

#### VOLUME 14, ISSUE 319 I www. orissapost.com

LEISURE | P2

#### **BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 19, 2025**

NATIONAL | P9

#### 'Perverted mind': SC raps Allahbadia, saves him from arrest

#### PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 18: The Supreme Court Tuesday protected influencer Ranveer Allahbadia from arrest over his distasteful comments during a YouTube show while severely castigating him for the remarks it described as "showing a perverted mind".

Several FIRs have been filed against Allahbadia AKA BeerBiceps, who had interviewed in his podcast several top politicians and tried to influence elections through his channel, for the comment on parents and sex on comedian Samay Raina's You-Tube show "India's Got Latent".

A furious court at the outset berated Allahbadia for his 'unacceptable comments" on the show and said, "There is something dirty in his mind which has been vomited on the YouTube show."

"The words you have used will make daughters, sisters, parents and even the societv feel ashamed. It shows a perverted mind. If this is not obscenity, what is it? Why should we quash or club the FIRs against you?" asked Justice Surya Kant, who was on the bench along with Justice N Kotiswar Singh.

However, the bench agreed to the submissions of senior advocate Abhinav Chandrachud, representing the influencer. that Allahbadia be protected from arrest keeping in mind the filing of multiple FIRs on the same issue as well as the death threats against him.

"Are you defending the kind of language he has used?" Justice Surva Kant asked Chandrachud, who conceded that he himself was "disgusted".

It directed Allahbadia to deposit his passport at the Thane police station

The court also called for regulation or maintaining decency in the content of YouTube channels and social media platforms. **MORE P9** 



MIRACULOUS ESCAPE: An aircraft from Delta Airlines sits upside down on the tarmac at Toronto Pearson International airport. All 80 people on board survived, and those hurt had relatively a deprived community for which minor injuries (Report P10) I am targeted," he claimed. **P4** 

# **'Decision disrespectful'**

The appointment of the new CEC Court hearing in the matter. by the PM-led panel Monday Gandhi also presented a disnight invited sharp criticism sent note to the panel, of which from Leader of Opposition in Home Minister Amit Shah is al-Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi who so a member. said the decision was very 'dis-The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would February 19 take respectful' and 'discourteous' for the PM and Home Minister up on 'priority basis' the pleas against the appointments of the

in view of the fact that the very CEC and election commissioncomposition of the selection committee and the process is beers (ECs) under the 2023 law. ing challenged in the Supreme In a post on X, Gandhi said, "During the meeting of the Court. and is due to be heard in less than 48 hours. Meanwhile, committee to select the next Election Commissioner, I preadvocate Prashant Bhusan Tuesday informed the top court that the exclusion of the CJI



over the integrity of our electoral process," he also said in his post while sharing his dissent note. He said as the LoP, it is his duty to uphold the ideals of BR Ambedkar and the founding leaders of the nation and hold the government to account. "It is both disrespectful and discourteous for the PM and HM to have made a midnight decision to select the new CEC, when the very composition of the committee and the process is being challenged in the Supreme Court and is due to be heard in less than forty-eight

hours," he said. In his dissent note presented before the panel, Gandhi cited the speech of BR Ambedkar while speaking in the Constituent Assembly in June 1949 to discuss the setting up of an independent Election Commission, where he had warned about executive interference in India's democracy and the affairs of the Election Commission. On Tuesday, a bench of Justices Surva Kant and N Kotiswar Singh was informed by advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for an NGO, that despite the Constitution bench verdict of 2023 directing selection and appointment of the CEC and ECs through a panel, including the Chief Justice of India, the government excluded the CJI and made a 'mockery of democracy'.

# Giriraj: Odisha to become silk hub

BUSINESS | P11



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Union minister Giriraj Singh Tuesday said his ministry with the help

### Nepal may stop NOC to **Odisha-bound students**

PNN & AGENCIES

Kathmandu, Feb 18: The Nepal government Tuesday said that it may stop issuing no objection certificates (NOCs) to students who wish to study in institutes in Odisha if the situation arising from the death of a student at a Bhubaneswar university is not resolved in a "justifiable and legal way"

study in any university or edu-

cational institutions in Odisha.

the concerned people, including

the guardians and students of

the university, for observing pa-

tience and said the ministry has

formed a help desk to facilitate

effective resolution of the prob-

lems arising from the incident.

raised the issue related to the

KIIT incident in the House of

Representatives during zero

hour Tuesday. Foreign Minis-

ter Arzu Rana Deuba has said that the ministry is continuous-

ly following up on the death of

the student and the situation

Meanwhile, several MPs

The ministry also appealed to



SPORTS | P12

12 PAGE |₹5.00

**Bishnupada Sethi** 

threatens to end life

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Senior IAS officer Bishnupada Sethi

Tuesday had a heated exchange with a CBI team and threatened

to end his life for loss of name

and fame after officials of the

investigating agency searched

The CBI team reached Sethi's

official residence at 8 am in con-

nection with its probe into a ₹10

lakh bribery case. Stating that he feels "helpless" as none listens to

him being innocent in the case,

Sethi threatened to end his life.

may commit suicide in the face of harassment," Sethi told

reporters outside his residence

and in the presence of CBI of

ficials. He alleged that the CBI

team took away his mobile

phone and also searched his na-

tive village in Balasore district

The 1995 batch IAS officer also al-

leged that he was being targeted

for being a Dalit. "They think we

are cheap people as I do not have

any political support and belong to

"They also did not bring loca" police during the search," he said

"I am ready to resign and

AGENCIES

his residence.

that developed thereafter.

Nepalese

Embassy in

New Delhi

"Two senior police officers from Nepalese Embassy in Prakriti Lamsal, 20, a third-New Delhi have reached the college Tuesday morning to year B Tech (computer science) student at Kalinga Institute of learn about the situation and Industrial Technology (KIIT), to ensure safety of Nepalese allegedly died by suicide at her students." Deuba wrote on X. "The Foreign Ministry and hostel room Sunday afternoon,

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Let the cartoonist draw. We believe in democracy. Just quietly block the site that publishes my cartoon

tution bench verdict of 2023 was a 'mockery of democracy'

from the panel despite a Consti-

#### AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 18: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Tuesday said it is 'disrespectful' and 'discourteous' for the Prime Minister and Home Minister to have made a midnight decision to select the new CEC when the process of selection is being challenged in the Supreme Court. The government late Monday

night appointed Gyanesh Kumar as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), hours after the meeting of the Prime Minister-led selection committee in which the Leader of

Opposition in Lok Sabha asked the government to defer the meeting in view of the Supreme



sented a dissent note to the PM and HM, that stated: The most fundamental aspect of an independent Election Commission free from executive interference is the process of choosing the Election Commissioner and Chief Election Commissioner". "By violating the SC order and

removing the CJI from the committee, the Modi Government has exacerbated the concerns of hundreds of millions of voters of the Odisha government will develop the state as the silk hub of the country.

Addressing media persons here at the BJP state headquarters. Singh said, at present 132 metric tonnes of silk, including 131 metric tonnes of Tussar silk, is being produced in India.

The Union textiles minister said 29 out of 30 districts of Odisha are involved in silk and handicraft works and there are about 3.5 lakh artisans and handloom weavers in the state.

"After discussing with the chief secretary, we have decided to announce Odisha as a silk state, which means the highest amount of silk will be produced from the state so that India can become the largest silk producer in the world," Singh said.

**MORE P4** 

leading to KIIT SUICIDE ROW unrest on the campus.

are doing needful by keeping co-Nepal's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology ordination with the college adminin a statement said that it may istration and the Indian security suspend issuance of no objecagency in this regard," she added tion certificate (NOC) in the Meanwhile, the Infocity pofuture to students wishing to lice Tuesday handed over the

body of the student to her father Sunil Lamsal, after post mortem at AIIMS Bhubaneswar. The po lice arrested six persons, including three senior administrative officials, in connection with the girl's death and the protests that followed. They got bail from a local court later.

The Odisha government has constituted a fact-finding committee, headed by ACS, Home to determine the circumstances that led to the 20-year-old Nepalese girl's unnatural death in KIIT hostel and what prompted the institute to issue suspension letters to students who were seek ing justice. MORE P3

### Researchers link gene to origins of spoken language

study published Tuesday in the

journal Nature Communications.

the protein - called NOVA1 and

known to be crucial to brain

development - since the early

1990s. For the latest research.

scientists in his lab at New

York's Rockefeller University

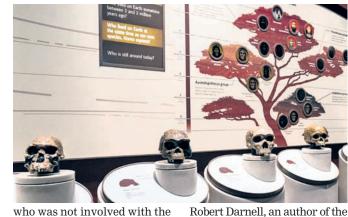
Darnell has been studying

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Feb 18: Why did humans start speaking? Scientists suggest genetics played a big role – and they say the evolution of this singular ability was key to our survival.

A new study links a particular gene to the ancient origins of spoken language, proposing that a protein variant found only in humans may have helped us communicate in a novel way. Speech allowed us to share information, coordinate activities and pass down knowledge, giving us an edge over extinct cousins like Neanderthals and Denisovans.

The new study is "a good first step to start looking at the specific genes" that may affect speech and language development, said Liza Finestack at the University of Minnesota,



who was not involved with the research. What scientists learn may someday even help people with speech problems.

The genetic variant researchers were looking at was one of a variety of genes "that contributed to the emergence of Homo sapiens as the dominant species, which we are today" said Dr

used CRISPR gene editing to replace the NOVA1 protein found in mice with the exclusively human type to test the real-life effects of the genetic variant. To their surprise, it changed the way the animals vocalised when they called out to each other. Baby mice with the human

variant squeaked differently than normal littermates when their mom came around. Adult male mice with the variant chirped differently than their normal counterparts when they saw a female in heat.

Both are settings where mice are motivated to speak. Darnell said, "and they spoke differently" with the human variant, illustrating its role in speech. This isn't the first time a gene has been linked to speech. In 2001, British scientists said they had discovered the first gene tied to a language and speech disorder.

Called FOXP2, it was referred to as the human language gene. But though FOXP2 is involved in human language, it turned out that the variant in modern humans wasn't unique to us. Later research found it was shared with Neanderthals The NOVA1 variant in modern humans, on the other hand, is found exclusively in our species. Darnell said.

The presence of a gene variant isn't the only reason people can speak. The ability also depends on things like anatomical features in the human throat and areas of the brain that work together to allow people to speak and understand language.

Darnell hopes the recent work not only helps people better understand their origins but also eventually leads to new ways to treat speech-related problems.

SHORT TAKES

#### ₹270.57cr loan fraud by **Gupta Power Infra**

New Delh: State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) Tuesday reported a fraud of ₹270.57 crore by Odishabased Gupta Power Infrastructure Ltd to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Borrowal fraud of ₹270.57 crore has been reported to the RBI in nonperforming asset (NPA) account of Gupta Power Infrastructure Ltd, PNB said in a regulatory filing. The loan was given by Station Square branch of the bank in Bhubaneswar, it said. The bank has already made provisions amounting to ₹270.57 crore, according to prescribed prudential norms. For the December quarter, PNB posted more than two-fold jump in net profit to ₹4,508 crore as against ₹2,223 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

#### **Double murder over** witchcraft suspicion

Baripada: A tribal couple was allegedly axed to death on the suspicion of practising witchcraft in a village in Mayurbhanj district, police said Tuesday. The incident took place Monday night at Kitabeda village in the district The deceased were identified as Debendra Naik. 70, and his wife Champa Naik, 48. The victims' daughter-in-law and granddaughter, however, narrowly escaped. Police have arrested one person in connection with the killing and registered a murder case, an officer said.













elsure

Actress

MUMBAI:

welcomed her

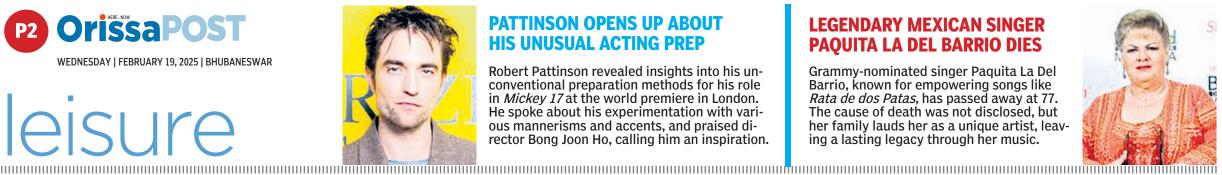
personal

#### **PATTINSON OPENS UP ABOUT** HIS UNUSUAL ACTING PREP

Robert Pattinson revealed insights into his unconventional preparation methods for his role in Mickey 17 at the world premiere in London. He spoke about his experimentation with various mannerisms and accents, and praised director Bong Joon Ho, calling him an inspiration.

#### LEGENDARY MEXICAN SINGER **PAQUITA LA DEL BARRIO DIES**

Grammy-nominated singer Paquita La Del Barrio, known for empowering songs like Rata de dos Patas, has passed away at 77. The cause of death was not disclosed, but her family lauds her as a unique artist, leaving a lasting legacy through her music.



JNE FORECAST

🗟 Ganesha Speaks.com accuracy • reliability • trust

Just grab any chance you get to demonstrate your expressive abilities, as it will fetch widespread appreciation. Something about your children may make you proud. However, Ganesha says, don't neglect the aged members of your family.

#### TAURUS

This day could be full of surprises, mostly unpleasant, fears Ganesha. Nothing is likely to turn out as planned and expected. There will

be sharp and sudden twist and turns, unex-pected shocks and setbacks all day long. You ill, however, with the grace and blessings of the Almighty, manage to stay steady and unruffled, and move ahead. By evening, this phase will pass. No serious damage will be done. Things will be back to normal.

#### GEMINI

You will be able to express your thoughts and opinions to the people you come in con-tact with today. They will also reciprocate and echo your feelings and emotions. This will give you validation and satisfaction. The day should be filled with fun and entertainment overall, says Ganesha.

#### Your career will reach a

decisive moment. You can expect a transfer, promotion or pay hike. Alongside your responsibilities will also increase. A chance of new job is also indicated. You can reject a tempting job offer.

Your expenses may shoot through the roof if you do not pay careful attention to

your finances. You will want to splurge on expensive perfumes and clothing. You will be able to attract those of the opposite sex. You must guard against coming off as a show-off. Be humble and polite to everyone, says Ganesha.



A mixture of the desirable and undesirable is on the cards today. Sentimental people will tend to think of you as a ittle immature. However, your sense of humour will be as robust as ever and you will never fall short of jokes. Ganesha advises you to pursue spiritually enriching activities in order to properly channelise your abilities.

### LIBRA

The whole point of being a Libran is that you always have the tendency to be two separate things put together on a pair of scales that somehow balance. Ganesha feels that today, you bring to the scales



### **PARINEETI'S SURPRISING** REVELATION

MUMBAI: Actress Parineeti Chopra recently made a surprising revelation about who truly holds a special place in her life.

While her husband and politician Raghav Chadha is undoubtedly important to her, it turns out there's someone else who's captured her heart in a different way. On Tuesday, the Kesari actress reposted a hilarious reel on her Instagram stories showcasing a little girl's over-the-top excitement when her mother brings her pizza.

The video, which is accompanied by the caption "When pizza is life," perfectly captures the pure joy and enthusiasm of the child as she sees her favorite meal. Parineeti reposted the clip with the playful caption, "Exclusive footage of me," humorously relating to the girl's excitement. The Ishaqzaade actress, who is currently in Delhi, also posted glimpses from her stay in the national capital.

A few days ago, Parineeti, an avid social media user. had shared a sneak peek into her pre-shoot routine. The actress posted a selfie from her makeup room as she prepared for an upcoming shoot. In the selfie, Parineeti was seen sporting a comfy t-shirt while capturing the moment in her mirror. Along with the image,

Radhika Apte, known for films like Pad Radhika's Man, Andhadhun, BAFTA post draws flak a candid moment

about motherhood, which drew flak Radhika returned to

work soon after giving birth and attended the BAFTAs, sharing glamorous pictures from the event. However, it was her behind-the-scenes post that grabbed attention. Dressed in casual attire, she was seen pumping breast milk with one hand while holding a glass of champagne in the other. She captioned the post humorously: "And now my BAFTAs reality (laughing face emoji). I have to thank Natasha @tashtash07 for making it possible for me to attend the BAF-TAs. She scheduled the itinerary around my breast-pumping timings. She not only accompanied me to the washroom to express milk but, more importantly, brought me champagne in the loo."

While many applauded her for shedding light on the struggles of new motherhood, others were quick to criticise her for drinking while pumping. One user worte, 'Are you kidding...you cannot have alcohol and breastfeed at the same time', another one added, 'It is sad that you are drinking while breastfeeding.'

UTTAR PURUSHA'S NATYA PARIKRAMA – DAY II



Artistes of Bhubaneswar-based theatre troupe Uttar Purusha performed the Odia play Panchanana Upakhyana on the second evening of a three-day event at Rabindra Mandap, Tuesday. Translated from a Bengali play by Amit Maitra and Sombhu Mitra, it was translated into Odia by Annada Shankar Roy. The comedy was directed by the host troupe's president, Prasanna Mishra. Popular theatre and film actor Choudhury Jayprakash Das was

# **'Now is the** best time to be an actor'

HYDERABAD: Malavika Mohanan, who has been dabbling between films across multiple film industries with films like Yudhraa (Hindi) and Thangalaan (Tamil), has showcased how she can effortlessly adapt to different storytelling styles and audiences. Her journey reflects the evolving nature of Indian cinema, where language is no longer a barrier but an opportunity to reach wider audiences.

At a time when South Indian actresses are also bagging some major Bollywood films as well, Malavika has shared her thoughts

working at a Pan-India level. "I have been fortunate enough to have been surrounded by some lovely people and talents, and I also feel like right now is one of the best times to be an actor, especially a female actor, because my last release was in Hindi, my current projects are in Tamil and Telugu, and I'm about to start one in Malayalam too. I am working with some of the best people in each industry, and

feel like a film will have its audience because of OTT. social media, because of the reach that we have today. If it's a good film, it doesn't what matter language it is, people will end up watching it," the actress said.

on

the stability of being your own master and servant. It's a fine balance to maintain.

#### **SCORPIO**

Despite a secured job and a harmonious home environment, you are still looking for something else. Long-term, financial security keeps bothering you. And your worries are solved to some extent as unexpected monetary gains are on cards today, predicts Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Your stars are mighty today and plan a pleasant day for you, says Ganesha. You are a thorough professional and garner compliments for this attitude. You also have a knack to sail through all the troubles at work. This approach of yours is sure to win hearts of people and add some names in your friends' list

#### CAPRICORN

You love the people around you unconditionally and such emotions will be more visible

now than ever. Today, you will want to keep yourself surrounded with your loved ones, make them happy and have a good time, says Ganesha. Your honesty and sincerity will give depth to your existing relationships.

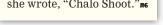
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#### **AQUARIUS**

If you're stuck indoors today, make the most of it. There's always carrom, checkers, chess and partying! Shake yourself a bit, and you'll come up with creative ways to spend a leisurely day. You'll find that either way, life is wonderful, says Ganesha.

#### PISCES

You are not by nature ill-tempered or jealous. However, you will need to be on guard against being both. today. Someone may try to sully your image or slander your name today. However, the best way to deal with provocation is not to loose your temper and to continue as usual, for things will take care of themselves soon enough, says Ganesha.



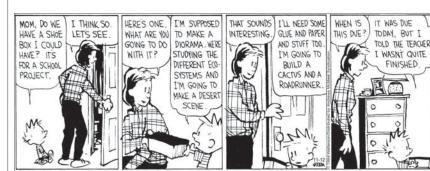
honored with the Asim Basu Samman.

PIC: MANORANJAN MISHRA





#### **CALVIN AND HOBBES**



#### BREVITY

#### WHY IS FARMER FRED WASHING THAT BEAST OF BURDEN WITH LAUNDRY DETERGENT?



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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

#### SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

S	А	Т	С	Н	Е	L		S	A	В	L	E
Т		Е		А		1		С		L		Ν
R	1	Ν	G	L	E	Т		Α	W	А	R	C
U		0		С		Т		Μ		R		L
Т	А	R	D	Υ		Е	Х	Ρ	U	Ν	G	E
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1		Е				Ρ		М				
G	0	N	D	0	L	A		Ρ	Н	А	S	E
L		Т		L		R		А		Т		L
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2	3	5	1	7	9	4	6	8
6	9	8	4	5	3	7	2	1
1	7	4	6	8	2	5	9	3
9	2	3	5	4	1	6	8	7
7	5	6	9	3	8	1	4	2
4	8	1	2	6	7	9	3	5
8	1	9	7	2	6	3	5	4
5	6	2	3	1	4	8	7	9
3	4	7	8	9	5	2	1	6







IT'S THE

MULETIDE

SEASON!





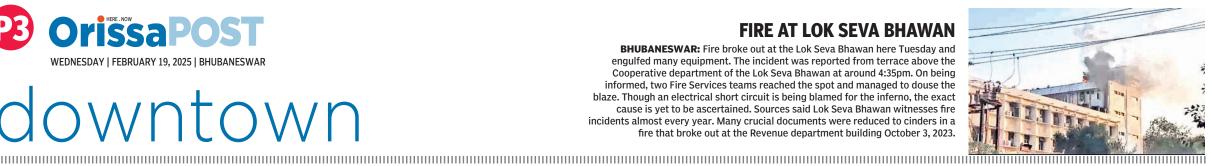
SUDOKU



### Orissapos WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 19, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR owntown

FIRE AT LOK SEVA BHAWAN

BHUBANESWAR: Fire broke out at the Lok Seva Bhawan here Tuesday and engulfed many equipment. The incident was reported from terrace above the Cooperative department of the Lok Seva Bhawan at around 4:35pm. On being informed, two Fire Services teams reached the spot and managed to douse the blaze. Though an electrical short circuit is being blamed for the inferno, the exact cause is yet to be ascertained. Sources said Lok Seva Bhawan witnesses fire incidents almost every year. Many crucial documents were reduced to cinders in a fire that broke out at the Revenue department building October 3, 2023.



Candlelight march over Lamsal death

# **MLAs raise KIIT student death in Assembly**

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Legislators cutting across party lines Tuesday expressed grief in the Assembly over the death of a Nepal student on Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) University campus here and condemned the alleged mistreatment of several other students from the neighbouring country by the private institute authorities.

The issue was raised during the Zero Hour by BJD member PK Deb who said the girl's suicide and subsequent development brought shame to the state. KIIT was accused of evicting a group of Nepalese students from their hostel, amid tension on the campus following the death of Prakriti Lamsal, a third-year BTech student of the institute.

"The incident has brought down the name of Odisha at

#### KIIT mistreated Nepali students: Prakriti's dad

The father of the Nepali student Prakriti Lamsal, whose body was found in her hostel on the KIIT campus here, Tuesday alleged that the private engineering institute "mistreated" undergraduates from the neighbouring country. His comment comes after the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) was accused of evicting a group of Nepali students from their hostel, amid tension on the campus following the death of Prakriti, a third-year BTech student of the institute. Sunil Lamsal, the father of the deceased student, reached here Tuesday morning to receive his daughter's body. The post-mortem was conducted at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar later in the day, an official said. "I have lost my daughter. Many other children are studying here. I learnt from the media that some students were driven out of their hostel. This is not right. This incident should not be repeated. These people go to Nepal and invite students to study here. The institute mistreated them," Lamsal alleged. He, however, reposed faith in the Odisha government and the police to get justice over the death of her daughter.

the international level," Deb claimed. He alleged that the incident was an outcome of the 'worsening law and order situation' under the BJP rule in the state. **Congress Legislature Party** leader Rama Chandra Kadam

also expressed concern over the alleged mistreatment of the students from Nepal. "This is an unfortunate incident and it should not be accepted by anyone," Kadam said.

Congress leader Taraprasad Bahinipati demanded a judicial probe into the incident in which the Nepalese girl was suspected to have died by suicide and several other students from the Himalayan country were allegedly assaulted by KIIT staffers.

He also threatened that he would stage a dharna in the Assembly if the CM did not order a judicial inquiry into the incident. In a statement, KIIT said it

has always been a home to students from across the world, fostering a culture of inclusivity, respect, and care. "We deeply regret the recent incident and reaffirm our commitment to the safety, dignity, and well-being of all our students, including our dear Nepali students," the institute wrote on X.

BJP MLA Babu Singh demanded the arrest of KIIT founder Achyuta Samanta. 'What has happened in KIIT is a shame for Odisha. Therefore, Samanta should be arrested,' the BJP leader said. Several other BJP MLAs also came down heavily on the institute over the Nepalese student's death.

Meanwhile, speaking outside the Assembly, Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said, "Around 100 Nepali students are presently outside Odisha following the eviction order. A few are in Patna,

while others are travelling to Nepal. The department has ordered the varsity to counsel those students, and bring them back immediately. Besides, an hourly-update from KIIT administration is being reviewed on the return status of Nepali students." He added that any report of hostility towards them would result in punitive action. "None will be spared," the minister said.

Several purported videos of Nepalese students being offered ₹2,000 to ₹2,500 by the KIIT administration made rounds in social media. In one such video, a girl is seen speaking to a KIIT official over phone, "The administration displayed utter insensitivity by evicting me from hostel when I was shivering in high fever. It takes one-two days to reach Nepal. It is impossible to return instantly.'

#### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Sever al students of KIIT University here Tuesday evening took out a candlelight rally seeking justice for Nepali student Prakriti Lamsal, who died by suicide recently due to harassment meted out to her by a student from Uttar Pradesh.

A protesting student at KIIT said, "We only want a student body that is independent of the college itself and will protect us...The faculty members of KIIT should be transparent enough to tell us as to why such incidents are happening. Since an international student was treated like this, time will come when we too will be treated like this.

Some students also vandalised the selfie point at the institute's main entrance. Bajrang Dal and CPI-M supporters also staged protests in the city seeking justice for the girl.



Bajrang Dal supporters stage protest in Bhubaneswar

The All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO Cuttack district committee al so staged a protest near College Chhak in Cuttack. Amarendra Nayak of AIDSO said, "Atith Devo Bhava tradition of India has been damaged due to this incident."

Similarly Students Federation of India (SFI), Odisha co ordinator Subhranshu Sekhar said that they will take to the streets if action is not taken against the officials who 'assaulted' the students.

Nationa

Sample Survey

### 5 get bail: Students, lawyers slam police

#### OST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Barely a few hours after five persons – two security personnel and three senior KIIT University officials - were arrested by Infocity police in connection with the brutal assault on the varsity students, a local court Tuesday granted them bail, evoking sharp reactions from the student community.

The Infocity police had booked the five under Sections 126(2) (wrongful restraint), 296 (obscene act in public), 115(2) (voluntarily hurting a person) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) - all bailable sections. The court granted them bail against a bail bond of Rs 20.000 each.

This however, did not go down well with the protesting students who claimed the police deliberately booked the accused under bailable sections despite ample evidence against them that they assaulted them mercilessly, the evidence of which is available on the internet.

The police were acting at the behest of KIIT officials," they alleged. A third-year BTech

student at the university, who wished not to be named, said, "On Monday morning, five woman constables slammed our hostel door (QC-4), and asked us to pack bags in five minutes, and leave immediately. They were assisted by KIIT staffers. When we requested them to give us some time, they remained adamant. Not only the hostel warden, but also the cops are responsible for the eviction of innocent students. While leaving the campus, the police assaulted us, and forcibly deleted videos that captured their

highhandedness.' Meanwhile, senior advocate Chittaranjan Das alleged that the police deliberately applied 'lighter' sections in order to ensure quick bail to the accused. "They should rather have charged them under Sections pertaining to attempt to murder, kidnapping. Moreover, sedition charges should also have been clubbed against them for perpetrating violence against foreign students who are our guests as claimed by Prime Min-

# **Accurate Data For Informed Policy Decisions**

Importance of CPI/ Inflation Rate

### Let us strengthen the National Statistical System

### Every month National Statistics Office (NSO),

ister Narendra Modi." he said, adding, "it seems the police are on their (university's) payroll."

#### Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation(MoSPI) releases Consumer Price Index(CPI) and Inflation rate

### **OPCC** chief launches Sankalp Padayatra

#### AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) chief Bhakta Charan Das launched a 60-km Sankalp Padayatra from Bhubaneswar to Srimandir in Puri, Tuesday.

After arriving at Biju Patnaik International Airport for the first time since being appointed state Congress president, Das received a rousing welcome from party workers and supporters. He was appointed OPCC president February 11.

From the airport, Das, along with senior party leaders and supporters, began the padavatra towards Puri. According to the schedule, he is expected to reach Puri February 20.

"The Sankalp Padayatra is being held to bring change within the Congress and in the state. It has been organised to restore the lost glory of Odisha," Das told reporters.

Former MLA Debashis Patnaik, chairman of the Sankalp Padayatra Committee, said the massive turnout at the airport indicates a strong future for the Congress in the state. The padayatra passed through Sishu Bhavan,

Rajmahal, Kalpana, and Ravi Talkies Square before reaching Lingipur Square.

After a lunch break at Lingipur, the march resumed towards Pipli, where the participants will spend the night. The following day, the march will reach Teisipur. Af-

ter lunch. they will start again and spend the night in Chandanpur on the way to Puri, he said. The padayatra will re-

February 20, stopping for lunch at Bata Mangala. In the afternoon, Das will visit Srimandir for having a darshan of the deities. After returning from the 12th century

the media, Patnaik added. Since his appointment as OPCC president, Das

has taken steps to reunite and strengthen the party's base in the state. He has urged leaders who were suspended or had left the party to return. Following his appeal. veteran Congress leader and former minister Suresh Kumar Routray has rejoined the party.

The Congress has been out of power in Odisha since 2000. Currently, the party has 14 MLAs

sume from Chandanpur

shrine, Das will address

and one MP in the state.

**Every month NSO enumerators** collect retail prices from over 50,000 retail shops across 2295 markets in India

**To Estimate CPI/ Inflation Rate** 



CPI's item basket and weights are based on the Household **Consumption Expenditure** Survey (HCES) of NSO



INTEREST RATE

One of the key inputs for the **Monetary Policy decisions** 

Provides insights on the movement of the retail prices in the country

Retailers/Shopkeepers are requested to cooperate with the enumerators of NSO and provide accurate data

Identity of the retail shops participating in the survey is kept confidential in all reports/microdata of MoSPI

> For CPI data of NSO, MoSPI, please visit cpi.mospi.gov.in, https://www.mospi.gov.in/

> > www.mospi.gov.in GolStats SMinistry of Statistics & PI











### **OrissaPOS**

WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 19, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

### owntown

### CHSE XII exams begin

Bhubaneswar: The annual Class XII examinations conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha began across the state Tuesday More than 1.14 lakh Science stream students appeared for the Odia (MIL) paper at 1,276 examination centres. The test was conducted from 10am to 1pm, a CHSE official said. "The examination was held peacefully across Odisha without any untoward incident. Only one malpractice case was detected in Mayurbhani district." he said. CCTV surveillance and tight security arrangements have heen made in all centres. The theory examination for Arts and Commerce students will commence February 19. while the theory paper examination for Vocational Studies will start February 20.

#### **CLASSIFIED** AFFIDAVIT

I, KRUSHNA

CHANDRA PADHI, S/o-Late Babana Padhi, resident of Village - Paligaon, P.O. - S. Mahada, P.S. Birmaharajpur, Dist.-Subarnapur, Odisha declare by this affidavit No.124 dt. 29.01.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as KRISHNA CHANDRA PADHI for all future purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit in the Court of Rajesh Ku. Samal, Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, dated 18.02.2025, I Nitesh Kumar Nayak, Address: Chhadabhumi, Lalsinga, P.O.-Badakodanda, Dist-Ganjam, Odisha- 761125, declare that I have changed my name from Dhoba Nayak to Nitesh Kumar Nayak. Henceforth, I shall be known as Nitesh Kumar Nayak for all purposes. Nitesh Kumar Nayak.

I Arati Roul, 49yrs., W/o-Ajaya Roul, Village-Alarpur, Post-Kotapur, P.S-Dharmasala, Dist-Jajpur, Vide Affidavit No.-75AA-034102 sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Dharmasala Dtd. 15.02.2025 declare that my son's actual name is Prabhujit Roul. But in his Aadhaar card his name has been wrongly mentioned as Provoujite Roul. This Affidavit is required

#### **CBI** raid sparks **Storm water mgmt** Sethi's protest PRESS TRUST OF INDIA plan for Capital city Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Senior IAS officer Bishnupada Sethi Tuesday accused the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) of harassment during a search at his official residence in connection with an alleged ₹10 lakh

An agreement between the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and IIT-Roorkee marks the beginning of a strategic initiative to tackle storm water challenges in the city

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: In a significant step towards addressing the growing challenges of urban flooding and waterlogging in the Capital city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roor-

kee Tuesday. The MoU signing ceremony was attended by Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, BMC Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, and representatives from IIT-Roorkee.

Speaking at the event. Minister Mahapatra emphasised the

BBSR

34.1°

21.0°

85%

Nil

VARIATION

SENSEX 75,967.39 🔶 29.47

CTC

32.8°

20.0°

81%

Nil

WEATHER

Max Temp

Min Temp

Humidity

Rainfall

INDEX

AGENCIES

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky

**MARKET WATCH** 

need for a futuristic drainage system, stating, "Bhubaneswar is a rapidly growing city, blending heritage with modernisation. To ensure its livability and resilience against urban flooding, a well-planned and technology-backed

hour.'

ment

The

2050, aimed at devel-

tem for the City.

ACT

AGENCIES

solution.

oping a sustainable and

climate-resilient drainage sys-

With rapid urbanisation and

inadequate drainage infra-

structure exacerbating storm

water issues, the new master

plan will focus on providing a

long-term, technology-driven

The project includes the

preparation of a detailed proj-

ect report (DPR) at an estimat-

ed cost of ₹8.04 crore (excluding

taxes). This study will not only

assess the current drainage sys-

the need of the agree-

paves The project includes the preparation of a detailed project report (DPR) at a plan under Vision ₹8.04 crore

tem but also propose innovative strategies for improving storm water management to prevent frequent waterlogging

The experts from IIT-Roorkee will lend their technical expertise to develop a scientific and data-driven master

> plan, ensuring that the City is better prepared to handle storm water challenges in the future. Bhu-

baneswar has been facing severe waterlog ging issues every monsoon, leading to

disruption in daily life, especially in low-lying areas. In the past, IIT-Kharagpur had conducted a drainage study that highlighted the necessity of a more extensive master plan, considering the City's fast-paced expansion.

The new plan will incorporate both short-term and long-term strategies, taking into account projected land use, population growth, and hydro-climatology for 2040, as per guidelines set by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.



bribery case

Speaking to reporters, Sethi

claimed that the CBI was un-

fairly targeting him due to his lack of political backing and

his background. "They think we are cheap people because ]

don't have political support and belong to a deprived communi-

ty," he said, emphasising that

he had always cooperated with

the agency. He mentioned that

he had already appeared before

the CBI twice in the past.



However, CBI officials present at the location denied any misconduct, asserting that the search was conducted as per legal procedures

The senior officer also ques tioned the timing of the raid, highlighting that no First Information Report (FIR) had been filed against him. "They arrived without prior notice, and there was no woman officer in the eight-member team," he said, noting that his wife was the only woman present. Sethi's wife also voiced her concerns accusing the agency of harassment and false allegations. He further denied any connections with Bridge and Roof Company (India) Limited or its arrested official. Chanchal Mukheriee.

## 'Weavers' income to be enhanced'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Union Textile Minister Giriraj Singh Tuesday said that his Ministry aims to enhance the income of the handloom weavers from ₹20,000 to ₹25,000 per month. The Centre and state will work on mission mode to achieve the target," he added.

Revealing the Central government's plan regarding Odisha, Singh said that the state will be developed as the silk hub of the country

Addressing media persons here at the BJP state headquarters, Singh said, at present 132 metric tonnes of silk, including 131 metric tonnes of Tussar silk, is being produced in India.

The Union minister said 29 out of 30 districts of Odisha are involved in silk and handicraft works and there are about 3.5 lakh artisans and handloom weavers in the state

"After discussing with the chief secretary, we have decided to announce Odisha as a silk state, which means the highest amount of silk will be produced from the state so that India can become the largest silk producer in the world," Singh said.

He further said that the union government in association with the state government and silk board will develop Odisha as a hub for silk pro duction

The BJP-ruled state will be asked to select one district for the development of the textile sector with proper market link age. The district will also be promoted as a tourism destina tion, the Union minister said

Highlighting the Union bud get for the 2025-26 fiscal, Singh said the size of the annual bud get has been enhanced from ₹16 lakh crore in 2014 to ₹51 lakh crore for FY'26.

The state of Odisha will also benefit from the budget. The railway allocation to the state has been increased from ₹838 crore in 2009-14 to ₹10,500 crore in the current budget, he point ed out.

Singh said that the number of airports in the state has al so increased to five during the tenure of the Modi government.

The Centre has decided to identify 120 new destinations to introduce air connectivity in the coming days. Sambal pur, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj, Ganiam and Kenoihar districts of Odisha are likely to benefit from this, he informed.

The Hirakud reservoir area and Satkosia in the state will be developed as major tourist destinations of the country with funding from the centre. the minister added

#### SC pulls up Odisha, others DOMESTIC VIOLENCE for not filing status reports

implementation of the domesthe payment of ₹5,000 as costs.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Prasanna B Varale to the Supreme Court mediation centre," the bench said

The bench noted Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalava, Odisha, Telangana, West Bengal and Assam were among the defaulters. "Pay cost of ₹5,000 and file it. If you don't file it, next time it will double," said Justice Nagarathna. The bench posted the matter March 25. In its December 2, 2024 order, the SC said the status report had to be filed with regard to implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, On January 17. the SC extended the time for filing of the status reports by the states and UTs till February 14. While hearing the matter in

November last year, the SC said the prayers in the petition were essentially for the implementation of the 2005 law.

While issuing notices, the SC said the obligation for the implementation of the law not only rested with the Centre but also with the respective state governments. The plea sought directions to the authorities for the proper enforcement and implementation of the provisions of the 2005 Act aside from directions for adequate appointments, notification and establishment of protection officers, service providers and shelter homes as directed under the Act. The plea also sought initiation and strict implementation of awareness campaigns related to crime against women.

### Guv encourages youth to shape India's future

tives spearheaded by the Central government to empower Kashmiri vouth in areas such as skill development, education employment, sports, and entre preneurship.

He emphasised that the KYEF symbolises the core values of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat reinforcing unity and mutual understanding across regional divides. "You are not only the future of Jammu and Kashmir but also the architects of 'Viksit

New Delhi, Feb 18: The Supreme Court Tuesday pulled up several states, including Odisha, and union territories (UTs) for not filing status reports over the tic violence law while allowing them four more weeks subject to

#### drainage system is collaboration aims at designing a ate-resilient storm wate

the way for the preparation of a comprehensive storm water management

to be produced before the concerned Aadhaar Authority for necessary correction of his name as Prabhujit Roul.

#### ଆରତୀ ରାଉଳ DEPONENT

#### LOST

I, Smt. Bishnupriya Nayak(32), W/o Gokulananda Navak. At- Court Street Digapahandi, P.S.-Digapahandi, Ganjam that my original Regd. Sale Deed vide Doct. No.2658/1998, Dt.18.08.1998 of SRO Digapahandi misplaced while moving from my Shop to Residence on dated 12.02.2025 and searched the same but did not found. Swearing this affidavit A/587/15.2.2025 to Authority concern that misplace of my documents and issue of SDE Number-12/25 in favour of me for my future.

	NIFTY	22,945.30	+	14.20	
	<b>T</b>	87.00	•	0.03	
	EURO	91.03	•	0.20	
2	GOLD	₹ <b>85,550</b>	•	₹791	
	SILVER	₹ <b>85,550</b> ₹ <b>96,064</b>	•	₹658	

took note when the petitioner's counsel said several states and UTs did not file their status reports despite the top court's direction. "The counsels for the respective states have sought some more time to file status reports. Hence, four more weeks are granted to file status reports subject to payment of cost of ₹5,000

Exchange Programme (KYEP) held at Raj Bhawan Tuesday The event, organised by

Bhubaneswar. Feb 18: Gov-

ernor Hari Babu Kambham-

pati stressed the crucial role

of youth leadership and em-

powerment in nation-building

during the 5th Kashmiri Youth

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), aimed at fostering national integration and cultural exchange among youth from different regions of the country.

speaking with women passen-

gers to assess their experiences

with potential discrimination.

ment instructions, our team

conducted a thorough inspec-

tion today. The Motor Vehicles

Act clearly states that discrim-

ination against passengers

is punishable. Penalties and

permit cancellations are pro-

Biswal said, "As per govern-

In his address to the young participants, Kambhampati highlighted the various initia-

Bharat'—a developed, inclusive and progressive India," said the Governor.

Kambhampati commended government schemes like Skill India, Startup India, and Mission Youth, which are playing a key role in shaping a better future for young people in Jammu and Kashmir.

### No road connectivity in 8,300 villages: Min Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: As many as 8,300 villages in the

state have no road connectivity, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabi Narayan Naik told the Assembly Tuesday.

In a written reply to a question by BJP legislator Tankadhar Tripathy, Naik said out of 59,971 villages in Odisha, road connectivity has been provided to 51,671 villages under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and other state-sponsored schemes in a phased manner.

"Road connectivity has not been provided to 8,300 villages as those habitations are not eligible to be covered under the schemes," the Minister said. However, the Cabinet has



recently approved the PMGSY-IV scheme, and a survey to identify unconnected villages is going on in different states, he said.

The Minister said the exact data on the number of villages and hamlets which don't have all-weather roads can be provided after the survey.

According to data provided by Naik, Koraput district topped the list of unconnected habitations with 1,374, followed by Rayagada (1,099) and Nabarangpur (641).

**State Transport** Authority conducts a thorough inspection at Cuttack Netaji **Bus Terminal** 

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack. Feb 18: Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena has issued a clear directive to the State Transport Authority (STA), emphasising that no bus staff shall discriminate against any passenger, and any disrespect towards women will be strictly dealt with.

In response, a comprehensive inspection was conducted at the Cuttack Netaji Bus Terminal



PROTECTING WOMEN'S DIGNITY IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(CNBT) Tuesday. The minister also announced plans to extend similar inspections and awareness campaigns to all bus terminals in the state.

A team led by STA Secretary Chinmayee Biswal and Deputy Transport Commissioner Biranchi Narayan Adhikari monitored over 20 buses, observing the behaviour of bus staff and

visions in such cases. Today's survey, however, revealed largely satisfactory feedback.

Minister Jena expressed his support, stating, "Passenger safety is the STA's responsibility, but when it comes to women's dignity, our govern ment is committed to proac tive measures. Any disrespect is unacceptable."

Principal Secretary Usha Padhee confirmed that such inspections will continue to ensure women's safety. Trans port Commissioner Amitabh Thakur stressed that ensuring women's dignity is a societal duty, and strict legal action will follow any mistreatment.

Bus owners and staff at CNBT welcomed the initiative, asserting they have always treated all passengers respectfully.

#### ASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CON TACT **BOOKING STATIONS** FOR OUR

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











## 'Disrespect towards women unacceptable'



#### Saintala residents fret Couple killed over witchcraft suspicion over tardy bridge work POST NEWS NETWORK ter in her lap and fled the house. After spending the night

Baripada, Feb 18: Despite

the enactment of Odisha Pre-

vention of Witch Hunting Act,

2013, sorcery and witchcraft re-

lated crimes continue unabat-

ed in state. In yet another such

shocking incident, a couple of

Dungurisahi in Kitabeda vil-

lage under Bisoi police station

of Mayurbhanj district was

bludgeoned to death allegedly

witchcraft that reportedly af-

flicted his family members'

and granddaughter, however,

as Debendra Naik, 70, and his

According to sources, ac-

cused Ajay Naik, 23, suspected

that Debendra and his wife

were practicing witchcraft,

which he believed was caus-

ing his father, Surendra Naik,

Man gets 20-yr RI

for raping minor

Sambalpur, Feb 18: A fast-track

POCSO court here Tuesday sen-

tenced a man to 20 years of rig-

orous imprisonment (RI) and slapped ₹25,000 fine on him after

convicting him of raping a minor

Additional District Judge Rohit

Lal Panda also ruled that in de-

fault of payment of the penalty, the

POST NEWS NETWORK

girl in 2020.

narrowly escaped.

wife Champa Naik, 48.

The victims' daughter-in-law

The deceased were identified

health

#### OST NEWS NETWORK

Saintala, Feb 18: Residents of this block in Bolangir district are facing loads of difficulties due to an inordinate delay in construction of a bridge over Lanth river that is expected to serve as a vital link between two prominent gram panchavats (GPs). Reports said it has been two

years since the Works department had taken up the construction work for the bridge that would connect Deng GP and Kamarlaga GP under Saintala block. However, the contractor has been delaying the work for reasons best known to him. On top of this, absence of a makeshift road has forced residents to take longer and perilous detours, adding up to 12 km to their daily commute, the reports added.

The block hosts various government offices, schools, colleges, and other institutions. and people from neighboring areas such as Kuikeda panchayat's Kamarlaga and Rengali; Gabhandapatrapali panchayat's Bhatasar and Gandapatrapali: Dharabagad panchavat's Jamkhunta, and Dharabagad village visit Saintala block



ficial works, the sources added. Likewise, the residents of Saintala, Deng, Karamatala, and Kumbhari GPs also depend on this route to reach Titilagarh.

The block administration had built a temporary road across Lanth river during winter that helped the people of these panchayats to avoid detouring 10 to 12 km. However, when the bridge construction began, the contractor conveniently violated the norm of creating a temporary access route. Repeated requests from the villagers under Deng and Kamarlaga GPs fell on deaf ears of the contractor, who said the government has not provided any guidelines on this, the lo-

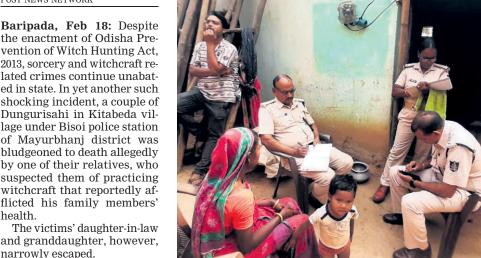
cals alleged. Meanwhile, attempts to en-

ing the construction work have been unsuccessful, as they are rarely present at the site to address the issue

Allegations have also come to the fore about use of substandard raw materials in the construction. While the rods have started rusting, sand for the construction is being lifted from below the bridge itself. Likewise, gravels are either being inadequately or improperly used.

Meanwhile, attempts to reach out to Works department SDO Dileswar Majhi over phone went unanswered. The locals have urged the administration to ensure that

the contractor and engineers are present at the site for proper execution of the work and built a temporary road there.



and infant son to suffer from frequent illnesses. Ajay went to Debendra's house around 8pm Monday and saw the latter watering his field. Following a brief conversation, Ajay suddenly attacked Debendra with the axe, killing him instantly.

### Tusker found dead in Deogarh forest



POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, Feb 18: A 12-yearold tusker died after reportedly coming in contact with live wires laid by poachers in Gariapali forest under Kundheigola forest section and Riamal forest range of Deogarh district, late Monday night.

The matter came to the fore when villagers spotted the carcass and alerted forest personnel Tuesday morning Deogarh forest ranger Niranjan Dharua and forester Tapan Nayak, along with a team, reached the spot and started

in a nearby village out of fear. Sumitra returned to her village Tuesday morning and informed her brother-in-law, Rabindra Naik, about the incident over phone. Rabindra visited the house and immediately alerted Bisoi police. Upon receiving the report

police officers, along with a forensic team and sniffer dogs reached the spot, collected blood samples and other evidence before sending the bodies to Rairangpur Hospital for post-mortem. A murder case (37/25) was registered.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the murders were driven by superstition as Ajay strongly believed that his relatives were responsible for his family's health issues. Bisoi police station in-charge Mini Bhoi Rana confirmed the details of the case and stated that further investigation is in progress.

#### Man beats father to death over money

POST NEWS NETWORK

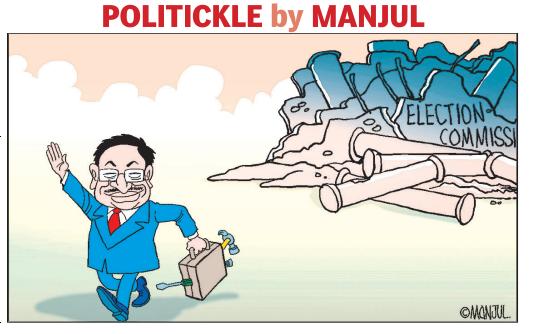
Basudevpur, Feb 18: In a shocking incident, a 65-year-old man was beaten to death by his son in Sasamalgheri village un der Kasia Marine police station in this block of Bhadrak district after the former refused to give him some money Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Dukhiram Mandal and the accused as Baidhar Mandal, 28. According to re ports, Dukhiram had given some money to Baidhar a few days ago as demanded by the latter. However, the accused son once again demanded more money Monday which was turned down by Dukhiram. Finding no other option, Baidhar turned to his mother, who also refused to give him any money.

Frustrated over the denials, Baidhar started an argument with his father Tuesday afternoon which further escalated into a major quarrel. Baidhar's anger reached its peak when he attacked Dukhiram with a shovel, leaving him severely injured and unconscious. Dukhiram was rushed to Basudevpur hospital where he succumbed to the injuries around 2pm Tuesday. As per a written complaint lodged by Anukul Mandal, another son of the de ceased, a case (24/25) was registered at Kasia Marine police station.

The police reached the village and started an investigation. "We have nabbed Baidhar from the village and taken him into custody for interrogation," Kasia Marine PS IIC Sabitri Panda said.

**DSPL - 389** 



### Sarangi inaugurates national conference at FMU

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Feb 18: A three-day National Conference on 'New Horizons of the Indian Knowledge System' was inaugurated in collaboration with the Sanskrit department of Fakir Mohan University (FMU) and its development council.

FMU Vice Chancellor Santosh Kumar Tripathy presided over the meeting which was inaugurated by Balasore MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi. Sarangi delivered an insightful lecture on India's ancient education system, medical science, the relationship between spirituality and science, Indian knowledge

traditions, the preservation of Vedic wisdom, and the status and future of Indian languages. Bhaskar Behera, chairman of PG council and Gopal Prasad Mohapatra of Sanskrit depart-

convict, identified as Nikhel Purti, 35. from Dangakhunti village under Mahulapali police station, has to undergo additional six months of RI. The judge pronounced the order after finding him guilty under Sections 376(3) and 4 of the Protection of Children from Sexu-

al Offences (POCSO) Act. The ruling further said Purti will have to undergo one year of RI under Section 506 of the IPC. All sentences will run concurrently, it said. As per Section 428 of CrPC, the time he has already spent in jail will be deducted from his sentence. According to the case diary, it was in October 23, 2020 evening when the victim, a 16-year-old girl from Mahulapali police limits, was returning home alone from her paternal uncle's residence when Purti intercepted her on a secluded forested path. Threatening to kill her, the convict forcibly took her deep into the forests where he raped her. He also threatened to kill her if she discloses the matter before anyone. Despite the threats, the survivor narrating the ordeal to her moth-



Following the murder, Ajay

entered the house, where

Champa was asleep. He also

attacked Champa with the

Terrified, the couple's daugh-

ter-in-law, Sumitra, took her

two-and-a-half-year-old daugh-

weapon.

ment at Ekamra College, Bhubaneswar attended the event as the chief speaker and a special invited guest.

er. The girl and her mother lodged a complaint at Mahulapali police station, where a case (176/2020) was registered.

an investigation. They recovered the carcass from the electric wires.

Initial findings, however,

called for a thorough probe by the divisional forest officer (DFO) to bring the truth to light.

have

revealed injuries beneath the

elephant's mouth, raising sus-

picion of either an infection

or poisoning through explo-

Later, Rourkela RCCF P

Ramaswami, Bhubaneswar

JTF members. Deogarh DFO

Magar Dhanaji Raosi, ACFs

Swadhinata Sahani, Arun

Kumar Behera, Riamal ranger

Niranjan Dharua also reached

the spot and took stock of the

situation. The carcass was

buried at the spot after veteri-

narians conducted a post-mor-

Conservationists

sive-laced bait.

tem.

### New tourist spots to boost tribal economy

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 18: The official recognition of seven attractive sites in this district as tourism destinations by the state government recently is expected to provide an impetus to the tribal economy of the district blessed with natural environment, forested hills, waterfalls, rivers, gorges, dams, and religious sites-including temples and monasteries.

The newly recognised sites include are: Tenteinali waterfalls in Telkoi block, Giridibandh waterfalls in Banspal block, Kaijoda waterfalls in Jhumpura block, Kanjhari waterfalls and Barhatipura Shiva temple in Ghatgaon block, Dargadishila, a scenic spot on the banks of the Baitarani River in Anandapur block and Dabarchua dam in Patna block

The Tourism department is optimistic about the growth of the local area and its people due to the much-awaited decision.

"This recognition will attract more tourists to the district. Development will take place in a phased manner, based on specific needs. The total number of designated tourist destinations in Keonjhar has now risen to 23. The initiative will contribute to the growth of the local area and its people," said Ramesh Chandra Nayak, assistant director of Tourism Department in Keonjhar.

The expansion of tourism

is also expected to benefit the tribal economy. "Most of these tourist spots are located in forested and tribal regions," said Alekh Chandra Patra, a retired field publicity officer.

Beyond these designated sites, Keonjhar is home to numerous other locations with natural beauty and waterfalls. "If these places are also developed, the district can experience economic and social growth while promoting sustainable tourism alongside industries like mining," said Anil Das, a professor of English at Dharanidhar University in Keonjhar.

Sanaghagara, Earlier, Badaghagara, and Khandadhar waterfalls in Banspal block, Kesharikunda on the banks of the Baitarani River in Champua block, and Gundichaghagi Waterfall on the Musal River in Ghatgaon block had already been granted tourist destination status.

Other recognised tourism sites include Handibhanga Waterfall, Murga Mahadev Temple and Waterfall in Joda block, Kanjipani Ghati, Maa Tarini Temple, and Sitabinji, a site of historical and mythological significance in Ghatgaon block.

The state government had recently written to all District Collectors, officially recognising 20 new tourist spots across the state, including the seven in Keonjhar.





# power post

#### FOCUS ASIAN POPULATION

Higher always higher! Let us never be satisfied with what is accomplished.

THE MOTHER

### India Faces Tariff War

s the impact of the recent Narendra Modi-Donald Trump meeting in the White House on India's economy is being assessed, it is significant that hours before Prime Minister Modi's visit, President Trump announced that the US would levy "reciprocal tariffs" on its trading partners. Sitting in the Oval Office, Trump explained that the US would automatically raise its own import taxes to match existing levels in other countries. Whatever countries charge the US, the latter will charge them. "No more, no less," he said. In his pugnacious way, which marks his new tariff war, he said that in almost all cases these countries are "charging us vastly more than we charge them," but those days are "over," he warned.

In fact, Modi's US visit came amidst a delicate economic moment in India. Trump spoke of India's high tariffs on American cars and other products, which are meant to protect Indian industry and create domestic jobs. India, like Mexico and Canada, will also enter negotiations to bridge its trade surplus, but this could involve concessions that could hurt Indian industry and purchases it can hardly afford. New Delhi tried to mollify the US by reducing tariffs on Harley Davidson motorbikes in the Budget. However, for Trump, that was too little, too late. The Indian government has gone out of its way to avoid tariffs in view of its fragile economic growth.

High tariffs on steel imports that the US has already announced are bound to affect Indian exports. However, the Indian economy is largely fueled by domestic consumption compared to other Asian economies. That is the deeper problem that is now starting to emerge. The government's expanded food transfer programme has supported India's bottom half and may have led to their participation in the economy. However, there is an urgent need for greater economic reform to encourage higher and more equitable growth. The government has said it expects a growth rate of about 6.7 per cent for the year ahead, indicating strong growth in the current global landscape. But the bigger concern, explain economists, is growing per capita income and better distribution of that income so that it reaches the people who need it most

The rising inequality would best be addressed through a higher tax on the super-rich and using it to support small businesses, which have been affected by compliance costs for the Goods and Services Tax and that could be simplified and lowered. Though there will be continuity in key areas of strategic partnership, including Indo-Pacific engagement and the Quad, economic discussions, trade, energy, nuclear cooperation and defense are likely to dictate the India-US agenda. Neither the optics nor the words emanating from the White House suggest that India's efforts have significantly persuaded Trump to go soft on imposing counter-tariffs and reciprocal taxes. In fact, the inhumane treatment meted out to undocumented Indian immigrants during their deportation aboard military flights only shows that the US under Trump would not make India an exception while safeguarding its economic interests. For one thing, Trump has an overwhelming majority of votes which probably makes him think he is invincible, for the time being.

The Indian economy is facing such a crisis that though there has been inequality for past decades, what is being witnessed now has not been seen since 1947. The government has sought to spur growth through strong spending on infrastructure such as roads and bridges. But the stimulus provided during the pandemic meant the government needs to tighten its belt to meet its fiscal deficit target of 4.5 percent by next year. This reduced spending could also take away from some of the boost provided by the income tax relief. Trump's appearance on the global economic scene only makes matters worse.

# **REAPING SILVER DIVIDEND** economic growth in Asia. The

opulation aging is rap idly becoming one of Asia's most daunting challenges. In 2023, 14% of the region's population was aged 60 or above, and that share is projected to swell to 25% by 2050. The proportion of the over-60 population in Japan is already 35.6% and will likely reach 43% by mid-century, while in China it is set to double, to 40%, by then. Though these countries have been graying for some time, even relatively younger ones across Asia are now experienc-



**CONCERNS THAT OLDER WORKERS ARE NOT AS PRODUCTIVE AS** THEIR YOUNGER **COUNTERPARTS** ARE

**OVERBLOWN** 

ing sharp demographic shifts. These trends can have significant economic consequences, from a shrinking labour force and rising pension and health-care costs to a greater

risk of elderly poverty and income inequality. To head off these problems, Asian governments must develop integrated policies that encourage older individuals to stay in the workforce, boost their productivity and well-being, and safeguard the financial stability of pension and health-care systems. By harnessing the full potential of elderly workers, these countries can tap an often underutilized resource to sustain economic prosperity.

Increasing seniors' labour-market participation rate can help mitigate the effects of a shrinking workforce while slowing the rise of public expenditures. To be sure, many older adults in Asia are already working: 26% of people aged 65 and older in Japan, and 38% in South Korea, were employed in 2023—among the highest rates in the OECD. Nevertheless, despite increases in life expectancy, it is still common for middle-aged and elderly individuals in Asia to retire even before the mandatory retirement age-in contrast to Western developed countries that have extended or abolished their retirement ages.

Concerns that older workers are not as productive as their younger counterparts are overblown. While some studies link aging to physical and cognitive declines, others show that it



Despite increases in life expectancy, it is still common for middle-aged and elderly individuals in Asia to retire even before the mandatory retirement age-in contrast to Western developed countries that have extended or abolished their retirement ages

ic condition, severe cardiovas-

cular disease, and cancer. Re-

tirees also have less incentive

to invest in their health and

can experience social isolation

and depression. As The Econo-

mist notes, there is meaning in

being useful, and even modest

amounts of excitement in the

workplace can act as an "an-

By promoting healthier ag-

ing through measures to ex-

tend workforce participation,

increase social engagement,

and improve health-care sys-

tems, Asia's policymakers

could create a "silver demo-

graphic dividend" that helps

to sustain the region's econom-

ic dynamism. Of course, the

link between population aging

and economic growth is com-

plex: some research suggests

aging may reduce productiv-

ity, while other studies high-

light positive outcomes when

the appropriate technologies

and frameworks are in place.

The extent to which older

workers bolster productivity

may well depend on factors

such as the implementation

not enough to drive long-term

including AI.

ti-aging serum."

does not necessarily diminish productivity. Although older individuals may find it challenging to adapt to fast-evolving technologies such as artificial intelligence, they can stay productive by cultivating their human capital, whether through formal education or continuous learning.

My research on Korean workers reveals that acquiring skills in information and communications technologies and participating in job-related training significantly boost the productivity of older employees, especially those who have a university degree or work in skill-intensive industries. This implies that creating lifelong learning opportunities could help offset the productivity drop often associated with aging.

Remaining fit and healthy-a core component of human capital-also influences older people's employment prospects, underscoring the importance of high-quality public health care. Universal coverage should address seniors' diverse health needs, as an Asian Development Bank report recently emphasized. Employment itself has various health benefits. While retirement can alleviate job-related stress and free up time for healthy activities, it has been shown to increase the risk of being diagnosed with a chron-

focus should be on enhancing employment, productivity, and innovation capacity across age groups, as well as promoting collaboration among them. To that end, governments should invest in the development of digital knowledge and technical skills for all workers. Japan, Singapore, and South

Korea—among the world's fastest-aging countries-have not resolved every challenge associated with a graying society, but they offer valuable lessons for how to confront this demographic shift. Raising the retirement age and providing flexible employment opportunities encourage older individuals to remain in the workforce. which is essential for mitigating labor shortages and ensuring fiscal stability. But policymakers must avoid rushed measures that distort the labor supply and inflate pension and health-care costs. More deliberate reforms to balance contributions and benefits-such as introducing the "macroeconomic slide," an automatic adjustment mechanism, in pension systems-can strengthen social safety nets.

Asian countries must act more decisively and swiftly to address population aging in ways that promote overall well-being. Extending working lives while enhancing seniors productivity through targeted skills training would help sustain economic growth and maintain the fiscal soundness of social-security systems. By adopting policies that promote healthy, productive aging, countries can transform the challenges of a maturing society into opportunities for lasting prosperity, social cohesion, and greater happiness for individuals and communities alike.

of elder-friendly innovations, The writer, a Professor of Economics at Korea Univer-Fully realizing the potensity, is a former chief econotial of older workers requires mist at the Asian Development increasing their employment Bank and a former senior rate, but not at the expense of adviser for international ecoyounger employees who may nomic affairs to the president be more productive. Keeping of South Korea. seniors in the workplace is

© PROJECT SYNDICATE

#### WISDOM CORNER

We always question the bonafides of the man who tells us unpleasant facts."

Be aware of heat exposure - Not just your own

The transference, as delivery service data across if you received a call inform- hundreds of rest areas, where

delivery workers could take a break, use a washroom and drink water and other beverages. Zomato said it planned to distribute 500,000 packs of refreshments, juices, and glucose at these rest areas.

Happiness always looks small while you hold it in your hands, but let it go, and you learn at once how big and precious it is.

MAXIM GORKY

Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never 66 tires, and a touch that never hurts.

CHARLES DICKENS

#### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1872:** The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City opened to the public, and it later became one of the foremost museums in the world.
- **1902:** Ansel Adams, the most important landscape photographer of the 20th century, was born in San Francisco.
- **1909:** Italian author Filippo Tommaso Marinetti coined the term Futurism in the Parisian newspaper Le Figaro.
- **1929:** The U.S. Congress formally accepted the deeds of cession of eastern Samoa, forming American Samoa.
- **1945:** During the final phases of World War II, U.S. Marines invaded Iwo Jima so as to wrest control of the strategically important island from the Japanese, who put up fierce resistance in the ensuing battle.
- **1986:** The Soviet Union launched the core module of the space station Mir.

#### 

#### **HEARING TEST**

One day, a man went to the doctor and said, "Doc, I think my wife is losing her hearing." The doctor replied, "I can help with that. Let's do a test. Stand 15 feet away from her and ask a question. If she doesn't answer, move closer and try again until she responds." The man went home and saw his wife cooking. He stood 15 feet away and asked, "What's for dinner?"



No response. He moved to 10 feet and asked again. "What's for dinner?" Still no response. He moved to 5 feet and asked. "What's for dinner?" She turned around and said. "For the third time, we're having spaghetti!'



IN JEST THIS

**MANY DELIVERY RIDERS DO NOT HAVE ADEQUATE HEALTH COVERAGE**, **YET THEY'RE OFTEN AT RISK FOR HEAT EXHAUSTION AND OTHER** WEATHER-RELATED

**CONDITIONS** 

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their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

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TO THE EDITOR

columns (between 600-1000

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

edit@orissapost.com

#### you may have learned Lin school, is the movement of thermal energy from one object to another through conduction, convection, or radiation. As it turns out, there's another way that heat can be transferred from one object to another: food delivery services.

When a food delivery person brings a bowl of hot soup to you, they are transferring heat from the restaurant to your belly. But that's not exactly what I'm referring to. I'm focused on what happens on extremely hot days when you decide to stay inside your cool home. You open a food delivery app and transfer your heat exposure to the delivery person.

Not many people think about this, of course, but a recent study in the journal Nature Cities underscores this transfer of heat exposure from consumers to delivery riders. The researchers, based in China and the UK, analyzed food

100 Chinese cities from 2017 to 2023 and found that lunchtime orders increased by almost 13 percent when the temperature rose from 20 °C to 35 °C. The lunch orders shot up by 21 percent when the temperature hit 40 °C. People didn't feel like cooking at home, nor did they want to get cooked in the sun.

It isn't surprising that the heat prompts people to use food delivery services. Those with money can always get other people to do unpleasant work, whether it's driving in sweltering heat to pick up food or slogging in torrid weather to harvest crops. But it's still important to think about the conditions you're exposing other people to when you opt for convenience.

Many delivery drivers (and riders) around the world do not have adequate health coverage, yet they're often at risk for heat exhaustion and other weather-related conditions. Just imagine how you'd feel

ing you that your delivery rider fainted on the way to vour place

You: "Oh no! Is he all right?"

Delivery service manager: "Yes, he'll be fine, but he has to spend the night in a hospital getting IV fluid treatment for dehydration."

You: "Thank you for letting me know. Please update me on his status. And can you also update me on the status of my food?"

When extreme weather poses risks to delivery riders, it's up to food delivery companies to protect their workers. They need to ensure that the workers aren't being overly stressed, having to make too many deliveries in too short a time. Let the consumers wait a few extra minutes in their air-conditioned or fan-cooled homes, if need be.

During a heat wave in Delhi last year, Swiggy and Zomato told the publication Rest of World that they had set up

**Consumers** themselves can help in a number of ways. Here are just three of them:

1. If it's a particularly hot day. consider giving the delivery rider a particularly good tip.

- 2. Offer the delivery rider a glass of cold water or other refreshment. If you do not want to make contact, just leave it outside your front door with a note that says, "Thank you for taking the heat for me.'
- 3. Don't make a delivery rider climb several flights of stairs to your doorstep. If there's no lift in your building, please give yourself a lift to the restaurant. (You may also walk down the stairs and pick up your food.)

#### Dip in the Ganges

Sir, The Ganges River holds immense religious importance, attracting millions of devotees who take a holy dip

NAVI MUMBAI

#### Ukraine uncertainty

Sir, The recent news about US President Donald Trump's strategy for Ukraine is alarming. Is isolating Kyiv in peace negotiations a strategic blunder? The willingness of the US administration to engage directly with Russia, while leaving out Ukraine, might undermine the sovereignty of a besieged nation. How will European allies react to this change? As divisions run deep, will they hold their ground against Russian aggression or expose themselves to further marginalization? These are questions that need urgent attention as the drama unfolds.

Anshu Bharti, BEGUSARAI

#### **Undesired numbers**

Sir, The present government has been a foremost critic of corrupt practices in the country. Over ten years of governance, the government has taken stringent measures to curb corruption in public offices. However, India's recent standing at 96th position in the Corruption Perception Index tells a different story. To put things into perspective, India is still grappling with corruption, and all these measures that the government has taken over the years have turned out to be futile. It has dropped 20 places from 76th in 2015 to 96th in 2024. Big talks look good when you have data to prove them, but it seems the present government has no positive data to prove that they have won the war against corruption; instead, they have managed to worsen it further

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

in its waters, especially during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela. Recent reports from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have raised alarming concerns about the presence of fecal coliform bacteria in the river at Prayagraj. This bacterial contamination, primarily caused by sewage discharge, poses serious health risks. The fecal coliform affects water quality and presents dangers to human health. Devotees need to have routine health check-ups after taking a holy dip. CK Subramaniam .

















### **Orissa**PC WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 19, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

# **Dollar dreams dashed** Maharashtra expands anti-narcotics task force

With dreams dashed, US deportee left with uncertain future, mortgaged house

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hoshiarpur (Punjab), Feb 18: In July 2024, Rohit set out for what he believed would be a pathway to a better future after an Amritsar-based travel agent promised him entry to the US legally but it came crashing down when he was deported with some other illegal Indian immigrants.

Rohit was among the deportees sent back on a US military plane Sunday night.

Rohit, a resident of Milwan village in Kangra district on the Punjab-Himachal Pradesh border, embarked on a journey to the United States in July 2024, hoping to turn his family's fortunes, only to be deported back after months of hardship.

A US military aircraft carrying 112 illegal Indian immigrants landed at Amritsar airport late Sunday night, the third such flight bringing deportees amid a crackdown by the Donald Trump government

against illegal immigrants. Of the 112 deportees, 44 were from Haryana, 33 from Gujarat, 31 from Punjab, two from Uttar Pradesh and one each from Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, sources said.

Rohit said he had been in contact with a travel agent based in Amritsar, who assured him of a valid US visa. The agent initially promised to send him to Dubai, from where his visa for the US would be arranged.

Talking to PTI over the phone Tuesday, Rohit said when he reached Dubai, he found himself among many other young men who were also stranded, waiting indefinitely for their visas. Fearing distressing his mother, who

was alone at home, he chose not to inform her about the ordeal

His mother Asha Devi said over the phone that Rohit's father had passed away a few years ago. He used to help his father in running a tea stall at Milwan, she said.

Rohit said the travel agent promised to send him to the US in a legal manner. After spending several weeks in Dubai, he clung to hope and eventually, the travel agent secured a visa for Greece, and from there, he was sent to Madrid. Spain.

He says having stayed in Madrid for about 10 to 12 days, he was flown to El Salvador, a nation in Central America, where his treacherous 'donkey route' (an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to

enter the US) to the US began. The journey from El Salvador to Mexico took approximately a month, fraught with severe hardships. During this perilous journey, Rohit faced numerous difficulties. He recounted that 'donkers' a term

used for human traffickers along these illegal migration routes would often assault and mistreat the travellers.

He said if the 'donkers' were provided food, it was a relief; otherwise, he had no choice but to survive without it.

Having spent nearly ₹40-50 lakh in this desperate attempt to reach the US, Rohit's journey came to an abrupt halt when he was caught by the US Border Patrol February 3 for crossing into the country illegally via Tijuana in Mexico along with some others.

A patrol vehicle was nearby and we were immediately arrested, he says, while adding there were a few more in the group who crossed over and were nabbed. "We were taken to a deten-

tion centre in San Diego. Our biometrics were collected and our medical exam was done. All other processes related to our detention were done and we were told that we had crossed over illegally. Later, we were put in a cell that accommodate about 50-60 peo-

A US military aircraft carrying 112 illegal Indian immigrants landed at Amritsar airport late Sunday night, the third such flight bringing deportees amid a crackdown by the Donald Trump government against illegal immigrants

ple," Rohit said. He said until the day they were deported they remained confined in the detention centre.

"They kept us inside, we did not get to see what was happening outside. A list was brought February 14, and they started reading out names. After some time, they took us in two buses to the airport in California which was about an hour away. Then we came to know we were being put on a plane," said Rohit.

He says during the journey the men were handcuffed.

Upon his return, his family tried to contact the travel agent, but the phone remained switched off. Now left in financial ruin, Rohit has demanded action against the agent and a refund of the amount paid.

Coming from a poor family, he now faces an uncertain future, with his house mortgaged to a bank. Rohit's sister said that her brother was in a state of shock over the turn of events that had taken after he set out for America and the family was in deep financial distress.

The decision to expand ANTF aims to enhance enforcement efforts and curb the spread of narcotics

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 18: The Maharashtra cabinet Tuesday approved the creation of 346 new posts in the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF), and the setting up of the Sixth State Finance Commission, among other decisions, officials said.

The decision to expand ANTF aims to enhance enforcement efforts and curb the spread of narcotics.

The government sanctioned the setting up of such an entity August 31, 2023.

The cabinet's approval includes 310 permanent posts and 36 contractual positions within the task force.

These include roles ranging from senior police officials to clerical staff and scientific assistants. The state government has sanctioned a recurring expenditure of over ₹19 crore and a one-time expenditure of more than ₹3 crore for vehicle procurement and other needs. the government stated.

Chairing the meeting, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis underlined the importance of acting decisively against drug networks across Maharashtra.

He said strengthening the task force would help law enforcement agencies tackle the growing use of narcotics more effectively.

The council of ministers also sanctioned ₹1,275 crore to improve the Varkhede Londhe Barrage Medium Project in Jalgaon district.

The project, located on the



Girna River, will provide irrigation facilities to 8,290 hectares of land in Chalisgaon and Bhadgaon talukas. The latest approval marks the third administrative sanction for the project, which aims to en-

hance water availability in the region.

In another decision, the cabinet approved the establishment of the Sixth State Finance Commission, which will give suggestions for financial planning and resource distribution from April 1, 2026, to March 31 2031. The commission is expected

to submit its report by December 31, 2025. The chief minister has been given the authority to recommend the names of the commission's chairman and members to the governor. The commission will review

the financial status of local self government institutions and suggest measures to improve their economic management, as per an official release.

The cabinet also approved a ₹1,594 crore solar energy project to enhance the energy efficiency of the Mhaisal Lift Irrigation Scheme in Sangli district.

This project aims to meet

models The cabinet's approval includes **310 permanent posts** and 36 contractual positions within the task force

plant will be installed. The generated electricity will be supplied to the Narwad substation

through a dedicated transmission line.

the scheme's annual electricity

requirement of approximately

39.8 crore units by leveraging

The Krishna Koyna Lift Irri

gation Project, which includes

the Mhaisal scheme, is crucial

for providing water to drought-

prone areas in Sangli and So

lapur districts, the statement

Under the approved plan 65 out of the 108 pumps in the

Mhaisal scheme will be upgrad-

ed to energy-efficient

Additionally,

an advanced

system and

a 200 MW

solar power

monitoring

solar power.

said.

The project's financial struc ture includes a loan of ₹1,120 crore from Germany's KfW Bank and a state government investment of ₹474 crore, the statement said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY SUPPLY OF MATERIALS E-Tender Notice No. Sr. DMM/SBP/Stores nder Publication/2025, Date : 14.02.2025 1) Tender No. 40255150 : DESCRIPTION OF ITEM : 04 CHANNE VOICE DATA RECORDING 8 PROCESSING UNIT (VDRPU). Tender Value (₹) : 2,68,00,018.00, EMD @ 2% (₹): 5,36,000.00. 2) Tender No. 40255151 : DESCRIPTION OF ITEM : SPRING SETTING DEVICE (SSD) ender Value (₹) : 1,00,11,120.00, EMD @ 2% (₹): 2,00,222.00. ender Closing Time and Date : 150 Hrs. of 10.03.2025 (For both the Tender) complete information including tende ocuments is available in website https://www.ireps.gov.in Senior Divisional Materials Manager

#### HC asks Punjab to decide on illegal travel agents

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 18: The Punjab and Haryana High Court has asked the Punjab government to decide on a representation seeking action against illegal travel agents duping innocents by illegally sending them abroad.

A bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Harmeet Singh Grewal passed the direction while disposing of the plea of advocate Kanwar Pahul Singh February 17. The petitioner further sought setting up of "emigration check posts" and an upgraded list of 'certified recruiting agents". The plea was filed in the wake of the deportation of several illegal Indian immigrants from the US recently and sought directions for immediate steps to establish the check posts in all of Punjab under the Emigration Act, 1983 to streamline the procedure of emigration and prevent illegal immigration.

### Asia Economic Dialogue in Pune from Feb 20 PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Feb 18: The Asia Economic Dialogue 2025, a geoeconomics conference, will be held from Thursday in Pune where Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will deliver the inaugural address.

The sixth edition of the threeday annual conference, organised jointly by the Ministry of External Affairs and Pune International Centre (PIC), has 'Economic Resilience and Resurgence in an Era of Fragmentation' as the theme, the organ-

isers said in a release Monday.

There will be12 sessions at the event, which will bring together more than 40 speakers including academicians, policymakers and industry experts from nine countries - Australia, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, the Netherlands, Singapore, South

Africa, and Sri Lanka. Ministerial participation will further amplify the discourse, facilitating an exchange of transformative ideas and strategies.

intelligence, cyber security, African transformation, blue economy, the International Monetary System, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and climate change.

The conference will kick off with opening remarks by eminent scientist and PIC president Dr Raghunath Mashelkar, and Union minister Piyush Goyal will deliver the inaugural address.

former ambassador to China and Bhutan.

It will be followed by a chat with Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, chairperson, Biocon Group, hosted by Rama Bijapurkar, expert on India's consumer economy and author of 'Lilliput Land: How Small is Driving India's Mega Consumption Story', the release said.

The valedictory address on day 3 of the event will be deliv-

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"The incident like the recent major deportation of illegal immigrants of India by the USA. caused losses of crores of rupees to the people of Punjab," said the petitioner.

He also sought directions for upgrading the list of "certified recruiting agents and permitted employers established outside India" so that people could have an easy access to the emigration process and prevent people from falling victim to fake travel agents.

He sought directions for immediate action against all such fake travel agents operating in the state under the Punjab Prevention of Human Smuggling Act to ensure the prevention of human trafficking via "donkey routes". Advocate Dheeraj Jain, who represented the Centre, said the court asked the petitioner to submit his representation to the state and the Central government authorities within a month.

The state and the Centre were directed to consider the representation and take a decision on the matter, Jain said.

The counsel said the Protector of Emigrants in Chandigarh has forwarded a total of 127 complaints over the unscrupulous agents to the Punjab government for action in the past year.

Among the pivotal geoeconomic topics that will be explored at AED 2025 are artificial

The inaugural session will feature a conversation between Piyush Goyal and Gautam Bambawale, AED 2025 convener and ered by Ashwini Vaishnaw, the Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics and Information Technology.

### PLPB, Surbana Jurong collaborate for IndusPark

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 18: PLPB, a real estate and infrastructure development company, has announced a strategic collaboration with Singapore-based Surbana Jurong to develop PLPB IndusPark, an industrial park in Punjab's Patiala.

The agreement was signed in Singapore Monday in the presence of the real estate delegation under CII Learning Mission, PLPB said in a statement here Tuesday. Slated to span over 150 acres of greenfield land near Rajpura in Patiala district, the project will have direct access to the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC). ensuring seamless logistics and supply chain efficiencies for manufacturers, especially SMEs and MSMEs, the statement said. Surbana Jurong is a global urban, infrastructure and managed services consulting firm.

"PLPB IndusPark is set to facilitate manufacturing units under orange and green categories, in compliance with the central and state government guidelines. The park aims to attract investments from industries across the globe seeking sustainable and compliant infrastructure while fostering employment opportunities for Punjab's skilled workforce," the PLPB statement said.

PLPB CEO Sumit Singla said, "We are thrilled to partner with Surbana Jurong, a globally renowned urban and infrastructure consulting firm. This collaboration marks a new chapter in Punjab's industrial growth, setting the foundation for a globally competitive manufacturing hub.'

"As an organisation, we are aligned to facilitate the industry players with all necessary support to engage with various stakeholders and assist in handholding and representing them as per the need to set the future-ready industrial ecosystem that fosters innovation, sustainability, and economic prosperity for the state of Punjab." According to the statement, Raman Kumar, Director, Programme Management, Surbana Jurong, said, "MSMEs are considered the backbone of the Indian economy. contributing a substantial portion to the overall GDP, estimating at 29 per cent, to India's GDP.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF MICRO. SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER (MSME), NEW DELHI** 

Notice Inviting Expression of Interest (EoI) for Empanelment of Implementing Agencies for FY 2025-26

Office of the Development Commissioner (MSME) invites applications from eligible Implementing Agencies (IAs) for their empanelment to organize training programs under the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESDP) for FY 2025-26, as per the scheme guidelines (can be downloaded from the portal https://dcmsme.gov.in/ESDP-Guidelines-new-01-04-2022.pdf).

The Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESDP) aims to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship by providing technical and managerial training. It focuses on skill enhancement, capacity building for MSMEs. fostering innovation, and generating employment. The programme ensures inclusive growth, targeting youth, women, and disadvantaged groups to drive economic development through technical upskilling and business innovation.

#### Eligibility Criteria for Empanelment

- Proven experience in organizing skill development and entrepreneurship programmes
- Adequate infrastructure and resources to conduct high-quality training.
- Willingness to adopt digital platforms for monitoring and evaluation

#### Who Can Apply

Institutions: IITs, IIMs, NITs, Technology Centers (TCs), Tool Rooms, Central Autonomous body under the Ministry of Education (MoE) Government of India, and Institutes from Central and State Government departments and organizations etc.

#### How to Apply

Interested organizations can submit their application in the prescribed format (can be downloaded from the official website at www.dcmsme.gov.in.) along with supporting documents through email to esdp.div@dcmsme.gov.in, latest by 20th March, 2025. Applicants must include detailed proposals specifying the geographical coverage of the training programs and the areas of specialization for advanced courses. Furthermore, the distribution of the ESDP programmes to the 166 Implementing Agencies will be based on the mandate to ensure a balanced distribution and maintain the prescribed ratio of various scheme components.

For More Details, Visit: www.dcmsme.gov.in or contact the following address:

Joint Director (ESDP) O/o DC (MSME). Room No.731, A-Wing, 7th Floor, Nirman Bhawan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi - 110011, Email: esdp.div@dcmsme.gov.in

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO.I: CUTTACK
😂 CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO.I: CUTTACK
E-Mail id:eepwdcuttack@gmail.com, Tel/Fax.No.(0671)-2304128 GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA ('e' <b>Procurement Notice</b> )
Bid Identification No.S.E. CTC (R&B)-63 of 2024-25
TENDER CALL NOTICE
No B-1019-The Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No I

Cuttack on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites on Percentage rate basis bid in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractor for Road Works as mentioned below.

2. No. of Work 03 Nos. 3. Nature of Work **Building Works** "C" & "B", "D" & "C" Class Rs.6000/- (Online) 4. Class of Contractor 5. Tender Paper Cost 6. Available of bid documents in From 20.02.2025 to 5PM of the website 03.03.2025 Date of Opening of Bid 11 AM of 04.03.2025

OIPR-34091/11/0049/2425

25113/1

CBC

The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://tendersodisha.gov.in Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website

Sd./- (Er. A. K. Nayak) Superintending Engineer Cuttack (R&B) Division No.I



Date : 07.02.2025

Employment Notice No. 01/2025-CMP Applications are invited for engagement of "Contract Medical Practitioner on contract basis in East Coast Railway, Sambalpur division. Willing MBBS Doctors, who fulfil the Qualification/eligibility criteria may apply for the above engagement on mail id of cmsecorsbp8@gmail.com. The engagement will be offered purely on contract basis for a period of one year or till the scheme become available or posting of a regular incumbent whichever is earlier which can be renewed as a fresh contract on year to year basis. The last date for submission of application on above mail id is **06.03.2025**.

Eligible and willing candidates may send the scanned copy of their application in the prescribed format along with scanned copies of their Certificates/Work Experience Certificates (if any)/ Testimonials on mail id cmsecorsbp8@gmail.com. After scrutiny of the application, interview through video conferencing/video calling would be taken of eligible candidates for which they would be intimated through their e-mail & WhatsApp number. Selected candidate will be intimated through the WhatsApp number/e-mail Id of the candidate. While reporting for duty, the candidate will be required to bring all the original Certificates/ Testimonials for verification and two passport size photographs. After due verification of the Certificates/Testimonials, the final engagement order will be issued.

NB : For application format, Total No. of Requirement, Educational qualification/ Eligibility, Age, Remuneration and other terms & conditions blease refer to website www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in About us O Division O Sambalpur Division O Recruitment.

Divisional Railway Manager (Personnel)/Sambalpur PR-986/P/24-25



national



Nothing can be more ironical than Modi Sarkar's FM saying that our Economy is **delivering Good** Returns MALLIKARJUN KHARGE CONGRESS PRESIDENT

#### **BUS FALLS INTO DRAIN IN PUNJAB, FIVE DEAD**

At least five passengers were killed and over two dozen injured after a private bus fell into a drain in Punjab's Faridkot district Tuesday, officials said. The accident occurred on the Faridkot-Kotkapura road at around 8 am when the bus carrying 36 passengers was going from Muktsar to Amritsar





We will end this (illegal layout menace) by giving B-Khata once and for all. This is only one-time

measure. You have been given only three months. Conduct a campaign and complete it within this time SIDDARAMAIAH | K'TAKA CM

An estimated ₹22.812 crore was stolen by cybercriminals in the country last year, posing a threat to both

the economy and citizens A REVANTH REDDY T'GANA CM

There is no need for any controversy over it. It is a closed chapter. That is the Congress' view

SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

#### SHORT TAKES

#### Seven killed as dumper truck crashes into van

Bhind (MP): Seven persons, among them four women, were killed and 18 others injured after a dumper truck hit a stationary loading van in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district Tuesday morning, officials said. The accident occurred around 5 am near Jawaharpura village when a group of people was returning from a wedding, Bhind district Superintendent of Police (SP) Asit Yadav said. He said some of the victims were sitting in the van, and others were standing on the road when a speeding dumper truck dashed into them and their vehicle.

#### Haryana to get new CS

Chandigarh: In a span of just over three months, Haryana will get a new chief secretary after incumbent Vivek Joshi was appointed as an election commissioner. Joshi is a 1989-batch Haryanacadre Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer. Under repatriation from Government of India October 31, 2024 Joshi

# PM, Amir of Qatar hold talks

India, Qatar have deep-rooted historical ties of friendship, trust and mutual respect. In recent years, the ties between the two countries, including in the areas of trade, investment, energy, technology, culture and people-to-people relations, have continued to strengthen, the MEA earlier said

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

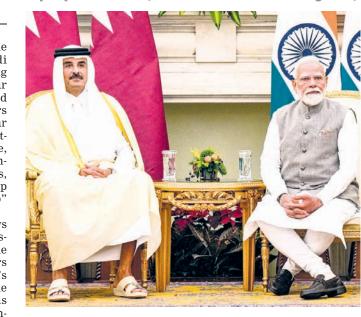
New Delhi, Feb 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday held wide-ranging talks with Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani as the two leaders decided to elevate India-Qatar relations to a "strategic partnership" with focus on trade, investments, technology, energy and people-to-people ties, further cementing the "deep and traditional relationship' between the two countries.

They also exchanged views on "regional and global issues" of mutual interest, the Ministry of External Affairs said. The Amir of Qatar's two-day visit comes at the invitation of Modi. This is his second state visit to India. He earlier visited India in March 2015.

His visit will provide "further momentum to our growing multifaceted partnership", the MEA had said ahead of the visit that began Monday. Earlier in the day, the Amir of Qatar was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour at the Rashtrapati Bhavan as President Droupadi Murmu welcomed the visiting leader. Modi was also present on the occasion.

Later, Modi and the Amir held talks at the Hyderabad House covering a range of bilateral issues. India and Qatar Tuesday also exchanged an agreement on establishment of strategic partnership between the two countries.

The documents were exchanged between Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, in the presence



of Prime Minister Modi and the Amir of Qatar here. "India-Qatar, further cementing the deep& traditional relationship. PM @narendramodi & HH Sheikh @TamimbinHamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar held wide-ranging talks at Hyderabad House today. Both leaders decided to elevate India-Qatar relations to a Strategic Partnership with focus on trade, energy, investments, innovation, tech-

nology, food security, culture & people-to-people ties. They also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest," MEA Randhir Spokesperson Jaiswal said in a post on X.

India and Qatar have deep-rooted historical ties of friendship, trust and mutual respect. In recent years, the ties between the two countries, including in the areas of trade, investment, energy, technology, culture and people-to-people relations, have

continued to strengthen, the MEA earlier said. As the two leaders held talks at the Hyderabad House, the MEA in a post on X said, a "new milestone" was on the cards of this "special India-Qatar partnership"

A revised agreement for avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income, between India and Qatar, was also exchanged, it was announced during the exchange of agreements ceremony held at the Hyderabad House. Prime Minister of **Qatar and Finance Minister** Nirmala Sitharaman exchanged the agreement.

The Amir of Qatar arrived here Monday evening, his visit coming almost a year after Modi had visited the Gulf nation in February 2024. Extending a rare gesture of hospitality, Modi received the Amir at the Delhi airport Monday evening. He welcomed him

#### Mumbai-bound trains receive bomb threats PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ballia (UP), Feb 18: Two Mumbai-bound express trains received bomb threats Tuesday, prompting authorities to halt the trains at two different stations in Uttar Pradesh for search, officials said. Nothing suspicious was found in either of the trains, they said, adding that the trains left for their destinations after a three-hour-long search operation. According to Government Railway Police (GRP) officials, information about the presence of bombs in the Kamayani Express from Ballia to Mumbai's Lokmanya Tilak Terminus, and the Dadar Express from Gorakhpur to Mumbai was received at around 10.30 am through social media. The authorities took the threat seriously and launched search operations, GRP media in-charge Shyam Babu, posted at the Additional Director General's office, told PTI.

ndia, Qatar Tuesday agreed to double bilateral trade to \$28 billion over the next five years and announced elevation of their relationship to the level of strategic partnership

The two sides also signed two agreements - one on establishing strategic partnership and another on **Revised Double Taxation** Avoidance Agreement and signed five memoranda of understanding to strengthen economic partnership

with a warm handshake and hug, displaying the bonhomie between the two leaders.

The Amir of Qatar will be accompanied by a high-levdelegation, including el ministers, senior officials and business leaders, the MEA earlier said.

External Affairs Minister Jaishankar had called on the Amir of Qatar, hours after his arrival in Delhi, and said he was confident that the visiting leader's talks with Prime Minister Modi Tuesday will "deepen our close bonds of friendship"

During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Doha last year, technology, investment, energy, trade, all aspects were discussed at length with a view to look at them, assess them from a strategic perspective. the then foreign secretary Vinay Kwatra had told reporters in February 2024.

The MEA Saturday said the Indian community residing in Qatar forms the largest expatriate group in that country and is "appreciated for its positive contribution in the progress and development of Qatar".

### Prez grants prosecution sanction against AAP leader Satyendar Jain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: President Droupadi Murmu has granted the sanction to prosecute AAP leader and former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain in a money-laundering case being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate, sources said Tuesday.

The sanction against the 60-year-old former Delhi health minister was sought under section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. The Ministry of Home Affairs had requested the President for providing sanction to prosecute Jain on the basis of an Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigation and the presence of "adequate proof", sources said.

Section 218 of the BNSS governs the prosecution of public servants and judges. It outlines the procedure for bringing charges against the accused for alleged offenses committed while performing his or her official duties. The ED is now expected to file a fresh supplementary chargesheet informing the court about the approval of the prosecution sanction of the President, sources said.

The federal agency booked Jain in a money-laundering case linked to alleged hawala dealings, and arrested him in May 2022. Jain held the health, power and a few other portfolios when he was taken into ED custody. He is currently out on bail and has been chargesheeted by the ED.

The money-laundering case stems from an August 2017 FIR filed against Jain and others by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on charges of alleged possession of disproportionate assets. The CBI filed a chargesheet in December 2018.



- The federal agency booked Jain in a money-laundering case linked to alleged hawala dealings, and arrested him in May 2022
- Jain held the health, power and a few other portfolios when he was taken into ED custody
- Satyendar is currently out on bail and has been chargesheeted by the ED

stating that the alleged dispro portionate assets were to the tune of ₹1.47 crore, about 217 per cent more than Jain's known sources of income during 2015-17. The ED had earlier said its probe found that "during 2015-16. Satvendar Jain was a public servant and four companies (beneficially owned and controlled by him) received accommodation entries (hawala) to the tune of ₹4.81 crore from shell (bogus) companies against cash transferred to Kolkata-based entry operators through the hawala route".

"These amounts were utilised for direct purchase of agricultural land or for the repayment of loan taken for purchase of agricultural land in and around

Delhi," the agency had said. Former Delhi Chief Minis ter and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal had earlier defended Jain, saying he was as a "hardcore honest and patriot" person who was being framed in a "false case".



was posted as Chief Secretary to the Haryana Government, upon his joining in the Haryana cadre. He had then replaced the incumbent chief secretary, T V S N Prasad, a 1988-batch IAS officer who superannuated from the post October 31.

#### PM Modi meets **Rishi Sunak**

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met former British prime minister Rishi Sunak Tuesday and praised him as a "great friend of India". He said on X. "It was a delight to meet former UK PM, Mr. Rishi Sunak and his family! We had a wonderful conversation on many subjects. Mr. Sunak is a great friend of India and is passionate about even stronger India-UK ties." Sunak was accompanied by his motherin-law Sudha Murty, an author and Rajya Sabha MP, and other family members. Earlier in the day, Sunak and his family had visited Parliament House in New Delhi.

Kerala: ED searches in

fake CSR fund 'scam'

Kochi/New Delhi: The

**Enforcement Directorate** 

#### laundering case and his bail plea is pending in the Delhi High Court. Sarpanch murder case: Sule slams Maha govt

AgustaWestland case: SC grants

bail to Christian Michel James

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: MP Supriya Sule Tuesday attacked the Maharash-tra government for its failure to arrest an absconding accused in the Massajog village sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh murder case, despite two months having passed since the incident. Speaking to reporters in Beed district after meeting Deshmukh's family, Sule said she had raised the matter with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who had assured her that he would look into the murder case. She added that she would soon meet Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to press for justice for Deshmukh's family. Santosh Deshmukh was abducted, tortured, and murdered December 9, 2024, allegedly for attempting to stop an extortion bid targeting an energy company in Beed.

**SNIPPETS** 

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Tuesday granted bail to alleged middleman Chris-

by the CBI. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta observed James

underway. James, however, cannot walk out of jail as he faces a related money

was in custody for the past six years while the investigation in the matter was still

tian Michel James in the purported ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland case being probec

#### MP HC allows 'trial run' of Union Carbide waste disposal

Jabalpur: The Madhya Pradesh High Court Tuesday allowed the state government to carry out a trial run of the disposal of 40-year-old chemical waste from the defunct Union Carbide factory in Bhopal in Pithampur area of Dhar district. The ncineration at a disposal plant inside the industrial area of Pithampur will be car ried out in three phases from February 27, Advocate General Prashant Singh told reporters here after a court hearing. The government Tuesday filed a compliance report, sought by the high court in January, about the steps it had taken for creat ng public awareness about the waste disposal process, he said.

Members of the Indian Youth Congress stage a protest demanding the resignation of Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw New Delhi Railway station stampede where over 18 people died in New Delhi

# 5bn globally lack access to medical oxygen: Lancet

The report by the Lancet Global Health Commission on Medical Oxygen Security is the world's first estimate of how unequally medical oxygen is distributed, gaps in coverage of patients in need, along with costs required to bridge these gaps

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tuesday conducted searches at multiple locations in Kerala in connection with the alleged fake CSR fund scam, in which fraudsters duped many people of their funds by falsely promising to offer laptops, two-wheelers and home appliances at half the

price. Official sources said the entities, trusts and individuals who have "received" money from Anandu Krishnan, the prime suspect in the case, are being searched to trace the "proceeds of crime" collected from poor people.

New Delhi, Feb 18: Five billion people or nearly two-third of the world's population lack access to medical oxygen, with highest inequities in low- and middle-income countries, estimated a new Lancet Commission report.

The report by the Lancet Global Health Commission on Medical Oxygen Security is the world's first estimate of how unequally medical oxvgen is distributed, gaps in coverage of patients in need. along with costs required to

bridge these gaps. Medical oxygen is essential in a healthcare system for treating patients, including those of surgery, asthma, trauma and maternal and child care.

It is also critical to a country's pandemic preparedness by helping prevent a repeat of the COVID-19 oxygen shortage es and the mass fatalities that resulted, said an international team of researchers, including those from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

In this study, the researchers said that 82 per cent of



patients worldwide requiring medical oxygen live in lowand middle-income countries (LMICs), and nearly 70 per cent concentrated in south and east Asia, the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa.

The patients include those with acute medical and surgical conditions, and long-term

oxygen needs due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). However, less than one in three people needing oxygen for medical or surgical conditions receive the life-saving gas due to gaps in service contact, readiness, provision and quality, leaving almost 70 per cent of the patients without

coverage.

The gaps are even higher in regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa (91 per cent) and South Asia (78 per cent), the authors said. In a case study accompanying the report, the authors described the scenario of medical oxygen in India, especially as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'The pandemic had a catastrophic effect not just because of the rates of contagion and the virulence of the disease but also because of the drastic scarcity in life-saving resources such as medical oxygen." the team from One Health Trust, India, wrote.

They added that with hospitals largely replying on third-party vendors for meeting their oxygen demand pre-COVID-19, the surge in demand during the pandemic led to black-marketing and hoarding.

Desperate requests for medi cal oxygen were also raised on social media and in exceptional cases, the court intervened by issuing orders against supply ing agencies and the govern ment for replenishing oxygen supplies, the authors said.

The commission report also suggested recommendations for how governments, industry global health agencies, academ ic institutions and civil society can work together to strength en health systems in providing access to medical oxygen.

The authors added that medical oxygen is a highly cost-effective investment to advance global public health that will accelerate the world's progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals for health by 2030, but also help countries prepare for the next pandemic.













# national



The budget session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, which began today with the Governor's address, was tumultuous due to the tussle between the ruling and opposition parties on burning issues of public interest and public welfare and sloganeering of 'Governor Go Back' etc

#### **ASSAILANTS FIRE UPON POLICEMEN**

A police party was fired upon by assailants hiding inside a building in a crowded locality of Patna Tuesday, though nobody was injured in the incident, a senior official said





Among the total SNA account unspent balance of ₹576.22 crore, the major share of ₹409.17 crore is in

the Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0, for which the release for the fourth quarter of 2023–2024 was made only March 26, 2024 M K STALIN TN CM

We are moving towards a new direction in higher education. Online facilities have been

introduced to ease operations in all universities, including those under the Higher and Technical Education Department HEMANT SOREN JHARKHAND CM

There is absolutely no cold war between us. We are united in our fight against those who oppose doublement

development. When I was chief minister, on Oc tober 31, 2023, then deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis had founded a similar cell. I have simply reconstituted it with my people overseeing its operations **DEVENDR FADNAVIS** | MAHARASHTRA CM





BRS sends a powerful message to both Congress and BJP! By using bulldozers to

shower flower petals, BRS is sending a powerful political message. While both BJP and Congress have caused massive destruction by sending bulldozers to demolish the houses of the poor, here is a party which is spreading love using the same bulldozer! Spread love, not hate! Now that's some clever messaging I say!

@KonathamDileep

#### SHORT TAKES

Prosecution seeks death

# Wait for new Delhi CM to end today



The Chief Ministers of some

because of their preoccupation

with presentation of budget in

◀ The Ramleela Ground and

payements and medians, were

cleaned and freshly painted

those states

BJP-ruled states, including Gujarat,

may skip the oath-taking ceremony

surrounding areas, including roads,

all. The newly-elected BJP leg-

islature party will meet at the

party's Delhi unit office to elect

the Leader of the House in the

Delhi Assembly Wednesday. The

meeting is expected to be held in

the evening, party leaders said.

BJP-ruled states, including Gu-

jarat, may skip the oath-taking

ceremony because of their

preoccupation with presenta-

tion of budget in those states.

The Ramleela Ground and

surrounding areas, including

roads, pavements and medians,

were cleaned and freshly paint-

ed. Party leaders said around

one lakh people are expected to

throng the whole area as there

was a lot of enthusiasm among

residents over the BJP forming

its government in Delhi after

more than 26 years, party lead-

The party ended the 10 year-

rule of the Aam Aadmi Party

in Delhi by winning 48 of the

70 Assembly seats in the Febru-

ary 5 polls. The venue will have

three stages with dignitaries.

including the prime minister,

Delhi LG V K Saxena, BJP

President J P Nadda, the new

chief minister and members of

his or her Cabinet seated at the

ers said.

The Chief Ministers of some

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: Delhi's wait for its new chief minister after the Assembly polls will end Wednesday, when the BJP Legislature Party is slated to choose the Leader of the House, even as preparations for the February 20 oath-taking ceremony are in full swing at the historic Ramlila Ground here.

Party leaders said the chief minister and the entire Cabinet will take oath at a grand ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union minister and other dignitaries.

A huge crowd is expected at the event and around 40 celebrities have been invited, sources said, adding the ceremony would be held around noon rather than 4.30 pm, as was communicated by party leaders earlier. BJP MP Yogender Chandolia said preparations for the ceremony are in full swing at the Ramlila Ground.

"Around 50,000 people, including party workers, RWA, sections of society and saints, will be invited. It will be a grand event in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet ministers will be present. It will last around 25-30 minutes," the Northwest Delhi MP said. They will celebrate the occasion across Delhi with drumbeats and make people feel the change

has now started, he said. He said the Ramleela Ground was chosen as the venue for the ceremony as people from various walks of life want to be part of the event and the space at the Raj Niwas could not have accommodated them

SNIPPETS

#### Another ragging incident surfaces in Kerala college

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 18:** A student of a government college here has made allegations of brutal ragging, claiming that he was targeted by senior students.

Bins Jose, a first-year biotechnology student at Karyavattom Government College, alleged Tuesday that he was assaulted, harassed, and threatened by a group of seven senior students February 11 on the campus. Sources said all the seven accused students were suspended till the completion of the investigation based on the findings of the college's internal anti-ragging cell.

The shocking incident came to light in the wake of widespread public outcry in Kerala over the brutal physical assault on a junior nursing student at the Government Nursing College in Kottayam. Jose said he had lodged a complaint with the police and the college authorities on the day of the assault itself.



"The incident happened when my friend Abhishek and I were walking through the campus. Then a group of seniors stopped us and started beating me. My friend managed to run away from there and went to inform the principal," he told the media here Tuesday.

"I was then taken to the unit room and locked up there. My shirt was removed, and they made me kneel. When I asked for water to drink, one of the senior students spat into a half glass of water and gave it," Jose recalled the harrowing experience on the day. Kazhakoottam Police said they had already registered a case into the incident February 11 based on various sections of the BNS including rioting, wrongful confinement, and restriction, and so on.



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis unveils 'Ashwarudh Statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj' at Badlapur, in Thane

### Mahakumbh has turned into 'Mrityukumbh', says Mamata

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, Feb 18:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday asserted that the Maha Kumbh has turned into a "Mrityukumbh" due to incidents of stampede, claiming that the actual toll at the mega religious gathering was suppressed by authorities.

At least 30 people died and 60 were injured in a stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj last month, while 18 people lost their lives in a recent stampede at an overcrowded New Delhi railway station.

"They have hidden hundreds of bodies to bring down the toll. The Mahakumbh has turned into a 'Mrityukumbh' under the BJP rule," Banerjee said during an address in the state Assembly.

Banerjee termed the stampede at the Mahakumbh "deeply heartbreaking", and stressed the need for better planning and management at large religious gatherings to ensure public safety. "The tragic loss of lives in such incidents highlights the importance of careful planning, especially when it comes to the safety of citizens," she said. The Chief Minister also

The Chief Minister also criticised the Uttar Pradesh government for creating a hype around the Mahakumbh "without making proper arrangements". "So many people died in the Mahakumbh (stampede) incident, but they are not releasing the correct death toll. They created such a hype about the event, and yet there were no proper arrangements at the venue," she said.

At least 30 people died and 60 were injured in

a stampede in Prayagraj last month, while 18

people lost their lives in a recent stampede at

an overcrowded New Delhi railway station

venue," she said. Banerjee went on to highlight the plight of Bengal residents who died in the stampede, alleging that their bodies were sent back without proper documentation, making it difficult for families to receive compensation.

"We conducted post-mortems to ensure that their families get the death certificates," she said. The chief minister also slammed the "VIP culture" at the Mahakumbh.

"While I avoided the holy dip to prevent inconvenience to common people, the event saw special treatment for VIPs," Banerjee noted.

Court sentences man to India, B'desh border talks begin in Delhi

central stage.

#### penalty for Sajjan Kumar

New Delhi: The prosecution Tuesday sought death penalty for former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in a murder case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, saying the crime was committed in a "brutal and diabolical manner". The prosecution said the case was "graver than the Nirbhya case" of 2012 in a written submission filed before special judge Kaveri Baweja.

#### Speeding Audi hits scooter

New Delhi: A speeding Audi struck a scooter in Delhi's Lodhi Road area, injuring two people, one of whom is in critical condition, police said Tuesday.The victims, identified as Naitik and Abhishek, were rushed to the hospital by the car's occupants, where police detained both of them. Naitik's condition is stable, whereas Abhishek's condition is critical, said Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Achin Garg.

#### Advocate collapses in T'gana HC, dies

Hyderabad: A senior advocate collapsed and died while presenting arguments in the Telangana High Court here Tuesday. P Venugopal Rao, in his mid 60s, who was presenting the case in court number 21, suddenly fell down and an advocate performed a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) procedure on him, a member of Telangana High **Court Advocates Association** said. A medical team at the High Court shifted him to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead.

### **CEC** Rajiv Kumar demits office

**New Delhi:** Rajiv Kumar, who oversaw the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the crucial Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls, demitted office Tuesday as the 25th chief election commissioner after a nearly three-year tenure marked with high electoral successes but also repeated allegations of bias by Opposition parties. Kumar joined the poll panel as an Election Commissioner on September 1, 2020, and assumed charge as the 25th CEC May 15, 2022. He served the EC for about four-and-a-half years in the two capacities. During his time with the EC, he effected reforms across various aspects of it functioning: structural, technological, capacity development, communication, international cooperation and administration.

#### UPSC further extends last date to apply for CSE prelims

**New Delhi:** The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has extended the last date to apply for this year's civil services preliminary examination till February 21. This is the second extension in the deadline for applying to the examination, conducted annually by the UPSC in three stages -- preliminary, mains and interview -- to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others. The last date for submission for Civil Services (Preliminary)-2025 and Indian Forest Service (Preliminary)-2025 "has been further extended till 21.02.2025 (6 pm)," said a notice put out by the Commission on its website.

#### death for rape of infant

Kolkata: A special POCSO court in Kolkata on Tuesday sentenced a man guilty of rape and attempted murder of a seven-month-old child in north Kolkata to death by hanging. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) court at Bankshall court had, Monday, convicted the man of kidnapping, rape and attempt to murder of the toddler from the Burtolla area of the city within 75 days of his arrest. The quantum of punishment was announced by the court after hearing the final round of submissions from the defence counsel as well as the public prosecutor representing the state, who praved for capital punishment arguing that the crime fell under the 'rarest of the rare' case category.

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: The bi-annual DG-level border talks between India and Bangladesh began in Delhi Tuesday with the BSF expected to put across issues related to obstruction in fencing work and attacks on its personnel and civilians by Bangladeshi miscreants to the BGB, officials said.

This is the first top-level meeting between the two border guarding forces after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August last year. The 55th Director General-level Border Coordination Conference between the two forces began at the Border Security Force (BSF) headquarters at Lodhi Road here after a ceremonial guard of honour and welcome was accorded to the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) chief Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui.

The Bangladeshi delegation arrived in India Monday and was received by BSF director general Daljit Singh Chawdhary at the IGI airport.

Discussions will be held on preventing attacks on BSF personnel and Indian civilians by Bangladesh-based miscreants/ nationals as well as trans-border crimes, construction of single row fence, action against Indian Insurgent Groups in Bangladesh, issues related to border infrastructure, joint efforts for effective implementation of Coordinated Border Management Plan, Confidence Building Measures and other issues, it had said.

## Times when comedians found themselves on wrong side of law

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 18:** A crass remark by YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia on comedian Samay Raina's show "India's Got Latent" has left many involved struggling against the long arms of the law.

The comment on parentsTubeand sex went viral on socialTubeand sex went viral on socialtheirmedia February 10. Ever since,IndiaAllahbadia, also known asAIB HBeerBiceps, has been at thewroncentre of heated discussion.religiSeveral FIRs have been filedactor:against him as well other co-A nmedians, including Ashishagain

and Apoorva Makhija, who were part of the show. Even as the Supreme Court of Tuesday protected Allahbadia from arrest over his distasteful comments, the episode refreshed in collective memory

Chanchlani, Jaspreet Singh

the many times Indian comedians were criticised for their content and at times found themselves on the wrong side of the law.

In February 2015, when Indian audiences were still warming up to the idea of stand-up comedy and You-Tube comedy shows were in their nascent stage, the All India Bakchod Knockout, aka AIB Knockout, attracted the wrong type of attention from religious groups, Bollywood actors, and politicians.

A number of FIRs were filed against the group and the show's participants, including filmmaker Karan Johar, actors Ranveer Singh, Arjun Kapoor, Deepika Padukone and Alia Bhatt. It was alleged that the show was "vulgar, obscene and pornographic".

AIB, controversy's favourite

#### **NO LAUGHING MATTER**



child, faced another FIR in 2017 for a tweet that showed Prime Minister

Narendra Modi with a Snapchat dog filter. The cases against AIB are pending in the Bombay High Court, said advocate Ashwin Thool, who appeared in the case in 2015.

#### SC flags vacuum in online content regulation

The Supreme Court Tuesday flagged the "vacuum" in law when it comes to sharing of content on platforms such as YouTube and said "all kinds of things were going on". A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh referred to a case of YouTubers where the Centre was also a party. "All kinds of things are going on. These YouTubers and their shows... something has to be done about them and we will do it. We are not going to leave it like this. We have issued a notice (in Ranveer Allahbadia matter)...We would like to do something. We may not overlook the importance and sensitivity of the issue," Justice Surya Kant said.

In 2021, an FIR was filed against the makers of "The Kapil Sharma Show" for showing actors drinking alcohol during a courtroom scene on the stage

a courtroom scene on the stage. In 2020, at least eight people sued comedian Kunal Kamra, who has been critical of the BJP, the judiciary and the larger government machinery in his shows, for contempt of

the Supreme Court. Attorney General K K Venugopal gave his approval to initiate contempt proceedings against Kamra for his tweets, saying that his tweets were in "bad taste".

In January 2020, Kamra confronted news presenter Arnab Goswami on an Indigo flight, leading the airline to ban him from flying with it for the next six months.

A similar action was taken by Air India, SpiceJet and GoAir after civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri's tweet suggesting other airlines to follow suit.

Celebrated comedian Vir Das, who has slammed the news media in the latest controversy involving Raina and Allahbadia, faced a police complaint in 2021 after his show, "I Come from Two Indias" at the John F Kennedy Centre in Washington DC. Das uploaded a six-minute clip from the monologue on YouTube that was critical of India in its fight against Covid-19, crime against women, and crackdown against comedians.

Comedians Munawar Faruqui and Nalin Yadav were arrested in January 2021 in Madhya Pradesh for alleged objectionable remarks about Hindu deities and Home Minister Amit Shah. The apex court ordered that the comics be released on interim bail after a month.















UN decries 'summary executions' of children by M23 UN decries 'summary executions' of children by M23

was told that the preparations for talks with North Korea are well underway. Giver President Trump's bold approach to making deals, I think we may start to see some thing concrete within this year CHUNG DONG-YOUNG | DEMOCRATIC PARTY REP, SOUTH KOREA

The unidentified Taliban senior officials were invited by grant-making organization Nippon Zaidan and

were also set to talk with Japanese **Foreign Ministry officials** YOSHIMASA HAYASHI | CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY, JAPAN

I recognise the immense responsibility I hold as governor and the constitutional powers granted to this office

KATHY HOCHUL | GOVERNOR, NEW YORK

#### SHORT TAKES

#### 4 paramilitary personnel killed

Peshawar: Four paramilitary personnel were killed and five others injured when unknown militants attacked their squad in Pakistan's violence-hit Kurram, where an aid convoy was also targeted. According to security officials. the militants ambushed the paramilitary Kurram Militia squad in Lower Kurram's Ochi area late Monday, where an aid convoy carrying essential supplies was ambushed earlier in the day. The injured and dead were shifted to a hospital. where the condition of one injured was stated to be critical.

#### Costa Rica to serve as a bridge

San Jose: Costa Rica has agreed to serve as a "bridge" to repatriate illegal immigrants in the US, including from India and Central Asia, according to an official release Tuesday. The first group of 200 migrants will

The UN rights office warned that the situation in eastern **DRC** was 'deteriorating sharply, resulting in serious human rights violations and abuses'

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dakar (Senegal), Feb 18: The UN human rights chief accused Rwanda-backed rebels who seized a second major city in eastern Congo of killing children and attacking hospitals and warehouses storing humanitarian aid. in serious human rights viola-

Volker Türk said in a state-

ment Tuesday that his office "confirmed cases of summary execution of children by M23 after they entered the city of Bukavu last week. We are also aware that children were in possession of weapons".

He provided no details or did not refer to specific events, but UN agencies have previously accused both Congolese government forces and the rebels of recruiting children. The United Nations Human Rights Council earlier this month launched a commission that will investigate atrocities, including rapes and killings akin to "summary executions" committed by both sides since the beginning of the year. The UN rights office warned that the situation in eastern DRC was 'deteriorating sharply, resulting

#### **UKRAINE PEACE TALKS**



#### tions and abuses

The M23 rebels Sunday captured Bukavu, the city of 1.3 million people, after seizing Goma, 100 kilometers (62 miles) to the north last month. At least 3,000 were reported killed and

ma fighting. Early Tuesday, the bodies of

over 20 people were recovered in Bukavu, François Moreillon, from the International Committee of the Red Cross, told The

thousands displaced in the Go-

Associated Press.

The M23 is the most prominent of more than 100 armed groups vving for control of eastern Congo's trillions of dollars in mineral wealth that's critical for much of the world's technology. The rebels are supported by about 4,000 troops from neighbouring Rwanda, according to UN experts.

Rwanda accuses Congo of enlisting Hutu fighters responsible for the 1994 genocide of minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus. M23 says it's fighting to protect Tutsis and Congolese of Rwandan origin from discrimination and wants to transform Congo from a failed into a modern state — though critics say it's a pretext for Rwanda's involvement

Hamas to free 6 living hostages, hand over 4 bodies

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, Feb 18: A top Hamas leader says the militant group will release six living Israeli hostages Saturday and the bodies of four others Thursday, a surprise increase that appar ently comes in return for Isra el allowing mobile homes and construction equipment into the devastated Gaza Strip.

The six are the last living hostages set to be freed under the ceasefire's first phase. The warring sides have yet to negotiate the second and more difficult phase, in which Hamas says it will release dozens more hostages in exchange for a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal.

Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya, in prerecorded re marks, said the "Bibas family' would be included in the hando ver of four bodies, apparently referring to Shiri Bibas and her two young sons, Ariel and Kfir, who for many Israelis embody the captives' plight.

Israel has not confirmed their deaths, and the prime minister's office urged the public not to distribute "photos, names and rumours.'

Israel has said it was gravely concerned about the Bibas family, while Hamas said they were killed in an Israeli air strike early in the war. Yarden Bibas, the husband and father, was kidnapped separately and released this month.

Kfir, who was 9 months old at the time, was the youngest hostage taken in Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. A video of the abduction showed Shiri swaddling her redheaded boys in a blanket and being whisked away by armed men.

An Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said Prime Minister Benjamin Ne tanyahu had agreed to allow long-requested mobile homes and construction equipment into Gaza as part of efforts to accelerate the hostages' release



# REUTERS

Monday amid windy weather ing 18 of the 80 people on board, officials said.

Three people on flight DL4819 from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport suffered critical injuries, among them a child, a Canadian air ambulance official said, with 15 others also immediately taken to hospitals.

Some of the injured have since been released, Delta said late Monday. The US carrier said a CRJ900 aircraft operated by its Endeavor Air subsidiary was involved in a single-aircraft accident with 76 passengers and four crew members on board. The 16-year-old CRJ900, made by Canada's Bombardier and powered by GE Aerospace engines, can seat up to 90 people. At least one of the two wings was no longer attached to the plane, video showed after the accident.

Canadian authorities said they would investigate the cause of the crash, which was not vet known. Passenger John Nelson posted a video of the aftermath on Facebook, showing a fire engine spraying water on



#### the plane that was lying belly-up on the snow-covered tarmac.

He later told CNN there was no indication of anything unusual before landing. "We hit the ground, and we were sideways, and then we were upside down," Nelson told the televi-

sion network. "I was able to just unbuckle and sort of fall and push myself to the ground. And then some people were kind of hanging and needed some help being helped down, and others were able to get down on their own,' he said.

#### WEATHER CONDITIONS

Toronto Pearson Airport said earlier Monday it was dealing with high winds and frigid temperatures as airlines attempted to catch up with missed flights after a weekend snowstorm dumped more than 22 cm (8.6 inches) of snow at the airport.

The Delta plane touched down in Toronto at 2:13 pm after an 86-minute flight and came to rest near the intersection of runway 23 and runway 15, FlightRadar24 data showed.

# **Russia hardens demands**



Riyadh, Feb 18: The United States and Russia said Tuesday they had agreed to press ahead with efforts to end the war in Ukraine after holding talks in the Saudi capital at which Kyiv was not represented.

The 4-1/2-hour meeting in Rivadh marked a crucial moment - the first time that US and Russian officials have sat down together to discuss ways to halt the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two. Ukraine says it will not accept any deal imposed on it without

its consent. Even before the talks took place, the new administration of President Donald Trump was accused by some European politicians of handing free concessions to Moscow last week by ruling out NATO membership for Ukraine and saying it was an illusion for Kyiv to believe it could win back the 20% of its territory now under Russian

control. US national security adviser Mike Waltz told reporters in Riyadh that the war must come to a permanent end, and this would involve negotiations over territory.

"Just a practical reality is that there is going to be some discussion of territory and there's going to be discussion of security guarantees," he said.

Addressing Ukrainian and European concerns, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said no one was being sidelined, the European Union needed to be

involved at some point, and any solution must be acceptable to all parties. But even while the meeting in the Saudi capital was under way, Russia hardened its demands.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters in Moscow it was "not enough" for NATO not to admit Ukraine as a member. She said the alliance must go further by disavowing a promise it made at a summit in Bucharest in 2008 that Kyiv would join at a future, unspecified date.

### SUS says both countries will name high-level teams

Rubio says Russians ready to engage, no one will be sid

Russia demands NATO cancel 2008 promise of Ukraine membership

### Russia objects to stationing of NATO-member forces in

#### Ukraine not at the talks, rejects deals without its consent

"Otherwise, this problem will continue to poison the atmosphere on the European continent," she said.

Ukrainian President Volody myr Zelenskiy has consistently demanded NATO membership as the only way to guarantee Kyiv's sovereignty and independence from its nuclear-armed neighbour.

## Delta jet flips upon arrival in Toronto

Toronto, Feb 18: - A Delta Air Lines regional jet flipped upside down upon landing at Canada's Toronto Pearson Airport following a snowstorm, injur-

arrive at the Juan Santamaria International Airport on a commercial flight Wednesday, according to a statement by Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves Robles' office. "The Government of Costa Rica agreed to collaborate with the United States in the repatriation of 200 illegal immigrants to their country. These are people originating from countries in central Asia and India," said the statement.

#### Ugandan forces enter eastern Congolese city

Kampala: Ugandan troops have entered the eastern Congolese city of Bunia to help local forces stop deadly violence by armed groups, a military spokesman said Tuesday. A meeting Monday between Ugandan forces and Congolese troops in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, agreed on a joint deployment in the city, said Maj Gen Felix Kulayigye, spokesman for the Ugandan military. Ugandan forces now control Bunia together with Congolese forces, he said, asserting that the action was provoked by crimes, including killings, along ethnic lines by armed groups.

#### Ex-Lankan prez's son indicted in legal action

Colombo: Namal Rajapaksa, the eldest son of former president and prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, was Tuesday indicted and released on bail by the High Court here for an alleged misappropriation out of an Indian investment prior to 2015. Leader of the Sri Lanka Poduiana Peramuna (SLPP), Namal Rajapaksa is the only member of the Rajapaksa family now a serving member of parliament.



Timo Arp, a butcher from Jagel, uses a chainsaw to cut up a sperm whale carcass lying on the beach in Hoernum, Germany, Tuesday

# Pak parl passes resolution over plebiscite in Kashmir

the Kashmiri people's right to

self-determination, according

to Radio Pakistan. This is, how-

ever, not the first time that such

a resolution has been passed in

support of the Kashmiris. But

the reason for Tuesday's reso-

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 18: Pakistan's parliament Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution urging India to implement the UN Security Council resolutions to allow Kashmiris to exercise their democratic right to determine their future through a fair and impartial plebiscite under the UN auspices.

Minister for Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam moved the resolution that reaffirmed Pakistan's "unwavering moral, political and diplomatic support" for

ing tributes to the valiant Kashmiris and their sacrific es; called on India to improve the human rights situation in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK); release detained Kashmiri leaders, and revoke all oppressive laws," it said.

The already scarred India-Pakistan bilateral ties further nosedived after India ab rogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating it into two Union Territories August 5, 2019.

lution is not yet clear. "The resolution paid glow-

### S Korean actor's death at 24 sparks debate on social media culture

**Kim's career faltered** after a 2022 drunk driving incident, with harsh online criticism and media scrutiny, especially targeting her as a woman

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, South Korea, Feb 18: South Korean actor Kim Saeron's death this week has triggered an outpouring of grief and calls for changes to the way the country's celebrities are treated in the public arena and on social media, which critics say can foster a culture

of harassment. The 24-year-old, who began

her career as a child actor and earned acclaim for her roles in several domestic films, including the 2010 crime noir "The Man from Nowhere," was found dead by a friend at her home in the country's capital, Seoul, Sunday. The National Police Agency has said that officers are not suspecting foul play and that Kim left no note. Once among the brightest stars on South Korea's vibrant movie and television scene.

Kim struggled to find work after a 2022 drunk driving incident, for which she was later fined in court. Online posts in South Korea

are notoriously harsh toward celebrities who make missteps, especially women, and



Kim faced constant negative coverage from news organizations that capitalized on public sentiment.

several of

major

Tuesday

published

about the

actor

Newspapers and websites criticized her whenever she was seen partying with friends,

Some invoked the 2019 deaths of K-Pop singers Seol-li and Goo Hara and the 2023 death of 'Squid Games' actor Lee Sun-kyun while calling for a change zero-tolerance culture toward lebrities

or when she complained about her lack of work and nasty comments on social media. She was even criticized for smiling while filming an independent movie last year.

Following Kim's death,

several of the country's major newspapers Tuesday published editorials and opinion pieces lambasting the toxic online comments about the actor. Some invoked the 2019 deaths of K-Pop singers Seolli and Goo Hara and the 2023 death of "Squid Games" actor Lee Sun-kyun while calling for a change in the "harsh, zero-tolerance" culture toward celebrities.

The Hankook Ilbo newspaper said the country's media outlets were part of the problem, lamenting that some outlets continued to exploit Kim for clicks even after her death, using provocative headlines that highlighted her past struggles.

The watchdog Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media

Tuesday criticized news or ganisations for blaming social media without considering their own "sensational and provocative reporting.<sup>3</sup>

Born in 2000, Kim began her acting career at age 9, with the 2009 film "A Brand New Life," portraying a girl's struggles to adjust to a new life after being left at an orphanage by her fa ther. She rose to stardom with 'The Man from Nowhere, which was one of the biggest hits in the South Korean movie scene that year and won her a domestic acting award.

She starred in various mov ies and TV shows before the 2022 drunk driving incident.

Gold Medalist, Kim's former management agency, did not immediately answer calls for comment.













## Business



We have modernised our investment ecosystem...we invite Indian investors and entrepreneurs to explore the true potential of Qatar's economy...We are ready to take steps to fast track negotiations for a new bilateral investment promotion and protection agreement

FAISAL BIN THANI BIN FAISAL AL THANI OMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER, QATAF

#### **DTDC LAUNCHES DIVA 2.0**

Express logistics services firm DTDC Express Tuesday announced the launch of conversational GenAI, DIVA 2.0, a first-of-its-kind technology in the domestic logistics industry to provide intelligent customer support. The latest technological tool is already live on the company's mobile app MyDTDC and its website, DTDC Express said



day

**Over the** last month, demand from long-term investors has been weak, resulting in

widening of spreads in the long-term corporate bond segment

KETAN PARIKH | HEAD OF FIXED INCOME, ICICI PRUDENTIAL LIFE INSURANCE

The government has wav more rice than needed, so there's no issue

with supply. Given that, they should allow exports of 100% broken rice BV KRISHNA RAO | PRESIDENT, RICE EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

It is the demand of trade and industry that the ITC of input and services used for con-

struction of warehouses and building for the purpose of leasing out at least should be allowed and for 'own use' may be blocked

VIVEK JALAN | PARTNER, TAX CONNECT ADVISOR

#### SHORT TAKES

#### InCred acquires **Arrow Capital**

Dubai: India's diversified financial services firm InCred Group has announced the acquisition of Arrow Capital (DIFC) Limited, a leading boutique financial services firm based in Dubai. Arrow Capital, founded in 2016 and regulated by the Dubai **Financial Services Authority** (DFSA), has established itself as a trusted advisor to ultra-high net worth individuals, families, trusts, and corporate entities worldwide. This move marks a significant expansion of InCred's global capabilities across wealth management, investment banking, and asset management, while strengthening its presence in the Middle East and Africa. Following the acquisition.

#### **INDICES BLEED**

# **BSE-listed firms' mcap** slips below ₹400L-crore

Uninterrupted foreign fund outflows and lower-than-expected corporate earnings continue to hit investors' sentiment

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms slipped below the ₹400 lakh crore-mark Tuesday as relentless foreign fund outflows and lower-than-expected corporate earnings continued to dent investors' sentiment.

After a day's breather, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex ended 29.47 points or 0.04 per cent lower at 75,967,39. Intra-day, the Sensex dropped 465.85 points or 0.61 per cent to 75,531.01.

On Tuesday, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by ₹2,01,032.5 crore to

₹3,98,31,067.30 crore (\$4.58 trillion). From The market its all-time cap of BSE-listhigh level of ed companies had gone past 85,978.25 hit Sept the coveted 27, last year, the BSE lakh crore mark benchmark has tanked in April last 10,010.86 points or

From all-time high level of 85,978.25 hit September 27, last year, the BSE benchmark has tanked 10,010.86 points or 11.64 per cent.

₹400

year.

"Markets ended a tad lower in a sluggish trading session as caution prevailed amongst the investors amid rising foreign fund outflows and falling rupee. Gains in IT, power, oil & gas, and metal stocks helped the market almost erase all its losses. However,

#### **Reliance to enter RE** manufacturing space

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

said

New Delhi, Feb 18: Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra) is entering into the renewable energy (RE) equipment manufacturing



trading session as caution investors amid rising foreign fund outflows and falling rupee PRASHANTH TAPSE | SENIOR VP (RESEARCH), MEHTA EQUITIES

NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Zomato, Power Grid, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HCL Tech were among the gainers.

#### IPO-bound NSE's valuation jumps 200% to ₹ 4.7L-cr

cap stocks,'

Prashanth

Tapse, Se

nior VP (Re-

search), Me-

hta Equities

Ltd, said.

Mumbai: The IPO-bound NSE's valuation jumped 201 per cent in 2024 to ₹4.7 lakh crore, a report said Tuesday. The largest India equity bourse, which is reported to have restarted its listing process by applying for a no-objection from markets regulator Sebi, is already the 10th-most valuable private company in the country, as per the 2024 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 list of listed as well as unlisted companies. The valuation was pegged at ₹3.12 lakh crore, as per a September 2024 report. Another media report said the company, which also runs the world's largest derivatives exchange, aims to sell 10 per cent of holding in the IPO.

#### **Over 28 lakh firms** registered in India; 65% active: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: More than 28 lakh companies are regis tered in the country and only 65 per cent of them or little over 18.1 lakh companies are active. according to official data.

Among those registered under the Companies Act, 2013, just 5,216 are foreign companies and out of those, 63 per cent or 3.281 entities were active at the end of January.

Latest data from the corporate affairs ministry also showed that a total of 16,781 companies were registered with a collective paid up cap ital of ₹816.14 crore last month

"A total number of 28,05,354 companies were registered in the country as on 31st January, 2025, of which 65 per cent (18,17,222) companies stand active. There is an increase of 0.14 per cent in the total propor tion of active companies with respect to registered companies when compared to December 2024," the ministry said in its latest monthly information bulletin.

As many as 9,49,934 companies have been shuttered.

In terms of sectors, the maximum number of active companies were in business services at 27 per cent, followed by manufacturing (20 per cent), trading and community, personal and social services (13 per cent).

The highest number of active companies were in Maharashtra, followed by Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

"An increase in the num ber of active companies is witnessed in the states of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi as compared to December 2024.

As January 31, there were 5,216 foreign companies registered in the country and out of them, 63 per cent or 3,281 entities were active.

### Tesla fast-tracks India entry plans The US electric carmaker

starts recruitment in India after Musk-Modi meet

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 18: Elon Musk's Tesla is looking to hire senior staff in India, job advertisements posted this week showed, signalling progress in the electric vehicle maker's plans to enter the world's third-biggest auto market.

The postings come less than a week after Musk's meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington. Tesla has for years planned

an India market entry and even setting up of local manufacturing. Some executives were hired around 2022, though some top-level people guit the company after Tesla put its India plans on hold back then.

With the automaker again scouting for showroom space in India since late last year, it has now listed 13 jobs on its website, opens new tab and social media platform LinkedIn, opens new tab for various customer-facing and back-end roles based in Mumbai, India's financial capital.

Among them is a "store manager" role responsible for overseeing and driving sales at the location, one job listing showed, a sign that Tesla is looking to open a showroom in the city. Delivery operations and customer support specialists are also being sought, the ads showed.

The listings come just after Modi met Musk in the United States last week, and discussed issues including space, mobility, technology, and innovation.

Musk has long criticised India for having high import

**Tesla has for years** planned an India market entry and even setting up of

local manufacturing. **Some executives** were hired around 2022, though some top-level people quit the company after **Tesla put its India** plans on hold back then

tariffs of around 100% on EVs and his company has repeated ly lobbied to relax them. The move, however, has faced opposition from local automakers who think Tesla's entry can hit their EV plans.

Last year, Musk was set to meet Modi during a trip to India where he was expected to announce a potential \$2 bil lion-\$3 billion investment, but the visit was called off after Tesla decided to lay off 10% of its global workforce amid de clining sales.

In November, Reuters re ported that Tesla was also scouting for showroom space in the country's capital city of New Delhi, and was in early stage talks with real estate developer DLF to help secure

**Unemployment rate** dips marginally in Q3

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

a location

New Delhi, Feb 18: The rate of unemployment among people aged 15 years and above in urban areas dropped marginally to 6.4 per cent in the October-December quarter of the current fiscal, according to the National Sample Survey Survey (NSSO). Joblessness, or unemployment rate, is defined as the per centage of unemployed people in the labour force. The unem ployment rate in the December quarter of FY24 was 6.5 per cent. However, the rate staved flat when compared sequentially. In the preceding July-Sep tember quarter of FY25, the rate of unemployment for people aged 15 years and above in urban areas was at the same level of 6.4 per cent, the 25th Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) showed.



US emerges 5th top oil supplier to India

roiled global oil trade and forced buyers of discounted Russian crude to find new wavs to maintain their purchases.

Imports of middle eastern oil rose by 6.5% in January to 2.7 million bpd, with Iraq continuing to be the second largest oil supplier to India, followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, according to the data. Last month, Indian refiners turned to non-Russian oil after the government warned them about the US sanctions weeks before they were announced. The share of middle eastern oil is about 5.1 million bpd crude imports in January rose to a 27-month high of about 53%, while that of Russia remained almost stagnant from December, the data showed. In the first 10 months of the current fiscal year from April 1 2024. India's oil imports rose 4.5% to average at 4.8 million barrels per day, per data.

its 11.64%

InCred Global Wealth, with offices in Dubai, Singapore, and London, will manage assets exceeding \$2 billion.

. . . . . . . . . . .

#### NTPC pays interim dividend of ₹2,424cr

New Delhi: State-owned NTPC Tuesday said it has paid an additional ₹2,424 crore of interim dividend to its shareholders in the financial year ending March 2025. This is in addition to the first interim dividend of ₹2,424 crore paid in November 2024, NTPC said in a statement. The ₹2,424 crore dividend paid on February 18 is 25 per cent of the paid-up equity share capital of the company. The total dividend paid by the company during the ongoing fiscal has reached ₹8,000 crore, which includes the final dividend of ₹3,152 crore for the financial year 2023-24 paid in September 2024.

#### space to increase its business portfolio, industry sources said. The Reliance Group company has already appointed Ivan

Saha as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Renewable Manufacturing, and Mushtaque Hussain as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Battery Manufacturing, they

"RInfra is making strategic entry into the renewable energy manufacturing industry," sources said.

The company would set up an integrated solar manufacturing unit with the objective to boost the production of solar panels and components in India, promoting self-sufficiency in clean energy.

companies and ships that have not been sanctioned by the US

*The purchase of Russian* 

oil by India may fall in

would buy Russian oil

only if it is supplied by

coming months as refiners

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 18: India's oil imports from the United States rose sharply in January from December, turning Washington as the fifth largest oil supplier to New Delhi, data obtained from trade sources show. India shipped in 218,400 bar-

rels per day of oil from the US compared to 70.600 bpd in December, the data showed. Refiners in India, the world's third biggest oil importer and

consumer, are bracing for higher imports of energy from Washington, as New Delhi looks to boost its energy purchases from the US to \$25 billion from \$15 billion last year. India's imports from its top oil supplier Russia rose 4.3% last month to 1.58 million barrels per day, per data.

The purchase of Russian oil by India is likely to fall in the coming months as refiners would buy Russian oil only if it is supplied by companies and ships that have not been sance tioned by the United States.

Widened sanctions on Moscow by Western countries including the United States have

### Dubai's Sobha Realty enters cricket world

The international luxury developer becomes global partner for ICC Men's event, starting with Champions Trophy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: Dubaibased Sobha Realty Tuesday said it has become a global partner for the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's event

launched Aadhaar-OTP based spans banking facilities coinciding

cle events.

In a statement, Sobha Realty, which is part of Sobha Group, said the partnership various in-stadia, broadcast and digital rights, starting with the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025, which begins February 19.

"Sobha Realty has become a Global Partner for ICC Men's events," the company said, adding that the partnership

will draw synergies with the moments of brilliance that are synonymous with ICC pinna-Spanning a visible presence in-stadia and with further

touchpoints across broadcast and digital channels. ICC and Sobha Realty will develop content that celebrates the 'Art of The Detail' and the outstanding moments of precision that define elite-level cricket," the statement said.

ICC Chair Jay Shah said: 'We are delighted to welcome Sobha Realty as a Global Partner in the ICC's Commercial Partner Programme, aligning with some of the most iconic events in the cricketing cal-

The partnership with the ICC reflects our shared commitment to delivering exceptional experiences to a worldwide audience while reinforcing our presence on the international stage RAVI MENON CHAIRMAN, SOBHA GROUP

#### endar."

partnership rep-"This resents a powerful fusion of two brands that share a commitment to excellence and passion. With the ICC Men's Champions Trophy just around the corner, we look forward to seeing how this collaboration will enhance the legacy and impact of ICC events on a global scale," Shah said.

The ICC is the global governing body for cricket. Rep-

resenting 108 members, the ICC governs and administers the game and is responsible for the staging of major international tournaments including the ICC World Test Championship Final, ICC Men's and Women's Cricket World Cups, T20 World Cups, Champions Trophy as well as all associated qualifying events.

Sobha Realty is an international luxury developer committed to redefining the art of living through sustainable communities. Established in 1976 as an interior decoration firm in Oman by PNC Menon, the company has grown its presence with developments and investments in the UAE, Oman, and India. In India, Sobha Group has a listed real estate company named Sobha Ltd. which is headquartered in Bangalore.

# Adani Foundation pledges education temples across India

Ahmedabad: The Adani Foundation has collaborated with GEMS Education, a global leader in private K-12 education, to establish temples of education across the country. With an initial donation of ₹2,000 crore from the Adani family, the partnership will prioritise making world-class education and learning infrastructure affordable to people from all strata of society. The foundation is the CSR arm of the Adani Group -India's largest infrastructure portfolio



The partnership will also give rise to best-in-class research institutions focused on developing teaching competencies supported by innovation and capability development. The first 'Adani GEMS School of Excellence' will come up in Lucknow in the academic year 2025-26. Over the next three years, at least 20 such schools in the K-12 segment will be rolled out across India's primary metropolitan cities and, subsequently, also in Tier II to IV cities. In these schools, 30% seats in CBSE curriculum will be free for under-served and deserving children. "This initiative reflects our commitment to making world-class education affordable and widely accessible," said Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group. "By adopting global best practices and innovative digital learning through our partnership with GEMS Education, we aim to equip the next generation of change-makers to become socially responsible leaders in India." "Our vision has always been to make quality education accessible to every learner, regardless of their socioeconomic background," said Sunny Varkey, Founder & Chairman of GEMS Education.



to open a savings

the bank website.









#### IOB celebrates 89th foundation day Chennai: Public sector

Indian Overseas Bank has

account opening and API

with its 89th Foundation

official said Tuesday. The

initiatives were designed

to offer simplified banking

services to both individual

and corporate customers.

The city-headquartered bank

has introduced an Aadhaar

OTP based account opening

facility, enabling customers

account effortlessly through

Day Celebrations, a top

# PORTS

#### FIH PRO LEAGUE

### Back-to-back loss for eves Germany thrash India PRESS TRUST OF INDIA match as regular skipper Har-



India and Spain women hockey players are seen dribbling the ball in FIH Pro League match at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar PIC CREDIT: BIKASH NAYAH

#### Spain edge out India 4-3 in FIH women's **Hockey Pro League**

**OrissaPOS** 

WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 19, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: An unsuccessful fourth and final quarter saw the Indian women's hockey team go down 3-4 to Spain in a thrilling match to suffer their first defeat of the ongoing FIH Pro League, here Tuesday.

Baljeet Kaur (19'), Sakshi Rana (38'), and Rutaja Dadaso Pisal (45') scored for India, while Estel Petchame (25', 49'), Sofia Rogoski (21') and Captain Lucia Jimenez (52') netted goals for Spain. Sakshi Rana and Jyoti Singh received their maiden senior international caps with the former scoring an impressive goal on debut.

The first quarter was tightly contested. India had an early

SHORT TAKES

WADA gives explanation

Madrid: The World Anti-Doping

Agency offered an explanation

Jannik Sinner received a much

for why top-ranked tennis player

shorter doping ban than the six-year

suspension it handed to a Spanish

figure skater in a similar doping

case. Spanish media has been

calling attention to the lengthy

ban handed to local skater Laura

Barguero after she tested positive

substance that earned Sinner a

for the anabolic Clostebol, the same

chance when Rutaja passed the ball to Sharmila Devi from the left, but her shot narrowly missed the post.

Spain attempted to play their signature free-flowing hockey but struggled against India's defensive press

In the ninth minute, India earned the first penalty corner but the opportunity was squandered as the ball struck Sushila Chanu's foot while she was receiving it. Towards the end of the quarter, Spain had a significant chance when Florencia Amundson unleashed a powerful shot, but Indian goalkeeper Savita made a fine save to keep

the score level. The match opened up in the second quarter with three goals scored in a span of six minutes. In the 21st minute, Deepika drifted wide and fired a reverse hit from the left, which was perfectly deflected into the goal by an unmarked Baljeet, marking her first senior international goal.

Two minutes later, Spain equalised as Rogoski's powerful reverse shot from close range slipped past Savita and found the net. Spain took the lead in the 25th minute when they earned their first penalty corner, which was successfully converted by Petchame.

Just before half-time, Spain received another penalty corner, but Captain Lucia Jimenez's shot went too high. India dominated the third quarter to reclaim the lead.

In the 38th minute, debutant Sakshi Rana won the ball from Jimenez near the circle, created an opportunity for herself, and fired a shot on target to equalize. In the final minute of the

quarter, Deepika made an impressive solo run down the left flank, dribbling past defenders and beating the goalkeeper before passing the ball to Rutaja, who finished confidently to re-

store India's lead. Spain applied pressure early in the fourth quarter, winning a penalty corner in the opening seconds, but Constanza Amund-

son's shot went wide. Moments later, in the 49th minute, Spain won another penalty corner. Amundson's initial shot was blocked by an Indian defender, but the ball fell to Petchame, who struck it past an outstretched Savita to score her second goal of the evening.

Spain reclaimed the lead for the second time in the 52nd minute when captain Jimenez fired a backhand shot from inside the edge of the circle, placing it perfectly into the bottom right corner. In a desperate attempt to find an equaliser, India played without their goalkeeper for the last four minutes of the match. However, Spain held their defensive shape and secured a narrow victory.

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: India were found wanting against a relentless German outfit as they suffered a 1-4 drubbing at the hands of the reigning world champions in their FIH Pro League match here Tuesday.

India was weak in defence and they lacked enough quality in the final third.

Florian Sperling gave Germany the lead with his seventh minute strike but Guriant Singh (13th') equalised for India within six minutes.

In what proved to be a riveting first quarter, Thies Prinz (14') restored Germany's lead a minute later as three goals were scored in the first quarter.

After a goalless second and third quarter, Michel Struthoff (48') and Raphael Hartkopf (55') scored twice in the fourth and final quarter to power Germany to a convincing win against the Paris Olympics bronze medallists.

Senior defender Amit Rohidas led the Indian team in this manpreet Singh was not part of the starting XI. It was, however, not clear why the champion drag flicker did not start.

Harmanpreet, though, was also rested for the home team's second game.

Coming into the game after a 2-0 win over Spain in their last outing, India could not begin well as Sperling drew the first blood with goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak unable to thwart the danger.

Unperturbed by the opening German strike, India responded swiftly with the experienced forward Gurjant deflecting the ball towards the opponent's goalpost.

Germany, however, regained their lead in the blink of an eye as the ball again got the better of Pathak after it came off Prinz's stick.

At the end of first quarter, Germany led 2-1.

India had a great chance to equalise in the 20th minute but Gurjant, trying to deflect a pass from Rajinder, missed the target.

Four minutes later, Arsh deep Singh missed the target by a whisker, even as substitute goalkeeper Suraj Karkera denied Sperling.

In the action before half time India had more possession but lacked finishing as Germany capitalised on their chances to take the lead.

As the match entered the third quarter, India needed to improve their performance inside the circle, but the Germans remained calm and held on to their lead.

Penalty corners continued to be a problem for India in the third quarter as they failed to convert them.

Instead, Germany scored twice within seven minutes in the fourth and final quarter to seal the match in their favour. This is India's second loss in

three matches Having already scored

10 goals in four Pro League matches, Germany were expected to test India's defence,

and the number of goals indicated that the visitors did their job pretty well.



India and Germany men hockey players in action in FIH Pro League match at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar

### Zelezny's tweaks will take me to 90m mark: Neeraj

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: Two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has revealed that his new coach Jan Zelezny has figured out mistakes in his technique and would now make some adjustments to his

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: The Indian Olympic Association's athletes commission chairperson and boxing legend M C Mary Kom Tuesday denied reports that she has resigned from her position, insisting that she has been misunderstood and will complete her tenure in the panel.



Mary Kom denies quitting IOA panel

I have not resigned, I will complete my tenure MARY KOM | BOXER, INDIA

Karhana, Winter Olympian Shiva Keshavan, London Olympics bronze-winning shooter Gagan Narang, rower Bajrang Lal, fencer Bhavani Devi, former women's hockey captain Rani Rampal, and Tokyo Olympics weightlifter silver-winning Mirabai Chanu. "I don't know why is it that every time I raise my voice for something, it is misunderstood like this? Lot of my fellow ath letes speak their mind on so ma ny issues but nobody gets mis understood," Mary Kom said. "Where is the resignation? Has anyone seen it?" she asked. One of the most decorated Indian athletes, Mary Kom has been on the athletes forum of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in the past and has a fairly good experience of the administrative side of sports. She has also been taken on board for various government panels and was a Rajya Sabha member from 2016 to 2022.



three-month ban after a settlement reached between WADA and the Italian tennis player Saturday. The deal was criticized by many of his fellow tennis professionals this weekend. WADA pointed out that while both cases involved the same substance, the specific facts related to Barquero's case were "very different" to Sinner's.

#### US defends lowest total

Al Amarat: The United States of America Tuesday successfully defended the lowest-ever total of 122 in a non-curtailed ODI match to beat Oman by 57 runs in a their Cricket World Cup League 2 match here. It is the lowest successfully defended totals in men's ODIs and excluding matches with a revised target or reduced overs. In conditions heavily favouring spin, it was the metronomic work of Nosthush Keniige that led the American charge, with the leftarm spinner claiming 5/11 from 7.3 overs to sink the hosts for just 65. The score of 65 all-out is also Oman's lowest in the men's international format.

#### **Barcelona returns to top**

Barcelona: Barcelona returned to the top of the Spanish league on goal difference after Robert Lewandowski's first-half penalty secured a 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano. The Catalan club Monday took advantage of weekend slip-ups by Real Madrid and Atlético Madrid to move onto 51 points, the same as Madrid and a point clear of Atlético. Madrid drew 1-1 at Osasuna Saturday and Atletico was held by the same score at home by Celta Vigo. Barcelona took the lead after 27 minutes when Pathe Ciss brought down Íñigo Martínez in the box, and a penalty was awarded after a video review. Lewandowski sent the keeper the wrong way from the spot.

throwing routine to achieve the 90m mark that the Indian star is pursuing for a while.

Chopra has been trying hard to hit the 90m mark. His personal best stands at 89.94m which was achieved in 2022. His season begins in May with the Diamond League and would mark the competitive start of his partnership with Zelezny, a former Olympic and world champion who also holds the world record (98,48m), "I believe

a 90+ throw is happening soon. He (Jan Zelezny) has made some technical adjustments in my game," said Chopra. "He (Zelezny) feels that his

tweaks would help me. I've been able to understand what he expects from me. One of the mistakes that he told me about

was how I was throwing very low even in Paris and that I was leaning towards the left.' "If I am able to incorporate

those changes, I think I will get a lot better," he added.

But the Panipat-lad insisted that the milestone is still not as important as winning medals for the country. "I want to do it myself. But, going to a competition and winning a medal against people who have previously thrown 90 meters is even more important. There's no point in throwing 90 meters and not winning.

He also spoke about the groin injury that marred his season last year. Chopra has consulted a doctor recommended by Zelezny in Prague.

The 42-year-old Manipuri, who is also a 2012 Olympics bronze-winner, had travelled to Haldwani for the National Games closing ceremony last week where she expressed her displeasure over being lodged at an "inferior hotel".

Speaking to PTI, Mary Kom said her outburst in a private WhatsApp group was misconstrued and leaked to the media as resignation.

"I was merely telling my fellow (athletes commission) members that if this kind of treatment happens again, I will consider resigning. I never said that I am resigning. IOA is my family and if I am unhappy over something, I have every right to express it. This does not mean that I am resigning," she went on.

Mary Kom was elected to the panel in 2022 with table tennis stalwart A Sharath Kamal as vice-chairperson.

'Whoever has leaked the private conversation in the WhatsApp group of Athletes Commission has not done the right thing. I don't know who has done it. I am hurt but I want to close this matter because IOA is my family," she later said at the IOA Bhawan here.

"I have no ill feelings towards anybody who has leaked the conversation but I want the IOA and the sports ministry to find out who has leaked it. I want to serve the country's sport and don't want a controversy which I had not created." she added.

The commission also features two-time Olympic medal-winning shuttler PV Sindhu, former shot putter Om Prakash

### CT set to start amid debate on relevance of ODI cricket

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Feb 18: Intrigue, uncertainty, backstage drama. The ICC Champions Trophy has seen it all even before the curtains go up on the tournament and it would only get more stirring over the next three weeks, starting with the opening clash between Pakistan and New Zealand in Karachi.

Eight teams will vie for a trophy, often talked up as tougher to win than the World Cup, and also to script a new chapter in their own cricketing story. While India will fight it out in Dubai, others will be primarily based in Pakistan, which would get to host its first ICC event since the 1996 World Cup.

Several barriers had to be hurdled over to cobble this tournament together after eight years. The tournament



is also crucial amid the raging debate on the relevance of ODI cricket, which is struggling to find its space amid the rage for T20 cricket and the devotion for Test format.

Perhaps, no other cricket-

ing event in the recent past has been harried so much by long-standing geopolitical tensions, stubbornness by administrative boards of two important participants, and the nail-biting anxiety over

the readiness of venues in the main hosting nation.

The chaos has been an endearing throwback to the 90s when cricket in the sub-continent resembled a hastily organised party.

#### ICC: 36 cameras to be used, 360 degree virtual field model

minimum of 36 cameras with a host of analytical tools and visual enhance-Aments to elevate the experience for the viewers will be used to broadcast the Champions Trophy matches, the ICC said on the eve of opening game between New Zealand and Pakistan in Karachi. Their drone camera will offer breathtaking aerial views of venues and surrounding landscapes, while the roving buggy cam will deliver immersive ground-level visuals. The signature Spidercams will further enhance the broadcast with its aerial coverage, offering dynamic perspectives of the action. The ICC TV will further collaborate with JioStar in an effort to engage mobile-first audiences and produce a dedicated vertical feed, optimizing the viewing experience for smartphones users.

But all these pre-tournament jitters will be forgotten once the teams enter the field, and the first of them will be Pakistan and New Zealand. If anyone needs a reminder, then Pakistan had won the last edition of the Champions Trophy in 2017.

The opening match in itself is a curious clash -- a talented-yet-volatile Pakistan unsure of its own destiny against a team for which order is ev-

erything.

But the blue riband match of the tournament will be February 23 when India take on Pakistan, ushering in customary waves of nostalgia, emotions political grand-standing, and the social media battle.

That marquee showdown will be in Dubai as India remained steadfast in its refusal to set foot on Pakistani soil owing to security concerns.

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