

Death of KIIT student sparks diplomatic tension

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: The alleged suicidal death of a 20-year-old Nepalese student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) here escalated into a diplomatic issue Monday, prompting intervention from Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

Following reports of Nepalese students being forcibly evicted from their hostels after staging protests, Oli deputed two officials to counsel affected students and coordinate with Indian authorities.

The deceased, identified as Prakriti Lamsal, was a third-year B.Tech (IT) student at KIIT. She was found hanging in her hostel room Sunday, in what authorities claimed to be a case of suicide.

Tensions flared on campus as news of her death spread, with students—particularly from the Himalayan country—staging demonstrations, demanding justice. In response to the unrest, KIIT authorities allegedly evicted several Nepalese students from their hostels and transported them to Cuttack railway station without making any arrangements for their travel.

According to some students, they were left without food, water, or money, forcing many to board trains in general compartments without reservations. Taking cognizance of the situation, Oli issued a statement on Facebook, expressing concern over the incident.

"We have received information that a Nepali student has died at KIIT University



Accused Advik Srivastav

of suicide) of BNS, and the accused student, Advik Srivastav, 21, of Lucknow was apprehended at Biju Patnaik International Airport while attempting to flee the City.

Police have seized the deceased's mobile phone, laptop, and other electronic devices as part of their investigation. "We have taken the accused into custody and are conducting a scientific investigation into the matter," said Mishra.

As tensions escalated, hundreds of students gathered on campus, demanding justice. KIIT administration held discussions with protesters but later sent many Nepalese students home, citing concerns over law and order.

In a statement, KIIT justified the evictions, claiming that despite over 10 hours of counseling and dialogue, some protesters refused to cooperate and blocked a major public road, worsening the situation.

"To ensure an unbiased investigation, Nepalese students were advised to return home temporarily with the help of local guardians. They are encouraged to return once the inquiry is completed. Their academic interests will be safeguarded," the university stated.

Following the temporary suspension of academic classes and hostel accommodations, normalcy was restored. The university later lifted the suspension and assured that the move was solely to maintain peace and ensure justice. To prevent further unrest, two platoons of police force were deployed on campus.

FOCUS ON INFRA, AGRICULTURE

ODISHA BUDGET 2025-26



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who holds the Finance portfolio, Monday presented ₹2,90,000 crore state Budget for the 2025-26 fiscal with focus on infrastructure, agriculture and irrigation.

Majhi said the Budget's special thrust is on transformative sectors like infrastructure, urban development, agriculture and irrigation, capital investment, port-led development, industrialisation and sports.

This was the first full-fledged Budget of the BJP government after the party came to power in Odisha last year. Majhi had presented an interim Budget of ₹2.65 lakh crore for the 2024-25 fiscal in July last year.

Speaking on the provisions of the Budget, he said an outlay of ₹1,70,000 crore was meant for programme expenditure, which is more than 58.62 per cent of the total Budget size. The capital outlay was ₹65,012 crore, which is 6.11 per cent of the GSDP. "The proportion of capital expenditure to total

Budget is the highest among all major states in the country," Majhi claimed.

"The revenue surplus is projected at 3 per cent of the GSDP, while the fiscal deficit is projected at 3.2 per cent of the GSDP. Year-end debt stock is expected to remain at 12.7 per cent of the GSDP. Therefore, the annual Budget is fully Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) compliant," he said.

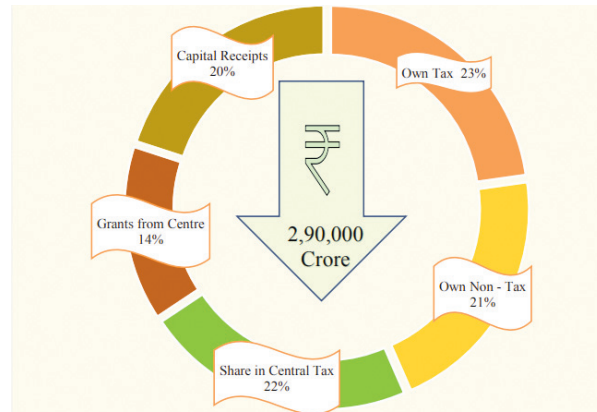
Among sectors, education received (₹41,273 crore), followed by rural development (₹39,221 crore), agriculture and allied (₹37,838 crore), social security (₹24,250 crore) and healthcare (₹23,635 crore).

Noting that around 48 per cent of the state's workforce depends on agriculture and 80 per cent of people live in rural areas, Majhi said his government has allocated ₹37,838 crore for the agriculture and allied sectors, about 12 per cent increase over the previous year.

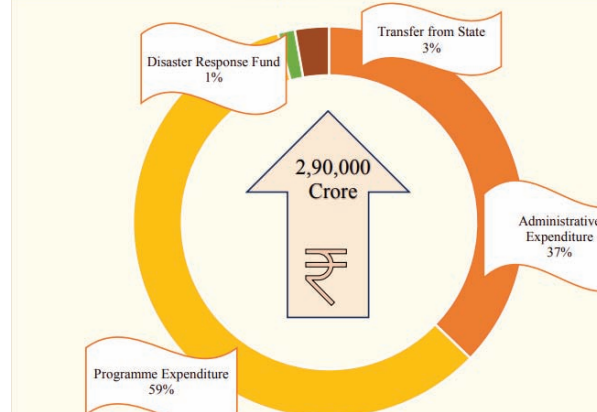
Among departments, Finance got the maximum allocation of ₹63,511.91 crore, followed by School & Mass Education (₹31,185.47 crore), Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water (₹28,451 crore), Health & Family Welfare (₹22,741 crore), Women & Child Development (₹15,223 crore) and Water Resources (₹14,894 crore).

Majhi announced 16 new

₹ comes from



₹ goes out



initiatives in the Budget, which include ₹30-crore Shree Jagannath Darshan Yojana for devotees with limited financial resources. "Such devotees can travel to Puri, visit Srimandir and have the Mahaprasad free of cost," Majhi said. Other new initiatives include, Antyodaya Gruha Yojana (₹2,603 crore), Subhadra Surakhya Yojana (₹153 crore) and Samrudha Sahara (₹400 crore). **MORE P3**

A very large sum of money from the last Budget hasn't been spent. Industrial growth is declining, and so are state's finances. It seems the double-engine government is going in reverse gear

NAVEEN PATNAIK | BJD PRESIDENT

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Do I need a train ticket to wash away my sins and attain moksha, or will a platform ticket do?

₹ FALLS 17 PAISE

Mumbai: The rupee depreciated 17 paise to close at 86.88 against the US dollar Monday, weighed down by significant foreign fund outflows and a recovery in the dollar index from intraday lows. Forex traders said the Indian rupee is trading with a negative bias as foreign banks went on a dollar-buying spree and importers scrambled to secure dollars.

36,420 women, 8,403 children missing in 5 years, CM says

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: A total of 36,420 women and 8,403 children went missing in the state over the past five years, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi informed the Assembly Monday.

Majhi said 421 women were trafficked to other states through middlemen, leading to the arrest of 453 people.

The police have been immediately registering cases on the basis of complaints and it has taken action to trace the trafficked women, he said in a written reply to the House.

During 2020-2024, a total of 1,417 women and 1,857 children who had gone missing were traced, the CM said. Besides, the state government has also res-



cued 784 child labourers.

Elaborating on the steps taken to prevent women and child trafficking in Odisha, Majhi said 36 Integrated Anti-Human Trafficking Units (IAHTUs) have been created.

IAHTUs have been made contact points to deal with such cases in Bolangir, Nu-

apada, Bargarh, Kalahandi, Sambalpur and Jharsuguda, he said.

Awareness campaigns to prevent trafficking incidents are being organised at the police-station level. Police patrolling has also been strengthened in vulnerable areas like bus stands and railway stations, Majhi said.

Special training is also being provided to police personnel to identify, conduct investigation and avoid the recurrence of such incidents.

In another written reply, the CM informed that 6,437 cases of kidnapping/abduction of women were registered in different police stations of the state during 2024, and 413 people have been arrested in connection with these cases.

EARTHQUAKE JOLTS NCR

New Delhi, Feb 17: Strong tremors were felt in the national capital and adjoining regions as an earthquake of 4.0 magnitude struck the region early Monday.

There were no immediate reports of any damage or injuries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people in the region to stay calm and follow safety precautions while keeping alert for possible aftershocks.

Modi said in a post on X, "Tremors were felt in Delhi and nearby areas. Urging everyone to stay calm and follow safety precautions, staying alert for possible aftershocks. Authorities are keeping a close watch on the situation."

The epicentre of the quake was in the Jheel Park area of Dhaula Kuan and there were some reports of people hearing a loud sound as the ground shook. **MORE P8**

Gyanesh Kumar new CEC

New Delhi, Feb 17: Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar was appointed as the next Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Monday, the Law Ministry said.

Kumar is the first CEC to be appointed under the new law on the appointment of the members of the Election Commission (EC). The term of Kumar, a 1988-batch Kerala Cadre IAS officer, will run till January 26, 2029, days before the EC is expected to announce the schedule of the next Lok Sabha election.



Vivek Joshi, a 1989-batch Haryana-cadre IAS officer, has been appointed as an Election Commissioner.

During his tenure as the 26th CEC, Kumar will oversee the Bihar Assembly polls later this year and the Kerala and Puducherry Assembly polls in 2026. Similarly, he will oversee the Assembly

polls in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, which are also due in 2026. Kumar, who played a key role in implementing decisions following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in Jammu and Kashmir during his stint in the Union Home Ministry, took charge as an Election Commissioner March 15, 2024.

His appointment came hours after the Congress asked the government to defer its decision on the new CEC till the Supreme Court concludes its hearing on a petition challenging the composition of the selection panel.

Taiwan bounty hunters kill invading iguanas

Taipei, Feb 17: Armed with a slingshot, Taiwanese bounty hunter Wu Cheng-hua bends sideways and aims his lethal weapon up at a green iguana, one of tens of thousands in the crosshairs of a government cull.

Taiwan's iguana population has exploded since the giant lizards were introduced from Central and South America more than 20 years ago as exotic pets.

Many escaped, or were dumped, and have bred rapidly in the warm climate of the island's south, invading neighbourhoods and ravaging farmers' crops.

After Wu finishes his shift at a breakfast eatery, he joins a group of hunters hired by the Pingtung County government, which pays



up to NT\$500 (US\$15) per iguana. "Sometimes we've been lucky and caught 300 iguanas in a day," Wu, 25, told AFP.

"Sometimes we were not so lucky and caught two, three or a dozen."

Carrying harpoon slingshots used for spearfishing and wearing rubber boots, the hunters crane their necks as they scan the thick forest for iguanas, which

live in the canopy.

There are more misses than hits as the men fire their stainless steel darts at the prehistoric-looking creatures high up in the trees and shielded by leaves and branches.

AFP journalists watch as an iguana plunges several metres to the ground and runs for its life. Another is shot multiple times before it is pulled out of the tree

still alive. The men bind the legs of the captured iguanas to stop them escaping and leave them on the ground as they carry on hunting.

"A perfect storm"

Taiwan began culling iguanas nearly 10 years ago and this year's target has been set at more than 100,000.

Experts and government officials say the effort is unlikely to eradicate the reptiles, which have also become pests in other countries, including the United States.

Some estimates put Taiwan's green iguana population at 200,000. A female iguana breeds once a year, laying dozens of eggs at a time.

"Climate anomalies" have fuelled iguana numbers in recent years, said Chen Tien-hsi, a wildlife expert

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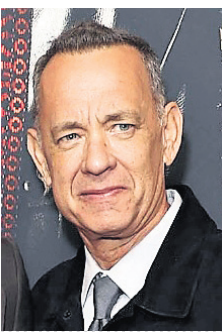


WINSLET'S DIRECTORIAL DEBUT GOODBYE JUNE FOR NETFLIX

Hollywood actress Kate Winslet will make her directorial debut with Netflix's *Goodbye June*, in which she will also act and produce. The film, featuring Toni Collette and Helen Mirren, is a drama about siblings uniting during tough times.

HANKS REVISITS PROBLEMATIC ACTS, GIGS OF SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE

The recent episode of the sketch comedy show *SNL50* was the one for pondering and being self-critical. In the episode, Hollywood royalty Tom Hanks deadpanned the opening of what seemed to be an in memoriam segment.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
A new acquaintance will make you feel happy today. You must remember that things don't have to be expressed explicitly; a word or a song from deep within can make a bigger impact. Ganesh says today is the right time to do something which will be more rewarding in the long-term.

TAURUS
This day you will be inclined to act tough and pick up a fight with everyone whom you are likely to encounter, warns Ganesh. Those who know you well will be at a loss to make anything out of your belligerent attitude and may not be able to keep up with you for too long. You'll simply be making a lot of enemies, alienating a lot of good friends.

GEMINI
You will feel the need to pursue your passions today. You will give more time to your family and will spend as much time as possible with your children and will bestow your love and affection on them. You will be in an imaginative and romantic mood today.

CANCER
Sometimes acting a little eccentric and adopting an approach that you will usually not helps you redefine your style, says Ganesh. Go ahead and do that today! Although you will be open to adapt and bring in some revolutionary changes, you will make sure to follow a proper pattern.

LEO
Financial gains will make you happy today. You will have the opportunity to participate in social functions. All your work will get completed as per schedule. You will be able to channel your energy effectively, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You are born with a talent for business. Your organisational skills too are flawless. Ganesh advises you to use all your creativity, innovative ideas and ability to motivate others to make progress in your business.

LIBRA
Ganesh advises you not to take stress about small issues or matters. To avoid tension and to gain mental peace it is advised you perform yoga or meditation. There will be pressure put on you regarding certain matters at the work-front.

SCORPIO
You go on a shopping spree and that too with your beloved. This may be quite therapeutic for your relationship. You may be just happy to use your bargaining skills to the optimum. Spending lavishly, first on shopping and then on sumptuous dinner to treat your taste buds.

SAGITTARIUS
Tedious day in store for you as hectic work is likely to keep you one toes; this is not-so-good-news. And well, it's time for some good news now. You will do so much running around for your work, that you will actually shed a few kilos of weight. Celebrate by treating your taste-buds, but with low-cal food!

CAPRICORN
Pain and fun, both are the two sides of a coin and today, you will experience both of them in equal amount. You may have to slog yourself to earn money, but be careful and don't drain yourself out, advises Ganesh. You will get what you have wished for, however, you need not try your luck too much.

AQUARIUS
You will receive some good news today. Whatever has been in the pipe line may come out in the open and you'll see the desired output, feels Ganesh. Courageous and patient, you can deal with the toughest of challenges with an ease and Ganesh gives a pat on your back for that. It will be a good day for people associated with Stock Market and finance.

PISCES
Your day today will be like a tug-of-war competition. Try to come out on top in this competition. Ganesh advises you not to underestimate your enemies. It is advisable to find a solution or avoid conflict so that you don't need to waste your energy in this.

Priyanka gets nostalgic



Mumbai: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who was recently in India for her brother Siddharth's wedding, is getting nostalgic. On Monday, the actress took to her Instagram, and dropped a bunch of pictures from her childhood, teens and initial phase of her career.

She also penned a long note in the caption and told the story behind each photograph. One of the pictures also shows her in the company of Bollywood superstar Ajay Devgn and the late actor Dilip Kumar.

She wrote, "As I was clearing up my photo library, I found some fun snippets of my life. 1: Fashion first. Moms sunnies, Dads bike (make was Rajdoot I think) 1983 2: As I said Fashion first. Always been a Desi girl 1982 3: it was my Birthday party but I had a bad asthma attack 1987 4: fashion stole my smile. Another birthday another year 5: My happiest place. Traveling with my family. Leh 1994 6: Camphor hospital grounds Bareilly".

One of the pictures also shows her holding a python. She further mentioned, "Lanky teenager at 13 was allowed a cola! of course in a fancy glass. 1995 8: Boston. major upgrade in confidence 1997 9: 90s baby. Stylin' with @irf.ahm 1997 10: my first modelling shoot in Bareilly. Hair and makeup by me 1999. See you soon with some more nostalgia".

UTTAR PURUSHA'S 3-DAY THEATRE FEST



The members of Uttar Purusha, one of the oldest drama troupes in Odisha, staged the Odia play *Sagara Manthan* on the inaugural evening of the event at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Monday. Adapted from JB Priestley's English play *An Inspector Calls* by legendary playwright Manoranjan Das into Odia, the drawing room drama was directed by the troupe's president, Prasanna Kumar Mishra. The play emphasized the importance of both personal and social responsibility. Debadatta, Chakradhar, Rajkumar, Ketan, Mithun, Pranati, and Dipti were among the artistes who performed on stage.

Mumbai: In *A Thursday*, Yami Gautam played a schoolteacher who orchestrates a hostage situation with her class of toddlers. This portrayal challenged traditional female roles in Bollywood, showcasing her ability to take on complex characters. The film's gripping narrative offered a thrilling cinematic experience while addressing critical social issues.

Reflecting on its impact, Gautam had shared earlier, "A film that changed the course of my career, all over again. *A Thursday* is very close to my heart for more reasons than one. It makes me sure as an actor to take many such

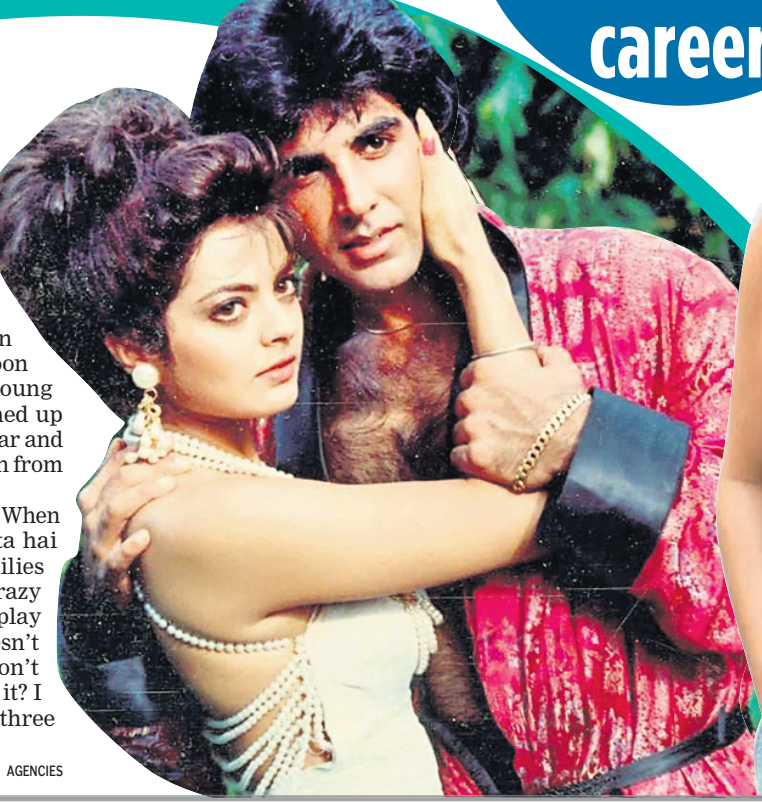
challenging and edgy characters in the future." For Gautam, the film was more than just a project; it reignited her passion for acting and provided her with a platform to explore challenging roles she had yet to embrace.

Celebrating the three-year anniversary of *A Thursday*, the film marked a pivotal moment in Yami Gautam's career. It reshaped her trajectory and showcased her willingness to take on challenging roles. Looking ahead, Gautam continues to explore diverse projects, embracing roles that push creative boundaries.

Film that turned Yami's career



Sheeba-Akshay breakup story



Mumbai: Sheeba Akshay, who has been a part of films, television, and web-series, recently recalled her time with Akshay Kumar on the sets of *Mr. Bond* (1992). The actress revealed how while working in close proximity, often actors end up being together but the love soon fizzles out, albeit it does leave an impact on young minds. In a candid conversation, Sheeba opened up about developing a 'friendship' with the Khiladi star and also revealed how she took her own time to cool down from the impact of a breakup.

Sheeba was quoted by an entertainment portal saying, "When you are young and working in close proximity, ho jata hai ishq (love happens)." Further talking about how their families too shared a bond, the actress continued, "Both fitness-crazy people... And family friends. My nani and his mom would play cards together." However, she continued to insist that she doesn't remember much about the breakup. "We were both kids. I don't even talk about it. I find it so funny. What's there to talk about it? I don't even remember much stuff from that time. It's been over three decades," she maintained.

PEANUTS



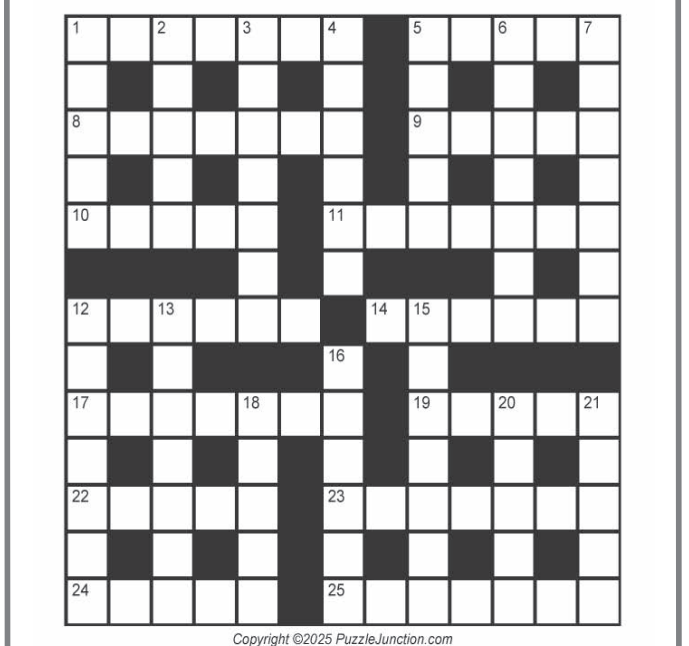
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Copyright © 2025 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Small bag
 - 5 Valuable fur
 - 8 Curl
 - 9 Prize
 - 10 Late
 - 11 Remove
 - 12 Sign of nervousness
 - 14 Floor coverings
 - 17 Long narrow flat-bottomed boat
 - 19 New moon, e.g.
 - 22 Safari sighting
 - 23 Italian rice
 - 24 Pass out
 - 25 Molasses
 - 4 Refuse
 - 5 Rapscaillon
 - 6 Ireland's famous stone
 - 7 Eternal
 - 12 Sty newcomers
 - 13 Cape Verde escudo part
 - 15 Stalemate
 - 16 Lory
 - 18 Antiquated
 - 20 Room at the top
 - 21 Split to unite
- Down**
- 1 Swagger
 - 2 Andrea Bocelli, for one
 - 3 Idyllically calm and peaceful

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

A	R	A	B	I	C	E	B	A	R	D
J	E	S	R	N	N	U				
A	U	S	T	E	R	A	Z	T	E	C
X	O	A	D	M	A	K				
U	P	E	S	T	I	L	I	F		
Z	U	R	I	C	H	B	R	I	D	G
I	O	K	A	O	P	I	Z			
C	O	R	N	U	C	O	P	I	A	
C	S	E	A	P	D	G				
Y	E	T	I	S	D	R	E	S	D	E
S	E	S	I	R	A	A				
T	A	R	N	W	A	X	E	X	I	T

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Members of OSE Employees Federation stage a protest at OPTCL headquarters in Bhubaneswar Monday over their charter of demands



downtown

CM: 582 Maoist cadres surrendered since 2006



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: A total of 582 CPI (Maoist) cadres have surrendered in Odisha from 2006 up to January 2025, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi told the state Assembly Monday.

While replying to a question by Congress MLA Mangu Khilla, the chief minister said out of 582 militias, 364 eligible surrendered persons have been provided the surrender benefits. A total of ₹9.62 crore has been spent in this regard, he said.

The state government has been implementing a "Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy" in the state since the year 2006 to bring back cadres, who have

364 eligible surrendered persons have been provided the surrender benefits, CM adds

added. As per the provision, the state also provides vocational training to the surrendered CPI (Maoist) cadre at the rate of ₹6,000 per month for a maximum period of 36 months.

If the surrendered CPI (Maoist) cadre opts for marriage and there is no surviving spouse, an incentive of ₹25,000 is being provided for his/her marriage, he pointed out.

The CM further said the Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy is one of the important components of the composite anti-Maoist action plan for which the Maoist menace has been remarkably contained in the state and the unprecedented turnaround in the situation in Swabhiman Anchal (earlier known as hotbed for Maoists) in Malkangiri district and Narayanpatna-Bandhugaon axis of Koraput district can be taken as success story in this regard.

joined the CPI (Maoist) outfit and are involved in armed conflict with the state and the administration.

Different benefits have been extended to the surrendered Maoist cadres as per the eligibility criteria of the policy, Majhi said.

Under the policy, the state government has been providing financial assistance up to ₹2.50 lakh, assistance of ₹25,000 for homestead land, and house-building assistance of ₹45,000, he said.

In case the surrendered CPI (Maoist) cadre is interested to pursue study, the government provides educational assistance of ₹3,000 to him/her, he



ENTICING DANCE: A peacock spreads its feathers at Peacock Valley in Munduli, Cuttack Monday

OP PHOTO

Bus hits ambulance; 5 seriously injured

Pipili: Five people were seriously injured after a bus hit an ambulance on the Puri National Highway near Madhuban square, Pipili, under Satasankha Police Outpost, Monday. According to reports, the ambulance, which was carrying a patient and his relatives from Bhubaneswar's Nilachal Medical to Brahmagiri, was hit from the rear by the bus near Madhuban. As a result of the crash, the patient, two relatives, and a two-year-old child in the ambulance, along with the ambulance driver sustained serious injuries. Local residents helped rescue the injured and they were initially taken to the Mangalpur Community Health Centre for treatment. Due to the severity of their injuries, the victims were later transferred to Bhubaneswar for further medical care. Authorities, including Satasankha outpost OIC Prakas Mallick and Pipili Police Sub-Inspector Narayan Behera arrived at the scene and seized both the bus and the ambulance involved in the accident. The bus driver has been detained and an investigation into the incident is underway, said a police official.

Viral videos bring to light student unrest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: The alleged mistreatment of students at KIIT University became public only after several videos surfaced on social media, showing heated arguments between the university authorities and the students, the latter agitating over the authorities' alleged inaction that led to the tragic death of the 20-year-old B Tech student from Nepal.

Netizens decried the authorities of the university over their alleged highhandedness. A purported video that triggered outcry on social media shows a female faculty telling protesting students, "KIIT offers free education to 40,000 students cutting across the globe, with its rich 30-year-old legacy. The economic capacity to run the mission outweighs the budget of Nepal. The university does not run only for you. If this upsets you, you should pack your bags and leave. Else, the police will drag you out of your hostel rooms."

Earlier in the day, KIIT re-



leased a notice, declaring Sine Die for every international student from Nepal. "They are hereby directed to vacate the university campus immediately today on 17th February, 2025," it mentioned. This allegedly led to thousands of students pouring into the Capital City's streets, staging demonstration against the varsity.

A second-year B Tech student at the university, who wished to remain anonymous fearing action, said he was asleep in his

room when security personnel slammed the door, ordering to pack their bags in five minutes, and leave the campus. "I am a native of Haryana. Till now, I have not made any train ticket reservations to travel back home. Besides, I do not have money to make last-minute arrangements," he said while standing with his friends outside Bhubaneswar railway station.

Meanwhile, reacting to the incident, Higher Education

Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said "India and, in particular, Odisha enjoys a very cordial relation with Nepal. Today's incident in KIIT University is unfortunate. The state government had taken action, arresting the suspect behind the incident. Besides, the victim's belongings have been seized." He added that the government has ordered for revocation of sine die, and bring the students immediately to the campus.

The deceased student's uncle, Nishan Kanel, reached the City Monday evening, along with her parents to receive her body. Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Nishan said, "Prakriti broke into tears a few days ago while speaking with my daughter. Upon enquiry, Prakriti expressed that her boyfriend Advik has been harassing her, threatening to make her private photos viral."

Nishan added that during the conversation, Prakriti requested the formers daughter to not reveal before family members, fearing embarrassment.

'Double-engine' going in reverse direction: LoP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: Leader of Opposition (LoP) and BJD president Naveen Patnaik Monday criticised the BJP government's first full-fledged Budget for 2025-26, claiming that the 'double engine' administration is moving in reverse.

Reacting to the state budget presented by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Patnaik said, "A very large sum of money from the last Budget hasn't been spent. Industrial growth is declining, and so are state finances. It seems the double-engine government is going in reverse gear."

Patnaik further alleged that the economic growth of the state had decreased under the double-engine government.

He also pointed out the lack of development in the farms and fields since the BJP came to power, stating that farmers are suffering and dying by suicide while rising costs are hitting the general public.



Patnaik noted the increasing unemployment rate and the distress among women members of Mission Shakti.

He questioned the purpose of the Budget if funds are not being utilised, saying, "Spending is very low. What is the meaning of the Budget if you are unable to spend money?"

Meanwhile, Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam termed the Budget a "political document," asserting that it had little to do with economics.

He criticised the Budget for not addressing major issues such as unemployment, price rise, and farmers' problems.

'Focus on growth, but gaps in some sectors'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: People from various walks of life in the City reacted variedly to the Budget for FY 2025-26 of the BJP state government which was presented in the Assembly by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday.

In the ₹2,90,000 crore Budget, special thrust has been given on transformative sectors, like - infrastructure, urban development, agriculture & irrigation, capital investment, port-led development, industrialization and sports.

While a majority of citizens who **Orissa POST** spoke to lauded the government's efforts in pushing sectors like agriculture, communication, education, infrastructure, healthcare and IT in the Budget, some were critical of, what they said, the lesser allocations to some sectors like tourism and issues like distress migration.

Sakyasingha Mohapatra, an entrepreneur, said the Budget emphasises growth across sectors, with a special focus on building an Innovation Corridor to boost research, technology, and start-ups. He said the key allocations for infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare, and education will help drive industrial growth and job creation.

STATE BUDGET 2025-26



ic progress and inclusive development," he said

ognised distress migration as an issue in Odisha. "Good that the

government has recognised the issues, formed a taskforce and made budgetary provision for the issue," he said.

He however, added that the ₹12 crore is not sufficient to arrest distress migration. "We need more efforts in terms of mapping migrant population, tracking movement, family-based intervention to prevent distress migration, illegal trafficking of laborers," he said.

Health expert Amrit Pattojoshi said the government has allocated ₹21,200 crore in the Budget for public healthcare which is an increase of about 30 per cent over the previous financial year. "It amounts to eight percent of the state Budget, which matches with the normative allocation for the sector as per recommendation of the 15th Finance Commission. This will give a boost to the sector," he said.

Welcoming the Budget, social activists Sudarshan Chhotaray said, "It focuses on infrastructure development both in rural and urban context. However, the focus on tourism is minimal with just ₹800 crore allocation.

He said the government could have invested more on building climate resilient and disaster resilient infrastructure, so as to make people survive future environment and climate threats in terms of natural disasters.

5-state regional review conference held in City



Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: A one-day regional review conference, involving five states—Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Kerala—was held in Bhubaneswar Monday. The event, organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India, and supported by the Odisha government, focused on reviewing the implementation of welfare schemes and addressing key challenges.

The conference provided a platform to discuss the progress of MoSJE initiatives, identify obstacles, and explore new strategies for inclusive growth and social justice. The inaugural session was addressed by MoSJE Secretary Amit Yadav, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, and ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare department Principal Secretary Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra.

Yadav emphasised the importance of structured dialogue between central and state governments to ensure effective implementation of social justice schemes. He highlighted the ministry's wide range of responsibilities, including the welfare of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), transgender individuals, senior citizens, and marginalised communities.

He stressed the core pillars of empowerment—education, social inclusion, and economic support—and discussed financial assistance programs such as scholarships and economic grants.

Ahuja addressed the need for access to quality education, healthcare, and housing for marginalised communities, aligning with Odisha's vision of becoming a "Viksit State." He also underscored the importance of promoting entrepreneurship and skill development to create sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance for SC communities.



DELIBERATIONS: Khurda Collector Chanchal Rana, Ekamra-Bhubaneswar MLA Babu Singh and BMC Mayor Sulochana Das attend the preparatory meeting ahead of Maha Shivratri at Circuit House in Bhubaneswar, Monday

High faecal coliform in Mahakumbh waters

New Delhi, Feb 17: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was informed on Monday that water quality at various locations in Prayagraj during the ongoing Mahakumbh was failing to meet bathing standards due to high faecal coliform levels. Faecal coliform, a marker of sewage contamination, should not exceed 2,500 units per 100 ml, as per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The NGT bench, consisting of Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava, Judicial Member Justice Sudhir Agarwal, and expert member A Senthil Vel, was addressing concerns about sewage discharge into the Ganga and Yamuna rivers.

A CPCB report, dated February 3, revealed that water quality at monitored locations did not meet primary bathing standards, particularly with respect to faecal coliform levels.

The report noted that the high number of bathers during the Mahakumbh Mela, especially on auspicious bathing days, contributed to the contamination.

The tribunal also pointed out that the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) had not fully complied with earlier directives to submit a comprehensive action report, only providing a covering letter with some water test results.

The UPPCB's report confirmed high levels of faecal and total coliform at various locations. The tribunal has scheduled the next hearing for February 19, where UPPCB authorities are required to appear virtually.

Odisha gears up for Mining Expo 2025



RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: The two-day Odisha Mining and Infrastructure Expo 2025 is scheduled to take place here from March 7 to 8, focusing on collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange in the mining and infrastructure sectors.

In a key step towards the event, the invitation and brochure were officially unveiled at a launch ceremony Monday presided over by Industries department Additional Chief Secretary Hemant Sharma. The event saw participation from industry leaders and policymakers.

Sharma emphasised the expo's role in attracting investments and fostering technological advancements. "Odisha's mining sector holds immense potential to drive economic growth. This expo will serve as a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange, positioning the state as a global leader in mining and infrastructure," he said.

Former Nalco CMD Tapan Kumar Chand highlighted Odisha's evolving role in the mining industry, while Futorex Group CMD Swami Prem Anveshi stressed the event's global outreach. "This expo will bring together national and international stakeholders to unlock new opportunities in mining and infrastructure," Anveshi noted.

With over 300 domestic and global companies expected to participate, the expo will showcase cutting-edge technologies, foster industry partnerships, and promote sustainability initiatives.

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Urgent appeal for Olive Ridley protection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: Environmentalist Soumya Ranjan Biswal has called for immediate intervention by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to address the growing crisis at Devi River Mouth, where thousands of Olive Ridley turtle carcasses have been found. In a letter to the Chief Minister, Biswal expressed deep concern over the alarming situation and highlighted the urgent need for conservation measures.

The Olive Ridley turtle, which is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, faces increasing threats due to weak enforcement of protective measures. However, Biswal noted that while conservation efforts



at the first two sites have been consistent, Devi River Mouth has largely been neglected, resulting in severe consequences for the turtles.

Biswal explained that every year, thousands of Olive Ridley turtles migrate from the

Sri Lankan coast to Odisha for breeding and nesting. Unfortunately, due to unregulated fishing activities, illegal trawling, and unmonitored marine traffic, many turtles are becoming entangled in nets or harmed in other ways. He urged the Chief

Minister to take decisive action to address these threats.

The environmentalist emphasized the need for a personal inspection by the Chief Minister to assess the situation firsthand. He also called for stronger enforcement of marine protection laws, particularly around the 20 km restricted zone during nesting seasons, and better coordination between the Forest and Fisheries departments.

Biswal further stressed the importance of transparent scientific monitoring to track turtle mortality and conservation efforts. Lastly, he recommended engaging with local fishing communities to provide alternative livelihoods, which would help reduce their dependence on illegal fishing practices.

BJP tops national party income with ₹4,340.47cr

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 17: The BJP reported the highest income among national parties for FY 2023-24, earning ₹4,340.47 crore, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). This accounted for 74.57 per cent of the total income of six national parties. The BJP spent ₹2,211.69 crore, or 50.96 per cent of its income. In comparison, Congress declared ₹1,225.12 crore in income and spent ₹3.69 per cent of it, amounting to ₹1,025.25 crore.

A large part of party incomes came from electoral bonds. The BJP received the most at ₹1,685.63 crore, followed by Congress with ₹828.36 crore, and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) at ₹10.15 crore.

Collectively, these three parties raised 43.36 per cent of their income through electoral bonds, which were declared unconstitutional by the SC in May 2024.

'Greater awareness needed about NEP'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati stressed the need for greater awareness about the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 among faculty members and teaching staff in educational institutions during a review meeting of the Higher Education department at Raj Bhavan here Monday.

The meeting saw the participation of Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, along with senior officials such as Commissioner-cum-Secretary Aravind Agrawal.

Agrawal presented a comprehensive overview of the department, providing insights into the current status of universities, government, and government-aided colleges, as well as student enrollment figures.



He also outlined the significant challenges faced by the higher education sector, such as infrastructure gaps and the need for enhanced digital learning initiatives.

One of the key points raised by the Governor was the need for more widespread knowledge of NEP 2020 among educators. Kambhampati noted that many faculty members remain unfamiliar with the policy's scope and objectives, which could hinder its effective implementation.

He called for targeted train-

ing programmes aimed at bridging this gap and ensuring that faculty members are fully equipped to adopt the policy's recommendations.

In addition to the NEP awareness, the discussions also covered critical issues such as faculty recruitment, the modernisation of curricula to align with industry needs, and strengthening the collaboration between academia and industry.

Agrawal highlighted the government's vision to bolster university governance, promote high-quality research, and foster skill-based education to better prepare students for the evolving job market.

Kambhampati commended the department's ongoing efforts and reiterated the need for continuous reforms to build a more robust and inclusive education system in Odisha.

947th coronation of Eastern Ganga king celebrated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: The 947th coronation anniversary of Eastern Ganga king Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva was commemorated with grandeur by heritage enthusiasts at the historic Sri Mukhalingam Temple in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh Monday.

The celebration aimed at reviving and honoring the rich legacy of the Eastern Ganga dynasty was jointly organised by Rediscover Lost Heritage (RLH), Apanna Parichha Smruti Sansad (APSS), Odia Bhojana (OB), and Kalinga Epigraphical Research Society (KERS).

The event commenced in the morning with a group of nearly 20 heritage enthusiasts embarking on a journey from the Gajapati Palace Square in Paralakhemundi to the Madhukeshwara Shiva Temple in



Mukhalingam. This historic location is believed to have been the early capital of the Eastern Ganga dynasty before King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva shifted his capital to present-day Cuttack, known historically as Abhinaba Baranasi Kataka, following his conquest of Utkala.

Speaking on the significance of the event, Deepak Kumar

Nayak, a founding member of RLH, highlighted Mukhalingam's historical importance. "Mukhalingam, identified as 'Kalinga Nagara', played a pivotal role as the early capital of the Eastern Ganga dynasty. The coronation of King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva is confirmed to have taken place here on February 17, 1078 CE, as evidenced by the Kormi copper

plate grants of the king," said Nayak. He further noted that although the coronation day had been celebrated in Puri in previous years, Mukhalingam holds special relevance due to its historical association with the king and his dynasty. Many relics and inscriptions related to Chodaganga Deva are still found in Mukhalingam, adding to its historical richness.

Bishnu Mohan Adhikari, a member of KERS, elaborated on the vast expanse of Chodaganga Deva's empire. "During his reign, the Kalinga kingdom stretched from the River Ganges in the north to the Godavari River in the south. He remains a revered figure among Odias, being the architect of the present-day world-famous Sri Jagannath Temple at Puri. His integration of Kalinga and Utkala into a unified empire laid the

foundation for the present-day state of Odisha," said Adhikari.

The heritage enthusiasts and history lovers who participated in the event, appealed to the governments of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to officially recognise and celebrate this day. They also urged the authorities to erect statues of King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva at prominent locations such as Puri, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, and Mukhalingam as a tribute to his contributions to the region's history and culture.

Prabhakar Mahodaya, the executive officer of Sri Mukhalingam Temple, assured the attendees that such celebrations would continue in the future, further promoting awareness and appreciation of the historical and cultural significance of the Eastern Ganga dynasty.

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WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	33.6°	32.8°
Min Temp	21.4°	17.2°
Humidity	85%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST mainly clear sky later.		

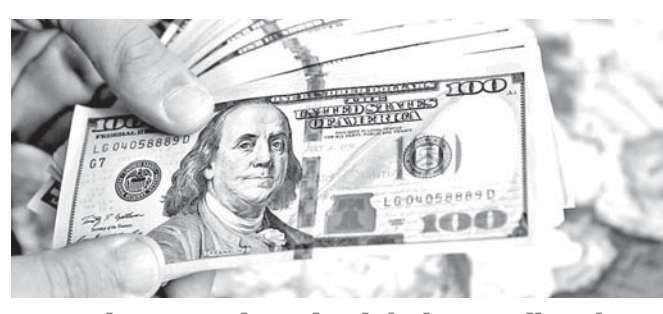
MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	75996.86	▲ 57.65
NIFTY	22959.50	▲ 30.25
DOLLAR	86.95	▲ 0.15
EURO	91.2250	▲ 0.18
GOLD	₹84,738	▲ ₹407
SILVER	₹95,384	▼ ₹29

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FOCUS CURRENCY

THE DOLLAR HEGEMONY



Whenever there is global turmoil and uncertainty, investors rush to dollar assets, causing outflows from developing countries, and leading to a fall of their currencies

enjoyed by the US due to the dominant status of its currency. To add to the privileges of dominance is another favourable factor, and it is that ninety per cent of all foreign exchange transactions worldwide are in dollars. It is the most preferred invoicing currency. Trump has already warned BRICS nations not to transact in non-dollar currencies. The preference for dollar invoicing is due to its inherent stability. And the belief that America will never default on its debt. This is tested from time to time, since the law and constitution does not allow the US government to pile on unlimited debt. It is currently about \$33 trillion. But the debt ceiling cannot be breached unless approved by the Congress, which sometimes leads to brinkmanship between the ruling party and the opposition. But invariably the debt ceiling is relaxed, until the new limit has to be relaxed again in a few years.

Whenever there is global turmoil and uncertainty, investors rush to dollar assets, causing outflows from developing countries, and leading to a fall of their currencies. This has happened to India as well. But the real reason is that implicitly the world has faith in the stability of America's financial system, its judiciary in resolving disputes speedily and fairly, its capability of resilience, and the US government's way of not passing too many irrational and isolationist laws and policies. Of course, none of this can be taken for granted. The rise of India and China in the twenty first century will surely challenge the hegemony of the dollar. India's rise is benign, while China's rise threatens the West. Their evolving bilateral relationship will surely shape world trajectory as well as affect the dollar's dominance. But for now, the dollar is king.

The writer is a noted economist.
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with the US, and it is this that Trump wants to reduce. The defence purchases of F35 fighters and other combat vehicles are on the cards, partly to assuage US sentiment.

Some of Trump's wishes seem contradictory. On one hand his desire to reduce the trade deficit and make the dollar cheaper is to increase American exports and jobs. On the other hand, he wants the dollar to remain the strong and dominant currency in the world. He threatened the BRICS nations, of which India is a member, that if they contemplate trading among themselves in non-dollar currencies, then he will impose 100 per cent import tariffs on them. You can't simultaneously ask for a weak and a strong dollar. The fact is that the dollar index, measured as DXY is close to being the highest it has been in the past twenty-five years.

which indicate less than enthusiastic support for some of Trump policies, especially on downsizing government and cutting benefits.

Yet what is the real source of dollar's hegemonic status? The first is simply that there is no other candidate currency. Neither the pound sterling in terminal decline since the World War II, nor the euro born in 1999, nor the Chinese yuan are anywhere close to the dollar's unmatched supremacy. In terms of global trade, the US share is barely 11 per cent. But the US economy makes up one fourth of the global GDP and of course is the largest. Trump is upset about the trade deficit which is close to \$1 trillion. Mirroring that, the Chinese have a trade surplus of \$1 trillion, one third of which is with the US. Many countries including India have a trade surplus with America. So, what happens to all the surplus dollars held by export surplus countries? It is in the form of exchange reserves. A whopping sixty per cent of all reserves worldwide are held in dollar assets, i.e. US government issued bonds. So that is the real reason for dollar hegemony. It is due to the strong desire of the rest of the world to hold dollars, or dollar assets. This creates a strong demand for US bonds, which reduces the cost of borrowing for the US government. This is the enormous privilege

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So, what is the real source of the dollar strength and its hegemony? Is it due to Trump's political support and popularity? Or his enjoying the governance trifecta? Not really. Incidentally, the trifecta is still not good enough because in the upper house, the Senate, the bills need a 60 per cent majority to be passed as law which Trump does not have at this stage. There are some murmurs from within the Republican Party,

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Ajit Ranade

A WHOPPING SIXTY PER CENT OF ALL RESERVES WORLDWIDE ARE HELD IN DOLLAR ASSETS

US President Donald Trump's electoral victory last November was decisive and sweeping. He now has majority control over both legislative houses, i.e. the lower house called the Congress or House of Representatives, and the upper house called the Senate. Sometimes both houses together are also misleadingly called the "Congress". He has of course the control of the White House, and this is called a "governing trifecta," which is a sweet spot. He has already exercised his increased influence in the passage of 64 executive orders in barely three weeks of assuming office for the second time. Unlike his first term which began in 2017, he also has a two-third majority of the conservative judiciary. This might prove crucial if he tries to deliver on his promise of no birthright citizenship. This cannot be merely done by an executive order, and might require a constitutional amendment, which might in turn be challenged in the Supreme Court. The apex court could come to Trump's aid, although this is not guaranteed in this case of citizenship debate.

Trump's popularity is also supposed to be ten per cent higher than what he got from his voters, which means that even some of those who did not vote for him now support his policies. These policies cover tariff action against trading partners, stricter action against illegal aliens, withdrawing from expensive wars in distant theatres and making NATO allies pay more, and finally reducing the size of the government.

The President has threatened that America will charge reciprocal import tariffs, as a tit for tat strategy. In response, India has immediately reduced import duty on American bourbon whiskey from 150 to 100 per cent. The duty on Harley Davidson motorcycles was reduced earlier. India enjoys a trade surplus of about \$30 billion

SPECTRUM CLIMATE FINANCE

Getting the green investment

The devastating effects of global warming are unfolding before our eyes. Uncontrollable fires ravage the Amazon. Rising sea levels threaten to submerge Pacific islands. Droughts and floods in Africa, and hurricanes and typhoons in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia, are increasing in frequency and intensity. And yet the countries most affected by the climate crisis – nearly all of them in the Global South – have some of the lowest greenhouse-gas emissions worldwide. Helping these vulnerable countries build resilience is no longer an option; it is an imperative.

The COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, concluded with the adoption of a New Collective Quantified Goal, with developed countries pledging at least \$300 billion annually, and all actors agreeing to scale up public and private finance for developing countries to \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035. While the Baku agreement has understandably been met with skepticism, we have no choice but to redouble our efforts to achieve these goals.

Public development banks – especially the 27 members of

the International Development Finance Club (IDFC, which we co-chair), but also those in the broader Finance in Common network – will play an essential role in reaching these targets.

Increasing green investment while considering the needs of low- and middle-income countries is no longer sufficient. Instead, the aim should be to redirect all financial flows toward the green transition within the framework of the Sharm el-Sheikh dialogue.

Achieving this goal will require overcoming three obstacles. First, we must stop funding projects and sectors that exacerbate global warming – a gargantuan task, given that the majority of financial flows remain incompatible with the Paris agreement's objectives. Second, we must start responding to the needs of the most climate-vulnerable countries, where adaptation and mitigation efforts are chronically underfunded. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we need a radical overhaul of the global financial architecture.

This systemic transformation requires close collaboration between public and private actors. Public devel-

opment banks have an important role to play here. They are uniquely positioned to catalyze change by influencing public policies, strengthening local capacities, supporting sectoral transitions, and creating the conditions to mobilize private capital. Such financing is crucial for narrowing the gap between the commitments announced in Baku and the huge investment needed for climate-change mitigation and adaptation efforts in the developing world.

While IDFC members have invested significantly in the global energy transition, their ability to transform national and regional financial systems may be their greatest asset. Supporting the development of ambitious national climate agendas, helping businesses and communities execute their transition plans, and strengthening the capacity of local financial institutions will have a larger multiplier effect than any amount of direct spending.

To unlock this potential, several conditions must be met. First, all public development banks' mandates and business models must be strengthened to reflect these objectives. And

whether these banks are multilateral, national, or subnational, they need the means to act, which requires expanding their capital base and facilitating their access to concessional resources. Last, but certainly not least, we must develop a global accountability framework that classifies financial flows according to their contribution to the green economic transition. Doing so would allow development banks to work in a systematic and coordinated manner.

Responding to the climate emergency requires mobilizing the entire financial system. Public development banks are leading the way on this front, but they cannot devise comprehensive frameworks and set ambitious objectives by themselves. Solutions exist; we must implement them before time runs out.

Serge Ekué is President of the West African Development Bank. Javier Díaz Fajardo is CEO of Bancoldex, Colombia's state-owned entrepreneurial development bank.
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Indo-Bangla Vision



True knowledge is not attained by thinking. It is what you are; it is what you become.
SRI AUROBINDO

There is no reason to be overjoyed, as many in India feel, over US President Donald Trump's remark during a joint Press conference he held with Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he left the current state of affairs to be dealt with by the latter. This is more so after Trump's right hand man, Elon Musk, sounded so enthusiastic over an invitation extended to him by the chief adviser of Bangladesh's caretaker government Mohammad Yunus to visit his country and invest in his Starlink project. In fact, what Trump said was equivocation at its best. He said: "I will leave Bangladesh to the Prime Minister (Modi)." In simpler words it could imply that India is left alone to deal with its problem and not expect any help from the US. Trump was asked a question on his administration's stance on the ongoing turmoil in Bangladesh and the atrocities on minority Hindus and Christians in the country. His assertion that the US "deep state" was not interfering in the affairs of Bangladesh, as alleged by the ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, does mean much as he is restating his Hands Off policy. To those, who believe what Trump meant was that India is free to act whichever way it thinks fit vis-à-vis Bangladesh, are taking a too charitable view of Trump's remark.

In fact, Yunus' attempt to bring Musk's satellite internet service to his country is a well-calculated strategic move to seek US support to his fragile interim government. Musk has a highly visible White House role as President Trump's right-hand man, where his meetings with foreign leaders have raised questions over the blurring of his official roles and business interests. During their lengthy video call, Musk and Yunus discussed the possibility of bringing Starlink, which provides internet access to remote locations by low Earth orbiting satellites, to Bangladesh. They emphasised that the service would create new opportunities for "Bangladesh's enterprising youth, rural and vulnerable women, and remote communities," a statement from Yunus' media office said.

The unrest in Bangladesh and the subsequent attacks on minority Hindus were among the topics discussed by Modi with Trump. But, at the Press conference, Trump chose his words carefully to actually mean the US would not intervene in the political landscape in Bangladesh, which has undergone several changes following violent student-led unrest, leading to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government. The most likely interpretation of his remark that he would leave the matter of Bangladesh to India would be that instead of him, Modi should take a call on the issue, since he does wish to get involved. In fact, the issue did not feature in the joint statement at all.

The upshot of this is that Trump has no intention to be convinced by Modi to take a strong public stance critical of Bangladesh's interim government. This is music in the ears of Bangladesh since it is in tune with the enthusiasm shown by Musk to invest in Bangladesh.

Yunus and his colleagues have their jobs cut out. There is an increasingly urgent need for them to reach a consensus on the overall reform package and timing of elections. The release of a UN report on the current state of affairs in Bangladesh stating the Opposition voice is being ruthlessly suppressed has already put Bangladesh in a spot of bother.

Significantly, Modi avoided addressing the issue and did not say anything about Bangladesh. He seemed to have realized about Trump's desire not to be dragged in to that issue and therefore thought it expedient to keep mum on the Bangladesh question. Observers would notice the earlier Trump-Modi warmth has completely evaporated in today's Trump 2.0 version.

Six months after the ouster of the Hasina government, Bangladesh is yet to have a stable political order. The lawlessness across the country was once again in full view on 5 February when a mob demolished the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman following reports of Hasina, who is in exile in India, planning to broadcast a speech on the day. Protesters circulated their plan online to destroy the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum. Using excavators and bulldozers, they unleashed the attack on the building in the presence of security personnel, where the father of the nation was assassinated in 1975.

The complicity of the care-taker government in the vandalism was clear. One reason for the present administrators' confidence could be that they can get away with their failures to tame the fundamentalists at work in Bangladesh is the overt and covert support he is getting from the US, notwithstanding Trump's denial. If the future of Bangladesh gets murkier which it seems is very likely, it will be a constant reminder of the failure of India's foreign policy and also a persistent security threat.

WISDOM CORNER

There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.
JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

The secret of life is to have a task, something you devote your entire life to, something you bring everything to, every minute of the day for the rest of your life. And the most important thing is, it must be something you cannot possibly do.
HENRY MOORE

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.
DESMOND TUTU

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1836:** Hindu spiritual leader Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who founded a school of thought that united diverse mystical traditions into a single belief system, was born in Hooghly, Bengal state, India. His disciple and successor Narendranath Datta became the world-famous Swami Vivekananda and helped establish the Ramakrishna Order.
- 1930:** Pluto discovered by Clyde Tombaugh. Using a 13-inch (33-cm) telescope at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, Clyde W. Tombaugh, a 24-year-old American with no formal training in astronomy, discovered the dwarf planet Pluto this day in 1930.
- 1943:** The Gestapo arrests German resistance fighter Sophie Scholl and other White Rose activists. 21-year-old student Scholl and her fellow campaigners were executed for having distributed flyers criticizing the Nazi regime.
- 1977:** The Space Shuttle takes off on its maiden flight. The "Enterprise" was mounted on a Boeing 747 Shuttle Carrier Aircraft; the first free flight took place on August 12, 1977

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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



Churn in Europe

Sir, This refers to "Transatlantic D. Rift," Orissa POST, February 17. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's call, too, for raising an "armed forces of Europe" is an acknowledgment that the European continent may no longer be the beneficiary of security guarantees provided by the US since the end of World War II, especially against the backdrop of emerging signals that President Donald Trump is intent on cutting a deal with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. Zelenskyy was only reflecting a sentiment following comments by US vice president JD Vance at the Munich Security Conference that the old relationship between Europe and the US is "ending" and the region "needs to adjust to that." Besides the Russian-Ukraine war and Trump's politics of demanding that NATO members bear more security expenses, his recent conversations with Putin and his promise of ending the war without giving Kyiv a central role in the negotiations, as well as Vance's attacks on what are seen as long-standing European values reflect the churn and geopolitical flux in Europe, which is experiencing major changes for the first time since the Cold War's end. An inward-looking US poses multiple questions to the idea of a united Europe and should prompt the continent's leaders to forge a more independent path for their security and stability..

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Ghastly incident

Sir, This refers to the news report "New Delhi Railway Station stampede toll reaches 18," Orissa POST, February 17. The ghastly incident at New Delhi Railway Station speaks volumes of the fact that there was no proper planning and effective management to control a huge number of passengers who were jostling for catching trains. The situation got out of control when the Railway administration suddenly changed the scheduled platform. There was no adequate number of Railway police to manage the crowd. Will the Railway Minister take the moral responsibility for failing to ensure safety and security of pilgrims?

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA



Foreign Minister Dr S Jaishankar must clarify. Since Friday, two more US Military flights have landed in India carrying deported Indians. On both flights, Indians were put in handcuffs and leg shackles. Some reports claim that Sikhs were not even allowed to wear their turbans



BGB DELEGATION LANDS IN DELHI A high-level delegation of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), the border guarding force of the neighbouring country, reached Delhi Monday for bi-lateral talks on issues like fencing and attacks on BSF personnel and civilians by Bangladeshi miscreants, officials said

Next Delhi CM likely to take oath Feb 20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 17: The next chief minister of Delhi along with the council of ministers is likely to take oath at the Ram-lila Maidan February 20, party sources said Monday. The oath ceremony is likely to be held around 4.30 pm February 20, which is expected to be attended by top BJP leaders, including chief ministers from the party-ruled states, the sources said. A BJP legislative party meeting, which was to be held Monday, has been postponed to most likely Wednesday when the party will finalise on the candidate for the chief minister's post, the sources said. The details of the oath ceremony will be discussed at the meeting, they added. The BJP returned to power in Delhi after more than 26 years by sweeping the recent Assembly polls, the results of which were announced February 8.

Waste disposal at Pithampur comes under SC scanner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 17: The disposal of hazardous waste of 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, which claimed 5,479 lives, near Indore came under the Supreme Court's scanner Monday which sought responses from the Centre, Madhya Pradesh and its pollution control board. The hazardous waste of around 377 tonnes of the now defunct Union Carbide factory was shifted to Pithampur industrial area in Dhar district, 250 km away from Bhopal and around 30 km from Indore. The top court took note of a plea raising the seminal issue of right to health and the risk to the inhabitants of nearby areas, including the city of Indore. Highly toxic gas methyl isocyanate (MIC) leaked from the Union Carbide factory during the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, eventually killing 5,479 people and maiming more than five lakh others. It is considered to be among the worst industrial disasters in the world. A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih agreed to hear a plea challenging the December 3, 2024 and January 6 this year orders of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

'NOT PARTY'S VIEWS' Cong distances from Pitroda's China remark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Congress says China 'remains our foremost foreign policy, external security, as well as economic challenge'

New Delhi, Feb 17: The Congress Monday distanced itself from its leader Sam Pitroda's remarks on China, saying they are not the views of the party and that China remains India's foremost external security and economic challenge. Pitroda, chairman of Indian Overseas Congress, was reported to have said that he does not understand the threat India faces from China, claiming that it is often blown out of proportion. "The views reportedly expressed by Mr Sam Pitroda on China are most definitely NOT the views of the Indian National Congress," AICC general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X. "China remains our foremost foreign policy, external security, as well as economic challenge. The INC has repeatedly raised questions on the Modi Govt's approach to China, including the PM's public clean chit to it June 19, 2020. Our most recent statement on China was 28th January, 2025," he said. "It is also extremely regrettable that Parliament is being denied an opportunity to discuss the situation and express a collective resolve to meet these challenges effectively," Ramesh said. The BJP has attacked the Congress over Pitroda's remarks, saying that what Pitroda has said symbolises the mindset of the Congress and said Pitroda's remarks are in line with its leaders' statements in support of China



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ties with China at a time when there are still many unanswered questions about the disengagement agreement of October 21, 2024. The statement had come after New Delhi and Beijing agreed to restore commercial and cultural ties including direct flights between the two capitals, resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, liberalised visa regime and other measures following the recent Beijing visit of the foreign secretary. "The Modi government has not yet satisfactorily explained to the country why this is the right time to normalise relations with China." "Ever since the Chinese occupied 2,000 sq km of territory in eastern Ladakh that had been accessed by Indian patrols until May 2020, the people and the Armed Forces of the country have held that the Government of India must insist on a restoration of the status quo ante as it stood prior to that," Ramesh had said in his statement, while posing a set of questions to the government.

Residents jolted as quake hits Delhi-NCR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 17: Many Delhi residents were startled by strong jolts after a 4.0-magnitude earthquake struck the national capital and adjoining regions Monday morning. The strong tremors triggered by the earthquake prompted several residents of Delhi to rush out of their homes. Anil Kumar, a resident of Sita Ram Bazar, said he never experienced such tremors before. "I felt a strong vibration and got scared. My wife and I immediately woke up our child and rushed out side," Kumar said. "I am a heart patient, so I panicked even more," he added. The epicentre of the quake was in the Jheel Park area of Dhaula Kuan and there were some reports of people hearing a loud sound as the ground shook. Another Sita Ram Bazar resident, Sundar Lal, initially mis-



26/11 TERROR ATTACK Rana became part of conspiracy in 2005

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 17: Tahawwur Hussain Rana became part of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks conspiracy in 2005 as a member of Lashkar-e-Taiba and HUUJI and was closely engaged with Pakistan-based conspirators, officials said. US President Donald Trump announced Thursday that his administration has approved Rana's extradition to India, referring to him as "one of the plotters and very evil people of the world."

The 64-year-old Rana, a Pakistan-born Canadian national and a close associate of Pakistani-American terrorist and one of the main conspirators David Coleman Headley, is serving supervised detention at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles after completing a 14-year sentence in 2023. Once extradited, Rana would be the third person to be sent on trial in India in the case after Ajmal Kasab and Zabiuddin Ansari alias Abu Jundal. In November 2012, Kasab, the lone surviving Pakistan terrorist, was hanged to death in Pune's Yerawada Jail. Rana, a member of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), had entered into a criminal conspiracy for executing the Mumbai carnage around the beginning of 2005 along with other co-conspirators based in Pakistan, as per the NIA chargesheet. Rana's role as a co-conspirator of the Mumbai terror attacks surfaced during the National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe. Arrested by the FBI October 27, 2009, Rana was chargesheeted by the NIA in 2011 under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Section 6(2) of the SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. Rana had assisted Headley in obtaining a visa for India and established 'Immigrant Law Centre' in Mumbai, which acted as a front, an official said. Rana had visited Hapur, Delhi, Agra, Kochi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai with his wife Samra Rana Akhtar between November 13 and November 21, 2008. His initial planning includes the attack on Chabad Houses located in different cities.



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The unauctioned gold ornaments shall be auctioned on subsequent working days after displaying the details on auction platform and/or auction center. In case the auction at Branch level fails, the same will be re-auctioned on 05.03.2025 at the specified district centre. If for any reason, the district level auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the district level auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir. District Centre: KENDRAPARA-COLLEGE CHAK GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, AT- BHRAMARADIA PATNA, COLLEGE CHAK, NEAR BPCL PETROL PUMP, PO+PS+DIST = KENDRAPARA, ODISHA , PIN - 754211 Branch Name: KENDRAPADA-KAKAT CHHAK GL, Taluka - Kendrapara Gold Loan A/C No. : GL23526024, GL23702978, GL24846018, GL25189295, GL25318826, GL28385024, GL29248587, GL29624212, GL29864594, GL29978022, GL30917643, GL30928490, GL31062005, GL31103898, GL31121792, GL31632967, GL31649057, GL31763516, GL31805964, GL31810507, GL32450299, GL32709224, GL32718286, GL32723788, GL32743777, GL33096377, GL33154740, GL33168999, GL33177963, GL33220383, GL33255987, GL33267461, GL33275953, GL33298543, GL33312052, GL33319201, GL33322186, GL33337402, GL33354725, GL33362627, GL33394950, GL33434105, GL33468851, GL33486879, GL33517056, GL33781038, GL33791005, GL33797306, GL33881073, GL33935511, GL33946471. Branch Name: KENDRAPARA-COLLEGE CHAK GL, Taluka - Kendrapara Gold Loan A/C No. : GL23608373, GL25760035, GL27825243, GL30842924, GL30849109, GL31859383, GL32793771, GL33155107, GL33244416, GL33264271, GL33347035, GL33515012, GL33521909, GL33541877, GL33714450, GL33744223, GL33945873. Branch Name: PATTAMUNDAL-GL - Taluka - Pattamundal Gold Loan A/C No. : GL23702012, GL26859206, GL29086820, GL29099403, GL30652843, GL30827249, GL30847880, GL31164603, GL31246062, GL31536411, GL32020631, GL32040200, GL32590901, GL32608964, GL32759523, GL32771039, GL32901403, GL32923204, GL33025689, GL33033577, GL33054982, GL33093448, GL33104317, GL33121002, GL33121238, GL33142020, GL33192116, GL33301075, GL33330990, GL33346032, GL33353000, GL33380802, GL33381629, GL33381187, GL33621336, GL33634288, GL33644187, GL33657792, GL33698715, GL33702621, GL33703358, GL33710908, GL33719197, GL33795037, GL33845734, GL33863913, GL33878545, GL33927192. 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The defaulter borrower(s) have an option to repay the entire dues including up to date interest and all applicable charges and close or regularize their loan account even after publication of this notice but in any case, till the date of auction, failing which the pledged gold ornaments will be sold and balance dues (if any) will be recovered with interest and costs. However, the defaulter loans which are closed or regularized on or after this publication, will have to bear the proportionate publication charge. Borrowers are requested to submit/update their latest bank account details to enable timely refund of excess auction proceeds, if any. For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

national

PLACES OF WORSHIP ACT 1991

SC hearing pushed to April

Pilgrim narrowly escapes death at Mathura station

SC irked over many fresh pleas on 1991 places of worship law, lists pending ones in April



es have not been issued on them, to file applications for intervention in pending ones by citing new legal grounds. Dismissing fresh petitions, on which notices were not issued yet, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar said, "The writ petitioners can file an (intervention) application rais-

legal issue that has not been raised in the pending petitions," the bench said.

It then listed the batch of petitions and cross ones pertaining to the 1991 law in the week commencing April 1 before a three-judge bench. At the outset, the CJI said, "People keep on filing fresh petitions alleging that they have raised new grounds...It will be impossible for us to deal with the petitions besides whatever has already been filed."

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave agreed to the bench and said no fresh plea be allowed on the issue.

Another senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for one of the old petitioners, raised the issue of non-filing of the response by the Centre to the petitions and said the last opportunity be given to the government for this purpose.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura (UP), Feb 17: A young pilgrim from Kanpur narrowly escaped death as he got pushed by a crowd while boarding a train at the Mathura railway station, officials said Monday.

The pushing caused him to fall unconscious on the platform, following which he was rushed to a hospital for treatment Sunday night, they said. He later said his mobile phone and money were stolen.

The incident comes close on the heels of a stampede at the New Delhi Railway Station which claimed lives of over a dozen people amid rising passenger traffic for the Maha Kumbh. Government Railway Police (GRP) in-charge Yadram Singh said here, "Rajkumar, a resident of Girsi in Kanpur and son of Bhuri Singh, fell and sustained injuries due to the pressure of the crowd while getting off the train."

Following the incident, passengers at the station immediately alerted railway staff. Rajkumar later recounted, "Someone pushed me from behind as I was stepping off the train, causing me to fall on the platform."

He suffered serious injuries to his head and arm. He also mentioned that after losing consciousness, his mobile phone and money went missing.

GRP in-charge Singh said Rajkumar is receiving treatment at the hospital and efforts are underway to locate his missing mobile phone.

Security measures were heightened at the Mathura Junction following the New Delhi Railway Station stampede Saturday night. Railway and district administration officials are on high alert due to the rising number of pilgrims travelling to Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh.

District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh and DIG Senior Superintendent of Police Shailesh Kumar Pandey conducted an inspection of the station at midnight, advising pilgrims to avoid rushing and not to believe in rumours.

New Delhi, Feb 17: Expressing displeasure over filing of several pleas on the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, the Supreme Court Monday said a three-judge bench will hear in April the pending post-notice petitions related to the 1991 law which mandates the religious character of a place to be maintained as it existed August 15, 1947.

TAKING THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Passion and politics take time, both building and spending. And wise is the one who peppers the future with salt from the past. Courting dust, after all, is no threat to the phoenix re-born from the ashes. But to do so, it must first burn.

Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (I.N.D.I.A.), the 28-party Opposition grouping, is in shambles and Rahul Gandhi's leadership of both is a train bound to nowhere. All in all, the Opposition is a basket case and the Narendra Modi-led BJP the lord and master of all that it surveys.

Doomsday prophecies, however, have been in vogue since the time of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. It began with a concerned, "who after Nehru?" to questioning his governing abilities in the aftermath of the 1962 Chinese aggression. Lal Bahadur Shastri who followed Nehru was initially laughed at for his unassuming humility but left the world wrapped in national respect and a great deal taller than his physical build. Mrs Indira Gandhi who succeeded him began her stint with the ridicule of being a 'gungi-gudiya' (dumb doll) and ended up making mincemeat of the old guard within her own party while splitting Pakistan, taking measure of the US Seventh fleet and the strong-armed, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in the Richard Nixon Presidency.

The Congress changed nomenclatures - Congress (I) - Congress (R) - as she ruthlessly did away with the old guard to infuse young blood in the ranks. Many of the veterans of today were political greenhorns of her time.



In 2014, the decline of the Congress was markedly in its failure to evaluate the threat perception emerging from Narendra Modi, particularly after he took over as chief minister of Gujarat. He had clearly made known his plans in his first meeting with his party legislators when he said "I am not here to play a five-day test match".

From day one, he locked horns with the Congress ruled Centre taking the plea that it was targeting Gujarat and defaming it, something that the Opposition ruled states are shouting themselves hoarse about today. The Congress committed the strategic blunder of playing on a field set by the wily Gujarat politician. He would pick on sundry remarks even conjure them up and then reply to it thus setting the narrative. He even added historic parallels of how injustice was done to son-of-the-soil, Vallabhbhai Patel by Nehru and the family was just continuing the tradition.

Vested interests within the Congress also colluded. Rahul Gandhi's idea of the 'Vikas Khoj' yatra by the youth congress in

Gujarat in February 2014 was a stupendous success and a step in the right direction. The membership drive of the youth wing that followed led to large scale cancellation of bogus membership and pumped youth vigour into the party. However the old guard scuttled the move which is yet to pick up momentum.

In fact, one time BJP leader Shankersinh Vaghela who had rebelled against the Keshubhai Patel government in 1995, split the party, formed his own regional outfit to come to power in Gujarat with Congress support had lots to say. Vaghela had subsequently joined the Congress and gave examples of his mounting frustration as old congressmen made things difficult for him. The "Shakti-dal" which he had successfully created as an effective counterfoil to the Bajrang Dal of the BJP had to be disbanded under pressure from the Congress old guard. The Sewa Dal, according to him, was too docile and decrepit a body to take on such a robust force.

Vaghela had demonstrated the 'force' of the Shakti dal when he had contested the by-election from Radhanpur in north Gujarat as he was required to be elected within six months of taking over as chief minister. Modi was then the BJP candidate's election-in-charge.

Rahul Gandhi's strategy of taking the Congress back to its Gandhian roots as distinct from the BJP's politics under Narendra Modi is a step in the right direction. The voting populace now has a clear choice between two distinct political entities. Secondly the decision to take the road less travelled has provided the people a chance to see things for themselves first hand. The result of the Lok Sabha elections of 2024 which has the BJP government now on regional crutches is proof enough that it is on the right path. What is needed is the ruthlessness of his grandmother to get old guard spoilers out of the way and an energetic youth cadre to fill the breach. Modi can be outwitted only through hard-nosed groundwork. The BJP is fast imbibing the ills of the Congress of old, it is time to forge a new futuristic Congress with natural baseline intelligence.

As the old saying goes 'Birth, rebirth, as the waiting die. Old love, new love sprouts wings to fly'.

IIFL FINANCE logo and contact information: CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797, Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 18.02.2025, Place: NABARANGAPUR, IIFL FINANCE LIMITED logo and signature line.

IIFL FINANCE logo and contact information: CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797, Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604.

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Date: 18.02.2025, Place: MAYURBHANJ, IIFL FINANCE LIMITED logo and signature line.

IIFL FINANCE logo and contact information: CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797, Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604.

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Date: 18.02.2025, Place: KORAPUT, IIFL FINANCE LIMITED logo and signature line.

IIFL FINANCE logo and contact information: CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797, Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604.

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Date: 18.02.2025, Place: Jharsuguda, IIFL FINANCE LIMITED logo and signature line.

international



We urge the US to ... stop emboldening and supporting Taiwan independence and avoid further damaging China-US relations and the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait

GUO JIAKUN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

WINTER BLAST BLANKETS US

Harsh weather moved west Monday as a polar vortex was expected to grip the Rockies and the northern Plains after winter storms pummelled the eastern US over the weekend, killing at least 10 people. The National Weather Service warned of "life-threatening cold" into Tuesday. Meteorologists said several states would experience the 10th and coldest polar vortex event this season



of the day quote

Hamas has guns. Someone has to confront those guys. It's not going to be American soldiers. And if the countries in the region can't figure that piece out, then Israel is going to have to do it




MARCO RUBIO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

India is a major maritime nation with a rich seafaring heritage. I look forward to engaging with India's maritime leaders and community on how we can work together to upskill and strengthen the global maritime workforce, unlock green growth and jobs, and make shipping more sustainable for all



ARSENIO DOMINGUEZ | SECRETARY-GENERAL, IMO

The economy and national values were destroyed and democracy was stabbed in the back by a person (Imran Khan)



NAWAZ SHARIF | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

Hearing against DOGE

Wilmington: A US judge has scheduled a rare holiday court hearing Monday, in a case brought by Democratic state attorneys general seeking to protect major federal agencies from Elon Musk's government cost-cutting team known as DOGE. US District Judge Tanya Chutkan in Washington, DC, Sunday called the hearing for Monday, the Presidents Day holiday when federal courts are closed. She did not say why she ordered the hearing, but on Friday she heard arguments by 13 Democratic state attorneys general for a temporary restraining order that would bar Musk's DOGE, or Department of Government Efficiency, team from accessing information systems at several government agencies including the departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Energy, Transportation, Commerce, and the Office of Personnel Management.

170 Pakistanis deported

Islamabad: Nearly 170 Pakistanis have been deported from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries over the last two days, according to a media report Sunday. Saudi authorities deported 94 Pakistanis involved in begging, drug dealing, illegal residence, working without a sponsor, absconding from employment, and violating contractual agreements. Geo News reported quoting immigration sources. Some of them were also blacklisted. Another 39 Pakistanis were deported from the UAE in the past two days after serving sentences for illegal activities and other violations. Others were deported from Oman, Thailand, Iraq, the UK, Cyprus, Indonesia, Mauritania, Qatar, and Tanzania.

41 former cops arrested

Dhaka: Police in Bangladesh have arrested 41 former officers who are among 1,059 ex-policemen accused of committing atrocities during the 2024 student-led movement that led to the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina, officials and media reports said Monday. Hasina, the Awami League leader, resigned and escaped to India August 5 last year after anti-discrimination students protests against the quota system turned into a movement and ousted her 16-year regime from power. Some 1,400 people lost their lives during the protests between July and August.

QUAKES CONTINUE

Santorini, a volcanic island in the Aegean Sea, has been shaken by tens of thousands of mild quakes since late January, forcing thousands of people to flee

Athens, Feb 17: Greece will soon set up an evacuation port on the island of Santorini to facilitate the safe escape of people in case a bigger quake hits the popular tourist destination, a Greek minister said Monday. Santorini, a volcanic island in the Aegean Sea, has been shaken by tens of thousands of mild quakes since late January, forcing thousands of people to flee, and authorities to ban construction activity, and shut

Greece to build escape port on Santorini

schools and nearby islands. No major damage has been reported but scientists have said the seismic activity was unprecedented even in a quake-prone country like Greece and have not ruled out bigger tremors. They have identified the main ferry port at the foot of a precipitous slope and other sites across Santorini as weak links, although they have not said they cannot be used in an emergency situation. Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias said Greece



will build an evacuation port for the safe docking of passenger ferries until a new port infrastructure is in place. "Along with the new port in Santorini which is being prepared, there was a decision for setting up an escape port on the part of the island where

passenger ferries would be able to dock in an emergency," he said in an interview with Greek ANT1 television. Although the tremors lessened over the weekend, local authorities extended emergency measures for a third week on Sunday and reiterated calls for people to stay away from coastal areas and steep hillsides prone to landslides. "This story is not over," Costas Papazachos, a seismology professor, and a spokesperson for the Santorini quakes told public broadcaster ERT. "Both authorities and habitants should get used to a rather unpleasant situation for some time, it could be another two, three months." Santorini took its current shape following one of the largest volcanic eruptions in history, around 1600 BC. Seismologists have said the latest seismic activity, the result of moving tectonic plates and magma, has pushed subsurface layers of the island upwards.

S'pore's PIO Oppn leader found guilty of lying in Parliament

Singapore, Feb 17: Singapore's Indian-origin Leader of the Opposition Pritam Singh was Monday fined SGD 14,000 after a district court found him guilty on two counts of lying under oath to a parliamentary committee. Singh was fined a maximum of SGD 7,000 for each of his two charges. Speaking to reporters after the hearing, the Leader of the Opposition said he will be running for the general election which is due in November this year. Deputy Principal District Judge Luke Tan convicted Singh on two charges of lying in the house relating to another lying case of a fellow former party member and MP Raeesah Khan in 2021. Singh, 48, was found to have given false testimony to a parliamentary committee that was looking into the conduct of former Workers' Party MP Raeesah Khan, who had admitted to making up a story about accompanying a sexual assault victim to the police station.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

European resolve hardens

The Europeans were holding an emergency summit in Paris to discuss their role in Ukraine's future after President Donald Trump's US administration, Kyiv's main military backer, announced it would sit down with Russia to seek an end to the three-year-old war



London, Feb 17: Britain said it was ready to send peacekeeping troops to back up any peace deal for Ukraine as European leaders gathered Monday to agree a unified strategy, while Russian and US officials prepared to meet for their own competing talks. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's comments Sunday reflect a growing realisation among European nations that they will have to play a bigger role in ensuring Ukraine's security. Washington has made clear to Europe it must stop relying on the United States for its defence. A peacekeeping force would not only raise the risk of a direct confrontation with Russia but also stretch European armies, whose stocks have been depleted by supplying Ukraine and decades of relative peace. There are also difficult questions about how some European nations, whose public finances are already groaning, will pay for such efforts. Germany said Monday it "will not shy away" from contributing ground troops in an appropriate framework in Ukraine, against which Russia launched a full-scale invasion in 2022, but that no concrete agreements

Senior US, Russian officials head for talks in Saudi sans Ukraine
 Britain, Germany could send peacekeeping troops to Ukraine
 Ukraine says it will not recognise talks held without it

We have to make sure that Europe overcomes the challenges of the future in a strong and sovereign manner and with its back straight

OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

were expected in Paris. Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson also said there was "absolutely a possibility" of sending Swedish peacekeepers, if and when there was a clear mandate. Ukraine's neighbour Poland, which has NATO's third largest army, said it would provide logistical and physical help, but not troops. Trump stunned Ukraine and European allies last week when he announced he had called Russian President Vladimir Putin, ostracised by the West, to discuss ending the war without consulting them.

US, RUSSIA TO MEET IN SAUDI
 Senior US and Russian officials will meet in Saudi Arabia Tuesday. The talks will be the highest-level in-person discussions in years between Russian and US officials and are meant to precede a meeting between Trump and Putin. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio set off for Riyadh with

Israeli strike kills Hamas' military chief in Lebanon

The strike came on the eve of the deadline for Israel's full withdrawal from southern Lebanon under the ceasefire agreement that ended the 14-month war between Israel and Hezbollah



Jerusalem, Feb 17: An Israeli drone strike in southern Lebanon Monday killed the head of Hamas' military operations in the country, Israel's army said. The Israeli military said it killed Mohammad Shaheen, the head of Hamas' operations department in Lebanon. The army accused Shaheen of "recently planning terror attacks, directed and funded by Iran, from Lebanese territory against the citizens of the state of Israel."

Hamas confirmed Shaheen's death but described him as a military commander. Footage showed a car engulfed in flames following the strike near a Lebanese army checkpoint and Sidon's municipal sports stadium. The original withdrawal deadline was in late January, but under pressure from Israel, Lebanon agreed to extend it to February 18. It remains unclear whether Israeli troops will complete their withdrawal by Tuesday. Since the ceasefire, Israel has continued airstrikes in southern and eastern Lebanon, saying it is targeting military sites containing missiles and combat equipment. Israel and Lebanon have exchanged accusations of violating the ceasefire agreement.

national security adviser Mike Waltz and Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, while the Kremlin said Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Kremlin foreign policy advisor Yuri Ushakov would take part. As fighting rages on, with Russia making slow but steady advances, Lavrov ruled out ceding any of the 20% of Ukraine it now controls. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, visiting the United Arab Emirates, dismissed the talks in Saudi Arabia. "Ukraine regards any negotiations on Ukraine without Ukraine as ones that have no result, and we cannot recognise ... any agreements about us, without us," he told reporters. Trump's Ukraine envoy, Keith Kellogg, said Saturday Europe would not have a seat at the negotiating table. Instead, Washington sent a questionnaire to European capitals to ask what they could contribute to security guarantees for Kyiv, and who was ready to deploy troops.



From left, Doreen Simpson, 87, a child evacuee, Ruth Barnwell, 100 year old former Wren, and Henry Rice, a 98 year old Normandy Vet, and Katie Ashby, founder and lead vocalist of D Day Darlings at the start of the 80-day countdown to VE Day 80 in front of a replica of a Spitfire at The Royal Albert Hall in London, Monday

Beijing prepares to benefit from Trump's disruption

Since Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election last November, policymakers in Beijing have been approaching the next four years of US-China relations with caution. They anticipate that the Trump administration will adopt a hardline stance toward China, which could intensify the ongoing trade war, technology conflict, and tensions surrounding Taiwan. The general consensus is that China needs to brace itself for challenging times ahead in its interactions with the United States. This week, Trump's decision to impose a ten percent tariff on all Chinese imports seemed to validate existing concerns. In response, China quickly announced its own tariffs on select U.S. products, along with restrictions on the export of essential minerals and an antitrust investigation into the American company Google. However, despite having various tools at its disposal, China's ability to effectively counter Washington in a tit-for-tat scenario is constrained



by the United States' significant power and the large trade deficit it holds with China. Recognizing this challenge, Chinese policymakers have been strategizing beyond mere trade war tactics since Trump's first term. Over the past three months, they have been refining their approach to anticipate, counter, and mitigate the impacts of Trump's unpredictable policies. Consequently, a comprehensive initiative to strengthen China's domestic economy and enhance its foreign relations has been quietly progressing. China's preparations roughly mirror the Biden administration's China strategy of "invest, align, and compete," which involved investing in U.S. strength, aligning with partners, and competing where necessary. Beijing's playbook for riding out the Trump years, meanwhile, focuses on making the domestic economy more resilient, reconciling with key neighbours, and deepening relationships in the global South. Trump may well be able to score

some short-term victories, but Beijing's plans look beyond him. Chinese leaders remain convinced of the country's historic destiny to rise and displace the United States as the world's preeminent power. They think that Trump's policies will undermine U.S. power and reduce U.S. global standing in the long run. And when that happens, China wants to be ready to take advantage. Fortifying the home front has been a key element of Beijing's strategy. Expecting that Trump's presidency will bring volatility in the form of trade, sanctions, and export controls, China has been introducing stimulus measures to boost the real economy and strengthen domestic consumption. On November 8, three days after the U.S. election, Beijing announced a program to distribute \$1.4 trillion to reduce local government debts over two years. The International Monetary Fund has estimated that Chinese local government debts total around \$9 trillion; addressing the problem represents a major push by the central

government to stabilize the economy and instill more confidence in the Chinese market. A month later, on December 9, Beijing pledged "more active fiscal policies and moderately loose monetary policies," which in practice entail more government spending, budgetary expansion, and lower interest rates. This marks a shift away from the belt-tightening policies that have been in place since 2010 and toward economic stimulus. In mid-December, China's Central Economic Work Conference, a key government meeting that determines the economic policy for the next year, reiterated those promises. Its recommendations included more government spending, interest rate cuts, and other policies meant to generate growth. Beijing's push for reform is not just about fixing domestic economic problems, either. It is also an effort to open up new opportunities for international trade. China is also looking to diversify its trade options. Over the past few months, statements from the Chinese

foreign and commerce ministries have referred repeatedly to China's effort to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which succeeded the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which stalled in 2017 after the United States withdrew. Beijing thus sees Trump's second term as a potential opportunity for China to expand its influence farther and faster. In this view, competition with the United States is not in itself the driving force behind China's grand strategy. It is instead one component of a larger process: China's rise and displacement of the United States as the world's leading superpower, what Xi often describes as "changes unseen in a century." Beijing assumes that Washington's own policies will dismantle the foundations of U.S. global hegemony, even if it creates a lot of turbulence for other countries in the process. China's top priority, then, is simply to weather the storm.

Business



The luxury car industry in India is like a startup which is still growing but it's growing for sure but it is still very small

BALBIR DHILLON | AUDI INDIA HEAD

GOLD RETREATS FROM ALL-TIME HIGH

Gold prices retreated from all-time level in the national capital Monday, with the precious metal declining ₹1,200 to ₹88,200 per 10 grams due to emergence of fresh selling from stockists and retailers. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had soared ₹1,300 to hit an all-time high of ₹89,400 per 10 grams on Friday.



Sensex, Nifty eke out gains in volatile session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 17: Stock markets snapped the eight-day losing run in a volatile session Monday with benchmark Sensex closing higher by 57 points on the back of value buying in blue-chip stocks HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries.

Helped by fag-end buying, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 57.65 points or 0.08 per cent to settle at 75,996.86. During the day, the barometer tanked 644.45 points or 0.84 per cent to 75,294.76.

The NSE Nifty rebounded 30.25 points or 0.13 per cent to 22,959.50.

Reports that the US and India will meet soon to decide on broad contours of a trade agreement for reducing tariffs supported buying in metal, pharma and financial shares, analysts said.

From the 30-share blue-chip pack, Bajaj Finserv, Power Grid, IndusInd Bank, Adani Ports, UltraTech Cement, HDFC Bank, Zomato and Tata Motors were among the major gainers.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, ICICI Bank, and ITC were the biggest laggards.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4,294.69 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

The total outflow by FPIs has reached ₹99,299 crore -- near ₹1 lakh crore -- in 2025 so far, data with the depositories showed. FPIs pulled out ₹21,272 crore in the first two weeks of this month, driven by global tensions after the US imposed tar-



iffs on imports. This came following a net outflow of ₹78,027 crore in January.

"Markets eked out modest gains in late recovery in a highly volatile trade, but most importantly it managed to halt the 8-session losing streak. Positive Asian and European indices aided sentiment, while gains in select banking, oil & gas, metal and power stocks helped local benchmarks recover from their early lows," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.51 per cent, while smallcap index declined 0.56 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, healthcare jumped 1.14 per cent, energy (0.89 per cent), services (0.82 per cent), metal (0.76 per cent), power (0.75 per cent), oil & gas (0.74 per cent).

Consumer Discretionary, industrials, IT, telecommunication, auto, teck and BSE Focused IT were among the laggards.

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

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.21 per cent higher at USD 74.90 a barrel.

Exports contract 2.38% in Jan

TRADE DEFICIT WIDENS TO \$23BN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 17: India's exports declined for the third month in a row in January, falling by 2.38 per cent year-on-year to USD 36.43 billion, while the trade deficit widened to USD 22.99 billion in the month.

Imports rose by 10.28 per cent year-on-year to USD 59.42 billion in January due to an increase gold shipments, according to the Commerce Ministry data.

The trade deficit was USD 21.94 billion in December and USD 16.55 billion in January last year.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told reporters that despite economic uncertainties in the world, India's exports are doing better in both goods and services sectors.

He said that sectors like electronics, pharma, rice and gems and jewellery are registering health growth rates during the month under review.

"Despite conflicts, and tariff retaliation around the world, we are doing well," Barthwal said, adding India's goods and services exports would cross



USD 800 billion in 2025-25.

Total exports were worth USD 778 billion in 2023-24.

In January, gold imports rose to USD 2.68 billion from USD 1.9 billion in the same month last year. Gold imports were USD 4.7 billion in December 2024.

Crude oil imports fell to USD 13.43 billion from USD 16.56 billion in January 2024 and USD 15.27 billion in December 2024.

The data showed that the estimated value of services exports for January 2025 was USD 38.55 billion compared to USD 31.01 billion in January 2024. Imports, on the other hand, are estimated at USD 18.22 billion compared to USD 14.84 billion

in January 2024.

On the goods front, key export sectors, including petroleum, and chemicals, have registered negative growth during the month under review.

Petroleum product shipments declined by 58.66 per cent to USD 3.56 billion last month. However, textiles, electronics, engineering, rice and marine products recorded healthy growth in January this year.

Cumulatively, during April-January this fiscal, exports rose by 1.39 per cent to USD 358.91 billion and imports by 7.43 per cent to USD 601.9 billion.

Trade deficit, the difference

between imports and exports, during the ten-month period widened to USD 242.99 billion. During the first ten months of this fiscal, petroleum product exports contracted by 24.76 per cent year-on-year to USD 53.06 billion.

Commenting on the data, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ashwani Kumar said the decline can be attributed to the volatility in commodity and metal prices, as well as on-going trade disruptions such as the tariff war and currency fluctuations.

Kumar however said this surge in imports, coupled with the widening trade deficit, has raised alarms about potential impacts on domestic industries and the overall trade balance.

"The depreciating value of the Indian rupee, which has fallen by 1.4 per cent against the US dollar since the beginning of the year, further exacerbates the nation's trade challenges," he said adding the depreciation has contributed to higher import bills, especially since India meets 90 per cent of its oil demand from overseas.

Govt may raise deposit insurance limit above ₹5L

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 17: The government is "actively considering" raising the deposit insurance limit beyond the current ₹5 lakh, a top finance ministry official said Monday.

Days after the New India Co-operative Bank scam came to light, Department of Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju announced that such a proposal is in the works.

"The point about increasing insurance... that is under active consideration. As and when the government approves, we will notify it," he told reporters at a press conference in the presence of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

He, however, declined to speak on the crisis at New India Co-operative Bank, saying the RBI is seized of the matter.

A deposit insurance claim gets triggered when a lender goes down, and over the years, the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) has paid out such claims. The body collects premiums from banks for the cover it offers, and a majority of the claims have had to be done in case of co-operative lenders.

It can be noted that following the PMC Bank scam, the DICGC insured limit was raised to ₹5 lakh from ₹1 lakh in 2020.

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said the cooperative banking sector is well regulated under the RBI's watch and termed the overall health of the sector as strong.

A crisis at one entity should not lead anybody to cast doubts on the overall sector, he added, pointing out that it is the job of the regulator to take actions against errant entities.

Western supply chain crisis: Global aerospace companies turn to India

REUTERS

Bangalore, Feb 17: Airbus, Collins Aerospace, Pratt & Whitney, and Rolls-Royce are expanding parts sourcing from India, driving growth in the country's emerging aerospace sector and pushing local firms to elevate their games, industry insiders say.

Bangalore-based Hical Technologies and JJG Aero are among those riding the wave. Hical, a supplier to Raytheon Technology and Boeing among others, aims to double revenue to 5 billion rupees (\$57.57 million) from its aerospace division in three years, said Yashas Jaiveer Shashikiran, joint managing director.

JJG Aero, also in Bangalore's industrial hub, took 12 years to hit \$2 million in revenue but soared to \$20 million in the last six, said CEO Anuj Jhunjhunwala.

The growth is part of an Asia-Pacific aerospace surge, with 2024 revenue projected to be 54% above 2019 levels, while North America and Europe remain 3% and 4% lower, according to Accenture Research.

"Earlier, we were chasing customers. Now, they are equally interested in evaluating Indian machine shops," Jhunjhunwala said, adding that contracts were being signed more quickly and onboarding processes being done much faster than ever before.

The companies produce parts for landing gear, wings, fuselage, electrical switches and motion control systems essential for flight safety and performance.

Leading Western plane and engine manufacturers, whose output has been constrained by strikes, production caps, and parts and labour shortages since the pandemic, say they



want to source more from India to meet rising demand for air travel.

"India is the best solution to supply chain challenges," Huw Morgan, senior vice president for aerospace procurement at Rolls-Royce, said last week at an industry event.

"Our engine volumes are growing at around 20% and the traditional supply chains are just not able to support it," Morgan said. "India is ... the best cost market."

The British company plans to double sourcing from India within five years.

The country is among the biggest aircraft buyers in the world, yet accounts for only 1% of the global supply chain market, according to the recently formed Aerospace India Association.

"Post-Covid, the global aerospace industry has reached an inflection point. While this shift began in 2020, aerospace is a slow-moving industry — it takes time for changes to materialise," said Aravind Melligeri of supplier Aegus.

MORE PLANES, MORE PARTS

India, the world's third-largest domestic aviation market by seats, is also among the fastest-growing, driving demand for maintenance services and parts.

Massive aircraft orders from IndiGo and Air India are

fuelling growth across the aviation ecosystem, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson told Reuters.

Although Indian firms have long supplied the \$180 billion global aerospace industry, they are now moving beyond basic manufacturing to higher-value work such as design, engineering, and system integration.

Airbus in 2024 awarded its second aircraft door contract within a year to Indian suppliers.

"India is contributing more than 1 billion euros currently in the overall Airbus supply chain and we expect to double that. Every commercial aircraft of Airbus today has some part or component that is made in India," said Michel Narchi, head of international operations at Airbus said.

INDUSTRY EFFORTS

India's civil aviation ministry held a meeting last week with industry leaders about boosting component manufacturing, said AIA Director General Srinivasan Dwarakanath. The association represents both Indian and global firms.

He said a key step towards real value addition would be the local sourcing of raw materials such as aluminium, steel, and titanium, eventually leading to certification of designs made by Indian suppliers.

The AIA estimates that India's aerospace industry will capture 10% of the global supply chain market within a decade, with the global market projected to reach \$250 billion annually by 2033.

"India also had the initial challenges of being physically farther away from the main markets of the U.S. and Europe. Engineering approvals, qualification timings, raw material sourcing — it took some time to build the ecosystem, but now India is all set," said Hical's Yashas Jaiveer.

Profit booking leading FIIs to sell Indian equities: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 17: Seeking to assuage concerns over foreign institutional investors (FII) selling Indian equities lately, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday attributed the action to profit booking.

Speaking to reporters in the financial capital, Sitharaman said the Indian economy is one where the investors are bagging better returns which leads to profit booking.

"FIIs also go out when they are able to or in a position to book profits. Indian market today, Indian economy today, has an environment in which investments are also yielding good returns and profit booking is also happening," she said.

It can be noted that FIIs have sold over ₹1.56 lakh crore of stocks since October last year, including nearly ₹1 lakh crore in 2025 itself, which has led to a sharp correction on the indices and wiping out investor wealth.

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (AGRI.), AGRIL. ENGG. DIVISION, CUTTACK
At/PO: Nayabazar, District: Cuttack-753004,
Phone No. (0671)- 2952638, E-mail Id: eeagril.cuttack@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice: Dated 13.01.2025
Bid Identification No. EE(AGRI.) Cuttack Division-07/2024-25

No.L-171: The Executive Engineer (Agril.), Agril Engg. Division, Cuttack, Odisha on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in single cover system from the eligible class of contractors through e-procurement in ONLINE MODE only in the website "www.tendersodisha.gov.in". for civil works/buildings in the district of Cuttack & Jagatsinghpur as detailed below.

Sl. No.	Nos. of the work/nature of work for which Tender invited	Approximate Estimated cost put to Tender (Excluding G.S.T.) (Rs. lakh)	Cost of Bid Documents (In Rs.)	EMD in (Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Total Six Nos. work/ Civil construction works/ Electrical works	3.36 to 4.22	Rs.2000.00	1% of the Amount Put to Tender	"C" & "D" Class Contractor	45 to 60 Days

1. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: 19.02.2025 at 10.00 AM to 28.02.2025, 5.30 PM 2. Last date/ time for receipt of bids in the portal: 28.02.2025 upto 5.30 PM. 3. Date of submission of original bid documents in Tender Box: 19.02.2025, 10.00 AM to 01.03.2025 upto 5.30 P.M. 4. Date & Time of opening of original documents & verification: 03.03.2025 at 11.00 AM. 5. Date & Time of opening of Online bids: 03.03.2025 at 2.00 PM onwards.

The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only in the e-Procurement website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in with matching class DSC. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender/ other details of the DTCN can also be seen in the said website. Authority reserves the right to reject / accept any or all of the tenders, increase/ decrease the quantities of works without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Executive Engineer (Agril.)
Agril. Engg. Division, Cuttack

OIPR-01447/11/0008/2425

ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI, KORAPUT
(DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT)
NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION
E-mail : nhmkpt@gmail.com Phone: 06852-252340
No.523/DPMU/NHM/KPT Date: 15.2.2025

TENDER CALL NOTICE
No.E-762: Sealed tenders are invited from registered suppliers/agencies for Procurement of Ophthalmic Operating Microscope. Details regarding the item, terms & conditions and formats for submission of tender may be downloaded from the website: https://koraput.odisha.gov.in. The tenders should reach the office of the undersigned by 10.03.2025 till 5.00 P.M. The tender will be opened at 11.00 A.M. on 11.03.2025. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- CDM & PHO-cum-District
Mission Director, Koraput

OIPR-10077/11/0013/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Bid Identification No. S.E. CBT (R&B) 31/2024-25
No.B-1008: charbatia@division1@gmail.com
i. Name of the Work: Civil Works-04 Nos. E1 Work-01 No.
ii. Estimated Cost : Rs.5,15,606/- to Rs.82,81,985/-
iii. Period of Completion: 01 month (30 days) to 06 months (180 days)
iv. Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal: from 10.00 AM of 18.02.2025 to 04.03.2025 upto 5.00 PM for online bidding.
v. Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the portal: 04.03.2025 upto 5.00 PM.
vi. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid: Superintendent-Engineer, Charbatia (R&B) Division, Choudwar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd./- Superintendent Engineer
Charbatia (R&B) Division
Choudwar

OIPR-34092/11/0015/2425

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI
BOIPARIGUDA, KORAPUT
E-mail-ori-boipariguda@nic.in
No.593/2025 Date: 17.02.25

TENDER CALL NOTICE
No.i-498: The Block Development Officer, Boipariguda, District-Koraput (Odisha) on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate contract tender in single cover system for the following work:-

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Amount put to Tender (In Rs.)
1	Construction of GPLF Building at Boipariguda	20,41,651/-
2	Construction of GPLF Building at Mathapada	20,43,648/-
3	Construction of GPLF Building at Kenduguda	20,43,648/-
4	Construction of GPLF Building at Pendapada	20,54,846/-
5	Construction of GPLF Building at Tentuligumma	20,67,531/-

Bid documents / DTCN will be available in the website www.koraput.nic.in from Dtd. 17.02.2025 to Dtd. 02.03.2025 (upto 5.30 PM). Bids are to be submitted online through e-tendering portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in, closing date is 02.03.2025 (upto 05.30 PM). Bid documents will be opened on dtd. 03.03.2025 at 11.00 AM in the office of the undersigned. Bid documents / DTCN and other details can be seen from the website www.koraput.nic.in

Sd./-
Block Development Officer
Boipariguda

OIPR-19157/11/0004/2425

INSUFFICIENT SNOW

Khelo India Winter Games postponed

This marks the second consecutive year that the event has faced rescheduling due to inadequate snowfall. Last year, the games had to be pushed to February after a dry January



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Feb 17: The second leg of the 5th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, scheduled to be staged in Gulmarg from February 22, has been postponed due to insufficient snowfall.

J&K Sports Council shared the development on social media Monday. "The 5th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, initially set for February 22-25, 2025, has been postponed due to insufficient snowfall. A new assessment will be conducted once snow conditions improve, and the revised update will be announced accordingly," it wrote on X.

This marks the second consecutive year that the event has faced rescheduling due to inadequate snowfall. Last year,

the games had to be pushed to February after a dry January.

The first leg of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 was held in Leh from January 23 to 27, featuring ice sports such as ice hockey and ice skating.

In the first leg, Ladakh bagged seven medals, including four gold and were followed by Tamil Nadu with five medals including three gold. Maharashtra finished with the maximum number of medals (10) but only two gold medals which they finished third. Maharashtra finished on top in KIWG 2024, winning 20 skating medals including six gold. Telangana (2 gold) finished fourth and Karnataka (1 gold) fifth in KIWG 2025.

The Khelo India Winter Games started in 2020. Almost

1000 athletes, including 306 women, took part in the inaugural edition. The participation has increased over the years. More than 1350 athletes in 2021 and 1500-plus in 2022 highlighted the growing attraction of the Games in J&K.

The 2024 iteration of KIWG saw the participation of 1200-plus participants including more than 700 athletes, 141 support staff, 113 technical officials, 250-plus volunteer and sports-specific volunteers and a total of 136 medals at stake.

This (2024) was also the first time the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India along with the Sports Authority of India managed the technical conduct of the Games in association with the National Sports Federations and Indian Olympic Association.

FIH PRO LEAGUE

INDIA LOOK TO CONTINUE WINNING MOMENTUM

Men in Blue had a woeful start by losing 1-3 to Spain in their opener but bounced back strongly to tame Spain 2-0 in the return match

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 17: Their campaign back on track after a jittery start, India will look to continue the winning momentum when they take on Paris Olympics silver medallist Germany in their next men's FIH Pro League match here Tuesday.

India had a woeful start to their home leg matches of the Pro League, losing 1-3 to Spain in their opener.

But the hosts bounced back strongly to tame Spain 2-0 in the return match Sunday.

With three points from two games, India is currently sitting in eighth place in the standings and will be desperate to climb up the table.

After a relatively off day Saturday, the Indians looked a completely different side Sunday, dominating for most part of the match and scoring two field goals through Mandeep Singh (32nd minute) and Dilpreet Singh (39th) to pocket all three points.

While the strikers shone bright in the second game, India's chief coach Craig Fulton would be a bit concerned about penalty corner conversions.

Despite winning seven penalty corners across their two games, India failed to convert a single chance.

In the absence of India captain Harmanpreet Singh, who was rested for the second match, Hockey India League star performer Jugraj Singh cut a sorry figure from set pieces.

The forwardline comprising Dilpreet, Mandeep and Sukhjeet



Singh have each netted a goal for India so far in the tournament and will be looking to add to their tally against Germany.

The Indian defence produced a much-better display in the second game, and were able to absorb pressure from the Spanish strikers.

The two sides last met during

a two-match Test series in New Delhi in October 2024, where Germany won the first game 2-0, but India bounced back in the second with a thrilling 5-3 victory.

EVES TO TAKE ON SPAIN IN DOUBLEHEADER

The Indian women's hockey team will be eager to get back to winning ways when it faces a confident Spain in the doubleheader here. After a promising start with a thrilling 3-2 victory over England in their opener, the India narrowly missed out on a bonus point in their second game, losing 2-1 in a dramatic shootout after the match ended 2-2 in regulation time. Despite showing resilience, India currently sit in eighth place in the standings with

four points from two games and will be looking to climb higher in the points table as they face a confident Spanish side Tuesday and Wednesday. India's performance against England offered glimpses of their potential, particularly in penalty corner conversions, where they scored twice from three attempts in their opening match. "Spain is a tricky team, and we know it's going to be a challenging contest. However, we are ready for the challenge," India captain Salima Tete said.

We are looking forward to our games against Germany. They are a quality team, and we know we need to bring our best performance to the field

HARMANPREET SINGH | CAPTAIN, INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Milkha Singh among top-20 finishers

Marbella: Veteran India golfer Jeev Milkha Singh overcame a double bogey to finish in the top-20 at the Marbella Staysure event on the 2025 Legends Tour here. Jeev shot a final round of 71 with four birdies, one bogey and a double bogey for a total of 3-under for 54 holes to finish T-19th Sunday. His first two rounds were 68-73. It was the opening event of the season on the Legends Tour and Jeev had finished T-28 in Trophy Hassan II on the Champions Tour PGA. Simon Griffiths produced another hugely impressive performance to win the opening event of the 2025 Legends Tour season with a 15-under total, holding off Colin Montgomerie, Miguel Angel Jimenez, Stephen Gallacher and Scott Hend in the final round.

Karan, Ramkumar bow down

Pune: Wildcard entrant Karan Singh went down in the opening round of the main draw, while Ramkumar Ramanathan fell short in the final qualifying round of the Maha Open ATP Challenger 100 Men's Tennis Championship here Monday. In the main draw matches, eighth-seeded Alexis Galarneau of Canada took 1 hour 3 minutes to beat 21-year-old Karan Singh 6-4, 6-1. The Canadian, ranked 170 in the world, broke Singh in the very first game of both sets. Even though Singh looked confident in the first set, he went down tamely in the second set. Winner of the last edition's Maha Open Challenger in Pune, Valentin Vacherot of Monaco, who went as high as 110 in ATP rankings last year, is currently placed at 201.

Thomas to retire at the end of season

London: Geraint Thomas, the former Tour de France champion who also won gold medals in track cycling for Great Britain at the Olympic Games in 2008 and '12, announced Monday that this will be his final year as a professional. Thomas, a loyal teammate with a tremendous appetite for victory who transformed into a leader in his own right over his almost two-decade career, said he will focus on the Tour this summer with Ineos Grenadiers. Aged 38, Thomas told the BBC that he will ride in support of the team's ambitions.

NATIONAL PARA ATHLETICS C'SHIP KICKS OFF 1,476 PARA-ATHLETES TO VIE FOR HONOURS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 17: Nearly 1,500 para-athletes from across India will showcase their skills when the 23rd National Para Athletics Championship begins at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here Tuesday.

This historic event, marking Chennai's first-ever hosting of the championship, will feature a record 1,476 para-athletes competing in 155 events by 30 teams, making it one of the largest para-athletics gatherings in the country.

Among the prominent athletes set to participate are Sumit Antil (Javelin), Manoj Sabapathy (Wheelchair Racing), Manoj Singaraj (Shot Put), Mariyappan Thangavelu (High Jump), Muthu Raja (Shot Put), Hokato Sema (Shot Put), Navdeep Singh (Javelin), and



Yogesh Kathuniya (Discus), among others.

"We are confident that this championship in Chennai will set new benchmarks for para-athletic competitions in India," Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) president Devendra Jhajharia said in a release.

"With an impressive 1,476 para-athletes competing in 155 events, this tournament reflects the rapid growth and increasing competitiveness of para sports in the country. With world-class facilities and a commitment to inclusivity, we are witnessing a new era for Indian para-athletics."

The event is being supported by the Tamil Nadu government and organised under the guidance of deputy chief minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, who also serves as the state minister for sports.

PCB reveals why Indian flag was missing from stadiums

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Karachi, Feb 17: A social media controversy was triggered after a video of Karachi's National Stadium surfaced, showing flags of participating nations playing in the upcoming ICC Champion's Trophy 2025, which is scheduled to be hosted by Pakistan from February 19.

The video shows that the Indian flag was purportedly not hoisted at the stadium, stirring up controversy and heated debate, criticising the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for venting out its anger against India for refusing to play Champions Trophy matches in the country.

While social media is buzzing with fans criticising Pakistan's refusal to raise the Indian flag at its stadiums, the PCB has downplayed the controversy, saying the flags of the countries who are playing in Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 have only been raised at the stadiums.

"As you know, India is not coming to Pakistan to play its matches during the ICC Champions Trophy 2025; the National Stadium in Karachi, Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium and the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore have hoisted flags of countries that are going to play at the said venues," said a PCB source to IANS.



When asked why the Indian, Bangladesh and other participating countries' flags were not there at the Karachi and Lahore stadiums, the source said, "The Indian team is going to play its matches in Dubai. Secondly, the Bangladesh team has not yet arrived in Pakistan and will be playing its first match against India in Dubai. Therefore, their flags have not been hoisted and the other nations, who have arrived here and will be playing in Pakistan... their flags are there at the stadium."

The source added that PCB does not need to give out an official statement on the matter as it is related to a social media video with an ill-intended agenda. "I

don't think PCB needs to even give an official statement on this. It's clear that the controversy is made without facts and aims to damage host Pakistan's image with fake news," the source said.

"Different stadiums in Pakistan are going to host different teams during the Champions Trophy matches. And they're hoisting their flags to welcome them", it added. It is pertinent to note that the BCCI refused to play in Pakistan due to security concerns and political tensions between the two countries, forcing the ICC to implement a hybrid model, in which India will be playing all of its Champions Trophy matches in Dubai.

2030 CWG right step towards India's goal to host 2036 Olympics: CGF CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 17: Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) CEO Katie Sadleir says hosting the 2030 CWG would be a step in the right direction for India as the country pursues the ambition of playing host to the 2036 Olympics.

Sadleir was speaking on the second day of The Times Group ET NOW Global Business Summit here Sunday.

"Hosting the Olympics would be an incredible achievement, and having the 2030 Commonwealth Games in India would

be the right step towards that goal," she said.

Her comments come in the backdrop of informal discussions between the CGF and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on the possibility of hosting the 2030 CWG.

Sadleir said she is optimistic that India would be among the top-10 performers in the Olympics in the near future.

"India's work is transformational. With the right leadership, infrastructure, and passion, India is on track to becoming one of the top 10 countries in the Olympics," she said.

Shooter Manu wins BBC Sportswoman of the Year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 17: Star Indian pistol shooter Manu Bhaker was named the BBC Indian Sports-woman of the Year Monday, following her outstanding performance at the Paris Olympics.

Manu was among five nominees for the award, alongside golfer Aditi Ashok, para shooter Avani Lekhara, India women's cricket vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, and wrestler Vinesh Phogat - each recognised for their exceptional contributions to Indian sport.

The nominees were shortlisted by an eminent jury of sports journalists and writers. Now in its fifth edition, the ISWOTY Award celebrates and honours remarkable achievements of women athletes in India.

Manu, 22, won the award for winning two bronze medals at the Paris Olympics, becoming the first Indian athlete since Independence to win multiple medals at a single Games.

She secured bronze in the 10m air pistol individual event as well as the 10m air pistol mixed team event.

In 2018, Manu made history as the youngest Indian shooter to win a World Cup gold at just 16. A recipient of the Arjuna Award, she previously won BBC's Emerging Player of the Year award in 2021.

Other award winners on the night included para archer Sheetal Devi (BBC Emerging Player of the Year), former India women's cricket captain Mithali Raj (BBC Lifetime Achievement Award), and para shooter Avani (BBC Para Sportswoman of the Year).

Manu expressed gratitude for the recognition and reflected on her journey to Olympic success.

"I thank BBC for honouring me. A few years ago, I won the Emerging Player award and now this year I got the big one. My journey was full of ups and downs," Manu said in her address.

"After Tokyo I struggled a lot, lost many events but journey didn't end, it continued. You can only write your own story and I did that in Paris. Now the journey will continue, and I would like to change the colour of the medal in Los Angeles (2028 Olympics)."