

Jacqueline Fernandez gets a Gulfstream Jet with her initials, JF, customised on exterior and interior as Valentine's Day gift

LEISURE | P2



India-B'desh talks

Border forces of India & Bangladesh to hold talks next week with issues such as border fencing, attacks on BSF personnel and civilians

NATIONAL | P8



Wealth erosion

Investors' wealth erodes by 25.31 lakh crore in eight days of market crash as Sensex tumbles over 3 per cent

BUSINESS | P11



Shuttlers bow out

HS Prannoy fights valiantly, but India succumbs to a 0-3 defeat against Japan in quarterfinals of Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships

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Gold zooms past record 89k-mark



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: Gold prices Friday soared by `1,300 to hit an all-time high of `89,400 per 10 grams amid heavy buying from iewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at `88,100 per 10 grams Thursday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed by `1,300 to hit a fresh peak of `89,000 per 10 grams against the previous close of 87,700 per 10 grams.

Silver also rallied by `2,000 to hit a four-month high of `1 lakh per kg Friday. The metal had finished at `98,000 per kg Thursday. In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for April delivery rose `184 to 85,993 per 10 grams.

"Gold prices continued their upward momentum, driven by a weaker dollar index and sustained support from US tariff policies. Gold rose on MCX, while Comex gold gained to trade at USD 2,935 per ounce," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities.

The focus now shifts to upcoming US Retail Sales and Core Retail Sales data, which could influence the next move in gold, Trivedi added. Silver futures zoomed by `2,517 or 2.64 per cent to $\,\hat{\,\,}97,\!750$ per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange

Globally, Comex gold futures for April delivery rose USD 6.49 per ounce to USD 2,951.89 per ounce. Meanwhile, spot gold traded higher at USD 2,929.79

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Talks amid tariffs

at the White House, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order on reciprocal tariffs which are likely to affect India more than any other US trading partner. And, after the talks with Modi, Trump said that India would increase its purchases of oil, gas, and military equipment from the US

Hours before his meeting with

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

to help reduce the trade deficit, while also emphasising that Washington would not exempt New Delhi from reciprocal tariffs. Trump was clear about his stance during a 44-minute joint news conference with Modi, when he said, "Whatever India charges, we will charge them. We are being reciprocal with India." The announcement of these reciprocal tariffs during Modi's visit means that India will now need to navigate the challenge of protecting its domestic businesses while ensuring continued access to the US market. However, this balancing act may come with a huge economic cost for India as it struggles with a slowing economy. For now, India is hoping that committing to purchase additional American oil and gas, along with defence items such as \bar{F} -35 stealth jets, will mitigate the negative impacts of Trump's tariff war. However, this may not translate into reality as long as Trump pursues his 'America First' policy with regard to trade as well as diplomacy. On the national security front, India failed to negotiate with the Trump administration the extradition of Khalistani extremist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who holds dual US-Canadian citizenship. However, the US has agreed to extradite Canadian citizen Tahawwur Ra-



BOOSTING TIES: In this image released by the PMO Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump gesture during their meeting at the White House in Washington DC

PNN & AGENCIES

Washington, Feb 13: India and the US agreed Thursday to start talks to clinch an early trade deal and resolve their standoff over tariffs as New Delhi promised to buy more US oil, gas and military equipment and fight illegal immigration.

The series of agreements emerged after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump at the White House, just hours after Trump railed against the climate for US businesses in India and unveiled a roadmap for reciprocal tariffs on countries that put duties on US imports.

"Prime Minister Modi recently announced the reductions to India's unfair, very strong tariffs that limit us access to the Indian market, very strongly," Trump said. "And really it's a big problem I must say.'

The deal to resolve trade concerns could be done within

the next seven months, said India's Foreign Secretary Vikram

A joint statement after the meeting said Washington welcomed New Delhi's recent steps to lower tariffs on select US products and increase market access to US farm products,

while seeking to negotiate the

initial segments of a trade deal by the fall of 2025.

Some of the leaders' agreements are aspirational: India wants to increase by 'billions of dollars' its purchases of US defence equipment and may make Washington the 'number one supplier' of oil and gas, Trump said at a joint press conference with Modi.

And Delhi wants to double trade with Washington by 2030, Modi said. Long-planned cooperation on nuclear energy, also discussed by the leaders, faces ongoing legal challenges.

"We're also paving the way to ultimately provide India with the F-35 stealth fighters," said Trump.

Although Trump had a warm relationship with Modi in his first term, he again said Thursday that India's tariffs were 'very high' and promised to match them, even after his earlier levies on steel and aluminum hit metal-producing India particularly hard.

Modi vowed to protect India's interests. "One thing that I deeply appreciate, and I learn from President Trump, is that he keeps the national interest supreme," Modi said. "Like him, I also keep the national interest of India at the top of everything else.'

The two leaders praised each other and agreed to deepen security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, a thinly veiled reference to competition with China, as well as to start joint production on technologies like artificial intelligence.

The joint statement said the two countries agreed to aggressively address illegal immigration and human trafficking by strengthening law enforcement cooperation.

Ruckus over farmer distress

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress legislators created a ruckus in the Odisha Assembly Friday over law and order situation in the state and alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement leading to farmers' distress, prompting the Speaker to adjourn the House several times.

na, one of the key accused in the

2008 Mumbai terror attacks

The Opposition members trooped to the well of the House even before Speaker Surama Padhy took her seat and raised slogans against the BJP government in the state. They demanded discussions on the law and order situation and alleged mismanagement in procuring paddy, and urged the Speaker to suspend all other businesses of the House.



Senior Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati was seen attempting to climb the Speaker's podium. BJD members stressed the alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement, while Congress raised the law and order issue. Unable to run the House, the Speaker adjourned the proceedings till noon. When the House reassembled, a similar scene was seen forcing the Speaker to further adjourn the proceedings till 4 pm. The Question Hour and Zero Hour proceedings could not be held due to the din in the House.

Opposition chief whip Pramila Mallik said the BJD members staged an agitation in the House as the Speaker rejected the party's notice for a discus-

sion on farmers' issues. "At least 14 farmers have died by suicide over crop loss due to unseasonal rains. We have given a notice for a discussion on the issue. However, the Speaker refused to accept it. Farmers are on the streets and have alleged that they are not being paid for about 10 kg of paddy for a quintal. The authorities deduct 10 kg of paddy for a quintal of grain in the name of 'katni chatni' (deduction of paddy)," Mallik told reporters outside the House.

State to create 25 lakh 'Lakhpati Didis': Majhi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday announced the launch of the 'Lakhpati Didi Sahayika Yojana' for the welfare of women working as community support staff at the grassroots level.

"I am introducing a new scheme called the 'Lakhpati Didi Sahavika Yojana,' Under this initiative, the government will temporarily bear the remuneration cost of the community support staff and will provide grants to Gram Panchayat Level Federations," he told the Assembly.

He said more than 62.000 community support staff will benefit from this decision, with their remuneration starting from April 2024. "Our government is committed to making women self-reliant and building a prosperous Odisha. Women community support staff play a crucial role in this vision. To address their challenges, we have taken an important step by launching this scheme," he added.

Majhi said the government is also implementing the 'Lakhpati Didi Ÿojana' for the economic growth of women in SHGs. Under this scheme, the goal is to help as many women members of SHGs as possible earn an income of `1 lakh annually. "The state government has set a target of creating 25 lakh 'Lakhpati Didis' by 2027," the CM said.

PM-led panel to name new **CEC** next week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: A selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to meet early next week to finalise the name of the next Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), sources said Friday.

The panel also comprises the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and a Union Cabinet minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

The panel could meet either Sunday or Monday ahead of the retirement of incumbent Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar February 18.

It will recommend a name from among the candidates shortlisted by a search committee. The President will then appoint the next CEC based on the recommendation.

After Rajiv Kumar, Gyanesh Kumar is the senior-most election commissioner. His tenure is till January 26, 2029. Sukh bir Singh Sandhu is the other election commissioner.

So far, the senior-most election commissioner (EC) was elevated as CEC following the retirement of the incumbent However, after a new law on appointments of the CEC and ECs came into force last year, a search committee shortlists names of five secretary-level officers for consideration by a PM-led panel for appointment to the posts.

Besides the CEC, a new EC could also be appointed to fill the vacancy created by Rajiv Kumar's retirement.

Scent of the mummy: Ancient Egyptian remains smell nice

London, Feb 14: At first whiff, it sounds repulsive: sniff the essence of an ancient corpse.

We know this is a very important

meeting, sir. She'll translate for you

and he'll translate for Musk's kids

But researchers who indulged their curiosity in the name of science found that well-preserved Egyptian mummies actually smell pretty good.

"In films and books, terrible things happen to those who smell mummified bodies," said Cecilia Bembibre, director of research at University College London's Institute for Sustainable Heritage. "We were surprised at the pleasantness of

"Woody," "spicy" and 'sweet" were the leading descriptions from what sounded more like a wine tasting than

a mummy sniffing exercise. Floral notes were also detected, which could be from pine and juniper resins used in em-The study published Thurs-

day in the Journal of the American Chemical Society used both chemical analysis and a panel of human sniffers to evaluate the odors from nine mummies as old as 5,000 years that had been either in storage or on display at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

The researchers wanted to systematically study the smell of mummies because it has long been a subject of fascination for the public and researchers alike, said Bembibre, one of the report's authors. Archaeologists, historians, conservators



and even fiction writers have devoted pages of their work to the subject — for good reason.

Scent was an important consideration in the mummification process that used oils,

waxes and balms to preserve the body and its spirit for the afterlife. The practice was largely reserved for pharaohs and nobility and pleasant smells were associated with purity and deities while bad odors were signs of corruption and decay.

Without sampling the mum mies themselves, which would be invasive, researchers from UCL and the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia were able to measure whether aromas were coming from the archaeological item, pesticides or other products used to conserve the remains, or from deterioration due to mold, bacteria or microorganisms.

We were quite worried that we might find notes or hints of decaying bodies, which wasn't the case," said Matija Strlic, a chemistry professor at the University of Ljubljana. "We were specifically worried that there might be indications of microbial degradation, but that was

not the case, which means that the environment in this museum, is actually quite good in terms of preservation.

Using technical instruments to measure and quantify air molecules emitted from sarcophagi to determine the state of preservation without touching the mummies was like the Holy Grail, Strlic said.

"It tells us potentially what social class a mummy was from and therefore reveals a lot of information about the mummified body that is relevant not just to conservators, but to curators and archaeologists as well," he said. "We believe that this approach is potentially of huge interest to other types of museum collections."

eisure



PAMELA WANTS MORE **CHALLENGING ROLES**

The Last Showgirl star Pamela Anderson has revealed the lasting impact she hopes the film will have on her career going forward. "I want challenging roles, I want to transform and see what I am made of. I feel like I have only just scratched the surface," quipped the 57-year-old.

KANYE WEST, BIANCA **DENY SPLIT RUMOURS**

A representative for Kanye West and Bianca Censori has denied reports suggesting they are heading for divorce insisting they are still together and have celebrated Valentine's Day as a couple.



accuracy • reliability • trust

Today ideas will flood your mind, but it is good that you will be able to carry them out efficiently. However, Ganesha warns you not to take brash decisions. Wise people will help you along the way. Pay heed to the advise of experienced people

TAURUS

Ganesha predicts that today, you will be successful in money matters. There is, at best, only an outside chance that any stimulating event or thrill ing escapade will occur today. In short, the day may be boring. Fret not as the dreary day may change into an exhilarating evening, feels Ganesha.

GEMINI

It is better for you to swim with the current in all of today's dealings, suggests Ganesha. This will help you effortlessly deal with even the most morbid state of affairs. No need to be a hero. today. Pleasure is the key word for you. Your performance will be satisfying at work, and more than satisfy-

CANCER

You will not only make plans, but will also act on them. So you can save money, time and energy for creative pursuits. The quality of your work and accomplishments will be high. Your creativity plays a key role

Today, Ganesha advises you to keep the Bhagavad Gita's verses in mind, and persist in fulfilling your duties without bothering about the fruits of your labour. Put in some extra effort to finish off whatever vou undertake todav. Patience bears its uits and they are always sweet. Also, Ganesha reminds you that anybody can enjoy pleasure, but only few can handle pressure. So, take your pick!

VIRGO

You better identify your worth in the realms of emotions, feelings and sentiments. You shall warm up to and about everything - from play to colleagues to amily. Simultaneously, you may realise where your limitations are. Ganesha predicts that the artist in you will flourish

Ganesha says that today in your office you should be very careful in your work. It is likely that your superiors will not be happy about your work or your ability today. Those of you who are business men should try and delay sending off tenders today.

SCORPIO

It is likely that you shall learn an important lesson in life to-day. Remember that spite and envy beget enemies. Ganesha advises you to display some errors so as to make you seem more human and approachable.

SAGITTARIUS

Today, find yourself driving all your thoughts and actions towards your family. You will also spend some superb time with your dearie and discuss intimate matters A relaxing day today as you spend time with your friends and family, chilling out and having a good laugh or two.

CAPRICORN

It's time to prove your extraordinary skills as a professional, says Ganesha. You will go out of your way, and even double your efforts to accomplish set goals, and chances are that you might succeed. Family and friends will be glad that could take out time to spend some happy hours with them. You will also let them know that they mean the world to you, and no matter what, you will be there whenever they need you.

AQUARIUS

The day begins on high note. You work hard, put your best foot forward and at the end get the final output as per your requirements. Romantic and beautiful, the setting Sun will bring the softer side of your personality to the fore as you will spend the evening with your sweetheart, predicts Ganesha.

PISCES

For you, today will be all work and no pay, says Ganesha. This, however, will not stop you from putting in extra efforts to finish your pending projects and to meet your deadlines. Who else but a Virgo to handle the pain nonchalantly without bemoaning the lack of pleasure?



Mumbai: Sukesh Chandrashekhar, currently incarcerated in Mandoli Jail, New Delhi, has sent a special Valentine's Day letter to actress Jacqueline Fernandez, professing his

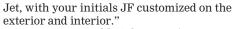
In an extravagant gesture for V-Day, Sukesh has gifted Fernandez a specially made Gulfstream jet with her initials, JF. customized on the exterior interior. The two-page letter,

dated February 14, was addressed to Jacqueline and included a heartfelt message along with an attachment. The letter read, "Baby know, you how special Valentines Day is for us, our relationship started on the day of Valentines. the day where we forgave and accepted each other the way we are. Your Valentine's Day present is a special-

ly made

Gulfst-

ream



He goes on to add, "The most important thing, no one can now question you about the Jet, because Baby I am Declaring the Jet in my Tax Returns for this year and paying the relevant gift taxes for the same, hereby

making it fully legal and not any alleged proceeds of crime. Baby girl, I know how much you love travelling, flying private, hope you love my Valentines present. Baby on this Valentines, I have only one wish, if there is a Re-Birth, I wanna be born as your heart, so that I can keep beating inside



movies, Rashmika Mandanna, fondly called 'Crushmika' by her fans, has gained significant popularity for her versatility and captivating screen presence. However, the actress says she doesn't follow a strategy when it comes to picking films and adds that she doesn't take her life too seriously, believing that one 'divine power' is guiding her. It won't be wrong to call Rashmika one of

the top heroines in Indian cinema courtesy the work she has done in blockbusters such as the Geetha Govindam, Chamak, Pushpa franchise and Animal to name a few. When it comes to picking films, does she

think about the value she would add to the project or the value it would add to her, the actress, who has a radiant smile, told this agency: "I think if you start thinking that way, you know, then life just becomes "Firstly, I don't take my life too

seriously. I just feel like there's one

divine power guiding me, right. And I honestly just go with the flow," she added. "But when I get films where I want to be a part of that storytelling, no matter what the character is, no matter if I'm a mother of two kids or a mother of four kids or I'm a grandmother or anything does not matter to me," said the actress, who has a natural sparkle and warmth in



Mumbai: Actress Adah Sharma on Valentine's Day has talked about what she finds most attractive qualities in a man and revealed that she is not into 'bad boys'

Talking about what she looks for in her perfect man, Adah said: "I think the most attractive quality in a man is if he can keep his phone away and be present in the moment. I'm not into bad boys , just like I'm not into food gone bad.

Adah added: "I like good sanskaari guys. If he laughs at my jokes, he will be happier in the relationship! larger volume of grey matter in the prefrontal cortex of his brain is more important for me in a guy than the size of his

Adah will next be seen in Mahesh Bhatt's Tumko *Meri Kasam* with Anupam Kher and Ishwak Singh. Directed by Vikram Bhatt, the movie is set to release in theatres March 21.

She will also be seen in the season 2 of Reeta Sanyal. Adah will be doing an project as well where she plays a superhero.

Years before SRK, PC, this Indian was 'world's biggest star'

The 1952 write-up highlighted Madhubala's stature, putting her over even Hollywood icons like Clark Gable, Audrey Hepburn, James Stewart, John Wayne, Natalie Wood, and Cary Grant

6 he biggest star in the world and she's not in Beverly Hills', read the headline of the cover story of the American magazine Theatre Arts' edition in 1952. The subject of the full-page piece was Indian cine star Madhubawas not just the reigning queen of Bollywood but one of the biggest box office draws in the world. And that piece highlighted her stature, putting her over even Hollywood icons like Clark Gable, Audrey Hepburn, James Stewart. John Wayne, Natalie Wood, and Cary Grant.

Art critic David Cort wrote the piece on Madhubala for Theatre Arts: "The story of India for the past 10 years may be condensed as follows: the war, the movie boom, and Madhubala." Born Mumtaz Jehan Begum Dehlavi, Madhubala began her film career at age 8 with

Basant in 1942. She progressed to lead roles by 14 and achieved success with Lal Dupatta, Mahal, and Dulari, all before she turned 16. In 1951, filmmaker and editor Aurbindo Mukhopadhyay reported that Madhubala charged Rs 1.5 lakh per film, the highest in the country. By 1952, when the Theatre Arts piece was written, Madhubala was 19. But she already boasted of blockbusters like Badal, Saiyan, and Tarana. With Tarana, she also gained critical acclaim and was considered the top star in Bollywood, alongside the three male superstars - Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, and Dev Anand.



In 1959, Madhubala was featured in the Time magazine, which called her one of the biggest stars in the world.

Madhubala gained international fame through a feature in the American magazine Life in 1951, followed by the Theatre Arts piece. Her Life feature had pictures by James Cobb Burke, one of the top photographers in the world. This prompted legendary filmmaker Frank Capra to approach her and offer her a break in Hollywood. However, Madhubala's father who also managed her - declined as he was uncomfortable with the

PEANUTS







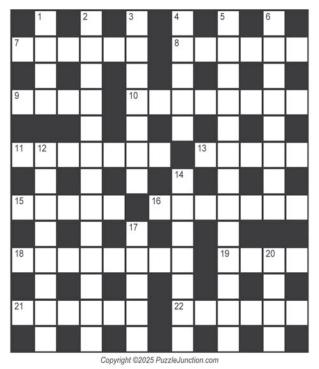
CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



POST **CROSSWORD**



16 Penned

about

19 Boundary

21 Sailplane

22 Crevice

Across

- 7 Ravel classic
- 8 Goof-offs
- 9 Scorch 10 Like weeds in a
- garden 11 Intense
- indignation
- 13 Personal journal
- 15 It may be fixed or blank

- <u>Down</u>
- 1 Tease
- 2 Carrousels
- (5-2-6)

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

- 18 Able to walk
 - 4 It won't hold water

3 Dragon lizard

- 5 Short-lived success
- (5,2,3,3)6 Cross
- 12 Too soon
- 14 Defend
- 17 Bear 20 Lady's escort

intimacy in American films.

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

SUDOKU

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

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

SOLUTIONS

	M	1	S	S	1	L	Е		Р	Α	С	Е	F
	0		0		М		Ν		1		Α		Е
	Р	Н	Υ	S	1	С	1	Α	Ν		R	U	Ν
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7 9 7 1 3 8 4 6 9 5 8 9 5 3 2 7 6 4 1 6 2 4 1 5 9

SUDOKU

owntown

MURDER CASE DETECTION

Commissioner of Police S Devdatta Singh briefs media about the arrest of a couple in connection with the sensational murder of an elderly couple that took place at Beleswar village under Madhupatna police limits in Cuttack in 2019, at DCP office in the Silver City, Friday



50% Class VIII students can't do basic division



Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Half of class VIII students in the state don't know basic arithmetic division and around 30 per cent struggle with subtraction. Odisha Assembly was informed

In a written reply to a query, state School and Mass Education Minister Nitvananda Gond said, "According to the Annual Status of Education Report (AS-ER)-2024, 69.5 per cent of class VIII students were able to perform subtraction, and 48.5 per cent of students can do division. against the national average of 68.5 per cent and 45.8 per cent, respectively."

Quoting the ASER report, Gond said, "The number of class VIII students who were able to do subtraction has increased by 6 per cent during the last decade (2014 to 2024).

Similarly, the percentage of such students who were able to do division also increased by 11 per cent during the period, he added while replying to a query by Baliguda MLA Chakramani.

'Odisha students' performance was better than the national average in 2024,

The minister further said the state government has been distributing Odia, English, and mathematics workbooks to class VIII students for practice. Besides, the government has planned to provide necessary study materials to the students for their education

Accordingly, proposals have oeen made to include it under magra Shiksha Yojana and the Budget 2025-26, he added.

BJD MLA seeks to know meaning of Odia Asmita

Bhubaneswar: What exactly does Odia Asmita (pride) mean? This question was raised by Opposition BJD MLA Arun Kumar Sahoo in the Assembly.

The BJP used Odia Asmita. among other planks, during electioneering last year and emerged victorious, defeating the BJD which was in power in Odisha for 24 years in a row.

Sahoo, a former Higher Education minister, asked, "What is the meaning of Odia Asmita as per the dictionary and how to explain it?"

In his written reply, Culture Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said that according to Odia dictionary, the word Asmita conveys concepts of self-awareness, 'I' ness, and an understanding of one's unique existence.

The minister said the definition has been obtained from the Odia dictionary published by the Odisha Sahitya Akademi, under the purview of Odia Language, Literature, and Culture department of the state government. The dictionary was first published in 2017 and re-issued in 2020, during the BJD tenure. However, the BJD leader was

not satisfied with the reply. "The explanation does not fully address the question about the

term's implications," Sahoo said. The BJD leader said that he got a partial reply to the question and will wait for the full answer of the term.

On the BJD MLA's dissatisfaction, the minister said, "I have presented the reply on Asmita by referring to the official Odia dictionary which has been prepared by a government agency. It's not possible for me to further explain Asmita by writing."

Odia Asmita is something that is to be felt in the Odia art, culture, language, tradition and development, he said, adding it 'is not a matter to be made a political issue. It is something much broader'.

5,318 beggars in state: Min

Bhubaneswar: The state government has so far identified 5,318 beggars across various districts and implemented the 'Sahaya' scheme to help them become self-employed, Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Minister Nityananda Gond told the Assembly Friday.

In a written reply, the SSEPD Minister said, "Out of 5,318 beggars identified in the state, Cuttack tops the list with 1,060.'

Additionally, there are 595 beggars in Bargarh district, followed by 545 in Ganjam, 482 in Bolangir, 417 in Sundargarh, 350 in Puri, 237 in Kalahandi and 205 in Angul, among others, Gond added. "Out of the state's 30 districts, Balasore, Boudh, Deogarh, Jagatsinghpur and Jajpur have been made beggar-free," he pointed out.

The Minister said, "The government has been implementing the 'Sahaya' scheme since 2017-18, under which steps are being taken to rehabilitate beggars."

Under the scheme, there's a provision to identify the beggars and impart training to make them self-employed, he said in his written reply.

"The government has also been taking steps to open rehabilitation centres for beggars," the SSEPD Minister



CROWD PULLER: Bheem, a massive 6-ft buffalo from Jodhpur in Rajasthan, weighing around 1,500kg is the sta attraction at Matsya Pranee Samavesh Odisha 2025 being held at Baramunda in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OPCC revokes suspension, expulsion orders on leaders

party to return.

ology of the party.'

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Three

days after being named as the

new president of the Odisha

Pradesh Congress Committee

(OPCC), Bhakta Charan Das

Friday revoked the suspension

and expulsion of all leaders and

appealed to those who quit the

In a press statement, Das

said, "The party has withdrawn

all the earlier suspension and

expulsion orders on leaders. We

also appeal to the leaders who

have quit the party to return.

The Congress will welcome all

leaders who believe in the ide-

Party sources said Das is

'As soon as the new presi-

scheduled to return to Odisha

dent arrives at the Biju Patnaik

International Airport here, he

will lead a 'Sankalpa Padyatra'

to the abode of Lord Jagannath

in Puri," a senior leader said,

adding that a 17-member coor-

dination committee has been

formed to organise the event.

Das has appealed to all lead-

ers and party workers to ac-

tively participate in the Pady-

Ajay Kumar Lallu new Cong state in-charge The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Friday appointed a new in-charge for the party's state unit. A notification issued by Congress General

Secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal stated that AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Ajay Kumar Lallu as the new in-charge of the Congress party in Odisha. Lallu, who replaces Ajoy Kumar as the AICC in-charge for Odisha, had been elected twice to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly in the past. He had also served as the president of Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee.

atra and make it a success. Das, 66, hailing from the

tribal-dominated Kalahandi district, was appointed as the new OPCC chief seven months after the post remained vacant following Congress's dismal performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in the state.

While Das belongs to Dalit community, the party appointed Rama Chandra Kadam, a tribal as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party.

According to political analysts, the grand old party has strategically put a tribal and a Dalit as the party's face in Odisha, which constitutes 23 per cent and 17 per cent of the state's population,

Disclosure affidavits must

The party has remained out of power for 25 years after Naveen Patnaik took the reins of the state in 2000.

Now that Patnaik's BJD has lost the polls and the BJP emerged as the winner, Congress has been pushed to third

"As there is chaos in the BJD after the regional party lost power in the state and two of its MPs quitting the party, Congress could emerge as the potential alternative to BJP in Odisha if it strengthens its

Das has appealed to all leaders and party workers to actively participate in the Sankalp Padyatra and make

base," a senior leader said.

MP man held for robbery at City wedding

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: The Commissionerate Police Friday claimed to have solved the mysterious theft of cash and jewellery worth Rs 1.2 lakh at a City wedding venue February 2 with the arrest of a 20-vear-old Madhva Pradesh (MP) native from Puri.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Pinak Mishra said a pair of diamond bangles, one mangal sutra, one pair of gold earrings, two gold rings, and a diamond bracelet have been recovered from the possession of Ritesh Sisodia following his arrest. His associate is still to be nabbed. Mishra said Sisodia and his associate had gatecrashed into the wedding venue at Suryansh Hotel, near Nalco Square, by posing as guests.

"With their distinct skills to impress people and with meticulous planning, the accused are experts in making smooth entry into wedding ceremonies before executing their plans," Mishra said.

The DCP said Sisodia, a native of Rajgarh district in MP, belong to the Sansi community. He would travel across the country with his associates to commit thefts at wedding ceremonies, "They would surf popular wedding venues in various cities before fixing their targets. In order to succeed in their plans, they would dress elegantlv. At the venues, they target the bride's family," he said.

On February 2, Ritesh and his associate struck at the wedding ceremony of one Saroj Kumar Mishra's daughter at Suryansh Hotel. "They moved close to Mishra's wife who was sitting on the wedding stage and quietly took away her vanity bag containing approximately 170 gm gold ornaments, and cash. Later, when she found the bag missing, she raised an alarm. An analysis of the hotel's CCTV footage led to the identification of Sisodia and his friend," Mishra said.

Sisodia ran out of his luck when he and his associate targeted another wedding venue in Puri the next morning. Cops in plain clothes spotted them and nabbed Sisodia. His associate however, managed to make good his escape, Mishra said.

State govt-EESL pact for fostering energy efficiency

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: The state government Friday inked a pact with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under Ministry of Power, to collaborate on exchange of ideas, technologies, and information for the implementation of large-scale energy efficiency measures.

The MoU was signed between Energy department and EESL in presence of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, who also holds the Energy portfolio, EESL CEO Vishal Kapoor, Energy department Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev and other senior officers.

According to Energy department sources, this partnership marks a commitment to fostering energy efficiency and sustainability across various sectors, reinforcing Odisha's leadership in climate action and green development.

"The collaboration will serve as a framework for deploying innovative and sustainable solutions, including energy efficiency projects in public buildings and municipal servi-



ty, and initiatives for capacity building, knowledge sharing, and joint research and development," they said.

The Deputy Chief Minister said Odisha is committed to becoming a leader in energy efficiency and sustainability.

"This MoU will help us enhance energy security, reduce costs, and improve public infrastructure across the state. By implementing large-scale energy efficiency projects, promoting clean mobility, and adopting innovative solutions, we are ensuring a greener, more resilient future for our citizens. This is a major step towards

realising Odisha's vision for sustainable development and economic growth," he said.

Dev said, "Enhancing energy efficiency is a key priority for Odisha as we strive for a more sustainable and resilient future. This MoU will enable us to leverage advanced technologies and best practices to optimise energy consumption across multiple sectors.

"This MoU is a testament to our shared vision for sustainable development and energy conservation. We are confident that this partnership will accelerate Odisha's leadership in energy efficiency and contribute significantly to India's Net Zero targets," Kapoor said.

Cuttack, Feb 14: The Orissa High Court has reaffirmed that the filing of a disclosure affidavit, as mandated by the Supreme Court in Rajnesh Vs Neha and Another, is a mandatory requirement for deciding applications for maintenance under various legal provisions.

The HC was hearing a revision petition challenging an order of the family court, which had directed the petitioner-husband to pay Rs 10,000 per month each to his wife and son under Section 125 of the CrPC.

Justice G Satapathy, presiding over the single-judge bench, noted, "It appears that neither of the parties has filed



the disclosure affidavit as required under Rajnesh (supra). However, the Supreme Court in Rajnesh (supra) has issued clear guidelines making it mandatory for the petitioner-applicant to file such an affidavit when initiating a maintenance proceeding."

Advocate A Mishra represented the petitioner-husband, while advocate A Swain appeared for the respondent.

The petitioner's counsel ar-

gued that since neither party had submitted the required affidavit the family court's order was flawed. He also contended that the petitioner's salary in 2017 was Rs 10,300, making it unreasonable for the court to order him to pay Rs 20,000 per

The respondent's counsel, ho wever, maintained that despite the absence of the affidavit, the family court had considered relevant materials while passing its order

month from December 1, 2017.

The HC accepted the petitioner's arguments and allowed the revision petition, reinforcing that compliance with the Rainesh Vs Neha guidelines is essential in maintenance pro-

US tariffs to significantly impact India's export landscape

nited States President Donald Trump's announcement to implement reciprocal tariffs is poised to significantly impact India's export landscape. These tariffs are designed to mirror the duties that countries impose on US goods, potentially affecting several key Indian export sectors.

April-November During 2024-25, the US was the second largest trading partner of India with USD 82.52 billion bilateral trade in goods (USD 52.89 billion worth of exports, USD 29.63 billion of imports and USD 23.26 billion trade surplus). During 2021-24, America was the largest trading partner of India.

According to Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). the top 100 US export products account for 75 per cent of India's total imports from that country. While India's simple average tariff is 17 per cent, the actual duties on key US imports are much lower.

A Morgan Stanley report Thursday said the direct impact of reciprocal tariff hikes will likely be manageable. However, the indirect impact through uncertainty weighing on business confidence is more worrisome.

The report stated that product-wise, tariff differentials are stark, and key segments. which could come under pressure due to reciprocal tariff hikes, are electrical, industrial machinery, gems and jewellery, pharmaceuticals, fuels, textiles, iron and steel, automobiles, and chemicals.



Key Indian exports likely to be

According to a NDTV report, the US has expressed concerns over India's high

tariffs on American motorcycles and cars. In response, the US may impose equivalent tariffs on Indian automotive exports. Brands like Royal Enfield, which have a substantial market in the US, could face significant challenges due to increased costs for American consumers.

Indian engineering products are also going to be hit as the US remains their primary market. According to a report in The Economic Times, Indian exporters in this sector might encounter heightened competition and reduced profit margins, potentially slowing export growth.

The other major sector going to be hit substantially is steel and aluminum with the reintroduction of a 25 per cent tariff. Despite India's robust domestic market, these tariffs could lead

to oversupply issues and in tensified competition within the US market.

In previous trade disputes. India has imposed retaliatory tariffs on US agricultu ral goods. The current tariff escalation could prompt the US to target Indian agricultural exports, affecting products like spices, tea, and

Trade analysts say this will particularly affect the over 5.4 million people of Indian descent living in the US, and around 5,661 Indian restaurants (not including food trucks and ghost restau rants) who are completely dependent on imports from India for their daily needs.

OrissaPOS^{*}

Guv for stock market listing of state PSUs

PSUs is to ensure transparen-

cy, efficiency, and financial

discipline in managing public

only enhances the company's

value but also contributes sig-

he remarked. He stressed the

need for timely audits and regu-

lar submission of audit reports

to build credibility and respect-

Kambhampati also

pressed concerns over the

failure of several PSUs to con-

duct annual general meetings

(AGMs) or finalise their annu-

al accounts, terming this as a

violation of corporate gover-

He urged PSU heads to ad-

here to financial norms, hold

AGMs regularly, and finalise

accounts by September 30 of the

The course provides

in-depth insights into

Ultrasonography, CT

scan, MRI, and PET CT

scan applications in HPB

diseases

POST NEWS NETWORK

following financial year.

ability with the public.

nance principles.

nificantly to the state's wealth,

"A well-functioning PSU not

resources.



Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Friday proposed listing of select state public sector undertakings (PSUs) and government-owned companies on stock market, a move aimed at transforming Odisha's economy.

Speaking at a high-level review meeting attended by all PSUs at New Abhishek Hall of Raj Bhavan here Friday, the Governor underscored the potential of this initiative to enhance accountability, drive performance and increase the financial strength of state PSUs.

The meeting was organised to bring to focus the importance of timely financial reporting, and compliance with statutory guidelines for financial discipline, transparency and good governance in PSUs.

The Governor highlighted

The Governor highlighted that the core responsibility of PSUs is to ensure transparency, efficiency, and financial discipline in managing public resources

Addressing the common perception that PSUs are loss-making entities, Kambhampati reassured that the reality now is different. He stressed on the significance of transparency, audits and compliance which are essential to rebuild public trust in PSUs. Drawing inspiration from Gujarat's success story under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the Governor cited how undervalued PSU stocks there (in Gujarat) have now become highly sought-after investment options.

"PSUs are the backbone of our economy. Their full potential must be realised for the benefit of the people and the state," said Kambhampati, urging the heads of these units to prioritise financial discipline and ensure up-todate accounts.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from various departments, including Principal Secretary to Governor NBS Rajput, Principal AG



ROADBLOCK: Police personnel prevent the agitating members of Odisha SHG Mahila Mahasangha from marching towards state Assembly near Lowe PMG in Bhubaneswar Friday

BMC launches 'Zero Waste Office' campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: The 'Charity begins at home' went well with the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) as the civic body Friday launched 'Zero-Waste Office' campaign, a significant step towards environment protection that is intended to be emulated by other offices in City.

As part of this initiative the BMC headquarters will be made waste-free, setting an example for responsible waste management, this was revealed at a workshop in this regard Friday.

To achieve this goal, employees and visitors are encouraged to follow five key practices: No or tobacco, and no spitting on premises; elimination of plastic carry bags; minimising food waste; using glass or steel bottles instead of plastic for drinking water, and reducing use of paper wherever possible.

A strict monitoring system will ensure that no unnecessary items or excess paper are present in any section of BMC departments. A Zero-Waste Audit will also be conducted to reinforce this initiative. Each

three members to oversee and implement waste management practices effectively.

Additionally, single-use plastic has been strictly prohibited both inside and outside the civic body office. Employees bringing food from home or outside are expected to minimise food waste. Paper cups, plates, and other disposables will be kept in a designated area for proper disposal. "We must first adopt these practices ourselves before encouraging others," said BMC Commission-

He emphasised that ze ro-waste living is not a difficult concept but a practical approach that can easily be integrated into daily life. By following environ-

mental regulations and embrac

ing a zero-waste lifestyle, both

personal and social well-being

can be enhanced. This BMC earlier had launched 'Zero Waste Schools' in City schools by efficiently processing wet waste in their campuses and recycling dry

waste, BMC commissioner said Additional Commissioner Subhendu Kumar Sahu stated that BMC staffers will first implement these practices in their offices before extending the noble initiative across all

WEATHER

BBSR CTC 31.2° Max Temp Min Temp Humidity Rainfall **FORECAST** Fog/mist in the morning and mainly





VARIATION SENSEX **75939.21** † 199.76 **22929.25 †** 102.15 **EURO GOLD**

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: In a significant step towards medical education and training, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here introduced the country's first-ever Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary (HPB) Radiology course. Spearheaded by the departments of Surgical Gastroenterology and Radio-diagnosis, the course was conducted under the aegis of International Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association (IHP-BA)-Indian Chapter.

Designed to enhance the understanding of complex HPB surgical anatomy, the course



HPB Radiology course begins at City AIIMS

provides in-depth insights into Ultrasonography, CT scan, MRI, and PET CT scan applications in HPB diseases. It aimed at refining diagnostic precision, improving surgical planning, and optimising postoperative follow-up to enhance patient care outcomes

Recognising the indispensable role of radiological interpretation in HPB diseases, the comprehensive course provided extensive training to HPB surgical trainees and faculty members from across the country. The programme was

structured into three online sessions covering the fundamentals of HPB radiology, followed by two days of intensive hands-on

physical training. Experts in HPB and liver transplant surgery, HPB interventional radiology, and advanced imaging techniques delivered insightful lectures, equipping participants with the latest advancements and best practices. A special live session featured real-time interventional procedures, providing train-

ees with practical exposure to

The event was graced by AIIMS Bhubaneswar executive director Ashutosh Biswas as chief guest. Other eminent figures present included IHP-BA-India secretary Biju Pottakkat, ex-president Sanjay Govil. scientific chair Naimish Mehta and Radiodiagnosis department head at AIIMS Bhubaneswar Suprava Naik. The organising team included chairman Bramhadatta Pattnaik, organising secretary Ranjan Kumar Patel and Taraprashad Tripathy.

The landmark initiative is expected to elevate the standards of HPB surgical training in the country, equipping medical professionals with enhanced radiological interpretation skills. With the growing complexity of HPB diseases and their treatment, the course lays a strong foundation for advancing diagnostic accuracy, improving surgical outcomes, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration in HPB care.

IHM MEET EXPLORES CAREER OPTIONS IN HOSPITALITY SECTOR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: In order to raise awareness about hospitality education and explore career prospects in the hospitality industry among youth of the state, Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) here. in collaboration with Press Information Bureau (PIB), organised a press meet at the institute's premises Friday.

The meeting chaired by IHM Bhubaneswar principal Sharada Ghosh was also attended by senior faculty members Sambit Suman and Pramathadhip Kar.

Ghosh said, "With the state emerging as a key tourism hub and witnessing a surge in luxury hotels and resorts, the demand for skilled professionals is at an all-time high." She highlighted premier courses offered by the institute, including BSc in Hospitality and Hotel Administration and MSc in Hospitality Administration, both awarded by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi. Designed to impart industry-rele vant skills, these programmes offer students a pathway to lucrative and dynamic career opportunities, she added.

She further highlighted that students from any academic background can apply for BSc course, provided they have English as one of their subjects Encouraging young aspirants she underscored the vast oppor tunities that hotel management presents as a rewarding and evolving profession. "Beyond hotel chains, employment op portunities are available across airlines, railways, industrial catering, facility management hospitals, retail, food service and even the armed forces. Skill sets acquired during the course enable students to seamlessly integrate into various service industry domains," said Suman

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

SILVER

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Rajgangpur, No.-390, dated 14.02.2025, I, Chandrika Sahu, W/o-Gopal Krishna Behera, R/o- Govt. Medical Campus, Ward No.-4, P.O./P.S.- Rajgangpur, Dist.- Sundargarh, Odisha declare that I have changed my daughter's name from Madhusmita Sahu to Madhusmita Behera. Henceforth, she shall be known as Madhusmita Behera for all purposes. Chandrika Sahu

City celebrates Valentine's Day

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Valentine's Day fever gripped the Capital City as lovebirds and couples celebrated the day of love, roaming around parks, malls, temples and tourist hotspots.

Youths and couples were seen exchanging gifts and enjoying candlelight dinner at cafes and restaurants in the City. Popular spots like Esplanade Mall, DN Regalia, and Market Building were bustling with shoppers, while florists saw a surge in demand for ros-

es, teddy bears, and chocolates. "Roses are selling like hotcakes," said Rajesh, a florist near Jayadev Vihar. "Every year, the demand goes up on Valentine's Day.'

Many couples visited holy

places like Lingaraj Temple and Ram Mandir, seeking divine blessings for their love. Even in the evening, temple courtyards remained lively with couples engaging in quiet

conversations. Restaurants in Saheed Nagar and Patia rolled out special candlelight dinner attracting offers, couples eager for a romantic evening. "Our Valentine's Day bookings are full," said Sandeep Mishra, manager of a

cafe in Infocity Major parks, including IG Park and Jaydev Vatika, witnessed a surge in visitors, with couples capturing special moments amidst nature. Despite occasional restrictions and debates surrounding Valentine's Day, Bhubaneswar embraced the spirit of love, proving that romance always finds a way.

CSIR-IMMT flags off Vigyan Rath

Bhubaneswar: In an attempt to popularise 'one week one theme' scientific research activities, Vigyan Rath was flagged off at Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) here Friday. Department of Scientific Research and Industrial Research secretary and CSIR director N Kalaiselvi inaugurated the initiative. CSIR-IMMT director Ramanuj Narayan and chief scientist LD Besar, Odisha Mining Corporation Limited operations director Sabyasachi Mohanty and students from government UP school at RRL Colony were present on the occasion. "The Vigyan Rath will travel through schools, colleges, and communities in Odisha, Jharkhand, and neighbouring states, inspiring citizens to engage with science and innovation, aligning with the vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'. Over three weeks, it will disseminate scientific knowledge and inspire citizens to contribute to India's growth," said Kalaiselvi

BJP likely to elect new president soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is likely to announce the name of its new president soon as it has been almost finalised at the party's core committee meeting held here Friday, a senior party leader said.

Balasore MP and returning officer for the party's organisational election, Pratap Chandra Sarangi said, "It is almost final and the name of the new president will be declared in two to three days." Discussions were held on the coordination between the party and the government during the meeting, he said.

Apart from Sarangi, the meeting was attended by the



party's National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, State president Manmohan Samal, party's Odisha in-charge Viiavpal Singh Tomar and others. Party sources said Samal is

likely to be reelected to the post. He had previously served as the state president from 1999 to 2004 and was reappointed on March 24, 2023

BJB retains NAAC 'A' grade

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: BJB Autonomous College here has retained its 'A' grade from the National Assessment and Ac creditation Council (NAAC).

The college has been accred ited with a CGPA of 3.11 out of a seven-point scale. The accreditation is valid for a period of five years, starting from February 13, 2025. Making the announce ment to this effect, the college principal in-charge Jhumk Rath said, "I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all stakeholders, including our staff, students, alumni, and for mer principal, who have contributed to this achievement Your tireless efforts, passion and commitment to excellence have made this possible.'

This accreditation is not only a recognition of our past achievements, but also a challenge to continue striving for ex cellence in the future, said Rath

BOOKING

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488 Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347 Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Fertiliser black-marketing rampant in Balasore dist



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Feb 14: Large-scale black-marketing of fertilisers and pesticides in Jaleswar and other blocks of Balasore district has raised concern among farmers even as district Agriculture department has remained a mute spectator to the issue.

Government records indicate that Jaleswar region is home to 148 licensed fertiliser shops and 95 licensed pesticide dealers. However, unauthorised shops selling these essential agricultural inputs illegally have proliferated in rural areas too.

The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has set the market prices for different types of fertilisers, and the state Agriculture department has displayed these price lists at all licensed retail outlets.

Despite these measures, it is alleged that shopkeepers are selling fertilisers at prices higher than the govern-

ment-mandated rates. The problem is severe in Raibania area of Jaleswar block and along West Bengal border, where black-marketing of fertilisers is rampant. Several unlicensed shops in various villages are also reportedly selling fake/substandard fertilisers and pesticides. These illegal activities continue unabated due to lack of regular inspection by the local Agriculture department.

Every year, around 2,500 hectares of land in Jaleswar and Bhograi blocks are undertaken for cultivation of Rabi paddy, requiring large amounts of fertilisers and pesticides. Taking advantage of seasonal demand, unscru-

hoarding supplies and selling those at inflated prices.

According to reports, farmers in areas like Raibania. Hatigarh, Khanabada, Olmara, Chafla, Munutunia, and Teghari in Jaleswar block have been forced to pay ₹ 1,650 or more per bag for DAP (Di-Ammonium Phosphate) fertiliser, which has a government mandated price of ₹1,350 per bag. Similarly, a 50-kg bag of urea, officially priced at ₹266, is being sold at ₹350. The 50-kg bag of Bharat NPK (28-28-0) fertiliser is being sold for ₹1,800 to ₹1,900 as against the official price of ₹1,700. Other fertilisers are also reportedly being sold at arbitrary prices.

This price manipulation is not limited to Jaleswar and Bhograi blocks but extends to rural areas across the district where government-approved dealers are exploiting farmers by overcharging them. Despite these illegal practices, the local Agriculture department has remained a silent spectator. Locals have alleged that some corrupt officials have colluded with unscrupulous traders, allowing them to operate without fear.

Farmers have demanded immediate action from the district administration and Agriculture department to curb the black market. When contacted, District Agriculture Officer Laxman Murmu assured that a crackdown on illegal shops would be conducted soon.

of the local block education of-

ficer, demanding action against

the accused teacher, but noth-

The family then filed a com-

plaint with the local police sta-

tion. The police too, allegedly

sat over the complaint and did

nothing for about two weeks.

ing happened.



EVICTION DRIVE: Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) carried out an eviction drive at over 30 years old Budharaja Daily Market near

Poverty drives couple to 'give away' infant girl

Baripada, Feb 14: Owing to abject poverty, a mother handed over her five-month-old girl child to another person after failing to feed her. The shocking incident reported from Mayurbhani district has sparked widespread concern. The couple struggling to make ends meet, took the heartbreaking decision as they could not afford to care for their eighth child.

Upon receiving information, block administration officials launched an investigation and rescued the infant and placed her under the care of the District Child

Welfare department in Baripada. Mohan Hansda, a resident of Ambasikada village in Sha-

makhunta block, had married Lakhia Hansda of Sanapuria village under Morada block. After marriage, they settled in a temporary polythene-covered hut in Lakhia's village instead of returning to Mohan's hometown. The couple has four sons and as many daughters.

The only government assistance the family has received is a ration card, which provides 40kg rice per month. Mohan, a daily wage labourer, found it nearly impossible to support his 10-member family with his meagre earnings. Lakhia revealed that her children often went hungry, sometimes surviving on handia (fermented rice beer). Out of desperation, she decided to give away her

The family had built an acquaintance with one Manoranjan Behera from Dhatika village under Shuliapada police limits, who frequently visited their area to sell earthen pots. Aware of the family's woes, Manoranjan offered to take in the infant, and the parents agreed. After taking custody of the baby, Manoranjan brought her to his village.

However, officials from the Women and Child Welfare department promptly intervened after being alerted. Supervisor Sushma Panigrahi, CHO Subhasmita Pradhan, Anganwadi worker Gaura Kisku, and ASHA worker Geetanjali Tipiria visited Mohan's house for an inquiry.

Following further investi gation, Shuliapada CDPO Tanushree Mishra and supervisor Sushma Panigrahi went to Dhatika village and rescued the child from Manoranjan. It was later revealed that Manoranjan had planned to hand over the baby to a relative named Abhi iit Singh in West Bengal.

The incident has sparked concerns about a possible interstate child trafficking network. While local police officials, including Morada IIC Satya Narayan Bal and Shuliapada IIC Aditya Prasad Jena, confirmed the case is now under the jurisdiction of the District Child Welfare department, they stated that no police investigation would be conducted at this stage.

6-YEAR-OLD BOY DROWNS IN POND

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Feb 14: In a tragic incident, a six-year-old boy drowned in a pond at Lakshmankhunta village under Rupsa police limits in Balasore district Friday. The deceased child has been identified as Jayadeb, the only son of Chittaranjan Mohanty. While Chittaranjan works for a private company in Guiarat, his wife was away for work when the incident took place Friday. Jayadeb was under the care of his grandparents.

While playing near their house, the child accidentally fell into a nearby pond. After an extensive search, locals found him in the pond and rushed him to Rupsa Community Health Centre. However, doctors declared him dead on arrival. Police have registered an unnatural death case (2/25)and are investigating the matter.

Teacher held for misbehaving with girl

Jajpur, Feb 14: A teacher was arrested Friday on the charge of inappropriately touching a Class VII girl student on the school premises in Jajpur district, a police officer said.

The accused is an assistant teacher at a government high school under the jurisdiction of the Jenapur police station. He was arrested Friday for allegedly touching the private parts of the 13-year-old student January 27, the police officer said.

The matter came to the fore when the girl narrated the incident to her mother after reaching home. Her father approached the headmaster of the school the next day. But the headmaster reportedly failed to resolve the issue.

The victim's family also

Protesting against police inaction and the Education department's callousness, local villagers, including the school's students, staged a dharna in front of the school Thursday. They also demanded that the accused teacher be arrested.

The Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Jajpur Road, SK Patnaik, reached the spot and assured the protesters that the accused would be arrested, following which the agitation was

The police arrested the accused teacher from Bhubaneswar Friday. He was forwarded to a local court and remanded to judicial custody, the police officer said.

Meanwhile, the Jajpur district education officer (DEO) has suspended the teacher following his arrest.

Pulwama attack anniv: NMO honours martyrs

Sambalpur: The National Medicos Organisation (NMO) organised a memorial meeting at the seminar hall of VIMSAR, Burla in this district Friday to pay tribute to the martyrs on the sixth anniversary of the Pulwama attack. The event commemorated the supreme sacrifice of 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel who lost their lives in the horrific attack February 14, 2019. The ceremony began with the lighting of lamps and two minutes of silence in honour of the departed souls. NMO members paid their respects by recalling the courage and dedication of the martyrs. Addressing the gathering, Dr Sanjeev Kumar Mishra emphasised the significance of their sacrifice and highlighted the necessity of national unity. Dr Gopeshwari Hota, who presided over the meeting, urged the organisation to extend support to the families of the martyrs. She also stressed the service among medical students.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER **RWS&S DIVISION, ATHAGARH** At/P.O.: Athagarh, Email: eerwssathagarh@gmail.com INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) [e-Procurement] Bid Identification No.RWS/ATH/10/2024-25 Letter No. 111/Dt.28.01.25 The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Athagarh on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites lump sum rate bid in double cove system in ONLINE MODE from eligible Civil Contractors for the works as detailed below under RWSS Division, Athagarh Construction of Govt. Quarter RWS&S Division, Athagarh under Athagarh Block in the district of Cuttack Dt.03.03.2025 upto 5.30 P.M. Date of opening of bid : On Dt.04.03.2025 at 11.30 A.M. onwards Any corrigendum / amendment / cancellation of IFB will be displayed in the e-tender website only. Cost of tender paper to be made through Online payment system. can be seen from the website i.e. http://tendersorissa.gov.in

Rourkela police launch 'Anusandhan Portal' for transparent FIR tracking



Rourkela, Feb 14: Rourkela police have launched 'Anusandhan Portal', a first-of-its-kind digital platform designed to enhance transparency and accessibility in the FIR tracking process for citizens. The portal, hosted on the newly revamped website of Rourkela police, enables complainants to monitor their case status in real time.

Speaking about the initiative, Superintendent of Police (SP) Nitesh Wadhwani said, "This portal allows complainants to check the real-time status of their FIRs, ensuring a seamless and efficient experience in accessing crucial updates related to their cases.

The 'Anusandhan Portal' is designed keeping user convenience and legal compliance in mind. It adheres to Section 193(3)(II) of BNSS 2023 and features a simple OTP-based login system, ensuring accessibility even for non-technical users.

functionality, Explaining its Wadhwani said, "Our objective is to bring transparency and accountability to the FIR tracking system. The investigation progress will be visible at various stages, giving complainants clarity on their cases.'

The portal offers multi-language support in Odia and Hindi, ensuring wider accessibility for native speakers. It also

incorporates strict security measures to protect sensitive FIR-related data.

The SP further informed that the complainant has to visit the Anusandhan Portal hosted on Rourkela police's official website. Then they need to select the complainant login option, enter the necessary details, including registered mobile number. Finally, after authenticating the OTP received on their mobile they can access the status and updates of their FIR.

To reduce the need for complainants to repeatedly check the portal, the system sends automatic SMS notifications whenever a new update is available. "This ensures that complainants remain informed without the hassle of logging in multiple times," Wadhwani added.

The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela provided technical support in developing the portal. "We are grateful to NIT Rourkela for their invaluable assistance in building this platform," Wadhwani said.

He further emphasised that this initiative aligns with Rourkela police's commitment to digital governance, transparency, and environmental sustainability, as it reduces the need for paper-based processes. "With Anusandhan, we aim to build stronger trust between law enforcement and the public. ensuring a more efficient and accountable policing system," he added.

Bank of India बैंक ऑफ इंडिया BOI Zonal Office: Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev

POSSESSION NOTICE Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Chakeisiani Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/ Co-Applicant in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-Applicant and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Ċo-Applicant in particular and the public in genèral is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India. Chakeisiani Branch for an amount mentioned below with interest

of time available to redeem the secured assets. **Date of Demand CHAKEISIANI BRANCH** / Liabilities due **Description of the Property** Notice / Date of as per Notice Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Applicant Possession Borrower: Mrs. Mandakini Parida, All that part and parcel of Land situated over Khata No. 26,47,617.54 : Mr. Purna Chandra Parida 02.02.2024 686/1500, Plot No.: 434/7528, Sub Plot No.: 4 and Sub + interest & Co-Applicant: Mr. Romio Ranian Parida. Plot No.: 5, Area: Ac.0.055 Dec (2395.8 Sqft), Kissam expenses Both are At/P.O.: Gopalpur, P.S.: Chandabali, 10.02.2025 Homestead at Mouza: Adalia, P.S.: Cuttack Sadar Dist.: Bhadrak, Odisha-756133 thereon Thana No.: 47, Tahasil No.: 275, DSRO: Cuttack Tahasil: Cuttack, Dist.: Cuttack, Standing in the name of Mrs. Mandakini Parida, W/o.: Mr. Purna Chandra Parida, Bounded by North Plot No.: 433, South: Internal 20 feet Road, East: Sub Plot No.: 6, West: Sub Plot No.: 3

& expenses thereon. The Borrowers' attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect

UCO BANK

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 15.02.2025

Zonal Office, UCO Bank Building, 2nd Floor, C-2, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751009, Tel: 0674-2620423

DEMAND NOTICE (for Immovable Property)

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

Demand Notice u/s. 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 was issued by the Authorised Officer against the following Borrower of UCO Bank, Gopalpur Branch.

GOPALPUR BRANCH Balance due as per **Schedule of Mortgaged Properties** Demand Name & Address of Borrower **Demand Notice Notice Date** Borrower: M/s. Sri Coastal Aqua 1) All the hypothecated assets, viz. Current Assets ₹ 32,00,221/-30.09.2024 Marine, Prop.: Mr. Wardi Nageswar, including Stocks, Book Debts, Receivables, as on 30.09.2024 Wardi Krishna Rao, At: Bandar, Consumable Stores & Spares and Hypothecated Interest and other P.O.: Gopalpur, Dist.: Ganjam-761002 expenses thereon Movable Plant & Machinery, 2) All that part and parcel of the immovable property situated at Mouza: Upulaputi, Thana: Gopalpur, Tahasil: Chatrapur, Dist.: Ganjam, Khata

No.: 263/1218, Plot No.: 1098/1997, Area: 50,530 sq.ft., in the name of Mr. Wardi Nageswar, Bounded by East: Road, West: Land of V. Rajeswari, Wardhi Rameya & Wardhi Korleya, North: Land of Jami Jagannath Rao, South: Land of V.Rajeswari You have committed default in repayment of loan and further interest at the agreed rate availed from **Gopalpur Branch** as mentioned in the above table. The Bank has issued notice under the said Act to repay the outstanding amount in the above mentioned table. The Demand Notice sent to the above mentioned parties by Regd. Post with AD which could not be served. Due to irregularity in repayment of a such due, the debt has been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA) You are therefore, called upon to pay the dues together with interest within 60 days from the date of this notice failing which Bank will be constrained to exercise the right of Enforcement of Security Interest as against the mortgaged secured assets given in the schedule as per securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. In terms of Sub-Section 13 of Section 13 you should not transfer the above said property by sale, lease or otherwise without obtaining written consent of the Bank. This notice is without prejudice to any other right remedy available to the Bank including initiation of legal action. Your kind attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 14.02.2025

Authorised Officer, UCO Bank

IN DEBTS RECOVERY APPELLATE TRIBUNAL AT KOLKATA **DIARY NO. 961 OF 2024**

Sd./- Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Athagarh

SUNDARAM BNP PARIBAS HOME ...APPELLANT **VERSUS** BANK OF BARODA & ORS.

...RESPONDENTS 1. MR. JAHANGIR ALI MOLLA Jholsa

Sahi, near Bimala Mandir, P.O.- Buxibazar, District - Cuttack-753001, Odisha Respondent No. 2
2. MRS. RUKSANA BEGUM, Jholsa Sahi, near Bimala Mandir, P.O.-Buxibazar District — Cuttack-753001, Odisha.

..Respondent No. 3 3. MR. SAYED AHSAN ALI, Nima sahi

P.O.- Buxibazar, District — Cuttack 753002, Odisha ..Respondent No. 4 4. SK. SALIMUDDIN, Nima sahi, P.O.

Buxibazar, District — Cuttack-753001, Odisha. ...Respondent No. 6 5. SK. NASIMUDDIN, Nima sahi, P.O Buxibazar, District- Cuttack-753001 ...Respondent No. 7 6. KALSER BIBI, Nima sahi, P.o. Buxibazar, District - Cuttack- 753001

...Respondent No. 8 7. SK ARIF, S/O Sk. Kasim, Darga Bazar Kadam Rasool, P.O.- Buxibazar, District Cuttack-753001, Odisha

SUMMONS WHEREAS the appellant has filed an

appeal u/s 18 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 against the order passed by the Learned Presiding Offcer, DRT- Cuttack, and other You are hereby summoned to

his Tribunal at 10:30 a.m. or at such time mmediately thereafter according to the onvenience of the Tribunal on 21st February 2025 to answer the claim. If you intend to file any documents, you may file the same with a list along with the

appear and file written statement before

You should file your registered address and a memo of appearance when you enter appearance before the Learned Court nd/or the Hon'ble Appellate Tribunal either n person or by a pleader/Advocate as duly

Take notice that, in default of, your ppearance on the day mentioned herein efore, the proceeding will be heard and determined in your absence Given under the hand and the seal of the



power post





In concentration and silence we must gather strength for the right action.





Silent Shift

omething curious happened in Delhi's bureaucratic circles last week. The government announced the empanelment of 42 officers for Joint Secretary (JS) or JS-equivalent posts, and here's the kicker—only 16 of them were IAS officers from the 2009 batch. That's barely a fraction. Another six IAS officers made it under the "initially deferred" and "initially leftover" categories, but even with those numbers, the representation of the elite IAS cadre in this list seems... well, underwhelming.

What's even more intriguing? Central Secretariat Service (CSS) officers appear to be taking up a significant chunk of the slots. This isn't a one-off case either for those who have been tracking recent empanelment lists. They notice a pattern—fewer IAS officers making the cut at the JS level, while non-IAS officers, including those from the CSS and other central services, are steadily increasing their share.

Is this part of a deliberate shift in government strategy—perhaps a move to dilute the dominance of the IAS and distribute power more evenly among different services? Or is it just a function of more stringent performance reviews and a changing approach to empanelment?

Babu circles are abuzz with speculation. Some see this as a sign that the government is growing wary of the traditional IAS hegemony, while others argue that the service itself is failing to groom enough officers who meet the Centre's expectations. Either way, one thing is clear: empanelment, once considered a natural progression for IAS officers, is no longer a given.

A timely reprieve?

In a well-timed move just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington, D.C., US President Donald Trump ordered the Department of Justice to halt prosecutions under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). This could have far-reaching consequences for many global business leaders and companies caught in legal battles

over alleged financial misconduct. From our point of view. at least one particular Indian tycoon, who has been in the crosshairs of US authorities, may breathe a sigh of relief. But more importantly, babus'



hopes are high that they may once again get bouquets with Stars and Stripes as ribbons for favours delivered.

The FCPA, since 1977, prohibited American companies and individuals from bribing foreign officials to secure business deals. Over the years, it ensnared numerous corporate leaders worldwide, including those from India, accused of engaging in financial transactions that allegedly crossed legal boundaries. The US Justice Department's scrutiny of a major Indian business house—one that has built its empire across infrastructure, energy, and ports—has raised concerns about legal entanglements affecting global investments.

Critics of FCPA have long argued that strategic government contracts need bribology as much as business acumen. The fear of US legal actions have posed a serious threat to US companies and sprawling conglomerates with international operations.

With Trump's executive order effectively pausing FCPA prosecutions, the potential impact on ongoing cases is significant. This policy shift may lead to a reassessment of pending investigations, possibly resulting in dropped charges or settlements that are more favourable to the accused. For Indian businesses expanding abroad, this also signals a shift in how US authorities handle corruption-related cases involving foreign entities

However, global watchdogs argue that weakening anti-corruption enforcement will embolden corporate malpractice and erode global ethical standards. For India, where regulators are already battling accusations of selective scrutiny, this development may further complicate efforts to uphold fair competition in high-stakes industries.

With legal uncertainties possibly easing, the stage is set for babus to prosper and a recalibration of international business strategy by

Too many hats, too few hands

Gujarat's bureaucratic chessboard has been reshuffled yet again, with the transfer of over 68 senior officials, including nine district collectors and 16 DDOs. Such large-scale moves are often framed as administrative efficiency drives, but this exercise raises pertinent questions about governance, priorities, and stability.

The appointment of Pankai Joshi as Chief Secretary appears to have triggered this overhaul. His relinquished responsibilities have been redistributed, while for the first time, the Ahmedabad Collector and Municipal Commissioner were transferred simultaneously—a decision that could signal deeper political recalibrations.

Some reassignments stand out. Ashwani Kumar, already helming Urban Development, now also oversees Ports & Transport, T. Nataraian, a key figure in Finance, takes charge of Guiarat Narmada Valley Fertilisers Company. While these changes suggest attempts to leverage expertise, they also expose an ongoing issue—senior officials continue to juggle multiple crucial roles. At least 15 still hold additional responsibilities across essential sectors like Home Affairs, Ports & Shipping, and Technical Education.

Meanwhile, the IPS cadre remains in flux. Over a dozen officers are $\,$ doubling up on roles, and critical posts like Gujarat's Anti-Corruption Bureau Chief and CID Crime Branch head remain unfilled. The policing structure appears increasingly overstretched, raising concerns over law enforcement effectiveness.

With another round of reshuffles expected post-Budget, and the Model Code of Conduct for local body elections temporarily stalling major changes, the question remains: will this reshuffle bring tangible improvements, or is it just another game of bureaucratic musical chairs?

> Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

The highest form of human intelligence is to observe yourself without judgment.

We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience

You drown not by falling into a river, but by staying submerged

PAULO COELHO

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

weeks later.

- **1898:** An explosion in Hayana harbour sank the battleship USS Maine. killing 260 American seamen and precipitating the Spanish-American War, which originated in the Cuban struggle for independence from Spain.
- 1927: The silent film 'It' was released in American theatres, and Clara Bow, the star, became Hollywood's first "It girl."
- 1933: An assassin's bullet meant for the U.S. president-elect, Franklin D. Roosevelt, wounded Mayor Anton J. Cermak of Chicago, who died three

TIME FOR REVAMP

fter announcing his intention to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO), President Donald Trump has indicated that he might be willing to reconsider. At issue is one of Trump's favorite themes: reciprocity and fair burden-sharing. He believes that China contributes too little and exerts too much influence over the WHO.

Trump is right to point out the importance of equitable burden-sharing. In fact, the WHO has already adopted measures suggested by its member states to address this imbalance. At present, only 26% of the WHO's approved budget comes from assessed contributions, a membership fee of sorts based largely on a country's share of global GDP and population. But member states are now on a path to financing at least 50% of the WHO's main budget in proportion to their economic and population size

Gordon Brown

WE MUST

NEVER FORGET

HAVE LEARNED,

FROM CHOLERA

THE MEDICAL

LESSONS WE

TO COVID:

NO ONE IS

SAFE

SAFE UNTIL

EVERYONE IS

Under the current formula. America's portion of the assessed contributions is capped at 22%, even though it accounts for 26% of global GDP. China now pays 15%, and that percentage will continue to rise as the country's share of global GDP grows.

The more the WHO is financed through assessed contributions, the more China, India, the Gulf petrostates, and several Central European countries will be obliged to contribute, ensuring that all countries pay their fair share. Of course, owing to America's generosity, the US government has made contributions that go beyond normal member-state dues-hence its position as the largest donor to the WHO. China, for its part, currently gives little beyond what is required, but this should also change over the coming years

Trump is equally concerned about China's influence on



All WHO member states have requested reforms to enhance the organization's performance, accountability, and transparency, as a quid pro quo for agreeing to increase the percentage of assessed contributions

the WHO and the country's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ironically, given the torrent of falsehoods about it, the pandemic accord under negotiation at the WHO would improve international health coordination and prevent similar failures from happening again. If this proposed instrument, as well as the updated international health regulations, were to require earlier reporting, full information-sharing, and a more rapid response to health threats, we could avoid repeating past mistakes. But the US will lose all influence over these negotiations if it leaves the WHO, while the Trump administration could instead use its clout within the organization to reach an agreement that the US can accept.

Trump also wants evidence of reform at the WHO. That means decentralization, with country and regional offices gaining greater authority visà-vis what he sees as an overly bureaucratic Geneva headquarters. It also implies avoiding the mission creep that often arises from member-state requests and earmarked funding designed to give priority to their own projects. The WHO must demonstrate progress on both issues in a transparent manner.

In fact, all WHO member states have requested reformsboth these and others-to enhance the organization's performance, accountability, and transparency, as a quid pro quo for agreeing to increase the percentage of assessed contributions. They want a guarantee that the money will be spent efficiently, with timely results and fully operational internal controls.

The WHO has already made important progress. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has, in fact, launched an ambitious plan to transform the organization, including by bolstering and delegating more authority to country offices. Moreover, in response to the recommendations of the Agile Member States Task Group, and following the Secretariat's complementary implementation plan on reform, the WHO has become more transparent and accountable. It has improved internal control systems and developed a process for designing and implementing program budgets that involves member states to a greater degree and improves resource allocation, monitoring, and reporting. Systems for preventing and responding to sexual abuse and misconduct have also been a priority under Tedros' leadership.

Perhaps most critically, Tedros himself has taken the

initiative to resist the natural tendency of the World Health Assembly (the WHO's decision-making body) to vote in new priorities and work areas. This has limited countries practice of earmarking funding for special-interest projects that would dilute the WHO's purpose and strength.

In this age of mass travel, increasing urbanization, industrial livestock farming, and human encroachment on wildlife habitats, the need for the WHO is stronger now than it was in the 1850s, when the first formal international health conference was held in response to a cholera outbreak. Even more vigilance—and greater cross-border cooperation—is required if we are to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

The last half-century has shown what such collaboration can achieve: smallpox was eradicated, polio and many tropical diseases are close to being eradicated, and HIV-related deaths have fallen by nearly 70%. But progress will falter if countries decide to go it alone.

That is why, to reassure the Trump administration and other governments, like Argentina, that are threatening to leave, there is a case for bringing together a group of highly respected leaders, representing every continent, and a top-level American official. They could be asked to show how the reformed WHO would best serve the global community—both the US and the rest of the world-now and in the future. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to do everything in our power to make global health cooperation the best it can be. We must never forget the medical lessons we have learned, from cholera to COVID: no one is safe until evervone is safe.

> The writer is the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. ©project syndicate

SPECTRUM INDO-FRENCH TIES

Key take-aways from PM's Paris tour



FRANCE HAS HISTORICALLY SEEKING TO CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE CENTRE OF POWER TO THE ANGLO-AMERICAN AXIS

participation of Prime swearing-in of Donald Trump figured prominently in the Indian media and the political community. Critiques construed it as a snub by the US President while US spokespersons mainly the former ambassador to New Delhi Eric Garcetti treated it as a trivial matter in line with the convention set by the White House. Heads of Governments and States were usually not invited to the oath-taking of US Presidents.

Garcetti did say that Prime Minister Modi should meet Donald Trump one-to-one instead of being a part of the crowd and he was sure that Modi was soon to be invited. sometime in February. The invitation came and Modi is, at the time of writing, in USA.

The question that is being addressed, in addition to taking account of Modi's visit to France, is why Modi had to go to USA via Paris. It can again be interpreted in two ways. One, his schedule in Paris was prefixed and the invitation from USA almost aligned with the dates with his visit

from 10 to12 February and on Minister Modi in the the 13th he landed in USA. The timings for both visits could at best be fortuitous because Donald Trump's office could not align their invitation with Modi's visit to Paris. Second, Modi himself would have asked for these dates as he was scheduled to attend the international conference on AI in Paris.

The interpretation of Modi's visit via Paris is in order as it has implicit political implications. In global geo-politics, structurally, France and USA may be on the same side, but in their strategic thinking, there is a clear divergence. France has been historically seeking to create an alternative centre of power to the Anglo-American axis. Britain, on the other hand, has been solidly in American camp since the Second World War, Apart from the colonial rivalry between France and Britain, they were diametrically opposite to each other in their positioning in geo-political order, especiallv vis-à-vis America which emerged as the super power.

Currently, France expects a

play its traditional world role. Likewise, India has moved on from Non-Alignment to strategic autonomy, a euphemism for multi-alignment which is possible in a multi-polar world. That is where France and India converge resulting in deepening of their bilateral relations. Whether this strategy will succeed is a matter of debate.

Let us count the take-aways from Modi's visit to France. The primary purpose was to cochair the third AI Action Summit in Paris. The first one was held in Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes, England in November 2023 and second in Seoul in May 2024. The next summit will take place in 2026 in India. That is the first welcome outcome of his visit. These summits and collaborations have become important following the tech disruption by China's DeepSeek. Notably, India also is building its own AI model.

Prime Minister Modi was also a distinguished guest among the world leaders in the dinner hosted by President Macron at Palais de l'Elysée (Elysee Palace).

new Indian Consulate in Marseille City. This denotes an expansion of India's diplomatic presence in France.

Another significant takeaway is the increasing collaboration between France and India on the nuclear sector. When US facilitated India's entry into NSG, France was the first country to sign an agreement with India on nuclear exchange. France strongly believes that nuclear power is an alternative to fossil fuel and for low-carbon economy. Almost 70% of electricity in France is generated by the nuclear power. India could seriously consider harnessing nuclear energy for electricity which is in deficit in most parts of the country.

India-France relations are close and growing. The only rider to this bilateralism is the need of a clear strategic security perspective, not based on past experiences and present prejudices.

> The writer is a professor in NIIS Group of Institutions, Odisha

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:

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

India's nuclear push

Sir, India is embarking on an ambitious expansion of its nuclear energy sector, recognizing its crucial role in achieving low-carbon energy goals. Seventeen years after the landmark India-US civil nuclear deal, the nation is prioritizing nuclear power as a key component of its energy mix. This commitment is underscored by the FY26 budget allocation of Rs 20,000 crore for research and development of small modular reactors (SMRs), signaling a strong push for innovation in this field. The long-term vision is even more transformative, aiming to achieve a remarkable 100 GW of nuclear energy capacity by 2047—a significant leap from the current 8.1 GW, which represents only about 2% of India's total electricity generation. However, achieving this ambitious target presents a formidable challenge. India has a roadmap to triple its nuclear capacity to 22.8 GW by 2032. But scaling beyond this level will require accelerated investments, continuous innovation, and robust regulatory support. The success of India's nuclear ambitions hinges on the government's ability to attract substantial private investment, forge strong global partnerships, and accelerate research and development in both SMRs and thorium-based reactors. These combined efforts will also be instrumental in helping India achieve its clean energy objectives while simultaneously ensuring energy security and reducing carbon emissions. Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Consensus key to end violence

Sir, This refers to the news report "Manipur Goes Under Centre" (Orissa POST, February 14). There is no denying that, despite the former Chief Minister's many shortcomings leading to the escalation of ethnic conflicts in Manipur, his tenure was deliberately prolonged because there was no consensus candidate for the post of Chief Minister. The problem persists to this day, prompting the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur. In order to stop ethnic violence, the candidate for the post of Chief Minister must be acceptable to both warring communities. The problems of the two communities need to be addressed with all sincerity and an open mind. Enough is enough. The cultural heritage of Manipur should not be allowed to be shattered.

> Arun Gupta, KOLKATA



TWO STATES

shared with their leaders in to

Talking to reporters sepa-

rately, farmer leader Jagjit

Singh Dallewal, who is on an

indefinite fast, too said that the

meeting was held in a positive

atmosphere and another meet-

ing will be held next week on

He was brought to the

meeting venue from the

Khanauri protest site in an

ambulance. Farmer leader

Kaka Singh Kotra said it

took four hours for Dallewal

Dallewal, the Samyukta Ki-

san Morcha (Non-Political) convenor, has been on an indefinite

hunger strike at the Khanauri border point since November 26 to press the Centre on vari-

ous demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP on crops.

About Friday's meeting

farmer leader Sarwan Singh

Pandher said, "We discussed

in detail the issue of legal guar-

antee to MSP for crops in the

Another farmer leader Abhi-

manyu Kohar said earlier in

the day that the government

should frame a law to give a

guarantee for MSP. He also

said the farmers are convinced

that a law guaranteeing MSP on

crops will benefit every section

Prominent leaders who were

part of the farmer delegation

are Sarwan Singh Pandher,

Abhimanyu Kohar, Kaka Singh

Kotra, Sukhjit Singh, PR Pan-

dian, Arun Sinha, Lakhwinder

Singh, Jaswinder Longowal,

MS Rai, Nand Kumar, Balwant

Singh Behramke and Inderjit

meeting."

of the country.

to reach Chandigarh.

February 22.

day's meeting," he added.





Meeting between farmers, central team held cordially



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 14: A meeting between a Central team led by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and farmers' representatives to discuss their various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP on crops, was held here cordially on Friday and the next round of talks has been slated for February 22.

The over two-and-a-half-hour meeting with the 28-member delegation from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha was held after a year-long protest by farmers.

It was also attended by Punjab Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, the state's Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Lal Chand Kataruchak and other state government representatives.

The two outfits have been spearheading the ongoing farmers' protest at Shambhu and Khanauri on the Punjab-Haryana border for the past

Following the meeting at the Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration here, the Union minister of consumer affairs, food and public distribution said the talks were held in a cordial atmosphere and another round of talks will be held February 22.

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will lead the central team in the next meeting, Joshi said, adding that he would also be a part of that talk.

"Details about the steps taken by the Narendra Modi government for farmers' welfare were

Poppy crop worth ₹125cr destroyed in Jharkhand dists

RANCHI: In a special operation. police have destroyed opium cultivation worth approximately ₹125 crore in four districts of Jharkhand -- Ranchi, Khunti, Saraikela-Kharsawan and Chaibasa. The operation, which began February 5, has led to the arrest of 86 people involved in the illegal business. According to official police data, opium cultivation across a total area of 9.871 acres in these districts has been identified and eradicated using tractors and grass cutter machines. It is estimated that three to four kilograms of opium is produced per acre of poppy cultivation, with one kilogram valued between ₹4-5 lakh in the market. This action has effectively prevented opium worth around ₹125 crore from reaching the market.



A balloon vendor is seen on the eve of 'Valentine's Day', in Amritsar, Punjab

Jharkhand farmers forced to let tomatoes rot as prices crash

In some areas, wholesale buyers are unwilling to

pay even ₹1 per kilogram, making it impossible for farmers to recover their investment

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, Feb 14: Thousands of farmers in Jharkhand are in deep crisis after the price of tomatoes plummeted to as low as ₹2 - ₹3 per kg. They have now abandoned their tomato crops, leaving them to rot in the fields.

In some areas, wholesale buvers are unwilling to pay even Re 1 per kilogram, making it impossible for farmers to recover their investment. Faced with mounting losses, several farmers have resorted to destroying their ripe crops with tractors.

Large-scale cultivators as well as small ones have suffered

as tomato farming communities span thousands of acres across various districts of Jharkhand like Chatra, Latehar, Hazaribagh, Jamshedpur, Ramgarh, Bokaro, Ranchi, Lohardaga, and Giridih.

Prices have been in free fall since January. Even in the retail market, tomatoes are fetch ing no more than ₹5-₹10 per kg. The cost of labour and trans portation is more than what farmers earn from the sale of their produce.

Sonaram Manjhi, a farmer from Patamda in East Singhbhum district, says a crate of 40-50 kg of tomatoes is being sold for just ₹30-₹35 in the wholesale market, not even ₹1 per kg.

Raghunath Mahato from Chatra adds that the returns don't even cover the cost of planting and irrigation. "It takes ₹35,000--₹40.000 to cultivate one acre of tomatoes, but at current prices,



we are losing ₹8,000--₹10,000 per acre." he laments.

Pachchu Mahato pensive seeds and spent heavily on fertilisers and irrigation, yet buyers refuse to pay more than a few rupees per kg, he said. The crisis is not new. Last

vear, farmers in Barkagaon Hazaribagh, dumped their to mato crops on the streets when they couldn't find buyers. This year the situation is wors-

ened by a steep decline in prices of other vegetables like cauliflow er, cabbage, and spinach, further deepening farmers' distress.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.

RAYAGADA

DIST - RAYAGADA, PIN CODE - 765001, ODISHA

E-mail ID- raygadam.hud@nic.in

suppliers/dealers/agencies for supply of 01 (ONE) and more number of

drinking water movable tank for use of Rayagada Municipality as pe specification given below upto 12.00 Noon on 27.02.2025 and the same will be

opened on the same day at 12.30 P.M. in the Office Chamber of undersign in presence of quotationer or their authorized agents. The participants should

quote the price both the words, figure and produce the in your office let

nead with office documents. The participants should deposit non-refundable of INR Rs.3,000/- (Rupees Three Thousand) only as per security in shape o

any Nationalized Bank Demand Draft in favor of Executive Officer, Rayagad Municipality or Municipality money receipt. The price should be quote

The participants received after the due date & time will not entertain and he undersigned reserves all the rights to accept/reject all/any participants

including all taxes applicable and other charges as applicable.

Punjab govt tightens noose

Chandigarh, Feb 14: The Punthe police and district administration officers to keep a check on corruption activities in their respective areas of jurisdiction or else face action themselves.

A state government spokesperson here Friday reiterated the "unwavering commitment of the Punjab government to ensure full transparency, accountability and integrity in public service delivery" As corrupt practices under-

mine public trust, weaken institutions and hinder national growth, so top priority must be accorded to check this menace, the spokesperson said.

The Punjab government has also directed that in order to ensure corruption-free and citizen friendly governance, all the field officers should take stringent and effective steps.

Every officer is duty bound to ensure that people do not face any kind of harassment or

28-year-old hero who was killed

in an IED blast on the LoC, was

laid to rest with full military

honours at Muktidham in Kh-

From the moment his funeral

procession left his residence in

Jhoolu Park, the city resounded

with chants of "Captain Karamjit Amar Rahe" and "Bharat Ma-

People lined the roads and

rooftops, showering flowers as

the convoy passed. Many car-

ried placards bearing his im-

age, while others held aloft the

irgaon, Hazaribagh



demand of financial considerations while interacting with the government officials at any level, he said. The state government has further directed that interaction of the public with the

that public work should be accomplished in minimum possible time in an efficient and polite manner, he said.

The Punjab government has said that in order to make the officers even more responsive and accountable, feedback about each Deputy Commissioner, SSP, SDM, Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar, SP, DSP, SHO and other field officers/officials will be taken not only from the public but also from the MPs and MLAs, in the State.

government at all levels should be completely hassle free. Likewise, it has underlined

PLATINUM JUBILEE OF BIT MESRA

around corrupt officers Prez Murmu arrives in Ranchi

Singh Kotbudha.

Ranchi, Feb 14: President Droupadi Murmu Friday arrived here on a two-day visit to Jharkhand during which she is scheduled to participate in the platinum iubilee celebrations of BIT Mesra, officials said.

The president arrived around 4.45 pm, and went to the Raj Bhavan where she would stay overnight, they said.

Security has been beefed up in Jharkhand's capital in view

Chief Secretary Alka Tiwari held a meeting to review preparations for the President's visit.

Tiwari instructed officials to keep all the arrangements in order during the President's visit as per the protocol.

Deployment of police forces was seen at strategic locations.

"Wherever necessary, the departments should coordinate with each other and make the preparations strong," an official statement quoting the chief sec-

Hazaribagh mourns its braveheart Karamjit

A pall of gloom has descended on the city of Hazaribagh after the tragic martyrdom of Army Captain Karamjit Singh Bakshi,

fondly known as Puneet. The 28-year-old officer lost his life in an IED explosion along the LoC in J&K's Akhnoor sector Tuesday



directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply, it said.

"Preparations for the national anthem and arrangements for security, electricity and loudspeakers and fire fighting, medical arrangements at the programme venue and accommodation site were reviewed.' the statement said.

On her arrival at Ranchi this afternoon, the President proceeded to Raj Bhavan, and she will participate in the BIT Mesra event on Saturday, an official said. The institute will

commemorate 75 years of aca demic excellence, research and technological innovation, a BIT official said. Ranchi Deputy Commissioner (DC) Manjunath Bhaiantri convened meetings with officials to oversee preparations for the President's visit.

As per Bhajantri's directions, officers have been deputed at key locations, including the airport, Raj Bhavan, and the event venue. Security deployments have been in place at high-rise buildings and sensitive locations along the President's transit route.



SPECIFICATION

Tank body - Zink sheet

ODISHA POLICE

Sd./- Executive Officer

Rayagada Municipality

STATE HEADQUARTERS, **CUTTACK**

Tank Load Capacity - 4000 to 4500 Liter

Tank outlet - Back side four nozzle/taping system

Tank wheel - 04 wheel momentums

OIPR-13150/11/0050/2425

Odisha Police

Office of the D.G. & I.G. of Police, Odisha, Cuttack

Tel.:0671-2304001, Website:www.odishapolice.gov.in, Email:pankaj.odpol@gov.in & aig-prov.odpol@gov.in

No.D-262:Online bids through e-Tender Portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in are invited from the eligible bidders for purchase of CCTV with ACCESS CONTROL DIGITAL MANAGEMENT AND FRS for Odisha Police during the current financia year 2024-25 as per the particulars mentioned below SI.No. Name of Item RFP No. & Date

CCTV with ACCESS
51-RFP-CCTV with ACCESS CON-

1 CONTROL DIGITAL MANAGEMENT AND FRS	TROL D	In different quantity						
Events		Date						
RFP Issue Date		12.02.2025						
Date & Time of Pre-Bid Meeting		A pre-proposal meeting will be intimated to						
Queries to be subn	nit on	bidder. (Online Link shall be shared based						
commissioneratepolice@nic.in	and aig-	on the request receive from bidder on						
		commissioneratepolice@nic.in and aig-prov.						
	rescribed	odpol@gov.in before 15.02.2025 by 15:00,						
n Annexure 5		Venue- O/o the Commissionerate of Police,						
		Bhubaneswar						
RFP Submission Due Date and T	īme	24.02.2025 Noon						
Date & Time of Opening of Techr	nical Bids	25.02.2025 Noon						
Date & Time of Opening of Finan	cial Bids	To be intimated						
Tender Document Fee		In favour of A.I.G. of Police (Prov.), Odisha,						
		Cuttack payable at Cuttack. (Demand Draft)						
EMD (Earnest Money Deposit)		In favour of A.I.G. of Police (Prov.), Odisha,						
		Cuttack payable at Cuttack. (Demand Draft)						

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: https://tendersodisha.gov.in. The authority reserve the right to accept/reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any Sd./- A.I.G. of Police (Provisioning) Odisha, Cuttack (Tender Calling Authority) Buxi Bazar, Cuttack-753001

www.odishapolice.gov.in. Email:sphqrs.odpol@nic.in

Tel/Fax No.0671-2304354

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ଉନ୍ନୟନ ଓ ବିପଣନ ସମିତି

ORMAS

ପଞ୍ଚାୟତିରାଜ ଓ ପାନୀୟ ଜଳ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର **Odisha Rural Development & Marketing Society**

creating competence and values in rural Odisha

Panchayati Raj and DW Department, Government of Odisha Date: 14.02.2025 File No.: ORMAS-mkt-Event-0001-2024

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

No.CAD-2581: ORMAS under the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department, Government of Odisha (The Client invites sealed two bid systems from the eligible bidders through e-tender process for "Selection of an Event Management Agency for Designing, Fabricating, Erection of stall with other allied works and Management of Event for Sisir Saras- 2025 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha" in Bhubaneswar, Odisha". Bidders fulfilling the prescribed eligibility criteria of the

Cards 2020 in Bridganeswar, Carsta in Bridganeswar, Carsta : Bidders familing the presented enginity enterta of the										
RFP can access and download the complete RFP Document and other details from www.ormas.org/panchayat.odisha.										
gov.in/ www.tendersodisha.gov.in. The bid calendar under the end to end process are :										
Date of Isue of RFP	Date of Pre-Bid Meeting	Last Date for Submission of Bid	Date of Opening of Technical Bid	Date of Technical Presentation & Opening of Financial Bid	Bid Processing Fee in Rs.	EMD in Rs.				
44/00/0005	21/02/2025	06/03/2025 up to	06/03/2025	07/03/2025	10,000/-	0.00.000/				

of stall with other allied works and Management of Event for SISIR SARAS- 2025 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha". The proposals received beyond the last date and time will be rejected without assigning any reason. The authority reserves al the rights to reject any/ all proposals at any stage without assigning any reason thereof. Sd./- Chief Executive Officer, ORMAS



National flag in silent tribute. In a mark of respect, shops along Guru Govind Singh Road

remained closed. At Muktidham, as Army officers folded the Tricolour and handed it to his mother. Neelu Bakshi, she raised her

voice -- choked with emotion

- declaring, "Jo Bole So Nihal,

Sat Sri Akal!' father, Ajninder Singh, his eyes brimming with tears, lit the funeral pyre, bidding farewell to the son who had brought them immeasurable pride.

Captain Karamjit was the only child of Ajninder Singh Bakshi, a well-known restaurant and tent house businessman, and Neelu Bakshi in Hazaribagh.

He was just weeks away from his April 5 wedding to a medical officer serving in the Army, but fate had other plans. He had returned home briefly for the wedding preparations but dutifully reported back to his post only 10 days ago. When his fiance arrived to

pay her final respects, the air grew heavier with sorrow, eyes welling up at the sight of a love story left midway. On Tuesday, while on patrol

along the LoC, Captain Karamiit and his unit were caught in an IED explosion planted by terrorists. Despite suffering grievous injuries, he was swiftly evacuated to a military hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

His mortal remains reached Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi Wednesday evening, where Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Jharkhand Finance Minister Radhakrishna Kishore paid their respects.

From there, he was taken to the Sikh Regiment in Ramgarh, where fellow soldiers bid him a solemn farewell before his final iourney home. As Hazaribagh weeps, India stands in gratitude. A soldier has fallen, but

his sacrifice will forever echo in the hearts of a nation.





Selection of an Event Management Agency for Designing, Fabricating, Erect Management of Event for Sisir Saras- 2025 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

of RFP	Pre-Bid Meeting	Submission of Bid	Opening of Technical Bid	Presentation & Opening of Financial Bid	Fee in Rs.	EMD in Rs.				
14/02/2025	21/02/2025 4 P.M.	06/03/2025 up to 3 P.M.	06/03/2025 4 P.M.	07/03/2025 10.30 A.M. & 4.30 P.M.	10,000/- Including GST	2,00,000/-				
The bidders must apply their proposal through e-tender process latest by 06/03/2025 up to 3 PM clearly mentioning "REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL - "Selection of an Event Management Agency for Designing, Fabricating, Erection										

OIPR-19004/11/0009/2425



I want to profusely thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Tahawwur Hussain Rana's extradition. We all wanted that the person who conspired against us. the mastermind of the Mumbai terror attack to be handed over to India

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

OVER 50 CRORE TAKE HOLY DIP AT TRIVENI SANGAM

Over 50 crore devotees have taken a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam till Friday evening during the ongoing Maha Kumbh, the Uttar Pradesh government said. The participation marks the largest congregation in human history for any religious, cultural, or social event, the state government, which is hosting the mega fair in Prayagraj, it said



hind a wheel of secrecy, but for what reason? Once we put it across to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he allowed us to open it to the private sector. In just five years, there was a quantum leap

DR JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

I appeal to the chief minister to reveal names of militancy and the CPI(M) will be beside you because the Communists have a history of protecting the country's sovereignty despite different political ideologies ILTENDRA CHAUDHURY | CPI(M) LEADER

The demand for fish is ever increasing in the state. Tripura consumes 1,17,000 million

tonnes of fish annually, while its own production stands at 85,000 MT, leading to a shortfall of around 32,000 MT

SUDHANGSHU DAS

SHORT **TAKES**

Daylight bank robbery at knifepoint in Kerala

Thrissur (Kerala): A man robbed a bank at knifepoint near Chalakudy in central Kerala in broad daylight Friday and fled with around ₹15 lakh in cash, police said. An official from the Chalakudy police station said they received a call in the afternoon from the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) about the robbery. A team was immediately dispatched to the bank branch in Potta, near Chalakudy, police said, Police also stated that, according to bank officials, the robber made off with around ₹15 lakh in cash, but the exact amount stolen was yet to be verified.

Narcotic smuggling racket busted

Rajouri/Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Police Friday seized six kg of narcotics, believed to be high-grade heroin worth over ₹30 crore in the international market, from a village near the Line of Control in Rajouri district, officials said. The recovery from Sair Bhawani village in the Nowshera sector was made on the disclosure of the arrested kingpin of the racket Jaswinder Kumar alias Sonu, a resident of Lamberi who was arrested 10 days ago following an investigation of a case registered last year,

Woman dies during childbirth

Thane: The kin of a 26-yearold woman who died during childbirth in a civic hospital in Kalvan in Thane district have accused the doctors of removing her uterus without consent, an official said. They have been protesting along with friends at Shastri Nagar Hospital, which is operated by Kalyan Dombivali Municipal Corporation, since Tuesday, he said in a statement.

3 Naxalites surrender

Gadchiroli: Three Naxalites carrying cumulative reward of ₹38 lakh surrendered in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district, a police official said Friday. Vikram alias Sandip Tulavi (40), Nilabai alias Anusaya Uike (55) and Vasanti alias Dullo Hidami (36) laid down arms before officials of Gadchiroli police and the CRPF, he added. "Tulavi and Uike carried rewards of ₹16 lakh each on their heads, while the figure was ₹6 lakh for Hidami," he said.

uote 77 US plane carrying 119 deportees likely to land in Amritsar today

Chandigarh, Feb 14: A US plane carrying 119 illegal immigrants is likely to land at Amritsar airport February 15, the second such batch of Indians deported by the Trump government as part of a crackdown it resolved to carry out when it was sworn in last

According to official sources, the plane is expected to land at the airport around 10 pm Saturday. Among the 119 illegal Indian immigrants, 67 hail from Punjab, 33 from Haryana, eight from Gujarat, three from Uttar Pradesh, two each from Goa. Maharashtra and Rajasthan and one each from Him-

Meitei body claims

Prez rule in Manipur

'most unfortunate'

Imphal, Feb 14: Two major

organisations belonging to the

Meiteis and Kukis, the commu-

nities which have been fighting

with each other in Manipur since

May 2023, Friday responded to

the imposition of President's Rule

The Coordinating Com-

mittee on Manipur Integrity

(COCOMI), an umbrella body

of several Imphal-based civil

society organisations of the

Meiteis, described the Centre's

decision as "undemocratic"

and "most unfortunate" and "a

ploy to push the state into fur-

ther turmoil". The Kuki Inpi,

on the other hand, termed the

imposition of the President's

Rule as a "necessary interven-

tion, albeit long overdue". The

apex body of Kuki tribes, how-

ever, stuck to its demand for a

separate administration for

them under Article 239(A) of the

in the state in opposite ways.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



achal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, they said. Another US plane carrying deportees is also expected to land February 16. The development came days after a US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed at the Amritsar airport last week. Of them, 33 each were from Haryana and Gujarat and 30 from Punjab.

Most of the deportees hailing from Punjab had said they wanted to migrate to the US for

a better life for their families. However, their dreams were shattered when they were caught at the US border and brought back in shackles.

assumed office as the US President, the country's law enforce ment agencies have launched a crackdown against illegal immigrants

Many people from Punjab and some other states, who entered the US through "donkey routes" -- an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to enter America or other illegal means by spending lakhs of rupees -- are now facing deportation. Several political leaders in Puniab had questioned the landing of a US aircraft in Amritsar. "The BJP-led Central government wants to defame Punjab. Why does it not land in Guiarat, Harvana or Delhi?" Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said on Thursday while replying to a question on the likely arrival of another US plane carrying illegal immigrants.

Notably, the Punjab government had recently formed a special investigation team to probe the issue of illegal human trafficking following the deportation of Indian citizens domiciled in Punjab from the US. The SIT has so far registered 10 FIRs against fraudulent immigration consultants on the statements of deportees, said a senior police official.

Man found guilty of rape, murder of Irish backpacker



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, Feb 14: Nearly eight years after an Irish-British woman was raped and murdered during her Goa visit, a court Friday convicted the lone accused in the case, a 31-year old local resident.

Judge Kshama Joshi of the District and Sessions Court at Margao town found Vikat Bhagat, the lone accused, guilty of raping and murdering the woman. Danielle McLaughir (28), said Vikram Varma, the lawyer representing Andrea Brannigan, the mother of the deceased.

The court will pronounce the quantum of sentence Monday (February 17), he said. Var ma informed that the public prosecutor has sought "maximum sentence" for the accused from the court.

Though the lawyer did not elaborate, such heinous offenc es attract life imprisonment or death. McLaughin, who arrived in the coastal state as a back packer tourist, was found dead in a forested area of Canacona village in South Goa district March 14, 2017.

Bhagat, a local resident, was later arrested by the police on rape and murder charges The accused, lodged at the Central Jail, Colvale in North Goa, Thursday attended the court proceeding through video conferencing.

was postponed for a day later by the trial court judge.

India-B'desh border talks next week

Discussions will be held on prevention of attack/assault on BSF personnel and Indian civilians by Bangladesh-based miscreants/nationals, how to prevent trans-border crimes, construction of single row fence, action against Indian Insurgent Groups in Bangladesh, issues related to border infrastructure, joint efforts for effective implementation of Coordinated Border Management Plan, Confidence Building Measures and other issues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: The border forces of India and Bangladesh will hold their bi-annual talks here next week with issues such as border fence construction and attacks on BSF personnel and civilians by Bangladeshi miscreants figuring among the discussion points, an official statement said Friday.

The 55th Director General-Level Border Coordination Conference between BSF and

(BGB) will be organised at the Border Security Force (BSF) headquarters here between February 17-20 February. This would be the first top-level meeting between the two sides after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August last year.

The Indian side will be led by BSF Director General (DG) Daliit Singh Chawdhary while the BGB delegation will be headed by Maj General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui. The



to discuss border-related issues and for better coordination between both the border guarding forces, the BSF said in a

statement.

Discussions will be held on prevention of attack/assault on BSF personnel and Indian civilians by Bangladesh-based miscreants/nationals, how to prevent trans-border crimes, construction of single row fence, action against Indian Insurgent Groups in Bangladesh, issues related to border infrastructure, joint efforts

for effective implementation of Coordinated Border Management Plan, Confidence Build-The last edition of these bi-annual talks was held in Dhaka in March last year.

The 4,096 km long India-Bangladesh boundary spans across five states -- West Bengal (2,217 km), Tripura (856 km), Meghalava (443 km), Assam (262 km) and Mizoram (318 km). The BSF is designated as the lead security and intelligence-gathering agency for this front.

The verdict was slated to be pronounced Thursday, but it

SC to hear plea of Allahbadia against FIRs in few days

New Delhi, Feb 14: The Supreme Court Friday said the olea of influencer Ranveer Allahbadia against the FIRs lodged against him over his alleged distasteful comments during a programme on You-Tube will be taken up in twothree days.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar told Abhinav Chandrachud, appearing for the influencer, that it does not allow oral mentioning of cases for urgent listing. have assigned the bench and it will come up (before a bench) in two-three days," the CJI said when Chandrachud submitted that the Assam police has summoned Allahbadia for joining the probe during the day.

Police visit Allahbadia's flat

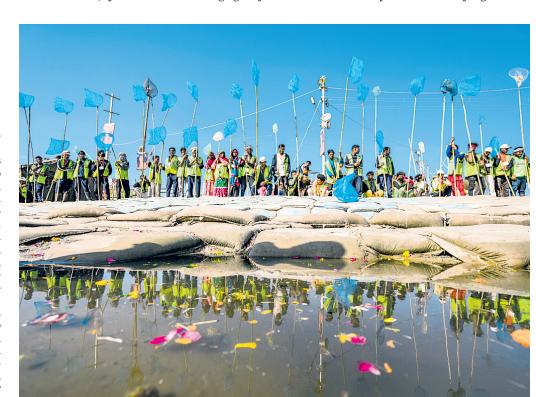
Allahbadia here as part of a probe into his controversial remarks made on a YouTube show, but found his flat locked, an official said. Crass remarks by Allahbadia, popular on YouTube for his 'BeerBiceps' channel, about parents and sex on comedian Samay Raina's now-delet ed YouTube show 'India's Got Latent' have sparked massive outrage, leading to complaints from several persons. "The Mumbai police, who have initiated an inquiry in connection with Ranveer Allahbadia's controversial remarks, Friday went to his flat in Versova area, but found it locked," an official said.

Podcaster Allahbadia's remarks on parents and sex on comedian Samav Raina's You-Tube show 'India's Got Latent' triggered a controversy and several FIRs have been lodged

against him and others in various parts of the country.

An Assam police team is in Pune to issue summons to Raina in connection with a case filed in the north-eastern state over his now-deleted You-Tube show 'India's Got Latent'. Raina has a house in Balewadi in Pune. A case was registered on Monday in Guwahati by a resident there for alleged promotion of obscenity in a publicly accessible online show.

Besides Allahbadia and Raina, others named in the case in Assam are Ashish Chanchlani, Jaspreet Singh and Apoorva Makhija. Earlier, Allahabadia was asked to remain present at Mumbai's Khar police station by the Mumbai police. The YouTuber is also facing a police complaint in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.



Sanitation workers clean a ghat at the Sangam area during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. 300 workers cleaned the ghats at various locations in an attempt to create a Guinness world record, according to officials

26/11 MUMBAI ATTACKS

Rana's extradition to unravel Pakistani state actors' role

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: The extradition of 26/11 Mumbai attacks accused Tahawwur Rana from the US would help probe agencies expose the role of Pakistani state actors behind the dastardly attack that left 166 people dead, sources said Friday.

In a major move, US President Donald Trump Thursday announced that his administration has approved the extradition of "one of the plotters and very evil people of the world" Rana to face justice in India.

Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, is currently lodged at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks.

India is working on the logistics of Rana's surrender and extradition from the US, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri has said.

The sources said that Rana's early extradition would help probe agencies expose the role of Pakistani state actors behind the 26/11 terror attack and may shed new light on the investigation. A group of 10 Pakistani ter-

rorists went on a rampage November 26, 2008 carrying out a coordinated attack on a railway station, two luxury hotels and a Jewish centre, after they sneaked into India's financial capital Mumbai using the sea route in the Arabian sea. Among the 166 people killed were US, British and Israeli nationals. The nearly 60-hour assault sent shockwaves across the country and even brought



In a major move, US President Donald Trump Thursday announced that his administration has approved the extradition of "one of the plotters and very evil people of the world" Rana to face justice in India

India and Pakistan to the brink of a war. The terrorists had targeted multiple iconic locations

in Mumbai, including Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels, Leopold Cafe, Chabad House and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus train station, each of which Headley had scouted in advance.

In November 2012, Ajmal Amir Kasab, the lone surviving gunman among the Pakistani group, was hanged to death in Yerawada Jail in Pune.

India has been trying to extradite Rana for many years because of his association with Pakistan-based terror groups Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul Jihadi Islami (HUJI), Headley and his active involvement in the Mumbai attacks, the sources said.

It is alleged that Rana was aware of Headley's terror links and even helped in reconnaissance of targets in Mumbai and planning the attacks on the National Defence College (NDC) in New Delhi and Chabad House in Mumbai. The extradition of Rana was cleared by the US rejected his review petition in the case. Rana is wanted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is probing the 26/11 attack case.

Supreme Court in January as in

During the course of investigation the roles of senior functionaries of the banned terror groups LeT and HUJI, -- Hafiz Muhammad Saeed alias Tayyaji, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Sajjid Majid alias Wasi, Illyas Kashmiri and Abdur Rehman Hashim Syed alias Major Abdurrehman alias Pasha with active connivance and assistance from officers of ISI, namely, Major Iqbal alias Major Ali, Major Sameer Ali alias Major Samir, all residents of Pakistan, have emerged, the sources said.

The NIA had also sent extradition requests to the US for extradition of Headley and Rana.



America, Modi Ji covered up Adani Ji's corruption! RAHUL GANDHI

AMIT SHAH ASKS MAHA GOVT TO IMPLEMENT NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Friday asked the Maharashtra government to implement the three new criminal laws in all police commissionerates of the state as soon as possible. Chairing a review meeting here on their implementation in presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Shah also said the Maharashtra government should set up a model directorate of prosecution in accordance with these criminal laws





Right now, BJP leaders are embroiled in internal fights over ministerial positions, each vying for control over departments to exploit public funds. Their strategy is to shift the blame for their unfulfilled promises onto the AAP, claiming that they couldn't deliver due to an

alleged financial crisis in the Delhi

ATISHI | OUTGOING DELHI CM

On one hand, Prime Minis ter Narendra Modi changed the word handicapped to Divyaang and talks about giving them respect and on the other

hand, the government of his own party is sitting on the work of two universities declared in the interest of the disabled in Rajasthan ASHOK GEHLOT | CONGRESS LEADER Tamil Nadu

is highly urbanised with nearly 48 per cent of its population living in urban areas. This will increase further in the coming vears enhancing the demand for sustainable housing. Therefore. innovative urban development plans should be prepared





PM Modi is FORCED to do a press conference something he

India in 11 years. THIS is why he NEVER takes press questions in India. THIS is why his "interviews" in India are fully scripted. He's so ANGRY & FLUSTERED

SHORT TAKES

Top court dismisses

New Delhi: The Supreme

Court Friday dismissed a

petition filed by the niece of

late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

J. Jayalalithaa seeking release

of the latter's properties seized

by the authorities in connection

with a disproportionate assets

SC Sharma refused to interfere

with the Karnataka High Court

case of 2004. A bench of

Justices BV Nagarathna and

judgment which had earlier

dismissed J Deepa's plea.

Court awards life

imprisonment to 3

has sentenced three men to

rigorous life imprisonment

saying it was not a fit case

to impose death penalty.

Additional sessions judge

and Shehzad who were convicted of the charges of murder, dacoity and criminal intimidation. Two accused persons in the case

remained untraceable and

were declared proclaimed

offenders. Additional public

prosecutor Vineet Dahiya said

the accused persons planned

the dacoity and fatally shot

the victim at his office in

Pitampura January 9, 2015.

Vikram sentenced Mohammed Adil Khan, Amit Kumar

in a 2015 murder case.

New Delhi: A Delhi court

Jaya's kin's petition

Oppn asks Centre to acknowledge failure in Manipur

rule was

his post

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: Opposition parties Friday said the President's rule was imposed in strife-torn Manipur "to buy time to settle internal conflicts within the ruling coalition" as they asked the ruling BJP to acknowledge its "failure" in the state

They also questioned why the government offered no clarification on Manipur in Parliament and why there was **President's**

a delay in removing Biren Singh Chief Thursday and the state Minister. They also **Assembly put under** asked if suspended animation, there was future days after Biren Singh plan for the that state

resigned from has been in a state of chaos since ethnic violence erupted in May 2023.

President's rule was imposed in Manipur Thursday and the state AZZssembly put under suspended animation, days after Biren Singh resigned from his post. The Congress Friday said the imposition of President's rule in Manipur is a direct admission of the failure of the BJP governments at the Centre and the state, and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to apologise to the people there.

In a post on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said there is a Constitutional crisis in Manipur that forced the imposition of the President's rule.

"Narendra Modi ji, It is your party which has been ruling at the Centre for 11 years. It is your party which was ruling

Manipur for 8 years. It is the BJP which was responsible for maintaining Law & Order in the state.'

"It is your government which is responsible for National Security and border patrol. The imposition of President's rule by YOU, suspending YOUR own party's government is a direct admission on how YOU failed the people of Manipur," Kharge said. The CPI(M) politburo, in a statement, said the imposition of the President's

rule underlines the 'utter bankruptcv"of the BJP's "double-enimposed in Manipur gine" govern-

ment. It demanded that all political parties be taken confidence to bring back normalcy in

the state. The party said, "The (former) chief minister (N Biren Singh), the main culprit, who was backed all along by the BJP-RSS was forced to resign because his partisan role was being examined by a court where evidence

with no choice but to quit". The CPI(M) said the central leadership of the ruling party (BJP) refused to take the required action to alleviate the deep suffering inflicted on the people of Manipur, "symbolised by the Prime Minister's callous refusal to even visit the troubled state"

was presented of his sectarian

partisan role which left him

The CPI(M) party said imposing the President's rule is not the solution, and the Central government cannot escape responsibility.





IAF's aerobatic team Surya Kiran performs on the last day of Aero India 2025, at Yelahanka Airbase in Bangalore

CHINA BORDER ROW

India rejects Trump's mediation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 14: India has virtually ruled out any role for a third party in its border dispute with China after US President Donald Trump suggested that he was ready to extend support if it helps in the resolution of the lingering issue between the two neighbours.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Thursday (Friday IST) that New Delhi has always adopted a bilateral approach in dealing with these issues. As a matter of long-held policy, India has been maintaining that there is no role for any third party in any of its bilateral issues or disputes with any country.

'Your question about the offer to mediate between India and China, I think, I suspect you know the answer to this question," he said when asked about Trump's offer.

"Whatever issues we have with any of our neighbours, we have always adopted a bilateral approach to dealing with these issues. It's no different between India and China," he said. "We have been discussing any is-



WITH THESE ISSUES AS A MATTER OF LONG-HELD MAINTAINING THAT THERE IS NO NY OF ITS BILATERAL ISSUES O

sues that we have with them on a bilateral plane, and we will continue to do so," Misri added. After his talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the US president made the offer

of support at a media briefing while responding to a question

on India's frosty ties with China over the border row. "I do see the skirmishes on the border. which are quite vicious, and I guess they continue to go on. If I could be of help, I would love to help as that should be stopped," he said. The US president also described China as a "very important player" globally and even suggested that Beijing could play a role could play a role in ending the war in Ukraine. Trump also underlined the importance of cooperation among India, China, Russia and the US.

filing this petition, which is nearly two years. This is actually a friendly match where the bureaucrats want the stamp of the Supreme Court and the high court on dismissal of the petition," the bench said. the foundation for constructing buildings between 2006 and 2014 without reportedly obtaining

Justice Surya Kant further told the state's law officer, "When the state comes belated ly, we become suspicious. We start reading between lines. How can you say a yoga centre is not an educational institution? If they are not going as per plan, then you can challenge the non-compliance but you can't be allowed to demol ish the structure constructed in over a lakh vards. It is not some kind of hutment." The top court told state advocate general PS Raman that now that Isha Foundation had constructed a voga and med itation centre in Coimbatore district's Velliangiri, the state

Five militants arrested from 3 Manipur districts

IMPHAL: Five militants belonging to proscribed outfits have been arrested from Manipur's Imphal West, Imphal East and Thoubal districts, police said Friday. Two active cadres of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (Noyon) were apprehended from Thangmeiband and Keishampat in Imphal West Thursday, they said. Police also arrested another member of the KCP (Noyon) from Khurai Thoudam Leikai in Imphal East. The arrested militant was "directly involved in extortion activities from the general public, government officials, hospitals, schools and petrol pumps", a police officer said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kottayam (Kerala), Feb 14: The Congress-led opposition UDF Friday claimed that the accused in the Kottayam Government Nursing College ragging case have connections with the Left student organisation, SFI. Meanwhile, the Kerala

Human Rights Commission ordered an investigation after registering a case on its own regarding the incident. Speaking to reporters, Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan alleged that the accused in the Kottayam ragging case are Students Federation of India

Government Nursing Students Association (KGNSA) has links with the Left-affiliated student organisation.

However, Higher Education Minister R Bindu and Health Minister Veena George stated that stringent action would be taken against the accused in the Kottayam ragging incident. Satheesan, said, "Everyone knows they are SFI activists, yet they are now denying it."

There have been allegations that the accused are associated with KGNSA, a pro-Left outfit and that one of them holds a key position in the organisation.



However, SFI has refuted these claims, asserting that it has no connection to the accused. Taking a swipe at SFI, Satheesan also alleged that its leaders and members were involved in the death of a student at the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Pookode, Wayanad last year, allegedly due to ragging.

SFI members were accused, yet they were allowed to appear for exams, while the only ones who suffered were the victim's family," he said, adding that such incidents should not be repeated. The health minister stated that strict action will be taken against the students involved in the brutal ragging of a nursing student in Kottayam.

"Action will be taken based on the Directorate of Medical Education's report, ensuring the maximum possible punishment for those responsible, beyond just suspension from the college," she said.

A bench of Justices

Surya Kant and N

Kotiswar Singh said

neither would it

permit bar members

to be divided on caste

lines nor allow it to be

politicised

formed knowledge, you can

take appropriate decision. As

by bureaucrats wanting the apex court's stamp on the peti tion's dismissal. "Mr advocate general what

SC criticises TN pollution

board for challenging HC

order on Isha Foundation

New Delhi, Feb 14: The Su-

preme Court Friday slammed

the Tamil Nadu Pollution

Control Board for moving after

two years against an order that

quashed a showcause notice

issued against Isha Foundation

for allegedly flouting environ

A bench of Justice Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar

Singh termed the petition

filed by the Tamil Nadu Pollu-

tion Control Board (TNPCB)

as a "friendly match" played

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

mental norms.

prevented the authorities from approaching the court on time. There is a delay of 637 days in

The showcause was issued to mandatory environmental clearances but the Madras High Court quashed it.

must ensure environmental

Can't allow bar bodies to be divided on caste, religion: SC

New Delhi, Feb 14: The Supreme Court Friday refused to order reservations on caste basis in the lawyers body elections saying it would open a "Pandora's box" without any empirical data

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh said neither would it permit bar members to be divided on caste lines nor allow it to be politicised.

"This is a sensitive issue. It will open a Pandora's box. Without any empirical data, it can't be done. Reserving seats for women was a different thing. We will not permit bar members to be divided on

caste lines or let the issues to be politicised," it said. The bench was hearing a plea of NGO Advocates for Social Justice seeking reservations in the upcoming Bengaluru Bar Association elections to members belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes.

"There are serious arguable issues from both sides, which can be deliberated in a healthy atmosphere. We don't want different bar bodies to be divided on such grounds. This is not our intention," it added. The matter was then tagged with a pending issue on the strengthening of bar associations and coming up for hearing February 17.

Senior advocate Madhavi Divan, appearing for petitioner NGO, said not even one member from the SC/ST or OBC categories were elected to the governing body of Advocate Associ-

ation of Bengaluru in the past years. Referring to reservation and affirmative actions in bar body elections in other countries, Divan said there should be

diversity in key positions, which

could inspire young members of the bar. Justice Surya Kant, however, said at the moment the court was "handicapped" in the absence of relevant

data and observed parliamentarians of the country were sensitive enough to ensure adequate representation different communities in key positions. "You

and made available. With in-

when a legislation comes for reservation, there are lots of debates and deliberations with expert bodies. Different data are collected

of today, in the absence of relevant data, we are completely handicapped," he said. The court said it would examine the "serious question" in another pending petition relating to reforms in bar associations.

"These are cases where we require some data, assessment How many people from particular communities are there in the legal profession, to what extent they are underrepresented. etc.," it added. The petitioner's plea was dismissed by the Karnataka High Court.

The top court January 28 modified its order and al lowed Advocate Association of Bengaluru to create a post of vice-president in the bar body for which elections would be held in the coming weeks. The move came after the court on January 24 earmarked the post of treasurer for women, after the election process had begun and nominations were filed even by male candidates.

Rajasthan HC rejects Naresh's bail plea

Jaipur: In a huge setback for Naresh Meena, who contested the Deoli-Uniara Assembly by-election last year as an Independent candidate, the Rajasthan High Court Friday denied him bail in connection with the Samrawata violence case.



international



always said, immigrants have been crucial in building our city and will continue to be key to our future success, but we must fix our long-broken immigration system

ERIC ADAMS | MAYOR, NEW YORK

TIKTOK RETURNS TO US APP STORES

TikTok has returned to the app stores of Apple and Google in the US, after President Donald Trump delayed the enforcement of a TikTok ban. TikTok, which is operated by Chinese technology firm ByteDance, was removed from Apple and Google's app stores January 18 to comply with a law that requires ByteDance to divest the app or be banned in the US





ment is made. I think Russia will be reintegrated into

into the European security system

VIKTOR ORBÁN PRIME MINISTER, HUNGARY

The theme 'Growth Unleashed' is to encourage British businesses to get out to extraordinary growth mar-

kets such as India, bang on doors and build their businesses ALDERMAN ALASTAIR KING

Unfortunate ly, the United **States is** making a wrong calculation about our region. One should not be



values, and accumulation TAYYIP ERDOGAN | PRESIDENT, TURKEY

SHORT **TAKES**

Fire at construction site leaves 6 dead

Seoul (South Korea): A fire broke out at a resort construction site in the South Korean city of Busan Friday, killing at least six people, fire officials said. About 100 workers managed to evacuate the site, while another 14 were rescued by helicopter from the top of the structure, said Hong Moon-shik, chief of the Busan Gijang District Fire Department. Hundreds of firefighters were deployed to the site and had largely extinguished the blaze by Friday afternoon, hours after it was reported at around 10:20 am.

11 killed as roadside bomb hits vehicle

Islamabad: At least 11 people were killed and seven others injured when a roadside bomb struck a vehicle carrying coal miners in Pakistan's restive officials said. The blast hit a mini truck in the Shahrao area of Harnai district of the province, according to Harnai **Deputy Commissioner Hazrat** Wali Kakar, "We have moved at least 11 bodies to the hospital and seven workers who were wounded have also been sent for

US deports 119 migrants to Panama

medical attention," Kakar said.

Panama City: Panama has received the first US flight carrying deportees from other nations as the Trump administration takes Panama up on its offer to act as a stopover for expelled migrants. the Central American nation's president said Thursday. "Yesterday a flight from the United States Air Force arrived with 119 people from diverse nationalities of the world," President José Raúl Mulino said Thursday in his weekly press briefing. He said there were migrants from China, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan aboard. The president said it was the first of three planned flights that were expected to total

Pope Francis hospitalised

about 360 people.

Rome: Pope Francis was hospitalised Friday to treat a weeklong bout of bronchitis and undergo diagnostic tests, the Vatican said, confirming the latest issues with the 88-yearold's pontiff's health that forced him to cancel his agenda through Monday at least. Francis was diagnosed with bronchitis February 6, but had continued to hold daily audiences in his Vatican hotel suite.

Trump denies US role in B'desh crisis

While US President Donald Trump did not directly address the question, speculation is that the response indicated the new Trump administration may not get itself involved in Bangladesh

New Delhi/Washington DC: The regime change in India's neighbour Bangladesh which many geopolitical analysts have attributed to the US' deep state's alleged work in the shadows grazed US President Donald Trump during his joint press briefing with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington DC. A reporter sought the views

of President Trump on whether the previous Democratic government under former President Joe Biden carried out a regime change in Bangladesh, and installed Muhammad Yunus as a chief adviser.

President Trump denied the US deep state played any role in the developments in Bangladesh, whose ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina took shelter in India.

nkly I have been read

'There was no role for our deep state. This is something

that the Prime Minister has

been working for a long

hundreds of vears, frankly I have been reading about it. I will leave Bangladesh to the Prime Minister," President Trump said.

on

While the Republican did not directly address the question, speculation is that the response indicated the new Trump administration may not get itself involved in Bangladesh, where alleged radical Islamist elements have been targeting religious minorities including Hindus.

Ties between India and Bangladesh have nosedived after Ms Hasina fled Dhaka in Auanti-government protest.

The interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, who returned from the US to work as Bangladesh's caretaker, continues to draw sharp criticism over not doing enough to stop attacks on minorities by radical Islamists.

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri Thursday said PM Modi shared concerns over the recent developments in Bangladesh with President Trump. This was a subject that was

discussed between the two leaders. And the Prime Minister shared his views and, indeed, his concerns with regard to recent developments in

> dia sees the situation,' the Foreign Secretary said after the two leaders' joint press briefing. 'We hope that the situation in Bangladesh will

Bangladesh and how In-

also move forward in a direction where we can pursue relations in a constructive and

Modi, Trump didn't discuss Adani's issue

stable way with them. But there are concerns about that situation. And the Prime Minister shared those views with President Trump," he said in response to a reporter's question.

PM Modi is in the US for two days. He also met with billionaire businessman Elon Musk.

Prosecutors see Islamic extremist motive in **Munich car mishap**

AGENCIES

Munich, Germany, Feb 14: The suspect in the car-ramming attack in Munich that left more than 30 people injured appears to have had an Islamic extremist motive, but there's no evidence that he was involved with any radical network, au thorities said Friday.

The 24-year-old Afghan who arrived in Germany as an asylum-seeker in 2016 and lived in Munich, was arrested after driving his Mini Cooper into the back of a labor union demonstration in the Bavarian city Thursday. Police officers pulled him out of the car after firing a shot at the vehicle, which didn't hit him, and arrested him.



said that the suspect said "Al lahu Akbar," or "God is great," to police and then prayed after his arrest — which prompted a department that investigates extremism and terror to take on the case immediately.

In questioning, he admitted deliberately driving into the demonstration and "gave an ex planation that I would summarize as religious motivation, Tilmann said.

She didn't give details, but added, "According to all we know at the moment, I would venture to speak of an Islamist motivation.

Pak expresses concern over US transferring military tech to India Islamabad: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan in a press briefing Friday

expressed concern at the proposed transfer of US military technology to India This comment comes following the release of the "India-US joint statement" after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit and meeting with US President Donald Trump. The statement highlights the defence partnership between India and US spanning multiple domains. India and the US planned to elevate military cooperation across all domains – air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace through enhanced training, exercises, and operations, incorporating the latest technologies, the statement said. Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Ministry has stated that the increase military capacity may cause imbalance in the region. In the joint statement, India and the US called on Pakistan to expeditiously bring to justice the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai, and Pathankot attacks. and ensure that its territory is not used to carry out cross-border terrorist attacks. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson mentioned that the reference to Pakistan in the joint statement was one-sided, misleading, and contrary to diplomatic norms. He alleged that the statement cannot cover up India's role in sponsoring terrorism, and extra-judicial killings. The spokespersor also remarked on rising hate crimes in India against Muslims and other minorities

Drone damages Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear plant

■ Radiation levels at the shuttered plant in the Kyiv region have not increased, according to the UN International **Atomic Energy Agency,** which said the strike did not breach the plant's inner containment shell

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, Feb 14: A drone armed with a warhead hit the outer protective shell of Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear plant early Friday, damaging the structure and briefly starting a fire, in an attack Kyiv blamed on Russia. The Kremlin denied it was responsible.

Radiation levels at the shuttered plant in the Kyiv region site of the world's worst nuclear accident — have not increased, according to the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, which said the strike did not breach the plant's inner containment shell.

The IAEA did not attribute blame, saying only that its team



stationed at the site heard an explosion and was informed that a drone had struck the shell.

Fighting around nuclear power plants has repeatedly raised fears of a nuclear catastrophe during three years of war, particularly in a country where many vividly remember living through the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, which killed at least 30 people and spewed radioactive fallout over much of the Northern Hemisphere.

The Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is Europe's biggest, has occasionally been hit by drones during the war without causing significant damage.

The strike came two days after President Donald Trump upended US policy on Ukraine, saving he would meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss ending the war. The move seemed to identify Putin as the only player that matters and looked set to sideline Ukrainian President Volody myr Zelenskyy, as well as European governments, in any

SNIPPETS

Musk's DOGE team: Judges to consider barring it from US govt

No one should make China an

issue in bilateral ties: Beijing

Beijing: No one should make China an issue in their bilateral relations and their coop-

eration should not harm the interests of another country, the Chinese Foreign Ministry

said Friday reacting to queries on the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Trump. Modi's meeting with Trump in Washington, weeks after the

US President assumed office for his second term, has evoked considerable interest in

China, especially on defence cooperation between New Delhi and Washington. In the

joint statement issued after Modi-Trump talks, the two leaders reaffirmed that a close

partnership between the US and India is central to a free, open, peaceful and prosper

ous Indo-Pacific region and spoke of strengthening Quad partnership among other issues. Replying to questions on this, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo

Jiakun said bilateral cooperation should not target third countries. "No one should

make China an issue in the relations and cooperation between countries or seek to

instigate bloc politics and confrontation." Guo said to a question on Trump's offer

to provide F-35 fighter jets to India besides strengthening defence cooperation.

New York: Two federal judges will consider Friday whether Elon Musk's government costcutting team known as DOGE will have access to Treasury Department payment systems and potentially sensitive data at US health, consumer

protection and labor agencies. The Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency has swept through federal agencies since Republican Donald Trump became president last month and put the chief executive of carmaker Tesla in charge of rooting out wasteful spending as part of Trump's dramatic overhaul of government. In Manhattan, US District Judge Jeannette Vargas will consider a request by Democratic state attorneys general to extend a temporary block on DOGE that he put in place Saturday, which

responsible for trillions of dollars of payments.

prevented Musk's team from accessing Treasury systems

airport in east Congo Goma (Congo): Rwanda-backed

M23 rebels seized 2nd

Congo claimed Friday that they have seized a following a days-long advance towards the



Kavumu airport, which serves the South Kivu immediately confirm if the Kavumu national airport was under the control of the M23 rebels or government forces. Government officials and civil society leaders did not immediately comment. Locals told the AP Friday morning that the rebels were a few kilometres away from the airport, a strategic spot for the Congolese military in their fight with the rebels.

Gaza names 3 hostages to be released Saturday

Cairo: Palestinian militant groups in Gaza said they would release hostages Iair Horn, US-Israeli Sagui Dekel-Chen and Russian-Israeli Alexandre Sasha Troufanov Saturday, in accordance with the terms of the ceasefire with Israel. The announcement, after days of uncertainty about whether the ceasefire agreed last month would hold, followed intense efforts by Egyptian and Qatari mediators to keep last month's US-backed agreement on track. A statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Israel accepted the list but that was late corrected to say Israel had received the list, which it said was a "purely factual description" that did not reflect any Israeli approach to the issue. Hamas said Israel was expected to release 369 Palestinian prisoners and detainees in exchange.



Saudi leads Arab push for alternative to Trump's Gaza plan

Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies were aghast at Trump's plan to "clean out" Palestinians from Gaza and resettle most of them in Jordan and Egypt, an idea immediately rejected by Cairo and Amman and seen in most of the region as deeply destabilizing

REUTERS

Riyadh/Abu Dhabi/Amman/ Cairo, Feb 14: Saudi Arabia is spearheading urgent Arab efforts to develop a plan for Gaza's future as a counter to US President Donald Trump's ambition for a Middle East Riviera cleared of its Palestinian inhabitants, 10 sources said.

Draft ideas will be discussed at a meeting in Riyadh this month of countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. Proposals may involve a Gulfled reconstruction fund and a deal to sideline Hamas, five of the people said.

Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies were aghast at Trump's plan to "clean out" Palestinians from Gaza and resettle most of them in Jordan and Egypt, an idea immediately rejected by Cairo and Amman and seen in most of the region as deeply destabilising.

The dismay in Saudi Arabia was aggravated, sources said, because the plan would nix the kingdom's demand for a clear path to Palestinian statehood as a condition to normalise ties with Israel - something that would also pave the way for an ambitious military pact between Riyadh and Washington, shoring up the



kingdom's defences against Iran. Reuters spoke to 15 sources in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and elsewhere to build a picture of the hurried efforts by Arab states to pull together existing proposals into a new plan they can sell to the US president - even

potentially calling it a "Trump

plan" to win his approval.

One Arab government source said at least four proposals had already been drafted for Gaza's future, but an Egyptian proposal was now emerging as central to the Arab push for an alternative to Trump's idea.

THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL The latest Egyptian proposal

Arab world furious about Trump's plan to 'clean out'

Arab nations to meet in Riyadh to discuss alternative Gaza plans

An Egyptian proposal currently the most likely candidate

Saudi crown prince expected to play a key role in discussions

involves forming a national Palestinian committee to govern Gaza without Hamas involvement, international participation in reconstruction without displacing Palestinians abroad, and movement towards a twostate solution, three Egyptian security sources said.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Palestinian representatives will review and discuss the plan in Riyadh before it is presented at a scheduled Arab summit Feb ruary 27, the Arab government source said. The role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, widely known as MbS. is shaping up to be key.

"We are telling the Americans we have a plan that works. Our meeting with MbS is going to be critical. He is taking the lead," said a Jordanian official

Long a major regional part ner for the United States, the crown prince is expanding Arabia's relationship through business and global

power politics. Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund is holding a con-

ference in Miami this month that Reuters revealed Trump is expected to attend. Riyadh is also expected to host his coming talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin to try to end the Ukraine war.

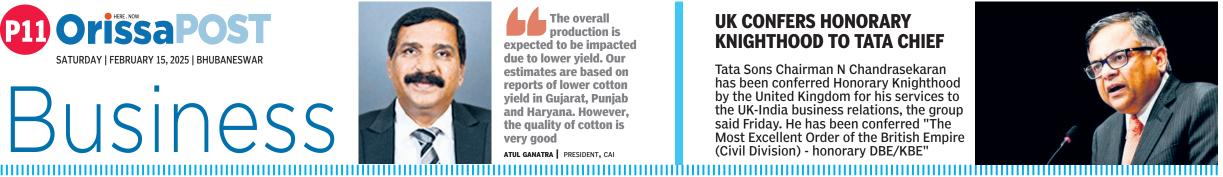
Susiness



production is expected to be impacted due to lower yield. Our estimates are based on reports of lower cotton yield in Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana. However, the quality of cotton is very good

UK CONFERS HONORARY KNIGHTHOOD TO TATA CHIEF

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran has been conferred Honorary Knighthood by the United Kingdom for his services to the UK-India business relations, the group said Friday. He has been conferred "The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (Civil Division) - honorary DBE/KBE"



continues to be one of the fastest growing economies, global corporates will

look to establish their GCCs for expansion. The start-up ecosystem has again gained momentum and they too will be major drivers of office demand alongside the BFSI

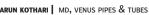
PEUSH JAIN | MD-COMMERCIAL LEASING AND

By investing in advanced technology, sustainable practices, and market-driven









SHORT **TAKES**

Forex kitty jumps

to \$638.26 billion

jumped by \$7.654 billion to

\$638.261 billion in the week

ended February 7, the RBI

by \$1.05 billion to \$630.607

billion for the week ended

been on a declining trend

along with forex market

reduce volatilities in the

recently due to revaluation

interventions by RBI to help

rupee. The forex reserves had

September 2024. For the week

increased to an all-time high

of \$704.885 billion at end-

ended February 7, foreign

component of the reserves,

increased by \$6.422 billion

to \$544.106 billion, the data

Sebi rejects Digvijay

application for REL

New Delhi: Capital markets

an exemption to make a competing open offer for a

majority stake in Religare

Enterprises Ltd (REL). Sebi

in an order stated that the

price offered by Gaekwad

was ₹275 per share in the

₹40 higher than the Burman

share. "The applicant (Danny

to demonstrate his ability to

meet the financial obligation

Boeing, HPCL tie up

Mumbai: US-based aircraft

partnered with state-owned

oil marketing firm HPCL for

ecosystem in the country. As

part of this partnership, the

two companies will explore

opportunities to scale SAF

(sustainable aviation fuel)

production in the domestic

certification of domestically

produced SAF, and advocate

the country, Boeing said in a

statement. According to global

airlines body International Air

Transport Association (IATA),

India has the potential to be a

its ethanol supplies and

key producer of SAF by utilising

availability of lipids feedstocks

like non-edible industrial oils.

for policies to develop a

robust SAF ecosystem in

market, support the

a sustainable aviation fuel

maker Boeing Friday said it has

offer," it stated.

for making the competing open

Investments, Florida) has failed

Gaekwad Developments &

Group's offer of ₹235 per

proposed open offer which was

regulator Sebi Friday dismissed an application filed by Digvijay Laxhamsinh Gaekwad seeking

released Friday showed.

currency assets, a major

January 31. The reserves had

said Friday. This is the third

consecutive week of a jump in

the kitty, which had increased

Mumbai: India's forex reserves

'US reciprocal tariffs create uncertainties' **US** president announces a new reciprocal tariff

policy for all the trading partners of the US, creating an uncertain trade environment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: US President Donald Trump's announcement on imposing reciprocal tariffs has created an uncertain trade environment between India and America, though the plan for a major trade deal could help promote two-way commerce, experts say.

They said that India should take steps cautiously for protecting domestic industries and expanding exports to the US.

After talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington, Trump has announced that India will buy more oil, gas and military hardware from America to bring down the trade deficit but asserted that Washington will not spare New Delhi from reciprocal tariffs.

Economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative



agreement soon, but the details remain unclear.

The US, GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said, is not clear if the reciprocal tariff applies to specific products or entire sectors. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said that India must strike a balance between protecting domestic industries and expanding exports to the US through targeted diplomacy.

'We should negotiate exemptions for key sectors, highlighting recent tariff concessions on US goods as leverage. A limited preferential trade agreement can further ease tariff concerns

ly problematic issue because there are many variables which the US will take into account while deciding their customs duties," Das said, adding customs duties are just one of the

Trade Organization) rule book.

"Reciprocal tariff is a high-

It can also include exchange rate, non-tariff barriers, subsidies, hurdles in government procurement, protection of intellectual property. "So how the reciprocal tariffs

will be quantified and converted into final tariff is a big question and it needs more analysis," he said. Regarding the trade deal. Das said there was no direct reference to the start of formal negotiations, adding, "I presume it is more about addressing concerns and interests related to a handful of products.

The US president, at a joint media briefing with the Indian prime minister following the talks, also said that both sides are looking at striking a major trade deal soon while calling import duties imposed by India on certain US products as "very unfair" and "strong".

"Whatever India charges, we will charge them," Trump has said, adding "We are being reciprocal with India.

The Modi-Trump meeting took place hours after the US President announced a new reciprocal tariff policy for all the trading partners of the US in the latest in a series of such actions initiated by his administration. In his remarks, Trump said

he and PM Modi have reached an agreement that could potentially make the US the "number one supplier" of oil and gas to India, suggesting it to be part of measures to bring down the US trade deficit with India that stands at around \$45 billion.

During the first term of President Donald Trump, India and the US had discussed a mini trade deal to boost economic ties. It was shelved by the Joe Biden administration as they were not in favour of a free trade agreement.

According to international trade experts, a trade deal between a developing and a developed nation should cover the maximum number of goods traded between them, as per WTO norms. A mini trade deal should have a roadmap to eventually convert it into a comprehensive free trade agreement.

WTO deals with global trade. Both India and the US are members of the Geneva-based body.

India cuts customs duty on bourbon whiskey to 50%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: India has slashed import duty on bourbon whiskey to 50 per cent as it warmed up to negotiating a mega trade deal with the US.

The reduction in customs duty on bourbon whiskey was notified February 13 just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talks with US President Donald Trump.

However, there has been no reduction in basic customs duty on import of other liquors. They would continue to attract 100 per cent duty.

The US is the primary exporter of bourbon whiskey to India accounting for about one-fourth of all such liquor imported into India.

As per the notification issued by the Department of Revenue, bourbon whiskey would now attract 50 per cent customs duty on its import.

It was 150 per cent earlier. India has imported bourbon whiskey worth \$2.5 million in 2023-24. The major exporting countries include the US (\$0.75 million), UAE (\$0.54 million). Singapore (\$0.28 million) and Italy (\$0.23 million).

Wholesale price inflation eases to 2.31% in January

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: Wholesale price inflation moderated marginally to 2.31 per cent in January due to the decline in prices of food items especially vegetables, government data released Friday showed.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation was 2.37 per cent in December 2024. It was 0.33 per cent in January 2024. As per the data, inflation in food items eased to 5.88 per cent in January, as against 8.47 per cent in December 2024. Inflation in vegetables came down significantly to 8.35 per cent, as against 28.65 per cent in Decem-

In the eggs, meat and fish category inflation declined to 3.56 per cent as against 5.43 per cent last month.

Within vegetables, tomato prices declined to 18.9 per cent while inflation in potato continued to be high at 74.28 per cent, and in onion it spiked to 28.33 per cent in January.

The fuel and power category witnessed a deflation of 2.78 per cent in January, against



a deflation of 3.79 per cent in December. In manufactured items, inflation was 2.51 per cent as compared to 2.14 per cent in December 2024.

Retail inflation data released Wednesday showed that Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation eased to a 5-month low of 4.31 per cent in January on easing prices of food items.

ICRA Senior Economist Rahul Agrawal said, "We project the WPI to average at 2.4 per cent in FY2025 and inch up further to 3 per cent in FY2026, despite expectations of a cooling in the prints for the food segment".

Earlier this month, RBI slashed the policy rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent in a bid to promote consumption. The rate cut happened after a gap of 5 years. RBI had last reduced the rate in May 2022.

In eight trading days, **BSE benchmark** tanked 2,644.6 points or 3.36%, and NSE Nifty slumped 810

our exporter should

be worried be<u>cause</u>

largest market for them.

We need to tread cautiously with this deal

without requiring a full-scale

FTA (free trade agreement),"

he said. Trade policy expert

Abhijit Das said that the an-

nouncement of reciprocal tar-

iffs has created uncertainty in

trade relations between the two

countries and that these duties

"really shred" the WTO (World

points or 3.41% PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: Investors' wealth eroded sharply by ₹25.31 lakh crore in eight days of market crash wherein the BSE benchmark Sensex tumbled over 3 per cent amid concerns over unabated foreign fund outflows, lower-than-expected quarterly earnings and uncertainty over global trade war.

In eight trading days, the BSE benchmark tanked 2,644.6 points or 3.36 per cent, and the NSE Nifty slumped 810 points or 3.41 per cent.

On Friday, the 30-share BSE bellwether gauge dropped 199.76 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 75,939.21, registering its eighth day of decline.

Tracking an extremely weak



BEARS TIGHTEN GRIP

Investors lose ₹25.31L-cr in 8 days

trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms dropped by ₹25,31,579.11 crore to ₹4,00,19,247 crore (\$4.61 trillion) in eight days.

US President Donald Trump has asserted that Washington will not spare India from reciprocal tariffs.

The President has set in motion his plan to impose reciprocal tariffs on imports, which is expected to further deepen the global trade war.

From the 30-share blue-chip

pack, Adani Ports dropped over 4 per cent. UltraTech Cement. Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank, NTPC and Tata Steel were also among the laggards. Nestle, ICI-CI Bank, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and HCL Tech were among the gainers.

"The risk-averse sentiment continues to rule investors' minds as corporate earnings are significantly lower than the market expectations during the start of the year, especially for mid and small caps. Muted

tinued as investors are perturbed by lingering foreign fund outflows

earnings trend, INR depreciation along with external factors like tariffs are expected to keep the sentiments weak in the near term, which could further push FIIs outflows," Vinod Nair Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 3.24 per cent and midcap index dropped 2.59 per cent

Among the BSE sectoral indices, services plunged 3.16 per cent, industrials (3.03 per cent). capital goods (2.76 per cent), power (2.65 per cent), utilities (2.52 per cent), consumer dura bles (2.39 per cent), commodities (2.25 per cent) and realty (2.03 per cent).

BSE Focused IT emerged as the only gainer. As many as 3,320 stocks declined while 681 advanced and 82 remained unchanged on the BSE.

JioStar launches JioHotstar

JioCinema, Disney+ Hotstar platforms merged

With close to 3 lakh hours of entertainment. live sports coverage, and more than 50 crore users, JioHotstar provides compelling subscription plans tailored to diverse audience needs. starting at ₹149

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: JioStar, the newly formed joint venture by the merger of Viacom18 and Star India, Friday announced the launch of JioHotstar by bringing together JioCinema and Disney+ Hotstar streaming platforms.

Existing JioCinema and Disney+ Hotstar subscribers will be able to seamlessly transition and set up their JioHotstar subscriptions, it added.

"At the core of JioHotstar is a powerful vision -- to make premium entertainment truly accessible to all Indians. Our promise of 'Infinite Possibilities' ensures that entertainment is no





longer a privilege, but a shared experience for all," JioStar CEO Digital, Kiran Mani said. Mani further said, "By inte-

grating AI-driven recommendations and offering streaming in over 19 languages, we are personalising content like never before. JioHotstar will offer the best

of Hollywood, with Disney, NBCUniversal Peacock, Warner Bros. Discovery HBO, and Paramount - all on the same platform, the company said.

It will also stream premier tournaments like ICC events, IPL, and WPL, while also spotlighting grassroots cricket with the Indian Street Premier League and events from BCCI,

ICC, and state associations,



other sporting events including the Premier League and Wimbledon, and domestic leagues such as Pro Kabaddi and ISL.

"Sports in India is more than just a game -- it's passion, pride, and a shared experience that unites millions. JioHotstar is revolutionising how fans experience live sports, combining the best of technology, access, and innovation," JioStar CEO-Sports, Sanjog Gupta said. JioHotstar will offer ultra-HD

4K streaming, AI-powered insights, real-time stats overlays, multi-angle viewing and range of 'culture' and 'special interest' feeds to ensure fans enjoy deeper, more immersive access to the sports they love, the statement said.

BSNL returns to profit after almost 17 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 14: BSNL has posted a net profit of ₹262 crore for December quarter, marking its return to profitability after almost 17 years, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said Friday terming it a "significant turning point" for the state-owned telco that has been focused on expansion of service offerings and subscriber base.

BSNL scripted an improvement on several counts, clinching 14-18 per cent growth across mobility, FTTH and leased line service offering, Scindia, Minister for Communications said adding that the subscriber base too has risen to about 9 crore in December, from 8.4 crore in June.

'Today is an important day for BSNL, and for the journey of the telecom sector in India... BSNL has, in third quarter of FY2024-25, for the first time in 17 years, posted a profit on a quarterly basis. The last time that BSNL posted a quarterly profit was in the year 2007," he said on BSNL's earnings.

The net profit came in at about ₹262 crore in the third quarter of the financial year. Mobility services revenue grew by 15 per cent, Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) revenue increased by 18 per cent and leased line services revenue rose by 14 per cent over Q3 of the previous year.

BIZ BUZZ

Customer outreach programme by BoB

Bhubaneswar: Bank of Baroda's Bhubaneswar Region initiated and carried out a customer outreach programme in five branches spanning two districts of Khordha & Navagarh district Friday. Amongst the branches were Bhubaneswar main branch, Samantarapur branch of Khordha and Gumei, Beruanbadi and Kunjabangarh branches in Navagarh district. The meeting was presided by VMNS Saibabu Dy General Manager and Regional Head.



programme was well received by all customers and key products of Bank of Baroda pertaining to CASA, Retail Assets, MSME, CASA Enablers, Wealth and Agriculture segments were showcased. The programme ended with felicitation of one women and one senior citizen customer from each branch. The initiative aims at connecting with ETB (Existing to Bank) & NTB (New to Bank customers) for the first time in a single session. The programme scheduled by Bank of Baroda's Bhubaneswar region is planned to continue till end of the month covering all branches.

MSME outreach programme by PNB

Bhubaneswar: Punjab National Bank, the second largest PSB of the country, has successfully organised MSME outreach programme at 150 different locations across the country including seven locations of the state - Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Berhampur, Dhenkanal



awareness about the various schemes of government such as PMEGP, PM Swanidhi, PM Vishwakarma, PM Mudra, PMFME and different loan products of bank such as GST Express, Prime Plus, PNB Sampati, Trade Growth with an aim to provide financial assistance to the prospective customers. In an event at Circle Office, Bhubaneswar Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, Principal Secretary, Government of Odisha has inaugurated the programme in presence of Rajesh Kumar, Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone, Debarchan Sahoo, General Manager, PNB Head Office, New Delhi and Laxmikanta Mishra, Circle Head, Bhubaneswar Circle.

Hockey teams ready for litmus test Shuttlers crash out

INDIAN SQUAD WILL OPEN THEIR **CAMPAIGN** WITH TWO **THRILLING MATCHES** AGAINST WORLD NO 7 SPAIN FEBRUARY 15 AND 16

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERICE

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: The Indian men's hockey team, currently ranked fifth in the world, is all set to kickstart their highly anticipated FIH Pro League 2024-25 campaign at the iconic Kalinga Hockey Stadium here Saturday.

Led by Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna awardee, Harmanpreet Singh, the Indian squad will open their campaign with two thrilling matches against World No 7 Spain February 15 and 16, followed by intense clashes against World No 4 Germany February 18 and 19.

India's campaign will open at home, thus offering a prime opportunity for the team to showcase their recent momentum. Following their encounters with Germany, India will take on Ireland February 21 and 22, before facing the formidable World No 2 England February 24 and 25.

With their bronze medal triumph at the 2024 Paris Olympics, the Harmanpreet Singh-led side has proven their mettle on the international stage. The team was last seen in action during a two-match Test series at home against Germany in October 2024, where India bounced back from a 2-0 defeat in the first game to defeat the visitors 5-3 in the second. Though Germany won the series via shootout, the competitive performances add**FIH PRO LEAGUE**





ed confidence to India's preparations for the FIH Pro League.

Earlier, India showcased their prowess by successfully defending their title at the Asian Champions Trophy 2024 in September, winning all their matches and cementing their position as one of Asia's strongest teams.

Harmanpreet Singh will be joined by vice-captain Hardik Singh as they lead a well-balanced squad filled with both experience and youthful talent. Senior players such as Manpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Sumit, Sanjay, Jugraj Singh, and Vivek Sagar Prasad will form the backbone of the team while emerging stars like Araijeet Singh Hundal, Angad Bir Singh and Arshdeep Singh bring fresh energy and skill to the lineup.

"The team is fresh from some fantastic performances in the recently concluded Hockey India League. I am particularly happy to have seen Jugraj win-

Our training is going well from Hockey India League, we have been preparing for months, have earnt a lot from HIL and we have been able to maintain our fitness as well

HARMANPREET SINGH | CAPTAIN, INDIA MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

ning the top scorer award and this only means well for the Indian team as we have more firepower in our dragflick,' expressed Harmanpreet on the eve of their opening encounter.

With a mix of seasoned campaigners and promising youngsters, India will be eager to make a strong start and challenge some of the world's top teams in the tournament. Moreover, after finishing seventh in last year's edition of the FIH Pro League, India will be determined to make a strong comeback this season. The team will aim to deliver an improved performance and clinch the top spot, a feat that carries the added reward of automatic qualifi-

cation for the 2026 World Cup. He further elaborated, "This

is an important year for us and Pro League truly marks the start of our new Olympic cycle and the international season. It's an important year for us with World Cup qualification (Asia Cup 2025) coming up and Pro League gives us a great opportunity to test where we stand. We are upbeat about our campaign, Spain, Germany and England are strong teams and will take it match-by-match."

Shedding light on the highstake competition, chief coach Craig Fulton said, "The next few days will be more like the Olympic Games, with back-toback matches which is why we have chosen a bigger squad. Since we are starting our campaign here, performance will be on our mind more than rank-

Pro League is big opportunity: Salima

Indian women's hockey team skipper Salima Tete wants her side to give its best in the FIH Pro League without thinking about results, terming it a big opportunity to work on "grey areas". India will open their campaign against England on Saturday here. The hosts will again square off against England on Sunday before taking on Spain on February 18 and 19. The Indian women will then play Germany (February 21 and 22), Netherlands on February 24 and 25 in the India leg of the league. Salima said chief coach Harendra Singh, who joined again on April last year, made a lasting impression on the side with his tactics.

ing points. The other teams are coming here already having played a few matches in Europe, so our focus will be on doing well and winning matches.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Qingdao, Feb 14: HS Prannoy fought valiantly, but India succumbed to a 0-3 defeat against a second-string Japan in the quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships, ending their campaign on a disappointing note here Friday.

India, the 2023 bronze medalists in Dubai, struggled to find their rhythm, and trailed 0-1 after going down in the mixed doubles.

Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto, ranked 37th in the world, showed resilience before going down 13-21, 21-17, 13-21 to world number 12 Hiroki Midorikawa and Natsu Saito.

With PV Sindhu sidelined due to a hamstring injury, India faced an uphill task against Tomoka Miyazaki, who has quickly risen to world number 8 following her triumph at the 2022 World Junior Championships.

World number 31 Malvika Bansod, stepping in for Sindhu, put up a brave fight, especially in the second game, but struggled to match the control and consistency of her younger opponent and lost 12-21, 19-21, leaving India 0-2 behind.

It all came down to Prannoy to keep India alive, but despite a determined effort, the 32-year-old, returning after a long break and struggling with early-season form, couldn't sustain the pressure against world number 16 Kenta Nishimoto.

The Japanese star sealed the rubber with a 21-14, 15-21, 21-12 victory in 1 hour and 17 min utes. India will be disappoint ed with the loss, especially as Japan did not field their full-

players absent. Japan were the inaugural edition champions in 2017 and were runners-up in 2019.

strength team, with several top

Miyazaki vs Malvika

Miyazaki, leading the newlook Japanese team, was sharp and precise, quickly surging to an 11-3 lead after Malvika hit long.

However, two mistakes from the Indian allowed the Japanese to take the first game. The second game was more

competitive as Malvika took a 5-3 lead, engaging in tight rallies.

Prannoy vs Nishimoto

In the men's singles, Prannoy fell behind 4-7 as Nishimoto dominated with angled returns. Prannoy handed Nishimoto

six game points with a net error, and another mistake sealed the first game for Japan. The second game was in-

tense, with Prannoy and Nishimoto tied at 6-6. He then earned five game

points after Nishimoto sent a shot wide, converting the first to roar back into the contest.



SHORT **TAKES**

Blow for wrestlers

New Delhi: Indian wrestlers may miss the second Ranking Series of the year in Albania after the Sports Ministry withheld approval, blaming the WFI for its failure to submit the necessary recommendations on time even as the federation denied the charge Friday. The wrestlers had already missed the first Ranking Series in Zagreb, Croatia, due to a tussle between the ministry and the suspended WFI. The second Ranking Series is scheduled to take place in Tirana, Albania, from February 26 to March 2. The Wrestling Federation of India, which was suspended by the ministry in December 2023 but remains recognised by the international body, had sent the proposal to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) January 30 -- almost a month before the start of the tournament.

Gukesh loses, ends 8th

Hamburg: World champion D Gukesh ended in eighth position after losing to Iranian-French grandmaster Alireza Firouzia in the second game of their seventh-place playoff match at the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam here Friday, Gukesh thus concluded his forgettable campaign in the tournament at Weissenhaus resort without a single win. A day after his remarkable comeback from a hopeless position to draw game one against Firouzia Thursday, the ball was in Gukesh's court to do well as the white pieces, but clearly, the world champion had run out of steam to lose in 30 moves. In the final game, Firouzja proved superior and cashed in on the opportunities presented to him.

Ikeda suspended

Monaco: Japanese race walker Koki Ikeda, a former Olympic silver medalist, has been banned for four years for doping, the Athletic Integrity Unit said Friday. The athletics watchdog said that a disciplinary and appeals tribunal ruled that the 26-year-old Ikeda had broken anti-doping rules. Ikeda has been provisionally banned from competition since November 2024, with his results disqualified since June 2023. Doping authorities say abnormalities were detected in his blood samples taken in June, August and September of 2023. The AIU alleged the abnormalities "were indicative of blood manipulation.'

Odisha shines at National Games with 46 medals

The state government has announced cash prizes of ₹6 lakh for gold medalists, ₹4 lakh and ₹3 lakh for silver and bronze medalists respectively

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Odisha athletes clinched a total of 46 medals, including 14 gold, 15 silver and 17 bronze at the 38th National Games held in Uttarakhand. The state secured the 12th position in the final ranking list and placed itself among the top 15 in the country.

To encourage and reward the outstanding performances of its athletes, the Odisha government has announced cash prizes of Rs 6 lakh for gold medalists, Rs 4 lakh for silver medalists and Rs 3 lakh for the bronze medalists.

Odisha's Sports Minister Shri Suryabanshi Suraj stated, "This year, Odisha has made a mark in national games, securing a place among the top 15 states. Winning 46 medals, including 14 gold, is a significant achievement. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the athletes. In recognition of their achievements we will felicitate them with cash awards. We are committed to support our sportspersons and will continue to support and nurture the sporting talent to shine on national and global stages.

It is pertinent to mention here that a total of 302 athletes and 75 support staff represented Odisha at the 38th National Games. Among the standout performers, sprinter Animesh Kujur secured three gold medals, gymnast Rakesh Patra won two golds, while gymnast Pranati Navak bagged one gold, one silver and two bronze medals. Cyclist Swasti Singh added to Odisha's medal tally with one gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

Additionally, Odisha athletes set new records in various categories, further strengthening the state's position as an emerging powerhouse in sports.

OFC keep playoff hopes alive

The Juggernauts are seventh in the table now with 29 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 14: Hugo Boumous' brilliance inspired Odisha FC to sustain top-6 hopes with a 3-1 comeback win against Hyderabad FC in their Indian Super League match here Friday.

The Juggernauts are seventh in the table now with 29 points, two behind the sixthplaced Mumbai City FC (31) as Sergio Lobera's team continues to be a formidable contender for the playoffs.

They entered the half-time trailing by a goal but produced a remarkable turnaround in the following 45 minutes to seal all three points - holding 54.6% possession in the game and taking five shots on target as compared to three of the opponents.

Odisha FC thus recorded their fourth straight win at home in Bhubaneswar against Hyderabad FC.

Hyderabad FC drew the game



momentarily in their favour by exerting pressure on the Odisha FC defence from a set-piece situation in the 30th minute.

The visitors worked in tan dem to dissect the Juggernauts backline, winning over second balls before Muhammed Rafi placed a headed pass from the left post in the path of Stefan Sapic for the latter to tap into the centre of the goal from extremely close range.

The Juggernauts turned to Mourtada Fall to secure the equaliser in the 47th minute with a slightly unique take to their corner routine this time around.

Boumous launched in a quick cross on the far post but fall was distant from the net at the time of the delivery. The centre-back

made a dash of a sprint before thumping in a powerful header into the top left corner, bringing the Sergio Lobera-coached side back into the game.

Odisha FC treated this sudden shift in momentum to their advantage, pressing high up with Diego Mauricio leading the charge at the centre.

The frontline worked collectively to recover possession in an instant, before Jerry Mawihmingthanga supplied Hugo Boumous with a slick ball on the right flank.

Boumous exceptionally carried the ball into the box before placing it into the bottom left corner in the 49th minute to give the Juggernauts a slender lead

CHAMPIONS TROPHY

ICC announces record \$6.9 million prize pot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Feb 14: Winners of the upcoming Champions Trophy will walk away with a whopping \$2.24 million cash reward after the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a 53 per cent hike in its prize money pool for the eight-team tournament starting February 19.

The winners' purse would be close to 20 crore in Indian currency. The runners-up will receive half the amount, \$1.12 million (₹9.72 crore), while each losing semi-finalist will take home \$560,000 (₹4.86 crore). The total prize pool has increased to \$6.9 million (₹60

crore approx). The substantial prize pot underscores the ICC's ongoing commitment to investing in the sport and maintaining the global prestige of our events, ICC chairman Jay Shah said in a statement ahead of the tournament which will be held in Pakistan and the UAE.

Each group stage win would be worth over \$34,000 (₹30 lakh) for the victorious team.

NATIONAL GAMES CONCLUDES

Shah asserts readiness to host 2036 Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Haldwani, Feb 14: A lively yet simple closing ceremony brought the curtains down on the 38th National Games here Friday with home minister Amit Shah as its chief guest asserting that the country is well on track to host a successful Olympics in 2036.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha declared the Games closed before handing over the flag to Conrad Sangma, chief minister of Meghalaya, the state that will host the next edition of the Games in 2027

India's bid to host the Olympics in 2036 is still in early stages and the International Olympic Committee will not decide on it until next year. Sports minister Mansukh

Mandaviya also joined the event to laud the athletes' performances

To start with, Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami welcomed Shah with a commemorative memento, a shawl and a bouquet of flowers.

"Dev Bhoomi' has now now also become a 'Khel Bhoomi' not just because of the National Games but also because of its athletes' performance in the Games and Dhami ji's relentless efforts towards hosting a successful Games," Shah said at the Indira Gandhi International Sports Complex here.

The venue has a capacity of 25,000 and was packed for the ceremony.

"Dhami ji has developed the infrastructure for sports in every district of the state. The sportsmen who have won so



many medals for Uttarakhand have turned 'Dev Bhoomi' into 'Khel Bhoomi'.

"Thanks to their efforts, Uttarakhand has jumped from 21st position (in last Games) to seventh position (in the overall standings). I congratulate all the athletes who helped paved

the way for 'Dev Bhoomi' to also become a 'Khel Bhoomi'. My best wishes are with them."

Several dignitaries were in attendance here, including Uttarakhand's Sports Minister Rekha Arya, boxing legend MC Mary Kom, and Olympic medallist shooter Gagan Narang,

I can say it today that India has a very bright future in sports. We have staked a claim to host the Olympics in 2036, and we are ready for it. When the Olympics are held here, our athletes will

win medals and make the

country's flag fly high AMIT SHAH | HOME MINISTER, INDIA

among others. Shah expressed optimism about India's progress in sports in the coming times. He encouraged the athletes and said that the current Narendra Modi government is creating world-class infrastructure and ecosystem for

sports across the country. He pointed out that Prime Minister Modi has taken many steps to promote sports.

"When Modi ji became PM in 2014, our sports budget was ₹800 crore, but now, it will rise to ₹3800 crore. This reflects the commitment of the Modi government towards sports," he said.

He said that in 2014, Indian players won only 15 medals in the Commonwealth Games. while now the number has reached 26. The Asian Games have increased from 57 medals in 2014 to 107 in 2023.

Shah and Dhami gave away the prizes to the top three per formers in the Games -- Ser vices Sports Control Board Maharashtra and Haryana.

Mandaviya said that the Games will be a catalyst in India's journey to become a sports hub.

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