

Kangana's perspective

Actor and Parliamentarian Kangana Ranaut shares insights into her evolving perspective on homemaking

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Job cuts hit US

The campaign by President Donald Trump to radically cut back the US bureaucracy spreads, firing more than 9,500 workers

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Export boost

Plans to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement will help India boost its exports to the US, say exporters

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Sinner banned

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BHUBANESWAR | SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 16. 2025

State economy to grow by 7.2%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Odisha's economy is estimated to grow by 7.2 per cent in the current financial year, which is higher than the all-India growth rate of 6.4 per cent, according to the state economic survey report for the 2024-25 fiscal.

The report, which was laid before the state Assembly Saturday evening, stated that the size of state's economy proxied by GSDP at current prices is estimated to be at ₹9.5 lakh crore in 2024-25 which has increased by 10 per cent from ₹8.6 lakh crore in the 2023-24 fiscal.

All the sectors have shown robust growth in the financial year 2024-25 and the state is poised for rapid growth in the years ahead. Higher capital investment and investment intent received through Utkarsh Odisha would further increase growth rate in the state in future, an official statement highlighting the key points of the report said.

Similarly, the per capita income has increased by 10.6 per cent to reach ₹1,82,548 in 2024-25 (advance estimate) while per capita income at all-India level has gone up by 8.7 per cent. The state's per capita income

is 8.8 per cent less than India's per capita income of ₹2,00,162 in 2024-25 and is on a convergent path, it said. Agriculture and allied sector have registered a ro bust growth rate of 3.3 per cent in 2024-25, which contributed 19 per cent to the Gross State Value Added (GSVA).

The agriculture sector in Odisha is growing on an average higher than the country. Over the last five years, the agriculture sector in Odisha grew at 7 per cent against the national growth level of 4.1 per cent.

Similarly, the industry sector in Odisha is expected to grow at 6.1 per cent in 2024-25 as per advance estimates contributing 43.9 per cent to the Gross State Value Added (GSVA). The services sector is esti-

mated to grow at 10 per cent in 2024-25 contributing around 37.1 per cent to the state's economy, it said.

Further, the state allocated nearly ₹58,195 crore towards capital outlay in 2024-25 (budget estimates), which is 6.1 per cent of GSDP. The state has the highest capital outlay to GSDP among major states in India, it said.

14 Kumbh pilgrims killed in mishaps

Bhubaneswar, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj/ Dahold, Feb 15: As many as 14 Maha Kumbh pilgrims died in separate incidents. Saturday. In the first incident, 10 persons travelling in a SUV were killed in a head-on collision with a bus on a highway in the Meja police station area of Prayagrai late Friday night, police said on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Vivek Chandra Yadav said devotees from Chhattisgarh's Korba district were heading to the Maha Kumbh to take a dip when the Bolero they were travelling in collided headon with a bus on the highway.

All the 10 people travelling in the Bolero died in the accident. while those in the bus suffered minor injuries, the DCP said.

"The news of the death of many people in a road accident on Mirzapur Highway in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh is extremely sad. I express my condolences to the families of the deceased. I wish for the speedy recovery of all those injured," Murmu said in a post on X in Hindi. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Aditvanath also expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident.

In the other incident, four persons were killed and six sustained injuries after a tourist van carrying pilgrims from the Maha Kumbh rammed into a stationary truck on a highway in Gujarat's Dahod district Saturday, police said.

The accident occurred around 2.15 am on the Indore-Ahmedabad highway near Limkheda, an official said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Child marriages go unabated

Though the government has set an ambitious target to make the state child marriage-free by 2030, it appears to be a distant dream if the revelation made by Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida on the floor of Assembly Saturday is any indication. Despite awareness programmes at various levels and stricter law, over 8,100 child marriages were held in the state in the last six years. Worse, a recent study by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) revealed that over 11,000 children in Odisha are vulnerable to child marriages. The report was based on data from the 2023-24 academic session which showed high rates of school absenteeism and dropouts. Although it has been nearly two decades since the promulgation of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, instances of underage marriages still continue largely due to the absence of proper monitoring and law enforcement

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Despite significant efforts to eradicate the practice, child marriages continue to be a major issue in the state. Government data reveals that the state has recorded a staggering 8,159 instances of child marriages over the past six years.

VICTORY MARCH: Indian eves celebrate as they began their campaign in the Women's Pro League with a 3-2 win over higher-ranked England at the Kalinga Stadium,

In a written response to the Assembly, Odisha Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida

highlighted that Nabarangpur district has the highest number of child marriage cases, with a total of 1,347 instances. Ganjam district follows closely with 966 cases, while Koraput district accounts for 636 instances. The other districts that have

featured prominently in the list include Mayurbhanj (594), Rayagada (408), Balasore (361), Keonjhar (328), Nayagarh (308), Kandhamal (308) and Cuttack (154). Significantly, Khurdha, of which capital city Bhubaneswar is a part, also over a hundred child marriages since 2019. The district records 110 child marriages in the last six years. These figures underscore the severity of the problem in these regions.

In addition to child marriages, the state is also grap pling with the issue of child labour. Over the same period, authorities have rescued 328 children who were working as

No leave for IAS officers without Chief Secy nod

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers are now prohibited from taking leave without prior approval from the Chief Secretary, according to a notification issued Saturday by the General Administration and Public Grievance department.

Reports have indicated that several officers have been taking leave without authorisation, leading to disruptions in administrative work. The government has taken note of such cases and decided to

enforce discipline within the bureaucratic setup.

"It has come to our attention that, in some cases, officers are availing leave or leaving headquarters without obtaining prior permission from the Chief Secretary. This results in unavoidable dislocation of official work," the notification

"It is therefore decided that, prior permission from the Chief Secretary shall be mandatory for all IAS officers of the state while availing leave as well as leaving headquarters," it fur ther stated.

Inventory of Ratna Bhandar valuables after repairs: Min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The inventory of valuables stored inside the Ratna Bhandar of Jagannath Temple will be conducted after the completion of ongoing repair work in the treasury, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan informed the Assembly Saturday.

In a written reply to a question from BJD MLA Tusharkanti Behera, the minister said that the Ratna Bhandar was opened July 14, 2024 in accordance with the guidelines approved by the

After shifting the ornaments from the treasury, the repair work is under progress by the ASI (Archaeological Survey of India), he said.

"After completion of the repair work, the inventory of the ornaments will be carried out. Only after that, comprehensive details about the ornaments can be disclosed," added the minister. The previous inventory of the valuables stored inside Ratna Bhandar was conducted from May 13 to July 23, 1978, he said.

3 of family found hanging in Dhenkanal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Feb 15: In a shocking incident, a man, his daughter and grandson died by hanging inside their house at Chaulia Khamar village under the Sadar police limits in this district, police said Saturday.

The deceased were identified as Shankarsan Das, 70, a retired Railway employee. his daughter Subarna Das. 40, and grandson Santosh Kumar Das, 18.

The matter came to the fore after villagers found stench emanating from a

On being alerted, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Surya Mani Pradhan, and other police personnel conducted a probe. A forensic team was pressed into service. The bodies were brought and sent for post-mortem.

Preliminary inquiry suggested that they might have died by suicide over suspected depression Wednesday.

Sources said that Shankarshan was staying in the village with his wife, Pushpanjali, 67, after his retirement nearly a decade ago. His daughter, Subarna, had

Barefoot and

wearing a small

loincloth, the

young man

appeared calm

as he waved two

wooden sticks, a

married in the Kankadahad block but had returned to her parental home due to marital disputes. Her son, Santosh, was a Class XII student.

Shankarsan's only son. Prasanna, had been residing in Dhenkanal town for the past 20 years. Locals said that mental distress might have forced the family to stay in the village.

Pushpanjali found her husband, daughter, and grandson hanging in two separate rooms of the house and informed villagers.

The cause of death remains unclear, the ASP said.

enous group in the area after

finding abandoned camps and

other evidence, but none of

their members had been seen

The area, known as Mamoria

Grande, was declared off-limits

for non-Indigenous in Decem-

SURA ROUTRAY BACK IN CONG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: A day after Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) revoked his expulsion order, veteran politi cian and six-time MLA Suresh Kumar Routray Saturday visited the state party headquarters

Routray said: "I was in acute pain for the last nine months af ter being expelled from the Congress. I have been in Congress for last five decades. Congress is a temple and Nehru family is God for me. I am happy to return home."

Routray was expelled from the party during the 2024 general elections on charge of anti-party activities. His younger son Manmath Routray had con tested as a BJD candidate and the father was accused of cam paigning for his son and against the Congress candidate in the Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha seat.

"Some people conspired against me and succeeded in removing me from the party Now I will be actively work for the party," Routray said. He was expelled from the party for six years. "For the last 50 years." have been working for Congress I am still in Congress and will remain forever in the party," he said. Meanwhile, speculation was rife that another Congress leader Bhupinder Singh who joined the BJD in 2014 may re turn to the party.

Uncontacted tribal filmed emerging from Amazon

Rio de Janeiro, Feb 15: A young man from an isolated indigenous tribe has approached a populated river community in the Amazon, Brazil's indigenous affairs agency has con-

The encounter occurred at around 7pm Wednesday in Bela Rosa, a community along the Purus River in the southwestern Amazon region.

Barefoot and wearing a small loincloth, the young man appeared calm and in good health as he waved two wooden sticks, a villager told this agency.

The villager spoke on condition of anonymity, saying Brazil's indigenous bureau Funai had advised locals not to discuss the incident.

The villager said locals believed the man was asking for

Mobile phone footage of the rare encounter showed one resident trying and failing to show the man how to use a lighter.

Funai officials arrived soon after, and after the man was served fish, he was taken to a nearby facility operated by the group. It was not immediately clear who shot the video.

"providing the necessary care" and is awaiting the arrival of a medical team.

A member of the nearby Juma tribe - whose original pop-

Thursday that a team on site is

local said ulation has dwindled to just three women - was expected to arrive soon at the site to try to

communicate with him. In 2021, Funai confirmed the existence of an isolated Indig-

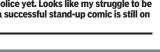
and in good health ber 2024. It added that threats to the group include land-grabbing and potential conflicts with nearby communities.

until Wednesday.

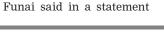
The Amazon rainforest is home to the world's largest number of uncontacted tribes.

As a policy, Brazil does not actively seek contact with them but instead creates protected and monitored areas.

No. I haven't been summoned by the police yet. Looks like my struggle to be a successful stand-up comic is still on

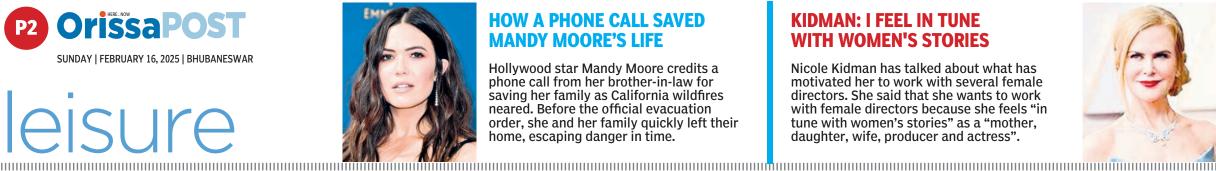












HOW A PHONE CALL SAVED MANDY MOORE'S LIFE

Hollywood star Mandy Moore credits a phone call from her brother-in-law for saving her family as California wildfires neared. Before the official evacuation order, she and her family quickly left their home, escaping danger in time.

KIDMAN: I FEEL IN TUNE WITH WOMEN'S STORIES

Nicole Kidman has talked about what has motivated her to work with several female directors. She said that she wants to work with female directors because she feels "in tune with women's stories" as a "mother, daughter, wife, producer and actress".



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

Ganesha predicts that today, you will be successful in money matters. There is, at best, only an outside chance that any stimulating event or thrilling escapade will occur to day. 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 satisfying back home.

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 in your accomplishments in career or business.

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 you undertake today. Patience bears its fruits and they are always sweet. Also Ganesha reminds you that anybody can enjoy pleasure, but only few can handle pressure. So, take your pick!

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 family. Simultaneously, you may realise where your limitations are. Ganesha predicts that the artist in you will flour

Ganesha says that today in very careful in your work. It is likely that vour superiors will not be happy about your work or your ability today. Those of you who are businessmen should try and lay sending off tenders today. The who have given their job interviews may not get a favorable response to it. There may be a delay in getting your call letters.

SCORPIO

It is likely that you shall learn an important lesson in life today. 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?

Sagarika all praise for SRK

Mumbai: Chak De! India remains a landmark film for its powerful portrayal of women in sports and Shah Rukh Khan's unforgettable role as Kabir Khan. Recently, Sagarika Ghatge, who played Preeti Sabarwal, reflected on filming a pivotal scene where she intensely locked eyes with SRK.

In an interview with *Hauterrfly*, Sagarika shared that this was her first proper scene with Shah Rukh, making her extremely nervous. Until then, her charmostly appeared in group acter had with minimal dialogue. scenes However, SRK's reassuring presence helped ease her nerves. 'She (Preeti Sabarwal) didn't have much to say. She was a quiet char-

> me was, 'Just be yourself, don't think about anything else.'" she recalled. Directed by Shimit Amin, Chak De! India follows former hockey captain Kabir Khan as he seeks redemption by coaching India's women's

acter in that way. I was so

nervous, but he made it so

comfortable. All he told

hockey team. Beyond Chak De! India. Sagarika has appeared in Fox, Miley Naa Miley Hum, and Premachi Goshta. She also made her digital debut with BOSS: Baap of Special Services.

State to host 'National Short Film Festival on Disability Issues'

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The state government, through its Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department, has announced to organise the National Short Film Festival on Disability Issues, titled 'Samarthya'.

The festival, to be organised by RR Events & Cine Production, aims to shed light on the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities while encouraging their participation in various fields and advocating for their rights

The details of the festival were unveiled during a press meet held at a City hotel Saturday



personalities from the film industry and government officials.

Director, RR Events & Cine Production, Ramesh Barik said the festival will accept film submissions from February 17 to March 10, 2025. "Filmmakers, students, and content creators from across the coun-

try are invited to participate by submitting short films with duration of two to five minutes, focusing on themes related to disability, inclusion, and empowerment," he said.

Barik said a thorough evaluation process has been put in place, with jury screenings scheduled from March 13 to March 16, 2025. The shortlisted films will compete in various categories, with winners to be announced during a Grand Award Ceremony March 19 The event will witness the

presence of celebrities from the Hindi and Odia film industries he said.

The Odisha government has allocated Rs 10 lakh in prize money, to be distributed across multiple categories.

Among those present on the occasion included actress Archita Sahu, filmmaker Sabya sachi Mahapatra, actress Pinki Pradhan, Additional Secretary SSEPD Deepak Rautarai, and Departmental Director SSEPD Niyati Pattnaik.

Kangana on homemaking

Mumbai: Kangana Ranaut is successfully balancing her dual roles as an actress and a politician. As the Member of Parliament from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi constituency, she continues to shine in the film industry while navigating pol-

In a recent interview, The Queen actress shared insights into her evolving perspective on homemaking. She recalled how her mother once emphasised the importance of managing a household, from making achar (pickle) to growing vegetables. Initially, Kangana dismissed these ideas as outdated, but over time, she grew to appreciate them. Remembering her words, she said, "My mom used to say that as a woman, you should be more invested in homemaking—from making achar (pickle) to ghee (clarified butter) to growing vegetables. I used to think she was saying such silly things. But now, I see things differently.

She went on to say, "I used to think that I was one of the youngest and richest women in the country. But today I am say-

ing the same thing...I think that is the evolution wom en. I read quote that 'You are not born as a woman, but you grow to be a wom-

an'... Today, my mother happy, and she thinks I have matured and become wiser.'



stories, where she mentioned that she is busy with Sikandar night shoot. She shared a picture of herself making a Korean heart as

she posed for the cameras.

For the caption, the Chhaava actress wrote: "PS - Sikandar night shoot. I guess finally we are back to this chaotic life of an actor.

Sikandar marks Salman's return to the big screen after more than a year. The superstar was last seen in Tiger 3. The teaser is further elevated by an electrifying background score composed by the acclaimed Santosh Narayanan, whose music perfectly complements the intensity and grandeur of the visuals

Rashmika's latest release is Chhaava, where she plays the role of Maharani Yesubai. The film is a cinematic adaptation of the Marathi novel Chhava by Shivaji Sawant. It sheds light on the political turmoil after the demise of Shivaji Maharaj when Shivaji Sambhaji decided to take over the empire.

The actress is also set to appear in several other major releases this year, including *Kubera* featuring Dhanush.

> To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

> > 2

5

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the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

4

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SOLUTIONS

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SUDOKU

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PEANUTS











CALVIN AND HOBBES







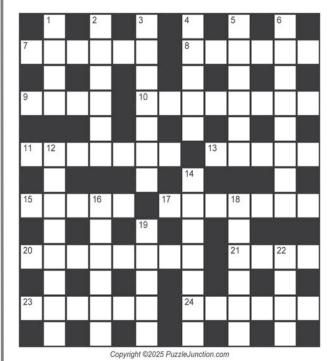


BREVITY



DOST

CROSSWORD



Across

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- 9 Malt kiln 10 Smart alecks
- (4,4)
- 11 Black magic
- 13 Wooden shoe
- 15 Beguile
- 17 Fill with fear 20 Balladeers

- 1 Roman robe

Down

- 3 Type of
- 2 Radio noise

marketing

4 Secret supply

21 Kon Tiki, e.g.

partners

Republic

23 Coalition

24 Baltic

- 14 Archaeologist's finds

6 Canadian forest

dweller (4,4)

- 16 Anxiety
- disorder

12 Reverse a

decision

5 Poser

- 18 Blue moon, e.g.
- 19 Charter 22 Fencing sword
- SUDOKU

BEON DIARY R P N S

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

owntown

EXAM TIME

As CBSE annual examinations begin Saturday, Class X students enter Kendriva Vidvalava No. 1, an exam centre, in Bhubaneswar



Har Pal Aapke Saath

Farmer issues rock House for 2nd day



Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The Odisha Assembly witnessed ruckus for the second consecutive day Saturday as Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress members demanded a special discussion on farmers' issues, including deaths following crop loss, while a senior BJP leader accused former bureaucrat VK Pandian of 'controlling' the actions of BJD members in the House

As the House assembled for Question Hour at 10.30am, the Opposition members trooped into the well of the House even before Speaker Surama Padhy took her seat and raised slogans against the BJP government. They demanded that a special discussion be held on the farmers' issues after suspending all the business in the House.

While most of the BJD and Congress MLAs were in the well of the House, Congress member Taraprasad Bahinipati was seen

raising slogans standing on a chair near the Speaker's podium.

Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik was present in the House when the $BJ\bar{D}$ and Congress members were agitating in the well of the House.

As the Speaker's repeated appeal to agitating members to return to their seats went in vain, she adjourned the proceedings till

After the adjournment of the House, BJD members marched to Raj Bhavan and submitted a memorandum to Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati on the farmers' issues.

"There is nothing more important than the farmers' plight. The farmers are not being given proper compensation for the crop loss due to the unseasonal rain in December last year. As many as 14 farmers died due to crop loss, some of them due to cardiac arrest. The farmers collapsed on their paddy fields and died, but the

government has not given a single rupee as compensation to the next of kin," BJD deputy leader in Assembly Prasanna Acharya said.

When the House reassembled after the adjournment, it witnessed an uproarious scene as senior BJP leader Jayanarayan Mishra accused former bureaucrat VK Pandian, who was close to former CM Naveen Patnaik, of 'controlling' the BJD members and their actions in the Assembly.

Mishra blamed the BJD members for disrupting the proceedings even after the Speaker agreed for a discussion on the farmers' issues. Why do they create ruckus and

waste valuable time of the House?" Mishra questioned.

"When I asked BJD members about this in the lobby (a common area for MLAs in the Assembly), they replied they are doing so under the instruction of Pandian,' Mishra said, questioning, "Will Pandian run the House?'

Mishra alleged that there is a

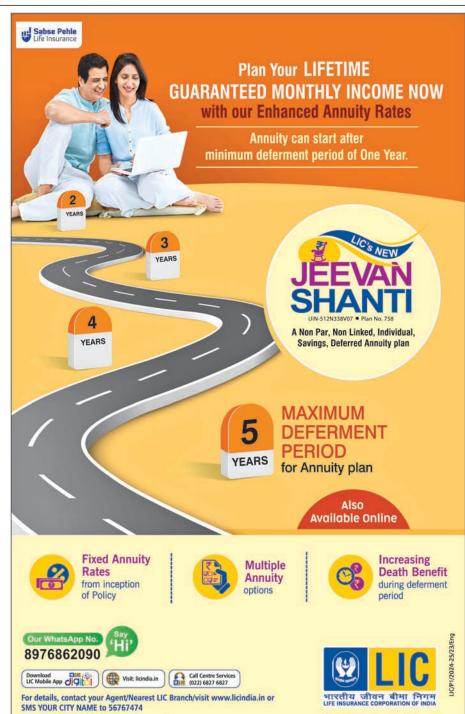
competition among BJD MLAs to become Pandian's favourite. Mishra's statement sparked a row and the House witnessed noisy scenes with the BJD members strongly objecting to the allegation. They also demanded that Pandian's name be expunged from the Assembly records.

"As per norms of the House, the name of a person who is not a member of the Assembly should not be taken in the House. If the senior MLA (Mishra) has any proof, he should present it before the House. He should also name the BJD MLAs who gave him such information in the lobby,' Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik said.

Senior BJD member PK Deb said they demand a special discussion on farmers' issues and not a debate under the norms of the notice for an adjournment motion which is held for only 55 minutes. "Since farmers' issues are much bigger and important, those should be discussed in details. We demand a special discussion and not a 55-minute debate," Deb said.

Outside the House, Parliamentarv Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling told reporters, "The Opposition plays the role of escapist and does not come for discussion even as the Speaker has allowed for a debate. They (Opposition) are afraid of a debate. The BJD does not have the habit of playing the role of an Opposition party and is therefore failing in its new av-

Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati also accused the BJD of disrupting the Assembly. "We had moved an adjournment motion for discussion on the farmers' issues and the Speaker had accepted it. The Congress was ready for the discussion, but the BJD members stalled the House. which is against the interest of the farmers," he said



Police help sought for **ESMA** enforcement on discom employees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The state Energy department has urged the Director General of Police (DGP) YB Khurania to ensure stringent enforcement of Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), 1988 which is in force on employees of all power utilities in the state till April 20 this year.

The state government has promulgated ESMA on power utilities such as GRIDCO, Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL), Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC), Odisha Power Generation Corporation (OP-GC) and power distribution companies October 21, 2024 for a period of six months to prevent any incidence of strike and maintain industrial peace.

In a letter to the DGP Friday, Energy department Principal Secretary Vishal Dev said degree and diploma engineers of Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Ltd (TPCODL) staged a dharna outside the corporate office here in protest against their routine transfer leading to law and order situation.

The senior management of the company and even female employees were denied exit from the building even after office hours recently. The situation was brought under control after the intervention of police administration, he said.

The discom management initiated disciplinary proceedings against such unruly behaviour of the demonstrators and lodged FIRs against four association leaders and seven other engineers.

Subsequently, after the intervention of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, the transfer orders were modified and TPCODL management decided to withdraw the departmental proceedings as a goodwill gesture.

However, the protesters have decided to take their demonstration to the next level by gathering in large numbers from February 11 demanding immediate withdrawal of the chargesheet against 11 officials, Dev said.

PDS RATION

Min: e-KYC verification extended till March 31

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Keeping in view the difficulties faced by people in remote pockets where there is lack of internet con-

nectivity, the state government has once again extended the deadline for e-KYC (know your customer) verification of ration card holders from February 15 to March 31, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said

This is the third time the state government has extended the time for e-KYC verification of the ration card holders. The e-KYC verification process was supposed to end December 31, last year.

Earlier, the government had extended the deadline to January 31, then till February 15, and now, the fresh deadline is March 31, 2025.

Speaking to reporters here, Patra said the extension was made considering the difficulties faced by the people due to the lack of internet services in remote areas.

Efforts are underway to enhance the connectivity infrastructure with network devices set to be deployed at 341 locations throughout the state, he said.

Out of the total of 11,840 fair price shops or public distribution system (PDS) points, 341 are operating offline, of which there is no network at 230 points, and the internet services are very slow at the remaining 111 locations, Patra pointed out.

IN A NUTSHELL

Out of the total of 11,840 fair price shops in the state, 341 are operating offline, of which there is no network at

There are 3.32 crore PDS beneficiaries under both Central and state schemes, of whom more than 33 lakh have not completed their e-KYC verification

fforts are underway to enhance Connectivity infrastructure with network devices set to be deployed at 341 locations in the state, says FS&CW

He said that a total of 3.25 crore people are beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), and 6.48 lakh people have been covered under the State

Food Security Scheme (SFSS). Of the total of 3.32 crore PDS beneficiaries under both central and state schemes, more than 33 lakh people have not completed their e-KYC verification process, the minister said, adding that nearly 12 lakh e-KYCs are pending in remote locations. The government has extended the deadline across the state for the left-out people to complete the process.

The government's e-KYC process requires Aadhaar-based biometric authentication for each family member through e-POS machines.

Every beneficiary under PDS will need to visit the nearest fair price shop for e-KYC verification, official

Mo Bus driver held over fatal mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: A 'Mo Bus' driver was arrested by the Tamando police on charges of killing a person and injuring five others late Friday night, official sources said Saturday.

The accused has been identified as Prasanta Kumar Chhotray, 31, of

According to Tamando police, Nandini Pradhan, her brother Bidyasagar Pradhan and their mother Rajkumari Pradhan were waiting for a bus near DN Regalia Mall when a 'Mo Bus', driven by Prasanta, hit them and dragged them for a few metres.

Three others - Satyaban Nayak, his wife Angelina Nayak and their son-inlaw Sikandar Parida - were also hit by the speeding 'Mo Bus', they said.

Soon, they were rushed to Capital Hospital, where Nandini was declared 'brought dead' and others were admit-Instead of helping victims, Prasanta

tried to flee the scene, police said, adding that angry locals, however, nabbed him, and vandalised the bus. On being informed police reached

the spot and placated them. Prasanta has been booked under Sections 281, 125(a)(b), and 106(1) of

BNS, they said.



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downtown



Govt gears up to tackle heatwave

Steps planned to ensure water supply, control pollution, and protect urban areas



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: With rising temperatures due to erratic climatic conditions and urban heat retention, the Housing & Urban Development (H&UD) department has issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) to mitigate the impact of heatwayes in urban areas.

All urban local bodies (ULBs) and the public health engineering organisation (PHEO) have been instructed to ensure an uninterrupted drinking water supply. Water pipelines must be maintained, and complaints regarding water scarcity should be addressed within 24 hours. Water tankers will be deployed in shortage-prone areas, with additional tankers arranged as needed. Hand pumps and tube wells must remain functional.

with spare parts readily available for repairs.

Control rooms will operate in PHEO and WATCO offices to handle water-related complaints. Authorities must track heatwave warnings issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and liaise with the state emergency operations centre (EOC) if necessary.

ULBs will set up drinking water kiosks, known as Paniya Jal Bitaran Kendra, at key locations such as bus stands, railway stations, markets, and government offices.

These kiosks, managed by Mission Shakti SHGs, NGOs. and local federations, must ensure hygienic water distribution with long-handle dispensers and daily water renlacement. Strict action will be taken against organisations

that discontinue services after initial publicity.

To combat heat retention and air pollution, authorities will strictly enforce bans on burning municipal solid waste, garden residues, and coal briquettes used by roadside eateries. Residents are encouraged homes for birds and animals, ensuring they are cleaned every alternate day.

Construction agencies and households must cover construction sites to prevent dust pollution and ensure proper disposal of debris. Sprinkling water over uncovered areas and covering transport vehicles carrying sand, cement, and debris with tarpaulin sheets will be mandated. Additionally, the roadside earthen layer should be maintained at a lower level than the metal road to prevent dust accumulation.

To enhance urban resilience, water bodies in and around cities will be rejuvenated, restored. and cleaned for public use. Authorities, including the police, forest department, and Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB), have been directed to strictly enforce environmental laws and National Green Tribunal (NGT) guidelines

The Odisha government remains committed to ensuring that urban areas are equipped to handle extreme heat, protecting residents from its

Unmukt hosts eco-friendly holi workshop

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: In a bid to promote eco-friendly celebrations. Unmukt Foundation has initiated hands-on workshops to teach children how to make natural Holi colours. Supported by Khurda Collector Chanchal Rana, the initiative aims to replace harmful chemical-based colours with safe, sustainable alternatives

The workshops were conducted at two schools-Government Upper Primary School and Govt. Nodal High School— Saturday. Using natural ingre-

dients like turmeric, beetroot, and spinach, the foundation

safe for both the skin and the environment. "The workshop changed

ensures that the colours are

my perspective. I'll never use chemical colours again and will pass on this tradition to my daughter," said a teacher from Government Upper Primary School, Baramunda. A student

Khandagiri, added, "I never realised synthetic colours were harming my health and costing my family. Now, I know how to protect myself."

Volunteers from the SOA National Institute of Law (SNIL) played a crucial role in making the event a success Shweta Aggarwal, CEO and founder of Unmukt Founda tion, expressed gratitude for the growing support. "Every year, children excitedly say they will make and teach oth ers. This enthusiasm drives us to keep going," she said.



Around 48 breeds of dogs, including Great Dane, Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, Beagle, Akita Inu, Indian Pariha, Sidz, German Shepherd, French Bulldog and Rottweiler participated in a Dog Show organised at Baramunda Biju Patnaik ground on the second day of Matsya Pranee Samavesh Odisha in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Falsehood can't hide truth forever: Patnaik



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Leader of Opposition in Assembly Naveen Patnaik Saturday said that falsehood may cover the truth for some time, but not for all times

Patnaik said this while addressing a function of a local television channel in the Capital city.

"Falsehood may cover the truth for some time, but not for all times. So, media should be the beacon of truth and highlight the successes and sufferings of common man despite pressures and challenges,' Patnaik said.

Noting that social media is getting popular among the youth in the present day, Patnaik said one should guard against its abuses and misuses through spreading misinformation and fake news.

Patnaik, who was chief minister from 2000 to 2024, said that the mainstream media should also brace up for the challenges and opportunities, because of, emerging technology, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI). "So, the responsibility lies

with the mainstream media to check facts, be the voice of the voiceless and strengthen the socio-democratic fabric of our great country," Patnaik said. Stressing on the nomencla-

ture of the private television channel 'Nandighosha', Patnaik said the very word has emotional links with lakhs of devotees of Lord Jagannath. The chariot of Lord Jagannath is known as 'Nandighosha',

He said "Nandighosha TV will become the voice of the people and play a vital role in the development journey

OUTR holds workshop on solar energy & literacy



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR), in collaboration with the Government of Odisha, organised a one-day workshop on "Standards & Labeling with PM Surya Ghar

and Energy Literacy-2025" here

Saturday. The workshop aimed to promote solar energy adoption by providing financial incentives for rooftop solar installations, enabling users to generate costfree electricity.

OUTR vice-chancellor Bibhu-

ti Bhusan Biswal, the chief guest, emphasised the importance of renewable energy utilisation and encouraged youth participation in sustainable energy awareness. Guest of honour, EIC (Electricity)-cum-Principal Chief Electrical Inspector Pyari Mohan Mishra, stressed the need for grassroots-level energy efficiency and spreading awareness about carbon emission reduction.

Experts AK Barisal, Loknath Tripathy, Sribatsa Behera, and UK Rout shared insights on energy literacy and sustainable practices. The event concluded with technical sessions and panel discussions on the benefits of solar energy, electricity conservation, and best practices. reinforcing OUTR's commitment to a sustainable and energy-efficient future.

Fuel conservation drive KLF Book Awards 'Saksham-2025' kicks off announced at IIC



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The oil industry, under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG), launched the fuel conservation awareness drive 'Saksham-2025' at the Institute of Life Sciences here Friday.

The campaign, themed "Cleaner Environment through Green and Clean Energy," aims to promote fuel conservation for environmental and health benefits while reducing India's crude oil dependence. The awareness drive will run until February 28.

IOCL Odisha State Office general manager (Lubes) S

Guv pushes for fisheries growth

Lakshmana Perumal delivered the welcome address, while IO-CL chief general manager and State Head Kamal Sheel inaugurated the event, outlining various awareness initiatives planned over the next 15 days. Noted Odissi music expert

and Utkal University of Culture associate professor Sangita Gosain delivered the keynote address. Senior officials from HPCL, BPCL, GAIL, and IOCL attended, along with over 140 students from schools and colleges across Odisha.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by GAIL deputy general manager (Coordination) Nigamananda Mishra.

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/ Bhubaneswar. Feb 15: The Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF) announced the winners of the KLF Book Awards 2025 at a ceremony held at the India International Centre (IIC) in New Delhi, The awards recognised outstanding literary contributions across 12 categories, including seven in English and five in Hindi.



Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, attended as the chief guest and highlighted the significance of storytelling in India's literary tradition. "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the esteemed authors whose works uphold our rich cultural heritage. They are both artistes and artisans," he said.

KLF CEO and patron Ashok Kumar Bal, in his inaugural address, reaffirmed the festival's mission to promote literary discourse. "The award-winning books are more than literary masterpieces-they shape intellectual discussions and broaden worldviews," he noted

Established in 2021, the KLF Book Awards celebrate liter ary excellence across genres honoring both emerging and established writers while contributing to the future of Indian literature.

fish farming, quality control, and infrastructure development, including establishing more hatcheries and ice plants. Under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), he suggested utilising subsidies for area expansion and urged better transportation facilities for fish farmers

OUR

lighted the importance of data-driven planning to bridge the gap between supply and demand, stressing self-reliance through technology-driven solutions and financial assistance. Officials were directed to allocate unutilised funds by the fiscal year-end to benefit more

BOOKING

WEATHER

Max Temp Min Temp Humidity Rainfall **FORECAST** Dense Fog

SILVER JUBILEE: As Arundhati Meher and Brahmananda Meher, managing director of Arundhati Jewellers, celebrate 25 years of their beautiful journey together, Dharitri and Orissa POST extend warmest wishes on this momentous occasion. A silver jubilee of marriage is a testament to

love, trust, and unwavering companionship. Over the years, the couple

has stood by each other, creating countless cherished memories and inspiring

those around them. On this special day, we pray to Lord Jagannath to bless

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati reviewed Odisha's fisheries

POST NEWS NETWORK

sector in a high-level meeting at Raj Bhavan Saturday. The meeting, attended by Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Minister Gokulananda Mallik, officials from the Fisheries department, OPDC, ICAR-CIFA, College of Fisheries, and industry representatives, focused on enhancing fish production and implementing

better policies The Governor stressed the need for identifying potential areas for fish farming through district-wise surveys and ensuring annual expansion of aquaculture land. With only 0.33 lakh hectares of Odisha's 4 lakh hectares of brackish water under cultivation, he urged immediate steps to bring more



The Governor also high-

them with good health, boundless happiness, and continued prosperity in life. land under aquaculture.

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.



PROTECTING FOREST: Women self-help group members take out a rally to create awareness on forest fires, from Tanda to Balijodi under Patana block in Keonjhar district urging people not to set fire to nearby Atei reserve forest

MoU signed for state's first seawater desalination plant

Chhatrapur, Feb 15: Seawater will soon be converted into fresh water in Ganjam district as the district administration has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL) to establish a desalination plant, the first of its kind in the state.

Ganjam District Collector Dibyajyoti Parida, IREL General Manager CVR Murthy, and Berhampur RWSS Executive Engineer Bikash Kumar Pati were present during the signing of MoU Friday.

The plant will provide fresh water to the residents of Ganjam. It will be set up within

Around 1,500 to 2,000 families are expected to benefit from the project

the IREL plant premises and is expected to get completed within a year.

In the initial phase, two villages--Aryapalli and Matikhala--will receive the desalinated water. IREL and RWSS will jointly supply 1.5 MLD (million litres per day) of potable water.

This will help alleviate the region's water scarcity during summer season. Around 1,500 to 2,000 families are expected to benefit from the project.

Further expansion will de pend on project estimates, the District Collector said. Once the plant is established pipelines will be laid along with construction of pumping stations and overhead tanks The tendering process will be completed soon and work will commence shortly, he added.

Currently, no such project exists along Odisha's 480-km coastline.

The project is expected to serve as a model for the east coast, providing potable water for both industrial and general use, IREL General Manager Murthy said.

AI leads to arrest of 6 poachers in Similipal



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Feb 15: The Forest department has arrested six poachers for trespassing into Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary in Mayurbhanj district, official sources said.

Samrat Gouda, Deputy Director of Similipal Tiger Reserve. South division said the arrests were made after successfully identifying and tracking the locations of the poachers using Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled cameras installed in the Similipal forests. Three country-made firearms, traps, and hunting materials were also seized from possession of

the accused. The accused were identified as Budhia Hembram from Bhupad village, Rath Singh and Baula Singh from Subarnamanjari village, and Mithun Hembram, Lakshman Soren and Pradhan Soren from Nuagaon village. The poachers confessed to hunting a mouse deer inside the sanctuary.

A case was filed in connection with the wildlife poaching incident, and all accused were sent to court, Saturday. An additional case under the Arms Act will be filed against them for illegal possession of firearms, said Gouda.

It is pertinent to mention that 15-20 days back, six poachers entered the core area of the sanctuary with the intent to

Mining firm official

missing for 72 hours;

police grope in dark

Keonjhar, Feb 14: Police here

have yet to locate Nimananda

Pradhan, Vice President of

Grewal Minerals and Metals at

Barbil in this district, nearly 72

hours after he was reported to

be missing under mysterious

Pradhan was last seen leaving his office around 7:30pm

Wednesday. When he failed to

return home that night, his fam-

ily attempted to contact him, but

his phone was switched off. They

then tried reaching his driver,

Md Firoz, only to find out that

his phone was also switched off.

Pradhan's family members re-

ported the matter to Barbil po-

lice Thursday. Upon receiving

the complaint, police began an

investigation, reviewing CCTV

footage from the company and

various other locations in Barbil.

Officers Friday visited Pradhan's

office to gather statements from

staff and also went to the driver's

Superintendent of Police Nitin

Kushalkar has personally taken

charge of the investigation. "We

residence for further inquiry.

POST NEWS NETWORK

circumstances

hunt wildlife. AI camera captured images of the poachers and the footage was immediately shared with the Forest department. In response, officials launched a search operation. After tracking the poachers using the photos, the depart-

During searches at their residences, the authorities seized the illegal firearms. The successful use of AI cameras has been instrumental in preventing poaching activities in Similipal to a great extent.

ment was able to arrest them.

Despite the arrests, the department is aware that poachers continue to infiltrate into the sanctuary. With the help of AI cameras, watchtowers, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). sniffer dogs, and enhanced security measures by police and Forest staff, the department aims to strengthen anti-poaching efforts. However, poachers, particularly those targeting herbivorous species like deer, sambars, and wild boars, often shift their attention to more dangerous prev such as elephants and tigers.

To fully eradicate poaching from Similipal, the filling of vacant positions within the department, strict implementation of laws, and continuous organisation of awareness campaigns are crucial, said environmentalist San-

Rengali Multipurpose Project hangs fire

55 KM OF LEFT CANAL WORK STILL INCOMPLETE. FARMERS' HOPES FADING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Feb 15: The already delayed Rengali Multipurpose Project continues to face setbacks with 55.178 km of the left canal yet to be completed despite years of construction. Initially scheduled for completion by July 2024, the target has been further pushed to 2027 due to land acquisition hurdles and disputes over forest land classification. As a result, absence of irrigation facility has hit thousands of farmers in this district hard, ieopardising agricultural productivity and livelihoods.

The state government has set an ambitious goal of achieving 100 per cent irrigation coverage across agricultural lands, implementing various projects under the irrigation development programme. These initiatives focus on expanding irrigation capacity, maintaining canals, prepar-

ing cropping plans, optimising water distribution, and strengthening water user associations. Every year, substantial funds are allocated for constructing irrigation channels, maintaining water reservoirs, and managing water resources.

However, work on the left canal of the Rengali Multipurpose Project in the Brahmani river has remained stagnant over the past five years.

According to a departmental report, only 278.109 km of the planned 333,287 km canal work has been completed as of January 2025. Multiple delays and further shifting of the deadline for project completion have left the farmers in Jajpur district anxious with irrigation remaining a distant dream.

As per the Water Resources department, around ₹1,295 crore out of the approved budget of ₹2,809.12 crore has already been

spent by January 2025. Planned

to provide water to 39,416 hectare farmland spread from 71.313 km to 123.550 km, the left canal is currently irrigating only 17,158 hectare. In Jajpur district, water has reached just 8,543 hectare farmland, significantly below expectations. Farmers attribute this shortfall to poor canal maintenance, substandard construction, and water leakage in several areas

The Rengali Multipurpose Project was conceived in the 1980s with key objectives including flood control, hydroelectric power generation, and irrigation. Funded through the Japan International Cooperation Agencv (JICA), the project was initially scheduled for completion between 2015-16 and 2022-23. Land acquisition delays and disputes over forest land conversion re-

Sources indicate that construction contracts were awarded to companies including Biraja Constructions, DD Builders, GVV Constructions, and Durga Constructions. However, due to

main major roadblocks.

delays and subpar work, irrigation coverage has not expanded as expected. Allegations have also surfaced

regarding misappropriation of

compensation funds meant for land acquisition. A departmental investigation revealed that four Land Acquisition Officers – Dambarudhar Pradhan, Girija Bhushan Pradhan, Prafulla Kumar Mahapatra, and Bholeshwar Sahu misappropriated over ₹1.2 crore meant for farmers. Consequently, the Water Resources department suspended them and initiated de-

partmental proceedings. Regarding the inordinate delay, SK Jali, Chief Engineer of

Rengali Dam, Sukinda Division stated that the project has been stalled due to prolonged delays in converting forest land and the lack of a dedicated land acquisition officer. The matter has been escalated to the state government for resolution, he added.

SLNMCH, Koraput

OFFICE OF THE DEAN AND PRINCIPAL

SAHEED LAXMAN NAYAK MEDICAL COLLEGE

AND HOSPITAL, KORAPUT

At/Po/Dist.: Koraput-764020 (Odisha), Telephone No.06852-250101 /

E-mail: slnmchkoraput.od@gov.in // Website: www.slnmch.nic.in

ADVERTISEMENT FOR WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

No.E-757: A walk-in-interview is proposed for filling up the following post on contractual basis in the Viral Research & Diagnosis Laboratory

at SLN Medical College & Hospital, Koraput under the project "Setting up

of Nation-wide Network of laboratories for managing Epidemics & Natura

Calamities" by Department of Health Research, MoHFW, Interested candidates possessing requisite qualification & experience may download

the application form annexed in this Advertisement (Page 4 to 6) and come

for the interview with duly filled in application form and all requisite origina

documents on scheduled dated - 28.02.2025 (Reporting time-10:30 A.M

to 11:00 A.M.) at LT-3, SLNMCH, Koraput.

OIPR-10121/11/0024/2425

Minor girl impregnated by youth

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, Feb 15: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly impregnated by a youth after being coerced into a relationship in this town of Keonjhar district, police said Saturday.

The matter came to the fore after the pregnant girl's mother lodged a complaint of rape against the youth at Joda police station. Police registered a case and launched an investigation into the matter by conducting a medical examination of the survivor.

The accused was identified as Dinesh Patra of Sahid Nagar area in Joda town.

According to the complaint, Patra picked up the girl on Shiva Ratri festival, last year and raped her. He even shot the vid-

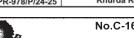
eo of the act on his mobile phone and frequently raped the girl by blackmailing her with threats of making the video viral on social media platforms. The girl, now five months pregnant insisted for marriage, but Patra thrashed her and refused to marry.

Left with no option, the girl narrated her ordeal before her family members following which her mother lodged a complaint at the Joda police station.

NAME OF WORK COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF CNC UNDER FLOOR PIT WHEEL LATHE MACHINE MAKE-HYT/PUNE MEMU CAR SHED, KHURDA ROAD FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS.

EMD: ₹2,17,900/-, Cost of Tender Document : ₹5,900/-, Period of Bidding Start Date: 17.02.2025

Sr. Divl. Electrical Engineer PR-978/P/24-25 Khurda Road



No.C-1669



Opening

11.00 A.M. on

dt.03.03.2025





Employment Notice No. ECoR/Pers/05/Engagement(45)/Contract Teacher/25 Date: 11.02.2025 It has been decided by the competent authority to conduct a WALK-IN-INTERVIEW for engagement of Teachers in Mixed Higher Secondary School.
Khurda Road on contract basis. The Khurda Road Railway Division invites eligible candidates for engager TGT/PET) in the Mixed Higher Secondary School, Jatni

Consolidated No. of Venue, date & remuneration Post time of interview Date-03.03.2025 (Monday) TGT (English Medium) 02 ₹26,250/-Time-10:00 Hrs Onwards TGT (Odia Medium) ₹26.250/-06 ₹26,250/-PET 01 School, Khurda Road, Jatni

Note: Candidates are advised to report to the venue by 9:30 Hrs for registration. No registration of application will be allowed beyond the closing ime of 10.30 Hrs.

NB: For application format, Educational qualification / Eligibility, Age and other terms & conditions, please refer to website ww.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in C About us C Division C Khurda Road Division S Recruitment.

Sr. Divisional Personnel Officer

PR-983/P/24-25



the Road' event held

In a first, 'Race of

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Feb 15: A two-day 'Race of the Road' event, organised by the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India, took place at Rajabasa Padia in Mayurbhanj district Saturday morning. The event was inaugurated by the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, Praveen Chandra Bhani Deo.

On the first day of the competition, 34 participants took part. The race was held on a specially designed track within the field

Pre-race checks for the vehicles were carried out the day before. While such competitions are usually held in southern India, this marked the first time 'Race of the Road' was hosted in eastern India. The track was well-prepared, ensuring participants could perform to their full potential.

The Four-Wheel Motor Sporting Race will take place Sunday for the first time in Odisha. Around 30 participants have registered thus far. Awards will be presented across 12 categories in both the bike and car races, with a total of 36 winners anticipated. Winners will receive trophies and cash prizes, as confirmed by the Kalinga

Motor Sporting Club.

OIPR-13031/11/0146/2425 City Division-III, CMC ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

Sd./- Executive Engineer

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, AGALPUR,

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Tender Call Notice No. 2313 (PW) Date: 15.02.2025

Bid Value: Rs.16.79 Lakhs to Rs. 49.62 Lakhs

Tender ID: 2024 ORULB 109891 (Two Bid)

Bid Value: Rs. 50.53 Lakhs to Rs. 66.78 Lakhs

5.00 P.M. on

dt.27.02.2025

Tender Details: Can be seen from the procurement

Tender ID: 2024_ORULB_110028

portal: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Civil work - 12 Nos

Civil work - 3 Nos.

Start

11.00 A.M. on

dt.18.02.2025

Date and Time schedule:

AT : DUDUKA, DIST. : BALANGIR E-mail ID : ori-agalpur@nic.in "e" - Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No.-PS-AGLP-03 OF 2024-25 Letter No. 476/ Date: 12.02.2025 I. The Block Development Officer, Agalpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in single cover system on ON-LINE mode from eligible contractors with valid licenses for execution of Building and Electrical works as detailed in DTCN Nature of Works : Building and Electrical works
No. of works : 01 (One) No. Tender Cost

D & C Contractor Class of Contractor

6. Availability of bid: From 10:00 A.M. Date: 17.02.2025 to document in the 05:00 P.M. Date: 25.02.2025 website 11:00 A.M. On Dt. 03.03.2025 3. The bidders have to participate in ON-LINE bidding only. Further

seen in the said website only Sd./- Block Development Officer, OIPR-19300/11/0005/2425 Agalpur (Duduka)

in). Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be

details can be seen from the website (https://tendersodisha.gov.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

ENGAGEMENT OF COMMISSION AGENT FOR DULAKHAPATNA (DLPT) PASSENGER HALT No. G.51/P.H/Notification/616

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FROM INTERESTED CANDIDATES FOR ENGAGEMENT AS COMMISSION AGENT TO SELL TICKETS FOR DULAKHAPATNA (DLPT) PASSENGER HALT IN BETWEEN MANJURI ROAD (MZZ) AND BAITARANI ROAD (BTV) RAILWAY STATIONS OVER JAJPUR KEONJHAR ROAD-BHADRAK SECTION, UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. COMMISSION PAYABLE TO THE HALT AGENT WILL BE AS UNDER:

Amount of Sale of tickets per month & Commission payable : $^* \not\equiv 1/\text{- to } 15,000/\text{-} : 15\%, ^* \not\equiv 15,001/\text{- to } 50,000/\text{-} : 12\%, ^* \not\equiv 50,001/\text{- to } 1,00,000/\text{-} 9\%, ^* \not\equiv 1,00,001/\text{- to } 2,00,000/\text{-} : 6\%, ^* \not\equiv 2,00,001/\text{- and above } : 3\%.$

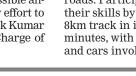
Security Deposit for above halt is ₹ 2,000/- (Rupees Two thousand only). N.B.: All photostat copies enclosed with the application must be self attested without which the application will be summarily rejected.

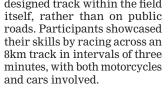
How to Apply: Candidates may apply in prescribed format for the above Passenger Halt to the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, East Coast Railway, Khurda Road, P.O.: Jatni, Dist: Khurda, Pin-752050 and applications should be dropped in the Box kept for this purpose in the office of the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, East Coast Railway, Khurda Road, on any working day. Application sent through postal service or by any other means shall not be entertained. Application duly filled in should reach this office by 1500 hrs. on or before 05.03.2025 (Wednesday). If the last day i.e. 05.03.2025 happens to be or is declared to be a holiday, applications will be received by the same time on the next working day. All the receive applications will be opened on 1530 hrs on 05.03.2025. For complete details, application format and other terms & co

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are looking into all possible an-











Detachment is the beginning of

SRI AUROBINDO



Aakar Patel

Many in the

West and

especially

of China's

continued

that it will

soon falter.

However, this

view has been

present for at

least 20 years

but China has

not obliged

them

believe

growth and

America have

been sceptical

The Chinese Way

"n the decade that the Bharatiya Janata Party's ideology took control in India, things did not stand still elsewhere. In 2015, China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang announced a 10-year initiative to reduce China's reliance on foreign technology and to move China from being a low-cost manufacturer to a direct competitor to the most advanced economies: Germany, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and the United States.

This plan was named Made in China 2025. It identified sectors like semiconductors, artificial intelligence, robotics, commercial aircraft, drones, high speed rail, electric vehicles and batteries, advanced ships and solar panels.

The sectors were classified into those where in China's assessment it was 'behind', where it was 'competitive' and where it was a 'global leader'. In 2015, the Chinese were, according to Bloomberg, behind in most sectors, competitive in a couple (high speed rail, batteries) and leaders in solar panels. The ambition was to ensure that China was competitive or leading in all of these industries.

After the plan was announced, it seriously offended America and its allies. America in particular is not used to another nation being 'global leader' in anything, because it alone has the god-given right to dominate the world.

America's president also felt threatened by the rise of China, which today has an economy of about 2/3rds the size of the US and will likely equal it in the next couple of decades.

This dislike of China's ambitions was so deep that China soon stopped speaking about 'Made in China 2025'. After Donald Trump first took office in 2017, the US slapped tariffs against China. The following year, China's Huawei came under sanctions and restrictions. Then under President Biden, the US banned the sale of high-end computer chips to China. All of these actions were to harm China's further rise and an economic partnership that had benefited both nations began to rupture. Today Trump is willing to penalise Americans by risking inflation through his tariffs, so long as they will slow China's growth.

Now, while China did not advertise the name Make in China 2025' the plan continued to be implemented. In 2025, it has become competitive in all of the sectors and is the global leader in half of them. China today produces and flies commercial aircraft of the type only Boeing and Airbus make. The Chinese made Comac planes are already being used by airlines

Last month, Deep Seek revealed to the world what Chinese capabilities are in artificial intelligence. This came as a shock to America for two reasons. The first was that the Chinese did this without having access to the most advanced chips from Nvidia and likely without as much access to capital as the California firms have. The second reason was that Silicon Valley never imagined that it would be equaled by a company from across the Pacific. There are only two serious contenders in the race to develop artificial general intelligence and it is the US and China,

not Europe and not any other country. Despite facing export controls, Huawei now

makes chips that are only a little behind the most advanced being made by Taiwan. They are not at the cutting edge, but they are homemade and Chinese talent can make do with lesser resource as Deep Seek shows. China makes its own aircraft carriers — the largest was deployed in 2022 — and LNG carriers. It debuted some of the most advanced military aircraft in the world in January. Of course, in electric cars, high speed rail, solar panels, batteries and drones, China has no rival. It is the world's largest producer, consumer and exporter of electric cars. It makes 80 per cent of the world's solar panels, 75 per cent of the world's lithium ion batteries (one Chinese company, CATL, alone controls a third of the global market) and 75 per cent of the world's drones (again, one company, DJI, controls a significant chunk of the global market). China has 2/3rds of the world's high speed rail network, about 40,000 km (the Ahmedabad-Mumbai distance is 500 km) and China's network is still growing.

Many in the West and especially America have been sceptical of China's continued growth and believe that it will soon falter. However, this view has been present for at least 20 years but China has not obliged them. Consider that India and China were even in 1990, on the cusp of our economic reforms, but today China's economy is six times the size of India's.

The rupture between India and China after 2020, the tariffs from the United States and a reluctance to grant access to advanced Chinese goods from India has meant Indians are only vaguely aware of the progress our neighbour has made. In many ways China is inward looking and the absence of a popular English media there has not made it easy for us to appreciate their progress. Our media's ignorance or lack of interest in China's progress has compounded the problem.

But the world recognises that China has become an advanced economy, through a plan conceived and implemented over just one decade. Li Keqiang died in 2023, but he went with likely a sense of satisfaction about what had been delivered by China under its 10-year plan.

This was the same decade, to remind readers once again, in which the BJP and our Prime Minister held thrall over India with their ideology.

WISDOM **CORNER**

The fabled musk deer searches the world over for the source of the scent which comes from itself

LAO TZU

Neither need you do anything but be yourself

The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white.

A man can do what he wants, but not want what he wants

THIS DAY **IN HISTORY**

- 1923: The burial chamber of King Tutankhamun was unsealed by British archaeologist Howard Carter; his discovery of the tomb the previous year was one of the most-celebrated contributions to Egyptology.
- 1937: DuPont chemist Wallace Hume Carothers patented nylon.
- 1949: The first Knesset (Hebrew: "Assembly"), the unicameral parliament of Israel and supreme authority of that state, opened in Jerusalem.
- 1959: Power in Cuba seized by Fidel Castro. After defeating the forces of dictator General Fulgencio Batista, Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba this day in 1959 and transformed the island country into the Western Hemisphere's first communist state.



Slavoj Žižek

LAW AND

TO ACHIEVE

ORDER, THE

BE CLEARED

TABLES MUST

DISSENT

NEW FACE OF PROTEST

omething important is happening in China, and it should worry the country's political leadership. Younger Chinese are increasingly exhibiting an attitude of passive resignation, captured by the new buzzword bai lan ("let it rot"). Born of economic disillusion and widespread frustration with stifling cultural norms, bai lan rejects the rat race and urges one to do only the bare minimum at work. Personal well-being takes precedence over career advancement.

The same tendency is reflect ed in another recent buzzword: tang ping ("lying flat"), a slang neologism denoting a sense of resignation in the face of relentless social and professional competition. Both terms signal a rejection of societal pressures to overachieve, and of social engagement as a fool's game with diminishing returns.

Last July, CNN reported that many Chinese workers were swapping high-pressure office jobs for flexible blue-collar work. As a 27-year-old from Wuhan explained: "I like cleaning up. As living standards improve (across the country), the demand for housekeeping services is also surging The change it brings is that my head no longer feels dizzy. I feel less mental pressure. And I am full of energy every day.

Such attitudes are presented as apolitical, rejecting both violent resistance to power and any dialogue with those in power. But are these the only options for the alienated?

The mass protests underway in Serbia suggest other possibilities. The protesters not only recognise that there is something rotten in the state of Serbia; they also insist on not letting the rot continue.

The protests began last November in Novi Sad, following a roof collapse that left 15 people dead and two severely injured at a recently renovated railway station. Demonstrations have since spread to 200 Serbian cities and towns, attracting hundreds of thousands of people, and making this the biggest student-led movement in Europe since 1968.



Traditionally, mass protests rely at least implicitly on the threat of violence, combined with an openness to negotiate. Yet here we have the opposite: Serbia's protesters are not threatening violence, but they have also rejected dialogue

Obviously, the roof collapse was merely the spark that lit the fuse of pent-up dissatisfaction. The protesters' concerns span many issues, from rampant corruption and ecological destruction (the government plans to go all in on lithium mining) to the general contempt that Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić has shown toward the population. What the government presents as a plan to tap into global markets, young Serbs see as a ruse to cover up corruption, sell off national resources to foreign investors under shady conditions, and gradually eliminate opposition media.

But what makes these demonstrations unique? The refrain from the protesters is: "We have no political demands and are keeping our distance from opposition parties. We simply ask that Serbian institutions work in the interest of citizens." To that end, they are insisting, narrowly, on transparency about the Novi Sad train station's renovation; access to all documents on the accident; a dismissal of charges against those arrested during the first anti-government protest in November; and criminal prosecution of those who attacked student protesters in Belgrade.

Thus, the protesters want to short-circuit the process that has allowed the ruling party to hold the state hostage by controlling all institutions. For its part. Vučić's government has reacted violently, but also with a technique known in boxing as "clinching": when a fighter wraps his arms around an opponent to prevent him from punching freely.

The more panicky Vučić becomes, the more desperate he is to try to strike some deal with the protesters. But the protesters are refusing any dialogue. They have specified their demands, and are insisting on them unconditionally.

Traditionally, mass protests rely at least implicitly on the threat of violence, combined with an openness to negotiate. Yet here we have the opposite: Serbia's protesters are not threatening violence, but they have also rejected dialogue. Such simplicity causes confusion, as does the apparent absence of any obvious leaders. In this narrow sense, the protests do have some similarities to bai lan.

At some point, of course, organised politics will have to enter the game. But for now, the protesters' "apolitical" stance creates the conditions for a new politics, rather than for another version of the same old game. To achieve law and order, the tables must be cleared. This is reason enough for the

rest of the world to support the protests unconditionally. They prove that a simple, straightforward call for law and order can be more subversive than anarchic violence. Serbians want the rule of law without all the unwritten rules that leave the door open for corruption and

The protestors are a far cry from the old anarchic left that dominated the 1968 demonstrations in Paris and across the West. After blocking a bridge over the Danube in Novi Sad for 24 hours, the young protesters decided to extend their rally for three additional hours so that they could clean up the area. Can one imagine the stone-throwing Parisians of 1968 ever doing the same?

While some might see the Serbian protesters' politically motivated apoliticism as hypocritical, it is better understood as a sign of their radicalism. They are refusing to play politics by the existing (mostly unwritten) rules. They are pursuing fundamental changes to how basic institutions work.

The biggest hypocrite in this story is the European Union, which is refraining from putting any pressure on Vučić for fear that he will gravitate toward Russia. While European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has expressed support for the Georgian people "fighting for democracy," she has remained remarkably quiet about the uprising in Serbia - a country that has officially been a candidate for EU membership since 2012. The EU is letting Vučić have his way because he promised stability and exports of lithium, a key input

for electric vehicles. The lack of criticism from the EU, even in the face of allegations of electoral fraud, has repeatedly left Serbian civil society out in the cold. Should we be surprised that there are so few EU flags being waved by the protesters? The idea of a "color revolution" of the type pioneered in Ukraine 20 years ago to "join the democratic West" no longer has any purchase. The EU has reached yet another political low.

The writer, Professor of Philosophy at the European Graduate School, is International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London.

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SPECTRUM DEFENCE

Will stealth F-35 fly to India?



Shivaji Sarkar

INDIA'S INDIGENOUS LIGHT COMBAT AIRCRAFT PROGRAMME HAS ALREADY FACED SETBACKS DUE **TO DELAYS IN US ENGINE SUPPLIES**

'ndia is set to deepen economic ties with the US through a massive \$500 billion purchase deal, securing crude oil, advanced weaponry—including the controversial F-35 stealth fighters—and tariff adjustments to align with US trade demands. This move comes as President Donald Trump, known for his tough stance on trade, agrees to the deal, making India the fourth country reportedly offered the F-35 after Israel, South Korea, and Singapore. Developed at a staggering cost of \$1.17 trillion, the F-35's potential induction into India's arsenal raises concerns about its impact on the country's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft programme has already faced setbacks due to delays in US engine supplies. The F-35, a single-engine fighter, may not be optimal for high-intensity operations against adversaries like China or Pakistan. Meanwhile. Russia has offered the Su-57 Felon under an accelerated Make-in-India proposal, with production potentially commencing by year-end.

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 36-hour visit to Washington, Trump signed revised global tariff regulations. At a joint press conference with Modi, he took aim at India's high tariffs, vowing to impose reciprocal import taxes. Prime Minister Modi opened up his kitty for petroleum purchases worth \$25 billion from the current \$15 billion to help Trump push US oil production and exports, for which he used the slogan "Drill, baby, drill." Trump categorically says, "Washington hopes to become top oil and gas supplier to New Delhi." In simple terms, India has to give up the choice of a closer and convenient market, like West Asia. Saudi Arabia remains India's third largest petroleum supplier. Iran was shut years ago under US sanctions. It's not yet clear how it would impinge on Russian oil purchases that bolstered profits of India's two giant private refiners.

India has remained a major consumer of Russian energy, while the West cut down its own consumption since the Ukraine war started. According to India's official trade data, in January-November of 2024, India imported 7.2 million tonnes of oil from the US, which accounted for 3.2 per cent of New Delhi's overall oil imports. Russia is currently India's top oil supplier, followed by Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the US. As for LNG, India imported 5.12 million tonnes from the US in January-November 2024, accounting for 20.2 per cent of India's overall LNG imports for the period.

Indian strategists are not confident with the highly expensive single-engine F-35. India and the US signed a deal to import 31 Predator drones from General Atomics in October 2024. The deal is valued at around \$4 billion and is intended to improve India's surveillance capabilities.

According to the US Congressional Research Service. New Delhi is expected to spend more than \$200bn over the next decade to modernise its military. Its strategic planners want to replace Russia which till now remains the topmost arms supplier.

It is likely that the F-35 offer would go through deep scrutiny. India had not approached the US for this aircraft but it has come as an offer during Modi's visit. The Prime Minister's visit has gone through many US machinations. While some like the crude and gas imports may fructify for a short period, it needs to be observed how many other strategic US offers finally come out. Tariff and illegal immigration, however, would remain the most uncomfortable issues with many possible punches.

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

A promising path

Sir, This refers to "Talks amid tariffs," Orissa POST, Feb 15. During PM Narendra Modi's visit to Washington, India and US established an ambitious agenda to deepen their bilateral strategic partnership. Trump's emphasis on reducing the trade deficit — now favouring India — and the swift repatriation of illegal immigrants from India had cast a shadow over the relationship. But the summit signalled the determination to reduce differences and deepen the agenda of cooperation. His criticism of India's "abuse of tariffs" reflects a broader critique of the global trading system, where other nations benefit from America's open market while restricting access to US products and services. As Trump prepares to impose reciprocal tariffs by spring, he has provided India with the opportunity to negotiate a "fair trade" arrangement in the coming months. Both countries have agreed to strengthen cooperation in the nuclear energy sector. On defence, India is prepared to increase imports of US arms, and Trump is ready to review existing restrictions on defence technology transfers to India. The potential for a new strategic compact between the two nations is underpinned by the convergence of Modi's "India First" policies and Trump's "America First" approach. With a heightened emphasis on self-interest and a flair for deal-making, Modi and Trump may have set India and the US on a promising path..

 ${\it N}$ ${\it Sadhasiva}$ ${\it Reddy}$, BANGALORE

Top-down approach

Sir, Ten days after the Delhi Assembly election results, the BJP has yet to choose its leader, raising questions about internal democracy within the party. While democracy demands that elected representatives select their leader. the BJP appears to rely on its high command for this decision, echoing the Congress' much-criticized top-down approach. This practice undermines the autonomy of elected members and contradicts the BJP's claims of being a party with a difference. It reduces representatives to mere figureheads while central leadership dictates key decisions. Such a system not only dilutes democratic principles but also distances political parties from the grassroots voices of their own cadre. True democracy thrives when leaders emerge organically from within, not when they are appointed from above

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI



TWO STATES





LDF, UDF flay Centre's loan condition for Wayanad

Thiruvananthapuram/Thrissur, Feb 15: The Centre's conditional loan of ₹529.50 crore for Wayanad rehabilitation has stirred up the political waters of Kerala with the ruling LDF and opposition UDF criticising the stipulations, while the BJP said the amount given was in effect a grant.

Kerala Revenue Minister K Rajan Saturday said that the loan of ₹529.50 crore sanctioned by the Central government for Wayanad rehabilitation carries conditions which were scary and a cruel joke. Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly VD Satheesan, a day ago, had termed the stipulations especially the condition to utilise the entire amount by March 31 as impractical.

On Saturday, he contended that the Centre's move amounted to insulting and mocking Kerala.

"It is a complete neglect towards Kerala. They are insulting Kerala. They are mocking the state, by saying this is sufficient for you. That is not right. They are not showing the common decency which they should show to a state," he claimed while speaking to reporters in Malappuram. Satheesan further said that

the BJP-ruled Centre had helped other states which suffered natural disasters, so how is it justified to not give the

same assistance to Kerala

Hitting back at the Left government in Kerala and the opposition UDF, BJP state president K Surendran said it was a 50 year interest free loan which in effect was a grant. He also said that the Pinarayi Vijayan government and the UDF need not be anxious about repaying the amount after 50 years as after five years the responsibility of that will fall on the national party here, an apparent reference to the BJP.

In response to this statement by Surendran, Satheesan questioned how the BJP leader can say the loan need not be repaid

"What right does he (Surendran) have to say that," the opposition leader asked.

Speaking to reporters in

TN takes possession of Jayalalithaa's seized assets

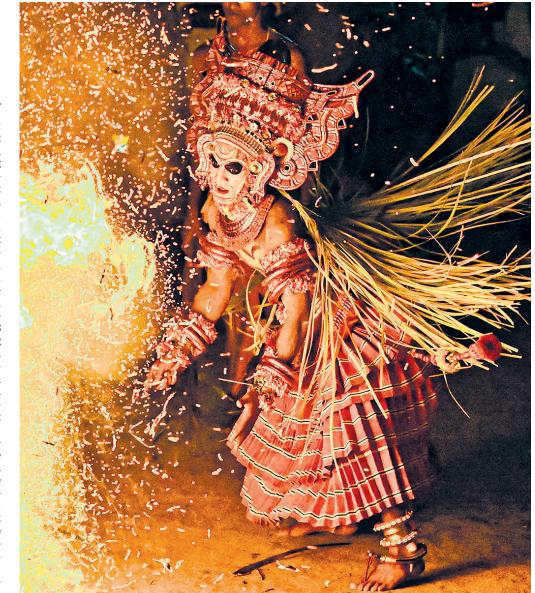
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore/Chennai, Feb 15: The Tamil Nadu government has officially taken possession of the seized assets belonging to late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, marking a significant development in the protracted disproportionate assets case. The transfer occurred Friday. a day after a Bangalore court ordered the handover of the assets, which had previously been under the custody of Karnataka.

Until now, authorities in Karnataka were in possession of an extensive collection of valuables, including 27 kg and 558 grams of gold jewellery, 1,116 kg of silver, and documents related to 1,526 acres of land. These assets had been stored securely in the Karnataka Vidhana Soudha treasury. The transfer was carried out in the presence of court and government officials.

As part of the legal proceedings, the seized items were meticulously documented and photographed, offering a rare glimpse into the wealth accumulated by the late leader. Among the images, an opulent golden crown with intricate craftsmanship stands out, reflecting the grandeur associated with Jayalalithaa's tenure.

Additionally, a vast collection of jewellery was catalogued, with rows of ornate ornaments laid out for inventory.



An artiste performs 'Kandanar Kelan Theyyam' as part of the 'Kaliyatta Mahotsavam' at Sri Vayanattu Kulavar

Tharoor's applause for PM Modi, Kerala govt irks LoP

dran further said that instead

of sleeping on the issue and

making political statements,

the government should take

immediate steps to utilise the

amount for the rehabilitation of

the victims of the landslides that

hit Wayanad in July last year.

The BJP leader, at the same

time said that everyone can

work together to seek an exten-

sion of the deadline of March

31 to April or May, saying that

the Central government would

Surendran also said that ac-

cording to rules laid down by

the former UPA government at

the Centre rehabilitation work

was the sole and complete re-

sponsibility of the concerned

Despite that, the Centre is

helping out as and when re-

quired and will do so in future

consider such a request.

state governments.

Kochi, Feb 15: Thiruvananthapuram Congress MP Shashi Tharoor's recent statements have sparked more criticism from his party colleagues than from other political leaders. On Saturday, Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, VD Satheesan, hinted that Tharoor is once again drifting from

Satheesan did not hold back in expressing his and the state Congress unit's displeasure with Shashi Tharoor. On 'Praise was in national interest'

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor Saturday defended his praise for Prime Minister Narendra Modi following his meeting with US President Donald Trump, stating that he spoke with India's interests in mind and that "we cannot always speak only in terms of party interest." Speaking to reporters, Tharoor said that Modi's US visit had yielded some positive outcomes for the Indian people. He also noted that Modi being the fourth world leader to meet Trump after he took office underscored India's growing importance on the global stage.

Friday, Tharoor made a 'double strike' -- first, in an article in a leading English daily, he applauded the efforts of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led Left government. Later, in Bangalore, he told the media that the meeting between US

President Donald Trump and Indian PM Narendra Modi was encouraging.

Satheesan dismissed the Modi-Trump meeting, stating, "I don't think any good has taken place in the Trump-Modi meet-

When asked about Tharoor's praise for the Vijayan government, Satheesan responded, "I do not know from where Tharoor has got these figures about the growth of MSMEs in Kerala. Many of the Kerala diaspora who return from abroad open shops, bakeries, and small ventures, but how can such ventures be accounted into the MSME figures?

"Let the party high command look into all these issues," added Satheesan. In his article, Tharoor highlighted that Kerala has implemented a new industrial policy focusing on knowledge-based industries, including AI, blockchain technology, and machine learning. Under the state's "Year of Enterprises' initiative, over 2,90,000 MSMEs have been established, with significant investments and support for women and transgender entrepreneurs.

"I had been constrained to observe in the past that 'God's own country' was the devil's own playground for business. If that is no longer true, we all have reasons to celebrate.

1st Catholic nun becomes medical officer in Kerala

Kochi (Kerala), Feb 15: Catholic nuns working as doctors in government hospitals are a rare sight in India. However, senior doctor Jean Rose is an

She joined government service two years ago in the hilly district of Idukki and currently serves as the medical officer at the Family Health Centre in Marayoor, a remote village home to several tribal communities.

A member of the Sisters of the Destitute, Dr Rose also known as Rosamma Thomas, completed her MBBS and post-graduation in Anesthesia from St John's Medical College, Bangalore.

After clearing the Kerala PSC examination for medical service, she received her first government appointment at Kattappana Taluk Hospital

in 2023. She later sought a transfer to the Marayoor Family Health Centre, as she had previously worked in the region during her MBBS and National Health

Mission (NHM) PG service. "While pursuing my MBBS

Name of work

No. of works

in the portal

inviting Bid

No. of covers

Estimated Cost

Period of Completion

Class of Contractor

Name and address of officer

OIPR-08044/11/0024/2425

Date & Time of availability of bid

documents in the portal Last date / time for receipt of bids

and PG, and during my service with the National Health Mission. I worked in Maravoor.' she said, explaining her decision to return.

According to Voice of Nuns, an initiative of the Kerala Con ference of Major Superiors (KCMS) and the Kerala Cath olic Bishops' Council (KCBC) Jagratha Commission, Dr Rose is the first nun to serve as a medical officer in a government hospital.

In a Facebook post, Voice of Nuns stated that she spe cifically requested the opportunity to serve tribal and underprivileged communities in the Marayoor region, which has a significant Adivasi

population. 'As part of a community that works for the destitute, I prefer to serve the poor and underprivileged," she told PTI

After completing her school ing in Chettuthodu, near Pala in Kottayam district, she actively participated in charitable services.

Dr Rose is the daughter of Mukalel Thomas and Rosam ma of Pala, who are now settled in Rajakumari, Idukki.

JUMBO RAMPAGE AT TEMPLE FESTIVAL

Kerala govt to take legal action

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode (Kerala), Feb 15: Kerala Forest Minister AK Saseendran Saturday visited a local temple where three people were recently killed after elephants ran amok, and announced that the government has decided to take legal action against those found violating various norms related to the incident.

Three elderly people including two women died in the stampede, which occurred when two elephants became agitated following the bursting of firecrackers during the festival at Manakulangara Temple near Koyilandy Thursday evening.

The minister stated that officials from the forest department, district administration and police had rushed to the spot soon after the tragedy, conducted necessary examinations and submitted reports to the government Friday.

Marine Elite Force to protect Olive Ridley turtles

This initiative comes in response to reports that over 1,308 Olive Ridley turtles have died along the Tamil Nadu coast after becoming entangled in fishing nets

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 15: The Tamil Nadu Forest Department has decided to establish a new Marine Elite Force to prevent the deaths of Olive Ridley turtles, a vulnerable species. This initiative comes in re-

sponse to reports that over 1,308 Olive Ridley turtles have died along the Tamil Nadu coast after becoming entangled in fishing nets. Currently, Tamil Nadu has

two Marine Elite Force units that combat marine wildlife crimes such as poaching, smuggling, and illegal fishing - particularly in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere and Palk Bay.

However, the alarming rise in turtle deaths has prompted authorities to set up an additional unit to strengthen conservation efforts. The primary cause of these turtle deaths is the use of trawl nets within five

nautical miles of the coast, a practice banned under existing

The worst-affected areas include the Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, and Chennai coasts.

To enhance protection, the Tamil Nadu State Wildlife Board has proposed designating specific turtle congregation sites as turtle conservation reserves. The department will also deploy volunteers to raise awareness among fishermen about sustainable fishing practices. Authorities will enforce restrictions on artificial lights near beaches, as these can disorient hatchlings.

The forest department will ensure the periodic removal of garbage from coastal areas. The state government has also proposed procuring patrol boats for the Forest Department, allowing independent surveillance alongside the Fisheries



Currently, the government allocates ₹80,000 per month for renting boats, but with hiring costs reaching ₹20,000 per boat. this approach is deemed unsustainable. Enforcement actions have already begun, with 342 fishermen found illegally fishing within five nautical miles using trawler boats. Of these, 208 fishermen have been charge sheeted, and their diesel subsidies worth ₹3.20 lakh have been

As part of conservation initiatives, the forest department has collected approximately 1 lakh Olive Ridley eggs from across the state. So far, 345 eggs have hatched, with ongoing monitoring efforts in place.

The department is also work ing on protecting Green Turtles using telemetry technology, which helps track their movements for better conservation planning.

The Olive Ridley turtle is classified as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and is listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

These classifications have helped curb large-scale commercial exploitation of Olive Ridley skins.

Door-to-door leprosy detection drive in Tamil Nadu

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 15: The Tamil Nadu Health department has commenced a statewide leprosy case detection campaign to screen suspected cases. The campaign will continue until February 28 with over 20,000 volunteers conducting intensive door-to-door screenings.

The initiative aims to cover 133 rural blocks and 27 urban areas across 37 districts

According to Tamil Nadu Director of Health Services, Dr TS Selvavinayagan, 18,192 searchers will screen residents in rural blocks, while 4,332 searchers will conduct screenings in urban areas over the next two



The campaign will extend its outreach to schools, colleges, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural **Employment Guarantee Scheme** (MGNREGS) workers, self-help group (SHG) members, voluntary

organisations, and government offices. Leprosy, a communicable disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae bacteria, spreads through droplets from coughing or sneezing by untreated

individuals. The disease has an incubation period of 5-7 years.

Dr Selvavinayagan stated: 'Leprosy manifests when the infected person's immunity declines. The initial symptom is a hypo-pigmented patch with a loss of sensation on the skin. With early detection, leprosy can be fully cured through multi-drug therapy (MDT).'

He warned that untreated leprosy could lead to complications such as peripheral nerve damage, resulting in deformities of the eyes, hands, and feet. The Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC) 2025 aims to identify cases early, including hidden cases, and provide prompt treatment.

Dr Selvavinayagan urged

the public to cooperate with searchers visiting their homes and to volunteer for screenings. He emphasised Tamil Nadu's potential to eliminate leprosy by 2025. "Elimination does not mean total eradication. It means reducing the disease to a level where it is no longer a public health problem. There should be no new deformity cases or childhood cases. Rehabilitation for individuals with leprosy-related deformities will continue," he said.

He said that as a preventive measure, post-exposure prophylaxis with a single dose of rifampicin will be provided where necessary. Additionally, all school children will be screened by public health teams.

ବନଖଣ୍ଡ ଅଧିକାରୀ ତଥା ବନ୍ୟପ୍ରାଣୀ ତତ୍ତାବଧାରକଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ରାଉରକେଳା OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER CUM WILDLIFE WARDEN ROURKELA FOREST DIVISION. ROURKELA. SUNDARGARH. ODISHA Phone No. 0661-2664637. Fax No. 0661-2664638, email : dforourkela.od@gov. Order No. 147 / Dtd. 14.02.2025

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) E-Procurement Bid Identification No. RKL-F.E & C.C/2024-25 Dtd

Construction of Water Body at near

village Mundajore Forest Block : North Chirobeda Beat : Barkani Section : Bondamunda Forest Range: Panposh of Rourkela Forest Division, Distric Sundargarh.

Rs. 6,09,169.00 From 11:00 A.M. of date 17.02.2025 to 05:00 P.M. of dated 24.02.2025 Up to 05:00 P.M. of dated 24.02.2025

Date of opening of bid documents At 11:00 A.M. of date 25.02.2025

"D" & "C" Class Contracto Divisional Forest Officer, Rourkela Forest Division

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal www.tenderodisha gov.in. The Addendum / Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website of

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer. Rourkela Forest Division



We believe that about 60 crore people have taken bath in Maha **Kumbh.** The government is showing a reduced figure because tomorrow when the international media or university will study the administration and management of this fair, they will find that proper administration and management was not done according to the number of people who came. Which is the failure of the BJP government

CRYPTO FRAUD CASE: CBI SEARCHES 11 LOCATIONS

The CBI has conducted searches at 11 locations in Delhi and Haryana on alleged cyber criminals who were cheating people by impersonating as government officers resulting in seizure of ₹1.08 crore cash, officials said Saturday. The searches were conducted at nine locations in Delhi and two in Haryana's Hisar Friday in connection with a two-year-old case, they said



knows the ground reality of the city and they should be in the prime decision metro project. So please ask this guestion to the state Chief Minister

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAY MINISTER

If there is a proof against them (dismissed employees) and they have been given an oppor-



The Prime Minister and the home minister made clear indications in the past that in due course of



time, statehood will be restored (to Jammu and Kashmir) and the powers and functions will be demarcated very clearly KIREN RIJIJU | UNION MINISTER

SHORT **TAKES**

Phone tapping case: Former DSP gets bail

Hvderabad: A local court granted bail to a former **Deputy Superintendent of** Police, an accused in a phone tapping case. First Additional Sessions Court here allowed the bail petition of D Praneeth Rao Friday after he executed a personal bond for ₹One lakh with two sureties each for the like sum.

Teacher held in sexual abuse case

Pondicherry: Pondicherry Police arrested a school teacher for sexually abusing a six-year-old girl student of his school. The teacher identified as Manikandan, who is teaching at a private school was arrested Saturday. The child is a Class I student in the private school where Manikantan teaches. The incident came to light when the girl complained of physical discomfort and was taken to a hospital, where doctors confirmed that she had been sexually harassed.

Fire destroys over 25 shops

Itanagar: A massive fire broke out at Tenga Market in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district in the early hours of Saturday, reducing more than 25 shops to ashes. police said. The fire erupted around 4 am, swiftly engulfing the market and causing property damage worth crores of rupees, Rupa police station Officer-in-Charge, subinspector Bharat Rai, said,

Man lynched

Bhagalpur (Bihar): A 36-year-old man, suspected to be mentally challenged, was lynched by a mob after he allegedly beat two people to death in Bihar's Bhagalpur district, police said Saturday. The incident took place in Makandpur village in Nathnagar police station area Friday night. A statement issued by the district police said, "According to locals, Chotu Kumar, suspected to be mentally challenged, started beating Rajeev Rai (68), Jai Prakash Ram (65) and three others with a wooden log in the village. While Rajeev Rai died on the spot, Jai Prakash Ram succumbed to his injuries during treatment. The other three are undergoing treatment at the nearest government hospital and their condition is reported to be

UN climate chief calls India 'solar superpower'

Simon Stiell, who is in *India to attend the ET* Global Business Summit, lauded India's efforts to mitigate climate change, saying that while some governments only talk, "India delivers"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: UN climate chief Simon Stiell has called India a "solar superpower" and urged it to develop an ambitious climate plan covering its entire economy, saying that an even stronger embrace of the global clean energy boom will supercharge its eco-

Stiell, who is in India to attend the ET Global Business Summit, lauded India's efforts to mitigate climate change. saying that while some governments only talk, "India delivers"

"India is already a solar superpower, one of only four countries to have installed more than 100 gigawatts of solar... Energy access is on the rise with villages across the country electrified by 2018, well ahead of schedule." he said.

"Now there is a real opportunity to take the next step and unleash even bigger benefits for India's 1.4 billion people and economy. India is already headed firmly in this direction, but an even stronger embrace of the global clean energy boom will supercharge India's economic rise," he said.

Stiell said India has an opportunity that only a few countries have: "To realise ambitious plans to deploy hundreds more gigawatts of renewable energy capacity. To lead a new wave of green industrialization, developing, scaling, and exporting

Maha govt sets up

seven-member panel

for law on love iihad

Mumbai. Feb 15: The Maha-

rashtra Government has set

up a seven-member commit-

tee headed by the state direc-

tor general of police (DGP)

to study the legal aspects

for a new law against forced

conversions and cases of

The committee includes

secretaries of the women and

child welfare, minority af-

fairs, law and judiciary, social

iustice and special assistance

departments, and deputy sec-

retaries of the home depart-

As per a Government Reso-

lution (GR) issued late Friday,

the committee will study the

prevailing situation in the

state and suggest steps to

tackle the complaints of "love

jihad" and forced conversions.

look at legal aspects and the

laws framed in other states.

The committee will also

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

'love iihad".

ment.



India is already a solar superpower, one of only four countries to have installed more than 100 gigawatts of solar... Energy access is on the rise with villages across the country electrified by 2018, well ahead of schedule

SIMON STIELL I UN CLIMATE CHIEF

vital technologies.'

He said the world's fifth-largest economy is well-positioned to reap the benefits of ambitious, economy-wide climate plans.

"Key among them is Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi's leadership in prioritizing LiFE-unleashing the power of institutions, communities, and individuals to protect the environment and promote a circular economy.

The UN climate chief added that India's leaders have a rare opportunity to deepen whole-of-economy industrial strategies that would make the fast-developing South Asian nation a "dominant force in clean energy and industry". Countries are required to

submit their next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), or climate plans, for the 2031-2035 period this year.

With most countries, including India, missing the February month urged them to submit their plans by September at the latest. An official source in the Union Environment Ministry told PTI that India has not yet finalised its new NDCs.

"India's new NDCs will have targets achievable with the means available. Mitigating climate change requires financial and technological support, along with other enablers. Developed countries are unwilling to provide this support. Why should countries that did not cause climate change continue to suffer?" the source said.

The collective aim of these climate plans is to limit global temperature rise since the start of the industrial revolution to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the key goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Developed countries, histor ically responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, were required to deliver a new and ambitious financial package to support climate action in the developing world at the UN climate conference in Azerbaijan last vear

However, they offered a paltry USD 300 billion by 2035, a mere fraction of at least USD 1.3 trillion needed annually from 2025. India had called the sum "too little, too distant", "paltry' and "an optical illusion".

The government's Economic Survey 2024-25 tabled in Parliament in January said the lack of funding from developed countries to mitigate climate change in the Global South may prompt developing countries to rework" their climate targets.

Stiell warned that without strong climate action, especially by the G20, the planet will be facing much more dangerous rises in temperature.

He cautioned that climate disruptions could severely affect India's economy.



A butterfly perches on a flower leaf, in Birbhum district of West Bengal

Top court to hear pleas concerning Places of Worship Act Feb 17

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: The Supreme Court will hear a batch of pleas relating to the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act. 1991. February 17.

As per the causelist for Feb ruary 17 uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan is slated to hear the matter. The Act prohibits conversion of any place of worship and provides for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed August 15, 1947. However, the dispute relating to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue in Ayodhya was kept out of its purview

Some of the pleas filed in the apex court have challenged the validity of certain provisions of the 1991 law. On January 2, the top court agreed to examine a plea filed by AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi seeking effective implementation of the places of

RAGGING HORROR

KNMC to bar accused from continuing studies

Kottayam/ Thiruvananthapuram. Feb 15: Amid widespread outrage over the brutal ragging incident at the Government Nursing College here, the Kerala Nurses and Midwives Council (KNMC) Saturday decided to bar all five accused students from continuing their studies.

A council meeting convened here observed that the accused did not deserve to complete their studies or enter the service profession. The council further noted that those entering the nursing profession should be humane and compassionate-whereas the accused displayed cruelty toward their juniors—behaviour that is unacceptable in any circum-

A council member described the Kottayam ragging incident as an "extremely cruel act" and said it cannot be justified under any circumstances. "We will never justify the incident. What we want to emphasise is that allowing such individuals into the nursing profession would be a disaster," said Usha Devi, a council member.

She said the Council would soon inform the concerned authorities of its decision. "We made the decision in a way that leaves them no chance to continue their studies. Through the District Health Services (DHS), we will inform the government of our decision, which will also be conveyed to the college authorities," the Council member told PTL

With this decision, the accused students can no longer continue their studies in Kerala, she added. The Council's ruling came a day after the state Health Minister indicated that strict action would be taken against those involved in the brutal incident.

On Friday, the department suspended Principal Sulekha A T and Assistant Professor/ Assistant Warden-in-Charge of the student hostel, Ajeesh P Mani, pending an inquiry for allegedly failing to prevent ragging and effectively intervene in the matter. The hostel's

Disturbing visuals of the brutal ragging surfaced Thursday, showing the victim tied to a cot and repeatedly pierced with a compass. The abuse took place

in the boys' hostel,

targeting first-year

nursing students

housekeeper-cum-security staff was also ordered to be removed immediately, according to a statement issued by the Health Minister's office late Friday night. The action was taken fol lowing an inquiry conducted by the Director of Medical Educa tion, as per the instructions of Health Minister Veena George,

the statement added. Cutting across political lines ministers and leaders continued to condemn the brutal rag ging incident and demanded strict action against it on Sat urday as well. State Minister for Devaswom and Ports V N Vasavan said the government's stance is to ensure that no ac cused are spared and that all those involved are brought to

However, the minister dismissed the opposition's allega tion that some of the accused had links with the Students Federation of India (SFI), the student wing of the CPI(M).

iustice.

Responding to a question or the matter, General Education Minister V Sivankutty took a different stance, stating that if any individual activists of the outfit (SFI) were involved in the incident, they should be removed from the organisation

Democratic India able to feed 800mn people: EAM

apparently referring to the PMGKAY at a panel discussion at the Munich Security Conference,

where he countered US Senator Elissa Slotkin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Munich, Feb 15: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar challenged an American senator who said that democracy "doesn't put food on the table" telling her that in India it does.

Jaishankar was apparently referring to the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) at a panel discussion at the Munich Security Conference, where he countered US Senator Elissa Slotkin.

"Senator, you said that de-



mocracy doesn't put food on your table. Actually... in my part of the world, it does. Today, since we are a democratic society, we give nutrition support, and food to 800 million people," Jaishankar said Friday. "That is a matter of how healthy they are and how full their stomachs are. So, the point I want to make is that different parts of the world are going through different conversations. Please do not assume that this is a kind of universal

working well. Maybe there are parts where it's not," he said. "I think people need to have honest conversations about why it's not." "But I would argue that to an extent, as someone dispassionately viewing it, a lot of it is an accumulated problem of the model of globalisation that we have followed for the last 25-30 vears. I think a lot of chickens have come home to roost.

There are parts where it is

"So, yes there are issues, but from our point of view, let's not make that universal," the External Affairs Minister added at the discussion. The central government has been providing food grains free of cost under the PMGKAY since January 1, 2023 to two types of beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and then extended it for five years from January 1, 2024.

Over 42L students set to appear at 7,800 centres

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) exams for Classes X and XII began Saturday, with more than 42 lakh students set to take the tests at over 7,800 centres across the country and abroad.

According to board officials. a total of 24.12 lakh Class-X students will take the test in 84 subjects, while more than 17.88 lakh students will appear in the Class-XII exams across 120 subiects. The exams are scheduled

in India and 26 abroad On the first day of the exams, the Class 10 students appeared for the English (Communicative) and English (Language and Literature) papers, while the Class-12 students appeared

to be conducted at 7,842 centres

CBSE EXAMS FOR CLASSES X, XII BEGIN



in the Entrepreneurship exam.

Today, the Class-X English and Class-XII Entrepreneurship ex-

ACCORDING TO BOARD OFFICIALS, A TOTAL OF 24.12 LAKH CLASS-X STUDENTS WILL TAKE THE TEST IN 84 SUBJECTS. WHILE MORE THAN 17.88 LAKH STUDENTS WILL APPEAR IN THE CLASS-XII EXAMS ACROSS 120 SUBJECTS

THE EXAMS ARE SCHEDULED TO BE CONDUCTED AT 7,842 **CENTRES IN INDIA AND** 26 ABROAD

am took place at 7,780 centres, with over 23.86 lakh

students appearing, while the Class-XII exam was conducted at 995 centres with around

ination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said. 'The exams were organised

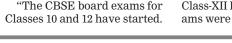
smoothly. I hope all the students reached their exam centres with enthusiasm and were able to take the tests in a positive environment," he added. Bhardwaj said the CBSE has ensured that all necessary guidelines and security measures are in place to maintain the integrity of the examination process.

"Schools and exam centres have been briefed on strict protocols to facilitate a fair and seamless examination experience. The CBSE had organised a live webcast on Friday in the are scheduled to end on March 18, while the Class-XII exams will conclude April 4.

The CBSE started its annual counselling service ahead of the board exams to alleviate examination-related stress and support the students as they prepare for their theory exams.

"A team of 66 trained pro-

fessionals, principals, coun sellors, special educators from CBSE-affiliated schools and psychologists will offer voluntary support to the students. The services are available from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm from Monday to Saturday," Bhardwaj said. "Fifty-one counsellors are based in India while 15 counsel lors will connect from Nepal Japan, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates to guide



ams were held. The Class-X ex-

23,000 students," CBSE Exam-

presence of school principals from Delhi-NCR, outlining the essential exam guidelines for the schools and stakeholders," he added. The Class-X exams

the students," he added.

nationa



Drones have revolutionised warfare, combining batteries, motors and optics to manoeuver and communicate on the battlefield in unprecedented ways. But drones are not just one technology -- they are bottom-up innovations produced by a strong industrial system

FARMERS PROTEST IN BIKANER DIVISION

Farmers staged protests and blocked highways in Rajasthan's Bikaner division Saturday, demanding additional water for crop irrigation. The farmers sat on "dharna" and held meetings at different locations to demand the release of water in the Indira Gandhi Canal. They threatened to continue their protests till their demands were met





Various deep information up. The cabinet will row and probably a SIT will be constituted as a police case is needed to take forward the inquiry, verify passport and visa details

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

Some people blame the Election Commission, Supreme Court and EVMs for their loss. The EC and EVMs are good when you win, and are bad when you lose. Now you allege irregularities in the voters' list

EKNATH SHINDE MAHA DEPUTY CM





PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM





important: why did you go to the US in the first place? To do charity? It is easy to say: money & tax is not everything,

once you have worked in the US for 15 years. And, built enough wealth for yourself. Now, you lecture: others not to take the path you had taken.

See the hypocrisy? I have no interest in personally targeting you. But, this BS has been throw by a lot of ex-NRI's (who have now returned to India).

So genuinely want an answer.

@Akshat World

Plane carrying 116 I-T dept starts mapping of I-T Act, Bill deportees from US lands in Amritsar



Amritsar/Chandigarh, Feb 15: A plane carrying 116 illegal Indian immigrants from the US landed at the Amritsar International Airport late Saturday night, official sources said.

This is the second such batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of its promised crackdown on illegal immigrants. The flight landed at the airport around 11:30 pm as against the expected time of 10 pm, they said. Earlier, there were reports that the plane would carry 119 immigrants, but now as per an updated list of passengers, the number of deportees in the second batch was 116, they added.

Among the deportees, 65 are from Punjab, 33 from Haryana, eight from Gujarat, two each from Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and one each from Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. Most of the deportees are in the age group of 18 to 30, as per the sources. The families of some of the deportees reached the airport to receive them. On February 5, a US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed at the Amritsar Airport. Of them, 33 each were from Harvana and Gujarat, and 30 from Punjab.

Notably, the third plane carrying 157 deportees is also expected to land Sunday. Notably, the US military aircraft with 104 Indian deportees landed at the Shri Guru Ramdas Ji International Airport in Amritsar February 5. A family member of the of one of the illegal Indi-

This is the second such batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of its promised crackdown on illegal immigrants

that the plane would carry 119 immigrants, but now as per an updated list of passengers, the number of deportees in the second batch was 116, they

Earlier, there were reports

US, says, "He reached the US 27th January. They sold their land. They are staying at their relative's house. We have spent ₹50-55 lakhs.' Punjab Chief Minister Bhag-

want Mann kept up his attack on the BJP-Centre Saturday over the landing of US planes with illegal Indian immigrants at the Amritsar airport and asked it not to make the holy city a "deport centre". Prime Minister Narendra Modi should have taken up the issue with US President Donald Trump and told him that India will send its own plane to bring these people back, he said.

Replying to a question on Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader R P Singh's post on X that Amritsar is the closest international airport for planes entering India from the US. Mann wondered that in that case, why the Centre has not started flight services to the US from the city, which has been the demand of the state government.

Mann Friday questioned the move to allow another plane carrying immigrants to land in Amritsar, as he accused the Centre of trying to defame Pun-

New Delhi, Feb 15: Income Tax payers can now match the sections of the I-Tax Act, 1961, with the corresponding clauses in the simplified I-T Bill, 2025, on the tax department portal.

Also, Section to Section mapping as per Income Tax Act, 1961 and Section number as per New Income Tax Bill has been uploaded on the I-T department's website.

A simplified Income Tax Bill, 2025, was introduced in the Lok Sabha February 13 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Bill, once enacted, will replace the 64 years old Income Tax Act which has become bulky over time with its traditional style of drafting and numerous amendments.

The simplified Bill has a word count of 2.6 lakh, lower than 5.12 lakh in the I-T Act. The number of Sections is 536, as against 819 effective sections in the existing law. The number of chapters also have been halved to 23 from 47 currently. The Bill has 57 tables, compared to 18 in the existing act, besides

ED seizes 'biggest' crypto fund worth ₹1,646 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized its biggest-ever cryptocurrency worth ₹1,646 crore as part of a "mega" money laundering investigation into a fraud investment scheme where numerous depositors were duped in the name of securities investment, official sources said.

The Ahmedabad office of the federal probe agency has also seized ₹13.50 lakh in cash, an SUV and a number of digital devices after it concluded a fresh round of searches on Saturday in the case related to "fraudulent" and unregistered offering and sale of securities in the form of investments through 'BitConnect lending program'.

The ED case, filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), stems from an FIR of the Surat Police crime branch which said the alleged fraud that took place between November 2016 - January 2018 (after demonetisa-



A simplified Income Tax Bill, 2025, was introduced in the Lok Sabha February 13 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

The Bill, once enacted, will replace the 64 years old Income Tax Act which has become bulky over time with its traditional style of drafting and numerous amendments

formulae which make it easier for a taxpayer to calculate tax liability. It has removed 1,200 provisos and 900 explanations.

In a post on X, the department February 14 said it has activated the utility to check Section of the Income Tax Act, 1961, vis-a-vis corresponding clause of the new Income Tax Bill. A taxpayer can select the section of I-T Act, 1961,

from a drop down menu and accordingly the corresponding clause in the I-T Bill will appear.

Besides, a section wise mapping has been given in tabular format for taxpayer convenience. The Bill uses shorter sentences and has been made reader-friendly with the use of tables and formulae. Tables have been provided for provisions relating to TDS, presumptive taxation, salaries, and deductions for

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

The Bill will come into effect from April 1, 2026, after it is vetted by a Select Committee of the Lok Sabha and cleared by Parliament.

The new Bill has omitted redundant sections, like those relating to Fringe Benefit Tax. The Bill is free from 'explanations or provisos', thereby making it easier to read and comprehend.

Also, the word 'notwith standing', which was used excessively in the Income Tax Act, 1961, has been done away with in the new Bill and almost everywhere replaced with the term 'irrespective'.



SHORT TAKES

Fire engulfs 7 tents in MahaKumbh

Mahakumbh Nagar: A fire broke out at the storeroom of a camp in the MahaKumbh Mela area Saturday evening, gutting seven tents and destroying some items, including blankets and foodgrains, officials said. No person was injured, they said. Chief Fire Officer (Kumbh) Pramod Sharma said the fire broke out at a camp in Sector 19 of the Maha Kumbh area and it engulfed seven tents. "As soon as we received the fire alert, firefighting motorcycles reached the spot within two minutes, followed by four fire tender trucks," he said.

Ch'garh: BJP sweeps all 10 mayoral polls

Raipur: The BJP swept all the 10 mayoral elections in Chhattisgarh Saturday with BJP National President J.P. Nadda and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai calling it a historic mandate in favour of 'Modi ki Guarantee'. Addressing media persons, CM Sai said, "The BJP has achieved a historic victory in the municipal elections, with the people of Chhattisgarh trusting the party. Voters have expressed their confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his leadership.'

Stampede-like situation at New Delhi rly station

New Delhi: At least four women were reportedly injured and rushed to hospitals after a stampede-like situation broke out at the New Delhi railway station late Saturday evening, triggering a chaos on platform numbers 14 and 15, officials said. Several passengers also claimed that at least four women were rushed to nearby hospitals.

YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia apologises again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 15: Popular YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia apologised for his controversial remark again on Saturday but said he is scared as he and his family are receiving death threats.

Allahbadia, one of the most influential podcasters with over 16 million followers across social media platforms, landed in a major controversy over his comment on parents and sex at Samay Raina's comedy show "India's Got Latent" last Monday. He apologised the next



day but the controversy refused to die down with police complaints filed against him and those involved with the show. On Saturday, the social media

influencer issued another apology on X and said he and his

team are cooperating with the police and all other authorities. "I will follow due process and be available to all

My remark about parents was insensitive and disrespectful. It is my moral responsibility to do better and I am genuinely sorry

"I'm watching death threats pour in from people saying that they want to kill me and hurt my family. People have invaded my mother's clinic posing as patients. I'm feeling scared and I don't know what to do. But I'm not running away. I have full faith in the police and the judicial system of India." he wrote.

Cop among 3 govt employees sacked over terror links in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu/Srinagar, Feb 15: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday dismissed three government employees including a jailed policeman for their alleged terror links, a move that drew sharp reactions from various quarters with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah questioning the action.

The sacked employees have been identified as police constable Firdous Ahmad Bhat, teacher Mohammad Ashraf Bhat and orderly in forest department Nis ar Ahmad Khan who was earlier arrested in connection with the killing of a National Conference

minister in 2000, officials said. The LG invoked Article 31 (2) (c) of the Constitution to ter minate the services of the three employees after investigation by law enforcement and intelligence agencies clearly estab lished their terror links, the of ficials said. Over 70 government employees have been fired by the LG in the Union Territory for their terror links in the past few years.

Should CJI be involved in executive appointments?

The views came in the wake of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar wondering Friday that how could the CJI, even by "statutory prescription", get involved in executive appointments such as that of CBI director, and said it was time to "revisit" such norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Legal experts Saturday gave divergent views on whether the Chief Justice of India should be involved in executive appointments with some saying the CJI's participation adds fairness in the process while others were of the opinion that he should not be in such selection committees.

The views came in the wake of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar wondering Friday that how could the CJI, even by "statutory prescription", get involved in executive ap-

pointments such as that of CBI

director, and said it was time to

"revisit" such norms.

While noted constitutional expert and senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi said the CJI should not be part of the selection committee relating to appointment of CBI director and other executive appointments, senior advocate Shoeb Alam said such appointments only benefit from the participation of the CJI. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan said since the matter relating to appointment of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and election commissioners under a 2023 law, which excluded the CJI from the selection panel,

was pending before the Su-

preme Court, the vice president should not have made such a statement.

Another senior advocate Mohit Mathur said though inclusion of CJI in the selection process was to keep it free and fair, the vice president should not have made such a statement.

"In view of separation of judiciary from executive and legislature and that Supreme Court exercises judicial review powers, the chief justice should not be part of selection committee relating to CBI director and other executive appointments. He can be part of it if appointments are to judicial tribunals though," Dwivedi said. Alam said, "Participation of

the CJI adds fairness and impartiality to selections to key posts." He said in a democracy like ours, such appointments only benefit from the participation of the CJI.

"Increasing the credibility of the process and ensuring adherence to due process, cannot be termed as judicial activism or encroachment on executive power," Alam said. "Most of all, it contributes to ensuring a suitable appointment, especially when there is no law covering the field of appointment. As

was the case for appointment of

ECs (election commissioners) and CEC till recently," he said.

Sankaranarayanan said, "As the matter is sub judice, neither the vice president nor I should comment on it. He should know better". Mathur said in the se lection process for CBI director, the prime minister is also involved along with the CJI Mathur said vice president is a post which has to be above all party or government lines.

Speaking at the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal Dhankhar had on Friday said that in his view, the 'doctrine of basic structure' has a very "debatable jurisprudential basis".



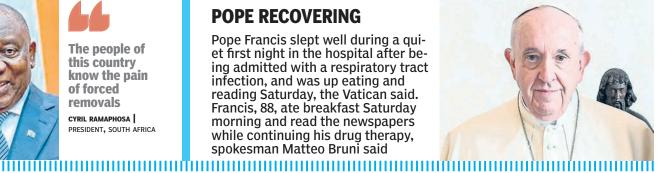
international



The people of this country know the pain of forced removals

POPE RECOVERING

Pope Francis slept well during a quiet first night in the hospital after being admitted with a respiratory tract infection, and was up eating and reading Saturday, the Vatican said. Francis, 88, ate breakfast Saturday morning and read the newspapers while continuing his drug therapy, spokesman Matteo Bruni said





fundamental interests or geopolitical conflict



WANG YI | FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

It was an honour to welcome India's **Prime Minister** @ narendramodi back to the United States, and look forward to continuing to strength en the US-India friendship

TULSI GABBARD | US DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Senator, you

said that democracy doesn't put food on your table. Actually ... in my part of the world, it (democracy) does. Today, since we are a democratic society, we give nutrition support, and food to 800 million people

S JAISHANKAR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Another woman takes over top job at Vatican

Rome: Another woman is taking over a top management job in the Vatican: Sister Raffaella Petrini, an Italian nun, was named Saturday as president of the Vatican City State, making her essentially the governor of the 44-hectare (108-acre) territory in Rome that is home to the Catholic Church. Petrini had previously been the secretary general of the Vatican administration, which among other things is responsible for the functioning of the Vatican Museums, a major source of revenue for the Holy See. She moves into the top job March 1 following the retirement of Cardinal Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, who turns 75 that day. Last month, Francis named the first woman to head a major Holy See office, appointing another Italian nun, Sister Simona Brambilla, to become prefect of the department responsible for all the Catholic Church's

Looting hits eastern Congo's Bukavu

Bukavu: Chaotic scenes unfolded in the eastern Congo city of Bukavu on Saturday after Rwanda-backed M23 rebels reached its outskirts. while a threat by Uganda's army chief to attack a Congolese town raised fears of the conflict flaring into a wider regional war. The rebels have been pushing south towards Bukavu, the second-largest city in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, since they seized Goma, the largest city, at the end of last month. On Saturday, the World Food Programme's depot in Bukavu, which housed 6,800 metric tons of food, was being looted. a spokesperson told Reuters.

Nepal Deputy PM sustains burn injuries

Kathmandu: Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel Saturday suffered burns during the inauguration of a tourism fair and was airlifted to Kathmandu. Paudel, who is also the finance minister, and Pokhara Mayor Dhanraj Acharya received burn injuries when hydrogenfilled balloons caught fire while lighting a candle at the inauguration of 'Visit Pokhara Year' aimed at attracting two million tourists in 2025. Pun Lama, the mayor's private secretary, told PTI that Paudel sustained injuries in his head and hand while Acharya suffered burns on his face. Both were airlifted to Kathmandu's Kirtipur Burn Hospital Kathmandu through Simrik Air helicopter for further treatment after receiving first-aid treatment at a hospital in Pokhara,

'Armed forces of Europe must be created'

Zelenskyy, Scholz take strong stands as new line from Washington under Trump jolts Europe

and econom-

including national

debt levels that have crimped

defence spending, have gotten

in the way of greater support.

Zelenskyy alluded to a

phone conversation between

Trump and Russian President

Vladimir Putin this week, af-

ter which Trump said he and

Putin would likely meet soon

to negotiate a peace deal over

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Munich, Feb 15: Two top European leaders stiffened their spines Saturday over unsettling new policies from Washington under President Donald Trump, as Ukraine's president urged creation of an "armed forces of Europe" and the leader of Germany denounced meddling in its election after US Vice President JD Vance met with a German far-right leader.

Strident speeches from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Day 2 of the Munich Security Conference testified to the impact of a blizzard of Trump decisions that have resonated at home and in Europe, notably his hopes to end the Russia-Ukraine war and nurture perceived allies on the continent. Ramping up his desire for a

more muscular and mighty Europe, Zelenskyy said Ukraine's three-year fight against an invading Russian army has proved that a foundation exists for the creation of a European army that has long been discussed among some continental leaders. "I really believe that time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hong Kong, Feb 15: Panda

craze has once again gripped

Hong Kong as residents com-

pete to name the territory's first

locally-born giant panda cubs

who just turned six months old.

the twin cubs, born August 15,

launched Saturday following a

celebratory ceremony attended

by Hong Kong leader John Lee

and other officials at Ocean Park,

the theme park that houses the

twins, their parents and two

other giant pandas that arrived

from mainland China last year.

Residents can submit their sug-

gestions via the park's website.

Lee said the southern Chinese

city now has the largest number

The competition to name

has come," he said. "The armed forces of Europe must be created. It's unclear whether the idea will catch on with European leaders. Zelenskyy has sought greater military and economic support from the European Union for

While the bloc — along

of pandas in captivity outside of

mainland China, and the cubs'

names would be announced in

fied as the "Elder Sister" and

the "Little Brother", will make

their public debut Sunday and

meet visitors for five hours dai-

ly. The birth of the baby pandas

last year made their mother

Ying Ying the world's oldest

first-time panda mom.

The pair, currently identi-

the first half of this year.

Biden administration's harder line against Moscow over Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Trump later assured Zelen-

skyy that he, too, would have a seat at the table to end the war. The Ukrainian leader insisted Europe should also have one. 'Ukraine will never accept

deals made behind our backs without our involvement, and the same rule should apply to all of Europe," Zelenskyy said. "A few days ago, President Trump told me about his conversation with Putin. Not once did he mention that America needs Europe at the table. That says a lot.' Zelenskyy insisted that "three

vears of full-scale war have proven that we already have the foundation for a united European military force. And now, as we fight this war and lay the groundwork for peace and security, we must build the armed forces of Europe.

Noting the presence of NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte in the audience. Zelenskyv said his idea "wasn't about replacing the alliance. This is about making Europe's contribution to our partnership equal to America's"

Scholz responds to Vance

Earlier, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he was "pleased" at what he called a shared commitment with the United States to the "preserving the sovereign independence of Ukraine," and agreed with Trump that the Russia-Ukraine war must end. But also Scholz took aim at

the new political tack from Washington, affirming his strong stance against the farright and said his country won't accept people who "intervene in our democracy" — alluding to remarks by US Vice President JD Vance who scolded European leaders over their approach to democracy. Ahead of February 23 elections in Germany, polls show the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party — whose co-leader met with Vance Friday — currently in second, ahead of Scholz's own Social Democrats.

Alluding to Germany's Nazi past, Scholz said the longstanding commitment to "Never Again" — a return to the extreme right — was not reconcilable with support for AfD.

Three Israeli hostages freed in Gaza, Israel to release 369 Palestinians

REUTERS

Cairo, Feb 15: Israeli hostages Iair Horn, Sagui Dekel-Chen and Sasha (Alexander) Troufanov were freed in Gaza Saturday and Israel began releasing some 369 Palestinian prisoners and detainees in exchange, after mediators helped avert a cease fire collapse.

The three Israelis were led onto a stage with Palestinian Hamas militants armed with automatic rifles standing on each side of them at the site in Khan Younis, live footage showed, before they were taken into Israel by Israeli forces Shortly afterwards, the first

bus carrying freed Palestinian prisoners and detainees de parted Israel's Ofer jail in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, live footage showed. The swap of the three Israelis

for the 369 Palestinians eased fears that the ceasefire agree ment could collapse before the end of the 42-day first stage of a ceasefire deal in effect since January 19. In what has become known

as Hostage Square in Tel Aviv people broke into cheers and tears when they heard the Red Cross was on its way to deliver the three to Israeli military forces in the Gaza Strip.

Ukraine — breaking with the

(C msc old days are over when America backers, pockets of supported Europe just political disagreebecause it always had ment in EU over its VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY I approach to Moscow

years and repeatedly warned that other parts of Europe could be vulnerable to Russia's expansionist ambitions too.

with the United States - has been one of Kyiv's strongest

HK residents compete to

name twin panda cubs

Assault on US agencies: Nearly 10K fired

The firings are in addition to the roughly 75,000 workers who have taken a buyout that Trump and Musk have offered to get them to leave voluntarily. That equals about 3% of the 2.3 million person civilian workforce

Washington, Feb 15: The campaign by President Donald Trump and his adviser Elon Musk to radically cut back the US bureaucracy spread Friday, firing more than 9,500 workers who handled everything from

managing federal lands to caring for military veterans. Workers at the departments

of Interior, Energy, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture and Health and Human Services had their employment terminated in a drive that so far has largely - but not exclusively targeted probationary employees in their first year on the job who have fewer employment protections.

Trump says the federal government is too bloated and too much money is lost to waste and fraud. The government has some \$36 trillion in debt and ran a \$1.8 trillion deficit last year, and there is bipartisan agreement on the need for reform.

But congressional Democrats say Trump is encroaching on the legislature's constitutional



ing, even as his fellow Republicans who control majorities in both chambers of Congress have largely supported the moves.

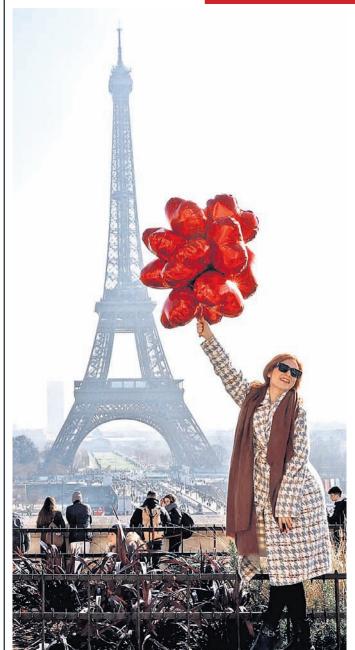
The speed and breadth of Musk's effort has produced growing frustration among some of Trump's aides over a lack of coordination, including White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, sources told Reuters.

'BETRAYED BY MY COUNTRY' Fired federal workers ex"I've done a lot for my coun-

try and as a veteran who served his country, I feel like I've been betraved by my country," said Nick Gioia who served in the army and worked for the Department of Defense for a total of 17 years before joining the USDA's Economic Research Service in December only to be fired late Thursday.

"I don't feel like this has anything to do with federal workers, I feel like this is just a game," said Gioia, who lives in Elizabethtown, Kentucky and has a child with epilepsy.

"To sit here and watch people like Mr Musk tweet out how he feels like he's doing a great job he doesn't realize what he's doing to people's lives.'



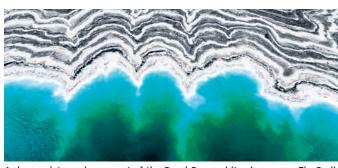
A woman holds heart-shaped balloons at Trocadero Square near the Eiffel Tower on Valentine's Day in Paris, France February 14



Fragments of an explosive device, a radiation warning sign in the foreground, are displayed by Ukrainian authorities after a drone attack at the former Chernobyl nuclear power plant, Ukraine February 14



A Congolese child, displaced by recent clashes between the M23 rebels and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), prepares to leave camp after being instructed by the M23 rebels to vacate the camps on the outskirts of Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo,



A drone picture shows part of the Dead Sea and its shore near Ein Gedi.



A folk artist takes part in a molten iron fireworks performance at Shanghai Happy Valley amusement park during the Lantern Festival, which marks the end of the Lunar New Year celebrations, in Shanghai, China,



Students are greeted by residents as they finish their protest march over the fatal November 2024 Novi Sad railway station roof collapse, in Kragujevac, Serbia February 13

Business



A new chapter has been added to the India-US partnership, enabling much stronger collaboration in strategic sectors including defence, energy, semiconductors, space and emerging technologies like AI, quantum computing, advanced materials, and biotechnology

INDIA STEEL CAPACITY TO SURPASS 300 MT

India is expected to surpass the 300 million tonnes (MT) steel capacity target by 2030 on the back of firm demand, SAIL Chairman Amarendu Prakash said Saturday. Prakash said the number looked unrealistic when the national steel policy was launched in 2017 to scale up India's total steel manufacturing capacity to 300 million tonnes per annum.





economic growth must be deeply rooted in our embracing



from the Indus Valley traders to Acharya Chanakya—laid the foundations of self-reliance and entrepreneurship, and those lessons remain as relevant today as ever MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION MINISTER





VK PAUL | NITI AAYOG MEMBER





GLENN SALDANHA | GLENMARK PHARMACEU

SHORT TAKES

Bank of India raises ₹2,690cr

Mumbai: Bank of India (Bol) Saturday said that it has successfully raised ₹2,690 crore bonds at an interest rate of 7.50 per cent. The funds were raised via the NSE Electronic Bidding Platform -- the bank's third infrastructure bond issuance in the current financial year. The public sector lender had initially set a base issue size of ₹1,500 crore, with an option to raise up to ₹3,500 crore. However, the offering received an overwhelming response. attracting a total of 94 bids worth ₹8,845 crore, which was nearly six times the base issue size. After reviewing the bids, the bank accepted 26 bids, finalising the issuance at ₹2,690 crore. According to the bank, the funds raised from these long-term bonds will be utilised for financing infrastructure projects and affordable housing, in line with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) guidelines. The money will not be allocated to any specific project but will contribute to the overall funding of key sectors, it added. Over the past nine months, the bank has raised ₹12,500 crore through multiple bond offerings.

Hvundai's India export milestone

Gurugram: Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), one of the country's leading automobile manufacturers. has completed 25 years of exports from India, reinforcing its position as the largest exporter in this segment. Since starting exports in 1999, the company has shipped over 3.7 million (37 lakh) vehicles across the globe, it said in a statement. The company's export data showed the success of India's push for self-reliant and globally competitive automobile production. Over the years, Hyundai has expanded its global reach, exporting cars to more than 150 countries. At present, the company supplies vehicles to over 60 nations with Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Mexico, Chile, and Peru emerging as its top markets in 2024. Hyundai exported a total of 1,58.686 vehicles in 2024, the company said. Among the top-selling export models, the i10 family has surpassed 1.5 million units in overseas sales, while the popular VERNA series has crossed 500,000 exports. The carmaker has also achieved a major milestone

by exporting over 1 million

vehicles to Africa.

Trade pact to help India boost its exports to US

The focus on technology, defence, and green energy will particularly benefit India's export sectors and enhance global competitiveness, exporters say

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: A target to take bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030 and plans to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement will help India boost its exports to the US, say

The focus on technology, defence, and green energy will particularly benefit India's export sectors and enhance global competitiveness, exporters

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ashwani Kumar underscored the importance of enhancing bilateral trade by eliminating barriers and streamlining processes.

International trade expert and Hi-Tech Gears Chairman Deep Kapuria said that the USD 500 billion bilateral trade target is an important outcome of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-level visit to Washington.

"Since India has surplus in trade with the US, it would bring significant gains to India

the world's largest economy. What is important here is that the two leaders have agreed to negotiate the first tranche of a

by fall of 2025," he said. Kapuria added that this decision will give a big boost to US investors who want to relocate to India and also looking for new investment opportunities in India.

mutually beneficial multi-sec-

tor bilateral trade agreement

"For Indian industry, this is a great opportunity to enhance their exports to the US as well as integration into GVCs (global value chains) led by US companies." he said.

However, economic think tank GTRI (Global Trade Research Initiative) said that a full India-US FTA appears unlikely

"The US prioritizes securing the best tariff deals but has little appetite for broad FTA-driven tariff cuts. India also has limited gains in services, as Washington is unwilling to expand business visas, GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava

He added that many trade

issues are already covered under the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), where India is a member.

Additionally, Trump's tariffs on Mexico and Canada, despite the USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), signal his scepticism toward trade agreements.

"Given these factors, India should focus on sector-specific deals instead of pursuing a comprehensive FTA," Srivastava said.

In 2023, the US and India bilateral trade in goods and services stood at USD 190.08 billion (USD 123.89 goods and USD 66.19 services trade). In that year, India's merchandise exports to the US stood at USD 83.77 billion, while imports were USD 40.12 billion, leaving a trade gap of USD 43.65 billion in favour of India.

The country's services exports to America were USD 36.33 billion in 2023, while imports were USD 29.86 billion. The trade gap (difference between imports and exports) was USD 6.47 billion in favour

BITs should capture national interest: **FM Sitharaman**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday said that going forward the bilateral investment treaties should capture national interest in relation to regulatory powers and serve as a guide to arbitrators in resolving disputes.

Speaking at the inauguration of the first PG Certificate Course on International Commercial & Investment Treaty Arbitra tion in New Delhi, Sitharaman said issues related to Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) are unique to the sovereign and hence BIT should be negotiated stand-alone rather than as a part of FTA agreement.

Stating that arbitrators have often ignored the judicial decisions of the host country Sitharaman said an investment treaty must not only provide better regulatory powers to the nations but must also serve as guidance to arbitrators to restore faith in arbitration.

"I strongly believe, mov ing forward, the framework of investment treaties should capture national interests in relation to regulatory powers and strengthen guidance for arbitrators in resolving disputes, keeping in mind nations' interests and circumstances as well," Sitharaman said.

Presently, India is negotiating this treaty with the UK, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the European Union (EU).

The government in Budget 2025-26 had announced revamping the current model BIT to make it more investor-friendly and attract foreign players.

"To encourage sustained foreign investment and in the spirit of 'first develop India', the current model BIT will be revamped and made more investor-friendly," the Budget

India to be connected with longest undersea cable, says Meta

New Delhi, Feb 15: Social me dia major Meta Saturday tagged India as one of its largest markets to be connected with the company's world's longest undersea cable "Project Waterworth" which is expected to be operational by the end of this decade.

Meta has announced "Project Waterworth" which will reach five major continents and span over 50,000 kilometers -- longer than the earth's circumference.

The project was part of the US-India Joint Leaders' Statement that was released on February 13 following the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to US. "Meta is investing in India

-- one of its largest markets -bringing the world's longest, highest capacity and most technologically advanced subsea cable project to connect India. the US, and other locations, Meta spokesperson said on Saturday.

The undersea cables are crucial for internet operations. These cables connect countries with each other. Local telecom operators connect with undersea cables to provide internet access to their customers.

The investment assumes significance as telecom operators have been demanding big techs including Meta to contribute towards building network infrastructure to decongest the data traffic load and improve customer's experience.

"Driven by India's growing demand for digital services, this investment reaffirms Meta's commitment to economic growth, resilient infrastructure, and digital inclusion. supporting India's thriving digital landscape and fostering technological innovation," the



According to the US-India joint statement, India intends to invest in maintenance, re pair and financing of undersea cables in the Indian Ocean, us ing trusted vendors.

Meta in a blog on Project Wa

terworth said that the compa ny is deploying first-of-its-kind routing, maximizing the cable laid in deep water -- at depths up to 7,000 metres -- and using enhanced burial techniques in high-risk fault areas, such as shallow waters near the coast, to avoid damage from ship anchors and other hazards. The company said the new

multi-billion dollar investment will connect five continents, en hancing the scale and reliability of the global digital highways that power Meta's apps and services, and will be ready for service at the end of the decade

"This project will enable greater economic cooperation facilitate digital inclusion, and open opportunities for techno logical development in these regions. For example, in India, where we've already seen significant growth and invest ment in digital infrastructure, Waterworth will help accelerate this progress and support the country's ambitious plans for its digital economy," the

GLOBAL TRADE ISSUES TO DRIVE SENSEX, NIFTY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Feb 15: Nifty and Sensex faced resistance at higher levels this week, leading to profit booking, as global macro uncertainties and mixed earnings kept investors wary. Going forward, market direction will hinge on global trade developments, earnings outcomes and sectoral momentum, say experts.

Over the past week, Indian eq uity markets have experienced notable declines across indices. The Nifty 50 index has fallen approximately 4 per cent since February 5, now standing about 13 per cent below its record high from September 2024.

The broader market has also seen significant pressure, with the Nifty Midcap 100 declining by 2.5 per cent and the Nifty Small-

cap 100 dropping about 3 per cent. The smallcap index has entered bear market territory, trading over 20 per cent below its December 2024 peak.

These declines stem from concerns over US tariff policies and slowing corporate earnings, leading to widespread sell-offs, particularly in small-cap stocks, said Krishna Appala from Capitalmind Research.

On Friday, the Indian stock markets continued their downward trend for the eighth straight session. At the closing bell, the Sensex closed around 200 points lower at 75,939, while Nifty shed 102 points or 0.55 per cent to end

According to experts, market volatility is a constant feature, but it also creates opportunities.

Instead of reacting impulsively to short-term swings, investors should focus on strong businesses with long-term growth potential and structural tailwinds.

While today's market presents its own set of challenges, selective opportunities are emerging. However, macroeconomic tail-

OpenAl board rejects Musk's \$97.4bn takeover bid

ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Francisco, Feb 15: OpenAI says its board of directors has unanimously rejected a \$97.4 billion takeover bid by

"OpenAI is not for sale, and the board has unanimously rejected Mr. Musk's latest attempt to disrupt his competition, said a statement Friday from Bret Taylor, chair of OpenAI's

OpenAI attorney William Savitt in a letter to Musk's attorney Friday said the proposal 'is not in the best interests of OAI's mission and is rejected."

Musk, an early OpenAI investor, began a legal offensive against the ChatGPT-maker nearly a year ago, suing for breach of contract over what he said was the betrayal of its founding aims as a nonprofit he helped found a decade ago.

Then on Monday, while that case was still awaiting a key ruling, Musk and his own AI startup, xAI, and a group of investment firms announced a bid



to buy the nonprofit that controls OpenAI. Musk in a court filing Wednesday expanded on the proposal to acquire the nonprofit's controlling stake in the for-profit OpenAI subsidiary.

Savitt's letter Friday said that filing added "new material conditions to the proposal. As a result of that filing, it is now apparent that your clients' much-publicized bid' is in fact not a bid at all." In any event, "even as first presented," the board has unanimously rejected it, Savitt said.

Musk has alleged in the lawsuit that the companies are violating the terms of his foundational contributions to the charity. Musk had invested about \$45 million in the startup from its founding until 2018, his

lawyer has said. He escalated the legal dispute late last year, adding new claims and defendants, including OpenAI's business partner Microsoft, and asking for a court order that would halt OpenAI's plans to more fully convert itself into a for-profit business. Musk also added xAI as a plaintiff, claiming that OpenAI was also unfairly stifling business competition.

20 NBFCs surrender registration certificates to RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 15: The Reserve Bank of India Friday said 20 non-banking financial companies, including Reliance Commercial Finance and IDFC Limited, have surrendered their certificate of registration (CoR)

Of these, two non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) have surrendered their CoR as they have exited from the non-banking financial institu tion business. These NBFCs are Manoway Investments Private Limited and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited.

IDFC Ltd, IDFC Financial Holding Company Ltd and other 16 entities surrendered the CoR as it ceased to be a legal entity due to amalgamation or merger

Besides, the RBI cancelled the CoR of 17 NBFCs, the central banks said in another statement

These NBFCs whose licences were cancelled had their registered office in West Bengal.

Will Harley-Davidson roar in full range in India again?

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Will US President Donald Trump's insistence on 'reciprocal tariffs' lead to the American cult bike brand Harley-Davidson's bigger play in India?

The budget presented earlier in the month has already cut custom duties on imported premium bikes to make their entry cheaper. Currently down to selling one

India-made X 440, co-developed with Indian partner Hero MotoCorp, and over five fully-built imported models, Harley-Davidson once sold 13 models in India with a starting price of ₹4.69 lakh with 33 dealerships before it shut its manufacturing and sales operations in 2020 as it could not make a mark after more than a decade of presence

in the country In the Union Budget 2025-26

presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, custom duty on motorcycle with engine capacity of 1,600 cc and above imported as completely built unit (CBU) was slashed to 30 per cent from 50 per cent earlier and for those imported as semiknocked down (SKD) units to 20 per cent from 205 per cent, while on completely knocked down (CKD) units to 10 per cent from 15 per cent earlier. Similarly, import tariff on

bikes with engine capacity not exceeding 1,600 cc in CBU form was cut to 40 per cent from 50 per cent earlier and for those imported in SKD form to 20 per cent from 25 per cent, while on CKD to 10 per cent from 15 per cent earlier.

As per industry observers,

the US imposes zero tariffs on

most of the imported bikes al-

though two-wheelers of engine

capacity between 500cc and 800

cc attract 1.2 per cent and those above 800 cc at 2.4 per cent.

According to an India-US joint statement after a discussion between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump at the White House, the leaders welcomed early steps to demonstrate mu-

tual commitment to address bilateral trade barriers

The US "welcomed India's re cent measures to lower tariffs on US products of interest in the areas of bourbon, motorcycles, ICT products and metals. as well as measures to enhance market access for US agricultural products, like alfalfa hay and duck meat, and medical devices", it said.

"India also expressed appreciation for US measures taken to enhance exports of Indian mangoes and pomegranates to the United States," the statement said, adding both sides also pledged to collaborate to enhance bilateral trade by increasing US exports of industrial goods to India and Indian exports of labour-intensive manufactured products to the US. Query to Harley-Davidson's Indian partner Hero MotoCorp on the possibility of expanding the brand's model lineup in India if import tariffs were reduced further remained un-

India was the second country where Harley-Davidson set up CKD assembly operations outside the US, after Brazil. However in 2020 the company decided to discontinue its sales and manufacturing operations in India as part of a global restructuring and closed the Bawal plant in Haryana.

The same year the company announced a partnership with India's leading two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp through a distribution agreement.

Under the agreement, the Indian partner agreed to sell and service Harley-Davidson motor cycles and sell parts and acces sories and general merchandise riding gear and apparel through a network of brand-exclusive Harley-Davidson dealers and Hero MotorCorp's existing dealership network in India.

In December last year, the two companies expanded their collaboration to introduce new products and agreed to introduce new trims of Harley-Da vidson X440 and develop an all-new bike.

Savita Punia bravely saved a firmly-hit reverse flick from crashing into the net with just two minutes in the first quarter, leaving India coach Harendra Singh in a sport of bother. Tessa Howard fired a powerful shot from the left, but Savita produced a strong save to keep the score tied at 1-1. Deepika marked her milestone 50th international appearance with a crucial goal, converting the hosts' second penalty corner with a rasping shot to give her team a 2-1 lead India focused on controlling the midfield, while England attempted to exploit the flanks. Katie Curtis stood out for England, using her stick skills to advance the ball, but India remained resolute in defense,

intercepting key passes.

the English goalkeeper.

found the equaliser.

matic win.

In the 42nd minute, India

earned another penalty corner,

and Deepika unleashed a pow-

erful shot, only to be denied by

England gained momentum

in the final quarter, earning

three consecutive penalty cor-

ners, but failed to convert any

of them. Their relentless pres-

sure finally paid off when Fiona

Just a minute later, vice-cap-

tain Navneet struck powerful-

ly from the edge of the shoot-

ing circle, sending the ball

through the goalkeeper's legs

and into the net to seal the dra-

A large number of specta-

tors and hockey enthusiasts

gathered at Kalinga Stadium

to witness the electrifying

matches, creating an atmo-

sphere of excitement and pas-

sion for the sport.

Eves shine as campaign begins



Navneet earns India hard-fought 3-2 win against England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: A confident India began their campaign in the Women's Pro League with a 3-2 win against higher-ranked England at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium here Saturday.

On the opening day, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj graced the occasion, extending their best wishes to the players and boosting their morale.

Two of India's goals came from penalty corners with Vaishnavi Phalke scoring the opener in the sixth minute and Deepika smashing the winner in the 25th, while Navneet Kaur struck the winner with just one minute left in the game.

Darcy Bourne (12th) and Fiona Crackles (58th) scored for England.

Vaishnavi opened the account from India, ranked ninth in the FIH, after a firmly-struck

shot from Manisha Chauhan off the first penalty corner hit a defender's stick and came back into play. Vaishnavi was perfectly placed to decisively hit the ball into the net.

India looked confident and showed the intent to ruffle the seventh-ranked England with pace and short passes. However, quite against the run of play, England struck when a sloppy clearance by defender Ishika Chaudhary saw Darcy just push the ball straight into the goal from close to bring up the equaliser.

A minute later, goalkeeper

Spain avenge Olympics loss The Europeans defeat India 3-1 in men's Pro League hockey opener



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Spain took sweet revenge for their defeat against India in the bronze-medal match at the Paris Olympics, overcoming Harmanpreet Singh's side 3-1 in a FIH men's Pro League game here Saturday.

India put up a lackluster show in their first Pro League match this season, even as Spain showed loads of determination with Borja Lacalle (28th), Ignacio Cobos (38th) and Bruno Avila (56th) slotting home the goals after the hosts had taken the lead in the 25th minute through Sukhjeet Singh.

The first quarter was all about gauging one another's strengths. Barring a run by Abhishek, who managed to create a chance for Lalit Upadhyay, the Spanish goalkeeper was hardly tested.

India goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur too was rarely tested with the ball just hitting the far post and getting deflected, that too from outside the striking

India brought in keeper Suraj Karkera in the second quarter, and he was called into action almost immediately. He did well to thwart Spain from scoring the opening goal following a good move from the right.

Sukhjeet opened the scoring for the hosts in the 25th minute following a speedy run and circle penetration from the right by Jarmanpreet Singh. The defender relayed the ball to Sukhjeet, who failed to trap it cleanly in his first attempt, but recovered well to send a powerful reverse-hit flying past the Spanish goalkeeper.

Three minutes later, Spain slotted home the equaliser. The rival team forwards prised open the Indian defence with a

couple of passes inside the circle before Borja Lacalle, at the far post, tapped the ball in.

With India lacking cohesion upfront and a defensive strategy, Ignacio doubled the lead in the third quarter.

Spain were awarded a penalty corner but a poor trap from Borja saw him let the ball through. He, however, rushed back to take the ball in control and relayed it to Cobos inside the circle, who made no mistake in putting it in.

Spain looked clearly the better side as India conceded multiple penalty corners in the third and fourth quarters.

The European side piled more misery on the hosts when Harmanpreet tried to get an ae rial pass from Spain under control and ended up conceding a penalty corner.

Bruno Avila then slotted home his maiden international goal with a powerful drag flick.

SHORT TAKES

Gulveer smashes NR

New Delhi: Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medalist Gulveer Singh made a strong start to his season, shattering a 16-year-old national record in the men's 3000m indoor race at the BU David Hemery Valentine Invitational in Boston. The 26-year-old Army runner clocked 7:38.26, finishing second in the event and surpassing the previous Indian record of 7:49.47 set by Surendar Singh in 2008. Surendar now serves as a coach, Buoved by his impressive performance. Gulveer has now set his sights on securing automatic qualification for the 2025 World Athletics Championships in the men's 10,000m, where the entry mark is

Riyadh: Aditi Ashok was the lone Indian to make the cut after she carded an even-par 72 in the penultimate round of the PIF Saudi Ladies International held at Riyadh Golf Club. She shot an even par 72 to be 3-under for 36 holes. At T-33, she was among the top 60 and ties who qualified for the final round. Among the other Indians Pranavi Urs (70-73) was 1-under but missed the cut which fell at 2-under 142, Diksha Dagar (75-69) also exited as did Tvesa Malik (73-73).

Jelena stops Swiatek

Oatar: Three-time defending Oatar Open champion Iga Swiatek suffered a crushing 6-3, 6-1 defeat by Jelena Ostapenko in the semi-finals on Friday, her fifth loss in as many meetings with the mercurial Latvian, Swiatek entered the semi-finals carrying a 15-match winning streak in Doha. having clinched the title in each of the last three editions. The fivetime Grand Slam champion was looking to become the first player since 2011 - and just second this century - to win the same WTA tournament four years in a row but Ostapenko had other ideas.

Upset for Chelsea

Augsburg: Enzo Maresca admitted Chelsea's dismal 3-0 defeat at Brighton was the "worst performance" of his reign as Japan forward Kaoru Mitoma produced a contender for Premier League goal of the season on Friday. Maresca's hapless side failed to muster a shot on target in their second defeat in the space of seven days at the Amex Stadium. Chelsea's third defeat in their last four games in all competitions was another blow to their hopes of finishing in the

Albania Ranking Series approval

Wrestlers seek sports minister's intervention

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Asian champion Sunil Kumar, U-23 Asian Championship gold winner Minakshi and several other Indian wrestlers gathered at Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya's residence Saturday, seeking his intervention to secure approval for their participation in the upcoming Ranking Series in Albania.

The ministry has withheld approval for the wrestlers to participate in the second Ranking Series of the year scheduled to take place in Tirana. Albania. from February 26 to March 2.

'We are unable to participate in the tournament and hence we came to the minister's residence to request him to let us participate in the tournament, Kumar told PTI Videos

"It will help us in the Asian Championship in Amman in March (as points will decide) the draws and first-round bouts," he added. However, the minister was travelling and unavailable. The gathered bunch of 8-10 wrestlers waited till about 2pm outside his residence before dispersing.

"Earlier, we were not allowed to participate in World Ranking Championship in Croatia, and now we are not allowed to go



to Albania. We came here to request, we don't know the reason," Minakshi said. "We are 30 wrestlers, there is no response. We came here and got to know that the minister is not here."

The ministry has cited the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) failure to submit the necessary recommendations on time as the reason for withholding the approval. WFI had sent the proposal to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) January 30, almost a month before the start of the tournament, a WFI

source had told PTI Friday. Due to the ongoing tussle between the ministry and the suspended WFI, the wrestlers had also missed the first Rank-

ing Series in Zagreb, Croatia. Last year, the government had cleared the Indian wrestling team's participation at for World Championships after all the 12 selected athletes assembled outside the residence of the sports minister.

Sinner banned for doping

Weeks after Grand Slam win, world no 1 Jannik Sinner gets three-month ban in settlement of doping case, can return before French Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Feb 15: Top-ranked tennis player Jannik Sinner accepted a three-month ban in a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency and said Saturday the agreement ends a case that was "hanging over me" since his two positive doping tests nearly a year ago.

WADA, which was seeking to ban the three-time Grand Slam champion from the sport for at least one year, had challenged a decision last year by the International Tennis Integrity Agency not to suspend Sinner for what the ITIA judged was accidental contamination by a banned anabolic steroid last

Sinner's explanation — that trace amounts of Clostebol in his doping sample was due to a massage from a trainer who used the substance after cutting his own finger - had been accepted.

The timing means the 23-year-old Italian won't miss any Grand Slam tournaments. The French Open, the season's next major, starts May 25.

"This case had been hanging over me now for nearly a year and the process still had a long time to run with a decision maybe only at the end of



I have always accepted that I am responsible for my team and realize **WADA's strict rules are** an important protection for the sport I love

the year," Sinner, who won the Australian Open in January, said in a statement.

The Montreal-based WADA had originally appealed the ITIA's ruling to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lau-

Focus on Rohit, Kohli as India depart to Dubai

sanne, Switzerland, It has for-

mally withdrawn the appeal. 'WADA accepts the athlete's explanation for the cause of the violation as outlined in the first instance decision. WADA accepts that Mr Sinner did not intend to cheat, and that his exposure to Clostebol did not provide any performance-enhancing benefit and took place without his knowledge as the result of negligence of members of his entourage," it said in Satur-

day's announcement.

IPL 2025: Opening match set to feature KKR, RCB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: The IPL 2025 is set to begin on March 22 with a match between title hold ers Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Eden Gardens, also the designated venue for this year's final May 25.

The BCCI is yet to release the schedule but it is expected that the governing body will announce the full list of venues and matches early next week.

In IPL 2024, Punjab had hosted Chennai Super Kings and RCB and had lost both the matches. However, this year the picturesque venue might get an additional match.

The Royals played PBKS and KKR at Guwahati last year, while they lost the match against Punjab, the match against the Knight Riders ended in a washout.

Five-time champions Super Kings, set to be led by Ruturaj Gaikwad, will open their IPL 2025 campaign March 23 at their home ground - MA Chidambaram Stadium — against Hardik Pandya-led Mumbai Indians, who also owns five titles in the league.

While both CSK and MI have zeroed in on their captaincy choices, Kolkata is yet to name their leader after IPL-winning skipper Shreyas Iyer joined PBKS after the mega auction.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY

Bumrah-less India will open their campaign against Bangladesh February 20 in Dubai before the muchanticipated blockbuster against traditional rivals Pakistan February 23,

and then the Men in Blue will take on New Zealand *March 2 to round off their* league engagements

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 15: Dressed nattily in a white T-shirt and black tracks, Rohit Sharma got down from his car, and walked towards his teammates at the departure lounge amid loud

calls of 'Rohit bhai' and 'Rohit sir' by fans waiting near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport entrance.

Most of the squad members arrived in the team bus including head coach Gautam Gambhir, vice-captain Shubman Gill and star batter Virat Kohli and the stars obliged some fans by signing autographs or waving at a few of them.

Soon, the team boarded an afternoon flight to Dubai for the upcoming Champions Trophy amid heightened optimism of netting another global trophy after winning the T20 World Cup last June. The confidence -- of the fans and the team -- has been boosted by India's recent 3-0 ODI series whitewash at home over England.

Those supporters assembled at the Mumbai airport will be hoping that the icons led by



Rohit and Kohli will pull off another triumph like they did in the West Indies last year.

One last opportunity for greats?

Few months ago, Hardik Pandva had walked out with the T20 World Cup trophy hoisted on his shoulders to join a sea of passionate fans on the streets near the Wankhede Stadium for an open bus parade.

If those scenes are to be repeated next month, then India will need some runs from Rohit and Kohli, who have copped

heavy criticism after repeated failures in Test cricket.

But they replied in kind, as Rohit made a characteristically fluent hundred — a 90-ball 119 in Cuttack ODI against England — and Kohli his 73rd fifty in Ahmedabad. This might have brought them a temporary relief but a productive outing in the Champions Trophy is mandatory in the context of the duo's future in top-flight cricket.

With the emphasis firmly on hitting the next World Test Championship cycle from June and building a team for the 2027 50-over World Cup the Aiit Agarkar-chaired selection panel will closely observe how the two veterans fare in Dubai.

Kohli needs 37 runs to become the third batter ever in ODI history to make 14,000 runs while Rohit is only 12 runs away from becoming the

10th batter to complete 11,000 runs. But without a trophy those numbers will lose some heaviness around them.

A chance for young turks

A big promotion came young Gill's way when he was named the ODI vice-captain, and the batter who averages nearly 61 in the format will be keen to stamp his authority with a fruitful outing in the Champions Trophy.

The injury-enforced absence of Bumrah is an opportunity for the likes of Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana, while Varun Chakravarthy would want to prove himself as the surprise strike weapon.

A coming together of all these factors will determine whether India will touch back in Mumbai as a boisterous winning group sometime next month.

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