydney, where he pulled out after sending down 10 overs in the first innings. Bumrah was asked to offload for five weeks after which his rehabilitation at NCA happened under strength & conditioning trainer Rajnikanth and physio Thulasi. The report sent by NCA head

Nitin Patel clearly states that while he has completed his rehabilitation and scan reports seemed to be okay, it couldn't be concluded that whether he would be bowling fit by the time the tournament starts. Hence the selectors didn't take any risk, a top BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Nitin left the ball in Ajit's (chief selector Agarkar) court and hence no one would want to stick their necks out and take the risk of putting an unfit

India not to play warm-up games

Dubai: India will not play any practice matches ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy even as Pakistan on Wednesday named three Shaheens squads which will feature in warm-up games against Bangladesh, South Africa and Afghanistan respectively. The warm-up matches will take place between February 14 to 17 in the lead-up to the main tournament, which is scheduled to be held from February 19 to March 9 in Pakistan and Dubai. India will play all their matches in Dubai. The BCCI decided against playing practice games as India are already playing a three-match ODI series against England which ends Wednesday. The Indian team is scheduled to reach Dubai February 15.

player in squad. If medical team doesn't green-light fully, how can the selection committee take that risk, the official said. During a meeting between the chairman of selector Agarkar, head coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Rohit Sharma in Ahmedabad, it was deliberated whether they would take an unfit Bumrah to the Champions Trophy or go for the inexperienced Rana.

ASIA MIXED TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

India thrash Macau 5-0

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Qingdao, Feb 12: India made a sizzling start to their campaign, delivering a 5-0 thrashing to Macau in their opening group D tie of the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship here Wednesday. Having won the bronze medal in the last edition in Dubai, India are now assured of a quarter-final berth. They will next face Korea in their second and final group tie Thursday. The mixed doubles pair of Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath, the newly-crowned National Games gold medallists, gave India a rousing start, recording a 21-10, 21-9 win against Iok Chong Leong and Weng Chi Ng in the opening match. In men's singles, 2021 World Championships bronze medalist Lakshya Sen then outwitted Pang Fong Pui 21-16, 21-12, making it 2-0. Malvika Bansod, the 2024 Hylo Open finalist, then sealed the tie for India with a dominant 21-15, 21-9 win over Hao Wai Chan



in women's singles. Chirag Shetty paired up with MR Arjun and prevailed 21-15, 21-19 over Chin Pon Pui and Kok Wen Vong in men's doubles. The world number 9 women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand completed the demolition with a 21-10, 21-5 thrashing of NG Weng Chi and Pui Chi Wa in the final match. Thursday's match against Korea will decide the group topper.

FIH PRO LEAGUE

England men's hockey team arrives in Bhubaneswar



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: England men's hockey team touched down in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday ahead of their participation in the India leg of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25. The upcoming matches, which will be held at the iconic Kalinga Hockey Stadium, promise to showcase top-tier international hockey, with England eager to maintain their strong run in the tournament. England, currently ranked No 2 in the world, will face Spain in their opening match in Bhubaneswar. Notably, England

have been impressive in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 so far, securing second place in the overall standings. They have accumulated 11 points from four games, recording three wins and a draw, and are looking to build on this momentum. A key player for England throughout the tournament has been forward Sam Ward, who has emerged as the team's leading scorer with eight goals. His sharp finishing and ability to find the net have been instrumental in England's success, and he will be a crucial player as the team looks to climb to the top of the standings in this leg of the competition.

Madrid mount stunning comeback

Bellingham strikes late for Real Madrid in five-goal thriller, play-off first leg against Man City

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Manchester, Feb 12: Real Madrid's Galacticos just don't know when they are beaten. Manchester City just keep on making the same mistakes. Jude Bellingham's stoppage-time goal sealed a stunning comeback for Madrid and a 3-2 lead in its Champions League playoff against City. In six frantic minutes at the end of a breathless first leg Tuesday, the Spanish giant scored twice to take a precious advantage into next week's match at the Bernabeu. City led 2-1 after 80 minutes at the Etihad Stadium through goals in each half from Erling Haaland. But Brahim Diaz and then Bellingham silenced the

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



home crowd and extend a sorry record for City that has seen it concede seven goals in the last 15 minutes of Champions League games this season. "We need to see games out better, that's for sure, City defender John Stones said. "We have to stay positive, which is difficult right now." Bellingham slid in to convert Vinicius Junior's lobbed pass

in the second minute of added time to bring back memories of Madrid's dramatic comeback against City in the semifinal in 2022. Then it was Rodrygo who scored twice from the 90th and Madrid eventually sent Pep Guardiola's team crashing out in extra time. At least City has a chance to salvage the tie in the second leg, but the sense of deflation

It's always really tricky to play against them and in the end we took one of the many chances finally and made it count
JUDE BELLINGHAM | ATTACKING MIDFIELDER, REAL MADRID

was clear after such a late collapse. "It's not the first time, unfortunately, it happened many times and that's why it's difficult," Guardiola said. I've been here for many years and we have been an extraordinary team. "But in the moment I'm not able... I'm not good enough, you know, to give something to (give) composure to the team, to (know) how to manage the situations." It was another thrilling, white knuckle-ride of a game between these two giants of European soccer and a one-goal advantage for Madrid means there is still all to play for.

ESFI to include e-sports medallists, coaches in cash incentive programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, Feb 12: Hailing the sports ministry's decision to include e-sports medallists and their coaches under its cash incentive programme, the ESFI Wednesday said the move would lead to "exponential rise in grassroots participation". The ministry has come out with a list of 51 sports that will be eligible for cash rewards, including all those which are part of the Olympic Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and the World University Games roster. The list includes sports like mallakhamb, e-sports and kho kho. This move aligns e-sports with traditional sports, opening doors for millions of gamers to represent India on the global stage, the ESports Federation of India said in a media release.