

Bhumi's achievement

Bhumi Pednekar says she is happy that she has built her career on playing women with agency

LEISURE | P2



Zelenskyy hits back

Ukrainian President Zelenskyy hits back at Trump's suggestion that Ukraine was responsible for Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion

INTERNATIONAL | P10



US SEC seeks help

US Securities and Exchange Commission asks Indian authorities for help in its probe into the Adani bribery case

BUSINESS | P11



India bounce back

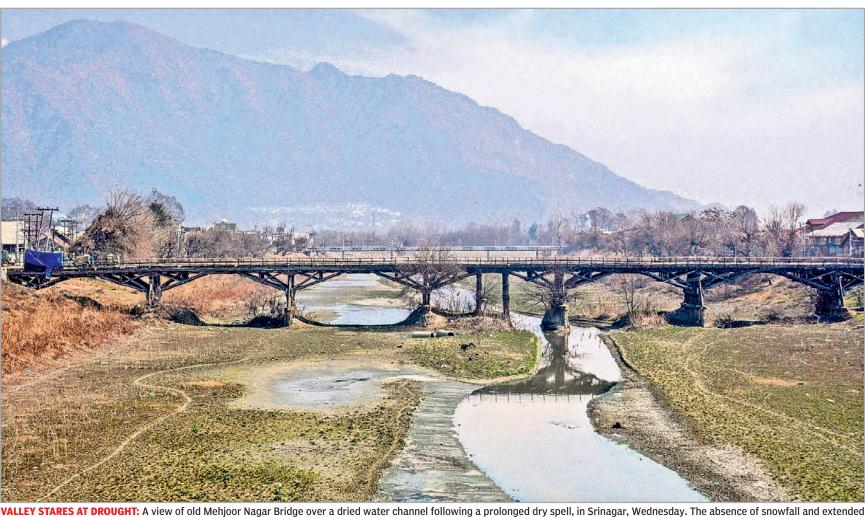
India win their second match in the FIH Hockey season by beating reigning World **Champions Germany**

SPORTS | P12

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dry conditions have hindered the replenishment of water reservoirs, leaving many streams and the Jhelum river flowing below normal levels

CM urges Nepal students to return, assures justice

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi Wednesday urged Nepalese students of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) to return to the campus here and resume studies, assuring them that peace and normalcy will be restored soon.

Around 1,000 Nepalese students of KIIT were issued suspension notices and asked to leave the campus immediately by the institute's authorities Monday following protests after the body of a student hailing from the neighbouring country, Prakriti Lamsal, was found hanging from the ceiling of her hostel room Sunday.

However, following the intervention of the Centre and the state government, the KIIT authorities tendered an apology and requested the Nepalese students to return to the campus.

Majhi, who is currently in Rajasthan, spoke over the phone with officials from Nepal, Sanjeeb Das Sharma and Navin Raj Adhikari, who held a meeting with Odisha Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling and Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, along with Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja at the State Guest House here during the day on the evolving situation.

The Chief Minister also as sured them that justice will be served in the case of the de ceased KIIT student, Prakriti Lamsal, a CMO statement said

Besides, Nepal's Foreign Minister Dr Arzu Rana Deuba also spoke with Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj over the phone on the issue. Nepalese students of KIIT al-

leged they encountered harrow ing experiences following the protests over the unnatural death of the student, including being shunted out of the campus and left at Cuttack railway station besides being roughed up, leaving many of them scarred and fearful of returning to the campus. Meanwhile, the high-level

committee, headed by additional chief secretary Satyabrata Sahu, Wednesday visited the KIIT campus and held discussions with a section of students and officials.

SHORT **TAKES**

Vig nets OAS officer while taking bribe

Bhubaneswar: Vigilance sleuths Wednesday arrested a senior Odisha bureaucrat while he was accepting a bribe of ₹50,000, an official statement said. The **Odisha Administrative Service** (OAS) officer, Sarat Kumar Giri, was working as LA (General) and was the competent authority for land acquisition in the Collector's office in Keonihar. The officer was apprehended by Odisha Vigilance in his office while demanding and taking a bribe of ₹50.000 from the complainant for disbursing the compensation amount of his land acquired for a highway. The entire tainted bribe money has been recovered from the possession of the accused and seized, it said. Following the apprehension, simultaneous searches were underway at three places linked to Giri in connection with a probe into disproportionate assets.

SC defers hearing as **CEC, EC take charge**

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday adjourned the pleas against the appointments of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (EC) under the 2023 law. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh indicated that the matter would be listed after the Holi festival break due to paucity of time. However, no date was fixed for hearing the matter. Earlier during the day, Gyanesh Kumar took over as the 26th CEC, while Vivek Joshi assumed charge as an EC. An EC since March 2024, Kumar was elevated as the CEC Monday.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Dirty? No way! This water is

as pristine as the Sangam's.

Go ahead, get it tested!

Trump spills the beans on tariff talks with PM

After calling PM Modi a 'better negotiator' than himself. Trump has spilled the beans on their tariff talks in a recent interview with Fox News saying nobody can argue with him, not even Modi, when it comes to tariffs. The US President revealed details about his tough stance during the talks and emphasised that he made it clear he would impose equivalent tariffs on India's imports to the US, mirroring the charges India places on American goods. Highlighting the challenge of selling to India due to its high tariff rates. Trump noted that India's import duties can reach as high as 100 per cent, which has led him to adopt a firm 'reciprocal' approach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 19: US President Donald Trump has said that he made it clear to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India will not be spared from Washington's reciprocal tariffs, emphasising that "nobody can argue with me" on tariff structure.



Trump made these remarks during an interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity recently. Fox News aired a joint television interview with President Trump and billionaire Elon Musk Tuesday night.

On February 13, hours before Prime Minister Modi's bilateral meeting with Trump in the White House, the US President

announced reciprocal tariffs. Under the plan, the Trump administration "will work strenuously to counter non-reciprocal trading arrangements with trading partners by determining the equivalent of a reciprocal tariff with respect to

each foreign trading partner." During the interview with Hannity, Trump reiterated his stance on existing tariff structures between the US and its partners, including India.

"I told Prime Minister Modi yesterday - he was here - I said, 'Here's what we're going to do, reciprocal. Whatever you charge, I'm charging'," President Trump said. "He (Modi) goes, 'No, no, I don't like that.' 'No, no, whatever you charge, I'm going to charge.' I'm doing that with every country."

India has very strong tariffs on certain imports from the US. Like in the automobile sector, India charges 100 per cent. Musk said, "It's 100 per cent -

auto imports are 100 per cent." "Yeah, that's peanuts. So, much higher. And — and others too. I said, 'Here's what we're going to do reciprocal. Whatever you charge, I'm charging,'

Trump said. "Nobody can argue with me," President Trump insisted. "If I said 25 per cent, they'd say, 'Oh, that's terrible.' I don't sav that anymore... because I say, 'Whatever they charge, we'll charge.' And you know what? They stop."

Sangam water unsafe: Govt data currently exceeding this limit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Ganga water at Triveni Sangam, where lakhs of people are taking a holy dip every day during the ongoing Maha Kumbh, is currently unsafe for bathing as it exceeds the prescribed limit for biological oxygen demand (BOD), a key parameter to determine water quality, according to government data.

BOD refers to the amount of oxygen required by aerobic microorganisms to break down organic material in a water body. A higher BOD level indicates more organic content in the water. River water is considered fit for bathing if the BOD

Yogi says otherwise

Lucknow: The water at the Sangam is fit for both bathing and ritual drinking (aachman) as confirmed by some recent reports, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said contain high levels of faecal bacteria He told the state Assembly that the Uttar Pradesh Control Board and the Central Pollution Control Board are continuously monitoring the water quality at the Sangam. He also trained his guns at Opposition Samaiwadi Party, saying the condition of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers was so poor while it was in power that the Prime Minister of Mauritius refused to take a dip during the 2013 Kumbh. **P9**

level is less than 3 mg per litre. Government data shows that the river water at Sangam is The BOD level at Sangam was 5.09 mg per litre at 5am January 16. It was recorded at 4.6 milligrams per litre at 5pm January 18 and 5.29 mg per litre at 8am January 19 (Wednesday).

According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, the BOD level at Sangam was 3.94 mg per litre January 13 when the Maha Kumbh started. It improved to 2.28 mg per litre on Makar Sank ranti (January 14) and further dropped to 1 milligram per litre January 15. However, it rose to 4.08 mg per litre January 24 and was recorded at 3.26 mg per litre on Mauni Amavasya

Rekha Gupta to

be new Delhi CM

Odisha gets ₹255cr NDRF aid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: A committee headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah has approved ₹1.554.99 crore of additional central assistance under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to five states including Odisha, which were affected by floods, flash floods, landslides and cyclonic storms during 2024.

Out of the total amount of

₹1554.99 crore, ₹255.24 crore has been approved for Odisha, ₹608.08 crore for Andhra Pradesh, ₹170.99 crore for Nagaland, ₹231.75 crore for Telangana and ₹288.93 crore for Tripura, according to an official statement.

This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by the Centre to the states in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), already placed at the disposal of the states.

viral infection found in trop-

ical countries worldwide. It

can cause joint pain, nausea,

vomiting and rashes, and in

severe cases can cause breath-

ing problems, hemorrhaging

and organ failure. While there

is no specific treatment for the

illness, medical care to main-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: First-time MLA Rekha Gupta will be the new chief minister of Delhi, the BJP announced Wednesday. Gupta was chosen as the

Leader of the House in the Delhi Assembly at the BJP legislature party meeting. The party has returned to power in Delhi after over 26 years, ending the 10-year rule of the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP.

Gupta and her Cabinet ministers will take the oath of office at the Ramlila Ground Thursday. She will be the fourth woman chief minister of Delh after Sushma Swaraj, Sheila Dikshit and Atishi. She will be the only woman chief minister among the states being ruled by

from Shalimar Bagh, defeating AAP candidate Bandana Kumari by over 29,000 votes in

Philippine village offers bounties for mosquitos

CRITICS WARN THE STRATEGY COULD BACKFIRE IF DESPERATE PEOPLE START BREEDING MOSQUITOES FOR THE REWARD Dengue is a mosquito-borne

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manila, Feb 19: A village in the densely populated Philippine capital region launched a battle against dengue Wednesday by offering a token bounty to residents for captured mosquitos — dead or alive.

The unusual strategy adopted by the Addition Hills village in Mandaluvong City reflects growing concern after the nearby city of Quezon declared an outbreak of the mosquito-borne illness over the weekend. Eight more areas reported an upsurge in cases of the potentially deadly viral infection.

At least 28,234 dengue cases have been recorded in the Philippines this year up to February 1, a 40 per cent increase compared to the same period last year, according to health department statistics. Quezon

City declared a dengue outbreak Saturday after deaths this year reached 10 people, mostly children, out of 1,769 residents infected.

An urban village of more than 100,000 residents living in crowded neighbourhoods and residential condominium towers, Addition Hills has done clean-ups, canal de-clogging and a hygiene campaign to combat dengue. But when cases spiked to 42 this year and two young students died, village leader Carlito Cernal decided to intensify the battle.

"There was an alarm," Cernal told The Associated Press. "I found a way.'

Residents will get a reward of one Philippines peso (just over 1 cent) for every five mosquitos or mosquito larva they turn in, Cernal said.

Critics warned the strategy



could backfire if desperate people start breeding mosquitoes for the reward. Cernal said that was unlikely because the campaign would be terminated as soon as the uptick in cases eases.

As the campaign began, about a dozen mosquito hunt-

ers showed up at the village office. Miguel Labag, a 64-year-old scavenger, handed a jug with 45 dark mosquito larvas squirming in some water and received a reward of nine pesos (15 cents). "This is a big help," Labag said,

smiling. "I can buy coffee."

releasing swarms of frogs to eat mosquitoes. Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa said it's crucial to

seen as critical.

clean up mosquito breeding sites, and for anyone who might be infected to seek immediate medical attention. Despite an increase in dengue infections, the Philippines has managed to maintain low mortality rates, he said.

tain a person's fluid levels is Officials in another village in the BJP at present. Quezon City were considering The 50-year-old leader won the February 5 Assembly polls

All 48 newly-elected BJP MLAs attended the legislature party meeting in the presence of Central observers Ravi Shankar Prasad and OP Dhankar. Gupta's name was proposed by senior party leaders Parvesh Verma, Vijender Gupta and Satish Upadhyay.

eisure



MINDY KALING WANTS TO **GET BACK ON CAMERA** American actress Mindy Kaling wants to get back into acting after working with Kate

Hudson and Brenda Song. The 45-year-old star - who hasn't appeared on screen since in 2023 - admitted working behind the camera on her latest show *Running Point* has inspired her to consider acting roles again.

NICOLE KIDMAN'S HOME RANSACKED

The Los Angeles home of Babygirl actress Nicole Kidman and country music star Keith Urban has reportedly been ransacked. According to NBC News, a law enforcement source confirmed the break-in, which included ransacking and breaking glass. The property was targeted on Valentine's Day.





Ganesha will play Cupid with you today. You will be seized by temptations, and may even forget that your desires are one-sided. If in a troubled relationship, you may get insights into some unresolved matters, says Ganesha.

TAURUS

This day there could be a lot of surprises in store for you. Be prepared for sudden and unexpected twist and turns in the flow of events. This is not a day for taking up meaningful activities. Ganesha advises you to postpone

You will don the role of a very affectionate parent today. get a bit uneasy by this sudden surge of love on your part. Don't overdo it; if you have just realised that your kids need warmth, be patient with them. With your spouse, however, you will have no problem in the warmth department

CANCER

Today, your love for your partner will reach the point of obsession. Before you realise it, you will uncharacteristically go out of your way to impress the love of your life. It will be as if you are under a spell. So unless someone shakes you out of your stupor, you may end up doing something that you may live to regret for the rest of your life.

'Show me the money!" Well, vou might as well be saying that aloud, because today, you are going to be heard. Ganesha foresees a fruitful day in money matters. Even professionally, you come to terms with enjoying the power of money. It is a good day for a bit of splurging, especially on those you love.

VIRGO

A candid conversation with your beloved is on the radar today. Labour to complete tasks you've been putting off for a while, says Ganesha. A trip to a sacred place is also blinking. But be advised, and weigh your options before making a choice.

Call it your charm, your

LIBRA

influence or whatever you will, but today, it brings incredible results for you, says Ganesha, Also, you may personally contemplate a little bit of self-improvement for ensuring better prospects in the future. It is likely that some of you may decide to smarten up your dream house.

SCORPIO

Endless ambitions and limitless energy – a day tailored to perfection, forecasts Ganesha. On the career front, you will be looking for some challenging activities. You will have more than enough vigour to tackle anything that work or academics can throw at you.

SAGITTARIUS The artist in you will shine today, and how, says Ganesha. You'll be content with your possessions, which have been preserved over long years. Later in the day, your focus may shift to renovating or decorating your home by adding artifacts and furniture.

CAPRICORN

The day will find you in an exceedingly good mood and you will be all energetic and geared up to take on challenges as and when they come, says Ganesha. A number of business activities will command your attention, and agreements and contracts you will take hold of as a consequence may get you a fortune.

AQUARIUS

Today, you decide not to mix business with pleasure. A wise decision, says Ganesha Your commitment to work increases and you don't want to harm your prospects. However, you reserve the evening only for your loved ones, who are more than happy to have you with them.

PISCES The feelings of resentment that you have been harbour-ing since some time will not allow you to take any criticism that comes your way in the right spirit. This does none harm, but you. Learn to let go of your negative thoughts and indulge in some harmless fun and frolic today, says Ganesha.



Bhumi's surreal feeling surreal feeling that she gets to live her dream of being an actor everyday through movies. complex roles. "I realised I wanted to be

an actor when I was 12 so I am grateful that even after 10 years I am doing what I love so deeply. I constantly seek agency in my characters. If they don't have agency, I wouldn't do them because I just wouldn't enjoy being a part of that process. I am lucky that I had the opportunity to play such diverse women," the actor told this agency Bhumi will next be

seen in *Mere Hus*band Ki Biwi. The actress talking about the

movie, shared, "A man woman relationship is so complex there are so many shades there. There is

a lot of happilove to play such

Aziz directorial also features Rakul Preet Singh

and Arjun Kapoor.

The Mudassar

Solitude is intimidating: Samantha

abad: Samantha Ruth Prabhu took

a break from her busy acting schedule to find peace and refreshment. The actress shared her experience of spending three days in silence without using a mobile phone to reset herself. Samantha took

to her Instagram stories share picture from her recent spiritual visit to an organisation in Coim-

batore, Tamil Nadu. The actress show cased the beautiful green surroundings along with her ID card for the sessions. She captioned the picture, Just me for company."

'Three days in silence. No phone. No communication She further added, "Somehow, being alone with ourselves has become one of the scariest things. Would I do it again? A million times, yes Would I recommend you try it?

A million times, yes." The Citadel: Honey Bunny actress admitted that solitude can be intimidating, yet she would willingly experience if again again.

Deepika on why she's an introvert

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone recently made a surprising revelation about her personality, uncovering the reason behind her introverted nature.

Mumbai: Actor Bhumi Ped-

nekar, who is completing a de-

cade in the industry this year,

says she is happy that she has

built her career on playing

Laga Ke Haisha.

women with agency, right

from her debut with Dum

Bhumi, known for

films such Toilet: Ek

Prem Katha, Bala,

Bheed, and Bhak-

shak,

said

The Fighter actress took to her Instagram and reposted a video suggesting that intelligent people tend to enjoy being alone and are naturally inclined towards introversion.

In the clip, an Instagram user is heard saying, "Here's how you know somebody is intelligent. This is a simple theory and observation. The more intelligent someone is, the more they struggle with social interactions. Or, as he put it, the more intelligent someone is, the more at risk they are of becoming antisocial. Intelligent people like to be alone. They tend to be natural introverts. In fact, they have a small, select group of people they trust, and they feel a bit uncomfortable when surrounded by others, especially strangers.

Reposting the video, Deepika wrote, "Aah! I have always wondered why I am such an introvert... Now I know.' On the work front, she was

last seen in the blockbuster Kalki 2898 AD, which also featured Prabhas, Amitabh Bachchan, and Kamal Haasan. Deepika also appeared in Rohit Shetty's cop drama Singham Again alongside Ranveer. In the action-packed drama, she played the role of Shakti Shetty, aka Lady Singham. IANS

CURTAINS DOWN ON NATAKA PARIKRAMA



Uttar Purusha, one of the oldest drama troupes of Odisha, staged Odia play Uttaradayada on the third and final evening of its three-day drama festival at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. Written by Narayan Chandra Sahoo, the play was directed by troupe's president Prasanna Mishra. It exposed the evil designs of fake god-men prevailing in contemporary society. Noted theatre personality Haren Sahoo was honoured with Uttar Purusha Samman.

Jagadish Samman for Pabitra, Sunanda

BHUBANESWAR: The birth anniversary of trendsetting modern Odia fiction writer Jagadish Mahanty was celebrated here at

dish Katha Samman of the year was conferred on distinguished short-story writer Pabitra Panigrahi. The award comprises a cash prize of Rs 10,000 and a commemorative plaque. Similarly, author Sunanda Pradhan received Jagadish Yuva Samman. She received a certificate along with a cash prize of Rs 5,000.

This festival, Jagadish Jayanti, organ ised in his memory by Jagadish Mahanty Trust was graced by retired professor and critic Guru Charan Behera from Banaras Hindu University as the chief guest whilee noted translator and critic Himanshu Sekhar Mahapatra was the key note speaker.

PEANUTS



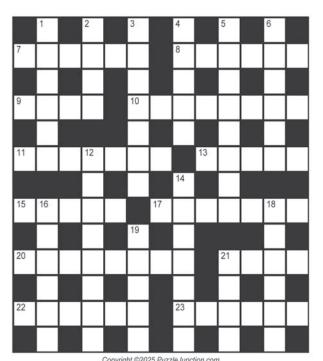
CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



FUN **CROSSWORD**



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Across

- 7 Popeye, e.g. 8 In the middle of
- 9 Neighbor of Vietnam
- 10 Indian Ocean
- island group 11 Dog treat
- 13 Cheap jewelry
- 15 Orderly pile 17 Real

- <u>Down</u>

20 Circle

measurement

21 Cousin of a

22 Tension

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23 Miner's goal

- sausage
- 1 Highly seasoned
 - 2 Handouts
 - 19 Hoard 21 Box seat

3 Sprite

6 Rise

14 Drifter

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times

5 Observant

4 Aesop's output

12 Salad addition

18 It's national, at

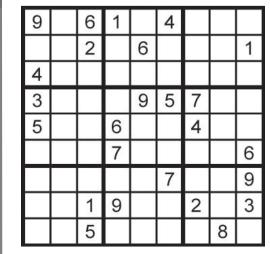
SUDOKU

the Buddha Mandir, Wednesday. On this occasion, the prestigious Jaga

The event was presided over by author Sarojini Sahu while poet Saroj Bal, delivered the welcome address. A dramatic presentation of a story by Jagadish Mahanty, was performed at the beginning by noted storyteller Prachitara

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

OBSZEPPELIN A A M S V A R W I C K CROSSWORD MEAGRE TIRELESSKNIT

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

owntown

ANNUAL MEET

Members of Odisha Government College Retired Lecturers' Association during the annual session and felicitation ceremony at Bhartiva Vidva Bhavan in Cuttack, Wednesday



Students, activists, lawyers question police role

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The unrest that broke out on the campus of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) following the alleged suicide of a 20-year-old BTech student from Nepal and the forcible eviction of hundreds of justice-seeking students from hostels after subjecting them to inhuman brutality at the hands of university guards and bouncers has raised several questions on the role of the police whose absence was conspicuous.

While the men and women in khaki whose mistreatment of citizens brought shame to the state last year in the Bharatpur police station episode that is still being investigated, the alleged mishandling of the events at KIIT has not only damaged the reputation of Odisha's pride as the education hub of eastern India, but also jeopardised relations with the Himalayan country.

As if the police' absence from the scene of violence at KIIT was not enough, viral videos surfacing on social media that showed

instructing evicted students to go back to the campus raises questions about their integrity which needs to be investigated, said lawyers and social activists.

The lid over the suicide blew off February 16 after Siddhanth Sigdel. a cousin brother of the deceased. Prakriti Lamsal. lodged a complaint at the Infocity police station, alleging that she took the extreme step following protracted harassment by a fellow student Advik Srivastav, who was subsequently arrested following wide-spread

As per the reports, tensions flared up on the campus after news of her death spread, with students—particularly from Nepal - staging demonstrations and demanding justice. But instead of helping the overseas students, the authorities acted by declaring sine die and allegedly used force in evicting them from their hostels. They were packed in the institute's buses in hordes and dropped at railway stations.

Some students, who wished not to be identified, alleged that

KIIT SUICIDE ROW



a woman constable aided their forced eviction along with institute's security personnel. 'Instead of bringing the culprit to justice, the police were more interested in forcing students to vacate hostels. It seems for them (police) what matters is to stay on the side of the powerful than finding the culprit," they alleged.

Activists and lawyers questioned why police were aiding the university authorities in perpetrating violence on the students rather than controlling the situation.

Bibhuti Bhusan Mohapatra, convenor of Students Against Corruption, said, "On whose

orders did the police go to the hostels and railway stations to vacate and call back the Nepalese students? Did they get their salary from KIIT, or from the government? Why were the Nepalese students beaten up after the body of the student was discovered?

Another activist and netizen, Sann, said, "The Odisha Police arrested five university staffers three directors and two security guards. But why were the two female university officials who made racist slurs harming India-Nepal relations were allowed to go scot free?"

Moreover, the quick bail to

the university staffers - arrest ed by Infocity police in connection with the brutal assault on the varsity students - by a local court, has sparked discussions over the alleged police bias.

Senior advocate Chittaranjan Dash said that a probe should be ordered to find out if the police were also involved in the beating up of the students instead of protecting them.

He 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 the attempt to murder and kidnapping," he said. Meanwhile, when queried

over the alleged police inaction, Infocity police station IIC Mahendra Kumar Sahu denied of any involvement of police in the beating up of the students. "We have arrested the culprit. Advik Srivastav, immediately, What happened at the hostel is not in our hands. It can be probed,' he said, while avoiding a direct question about their mishandling of the entire situation.

Nepal Foreign min urges Suryabanshi for fair probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Feb 19: Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba Wednesday requested Odisha Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj to make arrangements for impartial investigation into the death of a Nepalese student and take legal action against the

During a telephone call, she also asked Suryabanshi to ensure that classes resume for other Nepalese students in the university in his state in a safe environment, according to a statement from the secretariat of the Foreign Minister.

year B Tech student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technol ogy (KIIT) in Odisha, allegedly died by suicide at her hostel room February 16, leading to unrest on the campus. During the conversation

Prakriti Lamsal, 20, a third

Suryabanshi informed that the Odisha government has tak en the matter seriously and a high-level probe committee has been formed to provide justice to Lamsal and punish the culprit.

He also assured that arrange ments have been made for the safety of Nepalese students in the hostel and for resumption of studies, the statement added

Scholarship in Prakriti's name

Bhubaneswar: KIIT University Wednesday announced a scholarship in memory of Prakriti Lamsal, the 20-year-old Nepalese student of the private engineering institute who died allegedly by suicide at her hostel room February 16, leading to unrest on the campus. The announcement was made by KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, who met the deceased student's father and uncle, offering his deepest condolences, according to a statement issued by the institute. "A scholarship would be instituted in Lamsal's name as a tribute to her memory," Samanta said, adding, "As per the desire of Prakriti's father, the scholarship will be awarded to meritorious Nepalese girl students." During the day, senior officials from Nepal's New Delhi Embassy met students of their country on the campus, assuring them that similar incidents would not be repeated. "KIIT has taken proactive measures to facilitate the return of those who are

3.90L GHOST BENEFICIARIES REMOVED FROM PDS: MIN

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The state government has removed the names of 3,90,814 dead and ineligible beneficiaries from the public distribution system (PDS) during the ongoing e-KYC verification process, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) Minister Krushna Chandra Patra told the Assembly Wednesday.

Replying to a question by Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Patra said, "During the e-KYC process, names of 3,28,932 deceased persons have been deleted from the ration card data-

Similarly, 61,882 ineligible beneficiaries of 16,184 ration cards have been identified through field verification and deleted from the database so far, Patra added.

According to data provided by the FS&CW Minister, ineligible beneficiaries whose names have been identified during field verification and subsequently deleted include 6,003 in Nayagarh, followed by Cuttack (5,154), Balasore (4,748), Mayurbhanj (4,403), Khurda (3,783) and Puri (3,009).

In another written statement, Patra said, "So far, 2.99 crore beneficiaries have successfully completed the e-KYC verification of their ration cards, while 32,82,491 are yet to complete the process."

Steps are being taken to make e-KYC mandatory during the digitisation of new ration cards, along with cross-examination of new applicants with other exclusion criteria, he said while replying to a question by Congress MLA Sofia Firdous.

"The e-KYC verification of the remaining beneficiaries is expected to be completed by March," he said.

However, all the existing beneficiaries in the database, irrespective of their e-KYC verification status, are being provided ration, he said, adding, "No beneficiary will be deprived of their foodgrain quota due to want of e-KYC."

Meanwhile, Opposition BJD and Congress demanded that the ration cards of those staying outside Odisha and small traders should not be deleted from the list.

Speaking outside the House. BJD legislator Goutam Buddha Das said, "Deletion of dead beneficiaries and inclusion of new people is a continuous process. However, in the name of e-KYC verification, the government is creating trouble for the people," he

"Those staying outside Odisha are facing a lot of problems for e-KYC verification. We want to alert the government that they should not delete the eligible persons from the PDS," Das said.

Similarly, Bahinipati said. We welcome the move to delete the names of deceased beneficiaries from the ration card list. However, small-time traders and shopkeepers who are filing zero I-T return only to get bank loans should not be removed from the list.'

"Some beneficiaries died four or five years ago, but the government has been providing the rice quota. After an inquiry, it can be ascertained who was taking the rice. During the last 24 years of BJD rule, there was huge corruption, which came to the fore now," the FS&CW Minister told reporters outside the House.

"Some I-T payers are also availing free rice. Notices have been issued to them. After physical verification, the ineligible persons will be removed," he added.

Mission Shakti, women atrocity set House on boil

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The Assembly witnessed chaos as Opposition BJD and Congress members disrupted proceedings, forcing Speaker Surama Padhy to adjourn the House thrice during the day, eventually adjourning it for the day without transacting much business Wednesday.

The House was first adjourned at 10:31am, just a minute after it convened for the day

to take up the Question Hour, until 4pm without transacting any business. This came as BJI and Congress members stormed into the well of the House, shouting slogans against the government.

While BJD members, holding placards, rushed to the podium and raised slogans opposing the state government's move to restructure the Executive Committee of Mission Shakti Congress members protested

ities against women under the current BJP dispensation.

After the House was adjourned, agitated BJD members, holding placards in their hands, marched in a procession to the Mahatma Gandhi statue on the Assembly premises and staged a protest, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the notice for restructuring the Executive Committee of Mission Shakti.

BJD leaders Ranendra Prat ap Swain and Arun Sahoo, accused the BJP government of attempting to saffronise Mission Shakti and restructuring it against the wishes of lakhs of women who have been serving the programme for the past two They highlighted that these

women have been staging an indefinite protest in front of the Assembly for the last six days, opposing the government's

The BJD members argued that there was no justification for restructuring Mission Shakti and alleged that the govern ment was deliberately pursuing the move for political gains.

When the House reassembled at 4pm after the adjournment to take up the Private Members Bill, the situation remained unchanged. Both BJD and Congress members continued shouting slogans inside the well of the House, disrupting proceedings and forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House twice, finally adjourning it at 5:15pm for the day.

4-yr-old girl donates stem cells to sister

lege and Hospital, where the procedure was performed, Aliza Naaz, daughter of Sharukh Ansari of Jharkhand's Dhanbad, was admitted to Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) in Jamshedpur for treatment July 3 last year.

Following examinations, she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML), a severe form of blood cancer. Doctors advised Sharukh to go for allogeneic BMT and find a suitable stem cell donor. As human leukocyte antigen matching conducted at TMH confirmed a 100 per cent match with her elder sister, the family decided that Aliza's sister Aatifa will donate stem cell.

As the procedure required expenses of Rs 30lakh, she was brought to SCB. The procedure was performed in January.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 19: A four-year-old girl donated stem cells to her two-year-old sister, who has been diagnosed with blood cancer, marking the first such allogeneic bone marrow transplant (BMT) in Odisha. According to sources at SCB Medical Col-



Keonjhar Dy Collector arrested over bribery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: Vigilance sleuths Wednesday arrested Keonjhar Deputy Collector (land acquisition) Sarat Kumar Giri while accepting ₹50,000 bribe, official sources

According to Vigilance sources, the district court of Keonjhar had September 14 last year ordered for payment of ₹6,96,696 in the joint account of the complainant and his brothers towards compensation for their land acquired for construction of NH-215 (now NH-20) by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

The complainant approached the Deputy Collector at least fivesix times for disbursement of the amount. "The OAS officer, however, demanded 10 per cent of the amount as commission for release



of the compensation money," the

anti-corruption wing said. After the complainant cited his poor condition, Giri reduced the amount to ₹50,000.

With no way out, complainant approached the Vigilance authorities.

Acting on the complaint, the anti-corruption wing officials laid a trap and apprehended the officer in his office chamber, it said.

"The officer was caught by Odisha Vigilance in his office while demanding and receiving a bribe of ₹50,000 from the complainant for disbursing the compensation amount of his land acquired for a highway. The entire tainted bribe money has been recovered from the possession of the accused and seized," it said.

The Balasore Vigilance police station has registered a case (1/2025) under Section 7 of the PC (prevention of corruption) Act, 2018.

Following the trap, simultaneous searches were underway at three places linked to Giri - his paternal house in Khurda, his rented residential house at Keonjhar, and his office chamber - in connection with a probe into disproportionate assets.



owntown



GOVT PLANS HEATWAVE SAFETY FOR LABOURERS

The government takes proactive steps by adjusting work schedules, ensuring access to drinking water, and enhancing medical readiness

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: With summer temperatures expected to rise above 40°C in several districts, the state government has initiated precautionary measures to protect labourers from the adverse effects of extreme heat. Labour & ESI department Principal Secretary Chithra Arumugam Wednesday wrote to all Revenue Divisional Commissioners (RDCs), District Collectors, and other officials concerned, urging them to take proactive steps in safeguarding workers from heatwave conditions.

Considering the potential rise in sunstroke cases, Arumugam stressed the need to reschedule work hours between April and June 15, ensuring that labourers avoid physically demanding tasks between 11am and 3pm, the hottest part

All executive agencies, in-

NUBS celebrates

Foundation Day

BHUBANESWAR: The Nikhil Utkal



cluding those under the state and Central governments, as well as private employers, have been advised to adjust working schedules accordingly.

She emphasised that while productivity must be maintained, worker safety should be prioritised. Wherever possible, tasks should be carried out in the early morning or late afternoon without compromising wages.

Industries like emergency and essential services where rescheduling isn't feasible, em-

ployers and contractors must ensure necessary safety measures. These include ensuring adequate drinking water supply, ORS packets, shaded rest areas, and periodic breaks to prevent heat-related illnesses.

Health officials, including chief district medical officers (CDMOs), sub-divisional medical officers (SDMOs), and medical staff in primary and community health centers (PHCs/CHCs), will be kept on high alert to handle cases of sunstroke and dehydration. ESI dispensaries, which cater specifically to labourers, will play a crucial role in providing medical assistance.

Additionally, programmes will be conducted across industrial units and construction sites to educate workers about heat stress symptoms, precautions, and first aid measures, ensuring their safety throughout the

AGAINST PLASTIC POLLUTION: Students of Girls High School, Unit II, Bhubaneswar take out an awareness rally in the City Wednesday, carrying a banner that read 'No to Single-Use Plastic'

National-level handloom expo kicks off in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The 23rd national-level handloom expo, organized by Odisha State Handloom Weavers Co-op Society Ltd (Boyanika), was inaugurated by Cooperation, Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta at the Exhibition Ground here Wednesday.

The event will run until April 1, providing a platform for weavers from across the country to showcase and sell their handwoven products.

Highlighting Odisha's rich textile heritage, Minister Samanta said, "Odisha's handwoven products, especially Ikat (Bandha) weaving, hold a special place in Indian textiles." The expo aims to boost marketing opportunities for weavers and facilitate knowledge exchange on weaving techniques, cost-effectiveness, and design trends.

Sponsored by the Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts department, the expo features leading state-level organisations and 50 PWCS from Odisha.

Additionally, major handloom clusters from across India, including Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Telanga na, Delhi, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Gujarat, are par ticipating.

A total of 225 stalls have been set up, with 150 participants showcasing a diverse range of handloom products. The expo will be open daily from 11:30am to 9:30pm, offering visitors ac cess to exclusive handwoven collections. This year, sales are expected to reach ₹15 crore.

Boyanika is spearheading the event, ensuring promotion and sales to support the economic development of Odisha's weavers

Biswakarma Samiti (NUBS), Bhubane-swar Mahanagar Sakha, marked its 81st Foundation Day at the Buddha Mandir Auditorium here Wednesday. The event featured the launch of the annual magazine Dharamabanta and the Biswakarma Gaurav Samman awards for distinguished contributions to society. Dignitaries included former Odisha Chief Secretary Sahadev Sahoo, Chinta O Chetna's Surendra Das, and NUBS president Rama Krishna Moharana Moharana urged the government to establish professional training centers for artisans, emphasising their crucial role in preserving traditional craftsmanship.

WEATHER						
	BBSR	CTC				
Max Temp	33.7°	32.2°				
Min Temp	22.2°	21.5°				
Humidity	85%	89%				
Rainfall	Nil	Nil				
FORECAS	Γ	July 1				
Dry weather						

very likely



GOLD ₹269 SILVER

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AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Sohela, I, Rajat Ku Sahu @ Rajat Kumar Sahu, S/o. Rabindranath Sahu, R/o. - Grinjal, P.O. -Rengali, PS - Sohela, Dist. - Bargarh declare that in Aadhaar Card bearing No.xxxx xxxx 9538 my name reflects as Rajat Kumar Sahu. Whereas in academic certificates my name has been mentioned as Rajat Ku Sahu. That above both the names is

one and same person.

OASME hosts loan mela for startups & MSMEs



RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (OASME). in collaboration with the MSME department, organised a loan mela at the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development here Wednesday. The event aimed to provide financial assistance and guidance to startups and MSMEs across

Over 1,000 startups, MSMEs, and aspiring entrepreneurs participated at the event, exploring funding opportunities. Leading banks, including SBI, HDFC Bank, Bank of Baroda, UCO Bank, and SIDBI, offered tailored financial solutions to support business growth.

Speaking at the event, MSME department Additional Chief Secretary Hemant Sharma reaffirmed the state's commit-

ment to empowering business es. "The Odisha government is dedicated to ensuring financial accessibility for startups and MSMEs, enabling their growth and success," he said.

key highlight was OASME's MoU signing with SIDBI to facilitate loans for startups and MSMEs. OASME Additional Secretary General Satwik Swain called it a firstof-its-kind initiative in the state. "This partnership will streamline access to financial assistance, ensuring businesses receive the necessary funding to scale and succeed," he stated.

The event also saw the participation of senior officials, including SIDBI deputy general manager Pradyumna Choudhurv, SLBC head and UCO Bank general manager Goutam Patra, and OASME (Women Wing) chairperson Jyotirmayee Mo-

India's first 'Take a Book' library at Bhub airport

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: Bakul Foundation, in collaboration with the Airports Authority of India, has launched India's first "Take a Book" library, Flybrary, at Bhubaneswar airport recently. This unique initiative allows passengers to pick up books for free, read them during their journey, and return them on their next visit.

Unlike other airport libraries in India, such as those in Varanasi, Pune, and Bangalore, which do not permit book borrowing, Flybrary enables travelers to take books home. The library features shelves at both the departure and arrival areas, offering books in English, Hindi, and Odia, with English being the most prominent.

Passengers can also donate books by placing them on Fly-



brary shelves or sending them to Bakul Foundation, which is actively setting up libraries across Odisha.

The idea, conceived by Bakul Foundation founder Sujit Mahapatra, was long in the making. It gained momentum when he proposed it to Commerce and Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas event. With her support, the initiative became a reality.

Padhee praised the concept and promised to donate some books while encouraging passengers to contribute.

Seeing the enthusiastic response, BPI Airport director Prasanna Pradhan decided to continue the initiative. A Bakul volunteer visits daily to restock and organise the shelves, but demand is high. Mahapatra hopes the library will eventually sustain itself through public contributions from travelers, authors, and publishers.

IMDdirector general Mrutyunjay Mohapatra was among the many delighted to discover the library on arrival, marking a significant step in promoting reading and creating a positive im-

NTSC 2025 to be held Feb 21-23



REHIMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The second National Thermal Spray Conference (NTSC 2025) and Expo will be held from February 21 to 23 at the CSIR-IM MT campus, Bhubaneswar. The event will be jointly organised by CSIR-Institute of Minerals & Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) and the Indian Thermal Spray Association

Announcing the event at a press meet here Wednesday, CSIR-IMMT director Ramanuj Narayan, principal scientist Sisir Mantry, and chief scientist Laxmidhar Besra highlighted its significance. "NTSC 2025 will bring together experts from India and abroad to discuss thermal spray technology applications," said Besra.

"Around 400 delegates, including 22 international participants, will explore the role of thermal spray technology in sectors like defense, mining and metallurgy," he added.

Besra noted that corrosion costs India 3 to 4 per cent of its GDP, and thermal spray technology offers effective

solutions The conference will feature keynote lectures on plasma spray, HVOF, cold spray, nanostructured coatings, and

corrosion-resistant technologies. A dedicated expo zone will showcase live demonstra tions by manufacturers, mate rial suppliers, and research institutions. NTSC 2025 aims to bridge academia and industry, encouraging research com mercialization and startup involvement. The event will also recognise excellence through awards for best technical paper, best poster presentation, and young researchers.

Odisha Yatri crosses one lakh rides in 45 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb19: Odisha Yatri, the state's pioneering mobility application launched by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, has accomplished a significant feat by surpassing one lakh rides within a mere 45 days of its introduction.

This rapid success highlights the increasing trust and enthusiasm of commuters across Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. who have embraced the app for its commitment to safety, transparency, and convenience.

The app's rapid adoption reflects its effectiveness in addressing the key concerns of passengers and drivers alike, setting a new benchmark in the state's public transporta-

Odisha Yatri has been designed with a strong emphasis on both passenger safety and driver empowerment. The app offers a host of essential features, including real-time trip tracking, transparent pricing, and direct integration with the



Additionally, passengers have the option to share their trip details with family and friends, further enhancing the sense of security and reliability.

What sets Odisha Yatri apart from conventional ride-hailing platforms is its revolutionary zero-commission model. Unlike private mobility services that take a significant cut from drivers' earnings, Odisha Yatri

allows drivers to retain 100 per cent of their fares.

odisha

This transformative approach has not only improved the livelihoods of thousands of drivers but has also encouraged them to provide safer and more customer-friendly services.

With better earnings, drivers are more motivated to maintain vehicle standards, follow safety protocols, and ensure high-quality service, ultimately benefiting passengers with affordable fares and a superior

commuting experience.

Supported by the government. Odisha Yatri stands as a trustworthy alternative to private ride-hailing services, reinforcing its position as a game-changer in the state's mobility sector.

Speaking about the app's impact, Commerce & Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee stated, "Odisha Yatri is more than just a ride-hailing platform; it is a movement towards a safer, smarter, and more accessible urban mobility future for Odisha.' By prioritising transparency,

safety, and innovation, the app has gained widespread acceptance and continues to set new benchmarks," she added. Building on its early success,

Odisha Yatri is now gearing up for an ambitious expansion across the state. The government is planning a range of future enhancements that will further strengthen the platform's capabilities

These upcoming developments include real-time public transport tracking, allowing commuters to access live updates on buses and other transit modes, integration with the Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) to offer seamless travel experiences for tourists.

With every successful ride, Odisha Yatri moves the state closer to a smarter, more connected future—one that prioritises efficiency, security, and empowerment for all

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.

Missing company VP, Sea ingress into Rushikulya his driver return home around 7:30pm February 12 but did not not um Womied even the

Keonjhar, Feb 19: Vice president of Grewal Minerals and Metals at Barbil Nimananda Pradhan and his driver who had gone missing from Barbil February 12 returned home Wednesday evening.

While suspense prevails over the reason behind their sudden disappearance, their family members and the police have remained tightlipped over the issue. According to reliable sources, Barbil police had caught a cyber criminal and interrogated him. But suspense prevails whether it is a case of



did not return. Worried over the incident, his family members started a frantic search and tried to contact Pradhan over phone, which showed switched

bile also showed switch off. With no options left, his family members lodged a complaint with Barbil police Thursday. The police began a search and started checking the CCTV footage of the company and Barbil town. Police teams also visited Jharkhand and camped there for last six days.

off. Later, they tried to contact

his driver Md Firoz but his mo-



Chhatrapur, Feb 19: Frequent incursion of seawater into Rushikulya river and upto 10 km into the coast in Ganjam district has severely impacted irrigation and drinking water supply of the region.

The tidal ingress has led to increased salinity level of Rushikulya river. While saline water is unsuitable for irrigation purpose, it is also unfit for human consumption.

"Farmers are now facing an agrarian crisis as seawater ingress into the river has affected the irrigation," said Simanchal Nahak of Rushikulya Rayat Ma-

Due to tidal incursion, Rushikulya river water has turned saline (from Ganjam estuary up to Kansariganda in Chhatrapur block). This has severely affected water supply and irrigation facilities in Ganjam NAC, Kainchapur, Malad, and Karapada panchayats of Ganjam block, and Potlampur panchayat of Chhatrapur block.

Experts fear that at least 10 villages in these areas will bear the brunt of the tidal ingress. Frequent incursion of tidal waves is disturbing the region's ecological balance. Environmentalist Arun Satapathy and others have stressed the urgency of resolving this issue. However, the authorities are yet to water supply and irrigation facilities in Ganjam NAC, Kainchapur, Malad, and Karapada panchavats of Ganiam block, as well as Potlampur panchayat of Chhatrapur block have been

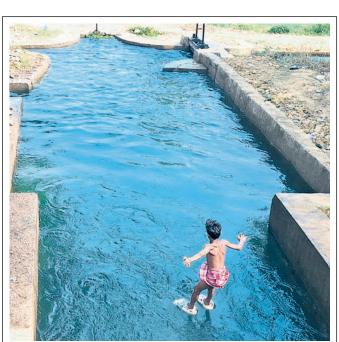
xperts fear that at least 10 Lvillages in these areas will bear the brunt of the tidal ingress

requent incursion of tidal waves is disturbing the region's ecological balance

take corrective measures.

Ajit Kumar Pradhan, executive engineer of Irrigation department, explained that high tidal force is pushing seawater upstream, while accumulated silt and the sand dunes near the river mouth is obstructing the outflow of saline water. As a re sult, brackish water remains in the riverbed longer than usual, seeping into irrigation canals and water supply pipelines.

Chhatrapur MLA Krushna Chandra Nayak has alerted Irrigation and Rural Water Supply department officials about the crisis. Similarly, former deputy speaker Ramachandra Panda has raised the issue with the chief engineer of the Rural Water Supply department.



BEATING THE HEAT: A youth jumps into Chaunrpur canal in Sambalpur district for a bath Wednesday as mercury rises

Man held for boy's murder in Jajpur

Jajpur: The police Wednesday arrested a man on charges of killing a teenage boy following an altercation over delayed serving of chow mein at a stall in Jajpur district. The arrested man, a local leader of BJD, was remanded to judicial custody. Police said that 14-year-old Santanu Das died Sunday due to the injuries he had suffered during the assault on the night of February 9 near Gobindpur village under Jajpur block. Santanu's father Sukadev, a resident of Gobindpur village, alleged in the police complaint that he had gone to the stall of Anil Kumar Mallik to have chow mein, but it was not served to him even after 30 minutes. When Sukhdev asked the reason for the delay, he was allegedly beaten up by Mallik. Santanu then reached the spot and asked the stall owner why he assaulted his father. Local BJD leader Kamal Mallik who lives nearby, along with others then allegedly thrashed the boy with iron rods injuring him critically. Local people took both the injured father and son to Jaipur district headquarters hospital. Later, Santanu was shifted to a private hospital in Cuttack after his condition deteriorated, and he died there Sunday night, police said. Kamal was arrested from a place in Jajpur where he was hiding, while other accused are still at large.

7-yr-old raped in Keonjhar dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, Feb 19: A seven-yearold girl was allegedly raped by a 13-year-old boy at a village under Turumunga police limits in Keonjhar district Monday night.

The matter came to light after police conducted a medical examination of the survivor and the boy before producing him in a juvenile justice board Wednesday. The incident occurred when family members were busy participating in a post death ritual of a kin Monday night. The girl had gone to the backyard of her house to attend nature's call when the boy raped her.

The victim's family members lodged a complaint with Turumunga police alleging rape following which a case was registered. "We have launched an investigation into the incident," Turumunga IIC Dharmendra Shanti said

Municipality status to Chhatrapur soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Feb 19: Chhatrapur, an NAC in Ganjam district, is set to be upgraded to a municipality soon, state Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mohapatra announced.

Chhatrapur MLA Krushna Chandra Nayak raised the issue in the Assembly, asking about the municipality status for Chhatrapur NAC. In response, the minis-

ter stated that during an official visit, he assessed the NAC's layout, area, and environment, and said it fulfilled all the criteria for municipality status. Following this, a proposal was sought from the district Collector, which has now been submitted and is under review.

The minister emphasised that Chhatrapur is in the process of achieving municipality status. Notably, before the last general elections, the then BJD government had announced municipality status to Chhatrapur, in compliance with a directive from Orissa High Court. However, no official notification

was issued at that time. During Mohapatra's visit to Chhatrapur, local representatives, including Berhampur MP, MLAs, and the NAC chairperson, submitted a memorandum urging him to upgrade Chhatrapur to a municipality.

Elevated corridor in Sambalpur by Dec 2026 Moreover, a new bus termi-

The 3.44 km long six-lane corridor, having a width of 14.5 metres, is expected to decongest the busy section of NH-53 near Ainthapali

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, Feb 19: The much-awaited elevated corridor on National Highway-53 at Ainthapali in Sambalpur city is likely to be completed by December 2026, an official said Wednesday.

Project director of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Sambalpur, Prem Sahu said construction of the project is going on in full swing. "If ev-



year," he said. Sahu said, "It would be a sixlane corridor having a width of 14.5 metres, with a total length of 3.44 km, including a 1.2 km flyover section. A significant portion of NH-53, around 12 km.

would run through Sambalpur city." At present, commuters witness heavy traffic congestion at Ainthapali area on the national highway as the Sambalpur-Rourkela Biju Expressway and another road, which leads to Sambalpur airstrip at Jamadarpali area, meet with NH-53 at two separate crossroads.

nus has come up at Ainthapali and, as a result, at least 450 buses pass through the road, contributing to the traffic congestion in "It has been proposed that heavy vehicles will pass through

the proposed elevated corridor, effectively mitigating traffic congestion issues," the officials added. On the request of the Sambalpur district administration, the NHAI had approved the proposal of the elevated corridor. Soil testing for the proposed project was conducted in 2020, sources said.

Last year, the Union highways and road transport ministry allocated ₹374.17 crore for this project and for the construction of a railway over-bridge near the venture, they said.

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Date and Venue:

Monday, 24th February 2025; 4:00 p.m. onwards. at National Informatics Centre, Unit-4, Sachivalaya Marg, Bhubaneswar - 751 001, Odisha, For registration, please contact: Biswajeet Dash, Mobile: 80183 78860.



Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.in/ir hey may file any complaint on the Smart ODR on https://smartodr.in/login

Student's body found hanging

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khallikote, Feb 19: The body of a Plus II firstyear student of RCM College here was found hanging from a tree atop Jay

Durga hills behind Jagannath Vihar in Ganjam district Wednesday. The deceased was

identified as Badal Palei, a resident of Deogaon village under Kabisuryanagar police station.

Locals spotted the body hanging with a rope and alerted the police. A team of Khallikote police, under the direction of IIC Ramesh Ku-

mar Pradhan, reached the spot and launched an investigation.

The cops recovered the body, seized a bag containing notebooks, a pair of slippers, college uniform, and a mobile phone from the spot.

Badal's father Palei, Pitambar who reached the scene on hearing the news, alleged that his son was murdered. It was revealed that Badal's biological mother had passed away, and he was living with his stepmother. The investigation into the incident is

in progress.



At/P.O. - Gopinathpur, Balugaon -752030, Dist. - Khordha

E.mail - dfochilikawl.od@gov.in **TENDER DOCUMENT**

Tender Notification No. 08/01WL-706/2025, Dated 18.02.2025 TENDER NOTICE FOR SELECTION OF A **COMPANY/ FIRM FOR SUPPLY, INSTALLATION** AND COMMISSIONING OF BOAT ENGINES WITH

ASSOCIATED REPAIR WORKS No.MM-490 : Sealed tenders/bids are invited from established/

reputed, registered, experienced and accredited manufacturers/ resellers for "Supply and installation and commissioning of two numbers of 50 HP outboard boat engines and associated repair works in existing boats as per specifications in the

The eligibility criteria and detailed specifications are available in the tender document. The tender document and other details are available in the websites www.odishaforest.in and www odisha.gov.in (all tenders section) and www.wildlife.odisha. The last date of receipt of bids is 10.03.2025 by 3.00 P.M.

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer

OIPR-08142/11/0002/2425 Chilika Wildlife Division

WATER CORPORATION OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

NOTICE INVITING BID

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT

No. 1157 / Date: 17.02.2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR "Selection of Consultant for Setting up PMU for Planning, Project Management, Policy Support, Implementation of Central and State Government Urban Water Supply Projects in Odisha, Coordination and Monitoring Support to WATCO".

No. C-1677: The Managing Director, WATCO, Bhubaneswar under the administrative control of Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha, invites proposal in conformity with RFP documents in Two Cover System (Part.): Technical Bid forms the reputed Consultancy Eim/Apenies on the basis of National Competitive Bidding for

Bid and Part-II: Financial Bid) from the reputed Consultancy Firm/Agencies on the basis of National Competitive Bidding for the work detailed in the table given below. The Consultants/firms are advised to examine carefully all instructions in the RFP Security Deposit/ Tender Processing Assignment

	No.	name of the work	Remittance)	Remittance)	Period
	1	Request for Proposal (RFP) for "Selection of Consultant for Setting up PMU for Planning, Project Management, Policy Support, Implementation of Central and State Government Urban Water Supply Projects in Odisha, Coordination and Monitoring Support to WATCO".	8,00,000.00	10,000.00 + GST @ 18%	12 (Twelve) Months
1	The	compelte RFP document can be viewed/downloaded from	m e-procurement po	ortal of the State Gov	ernment https://

endersodisha.gov.in from 21.02.2025 (11.00 Hrs. IST) to 24.03.2025 (17.00 Hrs. IST). RFP must be submitted online. RFP through any other mode shall not be entertained.

Name & Address of the Officer Inviting RFP The Managiner Director, WATCO

Ground Floor, Unnati Bhawan, Satvanagar, Bhubaneswar - 751007

Dist.: Khordha, Odisha, India, Phone# +91-674-2391444
Email: mail@watcoodisha.in / md@watcoodisha.in nterested bidders may download the Request for Proposal Documents (the "RFP" document) from the above website to see

urther details for participation in the online bidding. All amendments, time extension, clarifications etc. will be uplaoded in the website only. Bidders should regularly visit the abov OIPR-13194/11/0038/2425

KVB) Karur Vysya Bank Smart way to bank THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LTD. Asset Recovery Branch-Kolkata 15. Bondel Road. First Floor, Ballyaunae, Kolkata. WB-70019, Contact No: 033-22900752, 6382373682

movable Property

E-mail: head.arbkolkata@kvbmail.com, samirghosh@kvbmail.com E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement o Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property

mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd, Aska Branch, the constructive Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd., Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 17th March 2025 for recovery of Rs.76.62.942.53 (Rupees Seventy Six Lakhs Sixty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Two and Paise Fifty Three Only as on 31.01.2025 with further interest from 01.02.2025 onwards for Open Cash Credit facility payable as per law due to the Karur Vysya Bank Ltd, Secured Creditor from 1).M/s. Mahanta Cashew Industry (Borrower), At Sahapur, Aska, Ganjam Orissa 761110 2).Mrs. Gayatri Patra (Partner) 3).Mrs. Rina Kumari Patro (Partner) 4).Mrs. Rajlaxmi Patra (Partner) 5).Mrs. Manasmita Patra (Partner), 6).Mrs. Jyoti Patra (Partner) 7).Mr. Surendranath Patra (Guarantor) 8).Mrs. Sulabha Patra (Guarantor) 9).Mr. Panchanan Patra (Guarantor) 10).Mr. Rabindra Kumar Patra (Guarantor) 11).Mr. Bulu Patra (Guarantor) 12).Mr. Manoj Kumar Patra (Guarantor), all residing at Sahapur, Aska, Ganjam Orissa 761110

Description of Properties and Reserve Price

1. All that piece and parcel of commercial land and building thereon situated at Hal Khata No.269/102, Plot No.835/1664 measuring area

Ac.0.243DC standing in the name of Mr. Panchanan Patra. Reserve Price: Rs. 40,00,000/- EMD (10% of Reserve Price): Rs. 4,00,000/- Bid Amount Incremental: Rs. 50,000/-2. All that piece and parcel of land situated at Village Sahapur, Aska Ganjam, Odisha, Khata No.269/94, 269/71, Plot No.834/1659, 764/1635 measuring about Ac.0.415DC standing in the name of Mr. Panchanan Patra.

Reserve Price: Rs. 3,01,000/- EMD (10% of Reserve Price): Rs. 30,100/- Bid Amount Incremental: Rs. 10,000/-3. All that piece and parcel of residential land and building thereon situated at Sabik Patta No.409, 223, Sabik Plot No.4765, 4749, Hal Khata No.942, 451, Hal Plot No.5466, 5449, measuring about AC.0.034DC standing in the name of Mrs. Sulabha Patra

Reserve Price: Rs. 43,00,000/- EMD (10% of Reserve Price): Rs. 4,30,000/- Bid Amount Incremental: Rs. 50,000/-For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in our Bank's/ Secured Creditor's website i.e. www.kvb.co.in/Property Under Auction also at the web portal https://bankauctions.in of the service

Statutory 15 days' Notice under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002

The borrower/s and guarantor/s are hereby notified to pay the dues as mentioned above along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of e-Auction, failing which the Schedule property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest and cost.

The Karur Vysya Bank Limited

UCO BANK

High

Date: 19.02.2025

ZONAL OFFICE 18/1, Ainthapali Road, Sambalpur, Ph.: 0663-2540640

POSSESSION NOTICE Appendix - IV [See Rule 8(1)]

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property) Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of UCO Bank, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial

Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount with interest at the contractual rate together with incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of the said Notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the UCO Bank, Brajrajnagar Branch for an amount with interest and expenses thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

BRAJRAJNAGAR BRANCH / Name and Address of the Borrowers	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Date of Demand / Possession Notice			
Borrower: Entekhab Alam, S/o.: Late Abdul Kayum, Rehmat Nagar, PO./P.S.: Belpahar, Dist.: Jharsuguda, PIN-768217	(inclusive of interest upto 30.05.2024) + further interest and expenses, thereon	08.11.2024 / 15.02.2025	All that part and parcel of the immovable property consisting of Land and Building standing in the name of Entekhab Alam and Mosarrat Parween, situated at Mouza:		
Belpahar, Thana: Belpahar, Dist.: Jharsuguda, MS Khata No.: 1261/2842, MS Plot No.: 336/15027, Area: Ac.0.062 Dec.					
Borrower: Mr. Ranjan Kumar Panda, S/o.: Mukteswar Panda, At: Nuadihi, Ganda Ghora, PO.: Brajrajnagar, Dist.: Jharsuguda, PIN- 768216	79,52,710.43	08.11.2024 / 15.02.2025	All that part and parcel of the immovable property consisting of Land and Building standing in the name of Mr. Narendra Panda , S/o.: Mukteswar Panda, situated at Mouza: Brajrajnagar Town Unit No.: 2, Dist.:		
Jharsuguda, bearing Khata No.: 621/274, Plot No.: 83/8078, Area: Ac.0.050 Dec.					
Borrowers: 1) M/s. Fashion House, Prop.: Mr. Tarun Kumar Saluja,	(inclusive of interest upto	18.11.2024 /	All that part and parcel of the immovable property consisting of Land and Building		

15.02.2025 Saluja, S/o.: Govind Singh Saluja expenses, thereon School, Brajrajnagar, Dist.: Jharsuguda, Bahadurpada, Main Road, Near Panchayat High School, Brajrajnagar, situated at Mouza PIN-768216, 2) M/s. Seva Sadan, Brajrajnagar Town Unit No.: 1, Dist.: Jharsuguda, bearing Khata No.: 610/163, Plot No.: 1623,

Prop.: Mr. Mahendra Pal Saluja, 5513, Area: Ac.0.077 Dec Rungta Gali, Main Road, Brajrajnagar, Dist.: Jharsuguda, PIN-768216, Place: Sambalpur

Authorised Officer UCO BANK







All existence is a manifestation

SRI AUROBINDO



Firewall Breached

7th only a few weeks to go before the federal election on 23 February, Germany experienced a political earthquake. For the first time, the main opposition party, the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU), relied on the support of the extreme-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) to pass a motion in the national parliament.

CDU leader Friedrich Merz, long seen as a shoo-in for the chancellorship, justified the move by blaming other parties for their unwillingness to address migration. But while the motion produced nothing concrete, the democratic political parties' "firewall" against the far right was breached. No longer can Germany claim to be one of the last major European democracies not to have "normalized"

But what exactly is normalization, and on what grounds should it be criticized? For starters, it is not the same thing as mainstreaming. Normalization is specifically about rationalizing a transgression of an existing norm - not collaborating with far-right parties that pose a threat to democracy, in this case – whereas "mainstream" is always relative. Like the notion of the political center, it has no objective content, but simply refers to what is most common or widely subscribed.

Thus, entering a coalition with a farright party, or relying on it to pass laws, is a form of normalization, while copying the rhetoric of the far right is an example of mainstreaming. To mainstream an issue is to call attention to it and frame it the way the far right wants it to be framed. Hence, social scientists have long warned that if the issues the far right favors dominate in an election campaign, the far right will do well at the polls.

Since pro-democracy politicians do not want to be perceived as cynical opportunists, they usually seek ways to justify normalization. One option is simply to claim that the norm remains in force, and that one's behavior does not qualify as a violation. Merz took this path when he stressed that his goal is to diminish AfD's share of the vote. But this argument is unconvincing. Rival parties often end up in coalitions, and the fact that they have conflicting programs does not mean that they never co-

Another option is simply to declare the norm invalid. For decades, the Italian Social Movement (MSI), which cultivated nostalgia for Mussolini and Fascism, was deemed beyond the pale. Like the Communists, it was not considered to be a part of the arco costituzionale ("the constitutional arch"): the parties that basically accepted Italy's post-war democratic constitution. But then

came Silvio Berlusconi, a pioneer of normalization who suggested that the anti-fascist consensus was either obsolete or a left-wing plot against the right. His party proceeded to form a coalition with

One other option is to retain the norm, while insisting either that it does not apply to a particular party, or that it is less important than other political imperatives. Think of Italy's current Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, who got her political start in the MSI's youth organizations. Plenty of politicians, both inside and outside Italy, have decided that her Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia) party - a direct descendent of the MSI – is a perfectly acceptable partner. Even those still hesitant to work with the most right-wing Italian government since World War II can invoke larger issues – such as the need to present a united front in support of Ukraine - to justify cooperation.

A similar logic applies in Austria, where the center-right People's Party had initially ruled out working with Herbert Kickl, the chair of the far-right Freedom Party. After coalition talks with the center-left had failed, the People's Party proceeded to negotiate with Kickl's party, all in the name of keeping Austria governable. These talks, too, have now failed, but, in the process, the People's Party signaled to Austrians that Kickl was an acceptable choice after all (a signal that no doubt will help the Freedom Party in the next elections). It is reasonable to assume that many Austrians voted for the People's Party in the most recent election precisely because it had vowed not to normalize the far right; it is unclear whether it will be trusted again after its glaring betrayal of that promise.

Even more nefarious are situations where the far right calls the shots even as its leaders remain out of high office, and thus largely unaccountable. In Sweden, for example, the current minority government is supported by the far-right Sweden Democrats; in France, the government - which also lacks a majority - is ultimately at the mercy of Marine Le Pen's National Rally; and in the Netherlands. the government includes the far right, but its leader, Geert Wilders - who completely controls his party as its only official member – remains in the background.

Normalization is easier to detect than mainstreaming. But recognizing it as a problem requires a public that is paying attention, and prominent figures who will make norm-breaking a scandal, instead of normalizing it. Voters take their cues from elites; if a politician who is seen as mainstream treats a party as normal, public opinion will tend to follow. Moreover, research has shown that such acceptance spreads beyond partisans of the mainstream party that started the process and eventually extends to the citizenry as a whole.

Once normalization has happened, it is virtually impossible to undo. The significance of mainstreaming is somewhat different, because it remains up to politicians which topics to emphasize and how to treat them. It is high time they learned that uncritically adopting far-right talking points – often thinly veiled incitements to hatred - is not only immoral. It is also a losing proposition at the ballot box.

> The writer is Professor of Politics at Princeton University.

WISDOM CORNER

Do one thing at a time, and while doing it put your whole soul into it to the exclusion of all else

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do

Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you

FOCUS RENEWABLE ENERGY

THRUST ON N-POWER

year in history, the first to exceed 1.50 C pre-industrial levels with 44% of the globe affected by heat stress. The environmental challenge thus poses major problems for countries like India which must grapple with a huge population and balancing environment and development. Presenting, the Union Budget 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman laid stress on the country's energy transition efforts.

In the backdrop of the environmental crisis, Sitharaman rightly decided to enhance nuclear capacity to 100GW by 2047 from the current 8GW, which is an optimistic proposition. What is significant is the induction of new technology of small modular reactors (SMRs) which will get a support of ₹20,000 crore under Nuclear Energy Mission, for research and development and open the sector to private players. Five indigenously developed SMRs would be operationalised by 2033, and this should steadily be increased in future. In fact, in his recent visit to France, Prime Minister Modi decided to co-produce and co-design these SMRs.

Former Atomic Energy Commission chairman Anil Kakodkar has welcomed the Nuclear Energy Mission, saying 100GW of nuclear power generation by 2047 was required for India to achieve its declared goal of net-zero emission. Last year, Union Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh had informed Parliament that "Nuclear



100GW of nuclear power generation by 2047 is required for India to achieve its declared goal of net-zero emission

energy has a vital role in the country's energy transition to net zero as it is a base-load source of clean electricity, available 24X7.

However, India must also flog the anomaly stated by a report of World Inequality Lab (WIL): "The global top 10% are responsible for almost half of global carbon emissions and global top 1% emitters are responsible for more emissions than the entire bottom half of the world's population." This reveals no balanced or inclusive development and could be an obstacle in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and reducing inequalities (SDG10) and climate action (SDG13). The per capita emission of the bottom 50% is 1.4 tCO2/person which accounts for 12% of total emissions. The middle 40% emits 6.1 tCO2/ person while the top 10% has 28.7 tCO2/person, representing 40% and 48% share respectively of the total emissions.

The effect of climate change on tropical and sub-tropical countries has been quite severe, leading to projected revenue losses of over 80% by end of the century. If the figures for half of the population of the Global South are taken into consideration, their emissions would be around just 6%, while economic losses would be around 82 to 85%. In contrast, the top 50% of the global population accounts for 50% of all emissions and suffers a

mere 3% of income losses. India has pledged that by 2030 it would cut one billion tonnes of emissions, meet 50% of its energy needs from renewable energy and reduce emission intensity by 45% and increase non-fossil fuel energy to 500GW from 134 GW in 2019. Keeping this in view. India continued to decouple economic growth from its GHG emissions with the emission intensity reducing by 36% between 2005 and 2020. Moreover, in its biennial submission, the country stated that its share of non-fossil fuel sources in the installed electricity generation

capacity was 46.5% by October 2024 and total installed capacity of renewable power, including large hydro power. was 203.2GW. India's cumulative renewable power installed capacity (excluding large hydro projects) increased 1.5 times by 35GW in March 2014 to 156.25GW in 2024.

It may be mentioned here that, as per IMF estimates, under current policies, India's emissions will rise 41% by 2030 and keep growing up to 2040. This is obvious keeping in view the fast pace of development. Moreover, costs of renewable energy have to be further brought down and its use popularised.

Experts have pointed out that transitioning to a sustainable "nature economy" could unlock \$10 trillion business opportunities and 395 million jobs by 2030. Every dollar invested in restoring degraded lands has been estimated to bring between \$7 to \$30 economic returns

The possibility of reducing emission intensity is indeed quite bleak despite all efforts by most countries. Though in India renewable energy use has increased, fossil fuel extraction has not declined with increasing demand for such fuels.

Emissions must be reduced in future as the effects are indeed quite hazardous.

The thrust on renewable power as also nuclear power can be a counter to the high rates of emission that has become a threat to the environ-

LANGUAGE **SPECTRUM**

Dhurjati Mukherjee

CONTINUED

ECONOMIC

EMISSIONS

WITH THE

EMISSION

INTENSITY

REDUCING BY

36% BETWEEN

2005 AND 2020

Mueller

Social

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the far right

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will do well at

that if the

GROWTH

TO DECOUPLE

FROM ITS GHG

INDIA

Protect, promote & propagate



Rup Naravan Das

APART FROM THE LITERARY **AND CREATIVE WORKS. ODIA LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE HAVE BECOME AN INSEPARABLE WITNESS TO OUR FREEDOM STRUGGLE**

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

t's more than a decade since the declaration of Odia as a 'classical language' of India in February 2014. Although the 8th Schedule of the Constitution recognises 22 languages, very few of them have the distinction of being declared a classical language. Odia received this accolade fairly early. The occasion entrusts a responsibility of all Odias to protect, promote and propagate the language and its literature at a critical juncture when the next-generation Odia-speaking people are moving away from their mother tongue. The digital transformation has added both challenges and opportunities to make the language user-friendly without compromising its pristine purity. It is now all the more important that scholars, writers, intellectuals and students of Odia literature come forward and shoulder the responsibility to carry forward the legacy of the language while confronting the challenges.

Language is a rare gift to mankind to express feelings and communicate. One can rarely get the comfort of the mother tongue in any other language. Language is also a cementing force amongst various groups of people as they can easily connect on matters related to their day-to-day affairs and carry forward various commitments. Literature gives the right medium to

give vent to the inner voice. Odia is an ancient language spoken by people inhabiting not only this geographic territory known differently as Utkal, Udra, Koshala, but also by many people in adjoining states like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. The migration of Odia diaspora abroad expanded the compass of the language. Srimad Bhagabata, a 16th Century epic written by Atibadi Jagannath Das is not only an excellent creation in Odia literature but has also been a guiding light of socio-cultural life for all Odias. The establishment of 'Bhagabata Tungis' in villages across Odisha and regular recitation of the verses of Bhagabata resonated the life and living of Odias over the centuries

The earliest written texts in the language are about thousand years old. The modern Odia language is formed mostly from Pali words with significant Sanskrit influence. Historians have divided the history of the Odia language into five main stages: Old Odia (8th Century to 1300), Early Middle Odia (1300 to 1500), Middle Odia (1500 to 1700), Late Middle Odia (1700 to 1850) and Modern Odia (1850 to present) with profound imprints of works of eminent poets, writers and other literary luminaries like Sarala Das. Upendra Bhanja and the Panchasakhas. The first great poet of Odisha is Sarala Das, who translated the Mahabharata. This translation has since provided subsequent poets with the necessary foundation for a national literature, providing a fairly accurate idea of the Odia culture of the time.

The great poet Radhanath Ray is the most well-known poet who wrote with a Western influence, and his 'kavyas' (long poems) included Chandrabhaga'. 'Nandikeshwari', 'Usha', 'Mahajatra', 'Darbar' and 'Chilika'. Similarly, the contribution of Fakir Mohan Senapati, the most known Odia fiction writer, also known as 'Vyasa Kabi,' to inhibit the marginalisation of the Odia language, his creative writings, translations from Sanskrit, creation of valuable poetries and various forms of literature, have befittingly made him known as the father of modern Odia prose fiction. Other eminent Odia writers and poets of the time include Gangadhar Meher, Madhusudan Rao, Nanda Kishore Bal and Gaurisankar Ray. The names are only illustrative.

Similarly, the fiction trend that Fakir Mohan started developed further after independence, led by Gopinath Mohanty, Surendra Mohanty and Manoj Das. These authors pioneered the trend of developing or projecting the 'individual as protagonist' in

Odia fiction. Purnachandra Odia Bhashakosha, the Odia language dictionary of Gopal Chandra Praharaj is a monumental seven-volume work of about 9,500 pages that lists some 1,85,000 words and their meanings in four languages Odia, English, Hindi and Bengali.

Apart from the literary and creative works, Odia language and literature have become an inseparable witness to our freedom struggle. A new era in literary thought emerged influenced by Gandhi and the trend of nationalism. Gopabandhu was a large part of this idealistic movement, founding a school in Satyabadi and influencing many writers of the period. Other famous writers of the era were Godabarisha Mishra, Nilakantha Dash, Harihara Acharya and Krupasindhu.

At a time when we are more using Hindi and English as two prominent languages both for official and communicating purposes, the need for propagating the values and essence of regional languages is important. This will not only help enhance better bonding between linguistic states and the Union, but will strengthen relationship between various language-speaking people.

> The writer is a former senior fellow of Indian Council of Social Science Research.

Disconcerting data

Sir, It is sad that India's school enrolment has dropped by 37 lakh in 2023-24, according to data from Unified District Information System for Education Plus (U-DISE+), which was released by the Ministry of Education in December last year. The sharp decline is not an isolated incident but part of a broader pattern observed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, Bihar, in particular, has experienced high dropout rates, with female enrolment being severely impacted. The big fall in school enrollment is a wake-up call for all stakeholders involved in India's education system. It highlights the urgent need for policy reforms that prioritize equitable access to quality education for every child, regardless of their socio-economic background. As we reflect on these troubling statistics, it is essential for parents, educators, and policymakers to engage in meaningful dialogue aimed at addressing these challenges collectively to ensure that every child has the opportunity to receive an education that empowers them for a brighter future.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Economic misery

Sir, A new study report shed light on the realities of employment generation in India, which has been overhyped for many years. Niti Aayog defines gig workers as those who labour outside of the traditional employer-employee structure, and their number has surpassed one crore. This figure is expected to reach two crore 35 lakh by 2030. It has recently been revealed that 97.6 per cent of such workers earn less than five lakh rupees per year. In fact, 77.6 percent of gig workers make less than ₹2.5 lakh a year. According to a report from market research firm TeamLease Digital, at least 21 per cent of gig workers work more than 12 hours every day. Gig work primarily consists of delivery guys, platform workers, and cab drivers. All such workers are not eligible to any form of social security. If the government begins to view such labour opportunities as employment, it will be argued that the economic hopes that rest on them are nothing more than a castle in the sand

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR



TWO STATES





Kashmir may see 'drought'

According to officials, several water bodies are flowing below the zero level mark at many places while some springs in south Kashmir have dried up completely due to the receding water table

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Feb 19: Kashmir has witnessed a dry winter this vear with the months of January and February recording a precipitation deficit of around 80 per cent, which has raised the possibility of drought in the Valley this summer, the Met Department officials said. Several water bodies are

Feb

flowing below the zero level mark at many places while some springs in south Kashmir have dried up completely due to the receding water table, they said.

'There has been a 79 per cent deficient precipitation in the month of January and the situation in February so far is worse. If the dry weather continues, it is going to cause problems for the residents of the Valley as there won't be enough water for drinking or irritating the fields," a Met Department official said.

An official of the Irrigation and Flood Control Department said the water level in Jhelum river and several other water



CM Abdullah calls for collective effort

ammu and Kashmir is staring at a water crisis this year due to a massive deficit in rainfall, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said Wednesday, calling for a more proactive approach and collective efforts towards water management and conservation. Abdullah said in a post on X, "J&K is

staring at a water crisis this year. It's not a recent phenomenon, actually it's been building up for a few years now. While the government will have to adopt a more proactive approach for record 80% water management & conservation, it can't just be a government centric approach. All of us residents of J&K will have to change precipitation the way we take water for granted." The chief minister said deficit: Met he will review the measures being taken by the concerned

department to deal with the crisis. "I'll be reviewing the measures the Jal Shakti (PHE) Dept intends to take to deal with the developing crisis & I'll also be talking to the people of J&K over the next few months about what we can do collectively," he added.

bodies was more than a metre below the usual water level for this time of the year.

"If it does not rain or snow in the next fortnight, there is a possibility of crisis with regards to water for drinking and irrigation purposes," he added.

Social media is flooded with videos and images of dried up water bodies with Acchabal springs in south Kashmir having dried up completely.

The river bed of Jhelum is visible at many places, especially upstream in south Kashmir while the water level downstream in north Kashmir is alarmingly low. The lack of enough snowfall has forced authorities to postpone the fifth edition of Khelo India Winter Games which were scheduled to begin from February 22.

R'sthan Budget focuses on jobs, water supply

Calling this the state's first "green Budget", Kumari said special focus will be given on climate change adoption, forest and environment, sustainable agriculture, water harvesting, recycling and waste disposal, circular economy, and capacity building

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Feb 19: Recruitment for up to 2.75 lakh positions in the government and private sector, water supply projects, and the construction of nine greenfield expressways were the highlights of the Rajasthan Budget 2025-26 presented by state Finance Minister Diya Kumari in the Assembly Wednesday.

While presenting ₹5.37-lakh crore Budget, Kumari, who is also the Deputy Chief Minister of the state, announced that 20 lakh new houses will be provided with drinking water connections and ₹400 crore will be spent for this purpose.

'We are committed to creating a \$350 billion economy by 2030... We have increased capital expenditure by more than 40 per cent in a short period and have constructed more than 9,600 km of new roads and upgraded more than 13,000 km of roads," Kumari said.

Calling this the state's first 'green Budget", Kumari said special focus will be given on climate change adoption, forest and environment, sustainable agriculture, water harvesting, recycling and waste disposal. circular economy, and capacity building

"Under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, the GDP, indicating the development of the state, is estimated to increase to more than ₹19.89.000 crore in



While presenting the ₹5.37-lakh crore Budget, Kumari, who is also the Deputy Chief Minister of the state, announced that 20 lakh new houses will be provided with drinking water connections and ₹400 crore will be spent for this purpose

2025-26," she said.

Kumari announced recruitment for 1.25 lakh posts in government departments and state undertakings and 1.50 lakh private sector jobs in the coming year.

She said the state government will construct nine greenfield expressways at a cost of ₹60,000 crore.

For the energy sector, she announced 50,000 new agriculture connections and 5 lakh domestic connections, abolition of banking with other states at high rates, solar plants, and 150 units of free electricity per

month to beneficiaries under the CM Free electricity scheme.

An allocation of ₹10 crore was made for work of non-patchable roads in each Assembly constituencies and ₹15 crore in constituencies un der desert region, ₹50 crore for detailed project report of ring roads in 15 cities, ₹250 crore for traffic improvement work in Jaipur, Jaipur metro work from Sitapura industrial area to Ambabari and Vidhyadhar Nagar, DPR for Jaipur metro extension to Jagatpura and

Vaishali Nagar. A fund of ₹150 crore was announced under the CM Thar region development programme, installation of 50,000 street lights in all cities of the state.

She announced global capac ity centre policy for investment in the service sector, Rajasthan trade promotion policy for trad ing sector, development of 10 sites as iconic tourist destinations.

Kumari said ₹100 crore wil be spent to promote night tourism, ₹100 crore for Triba Tourist Circuit covering Tri pura Sundari temple, Mangarh Dham, Beneshwar Dham and other temples, and Govind Devji Kala Mahotsav to mark 300 years of foundation of Jai

She said "Vaidik Gurukul" and "Vaidik Tourism Centres will be established in Jaipur Jodhpur, and Udaipur, and "Yuva Sathi Kendra" in Kota Jodhpur, Jaipur and Sikar to address the issues of suicides and stress among students.

J&K HC quashes order of detention of iournalist under PSA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Feb 19: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Wednesday quashed the detention order of journalist Majid Hyderi under the Public Safety Act (PSA). VK Chatterjee quashed the detention of Hyderi under PSA, the peadvocate reporters here.

Majid Hyderi was arrested and booked under the PSA on charges of extortion and defamation in September 2023. He was later lodged in the Kot Balwal jail in Jammu district. The court had reserved the judgement on Majid's detention after a heated argument from both sides and announced the judgement today.

In another case, the high court dismissed the petition filed by senior advocate, Mian Qayoom, challenging his detention order under the PSA. Mian Qayoom was arrested June 25, 2024, during the investigation into the murder of advocate Babar Qadri.

Qadri was killed by gunmen in his home in the Hawal area of Srinagar city in 2020. Before his killing, he had accused Mian Qayoom of hatching a conspiracy to kill him.



In this image released by @ombirlakota via X on Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla pays tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his

IGP Jammu reviews railway security

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

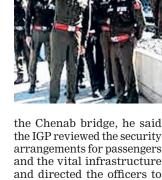
Jammu, Feb 19: Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, conducted a comprehensive security review of strategic locations along Katra-Banihal railway section, which is likely to be thrown open for commercial operations shortly to fulfill the dream of Kashmir's rail connectivity. an official said.

Accompanied by Udhampur-Reasi Range Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Rayees Mohammad Bhat, Doda-Kishtwar-Ramban Range DIG Shridhar Patil and other senor police and railway officers, the IGP visited Railway stations at Katra, Reasi and Sangaldan and the iconic Chenab bridge at Kauri Tuesday, a police official said.

He said the visit focused on assessing the existing security measures, law enforcement deployment, surveillance systems and anti-sabotage preparedness to counter any potential threats.

The IGP interacted with the officers and personnel on the ground, reviewing security protocols, surveillance systems and coordination mechanisms among different agencies, the official said.

At the Railway stations and



Force (RPF) personnel. Emphasizing the importance of proactive policing and intelligence gathering he directed the officials to en hance vigilance, strengthen security checks and ensure seamless coordination be tween police, railway authori

enhance security measures

and to coordinate effectively

with the Railway Protection

ties and other security forces. "Continuous monitor ing and enhanced security measures will remain a priority to ensure the safe ty of passengers, residents, and critical infrastructure" the IGP said.

India-Egypt joint exercise Cyclone-III underway in Bikaner

The third edition of 14-day exercise, which started February 10, includes joint training on close quarter battle (CQB) drills, survival techniques, demolition training and combat medical skills, among others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Feb 19: Indian and Egyptian troops are undergoing rigorous combat conditioning and tactical training under the ongoing joint special forces exercise Cyclone-III at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan's Bikaner, officials said Wednesday.

The military drill is aimed at strengthening joint operational capabilities, defence spokesperson Col Amitabh Sharma said in a release

The third edition of 14-day exercise, which started February 10, includes joint training on close quarter battle (CQB) drills, survival techniques, demolition training and combat medical

skills, among others, he said. "High-intensity drills be-



have been designed to enhance

the soldiers' ability to respond

effectively to complex operation-

al scenarios, particularly in des-

ert and semi-desert terrain," the

emphasised agility, endurance

and precision, ensuring that

The joint training sessions

spokesperson added.

he joint training sessions emphasised agility, endurance and precision, ensuring that both contingents operate seamlessly as a cohesive force in real-world combat situations

he exercise also provides a unique opportunity to showcase India's indigenous defence capabilities and the Egyptian contingent gains first-hand exposure to India's cutting-edge military technology and weapon systems

and weapon systems, he said.

"Such collaborations not only enhance tactical capabilities but also deepen diplomatic and military ties between the two nations," he said.

The exercise will culminate in an intense 48-hour validation phase, during which both con-

tingents will conduct simulated counter-terrorism operations.

The final phase is designed to rigorously test the troops' ability to plan and execute tactical manoeuvres in high-pressure environments. This segment will see soldiers executing joint tactical drills, neutralising simulated threats and applying their learned skills in a realistic operational setting.

"Exercise Cyclone-III stands as a symbol of India and Egypt's enduring defence cooperation and shared commitment to counter-terrorism and regional security. This high-intensity exercise is a testament to the strong strategic partnership between India and Egypt, reinforcing military cooperation and enhancing inter-operability between the two nations' elite forces," the spokesperson said.



(A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking) At/PO. – Ghatikia, Near Kalinga Studio, Bhubaneswar – 751029

Notice for Auction of Cashew Plantation No. 8

No.CAD-: Odisha State Cashew Development Corporation Limited hereby invites interested person/ organization to bid for the cashew plantations unde its jurisdiction in six divisions i.e. Khordha, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj Coraput and Sundergarh in the auction to be effectuated on the websit https://www.mstcecommerce.com/ on. Dt. 19/02/2025. The details of the date

and time related to the auction process are as mentioned below.						
SI No.	Particulars	Date	Time			
1	Publication Date	19/02/2025	11:00 A.M.			
2	Document Submission / EMD Payment	19/02/2025	11:00 A.M.			
II	Start Date					
3	Document Submission/EMD Payment	27/02/2025	05:00 P.M.			
	End Date					
4	Auction Start Date	28/02/2025	11:00 A.M.			
5	Auction End Date	28/02/2025	05:00 P.M.			

Auction timing for the plantations being leased out for 3 years is 11:00 A.M. to 02:00 P.M. and auction timing for the plantations being leased out fo 5 years is 02:00 P.M. to 05:00 P.M.

The plantations will be leased out for 5 years/3 years as per the area of the plantation. The detailed terms and condition may be obtained from the website https://www.mstcecommerce.com/ or https://www.oscdc.nic.in. N.B: This is the last phase of auction for cashew plantations und

Thus it is notified for the information of general public that, you are requested to take part in the auction process carefully as per the instructions mentioned in the above mentioned website, date and time. For more nformation you may contact to the Head Office or the respective Division

OIPR-01049/11/0028/2425 Sd./- Managing Director

ing carried out in the exercise



both contingents operate seam-

lessly as a cohesive force in re-

The exercise also provides a

unique opportunity to showcase

India's indigenous defence capabil-

ities and the Egyptian contingent

gains first-hand exposure to India's

cutting-edge military technology

al-world combat situations.



Planting trees is crucial for saving environment, stopping soil erosion, saving water and life... This pledge is now becoming a people's movement

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

MIZORAM GETS ITS FIRST SKYWALK

The first skywalk in Mizoram has been inaugurated in state capital Aizawl, officials said. The privately owned sky bridge located at Aizawl Peak Resort or Hangi Lunglen Tlang in the northern part of the state capital was inaugurated by Chief Minister Lalduhoma for the public Tuesday, they said



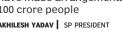


Board has also Pollution Control Boards are continuously monitoring water quality, and recent reports confirm that the water at the Sangam is now fit for both bathing and ritual use YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

The menace of drug trafficking and abuse has assumed alarm ing proportions today and is of much concern to my govern-



against the Maha Kum bh, but the government invited people to the event claiming to have made arrangements for 100 crore people



SHORT **TAKES**

Eight killed in 2 road accidents

Ranchi: At least eight people were killed in two road accidents in Jharkhand's Giridih district, police said Wednesday. Six people were killed in Madhuban police station area late Tuesday night, while two others died in Bagodar police station area early Wednesday. In another incident early Wednesday, two persons were killed when the motorcycle they were riding rammed into an electric pole in Bagodar police station area, another police

Court grants interim bail to kin of Azam

Rampur (UP): A special court Wednesday granted interim bail to the kin of SP leader Azam Khan, a day after his other son Abdullah was given the reprieve in a property related case. MP MLA special court magistrate Shobhit Bansal granted the relief to the veteran politician's wife Dr Tazeen Fatima and son Adeeb Azam Khan in the case registered in 2020. Advocate Zubair Ahmed Khan, who appeared for the applicants. said. "This was a case of 2020 in which there were allegations related to the destruction of records in the record room related to enemy property. In this case three including Fatima, her son Adeeb Azam Khan surrendered before the court today and after hearing the arguments the court has released them on interim bail.

Five militants held in Manipur

Imphal: Five militants belonging to three banned outfits have been arrested in Manipur in the last two days. police said Wednesday. One sympathiser of a proscribed organisation has also been nabbed. The arrests have been made in Imphal East and West, Bishnupur and Kakching districts, a police officer said. An active member of banned outfit People's Liberation Army (PLA), identified as Waikhom Ibungo Meitei (26), was arrested from Hatta Golapati area in Imphal

Gurugram: Girl raped,

East Tuesday.

brutally thrashed Gurugram: A 13-year-old girl was brutally raped and beaten up her neighbour in Sector 29 area here, police said Wednesday. The girl's mother, in her complaint, alleged that at around 3 pm Tuesday her daughter left home to meet her maternal grandmother.

NIA arrests 3 men for leaking defence info to Pak operatives

It has been alleged that Pakistani intelligence operatives funded the espionage through cryptocurrencies, and used escorts to honeytrap officials. With the latest three arrests, the NIA has so far picked up eight people in the high-profile espionage case, originally registered by Andhra police's Counter Intelligence Wing



New Delhi, Feb 19: Three men were arrested for leaking sensitive information to Pakistan-based intelligence operatives, the NIA said Wednesday.

In a statement, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said the three men were sharing sensitive information about Indian defence establishments at Karwar Naval Base and Kochi Naval Base.

While Vethan Laxman Tandel and Akshay Ravi Naik were picked up from Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka, Abhilash PA was arrested from Kochi in Kerala Tuesday.

All three accused persons, arrested with the assistance of local police, were allegedly

Four Naxalites

gunned down

by police in MP

Balaghat. Feb 19: Four

Naxalites, including three

women cadres, were killed

Wednesday in an encounter

with the police in Madhya

Pradesh's Balaghat district, an

The anti-Naxal Hawk Force

of the state police and local

police teams took part in the

operation that took place in a

forested area, said addition-

al superintendent of police

from the encounter site, police

said. Balaghat shares borders

with Gondia district of Ma-

harashtra and Rajnandgaon,

Khairagarh and Kawardha

districts of Chhattisgarh with

both adjoining states facing

Left-wing extremism in certain

in the morning, at a location

some 90 km away from the dis-

trict headquarters, Dabar told

PTI. The spot is near Ronda

Forest Camp in Supkhar For-

est Range under Garhi police

station area, as per an official

rifle, a Self-Loading Rifle (SLR)

and a .303 rifle besides essential

daily-use items from the spot.

Police recovered an INSAS

The gunbattle broke out

Weapons were also recovered

official said.

found to have been in contact with Pakistan Intelligence Operatives (PIOs) through social media.

As per NIA investigations, they were sharing sensitive information about Indian defence establishments at Karwar Naval Base and Kochi Naval Base and were receiving money from PIOs in exchange for the information.

A total of eight people have been arrested so far in the case. NIA has so far chargesheeted five persons, including two absconding Pakistani operatives, in the case that was originally registered by the Counter Intelligence Cell, Andhra Pradesh in January 2021.

The anti-terror agency took over the case in June 2023. NIA

investigations have revealed that Pakistan national Meer Balai Khan and one Akash Solanki -- who has been arrested -- were involved in the espionage racket related to leaking of sensitive vital information about the Indian Navy as part of an "anti-India conspiracy".

Another absconding PIO, Alven, and two others -- Manmohan Surendra Panda and Amaan Salim Shaikh -- have also been chargesheeted by the

The NIA will continue its probe in the case to unravel the espionage conspiracy by Pakistan-based operatives and other anti-national elements, the statement said.

The NIA took over the case after the Andhra Pradesh police suspected the involvement of foreign intelligence operatives.

The chargesheet filed before the NIA court in Vijayawada in July 2024, the probe agency said Solanki had confidential details of Indian warships and submarines, which he passed on to a Pakistani intelligence operative, who went by the name 'Aditi Chouhan'. It was reported that Khan funded Solanki through cryptocurrencies. Meanwhile, the NIA which had inspected various locations in multiple states — is still probing the case.



Bangalore, Feb 19: The Lokayukta police probing the MU-DA site allotment case Wednesday said the charges against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his wife Parvathi could not be proved for want of evidence.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, R Ashoka, addressing the media said the Lokavukta report giving clean chit to Siddaramaiah was on the expected lines, while the petitioner in the case, activist Snehamayi Krishna, told PTI: "Only those officials who have sold their conscience can give such a report". The probing officers said they have submitted the final report to the High Court. "Since the above allegations against accused-1 to accused-4 in the case have not been proven due to lack of evidence, the final report is being submitted to the High Court," the Lokayukta police said in a letter to Krishna. Besides Siddaramaiah and his wife, his brother-in-law Mallikariuna Swamv and the land owner

Devaraju are the accused. The Lokayukta police said that further investigation will be conducted into the allegations of Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA)



have submitted the final report to the High Court

providing compensatory plots in the ratio of 50:50 from 2016 to 2024 and an additional final report will be submitted to the High Court under Section 173 (8) CrPC. In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout.

reach, the court said, a single article or report could resonate with millions, shaping their beliefs and judgments. It has the capability to cause

A view of the snow-covered Tandi village, confluence of the rivers Chandra and Bhaga, in Lahaul and Spiti PRIPHO

Media must exercise

utmost caution before

publishing any news: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Su-

preme Court has said persons

working in key positions in the

media must exercise utmost

caution and responsibility be-

fore publishing any statements,

news, or opinions and observed

the right to freedom of speech

and expression was paramount.

Pardiwala and R Mahadevan

reiterated that the power of the media in shaping public

opinion was significant and

the press possessed the ability

to influence public sentiments

and alter perceptions, with re-

The bench's observation came

when it quashed a defamation

case against English daily Times

of India's editorial director and

other journalists, who were ac-

cused of publishing alleged de-

famatory contents over the au-

thenticity of certain paintings to

be auctioned by Bid & Hammer

'We find it necessary to em

phasise that right to freedom

of speech and expression guar-

anteed under Article 19(1)(a)

of the Constitution of India is

paramount. At the same time.

it is reiterated that those work

ing in the media, particularly,

individuals in key positions,

authors, etc., must exercise ut-

most caution and responsibili-

ty before publishing any state-

ments, news, or opinions," the

bench said in its February 18

glish writer Bulwer Lytton as

saying, "The pen is mightier

than the sword". Given the vast

The top court quoted En-

judgement.

Fine Art Auctioneers.

markable speed.

A bench of Justices J B

severe damage to the reputation of those concerned, with consequences that may be far-reaching and enduring, it added. 'This highlights the critical need for accuracy and fairness in media reporting, especially when dealing with matters having the potential to impact the integrity of individuals or institutions. Keeping these aspects in mind, publication of the news articles must be done in public interest and with good faith," said the bench.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the journalists against a Karnataka High Court order, which dismissed their petition challenging the initiation of the criminal proceedings against them. The were facing charges of under Sections 499 (defamation) and 500 (punishment for defamation) of the IPC.

The complainant (art auction house) alleged that the defamatory news item that was printed, published and circulated by all the accused persons had caused readers to view the complainant with suspicion and also fostered an unjustifiable and unfounded public opinion that its works offered for sale through public auctions could be fake.

The top court however observed procedural irregularities in the magistrate's summoning order and said the complainant failed to produce any witness to prima facie establish the alleged imputations had lowered its reputation.

STAMPEDE ROW

Delhi HC asks rlys to take note of PIL raising concerns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Delhi High Court Wednesday asked the Railways to examine the fixing of maximum passengers and sale of platform tickets issues raised in a PIL over the recent stampede at the Nev Delhi Railway Station.

A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela asked the authorities concerned to state in its affidavit, the details of its mea sures on the issues.

"Let the issues raised in the petition be examined, as suggest ed by the solicitor general, at the highest level at the Railway Board and thereafter an affidavit be filed by the respondent giving details of the decisions which might be taken by the Railway Board," the court ordered.

Solicitor general Tushar

Mehta said the matter was not taken in an adversarial manner and the Railways was bound to follow the law. He said there was an "unprecedented" sit uation and assured the court that the issues raised in the PIL would be considered at the highest level. The court said the PIL was not confined to the recent incident of stampede as it sought implementation of the existing legal provisions with respect to maximum number of and sale of platform tickets.

If the legal provisions were perhaps implemented adequate ly, such incidents of stampede could be avoided, it added. The matter would come up March 26.A PIL was also filed in the Supreme Court February 17. two days after the tragic inci dent that claimed 18 lives and left 15 injured, and sought im mediate action to prevent such disasters in the future.

The PIL, filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari, sought a direction to the Centre and other authorities for implementa tion and consideration of a 2014 report of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on "Managing Crowd at Events and Venues of Mass Gathering".

Ensure child care, feeding rooms in public buildings: SC to states

statement.

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Supreme Court Wednesday outlined the importance of separate spaces for child care and feeding of infants in public buildings and asked states to ensure such facilities were provided.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Prasanna B Varale said setting up such facilities would ensure privacy of mothers and prove beneficial for infants. In existing public spaces, as far as practicable, the state governments may ensure such facilities were provided,

"In so far as public buildings which are at the stage of planning and construction at public places, the state gov-

ernments may ensure that sufficient space is reserved for the purposes referred to above, said the bench. The top court was hearing a plea seeking directions to construct feeding rooms, child care rooms or any other facilities for infants and mothers in public spaces.

The Centre's counsel said the secretary of the Ministry of Women and Child Development February 27, 2024, issued a communication on the issue to chief secretaries and administrators of all states and union territories (UT).

Saying it was conscious that it issued no notice to states and UTs, the bench expressed satisfaction over the secretary's communication incorporating the prayers mentioned in the plea. "On a perusal of the same, we

find that the advice for setting up of the aforesaid facilities at public places is for the purpose of ensuring privacy and ease of discharging of duties of mothers who have young children and for the benefit of the

infants," it added. The bench said if the advice was acted upon by the states, it would go a long way in facilitating privacy to young mothers and infants at the time of feeding.

"We find that the said ad-

Abench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Prasanna B Varale said setting up such facilities would ensure privacy of mothers and prove beneficial for infants

n existing public spaces, as far as practicable, the state governments may ensure such facilities were provided, added

vice which has been issued by the central government is in accordance with the fundamental rights ensured under Articles 14 and 15 (3) of the Constitution," said the court. The court directed the Centre to incorporate the advisory in the form of a reminder communication to the chief secretaries and administrators of the states and UTs along with a copy of its order.

The petitioner's counsel said states complying with the advisory issued by the Centre February 27, 2024, would serve the purpose of filing the plea The bench disposed of the plea and asked the Centre to comply with its direction within two weeks.

The plea sought a direction to the authorities to ensure the fundamental right of nurs ing mothers and infants were protected aside from dedicating exclusive spaces for child care and feeding in public buildings etc. The top court November 19, 2024 observed at the mo ment, there appeared to be no concrete law including rules or notifications, issued by the







national



For the last 16 years, I have been talking about Kerala youth migrating to other countries due to unemployment and the need for startups and promotion of entrepreneurship in the state

GOOGLE INAUGURATES NEW CAMPUS IN B'LORE

Tech titan Google Wednesday inaugurated its new campus in Bangalore, which is touted to be among its largest offices globally. India has always played the role of a strategic nerve centre in the tech discourse, the company said, adding that this is "evident in the thriving startup and app ecosystems, the digital public infrastructure that's transforming life for hundreds of millions of Indians, and the depth and diversity of Indian creators"





Congress lost its deposit in 65 of the 70 assembly seats in Delhi, yet they celebrated when AAP lost the elections to the BJP. Congress has deteriorated into a party that now even celebrates the victory of the BJP PINARAYI VIJAYAN KERALA CM

Manmohan Singh, who studied economics in top educational institutions like Cambridge and

Oxford, held key positions in past governments, such as finance secretary, Reserve Bank's governor and as the chairman of University **Grants Commission** BHUPENDRA PATEL | GUJARAT CM

We are told that the Portuguese ruled Goa for 450 years, which is not true. They could rule only three talukas.

Salcette, Bardez and Tiswadi, for 450 years, while the rest of Goa was outside their dominion. They ruled over the whole of Goa only for 90-100 years

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM



BJP always insults great sons of our nation. They installed a low quality 35-foot Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue in

collapsed within a year. They made money in the name of statue and insulted Shivaji Maharaj I feel bad

Sindhudurg in Maharashtra which

#ShivajiMaharajJayanti @SSsagarHyd

SHORT **TAKES**

Kerala revises salaries of PSC chairman

Thiruvananthapuram: The Left government in Kerala Wednesday decided to revise the salaries and benefits of the chairman and members of the Kerala Public Service Commission (PSC). The decision was taken by the state Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, an official release said here. As per the new decision, the chairman's salary will be equal to the maximum amount in the super time scale of district judges. The members will receive a salary matching the maximum amount in the selection grade scale of district judges.

Three TN students die as bus overturns

Munnar (Kerala): Three students, including two girls from Tamil Nadu, were killed, and over 30 others were injured after the bus they were travelling in overturned at Eco Point in Mattupetty, near here, Wednesday, police said. The deceased have been identified as Aadika (19), Venika (19), and Suthan (19), all students of Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, in Kanyakumari district of the neighbouring state. The accident occurred when the tourist bus, carrying students from Kanyakumari to Munnar on an excursion, overturned upon arrival, police said.

U'khand Cabinet clears stringent land law

Dehradun: The Uttarakhand Cabinet Wednesday approved a stringent land law to "maintain" the state's original identity by preventing people from buying limitless land, officials said. People of the state had long been demanding imposition of limits on individuals buying land in the state, they said.

Yogi slams Oppn over Mahakumbh

Speaking in the state Assembly, Adityanath said the Mahakumbh was not just a religious event but a symbol of India's cultural and spiritual heritage but the Opposition has been spreading "false propaganda", disregarding its significance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 19: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Wednesday lambasted Opposition parties for their critical statements on the Mahakumbh, saying their attempts to "malign" the event with false narratives and disrespect Sanatan Dharma will not be tolerated. Speaking in the state Assem-

bly, he said the Mahakumbh was not just a religious event but a symbol of India's cultural and spiritual heritage but the Opposition has been spreading "false propaganda", disregarding its significance. Adityanath assured full sup-

port to the devotees affected by the January 29 Mahakumbh stampede and related road accidents in Prayagraj, while accusing Opposition parties, particularly the Samajwadi Party (SP), of politicising the tragedy. "You can raise issues in the House, but you must maintain dignity in your words... a judicial commission was investigating any incident, and those found responsible for mismanagement would face strict action. No matter how influential the culprit may be, they will not be spared," he declared. The Op-



Action initiated against 101 social media accounts

egal action has been initiated against 101 social media accounts in 10 cases for allegedly spreading misleading information related to the Mahakumbh and Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh Police said Wednesday. The action followed directives from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to curb fake news and misinformation regarding the mega event. According to Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Prashant Kumar, a comprehensive cyber patrolling strategy was implemented to monitor and counter the spread of misleading content.

position is trying to "mislead people", but the state's BJP government is committed to making the event historic and grand, he said.

'Sanatan Dharma is the soul of India, and it is our duty to uphold its dignity. The Opposition's attempts to malign the Mahakumbh with false narratives will not be tolerated," he said on the second day of the Budget Session. Responding to statements made by Opposition leaders in the Assembly, he said they are trying to disrupt the sacred event with baseless allegations. He accused parties like the Samaiwadi Party of attempting to create a confusion among the masses

Right since the beginning of Mahakumbh , he said, the opposition has been against it and is spreading baseless rumours. "They are distorting facts and calling the event a waste of money". Instead of discussing issues related to the event in the Assembly, they chose to disrupt the session, he said. Citing social media posts made by Opposition leaders, he said their statements reflect their mindset and values. No civilised society could accept such language, he said.

The Mahakumbh is the soul of Indian culture and viewing it through a narrow political lens is inappropriate, he said Referring to specific opposition leaders, Adityanath said SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had questioned the scale and expenditure of the Mahakumbh

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had "falsely' claimed "thousands" died in the stampede. Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee called it "Mrityukumbh," or Kumbh of Death, he said.

Jaya Bachchan of the SP alleged dead bodies were thrown into the Ganga, and RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav dismissed the event as useless. Aditvanath said.

These "irresponsible statements" are "a direct insult to Sanatan Dharma's biggest



A military personnel during the third edition of India - Egypt joint special forces exercise 'CYCLONEIII', at Mahajan Field Firing Range,

COURT CORNER

TMC MP Mahua Moitra moves apex court

NEW DELHI: TMC MP Mahua Moitra has moved the Supreme Court against the provision of the 2023 law over the appointments of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the Election Commissioners (ECs). A bench of Justices Surva Kant and N Kotiswar Singh Wednesday deferred the hearing of similar pleas against the provision after the Holi break. According to the Supreme Court website, the matter could come up March 19. Moitra, an MP from Krishnanagar Lok Sabha constituency. in her plea filed through advocate Talha Abdul Rahman, argued having a direct interest in the integrity and fairness of the electoral process in India and the role of the Election Commission of India (ECI), including the process of appointment of ECs. According to Section 7 of the Act. the selection committee -- tasked with making recommendations for appointment of the CEC and other ECs -- shall consist of the Prime Minister, as the chairperson, the Leader of Opposition (or the leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha) and a union cabinet minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.

Top court slams WB govt for filing 'frivolous' plea

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has pulled up the West Bengal government for not paying retirement dues to a man for 18 years and said it had filed a "frivolous" plea while imposing costs of ₹10 lakh. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta dismissed a plea filed by the state government against an order of the Calcutta High Court. "We dismiss these petitions filed by the state of West Bengal on the ground of delay as well as on merits and also impose costs of ₹10 lakh, to be paid to the respondent within four weeks from today," the bench said. The bench observed it considered the case on merits despite the plea being filed with a "substantial delay of 391 days" and no satisfactory explanation was given by the state.

Court junks defamation case against Saurabh

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court Wednesday dismissed a criminal defamation complaint against AAP's Saurabh Bhardwaj, citing delay in filing the case. Additional chief judicial magistrate Neha Mittal dismissed the complaint filed by BJP's Suraj Bhan Chauhan, saying the alleged offence of defamation took place in September 2018, and observed the limitation period for filing the present complaint was three years. The judge said none of the grounds pleaded by the complainant to seek condonation of delay were found to be justifiable. "This court is of the opinion that the complainant is not entitled to the condonation of delay in filing the present complaint. Accordingly, the present application is dismissed," held the court.

DEATHS IN KOLKATA

MYSTERIOUS 3 found dead at home; as many hurt in mishap

Police were investigating a claim by one of the three seriously injured in the car accident that the entire family planned to die by suicide together

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 19: Two women and a teenage girl of the same family were found dead inside their house, while three other members were injured as their car rammed into a metro pillar in Kolkata Wednesday, police said.

The three bodies were found in separate rooms on the third floor of the four-storey house in Tangra area, with the bodies of the two women bearing wrist injuries, a senior police officer said.

Police discovered the bodies after coming to know about the deaths from the husband of one of the deceased. He was among the three injured in the car accident, Joint Commissioner of Kolkata Police, Rupesh Kumar, told reporters after visiting the house. The accident took place when the car collided with a metro pillar near Abhishikta crossing on EM Bypass, Kumar said.

Police were speaking to eyewitnesses to ascertain how the accident took place and were scanning CCTV footage. The eyewitnesses claimed that the



car did not collide with any other vehicle and directly rammed into the pillar. Kumar said. Commissioner of Kolkata Police Manoj Verma also visited the house. He said a teenage girl aged around 14-15 years was among the deceased.

We have got certain clues. It is premature to conclusively say whether it was a case of murder or suicide. The body of the teenage girl did not have any major injury marks. The exact reason behind her death and the other two deaths can be ascertained only after we receive the post-mortem examination report," the CP said.

Police were investigating a claim by one of the three seriously injured in the car accident that the entire family planned to die by suicide together. A probe was also underway into claims by neighbours that around 10 people had visited the residence of the family twice Tuesday and whether the deaths are linked with these developments "During preliminary investi-

gation, we have come to know that the family was having some financial problem. We are trying to ascertain whether today's developments are linked to it," Verma said. The Devs were involved in tannery business and lived in the locality for decades, the local KMC councillor said. During preliminary investigation, it was found that the two women had slit their wrists after consuming some pills mixed in their food, another police officer said.

After that, the three other family members went out in their car and the vehicle rammed into a pillar near Kavi Sukanta metro station around 4 am, he said. The accident spot is around 6 km from their house, the officer said.

The three injured occupants of the car were Prasun Dey and Pralay Dey, besides a teenage boy. They will also be questioned upon improvement in their condition, he added.

ALLAHBADIA ROW Parl panel seeks **MEITY's response**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: Citing the Supreme Court's stern words against vulgarity in the Ranveer Allahbadia case, a par liamentary panel Wednesday asked the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to submit a note on the efficacy of existing laws in dealing with such cases and any amendment needed to bring online platforms under legal scrutiny.

The Standing Committee on Communications and In formation Technology headed by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey wrote to the ministry's secretary S Krishnan over the issue. It said, "In the light of the above and growing incidents of misuse of digital and social media platforms, the Ministry of Electronics and IT is request ed to send a brief note to this committee on the efficacy of existing laws to deal with such cases and need to amend the existing laws/IT Act, 2000, in order to bring such platforms

under legal scrutiny This is needed to "safeguard the societal values and protect the dignity of women and chil dren" while adhering to the creative expression and freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, the missive added. The ministry has been asked to submit its note by February 25 and treat the matter as "most urgent", it added.

India exceeds climate targets, says Simon Stiell

New Delhi, Feb 19: India is already meeting and exceeding key climate targets and has a real opportunity to grow even faster using clean energy and industry, UN climate chief Simon Stiell has said.

In an email interview with PTI, Stiell said India's vast geography and large population mean a significant number of people are vulnerable to climate impacts. Therefore, he said, it is crucial to invest in making people, communities, infrastructure, and businesses more resilient.

"I see a real opportunity for India to grow even faster, using clean energy and industry, which will be a huge benefit to India's economic prosperity, with millions more jobs, better health outcomes, more affordable and secure energy accessible to all, and faster-rising living standards for the Indian people," the executive secretary of the United Nations

Framework Convention on Cli-



mate Change (UNFCCC) said. He noted that from melting glaciers in the north to stronger storms, cyclones, and food insecurity, India's geography

and population make a large number of people vulnerable to climate impacts. Stiell, who visited India last week, called the country a "solar superpower" and urged it to develop an ambitious cli-

mate plan covering its entire

economy. He said that fully em-

bracing the global clean energy boom would accelerate India's economic rise

He praised India's efforts to tackle climate change, saying that while some governments only talk, "India delivers". As part of its climate commitments or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2022, India aims to reduce its GDP emission intensity by 45 per cent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. It al-

so aims to achieve 50 per cent of its installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

India has also pledged to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes through additional WHO VISITED and tree

INDIA LAST WEEK, by 2030. CALLED THE COUNTRY According to A "SOLAR SUPERPOWER" government AND URGED IT TO DEVELOP data, India's AN AMBITIOUS CLIMATE PLAN GDP emission COVERING ITS ENTIRE ECONOMY intensity fell HE SAID THAT FULLY by 36 per cent **EMBRACING THE GLOBAL** between 2005

CLEAN ENERGY BOOM and 2020 **WOULD ACCELERATE** As of December INDIA'S ECONOMIC 2024, the share of RISE non-fossil fuel power

generation capacity in the country has already exceeded 47 per cent, and an additional carbon sink of 2.29 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent was created between 2005 and 2021. Countries are required to submit their next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), or climate plans, for the 2031-2035

period this year.

With most countries, including India, missing the February 10 deadline, Stiell earlier this month urged them to submit their plans by September at the latest. An official source in the Union environment minis-

try told PTI that India has not yet finalised its new NDCs. India's

NDCs will have targets achievable with the means able. Mitigating climate change requires financial and technological support, along with other enablers. Devel-

oped countries are unwilling to provide this support. Why should countries that did not cause climate change continue to suffer? the source said. The collective aim of these

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

Govt sources defend deportation flights landing in Amritsar

NEW DELHI: With Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann taking exceptions to US flights carrying Indian deportees landing in Amritsar, government sources Wednesday defended the move. saving the state makes up for the biggest share of these illegal immigrants. Sharing figures of the three flights that have arrived in India since February 5. they said Puniab residents total 126 of the 333 people deported in US military aircraft, followed by 110 from neighbouring Harvana and 74 from Guiarat, Eight of them were from Uttar Pradesh, five from Maharashtra, two each from Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Raiasthan and Goa, and one each from Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand. Each of the three flights February 5, 15 and 16 carried over 100 Indians and 333 of them have been deported so far. they added. The total includes 262 men, 42 women and 29 minors, the sources added.

international



The Global South cannot continue to be shortchanged. India and major players in other parts of the world deserve their due representation in the structures of the United **Nations. As regards Security** Council, this translates to permanent category membership PARVATHANENI HARISH

CONTEST TO NAME PAK'S FIRST MOON ROVER

Pakistan authorities launched a nation-wide contest to name its first moon rover as the country prepares to launch its maiden lunar mission in 2028. The Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) announced



will clarify the proposals put forth by the US, administration aims to achieve. Then we'll put Mexico's arguments on the table, particularly those concerning the (economic) integration between

MARCELO EBRARD ECONOMY SECRETARY, MEXICO

the two nations

I announce that I have reached an agreement with the new American administration so that the extradition treaty will continue with the

necessary safeguards for the state of Honduras XIOMARA CASTRO | PRESIDENT, HONDURAN





Yellow Dagger

institutions, aiming to bring down the system of the powers and the democratic order, which received the sinister name of 'Green and

PAULO GONET | BRAZIL'S PROSECUTOR-

SHORT TAKES

7 passengers killed in Pak

Islamabad: Unidentified gunmen killed at least seven passengers of a bus Wednesday after checking their identity cards in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan province, officials said. The gunmen targeted the passenger bus in the Barkhan area of the province when it was moving from the provincial capital, Quetta, to Puniab province, Police said that the assailants stopped the bus on a national highway by setting up a blockade. The attackers boarded the bus, checked the passengers identity cards, and forcibly took seven individuals to a nearby mountain. Shortly after, gunshots were heard. Barkhan Deputy Commissioner Wagar Khurshid Alam confirmed the incident and the

■ 300 deportees from **US held in Panama**

Panama City (Panama): Panama is detaining in a hotel nearly 300 people from various countries deported under US President Donald Trump, not allowing them to leave while waiting for international authorities to organise a return to their countries. More than 40 per cent of the migrants, authorities say, won't voluntarily return to their homeland. Migrants in the hotel rooms held messages to the windows reading "Help" and "We are not save (sic) in our country." The migrants hailed from 10 mostly Asian countries, including Iran, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and others. The US has difficulty deporting directly to some of those countries so Panama is being used as a stopover. Costa Rica was expected to receive a similar flight of third-country deportees Wednesday.

Man convicted over attack on ex-Japan PM

Tokyo: A Japanese court Wednesday convicted a man who threw a homemade pipe bomb at Japan's former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at a 2023 campaign event, sentencing him to 10 years in prison, court officials said. Ryuji Kimura, 25, was found guilty of attempted murder in the April 15, 2023 attack on Kishida at a small fishing port in the western city of Wakayama, as well as four other crimes including violations of laws on explosives and other weapons. At stake was whether Kimura intended to commit murder.

Zelenskyy demands 'more truth' REUTERS Ryiv, Feb 19: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy "not a serious conversation", and that he could not sell his country. He was expected to meet visiting Us Ulumina and Waith

hit back Wednesday at Donald Trump's suggestion that Ukraine was responsible for Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion, saying the US president was trapped in a Russian disinformation bubble.

Speaking ahead of talks with Trump's Ukraine envoy, a day after Trump said Ukraine "should never have started" the conflict, Zelenskyy said he would like Trump's team to have "more truth" about Ukraine. The Ukrainian leader said Trump's assertion that his approval rating was just 4% was Russian disinformation and that any attempt to replace him would fail. "We have evidence that these

figures are being discussed between America and Russia. That is, President Trump unfortunately lives in this disinformation space," Zelenskiy told Ukrainian TV

The latest poll from the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, from early February, says 57% of Ukrainians trust Zelenskiy. Less than a month into his

presidency, Trump has upended US policy on Ukraine and Russia, ending Washington's bid to isolate Russia over its invasion of Ukraine with a

paragraph 5, Putin on talks, and damage to pipeline, paragraphs 8 and 23

envoy says in Kyiv he expects

envoys approve new sanctions against Russia

Live updates on the talks, their fallout and the war

Trump-Putin phone call and talks between senior US and Russian officials.

Trump said he may meet Putin this month. The Kremlin said such a meeting could take longer to prepare but Russia's sovereign wealth fund said it expected a number of US companies to return to Russia as early as the second quarter.

Putin said he rated the US-Russia talks in Saudi Arabia on ending the war in Ukraine highly. "There are results," he said, according to Russian news agencies, which did not elaborate.

The talks have excluded both Ukraine and Europe, which Trump says must step up to guarantee any ceasefire. Zelenskiy has suggested giving US companies the right to extract valuable minerals in Ukraine in return for US security guarantees, but indicated that Trump was not offering that.

Zelenskiv told a press conference the US had given Ukraine \$67 billion in weapons and \$31.5 billion in budget support, and that American demands for \$500 billion in minerals are

iting US Ukraine envoy Keith Kellogg, who said as he arrived in Kyiv that he expected substantial talks as the war approaches its three-year mark.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov lauded Trump for saying that previous US support of Ukraine's bid to join the NATO military alliance was a major cause of the war in

EUROPE PREPARES NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

Trump's US policy reversal puts it at odds with allies in the 27-member European Union, whose envoys Wednesday agreed on a 16th package of sanctions against Russia, including on aluminium and vessels believed to be carrying sanctioned Russian oil.

France said it did not understand the logic of Trump's comments that Ukraine was to blame for Russia's invasion

French President Emmanu el Macron was set to have an informal meeting on Ukraine with some European leaders and NATO ally Canada at 4 pm, following a similar meeting with Britain, Italy, Germany, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands and the European Union Monday.



Foreign Office spokesperson issued a statement in response to remarks by Afghanistan's acting Charge d'Affaires Sardar Shakaib, who alleged that Afghan refugees in Pakistan were being 'arrested without warning

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 19: Pakistan Wednesday rejected the allegation of "mistreatment" of Afghan refugees while highlighting its role in hosting millions of Afghans for decades.

or formal correspondence'

Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan issued a statement in response to remarks by Afghanistan's acting Charge d'Affaires Sardar Shakaib, who alleged that Afghan refugees in Pakistan were being "arrested without warning or formal correspondence' He also alleged that the Pa-

kistan government intended to expel all Afghans, even those with documents permitting their stay, especially saying that Afghan nationals in Islamabad and Rawalpindi were recently subjected to arrests, searches, and orders from the police to leave the twin cities and relocate to other parts of the country.

The FO spokesperson stated that Pakistan noted the remarks made by the Afghan charge d'affaires in Islamabad, about Pakistan's Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan.

"His assertions regarding mistreatment of Afghan nationals are misplaced," Khan said. "I would like to remind him that Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghans for decades with respect and dignity, while extending traditional hospitality, sharing its resources and services such as education and health, even with very little international support.

He also stated that Pakistan started the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP) in 2023 to expel aliens and put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure that no one is mistreated or harassed during the repatriation

He said Pakistan also extensively engaged the Afghan side to ensure smooth repatri ation of Afghan nationals.

"While Pakistan has done what it could, we expect interim Afghan authorities to create conducive conditions in Afghanistan, so that these re turnees are fully integrated in the Afghan society," he said.

"The real test of Afghan authorities would be to ensure that rights of these people about whom the Afghan diplomat talked are protected in Afghanistan," he added.

The Afghan refugee issues began in the wake of invasion of Afghanistan by the troops of the former USSR in 1979. The inflow peaked in the 1980s and Pakistan continues to host them due to in stability in Afghanistan. But it launched a plan in 2023 to expel aliens.

The Dawn newspaper reported that over 18,000 Afghan nationals returned to their country from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad in January this year, with repatriations in the second fortnight of the month slightly higher than the first fortnight.

According to the International Organisation for Mi gration (IOM), the pace of de portation of Afghan nationals from the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Rawalpindi has increased.

Alleged drug kingpin shot inside SL court PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Feb 19: Sri Lankan police Wednesday said a 34-yearold gunman has been arrested for the murder of a noted underworld figure who was shot dead Wednesday morning within the magistrate's court premises here. Ganemulle Sanjiwa died af-

ter admission to the hospital, Dr Rukshan Bellana, director of the National Hospital said. The gunman was arrested

at the northwestern region of Puttalam hours later. Police said the gunman was wanted for seven murders committed previously. He had served in the Sri Lanka Army commandos regiment, police said.

Sanjiwa was brought to the main magistrate's court from the prison in the southern town of Boossa for a hearing at court number 5. He was shot at by a gunman who was present at the hearing disguised as a lawyer, police said.



In this photo provided by Jocelyn Flint, false killer whales are stranded, Wednesday, on a remote beach on near Arthur River in Australia's island state of Tasmania

SNIPPETS

Indian national arrested in balloon explosion incident

Kathmandu: Nepal police have arrested an Indian national in connection with an incident at a tourism event in which Deputy Prime Minister Bishnu Paudel sustained a minor burn injury. Kamlesh



Kumar, 41, who was responsible for filling a balloon with hydrogen gas during the inauguration of 'Visit Pokhara Year 2025', has been arrested, Deputy Superintendent of Police Basanta Sharma said. Two sets of hydrogen gas-filled balloons exploded when Deputy Prime Minister Paudel and

Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City Dhanraj Acharya released them along with a banner soon after lighting candles through an electric switch as part of the ceremony February 15. The balloons caught fire as the candles lit for the festival were too close to them. DSP Sharma said a case has been registered against Kumar in Kaski district court. Paudel, who is also the finance minister, and Acharya had sustained injuries on their hands and face. Paudel was discharged Monday after treatment at Kirtipur Burn Hospital in Kathmandu while Acharya will remain under medical supervision for a few more days, according to hospital sources. Soon after the incident, Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak formed an investigation committee.

Bangladesh clashes leave nearly 150 students injured

Dhaka: More than 150 students have been injured in Bangladesh during clashes at a university campus, a sign of serious discord between groups instrumental in fomenting a national revolution last vear. Tuesday afternoon's clashes



began after the youth wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) sought to recruit students at the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology in the country's southwest. That sparked a confrontation with campus members of Students against Discrimination, a protest group that led the uprising that ousted autocratic ex-premier Sheikh Hasina last August. At least 50 people were taken for treatment after the skirmish. Khulna police officer Kabir Hossain told AFP. "The situation is now under control, and an extra contingent of police has been deployed," he added.

UK's knife crime crackdown named in memory of Indian-origin boy

Ronan's Law will require retailers to report suspicious and bulk purchases of knives on their platforms to police, with tougher sentences for selling knives to under 18s

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Feb 19: The UK government Wednesday announced stricter rules for online retailers selling knives, along with tougher penalties for failing to enforce them, as part of a new crackdown named in memory of an Indian-origin boy killed in a stabbing attack.

Ronan's Law will require retailers to report suspicious and bulk purchases of knives on their platforms to police, with tougher sentences for selling knives to under 18s.

Ronan Kanda, 16, was attacked near his home in Wolverhampton in the West Midlands region of England in July 2022 and died at the scene after being stabbed twice in what emerged as a case of mistaken identity.

His mother, Pooja Kanda,



in the West Midlands region of England in July 2022 and died at ne scene after being stabbed twice in what emerged as a case of

His mother, Pooja Kanda, has since been campaigning for more stringent measures after two teenagers – also of Indian origin – were sentenced to a total of 34 years' imprisonment for her son's murder

has since been campaigning for responsibilities. We welcome more stringent measures after the proposal of a registration two teenagers - also of Indian scheme, where the government will continue to implement origin – were sentenced to a total of 34 years' imprisonment for stricter measures on the online her son's murder.

said in a statement.

"Retailers, social media, and

sellers need to take on more

sale of bladed articles. "In 2022, I lost my son, Ronan, "This part of Ronan's Law to knife crime and mistaken will provide much-needed barriers against knife crime. I wish identity. In 2023, we sat in the this was done years ago, and my courtroom where we were shown a Ninja sword and over son would be with me today, 25 bladed articles. Looking at she said. them, I knew my son didn't The campaigner has been stand a chance," Pooja Kanda

raising the issue of online sale of bladed articles being allowed without proper ID checks after Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that her son's teenage killers illegally bought lethal weapons online and collected them from the Post Office on the day of the attack - with no age or identity verification taking place. It was later revealed that one of them had bought more than 20 knives online, including by using

his mother's ID. "I knew we could not go on like this, and our fight for what was right had begun. Proper ID checks by sellers, as well as postal and delivery services, played a crucial role," noted Kanda.

The Home Office said Ronan's Law is aimed at closing lethal loopholes in the online sale of knives as a result of "tireless campaigning" by Ronan's mother and sister Nikita to re strict young people's access to weapons online and to protect other families from the same heartbreak.

Under the new set of measures, retailers will be required to report any bulk or suspicious-looking purchases of knives on their platforms to police to prevent illegal resales happening across social media accounts. The sentence for selling weapons to under 18s will be increased from six months to up to two years prison time, which could apply to an individual who has processed the sale or a CEO of the company.

susiness

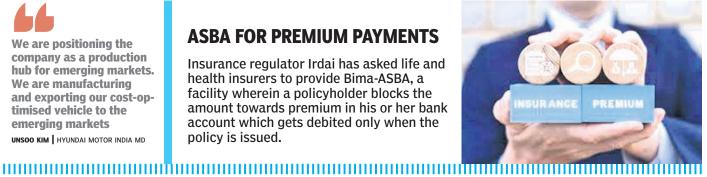


We are positioning the company as a production hub for emerging markets. We are manufacturing and exporting our cost-optimised vehicle to the emerging markets

UNSOO KIM | HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA MD

ASBA FOR PREMIUM PAYMENTS

Insurance regulator Irdai has asked life and health insurers to provide Bima-ASBA, a facility wherein a policyholder blocks the amount towards premium in his or her bank account which gets debited only when the policy is issued.





sion into new cities reflects our commitment to providing world-class



services, ensuring our franchise partners stay ahead in a competitive market while offering exceptional experiences to modern travellers

KARAN AGARWAL | DIRECTOR AT COX & KINGS

We design the products in **India. For PCB** (motherboard) level design we have a partner



VARUN GUPTA | BOULT CO-FOUNDER AND CEO

We do not see any immediate impact. But if they impose the tariffs it will

hurt American consumers only. We are into wait and watch mode. We mainly export generic drugs to them

RAJA BHANU | PHARMEXCIL DIRECTOR GENERAL

US SEC SEEKS INDIA'S 'Economic activity to pick up' **HELP IN ADANI PROBE**

New Delhi, Feb 19: The US Securities and Exchange Commission has asked Indian authorities for help in its investigation of Adani Group founder Gautam Adani and his nephew over alleged securities fraud and a \$265-million bribery scheme, a court filing showed Tuesday.

The regulator told a New York district court it was making efforts to serve its complaint on the founder and his nephew, Sagar Adani, and was seeking help from India's law ministry to do so.

Neither individual is in US custody, and both are now in India.

"The SEC has requested assistance ... under the Hague service convention," it said in the court filing.

Adani Group and India's law ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for

Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he did not discuss the Adani case with US President Donald Trump during his visit to Washington, describing it to reporters as an individual issue never discussed by leaders. India's Opposition Congress

party has called for Adani's arrest and accused Modi of



Nine Adani group stocks end lower

NEW DELHI: Nine Adani group stocks ended lower Wednesday as the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has told a federal judge that its efforts to serve its complaint on Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani in the alleged bribery scheme are "ongoing," including through a request for assistance to the Indian authorities. Shares of Adani Green Energy dropped 3.75 per cent, the groups' flagship firm Adani Enterprises declined 1.78 per cent. Ambuia Cements went lower by 1.36 per cent, Sanghi Industries fell 1.36 per cent, ACC slipped 0.93 per cent, Adani Wilmar dipped 0.90 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions (0.81 per cent), Adani Power (0.47 per cent) and Adani Ports (0.28 per cent) on the BSE. In intra-day trade, shares of Adani Green Energy tanked 4.25 per cent and Adani Enterprises tumbled 4.30 per cent. However, the stock of NDTV climbed 1.35 per cent and Adani Total Gas went up by 0.54 per cent.

shielding him or favouring him in deals in the past. Modi's party and Adani have denied the charges

Last year, federal prosecutors in Brooklyn unsealed an indictment accusing Adani of bribing Indian officials to convince them to buy electricity produced by Adani Green Energy, a subsidiary of his Adani Group

He then misled US investors by providing reassuring information about the company's anti-graft practices, it added.

Adani Group has called the accusations "baseless" and vowed to seek "all possible legal recourse." In January, Adani Green said it had appointed independent law firms to review the US indictment.

Mumbai, Feb 19: High frequency indicators, like vehicles sales, air traffic, steel consumption and GST E-way bills, point towards a sequential pickup in momentum of economic activity during the second half of the fiscal 2024-25 and sustain moving forward, RBI Bulletin said

However, a strong dollar, driven by US economic resilience and trade policy pivots. could exacerbate capital outflows from emerging economies, push risk premiums higher, and intensify external vulnerabilities, said an article on 'State of the Economy' published in RBI's February bulletin.

Economic activity momentum is poised to be sustained, strong rural demand is expected to receive a further fillip from the robust performance of the agriculture sector. Urban de mand is also poised for a recovery, tracking decline in inflation as well as a boost to disposable incomes from the sizeable in come tax relief announced in the Union Budget 2025-26.

...high frequency indicators point towards a sequential pickup in momentum of economic activity during H2:2024-25, which is likely to sustain moving forward," it said.

The economic activity index (EAI) is constructed by extracting the common trend underlying 27 high frequency indicators of economic activity using a Dynamic Factor Model.

It also noted that the global economy continues to grow at a steady but moderate pace, with divergent outlook across countries amid rapidly evolving political and technological landscapes

Financial markets remain on edge on the slowing pace of disinflation and the potential impact of tariffs. Emerging market economies (EMEs) are witnessing selling pressures from foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) and currency depreciation engendered by a strong US dollar, the article said.

The central bank said the views expressed in the article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India. The authors further said the

budget measures to fuel four engines of growth - agriculture, MSMEs, investment and exports - are expected to boost medium-term growth prospects of the Indian economy.

"The Union Budget prudently balances fiscal consolidation and growth objectives by continued focus on capex alongside measures to support consumption while providing a clear roadmap for debt consolidation," the article said.

is also expected to benefit from the repo rate cut by the Mon etary Policy Committee (MPC) in its meeting February 7, 2025

The article also said there was an increase in the share of public sector banks (PSBs) in volume of transactions (from remitter bank side) during January 2025 as compared to the levels recorded a year ago

The number of technical declines per 10,000 UPI transactions reduced across most bank categories in January 2025 compared to January 2024 reflecting enhanced efficiency of banks' systems despite higher transaction volumes.

A rising US dollar and FPI outflows from EMEs amidst growing global uncertainties exerted significant pressure on EME currencies during Janu ary 2025. The Indian rupee (INR) depre-

ciated by 1.5 per cent (m-o-m) in January, in line with movements in most major currencies "In an environment of height

ened global market turbulence, the INR exhibited relatively low volatility," the article said FPI flows turned negative in January 2025, reflecting

heightened global uncertain ties. Net FPI outflows worth USD 6.7 billion were recorded with equity outflows of USD 8.4 billion amidst rising risk off sentiments among investors. Gross inward foreign direct

investment (FDI) rose by 20.6 per cent (y-o-y) to USD 62.5 hillion during April-December 2024.

Gold reclaims

all-time high of

SHORT **TAKES**

HSBC India PAT grows 11%

Mumbai: Foreign lender HSBC on Wednesday reported an 11.27 per cent growth in profit before tax from India at USD 1.688 billion for 2024. The bank has reported a profit before tax of USD 1.517 billion in 2023 from its India operations. where it operates 26 branches. The bank said it has 44,000 employees in the country -- the highest anywhere in the world. It also operates a back office in the country that supports global operations. The biggest contributor to profit was the global banking and markets vertical, which delivered a pretax profit of USS 875 million in 2024 as against USD 774 million

Argentina Wednesday signed an agreement for deeper collaboration in exploration and resource development of critical minerals, particularly lithium, an official statement said. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in the presence of Union Minister for Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy, Governor of Catamarca, Argentina, Raúl Alejandro Jalil, here. Both sides discussed expanding cooperation in the mining sector, particularly in lithium exploration and investment opportunities, the Ministry of

Mines said in a statement.

Vintage car imports eased

New Delhi: The government has eased norms for imports of cars classified as 'vintage motor vehicles" by actual users, according to a notification. Earlier, cars manufactured prior to January 1, 1950 were permitted for import by these users. "Cars classified as 'vintage motor vehicles' are free for import by actual users, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade has said in a notification. However, it said such cars that would be plying on public roads will continue to be subject to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

US reciprocal tariffs on India to have limited impact: S&P tor, Sovereigns (Asia-Pacific)

New Delhi, Feb 19: India will be less impacted by the proposed US reciprocal tariff as the country's economy is mainly driven by domestic demand, and has substantial services exports, which is not going to be targeted by the Trump Administration, S&P Global Ratings said Wednesday.

US President Donald Trump has announced he will impose reciprocal tariffs on its trading partners, including India.

S&P Global Ratings, Economist Asia-Pacific, Vishrut Rana said the reciprocal tariff will hurt countries like Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan more as they have high trade surplus with the US.

The Indian economy has two mitigating factors -- greater reliance on domestic economy and larger services trade with the US. which is not likely to be tariffed. In Japan also, there are similar mitigating factors -- greater reliance on services trade, and domestically-driven economy.

'... which means (US) trade measures might be less impactful there (India and Japan)," Rana said at the S&P Asia-Pacific Credit Focus webinar.

He also said that reciprocal tariffs may fuel inflationary expectations, thus leading to higher interest rates globally. S&P Global Ratings, Direc-

YeeFarn Phua also said India's economy is largely still domestic-oriented and the nature of the exports to the US is more on the services side, which is less prone to tariffs. "India's dependence on ex-

ports for growth is not that great. So, therefore, I think the impact (of US tariffs) will be more or less limited," he said, adding on the goods side the sectors which could be exposed to higher tariffs are jewellery, pharmaceutical, textiles and chemicals.

Phua said the US may not impose higher tariffs on pharmaceuticals, which are basically generic drugs, from India as it would drive up healthcare costs in its own country.

However, textiles and to some extent chemicals are most at risk of higher tariffs.

"If we were to reimagine that scenario for the first Trump administration to unfold again, I think overall, the impact on India should be quite minimal," Phua added.

Earlier in 2018 under the Presidency of Donald Trump, Washington had imposed an additional 25 per cent import duty on steel products and 10 per cent on certain aluminium products. In retaliation. India in June 2019, imposed additional customs duties on 28 American products.

Sensex, Nifty end lower in volatile trade

Previous

ZOMATO

AXIS BANK

ICICI BANK

Mumbai, Feb 19: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended marginally lower in a volatile trade Wednesday dragged by blue-chip IT stocks.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex dipped 28.21 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 75.939.18. Intra-day, it hit a high of 76,338.58 and a low of 75.581.38, gyrating 757.2 points.

The NSE Nifty skidded 12.40 points or 0.05 per cent to From the Sensex pack, Tata

Consultancy Services and Infosys fell over 2 per cent each. Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel Sun Pharma, Power Grid, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Tech, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Tech Mahindra were also among the laggards.

Among the gainers, Zomato jumped nearly 5 per cent. Larsen & Toubro, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were also among the gainers.

Among BSE sectoral indices, BSE Focused IT dropped 1.33 per cent, teck (1.31 per cent) and IT (1.21 per cent).

BSE Industrials jumped 2.59 per cent, capital goods (2.19 per cent), metal (1.41 per cent), services (1.41 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.05 per cent), and commodities (0.95 per cent).

"The national benchmarks exhibited a range-bound performance with a slight downward bias, though selective buying in the broader market

BSE SENSEX

9:15 am

+4.86%

+1.77%

+1.77%

was evident, driven by bar-

gain hunting in beaten-down

stocks. A reversal in FII flows

also influenced market dynam-

ics; however, the durability of

this trend remains uncertain.

Despite concerns over potential

US tariff impositions and de-

lays in anticipated interest rate

cuts, market sentiment remains

optimistic about a rebound in

India's Q3 GDP growth," Vinod

Nair, Head of Research, Geojit

In Asian markets, Seoul and

Shanghai settled in the positive

territory while Tokyo and Hong

Financial Services, said.

FEBRUARY 19, 2025

3 pm

Kong ended lower.

LOSERS

HINDUSTAN UNILEVER -1.98%

"While markets ended flat

with a slightly negative bi-

as due to selling in IT stocks,

broader markets witnessed

a lot of optimism as mid and

smallcap stocks rallied after the

recent sell-off. Despite the un-

certainty over rising FII selling,

falling rupee, and the ongoing

tariff war, the recently beaten

sectoral stocks from banking,

automobile, telecom, metals

attracted significant buying

interest," Prashanth Tapse,

Senior VP (Research), Mehta

Equities Ltd, said.

CHANGE: -28.21 (-0.04%)

75,939.18

11 am

TOP

GAINERS



Today's

Closing

₹89,400 per 10 gm PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: Gold price jumped by Rs 900 to revisit the all-time high of Rs 89,400 per 10 grams in the national capital Wednesday amid strong global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 88,500 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. On February 14, it rallied by Rs 1,300 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 89,400 per 10 grams in the local markets.

So far this year, price of gold has surged Rs 10.010 or 12.6 per cent to Rs 89,400 per 10 grams as compared to Rs 79,390 grams January 1.

Additionally, the yellow metal of 99.5 per cent purity rallied by Rs 900 to reclaim its all-time high level of Rs 89,000 per 10 grams. It had closed at Rs 88,100 per 10 grams in the

previous session. According to experts, gold extended its gain Wednesday, buoyed by safe haven demand and persistent buying amid President Trump's new tariff threats, combined with rising geopolitical uncertainty.

Silver price also increased by Rs 600 to Rs 99,600 per ki logram Wednesday.

India's power sector needs \$700bn investment for net-zero: Moody's

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: India's power sector - the biggest carbon emitter - will need massive USD 700 billion investment over the next 10 years to help the country achieve its 2070 net-zero pledge, Moody's Ratings said Wednesday. Stating that the power sec-

tor accounts for around 37 per cent of carbon emissions in the country, the rating agency said the investments required by the power sector during fiscal 2026-51 to be of the order of 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent of GDP (around 2 per cent for the next 10 years), which is manageable for India.

The sector, which currently is highly dependent on coalfired generation, has to make significant decarbonization

investments for the country to meet its emission cut goals. "Our expectation of strong

economic growth over the next 10 years implies an expansion of India's coal-based power generation capacity in that period, hindering carbon transition,' In a note, Moody's pegged

power sector's annual investment requirement between Rs 4.5 lakh crore to Rs 6.4 lakh crore (USD 53 billion to USD 76 billion) of investment until fiscal 2034-35 (fiscal year ending March 2035), and around Rs 6 lakh crore to Rs 9 lakh crore annually over fiscal 2026-51. "We estimate India's power

sector investments... would be in the range of Rs 4.5 lakh crore to Rs 6.4 lakh crore (USD 53 billion to USD 76 billion) until fiscal 2034-35 (total investment of around USD 700 billion over the next 10 years), and Rs 6.0 lakh crore to Rs 9.5 lakh crore annu-

ally over fiscal 2025-51," it said. The power sector investments include capital spending

for electricity generation (including renewable energy, coal and nuclear power), electricity transmission and distribution and energy storage.

"Annually, this represents 2 per cent of real GDP over the next 10 years, and 1.5-2 per cent of GDP over fiscal 2026-51," it said. "These investments are significant and will be funded jointly by the public and private sectors and foreign and

domestic capital.'

Moody's expect India's economy to grow at around 6.5 per cent per annum over the next 10 vears, with a compound annual growth rate for power demand of around 6 per cent. The per capita consumption

of electricity in India (1,255 kilowatt-hours (KWH) in fiscal 2022) is around one-third of the world average, according to the International Energy

Agency (IEA). This is expected to increase with the growing economy and improved living standards of India's population.

"Our projection of an increase of around 450 GW of renewable energy capacity over this period would be insufficient to meet such demand, implying that India's coal-based power generation capacity will continue to expand by 35 per cent (from 218 GW to around 295 GW) over the next 10 years," it said.

Investments to meet net-zero target will have to focus on renewable energy, grid networks and energy storage. Solar and wind power will dominate new generation capacity additions over the next 20-25 years, with nuclear and hydropower addi-

'We expect installed generation capacity to increase by 2.0x-2.2x by fiscal 2034-35 to meet India's power demand growth of 1.7x-1.8x in the same period. Non-fossil fuel power will account for 45-50 per cent of total output by fiscal 2034-35, from 23.5 per cent in fiscal 2023 Stating that private sector

is vital to transition and that foreign capital was essential to bridge funding gap, Moody's said its expects the private sector to remain very active in India's renewable energy sec tor, while government-owned companies will also increase their role. Conventional bank lending

and non-bank financial institutions will be the key source of debt capital for under-construction projects, and debt capital markets (domestic and overseas) will be key to the re financing of debt for operational projects. However, access to long-term low-cost capital and foreign capital will be essential to bridge the funding gap.



Can Men in Blue rise to glory?

India look to overcome selection challenges, past turbulence against Bangladesh in their CT opener

5, his most productive slot, or

at No 6 with Axar Patel coming

The wicketkeeper batter had

batted at No 6 in the first two

matches against England before

going back to No 5 in the final

one-dayer. In all likelihood, the

team management could remain

fluid and take a call as per the

However, finding the right bal-

ance in bowling poses a bigger

one place above him?

game situation here.

challenge, partly

It will be a

toss up between

Arshdeep Singh

and Harshit

the new-ball

partner

cause of the in-

iurv-enforced

absence

Bumrah.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Feb 19: A turbulent recent cricketing past has made a resonant effort mandatory for India in the Champions Trophy, and their opening match against a tricky Bangladesh here Thursday will be the first point in assuaging a set of existential questions surrounding this team.

These questions are worrying even for a pre-tournament favourite like India. Can this Indian bowling unit tide over the absence of injured pace talisman Jasprit Bumrah? Can Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma summon their glory days back? Can young names like Shubman Gill ace the pressure of a multi-nation competition to deliver consistently?

In that context, the ICC showpiece is a godsend because ODI is the comfort zone of those icons and young tyros in this Indian line-up, and they will be genuinely eyeing a strong outing here. It's imperative that they do so -- from a team and individual perspective.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Kohli, Rohit and even head coach Gautam Gambhir, although only six months into his tenure, are living on borrowed time because the shockwaves created by the setbacks against New Zealand and Australia have not subsided yet.

Some bright signs are there though. Skipper Rohit made a century a few days back against England and Kohli a fifty, while Gambhir masterminded the dominant 4-1 and 3-0 victories in T20Is and ODIs respectively.

Gill was exceptional while emerging as the player of the series, cracking two fifties and a hundred in three ODIs against

But the challenge India face in the Champions Trophy is vastly different from a rather cozy home series.

Bangladesh, Pakistan and New Zealand, their opponents in Group A, are far more motivated than the seemingly disinterested England whom they faced recently, and even one defeat can change the whole league stage equation quite dramatically.

The selection riddles

Although India is playing a strong brand of 50-over cricket of late, they have some selection riddles to solve before they face Bangladesh.

It starts with KL Rahul's bat-

Mohammed Shami, who will have to lift his game by a few notches here.

Rana might have been impressive so far in his outings, and he has the ability to hustle the batters with sheer pace and bounce even on the most docile of pitches.

But, at this moment, Arshdeep is the frontrunner to share the newball duties because of the left-arm angle and the variety he possesses in his bowling.

Other than that, India is likely to go with three spinners with Hardik Pandya as the fast bowling all-rounder. But herein too, India will have

to ponder over who is the third spinner behind primary choices Ravindra Jadeja and Axar.

They have a tough selection to make between left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarthy.

If the recent form is the yardstick then 'mystery spinner' Chakravarthy should get the nod, but Kuldeep showed his readiness while outwitting some reputed batters in the nets here Tuesday.

Gill tops ODI rankings

Dubai: India vice-captain Shubman Gill Wednesday dethroned Babar Azam of Pakistan from the No 1 spot in **ODI Rankings for** batters on the back of his

strong show against England in the recent home series. The ICC issued the latest rankings just ahead of the start of the eightteam Champions Trophy in Karachi with the match between Pakistan and New Zealand. Gill, who scored two fifties and a century in the recent three-match ODI series against England at home which India won 3-0, jumped one place to the No 1 spot. He now has 796 rating points compared to

NATIONAL PARA ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP







Para-athlete Jayanti Behera after winning Odisha's first Gold Medal in the T-47 women's 100m race with an impressive time of 13.43 seconds

Pankaj Bhue after winning Bronze medal in the men's T13 Long Jump category with a jump of 5.93m

An overjoyed Janaki Oram secures Bronze in the women's T12 100m category

Defending champion lose to Kiwis in CT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Feb 19: Will Young and Tom Latham struck fine hundreds as New Zealand maintained their recent dominance over hosts Pakistan with an emphatic 60-run win in the Champions Trophy opener here Wednesday.

Young compiled an important innings of 107 off 113 balls, while Latham remained unbeaten on 118 off 104 balls to steer the Black Caps to 320 for five after Pakistan put them in to bat. Glenn Phillips' 39-ball 61 also went a long way in the Kiwis getting past the 300-run mark as New Zealand overcame a shaky start.

The Pakistan top-order comprising Babar Azam (64 off 90). Mohammed Rizwan (3 off 14) and Saud Shakeel (6 off 19) were a tad too conservative in their approach. That ultimately cost the home team as it ended with 260 all out in 47.2 overs.

Fakhar Zaman (24 off 41) batted at number four after being off the field for a major part of the New Zealand innings due to an injury scare. It was New Zealand's third win over Pakistan in less than two weeks, the Kiwis having beaten the Rizwan-led side twice in the preceding tri-series.

India beat Germany in tightly-contested affair Djokovic in Doha

Gurjant Singh's lone goal in the fourth minute helps team win over world champion

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: India won their second match in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 (Men) season Wednesday after beating World Champions Germany 1-0 at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium Bhubaneswar.

Gurjant Singh scored the only goal of the match as India climbed to seventh in the standings.

It was a good response from India after they had succumbed to a 4-1 loss to Germany Tuesday. The Indian defence, marshalled by Captain Harmanpreet Singh, put in a solid display to secure an important win.

After a bright start, India took the lead four minutes into the match as Gurjant Singh scored in back-to-back matches.

Raiinder Singh sent the ball into the circle hoping for Mandeep Singh to put it into goal. Mandeep's effort was



Players of both teams trying to maintain possession in the FIH Pro League at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

saved by Alexander Stadler but the German goalkeeper did not clear the loose ball away. An unmarked Gurjant dove in to sweep the ball into the empty goal.

India deployed a half-court press as they looked to protect their lead and pounce on any German mistakes. Germany nearly got the equaliser as Thies Prinz showcased his incredible 3D skills to beat his markers. Krishan Bahadur Pathak stood tall and swatted away Prinz's attempt before Florian Sperling scooped the loose ball over the goal.

Germany won the first penalty corner of the match with 46 seconds left in the quarter but Gonzalo Peillat's drag-flick flew wide of the goal as the first quarter ended 1-0 in India's favour.

Eves go down 0-1 to Spain

conceded a goal in the final quarter to go down 0-1 to Spain in the return leg match of the FIH Pro League here Wednesday, Segu Marta scored the lone goal, a field effort, in the 49th minute to break Indian hearts at the Kalinga Stadium here. Spain earned as many as nine penalty corners in the match while India got just two. This was India's second consecutive loss to Spain as the hosts had lost 3-4 in the first leg here Tuesday.

India resorted to sitting deeper in their half and forcing the Germans to try and find ways to penetrate the circle. Suraj Karkera, who replaced Pathak in the Indian goal in the second quarter, was rarely called into action.

It was India who had the better chances from counter attacks as Shilanand Lakra. Nilam Sanjeep Xess and Raj Kumar Pal tested Stadler. India won three penalty corners in the final minute but the German defence made sure they went into the break trailing only by the solitary goal.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Doha, Feb 19: Novak Djokovic was upset by Matteo Berrettini 7-6 (4), 6-2 Tuesday at the Qatar Open in the Serb's first match since exiting the Australian Open with a hamstring injury.

The 37-year-old Djokovic, ranked No 7, lost to the Italian for the first time in five career matches and will have to wait to join Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103) as the only players in the ATP Tour's 100-win club.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion reached the Australian Open semifinals but retired from the last-four match NOVAK DIOKOVIC I SERBIAN TENNIS

a better player today

against Alexander Zverev be cause of a hamstring injury. Djokovic said he didn't have "any pain or discomfort."

"I wasn't at my desired level, and it could be that I'm still not moving the way I want to move, but ... I played without pain, so there is no excuse in that."

Berrettini won for the 10th time in his career against a top 10 player and will face Tallon Griekspoor in the second round

Madrid, City to reach dramatic finish

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madrid, Feb 19: One of the past two winners of the Champions League, Real Madrid or Manchester City, is going out of the competition Wednesday before the round of 16.

Defending champion Madrid takes a 3-2 lead into the second leg at home in their knockout playoff which Man City coach Pep Guardiola suggested left his team with just a 1% chance to advance. Guardiola later backtracked on the claim, which Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti also dismissed.

Man City was shown Tuesday how to approach a daunting task by Celtic which pushed Bayern Munich to the limit after losing the first leg at home. A fortunate



goal deep in stoppage time let the heavily favored Germans salvage a 1-1 draw and avoid the jeopardy of extra time, to progress 3-2 on aggregate, Also Wednesday, Paris Saint-Germain and Borussia

Dortmund start 3-0 up at home to, respectively, Brest and Sporting Lisbon. A tricky week for Italian clubs against the middle classes of European soccer continues with Juventus taking a 2-1

SPANISH REF UNDER SCRUTINY

Barcelona: The referee who sent for cursing at him has denounced what he calls a false accusation by local media that has led to him being temporarily sidelined by the Spanish soccer federation. The federation said Tuesday that José Luis Munuera would not be named to referee games until it concludes its analysis of a report by online newspaper El Español that alleged Munuera had business relations with "officials" in the Spanish league.

lead to PSV Eindhoven.

AC Milan was ousted at home by Feyenoord, the fourth-place team in the Dutch league, Tuesday hours before Atalanta was beaten 5-2 on aggregate score by Club Brugge, second in the Belgian league.

Gold medallist power-lifter dies after 270-kg rod falls on neck

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Feb 19: A gold-medallist female power-lifter in the Junior National Games died when a 270-kg rod fell on her neck during practice in Rajasthan's Bikaner district, police said Wednesday.

Female power-lifter Yashtika Acharya (17) died while practising in the gym. The neck of the gold medallist player broke when a 270-kg rod fell on her Tuesday, Naya Shahar SHO Vikram Tiwari said.

He said immediately after the accident, she was taken to the hospital where doctors declared



her dead.

Tiwari said the accident happened when the trainer was making Yashtika lift weights in the gym. The trainer also suffered minor injuries in the tragedy. The SHO said the family has not registered any case in this regard. After the post-mortem, the body was handed over to the family Wednesday. Yashtika won the gold medal

in National Bench Press Championship in Goa in October last vear in the Sub Junior 84kg and above category.

Power-lifting is a competitive strength sport in which an athlete tries to lift maximum weight on three lifts -- squat, bench press and deadlift.

In a squat, the bar loaded with weights rests on the lift er's shoulders at the back of the head. The lifter bends her or his knees and drops into a squatting position and then ascends back to an erect position.

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