



Rakul's perspective

Actor Rakul Preet Singh says a comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there

LEISURE | P2



Trump pushes trade war

Donald Trump plans to unveil reciprocal tariffs which could take aim at every country that charges duties on US imports

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Gold prices up again

Gold prices rise ₹140 to ₹88,100 per 10 grams in the national capital Thursday amid strong trends in international markets

BUSINESS | P11



Panghal turns pro

India's lone male boxer to win a world championship silver medal, Amit Panghal, becomes the latest from the country to turn professional

SPORTS | P12

NEW I-T BILL INTRODUCED

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 13: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Income Tax Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha Thursday and urged Speaker Om Birla to refer it to a select committee of the House.

Opposition members opposed the Bill at the introduction stage but the House passed a motion by voice vote for its introduction. While moving the Bill for introduction, Sitharaman urged Birla to refer the draft law to a select committee of the House. She urged the Speaker to take a call on the proposed panel's composition and rules.

The Bill will replace terminologies such as 'assessment year' and 'previous year' with the easier-to-understand 'tax year' as part of a move to simplify language while removing provisos and explanations.

MODI MEETS US NSA, ELON MUSK

AGENCIES

Washington, Feb 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he had a 'fruitful meeting' with US National Security Advisor (NSA) Michael Waltz and they discussed defence, technology and security areas, which are important aspects of the India-US ties.

"Had a fruitful meeting with NSA @michaelwaltz. He has always been a great friend of India," Modi said in a post on X. "Defence, technology and security are important aspects of India-US ties and we had a wonderful discussion around these issues. There is strong potential for cooperation in sectors like AI, semiconductors, space and more," he said.

After his meeting with Waltz, Modi met SpaceX CEO Elon Musk. Musk arrived at Blair House with his three young kids.

Modi arrived in the US capital Wednesday evening for a bilateral meeting with President Donald Trump.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



After making Valentine's couple sanskari, we'll celebrate by watching a Samay Raina comedy show

PANIC AS LEOPARD GATECRASHES WEDDING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 13: A wedding in Lucknow saw an uninvited guest, a leopard, who strayed into the venue, leaving a Forest official injured, attendees in panic and the bride and groom stranded in a car for hours.

The incident happened in the Buddheshwar road area of the state capital Wednesday night when the leopard entered a banquet hall, creating panic among the guests who frantically started running to save their lives, an eyewitness recalls.

Even the bride and groom who were in the marriage hall ran off and locked themselves in a car, the eyewitness said.

Police and the Forest department officials immediately



NATURE'S FURY: Volcanic steam and ashes rise from Mount Etna, Italy

REUTERS

Z-category security cover for Dalai Lama

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 13: The Centre has provided a Z-category armed protection cover to Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama in view of potential security threats to him, official sources said Thursday.

The Union Home Ministry has directed the VIP security wing of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to take charge of the 89-year-old leader.

The sources said the Dalai Lama would be secured by a Z-category protection cover of CRPF commandos in all parts of the country.

He had a small protection cover of the Himachal Pradesh Police. The security cover was extended when he travelled to Delhi or any other place by the local police.

The government has now granted him a uniform security cover after a review by Central intelligence agencies, a senior officer said. A team of about 30 CRPF commandos will work in shifts to secure the Dalai Lama, he said.

In a similar move, the Home Ministry has provided a Z-category cover to BJP leader Sambit Patra, 50, in Manipur, the sources said.

Manipur goes under Centre

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 13: President's rule was imposed in strife-torn Manipur Thursday and the state Assembly put under suspended animation, a few days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post that led to political uncertainty in the northeastern state.

The Manipur Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Singh, who was heading the BJP government in Manipur, resigned as CM after nearly 21 months of ethnic violence that has claimed over 250 lives so far.

He resigned February 9 and submitted his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla in Imphal, hours after his meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah here.

The decision to impose the Central rule was taken after the Governor sent a report to President Droupadi Murmu.

"After considering the report and other information received by me, I am satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of that state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India," the notification said. It further said, "Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 356 of the Constitution, and of all other powers enabling me in that behalf, I hereby proclaim that I assume to myself as President of India all functions of the government of the state of Manipur and all powers vested in or exercisable by the Governor of that state."

The decision to impose the Central rule by the BJP-led Centre came as the party failed to have a consensus on chief ministerial candidate despite having several rounds of discussions between party's northeast in-charge Sambit Patra and legislators.

Singh's tenure as CM was marked by a number of controversies, primarily centred on his handling of ethnic violence, allegations of instigating conflict, and questions regarding his governance.

One of the most significant controversies of Singh's tenure was the ethnic violence that erupted in May 2023. It finally cost him the key post.

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



FILE PHOTO

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

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

Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust, a vocal critic of Singh's handling of the ethnic conflict, sought a court-monitored probe into the authenticity of the tapes. This led to a Supreme Court ruling ordering the CFSL to verify the tapes' authenticity and submit a report.

Meanwhile, Congress said President's rule in Manipur came only after the fabric of state's society was allowed to be 'severely damaged'.

"Finally what the Indian National Congress has been demanding for almost 20 months has happened. President's rule has been imposed in Manipur. This has come after what the Supreme Court called 'the absolute breakdown of constitutional machinery in the state' which saw the killing of over 300 people and displacement of over 60,000 men, women, and children since May 3, 2023," Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

"This has come after the fabric of Manipur's society has been allowed to be severely damaged, if not totally destroyed," he said.

P9

Guv: 2024 govt change a declaration of faith



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Thursday said the people of Odisha opted for a change of government in the 2024 elections, describing it not just as a political decision but as a 'declaration of faith'.

In his customary address in the Assembly at the start of the Budget Session, Kambhampati presented a vision of change and progress for the state.

He remarked that despite Odisha's glorious past and abundant human resources, the state had struggled to fully realise its immense potential. "The state's promises often remained unrealised. The people of Odisha, with hope in their hearts and a vision for the future, opted for change over continuity in the 2024 elections," he said.

The Governor emphasised that the people were tired of waiting for a transformation that never seemed to arrive. "They embraced the promise of my government that they would listen, understand, and act. Their vote was not just a political decision, it was a declaration of faith," he added.

"The new government has shouldered the responsibility of taking the state forward with a vision of prosperity," he said.

He highlighted several initiatives such as implementation of the flagship 'Subhadra' scheme aimed at benefiting one crore women, 'Samrudha Krushak Yojana' for farmers, and opening the 'Ratna Bhandar' of Srimandir. He also mentioned efforts to revive the Odia Amsita (pride) and launch of programmes to empower the poor, youth, and women.

He also noted that the state government has received three lakh suggestions for 'Vision 2036', which aims to build a developed Odisha with a target of a \$500 billion economy by 2036. He said the state has implemented the National Education Policy, Ayushman Bharat in the health sector, Kamadhenu scheme for dairy farmers and others. He also mentioned plans to fill 1.5 lakh government jobs over the next five years.

Indians least satisfied with their love lives: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 13: A new global survey conducted across 30 countries and released ahead of Valentine's Day reveals that Indians are among the least satisfied with their love lives.

The 'Love Life Satisfaction 2025' survey results were led by countries such as Colombia (82 per cent), Thailand (81 per cent), Mexico (81 per cent), Indonesia (81 per cent), and Malaysia (79 per cent). India at 63 per cent, South Korea at 59 per cent, and Japan at 56 per cent were at the bottom.

It was conducted by leading market research and polling company Ipsos with a sample size of 23,765 adults across 30 countries and more than 2,000 in India.

"Indians largely live in joint families and those in nuclear families have familial responsibilities, work pressures, career and societal pressures, leaving less time for romance, physical intimacy and love," Ashwini Sirsikar, group service line leader, Ipsos UU & Synthesio, said in a statement.

The survey also looked at different parameters separately to assess how Indians stacked up. While 64 per cent of Indians polled said they feel loved, only 57 per cent of Indians claimed to be satisfied with their romantic/sex life.

However, as per the findings, more Indians (67 per cent) were satisfied with the relationship shared with their spouse.

"Interestingly, happiness with sex life and partner was seen to be co-related. People in countries that are more sat-



isfied with their relationship with their partner are more likely to be satisfied with their romantic/sex life," it said.

"Some countries were out-

liers, like Brazil, South Korea and India, where people are less satisfied with their partner compared to their level of satisfaction with their romantic/

sex life," it added. The findings also suggested those on a higher income were more likely to feel loved and be happier with their romantic/sex lives.

For instance, it suggested that 83 per cent of high-income earners across 30 countries say they are satisfied with the love in their life compared to 76 per cent of those on a middle income and 69 per cent on a low income. The same trend holds true for their romantic and sexual satisfaction as well.

"Sixty-seven percentage of people with a high income are satisfied with their sex life compared to only 51 per cent of low-income earners," it said.

Around 2,200 individuals were surveyed in India. Of them, approximately 1,800 were interviewed face-to-face and 400 online.

leisure



ANISTON STILL IN SEARCH OF LOVE

After a string of highly publicised relationships, including her marriages to Brad Pitt and Justin Theroux, Hollywood actress Jennifer Aniston has made a conscious effort to keep her personal life out of the spotlight. However, a new report suggests that the actor has not lost hope in finding love.

MILLIE BROWN DOESN'T HAVE TOO MANY FRIENDS

Millie Bobby Brown recently shared that she doesn't have many friends. The *Stranger Things* actress was just 11 when she joined the Netflix series and she admitted growing up on set, where she was privately tutored has left her with a lack of social skills.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Your ability to let go things will reflect in your personal as well as your professional life. Today could be a significant day for you, and Ganesh advises you not to forget your special abilities. Make good use of them so that others too can benefit.

TAURUS
You will be very sensitive about the image you project socially and professionally. Ganesh sees you treating this very seriously and doing everything you can to make this right impression. Today, you will remain decent, dignified and focussed in all that you do. Do not be too eager to please others.

GEMINI
Routine work bores you, and today you will go all out to break free from the shackles of boredom. The results, however, may not be as dramatic. You will have to depend on your children, if any, to rescue you from the tyranny of routine. Monetary gains can be expected either in the form of inheritance of ancestral property or as increment in your basic salary.

CANCER
Don't meddle in others' affairs today, suggests Ganesh. For they will not take it kindly. Adopt the middle path. Ganesh feels that you must keep your bravado and boldness in check.

LEO
Your pride and self-confidence will help you to excel in whatever task it is that you take up today. Other people will also praise you. You will buy new clothes and other possessions that you have been desiring since a long time, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You will be faced with serious financial problems today. You may even have to pay through your nose to get what you desire. Later in the evening, you might accomplish some short-term goals. Ganesh predicts that some vital business agreements will end your day in high spirits.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be able to improve your relations abroad. There will be good news coming from friends or relatives living abroad. Your working ability and efficiency will make you popular in the office today. In the day today you shall have a variety of good and bad experiences.

SCORPIO
Be vigilant; keep your eyes and ears open for all the events happening around you, says Ganesh. Your intuition is trying to tell you something, trust it. Think and act positively, the rest would fall in place.

SAGITTARIUS
Work is likely to keep you on toes. At work place, you and your opinions will be in demand. Those who are associated with stock exchange and shares will be happy to gain profits during the afternoon. Wait and watch the end result in the evening.

CAPRICORN
You have projected yourself as a confused individual, and rightfully so, as the Lions are most of times in double mind. But, today you'll come up with a specific career plan that will surprise many of the people. Be clear about what you want to do in life, how you want your life to be and make sincere efforts to achieve that stage, guides Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You will take the road to spirituality today and give a miss to materialism. You will visit temples, other religious places, and spiritual leaders to find answers for some of your questions. It will, however, take a while for you to distinguish between mysticism and materialism, and understand that you can have the best of both worlds.

PISCES
You will not take matters to heart needlessly today, and will instead calmly evaluate the bitter words of others to see if there is a grain of truth in them somewhere. This is a good practice and one that should be continued. While you won't be in the mood to tolerate any injustice, you will be able to forgive those who have wronged you and will thus be able to refrain from stoking further, the fires of enmity, says Ganesh.



Maddy talks about re-release trend

Mumbai: Actor R Madhavan recently shared his thoughts on the trend of re-released films like *Sanam Teri Kasam*, *Tumbbad*, and *Rockstar*, which have been enjoying massive success at the box office, while new releases struggle to make an impact. Madhavan, whose 2001 film *Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein* was re-released in August 2024 after 23 years, attributes this trend to nostalgia. "People want to relive the experience of watching these films in theatres, especially those that didn't get much appreciation when they first released, like *Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein* and *Tumbbad*." He adds, "All these films didn't get much appreciation when they first released, but over a period became a cult hit. So, the audiences want to see the original glory and enjoy the nostalgia."

While Madhavan acknowledges the success of re-releases, he believes it's just a passing trend. "Re-releases won't be a game-changer; they're mostly extra pocket money for producers," he says, adding that nostalgia doesn't equate to long-term success. He also highlights the challenges for new films, noting that in today's world, filmmakers are competing not only with social media content but also with the nostalgia surrounding older films. "To earn respect, we need to be better than K-pop," he concludes, referencing the growing influence of international content, especially Korean media. AGENCIES



'Comfort zone is your enemy'

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh agrees that the comfort zone can be an enemy. She believes stepping out of it and doing hard things leads to growth.

Rakul took to her Instagram, where she posted a quote, which read: "Comfort Zone Is Your Enemy... A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there." - Unknown... One of the biggest reasons people are lazy and always want to do everything tomorrow is because they are too comfortable with their lives. They don't want to change the way things are going. Doing the things that you're always doing is easy, but it doesn't lead to the growth that you want.

"Growth demands that you step out of your comfort zone and do the hard things. It's easy to watch." She captioned it as: "It is what it is."

Rakul is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film *Mere Husband Ki Biwi* and had recently shared that 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." IANS



First Indian female actor to charge ₹1cr

Mumbai: The 1990s marked a transformative period for the Indian film industry with the liberalisation of the economy. As the market opened up, new avenues for earnings emerged, and actors gained unprecedented visibility and endorsement deals. Chiranjeevi was the first Indian actor to earn over ₹1 crore per film with *Aapadbandhavudu* in 1992. However, the first actress to achieve this milestone was Sridevi. She charged ₹1 crore for the 1993 film *Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja*, making her the highest-paid actress in Bollywood at the time.

Sridevi's stardom was unparalleled, even surpassing the Khans during her peak. While Shah Rukh, Salman and Aamir along with other top stars like Sunny Deol and Sanjay Dutt, earned ₹50-75 lakh during the early to mid-90s, Sridevi commanded a fee higher than even her male counterparts. By the mid-90s, she was a dominant force in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi cinema, headlining films like *Gumraah*, *Army*, and *Laadla*.

In 1996, at the age of 33, she retired from acting to focus on her family after becoming pregnant with her first child. Her final film before her break was *Judaai* in 1997. She made a comeback in 2012 with English Vinglish and later appeared in *Puli* (2015) and *Mom* (2017) before her tragic death in 2018. AGENCIES

Romance missing from theatres this Valentine's Day

New Delhi: It's the season of red roses, hearts and chocolates but couples out on a movie date to rekindle their romance or perhaps begin one can pick only from a historical-actioner or a superhero film, unless they settle for a rerun of a nine-year-old film.

This Valentine's Day, which falls Friday, only three new films would have released. There's Vicky Kaushal's historical action drama *Chhaava*, superhero film *Captain America: Brave New World* and scattered



screenings of the latest in the *Bridget Jones* franchise.



It is a far cry from earlier years when romantic dramas



were an important part of Hindi cinema's release calendar.

That the two romances currently in theatres are the 2016 *Sanam Teri Kasam*, starring Harshwardhan Rane and Pakistani actor Mawra Hocane, and the recently released *Loveyaapa* with Junaid Khan and Khushi Kapoor is telling. The former, a flop when it released, is a surprise hit and the latter is doing humdrum business.

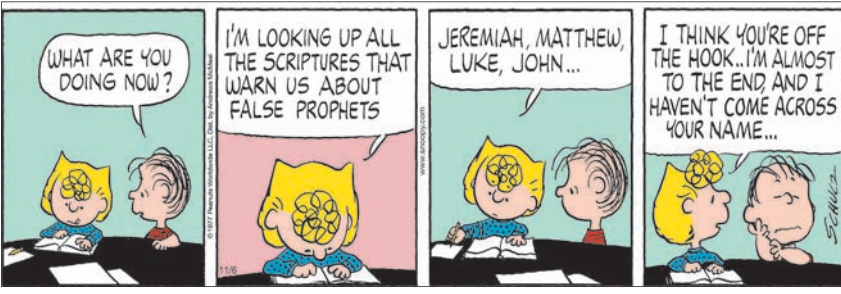
The inevitable question being asked is this - why have love and longing disappeared from the big screen, the kind shown in *Qayamat Se Qaya-*

mat Tak, *Maine Pyar Kiya* and, of course, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*.

Have people lost interest or is it simply a temporary phase as Hindi cinema tries to find a solution to increase footfalls in theatres?

Filmmakers and trade insiders argue that romantic stories will always stay in demand. If the re-release success of some films is any indication, it is time to come up with a great love story once again. But are filmmakers listening. PPI

PEANUTS



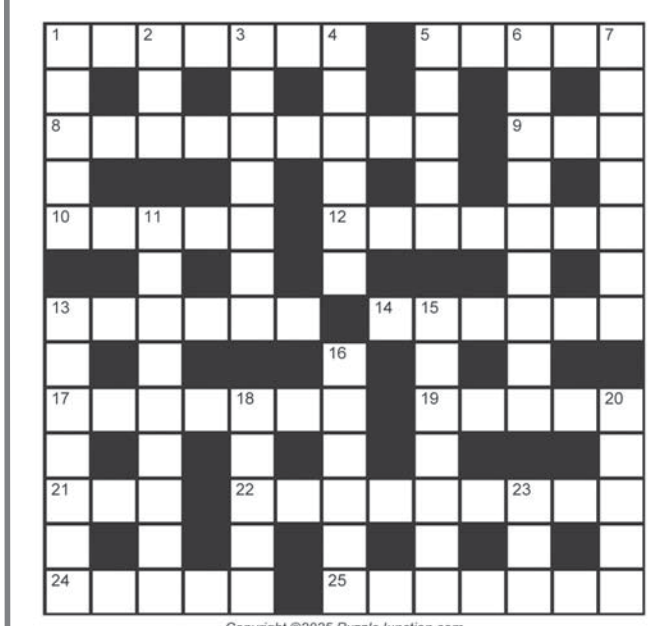
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Rocket carrying a warhead
 - 5 Harness racer
 - 8 Thomas Sydenham, for one
 - 9 Piña colada ingredient
 - 10 Cruz, Bolivia
 - 12 Changed, usually not for the better
 - 13 They can be acute and oblique
 - 14 Silvery metallic element
 - 17 Quick bread
 - 19 Tough, durable wood
 - 21 Camel hair fabric
 - 22 Parson
 - 24 "The Barber of Seville," e.g.
 - 25 Oval
- Down**
- 1 Broods
 - 2 Tofu base
 - 3 Copy
 - 4 Mystery
 - 5 Burgundy grape
 - 6 Custodian
 - 7 Modernise
 - 11 Sleep interrupter
 - 13 Popular salad ingredient
 - 15 Outlawed
 - 16 Go back on
 - 18 Capital of Ghana
 - 20 Flexible joint
 - 23 Chart

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

P	L	A	N	T	S	S	C	A	M	P	T
L	W	W	S	H	E						
A	F	F	R	O	N	T	A	R	M	E	D
S	U	S	O	S	E	E					
M	U	L	C	T	R	O	M	A	N	C	E
A	E	Y									
C	O	M	P	E	T	I	T	I	O	N	A
O	U	R	E	U							
N	A	T	U	R	A	L	R	A	D	A	R
C	R	A	L	M	R	G					
E	N	A	C	T	E	C	O	L	O	G	Y
G	I	R	I	N	L						
O	C	E	L	O	T	S	L	E	E	V	E

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Musicians perform during cultural programme 'Barnali' organised by Rudrakshya Foundation, at Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Auditorium in Bhubaneswar Thursday



downtown

ILLEGAL TREE FELLING

NGT for action against Begunia tehsildar

The direction comes after residents of Chima village under Begunia block approached the apex green body, alleging that over 100 trees were felled illegally for a PMGSY road project May 21, 2024



Notice to CS over CNG station

Bhubaneswar: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has served a notice to the Chief Secretary, seeking a response to a petition challenging the installation of CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) station and District Regulating Station (DRS) in residential areas of the City in violation of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) norms. The Eastern Zone bench of the NGT, while hearing a petition by Sukadev Mohanty, a resident of HIG-179, Kanan Vihar, Phase 1 where a CNG and Piped Natural Gas (PNG) station is being setup, directed the authorities to submit replies within four weeks. The applicant stated that GAIL India Limited had applied for supply of gas pipeline in Bhubaneswar, under Khurda district, and started construction over plot no 457 in Khata 619, Kisan Gochahara in Chandrasekharpur Mouza within BMC. It was alleged that the said construction area is very close to the residential area of Kanan Vihar. The tribunal has scheduled the next hearing for March 26, 2025.

constituted a committee to investigate the matter. The Eastern Zone bench of NGT, led by Justice B Amit Sthalekar and Judicial Member Arun Kumar Verma, reviewed the findings and confirmed the evidence of illegal tree cutting. They also identified 12 tree stumps during inspections at the site.

The tribunal, in its final order issued January 29, observed gross negligence on the part of Begunia tehsildar for failing to report the illegality in time.

The NGT order said, "There has been a lack of promptitude, sincerity, and devotion towards duty on the part of the tehsildar, leading to grave loss of revenue to the exchequer."

Consequently, the tribunal directed disciplinary action against tehsildar Tapas Kumar Bishi.

Reports from Tangi range officer and the NGT-constituted committee confirmed the presence of tree stumps from species like fasi, kochila, and mai, while evidence suggested the felling of kasi, neem, sal, jackfruit, and aksia.

cer (DFO). They claimed that tree cutting was not part of the approved road construction plan for which it led to

environmental degradation and financial loss.

Acting on the complaint, the apex environment watchdog

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed disciplinary action against Begunia tehsildar in Khurda district over allegations of unauthorised cutting of trees for a road construction project under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

According to reports, residents of Chima village under Begunia block had approached the NGT, alleging that over 100 trees, including fruit-bearing and matured ones, were felled May 21, 2024 without approval from the Khurda divisional forest offi-



ALL SET: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi arrives at the state Assembly on the first day of the Budget Session Thursday

House pays homage to ex-PM Manmohan Singh

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: The state Assembly Thursday paid homage to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and two former members of the House who passed away recently.

As soon as Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati completed his address on the opening day of the Budget Session, Chief

Minister Mohan Charan Majhi moved an obituary reference on the demise of Singh, former MLAs Bijaya Kumar Mohanty and Sadan Nayak.

Describing Singh as a great economist, Majhi expressed condolences on the death of the former PM, and the two former legislators.

BJD president and Leader of

the Opposition Naveen Patnaik, Congress Legislature Party leader Ram Chandra Kadam and CPI(M) leader Laxman Munda also expressed their condolences.

The House observed a one-minute silence as a mark of respect for the departed souls.

The Speaker then adjourned the House till 10:30am Friday.

'Spider Satish' arrested for burgling Niranjana's house



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Police Thursday arrested a man, identified as Satish Reddy alias Spider Satish, a native of Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, for decamping with ₹2.50 lakh cash and gold ornaments worth ₹50 lakh from the house of senior Odisha Congress leader Niranjana Patnaik January 26, a senior police officer said.

Speaking to reporters here, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack police commissioner S Dev Datta Singh said, "We arrested the accused from the outskirts of Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh after examining more than 400 CCTV footage, call records of 10,000 phone numbers, and 50 suspects."

As the burglar covered his entire body including face with a mask and hands with gloves, it was a very difficult task for the police to identify the accused, he said.

"Multiple specialised police teams were formed to crack the case. The teams visited differ-

ent places in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala for investigation and finally, it was found that the accused was in Kerala jail for some time in connection to a case," he said.

"Satish was involved in at least 17 such cases including two cases in Odisha. He robbed the house of a renowned contractor in the same area in Bhubaneswar in 2023," Singh said. The police commissioner said, "We have seized a car, stolen cash, gold ornaments and other items such as apparel, shoes and a torch that he used to commit the crime."

Almost all stolen items and cash were recovered from the accused and those handed over to the victim, said Bhubaneswar DCP Pinak Mishra.

"We got all the stolen cash and most of the ornaments. Our police force is quite capable of cracking such a burglary case. But, there is a need to provide them quality training so that they can crack difficult crime cases more efficiently," said Congress leader Niranjana Patnaik.

Naveen pulls up MLA; buzz in Odisha politics

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: BJD president Naveen Patnaik Thursday reprimanded his party MLA from Champua, Sanatan Mahakud, over the latter's absence in the legislature party meeting held on the eve of Budget Session of the Assembly. The incident sent the chatters abuzz in political circles over the future course of the legislator.

The incident took place on the Assembly premises when Patnaik was walking down the corridor. On the way, Patnaik met Mahakud and asked him the reason for his absence in Wednesday's legislature party meeting.

Patnaik's half-a-minute conversation with Mahakud was captured by television channels, the visuals of which went viral immediately. Patnaik was also heard saying whether Mahakud came to the Assembly to see the BJD chief minister.

"Why didn't you attend the party meeting yesterday?" Patnaik was heard asking in Hindi. In his reply, Mahakud said, "I wasn't keeping well." Not convinced with his reply, Patnaik said, "Have you come today to see the BJD CM?"

After Patnaik left the place, Mahakud told reporters that the BJD president enquired about his absence in Wednesday's BJD MLA meeting held at Sankha Bhawan, the state



Champua MLA Sanatan Mahakud rubbished speculation regarding a change in his political allegiance

headquarters of the regional party here.

"Naveen Patnaik is the chief of our party. He can surely ask me. He asked me why I did not attend the BJD legislature party meeting yesterday. I did not go to the meeting because I was unwell," Mahakud said.

Asked about the second question by the BJD president, Mahakud said, "Nothing more than that. You might have heard something else. I am with Biju Janata Dal and I will stay in

the party till end of my tenure in 2029. I cannot go to any other party as I was elected on a BJD ticket."

Later, Mahakud rubbished speculation regarding a change in his political allegiance. "The BJD supreme mentioned nothing about switching sides to the BJD. Since Mohan Majhi is the CM, there is no harm in meeting him for the development of my region. He had visited my constituency Champua. There was a cake cutting ceremony after which he gave me a piece of cake. Please, avoid reading too much into it," he said.

The incident sent the chatters abuzz in political circles here, as BJD has already witnessed two of its Rajya Sabha MPs—Mamata Mohanta and Sujit Kumar—resigning and joining the BJD after the BJD lost the 2024 general elections.

Patnaik accuses BJP of usurping his govt's feats

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Feb 13: Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly and former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday accused the BJP government of hijacking the credits for the achievements of the previous BJD government.

Speaking to media persons regarding Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati's speech in the Assembly Thursday, Patnaik said: "In the Governor's address today, this BJP government is trying to take credit for many of the achievements of my government. The government should concentrate on various areas where it is failing, like the law and order situation, rising prices and unemployment."

Meanwhile, BJD Leader Goutam Buddha Das said that Governor Kambhampati is new to Odisha and has no knowledge of the ground reality in the state.

Das also alleged that the Governor just read out the information supplied by the state government.

However, Industry Minister Sampad Chandra Swain advised Patnaik to introspect on his statement.

"We launched new schemes for women like the Subhadra Yojana, increased MSP for farmers to ₹3,100, and we have been working to fulfil

the commitment made during the time of election. In our period, the law and order situation is better than their (BJD government) period. During Utkarsh Odisha-Make In Odisha Conclave-2025, we received ₹16.78 lakh crore investment intent and signed MoUs of 13 lakhs crores. This will generate massive job opportunities in the state. Everyone knows how many MoUs were signed and how much investments were grounded during the former Chief Minister's tenure," said Swain.

The Budget session of the Odisha Assembly commenced Thursday with the inaugural address of Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati.

The Governor in his address highlighted various achievements of the state government during the last eight months.

He claimed that the state government led by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has taken several landmark decisions with an aim to empower the poor, youth, farmers and women of the state.

The third session of the 17th Odisha Legislative Assembly which is scheduled to continue till April 5 in two phases will have 28 working days. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who is also the Finance Minister, will present the budget February 17.



KODAK MOMENT: Members of Nikhila Odisha Jeebika Mission EC Sangha take a selfie while returning from a rally at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar Thursday

Liver transplant recipient at SCB dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 13: The second liver transplant recipient at SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH), Manas Muduli, 39, passed away Wednesday.

Muduli, a resident of Nayagarh, was admitted to the Central ICU of the hospital January 22 due to health complications. He breathed his last during treatment in the morning hours. His body has been handed over to his family.

SCB's Additional Superintendent and Nodal Officer of the Liver Transplant Unit, Dr Manoj Patnaik said Muduli became critically ill due to an infection. "He had previously suffered from similar health issues and was undergoing treatment. Later, fluid accumulation in his abdomen and severe complications led to a second bout of infection, which worsened his condition, ultimately resulting in his death," he said.

Notably, Muduli had been suffering from liver cirrhosis for the past six years. On September 9 last year, he un-



The first liver transplant recipient at the top healthcare facility, Manas Barik, 45, is stated to be healthy

derwent a liver transplant at SCBMCH. His wife, Chhabi Muduli, had donated 55 per cent of her liver for the transplant. A team of four doctors, including P Balachandran Menon, Director of Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG), Hyderabad, assisted SCB's medical team in the procedure. However, after the transplant, Muduli was admitted to SCB twice due to recurring health issues.

It is pertinent to mention here that Manas Barik, 45, from Tigriria in Cuttack district was

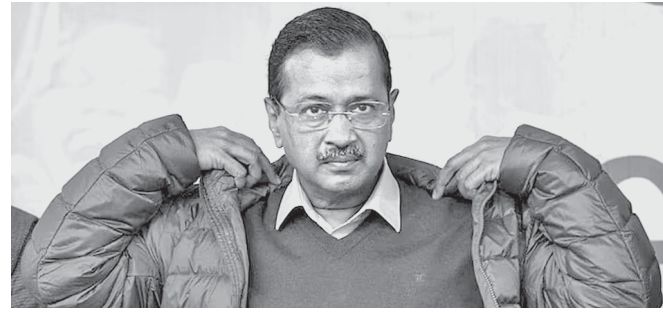
the first liver transplant recipient at the top healthcare facility. The procedure was conducted April 3, 2024, and he is stated to be healthy.

Meanwhile, sources said following the second liver transplant in September last year, there seems to be a slowdown in transplant activities at SCB. Reports indicate that the AIG team has not visited SCB for the past five months and has not conducted follow-ups on transplant recipients.

When asked about it, Dr Patnaik said, "The AIG team communicates with patients remotely to assess their condition and suggests treatments and medications, which SCB doctors then administer". He said the AIG team has been unable to visit SCB due to their absence from India.

FOCUS POLITICS

MIDDLE-CLASS 'WAVE'



There is still space in Indian politics for a robust streetfighter, someone who raises issues of public concern in a consistent and convincing manner

ronment with limited powers made his task unenviable. Which is also why the BJP should be careful in the manner it seeks to target Kejriwal henceforth. A vindictive mindset that wishes to settle scores may just be the opening the AAP leader needs to hit the streets again. When he was first jailed in 2024 in the alleged Delhi liquor scam, Kejriwal made the mistake of clinging onto office when he would have been probably far better off in relinquishing power and seeking redemption in the people's court. Maybe he ought to have resigned and called for a snap poll when the Centre with brutish authority brought in an ordinance to overturn a Supreme Court verdict and undermine the powers of the elected government. By the time Kejriwal actually handed over charge to his junior colleague Aatishi in October 2024, it was too late. The reservoir of public sympathy had evaporated.

To recapture that common touch and his personal credibility, Kejriwal needs to go back to where it all began for him all those years ago. There is still space in Indian politics for a robust streetfighter, someone who raises issues of public concern in a consistent and convincing manner. The opposition is mostly fragmented and uninspiring. In the circumstances, Kejriwal is still one of the few leaders who possesses the strategic nous and ground level connect to rebuild AAP as part of a wider image makeover. The odds are stacked against him but as an individual who has often punched way above his weight, an electoral defeat may just be the wake-up call he needed.

Post-script: My friend who voted for the BJP hasn't given up on AAP yet. "If the BJP fulfils its promises, its fine. Else who knows I might change my mind again in five years," she says. In Indian politics, nothing is permanent and middle-class choices in particular can be notoriously fickle.

The writer is a senior journalist and author. His latest book is 2024: The Election That Surprised India.

AAP and made it a remarkably successful political unicorn in a very short time. Ten years on, the romantic dream of being a 'party with a difference' lies shattered. The same section of middle-class which was so attracted to AAP has chosen to literally dump it in the hope that civic issues like garbage mounds and overflowing sewers will now be addressed. In a sense, the 2025 verdict was the ultimate middle-class 'wave' election at play, one where voters expressed a sense of anger and disquiet with the AAP's style of functioning. A party built on a spirit of voluntarism was seen to have fallen short on governance, tangled in a mix of hubris, histrionics and short-term fixes.

When a bright-eyed Kejriwal in an over-sized muffler moved around Delhi in a small blue Wagon R car, the middle-class cheered him on. The simplicity of his lifestyle was endearing. Now, when he was seen to travel in a cavalcade of SUVs, the middle class wondered if he too had succumbed to VIP privilege. The so-called 'Sheesh Mahal', the chief minister's redesigned residence, became the ultimate symbol of middle-class betrayal. Many of the alleged luxuries in the house maybe grossly exaggerated by political rivals and a partisan media but the allegations stuck. There are many ruling party MPs who live in far more opulent homes but when you enter public life with the promise not to occupy government bungalows and then move in to a rather lavishly appointed

In February 2015, a friend of mine voted for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Delhi Assembly elections. All her life, she had been a steadfast Congress supporter: the first time she switched was in the 2014 general elections when she plumped for the BJP because she was angry at the 'scam' culture in the Manmohan Singh government. Now, months later, she had chosen to vote for AAP. "I like both Modi and Kejriwal," she told me, "They are self-made politicians who are promising change."

Fast forward to February 2025. This time, my friend decided to vote for the BJP. For ten years, she had stuck to the 'Delhi formula': Modi for PM, Kejriwal for CM. The Congress was not on her radar because she felt it was a 'wasted vote' since they had no chance of winning. So why had she chosen not to vote for AAP this time? "Because I felt let down. Do you know I was even an AAP volunteer for a while but now I feel that they are like any other party and Kejriwal is just another politician," she replied.

In the voting preferences of my friend – a representative of Delhi's affluent middle class – lies the core reason why AAP and Arvind Kejriwal lost the 2025 elections. When Kejriwal first made a mark on the national stage, it was because he was perceived as the antithesis of the traditional politician. An IITian, a Right to Information activist, a Magsaysay award winner, a founder-member of India Against Corruption, Kejriwal represented the politics of 'hope' above all else. If Narendra Modi was promising 'acche din', then the AAP leader was guaranteeing something even more precious: a complete break from the rent-seeking, grubby politicians who were seen to be corrupt and unaccountable. While the BJP was still tagged as a Hindutva 'communal' party, the Congress was branded as a family-centric party of the crooked elite. As a political start-up, AAP, by contrast, carried no historical baggage. Which is why dreamy, idealistic middle-class professionals gravitated towards



Rajdeep Sardesai

IN INDIAN POLITICS, NOTHING IS PERMANENT AND MIDDLE-CLASS CHOICES IN PARTICULAR CAN BE NOTORIOUSLY FICKLE



Kaushik Basu

The rise of digital platforms and social media has provided the super rich with new tools to shape public opinion. Voters believe they are active participants while – élé belé – real power is concentrated in the hands of the few

Democratic Erosion

Democracy is under threat around the world, but not because dictators are overthrowing elected governments and seizing power. While authoritarian takeovers still make headlines, they are no longer the greatest threat to free societies. The real danger is more insidious: a gradual yet profound transformation of our democratic systems.

On the surface, these systems appear to be functioning as they should. Elections are being held, and voters are casting their ballots for leaders and parties they believe will represent their interests. But too often, they end up electing politicians who serve only their own interests rather than those of their constituents. While gullibility is not new, it has become so pervasive that it now threatens the very foundation of democratic governance.

To understand how we got here, consider the "élé belé rule." When I was growing up in Calcutta (now Kolkata), all smart kids playing in the streets and parks knew the rule. When they played games in the neighborhood, a younger kid – usually accompanied by a doting mother – occasionally would insist on joining them. Rather than refusing outright, the players would whisper to one another the code words "élé belé," signaling that while the new kid could play along, he was not actually part of the game. If he scored a goal, we would cheer and applaud, but we all knew the truth: his goal didn't count.

Today, élé belé has become a staple of democratic politics, with ordinary people around the world eagerly throwing their support behind demagogues who don't think they count. For these leaders, a commitment to public service is worse than irrelevant; it threatens the relentless pursuit of wealth and power for themselves and their cronies. Voters who believe they are part of the game are just being played.

The result is democratic erosion. Mainstream economists and political scientists have long relied on the "median voter theorem," which states that in a majoritarian electoral system, political leaders will naturally gravitate toward the preferences of centrist voters, as winning elections requires appealing to the ideological middle rather than the extremes. But today's deepening political polarization and the growing tendency of politicians to embrace radical positions suggest that this assumption no longer holds.

While the underlying causes of this shift remain unclear, it is strongly correlated with the rise of social media. Instead of fostering informed debate, digital platforms have become powerful tools for spreading misinformation, enabling opportunistic leaders to manipulate and mislead people with ease.

Since its inception in ancient Athens, democracy has undergone numerous transformations. As technology advances, certain features of earlier democratic systems become outdated. Evolving moral standards can also lead to fundamental reforms. For example, in the Roman Republic, the votes of high-ranking officials and the wealthy carried more weight than those of ordinary citizens. We no longer find this acceptable.

Similarly, as democracy evolved, the need for stability became evident, leading to the introduction of constitutions. While constitutions can be amended, doing so requires more than a simple majority, ensuring that core institutions are not subject to impulsive change.

With democratic governance under increasing strain, the world once again finds itself at a critical juncture. Today's extreme inequality is eroding democracy in unprecedented ways. The rise of digital platforms and social media has provided the super-rich with new tools to shape public opinion. Voters believe they are active participants while – élé belé – real power is concentrated in the hands of the few.

Curbing inequality is thus not just a moral imperative; it is also necessary for protecting democracy against the threat of authoritarianism. To this end, we need a tax system that redistributes wealth and income without stifling innovation and entrepreneurship.

There is certainly scope for this. Once they reach a certain level of wealth, the super-rich are no longer motivated by a desire for more money per se, but rather by the desire to outdo their super-rich peers. This implies an opportunity to implement what I call an "accordion tax," which taxes high earners and redistributes the revenue to those with lower incomes in a way that preserves the relative ranking among the rich. Such a system would enable us to reduce inequality and maintain the incentives that drive ambition and innovation.

But individual countries cannot tackle extreme inequality by themselves. International cooperation is essential, given the limits of unilateral action in a globalized world. History has shown that when faced with major challenges, the world can come together to translate bold ideas into action. To save democracy, we must do so again.

WISDOM CORNER

So long as we love, we serve; so long as we are loved by others, I should say that we are almost indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend. **ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON**

All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost. **JRR TOLKIEN**

You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of. **JIM ROHN**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1766: Thomas Malthus, the English economist and demographer best known for his theory that population growth will always tend to outrun the food supply and should be checked by stern limits on reproduction, is believed to have been born this day.

1876: The telephone is patented. Both Alexander Graham Bell and Elisha Gray applied for a patent on that day - Bell won.

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Fiscal prudence & development goals



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

FISCAL PRUDENCE SHOULD BE MAINTAINED IN TANDEM WITH PROGRESS IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

The fiscal health of states is a cornerstone of India's economic development and efficient distribution of resources. Efficient fiscal management spurs growth, improves social welfare and prevents an economy from sliding into fiscal abyss.

On 24 January, Arvind Panagariya, Chairman, 16th Finance Commission, launched the first ever Fiscal Health Index 2025 report of NITI Aayog in New Delhi. The index has been prepared for 18 major states using data from the CAG. The report is based on five major sub-indices namely Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilisation, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index and Debt Sustainability. The score of a state is calculated based on these five indicators. Based on the index score, the states are classified as Achievers (>50 points), Front Runners (> 40 or <=50), Performers (> 25, 40 or <= 40) and Aspirational (25 or

< 25). Based on these 5 sub-indices, a picture of the fiscal health of 18 major states has been given. In this index, Odisha is at the top, surpassing all other states with a total score of 67.8. Since the period of analysis pertains to the financial year 2022-23, it is natural to give credit to the erstwhile state government.

Along with Odisha, only 6 states are in the Achiever's category. Odisha is followed by Chhattisgarh (55.2), Goa (53.6), Jharkhand (51.6) and Gujarat (50.5). Punjab (10.2) ranked at lowest followed by Andhra Pradesh (20.9) and West Bengal (21).

The report says that Odisha is among the few states, complying with the FRBM parameters since 2005, taking prudent measures to keep its fiscal indicators healthy. Odisha's revenue expenditure and capital expenditure increased by 53.5% and 42.0% respectively between 2018-19 and 2022-23. The state has increased its

expenditure on priority sectors like healthcare and education to meet developmental needs. It was observed that on an average, the revenue expenditure on health and education by Odisha (CAGR 33.8%) was higher than that of the major states (CAGR 22.6%) during 2020-2022.

The ratio of the state's own non-tax revenue to GSDP witnessed an increase from 2.9% in 2018-19 to 5.6% in 2022-23. However, according to the budget text, it was 1.5% of GSDP in 1999-2000, and has increased to 6.07% in 2022-23.

Surprisingly, the report expresses elation as 90% of the state's own non-tax revenue and 45% of the state's own revenue receipts stem from the mining sector with premiums linked to market prices over the lease period, rather than increased extraction. However, revenue from mining is not sustainable.

According to the report, fiscal prudence and efforts to mobilise

its own revenue have reduced the state's fiscal deficit from 6.9% of GSDP in 2000-01 to 2% in 2022-23 which is within the limit of 3% set by FRBM. But according to budget data, the fiscal deficit in 2022-23 was 2.85% while other data say it is close to 3%. However, the 2% figure is completely wrong. The question arises as to why the index was prepared for only 18 states, not the rest of states. Further, it is wrong to consider different base years while preparing this index and providing various data.

Undoubtedly, there has been tremendous improvement in the state's fiscal prudence over the years. However, fiscal prudence should be maintained in tandem with progress in human development and employment generation as well as inflation control.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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



Ban ragging

Sir, Educational institutions are temples of knowledge and enlightenment. They are centres of excellence where students get admitted to gain professional knowledge and acumen and not to get ill treatment and suffer traumatic experience. Friendly atmosphere heightens fellow feeling and brotherhood in the campus. But, ragging vitiates the academic atmosphere in colleges and universities. Ragging is inhuman, brutal, unfriendly and sadistic. It is an attack on basic human rights. It is the outcome of a perverted and diseased mind. Every senior student shouldn't forget that he was a junior some years ago. Ragging causes pain and agony to students. It is an unlawful and dehumanizing act. There should be zero tolerance towards ragging in the country's educational institutions. The University Grants Commission should bring in strict guidelines for banning ragging in campus.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Reducing tax burden

Sir, The newly tabled Income Tax Bill, set to replace the Income Tax Act 1961, raises significant concerns for taxpayers. While the bill aims to simplify tax language and reduce litigation, it does little to address the pressing issue of high tax burden for the average taxpayer. Despite claims of simplification, the bill maintains the same income tax slabs and rates as proposed in Budget 2025, offering limited relief. The proposed hike in tax rebate under Section 87A to Rs 60,000 for incomes below Rs 12 lakh is a welcome change, but it is still inadequate for the rising cost of living. Moreover, the new tax regime, with its limited deductions, only Rs 75,000 for standard deduction and NPS contributions, fails to offer taxpayers meaningful options for tax planning, unlike the old regime, which provides more deductions and exemptions. The lack of any substantive changes to the income tax slabs and rates for both new and old tax regimes will leave taxpayers struggling with higher tax liabilities. The government's focus should be on reducing the tax burden on the middle class and providing more avenues for savings and exemptions.

Vishal Mayur, TUMAKURU (KARNATAKA)

Abdullah optimistic on statehood restoration

The Centre abrogated Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and reorganised the erstwhile state into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh in 2019



In an exclusive interview with PTI Videos, the chief minister also said he had a "very good conversation" with the home minister.

Asked if he had raised the issue during his meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi earlier this week, Abdullah said the process of statehood restoration was underway and urgently needed to be taken to its logical conclusion.

When the Supreme Court upheld the Centre's decision of abrogating Article 370, it made a general mention about statehood being restored "as soon as possible", he said.

The Centre abrogated Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and reorganised the erstwhile state into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh in 2019.

"It was discussed as soon as possible and that was over a year ago. We feel that time has arrived now," Abdullah said

shouldn't have occurred in the first place and now there is a necessity that they be investigated transparently. If someone is held guilty, the law has to take its course," Abdullah said. In Billawar, a 26-year-old man accused of being involved in militancy allegedly committed suicide February 4 following "police harassment". The day after, a truck driver was killed in army firing when he allegedly refused to stop at a checkpoint in Sopore in Baramulla district.

Following the two deaths, the chief minister had said that such incidents "risk alienating the very people who we need to carry with us on the road to complete normalcy". Abdullah told PTI Videos that although security and police were not the direct responsibility of the elected Union Territory government, it was still their combined responsibility to ensure such incidents did not happen. "As far as the people are concerned, the government is there. They are not going to say who's responsible in the government. It's our collective duty and it should be our aim that such incidents don't happen. That is why this was a major part of my conversation with the home minister," he said.

When the Supreme Court upheld the Centre's decision of abrogating Article 370, it made a general mention about statehood being restored as soon as possible

OMAR ABDULLAH | CM, JAMMU AND KASHMIR



Workers plant paddy saplings, at a field in Nagaon district of Assam

Capacity building for conservation at Kaziranga

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to the largest population of greater one-horned rhinoceros, making it a critical site for wildlife conservation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Feb 13: International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) in collaboration with Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve is organising a seven-day ITEC-Executive Course on capacity building for wildlife and conservation practitioners in Kaziranga.

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) course, sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs, is being held for the first time at a national park in India and will conclude February 16, an official release said Wednesday.

The initiative brings together 44 officials from 27 countries, underscoring the shared global commitment to wildlife conservation and sustainable development, it said.



The course will cover topics crucial to wildlife and natural heritage management, showcasing India's achievements in big cat conservation, conservation planning and management effectiveness, technology-aided conservation, rhinos as a flagship species and community engagement, among others.

The inaugural session of the course was chaired by the Minister of Environment and Forests

Chandra Mohan Patowary Tuesday, the release said.

The ITEC program aims to foster cooperation among developing countries by sharing knowledge, expertise, and best practices, it said.

The primary objectives of the ITEC courses are to offer training and capacity building in various fields, thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of partner nations.

Additionally, the program seeks to promote cultural exchange and strengthen bilateral relationships, paving the way for sustainable development and global cooperation, it added.

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to the largest population of greater one-horned rhinoceros, making it a critical site for wildlife conservation.

LG Sinha directs stronger measures to protect borders

The back-to-back security review meetings took place amid a series of incidents along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu division over the past couple of days



Jammu, Feb 13: Directing for stronger measures to protect the borders amid a ceasefire violation and a major IED attack in the recent past, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday said all security agencies must work together to counter the cross-border threats.

He also called for intensified efforts to wipe out terrorism from Jammu province and said every perpetrator and supporter of terrorism must pay the price.

"We must strengthen border security against asymmetric threats due to porous border with riverines and difficult mountain range and all the security agencies must work together to provide necessary

back-up support," the lieutenant governor said, chairing a high-level meeting to review the security scenario in Jammu division. This was the second security review meeting chaired by the lieutenant governor in as many days. Sinha presided over a high-level security review meeting in Srinagar for Kashmir valley Wednesday.

The back-to-back security review meetings took place amid a series of incidents along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu division over the past couple of days.

While two army personnel, including a captain, were killed in a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) explosion triggered by the terrorists in Akhnoor sector of Jammu Feb-

We must strengthen border security against asymmetric threats due to porous border with riverines and difficult mountain range and all the security agencies must work together to provide necessary back-up support

MANOJ SINHA | LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

ruary 11, a soldier was injured in cross-border firing in Rajouri sector a day earlier.

The Pakistani troops also violated ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing on the army posts in Poonch sector Wednesday, prompting a befitting reply by the Indian Army.

The security review meeting in Jammu was attended by senior police officers led by DGP Nalin Prabhat, who along with Inspector General of Police, Jammu zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, briefed the chair on the future action plan and the proposed measures to tackle the security challenges to ensure a safe and secure environment for the common citizen, an official spokesman said.

He said the IGP railways also gave a detailed presentation on the security architecture of railways and the roadmap put in place to strengthen the security of stations and the tracks.

"Our focus should be on complete wipe-out of terrorism from Jammu division. We should not even have remnants of terrorism in Jammu region," the lieutenant governor said, addressing the meeting.

He called for effective steps to wipe-out terrorism and ensure complete dismantling of the infrastructure and local support of terrorism.

The lieutenant governor directed the police officials to take strongest possible action against those providing logistical and financial support to

terrorism.

"Every perpetrator and supporter of terrorism must pay the price. We need to equip ourselves with credible intelligence and act more effectively to neutralise the terrorists and ensure the security of citizens," he said. Sinha directed the police officials to make sure that acts of individuals or groups trying to create fear in the society are termed as "terrorist action" and they should be punished as per the law.

He discussed a roadmap for technology driven policing, area domination plan, inter-agency coordination, action against narco-terrorism, capacity building of police force and innovative strategies to improve cyber patrolling and monitoring capabilities.

The lieutenant governor stressed on credible intelligence gathering, sharing of real time operational intelligence and anti-terror operations based on precise inputs.

He also called for strengthening the legal framework to deal with terror propagandists and strengthening of police establishment at local level for modern and efficient policing.

Assam to become global semiconductor manufacturing hub

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Guwahati, Feb 13: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Wednesday met Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong and discussed the state's role in strengthening India-ASEAN relations.

The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) in a post on X said the two leaders' talks focused on semiconductors, skilling, green energy and innovation-driven industries.

"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," Sarma said.

He expressed gratitude for the commitment of Yong, who is also the trade and industry minister of Singapore, in deepening the existing relationship between Assam and Republic of Singapore.

Earlier during the day, the

CM had a breakfast meeting with key stakeholders of Singapore's semiconductor and other industries with focus on strengthening supply chains and linkages to position Assam as an emerging semiconductor hub.

"At #AdvantageAssam2, we will take the next steps in transforming Assam into a semiconductor hub through trusted supply chains and linkages," he added.

The companies which took part in the discussion include

Tata Electronics, Fuji Machine Mfg, Keysight Tech, Nordson Corp, Lintec Corp, Cohu Ink, Ecosoft, Toppan Photomasks, Singapore Business Federation and Indian Ocean Group, the CMO said.

The Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit is scheduled to be held February 25-26 in Guwahati.

Sarma also addressed over 200 business leaders at the Singapore Road Show for the summit and extended a warm invitation to each prospective

investor to Assam. "Assam is the PLACE to be! That was the resounding message we conveyed to over 200 business leaders at the #SingaporeRoadShow. I personally invited each prospective investor to join #AdvantageAssam2 and explore the diverse opportunities our state offers," he wrote in a series of posts on the microblogging site.

Singapore's investor community showed great enthusiasm for Assam's unique advantages in harnessing India's economic potential, Sarma claimed.

"Our locational edge, single-window clearance, tailored

incentives, strong law & order, and disciplined workforce stand as our core USPs. With a projected GDP of \$143 billion, \$SD 12.2 billion in infrastructure revamp, 15 km of roads built daily, a 6,000 MW green energy target, \$4.7 billion in private investment, and a low debt-to-GSDP ratio, Assam offers investors excellent prospects and good ROI," he added.

Advertisement for Balasore Wildlife Division. Text: ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର ବିଭାଗୀୟ ବନଭଣ୍ଡାର, ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER BALASORE WILDLIFE DIVISION At/Po : KURUDA, Dist. : BALASORE, ODISHA - 756056 Phone No : 06782-256142, e-mail : dfo.balasorew@odisha.gov.in SHORT TENDER NOTICE Tender No. 3/2024-25 Dated : - 11.02.2025 No.MM-481 : Divisional Forest Officer, Balasore Wildlife Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites sealed tenders from reputed intending Manufacturing Firms/ Dealers/ Suppliers having valid GSTIN and PAN Registration No. for procurement of One (01) X-2 PistoTranquilizer with accessories (PNEUDART, USA). The tender papers with detailed terms and conditions will be available in the website www.balasore.odisha.gov.in and www.odishaforest.in in the Office of the DFO, Balasore Wildlife Division, Balasore on payment of Rs. 1,000/- (One thousand) only in cash or Account Payee Bank Draft in favour of Divisional Forest Officer, Balasore Wildlife Division, Balasore during office hours from 14.02.2025 to 25.02.2025. The Tender Papers can be submitted at the below mentioned address on or before 25.02.2025 latest by 05.00 P.M. by Speed Post/Registered Post/ by hand only. The tender will be opened in the office of the undersigned on 27.02.2025 at 11.30 A.M. Post/Courier : Divisional Forest Officer, Balasore Wildlife Division, At/Po-Kuruda, Balasore, Pin-756056. Email-id : dfo.balasorew@odisha.gov.in Sd./ Divisional Forest Officer Balasore Wildlife Division OIPR-08036/11/0007/2425

Advertisement for Government of Odisha Department of Water Resources. Text: GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, WATER RESOURCES, SECHA SADAN, BHUBANESWAR No.A-1057 Email Address:cemech.eicwr.od@gmail.com e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No.CEM/MDL-04/2024-25 1. Name of the Work : Mechanical Gate Works 2. No. of Works : 01 (One) 3. Category of executors : SSI Units registered under DIC/ NSIC/MSME for Irrigation Shutters/ Hydro mechanical gates. 4. Bid Identification No. : CEM/MDL-04/2024-25 5. Tender Value : Rs.20,44,018.00 6. Period of Completion : 20 (Twenty) Calendar days 7. Date & Time of availability of bid documents in the portal : From dt.15.02.2025 (10.00 AM) to dt.28.02.2025 (5.30 PM) 8. Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal : dt.28.02.2025 (upto 5.30 PM) 9. Date and Place of Opening : dt.01.03.2025 (12.00 Noon onwards of Bid 10. Name of the Officer Inviting : Chief Engineer, Mechanical, O/O the E.I.C.,Water Resources, Odisha Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any Further issue of Addenda/Corrigenda/ Cancellation Notice shall be uploaded in the aforesaid website only. Sd./- Chief Engineer, Mechanical O/o, Engineer-in-Chief, Secha Sadan, Bhubaneswar OIPR-32520/11/0023/2425

Advertisement for Government of Odisha Office of the Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Bhadrak. Text: GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.O-1469 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BHADRAK ee_rwbdk2@yahoo.co.in "e" Procurement Notice for Building Works Identification Online Tender 14/RWD/BDK-II/2024-25, Dtd.11.02.2025 1. Name of the Work:- Building Works as per Annexure. 2. Total Number of Works:- 1 No. 3. Approximate Estimated Cost :- Rs.56.32 Lakhs. 4. Class of Contractor:- As per Annexure. 5. Period of Completion:- As per Annexure. 6. Other details:- The details are as follows. Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of Tender On-line for bidding Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification Date & Time of Opening of Bid 1 2 3 4 5 6 Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Bhadrak 14 18.02.2025 At 11.30 A.M. 27.02.2025 upto 5.00 PM. 27.02.2025 upto 3.00 P.M. 28.02.2025 at 11.30 AM 7. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in". 8. Any other changes/ Corrigendum may be seen only in website www.tendersorissa.gov.in. 9. Date of transparent lottery to be conducted on dt.11.03.2025 at 11.30 A.M. in the office of the Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Bhadrak. Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W.Division-II, Bhadrak OIPR-25090/11/0017/2425

Keeping pace with the fast-changing technology is another area of challenge. You have to take measures to make accounting and payment systems smooth and effective DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

SC ORDERS DISSOLUTION OF MEGHALAYA VARSITY

The Supreme Court Thursday ordered the dissolution of the Chander Mohan Jha University in Meghalaya upholding the state government's 2014 decision to shut down the institution over mismanagement and several other shortcomings.



of the day quote

Under the AAP government, the power sector was continuously monitored which has now collapsed within three days with BJP coming to power ATISHI | OUTGOING DELHI CM

Governments keep coming and going but relationships continue. We met Kejriwal as a gesture of friendship. However, our democracy is not free and fair. Elections are not free and fair ADITYA THACKERAY | SENA (UBT) LEADER

Many MVA workers have already joined the BJP, and I encourage those who are left to do the same. Only (ruling) Mahayuti workers will receive funds NITESH RANE | BJP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Woman's body recovered from lake

Bangalore: The body of a 21-year-old woman was recovered from a lake on the outskirts of the city under mysterious circumstances, police said Thursday. The deceased has been identified as R Sahana, a resident of Harohalli near Hosur, they said. Police stated that the victim's father claimed it was an accident, while her boyfriend alleged it was a case of 'honour killing' as her father had opposed their relationship due to their belonging to different communities.

Protests in Jamia: Over 10 students detained

New Delhi: Over 10 Jamia Millia Islamia University students were detained by Delhi Police for protesting against the university's disciplinary action against two PhD scholars, who were served show-cause notices for allegedly organising a demonstration last year, an official said Thursday.

Three killed in road crash in UP

Kushinagar (UP): A truck truck hit an auto-rickshaw here, leaving three persons dead and four others injured, police said Thursday. Those killed were identified as Mansa Chauhan (40), Awadhesh Chauhan (41) and Kanta Chauhan (65), they said. The injured were rushed to the Community Health Centre, Kaptanganj from where doctors referred them to the Medical College in Gorakhpur.

Court issues summons to Dhananjay Munde

Mumbai: A court in Maharashtra's Beed has issued summons to state minister Dhananjay Munde in connection with a complaint filed by his first wife, who accused him of not disclosing information in his affidavit submitted before the 2024 Assembly elections. A Joint Civil Judge Junior Division and Judicial Magistrate First Class (CJD and JMFC) at Parli in Beed, issued summons to the NCP leader February 10.

Microsoft inaugurates new campus in Hyd

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy Thursday inaugurated a new campus of Microsoft as the company celebrates its journey of 25 years in Hyderabad. The state-of-the-art 1.1 million sq ft LEED-certified building at Gachibowli, the city's IT hub would house 2,500 additional employees.



Artistes from Feroz Abbas Khan's 'Mughal-E-Azam: The Musical' during their performance PTI PHOTO

Waqf Bill report tabled in Parliament

New Delhi, Feb 13: The report of the Joint Committee on Waqf (Amendment) Bill was tabled in both Houses of Parliament Thursday with the Lok Sabha speaker allowing the submission of dissent notes in entirety as demanded by the Opposition and Home Minister Amit Shah asserting the BJP had no objection to it.



The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha witnessed stormy scenes with Opposition members trooping to the Wells of the respective Houses protesting against the "undemocratic" action of the committee chairman In the Rajya Sabha, BJP member Medha Kulkarni tabled the voluminous report amid protests by the opposition members

Committee Chairman Jagdambika Pal had redacted parts of the dissent notes contending that they cast aspersions on the parliamentary panel and made personal allegations against him. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha witnessed stormy scenes with Opposition members trooping to the Wells of the respective Houses protesting against the "undemocratic" action of the committee chairman. In the Rajya Sabha, BJP member Medha Kulkarni tabled the voluminous report amid protests by the Opposition members. Later, she tabled a corrigendum to Appendix 5 of the report that deals with notes/

minutes of dissent, prompting the Opposition to claim victory. In the face of Opposition protests in the Lok Sabha, Home Minister Shah said his party has no objection to attaching the notes of dissent to the report submitted by the Opposition as per parliamentary practice. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said members of the Waqf committee had met him and discussed certain issues. "Those issues have been included in the annexure," he said as opposition members staged a walkout. The

Affairs minister said when the report was tabled in Rajya Sabha, some Opposition MPs raised objections and claimed their dissent notes had been taken out. "In this, one thing has to be kept in mind that in the annexure and dissent note if any question is raised on the committee like casting an aspersion on the committee, which the chairman feels is not right, then the chairman has the power to remove it, not the report. It's written in the rules," Rijiju said. The Joint Committee of Parliament on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill had adopted the report by a majority vote and that contained changes suggested by members of the ruling BJP, prompting the Opposition to dub the exercise an attempt to destroy Waqf boards. It was adopted by a 15-11 majority vote. The Rajya Sabha also witnessed a walkout by Opposition members and BJP president J P Nadda accused them of being "anti-national" and indulging in politics of appeasement.

Abhishek reaffirms TMC's solo fight in 2026 state polls

Kolkata, Feb 13: TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee Thursday reaffirmed that the party will contest the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections alone, maintaining its 'Ekla Chal' (go it alone) policy in the state while remaining a constituent of the opposition INDIA bloc at the Centre.

Speaking at a free health camp "Sebashray" in his Diamond Harbour constituency's Satgachhia, Banerjee asserted that TMC had successfully contested elections independently in the past and would continue to do so. "Didi (Mamata Banerjee) has already made it clear that we will fight alone in Bengal. This is nothing new. We fought alone in 2014, 2016, 2019, and 2024. We performed well then, and we will do so again," he said.

Banerjee asserted that it will contest next year's Assembly elections independently if the Congress does not allow it to fight on its own terms, as it is the stronger force in Bengal. "We have said this categorically in the past as well that we continue to be a part of the INDIA bloc. However, if Congress does not wish to explore any way forward or engage in seat-sharing, we will contest alone," he said. Banerjee dismissed claims that an alliance with the Congress could have prevented BJP's winning 12 seats in the Lok Sabha elections in Bengal, saying, "Ultimately, it is the people's support that matters. Whether we fight alone or in an alliance, it does not make much difference. At best, there could have been a two-to-four seat difference, nothing more."

SNIPPETS

India to conduct 2-crewed space flights under Gaganyaan by 2028

New Delhi: India has broadened the scope of the Gaganyaan mission and plans to carry out two crewed space flights by 2028, Parliament was informed Thursday. According to the enhanced scope, the Gaganyaan programme will have eight missions -- two crewed and six uncrewed -- Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. Singh said the earlier Gaganyaan programme entailed one crewed mission and two uncrewed ones. The total funding for the programme has been enhanced to ₹20,193 crore to address the programmatic requirements, according to the revised scope that includes new developments for the Bharatiya Antariksh Station and precursor missions, he said. The allocation also covers additional requirements to meet the ongoing Gaganyaan programme, he further said.

CRPF jawans kills 2 before taking his life at Manipur camp

Imphal: A CRPF jawan allegedly killed two of his colleagues and injured eight others before taking his own life at a camp in Manipur Thursday, official sources said. The incident took place at a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Lamsang located in the Imphal West district at around 8.20 pm, they said. The accused, Havildar Sanjay Kumar, opened fire from his weapon killing a constable and a sub-inspector of the force on the spot. He later turned the gun on himself and has been declared dead, the sources said. The accused belonged to the F company of the 120th battalion of the force. Eight CRPF personnel have been injured in the firing and they have been shifted to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Imphal, they said.

Court protects Amanatullah from arrest till February 24

New Delhi: A Delhi court Thursday granted protection from arrest till February 24 to AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan for allegedly attacking a police team in Jamia Nagar in the national capital on February 10 and said that allegation did not "seem to carry weight". Special judge Jitendra Singh ordered Khan to join the police's probe in the case whenever directed by the investigating officer. The direction came on the anticipatory bail plea filed by Khan in the case. The court directed police to bring all the documents aside from any CCTV footage related to incident before the court February 24. Delhi Police registered an FIR against Khan for allegedly leading an attack on a police team in Jamia Nagar Monday, alleging that the mob led by Khan helped a proclaimed offender, Shahwej Khan, an accused in an attempt-to-murder case, escape from custody.

MCD presents ₹17K-cr budget

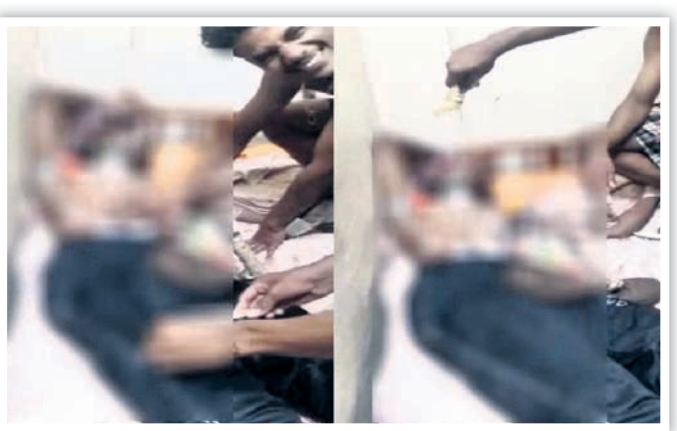
New Delhi, Feb 13: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Thursday presented a budget of ₹17,000 crore for the next financial year with sanitation receiving the highest allocation of ₹4,907.11 crore. Besides sanitation, infrastructure development, education and waste management, have been focused upon in the MCD budget. In waste management, the MCD plans to establish waste-to-energy plants in Narela-Bawana (3,600 TPD) and Ghazipur (3,000 TPD), along with bio-CNG plants in Okhla, Ghogha Dairy, and Ghazipur to process 750 metric tons of waste daily. The special budget meeting also announced that work is underway to set up bio-methanisation plants with a capacity of 200 metric tons per day, expected to be completed by March 2025.

KERALA RAGGING HORROR CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Kottayam (Kerala), Feb 13: Disturbing visuals of the brutal ragging of a junior student at the Government Nursing College here surfaced Thursday, showing the victim being tied to a cot and his body repeatedly pierced with a compass.

According to footage received by the Gandhinagar police, the victim was stripped half-naked and subjected to horrifying acts, including having dumbbells placed on his private parts after being tied to a cot and having facial cream poured into his mouth. Kottayam District Police Chief Shahul Hameed said that police are investigating whether more students were subjected to ragging. The five students arrested

Wednesday in connection with the case are currently in the district jail after being remanded by a court here. The visuals aired by TV channels showed the junior student-lying on the bed with lotion all over his body and his hands and legs tied with a rope-screaming in pain, unable to move while his body was repeatedly pierced with the compass. The senior students pierced various parts of his body with the compass, counting aloud, "one, two, three". As the victim screamed in pain, the accused mocked him, taunting and insulting him by calling him a "sexy body". The video recorded by third-year students captured this brutal act of ragging, police said. The abuse took place in the boys' hostel targeting first-year nursing students. The arrested students have been identified as Samuel Johnson (20), Rahul Raj (22), Jeev (18), Rijil Jith (20), and Vivek (21). One of the arrested students was an office-bearer of a nursing



student organisation, police said. They were arrested after a case was registered under the Prohibition of Ragging Act, following a complaint that ragging had been ongoing for nearly three months at the nursing institute, which

The five students arrested Wednesday in connection with the case are currently in the district jail after being remanded by a court

The visuals aired by TV channels showed the junior student-lying on the bed with lotion all over his body and his hands and legs tied with a rope-screaming in pain, unable to move while his body was repeatedly pierced with the compass

operates under the Government Medical College. The accused have also been booked under Sections 118(1) (intentionally causing hurt using dangerous weapons or means), 308(2) (punishment for extortion), and 351(1) (criminal intimidation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, the police said. The accused students have been suspended,

college authorities confirmed. According to the complaint, the ragging began in November last year. The complaint also stated that senior students regularly extorted money from juniors Sundays to buy alcohol and frequently assaulted them. The accused November 16 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 to purchase alcohol. Meanwhile, student organisations in the state condemned the incident, describing it as barbaric and shocking. SFI state secretary P M Arsho stated the organisation's strong stance against anarchic acts such as ragging. SFI is the student outfit of the CPI(M).

national



There are no models that you can build and understand how the trends will be because they are very dynamic... Despite that, we have tried keeping the assessments as close as possible, keeping India's interests as topmost

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

DHARAVI REDEVELOPMENT SURVEY CROSSES 50K MARK

The Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) notched up a major milestone Wednesday by completing over 50,000 door-to-door surveys which is the highest in Mumbai Slum Rehabilitation Authority's (SRA) history



of the day note

The Opposition has acted very irresponsibly and it should be condemned. This is the politics of appeasement and this is being done to weaken the country

JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA | UNION MINISTER

I have got the opportunity to be a minister for the third time. PM Modi believes in Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar

RAMDAS ATHAWALE | UNION MINISTER

As long as we are around in Bihar, they cannot form a government here. The people have sized up the BJP. They will size up the NDA here as well

LALU PRASAD | RJD PRESIDENT

POST OF THE DAY

BIG BREAKING United Opposition will raise the massive voter list & EVM frauds by BJP

"The fraud that took place in Maharashtra & Haryana will repeat in every state" The battle launched by LOP Rahul Gandhi is growing stronger

@mr_mayank

SHORT TAKES

Three cops booked over custodial death

Muzaffarpur: Three police officers in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district have been booked for the alleged custodial death of a young man, who was found hanging from the ceiling of a police station lock-up last week, a senior official said Thursday.

Dhankhar to visit Jammu tomorrow

New Delhi: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar will be on a day-long visit to Jammu Saturday, his office said. During his tour, the vice president will preside over the 10th convocation of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University.

Noted vocalist Prabhakar dead

Mumbai: Renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Prabhakar Karekar has passed away in Mumbai following a brief illness, his family said Thursday. He was 80.

Police arrest 46 linked to Jamtara gangs

Kolkata: West Bengal Police has arrested 46 people allegedly linked to the notorious Jamtara gangs involved in jhanting, online frauds and financial scams, a senior police officer said Thursday.

TROUBLE MOUNTS

MPs raise issue of Allahbadia's comments at Parl panel meet

Allahbadia, who has apologised for his comments dubbing it as a "lapse in judgement", failed to appear in connection with a probe into his controversial comments on Samay Raina's now-deleted YouTube show "India's Got Latent"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 13: The controversy around Ranveer Allahbadia's remarks dominated headlines yet another day after a parliamentary panel Thursday asked the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to submit a note on the issue by February 17 and Assam police summoned the influencer.

Allahbadia, who has apologised for his comments dubbing it as a "lapse in judgement", failed to appear in connection with a probe into his controversial comments on Samay Raina's now-deleted YouTube show "India's Got Latent".

At a meeting of the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, members from different parties voiced concern over Allahbadia's comments and called for stringent measures to punish him and to ensure that such an incident does not recur.

The Mumbai police as well as Maharashtra Cyber Department have also asked Raina, who was a part of the controversial reality show "India's Got Latent", to appear before them in the next five days.



visit the Khar police station Thursday, did not turn up, and told police that he was afraid of the media, an official said. The Assam Police has also asked Allahbadia, Chanchlani, Raina, Jaspreet Singh and Apoorva Makhija to be present in person in connection with a case filed in Guwahati for allegedly promoting obscenity in a publicly accessible online show.

A team of the cyber police from Assam is currently in Mumbai. The comedians will have to be present in person within four days, Guwahati Joint Commissioner of Police Ankur Jain told reporters here Thursday.

On Wednesday night, musician A R Rahman became the latest celebrity to have joined the growing discourse around Allahbadia's comment, which many have deemed "vulgar" and "irresponsible".

At the "Chhaava" audio launch, the music maestro said the past week has been all about "what happens when the mouth opens" as he made an oblique reference to the raging controversy surrounding Allahbadia.

At the event, held Wednesday night in Mumbai, Kaushal asked Rahman to describe his music using "just three emojis". "You want me (to) keep my mouth closed," Rahman said after some contemplation, referring to the emoji. "I think in the past week we have seen

what all happens when mouth opens," he added, eliciting laughter from both Kaushal and the audience.

To which Kaushal replied: "Talk about roasting." Raina Wednesday announced that he was deleting all episodes of "India's Got Latent" and that he will fully cooperate with all the investigating agencies in their probe. The comedian said it was "too much to handle" for him. The Mumbai Police have so far recorded the statements of seven persons, including social media influencer Apoorva Makhija, in connection with controversial comments, officials said Thursday.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has also asked Allahbadia, Raina, and other panellists Mukhija, Jaspreet Singh, and Ashish Chanchlani, as well as the show's producers Tushar Poojari and Saurabh Bothra to appear before it February 17 in New Delhi. Chanchlani, who was scheduled to host the screening of Hollywood film "Captain America: Brave New World" on Valentine's Day, said he was skipping the event citing health concerns.



View of the rebuilt Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) office, Keshav Kunj, at Jhandewalan, in New Delhi. RSS has moved back its office in the city to its old address following the near completion of the rebuilding project spread across over 3.75 acre premises, housing three 13-storey towers and around 300 rooms and offices in total

Modi meets US NSA Michael Waltz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he had a "fruitful meeting" with US National Security Advisor Michael Waltz and they discussed defence, technology and security areas, which are important aspects of the India-US ties.

"Had a fruitful meeting with NSA @michaelwaltz. He has always been a great friend of India," Modi said in a post on X. "Defence, technology and security are important aspects of India-USA ties and we had a wonderful discussion around these issues. There is strong potential for cooperation in sectors like AI, semiconductors, space and more," he said.

Modi arrived in the US capital Wednesday evening for a bilateral meeting with President Donald Trump. The meeting with Waltz was the first engagement of the day. External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval were present at the meeting. After arriving at Blair



House, the President's Guest House, Modi met US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. "Congratulated her on her confirmation. Discussed various aspects of the India-USA friendship, of which she's always been a strong votary," Modi said on X. Just hours before her meeting with Modi, Gabbard took the oath of office as the 8th Director of National Intelligence in the presence of Trump.

PREZ RULE IN MANIPUR

TMC, Cong slam govt

President's rule was imposed in strife-torn Manipur Thursday and the state assembly was put under suspended animation, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post that led to political uncertainty in the northeastern state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 13: The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the Congress Thursday described the decision to impose President's rule in strife-torn Manipur as a "very delayed" move, and accused the BJP-led central government of destroying democracy in the northeastern state.

President's rule was imposed in Manipur Thursday and the Assembly put under suspended animation, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post that led to political uncertainty in the state.

TMC spokesperson Joy Prakash Majumdar told reporters here that Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah were responsible for the ethnic clashes and the continuing uncertainty in Manipur.

"For so many days, they allowed the situation to remain so. Now, when the term of the



assembly was set to expire and the performance of Singh is under the scanner, the BJP is thrusting President's rule in the state, which had once elected the party with the hope of peace and good governance. The BJP has betrayed different ethnic communities in Manipur," he asserted.

Majumdar also accused the saffron party of "killing democracy" in Manipur and "aiding ethnic polarisation", which backfired. Echoing him, senior Congress leader Adhir Chowdhury held the Centre responsi-

ble for the present situation in Manipur. "The Central government did not act when people were killed, women raped and houses set afire (in Manipur). Now, when all the ploys have failed with no successor to take over the reins, the BJP is imposing President's rule," the former MP said.

Meanwhile, BJP MP and spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said the central leadership took "the right step at the right time", and President's rule will help Manipur develop like other saffron party-ruled states. To a question, Bhattacharya admitted that due to "mishandling" of certain issues by the N Biren Singh-led government, things became "a bit complicated", but the Union Home Ministry kept a firm grip on the situation.

Singh, who was heading the BJP government in Manipur, resigned as chief minister after nearly 21 months of ethnic violence that has claimed over 250 lives so far.

Ex-Sena (UBT) MLA quits party, joins Shinde-led Sena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 13: Former Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Rajan Salvi Thursday joined the Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, a move that is seen as a jolt to party chief Uddhav Thackeray.

Salvi, who represented Rajapur constituency in Ratnagiri district from 2009-2024, lost the November 2024 assembly polls to Shiv Sena's Kiran Samant, brother of state Industry Minister Uday Samant. Since then Salvi was upset with party leaders, blaming them for his electoral defeat.

Salvi had quit as a deputy leader of Sena (UBT) Wednesday. The party has several functionaries with that designation. In a letter to Thackeray Wednesday, Salvi said, "In the prevailing circumstances and amid the internal politics within the organisation, I won't be able to do justice to my post. Accepting moral responsibility for my defeat, I am resigning as the deputy leader of the party."

Addressing a press conference at Anand Ashram, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the Shiv Sena (UBT) under Thackeray was plagued with infighting.

Masterclass for students at Pariksha Pe Charcha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 13: Learning to become masters of technology and not slaves, using AI wisely and making own decisions are among the mantras shared with students during a technology masterclass as part of the Prime Minister's Pariksha Pe Charcha broadcast Thursday.

Sharing the mantras were YouTuber Gaurav Chaudhary, popularly known as "Technical Guruji", and Radhika Gupta, the MD and CEO of Edelweiss Mutual Fund, at a special session of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', an annual event in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with students appearing for board examinations.

In a shift from the traditional town hall format, Modi preferred a more informal setting this time and took the students to Delhi's iconic Sunder Nursery for his annual interaction with them ahead of board exams. Eminent personalities like boxer MC Mary Kom and spiritual leader Sadhguru

If you eat right, you will be able to write your exams better! The fourth episode of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' will be all about eating and sleeping well in the run-up to exam prep. Listen to Shonali Sabherwal, Rujuta Diwekar and Revant Himatsingka share their views on this subject tomorrow

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER



have also shared their experiences and knowledge with students on key aspects of life and learning in different episodes of Pariksha Pe Charcha this year. Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone Wednesday shared tips on stress management while opening up about her own struggle

with depression. Next in the series is a chat on "Good nutrition fuels a sharp mind" with nutrition experts Shonali Sabherwal, Rujuta Diwekar and Revant Himatsingka, which will be broadcast Friday. The guests will share insights on healthy eating,

sleep and wellbeing. "If you eat right, you will be able to write your exams better! The fourth episode of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' will be all about eating and sleeping well in the run-up to exam prep. Listen to Shonali Sabherwal, Rujuta Diwekar and Revant Himatsingka

share their views on this subject tomorrow," PM Modi said in a post on X.

In the broadcast Thursday, Chaudhary told students to "learn to become masters of technology and not slaves. Technology should play the role of a good enabler but your own intelligence, sharpness and creativity should take precedence". He guided students on using technology effectively, ensuring it becomes their greatest strength rather than a distraction in their studies.

Chaudhary also highlighted the benefits of smart study apps, digital notes and online learning platforms, helping students integrate technology into their academic journey. He advised students to use AI as a tool rather than relying on it entirely and encouraged them to embrace real-life experiences beyond technology. Sharing anecdotes about the era of "floppy disks" (electronic data storage devices) and the evolution of technology since then, Gupta said now artificial intelligence can play the role of a good study partner.

Google, T'gana ink pact

Hyderabad: Google Thursday announced a strategic collaboration with the Telangana government to harness the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence across the state in various sectors. This collaboration formalised through an MoU aims to drive the development and implementation of AI solutions. It focuses on key sectors, including agriculture, mobility, education, sustainability and governance. Additionally it seeks to foster innovation, bridge the digital divide and equip the workforce with future-ready skills, said an official release. The MoU exchange took place in the presence of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, IT Minister Sridhar Babu, and Google representatives. Under this agreement, Google will collaborate with the Telangana government to develop AI-powered agricultural solutions to support farmers and enhance mobility through transit data integration and road information sharing.

