

#### **Defining compassion**

Actor Rashmika Mandanna takes to social media to reflect on the true essence of kindness

LEISURE | P2



#### NASA's word of relief

Asteroid 2024 YR4's chances of hitting the Earth drops to 1.5 per cent from 3.1 per cent days ago,

INTERNATIONAL | P10



#### Gold at fresh peak

Gold prices hit a fresh high of ₹89,450 per 10 grams in the national capital Thursday, advancing ₹50 amid firm global trends

BUSINESS | P11



#### **Madrid crash out City**

Kylian Mbappé scores a hat trick, Real Madrid dumps Manchester City out of the Champions League

SPORTS | P12

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#### **REKHA GUPTA TAKES CHARGE AS DELHI CM**

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 20: BJP MLA Rekha Gupta took charge as the ninth Chief Minister of Delhi at her Secretariat office here Thursday and asserted that every commitment made to the people will be fulfilled by her government.

Earlier in the day, the first-time MLA from Shalimar Bagh was administered oath as the CM by Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena in a grand ceremony at the Ramlila Maidan. Her Council of Ministers also took oath

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP's top brass including Union Ministers Amit Shah, JP Nadda and Rainath Singh, and the CM and Deputy CMs of several NDA-ruled states attended the ceremony.

Later, Gupta reached the Delhi Secretariat to take charge as the CM. Later in the evening, Gupta announced allocation of portfolios among members of Council of Ministers, keeping with her finance, services, vigilance, revenue,

lative affairs, irrigation and flood control, while Ashish Sood got home, power, urban development and education portfolios.

Minister Kapil Mishra got law and justice, labour and employment, and tourism, while his cabinet colleague Manjinder Singh Sirsa received industries, forest and environment, food and supply departments. Among others, Pankaj Singh was allocated health, transport and information technology departments.

#### **IRREGULAR** by MANJUL



We should learn from USAIDhow to influence elections without tampering with electoral rolls or EVMs!

VOICING DISSENT: Activists wearing masks of AfD top candidate for Chancellor Alice Weidel, Elon Musk, US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and US Vice President JD Vance protest against the support of the US and Russia for the far-right AfD in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Thursday

### Achyuta summoned over KIIT suicide row

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Expediting its probe into the alleged suicide of a girl student of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) here and subsequent action against other Nepalese pupils by the institution, the state government's high-level committee Thursday summoned KIIT founder Achyuta Samanta seeking his personal appearance before it Friday.

In a letter, the Higher Education (HE) department asked Samanta to appear before the committee at 6:30pm of February 21, 2025 at the State Guest House to produce evidence related to the issue.

The three-member committee, headed by Additional Chief Secretary, Home department, Satyabrata Sahu, is mandated to ascertain the circumstances leading to the alleged suicide, high-handed action by the institute authority, reasons for issuing notice to only a specific group of students and closing the institute sine die for them and other incidental matter that emerges during inquiry.

The committee, also com prising the secretaries of HE and Women & Child Develop ment departments, had visited KIIT campus Wednesday and held a discussion with some of the Nepalese students who were allegedly mistreated by the staffers of the private institute for staging demonstration on the campus. HE Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said, "The high-lev el committee is empowered to summon anyone for the pur pose of inquiry into the matter The committee is functioning

on the basis of law." Later in the evening, Infocity police arrested five more KIIT staffers - four security guards and an assistant field officer - in connection with the issue under Sections 126(2), 296 and 115(2) of BNS. They were later remanded to judicial custody by a local court.

Meanwhile, Samanta tendered an apology to the parents of the Nepalese pupils and urged all those who vacated

# among other departments. At a presser, Gupta said her Cabinet colleague Parvesh Verma was given charge of PWD, water, legis-

In a jolt to Lokpal, the Supreme Court Thursday pulled up the anti-corruption authority for its apparent attempt to transgress its jurisdiction. The top court's reprimand came during the hearing of a suo motu case initiated by it after the Lokpal January 27 ruled that it has jurisdiction over High Court judges under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013. While putting a stay on the ruling, the SC said the matter was of great importance, **P9** concerning the independence of the judiciary. "Something very, very disturbing," Justice BR Gavai, who headed the apex court bench, remarked. While advancing reasons for its order, the Lokpal, headed by former SC judge Justice AM Khanwilkar, had said that a judge of the HC would qualify as a person in a body established by an Act of Parliament within the sweep of Section 14(1)(f) of the Lokpal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

drew the SC's ire.

New Delhi, Feb 20: The Supreme Court Thursday stayed the Lokpal order on entertaining complaints against sitting High Court judges, saving it was 'something very, very disturbing'.

Act. In fact, the very reasoning

vai, Surya Kant and Abhay S Oka issued notices and sought responses from the Centre, the Lokpal registrar and the person who filed complaints against a sitting HC udge by 10.30am of March 18.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said a HC judge would never fall within the ambit of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.

Dealing with Lokpal's



order on two specific complaints against the sitting HC judge, the bench issued an injunction to prevent the complainant from disclosing the name of the judge and directed him to keep the complaint confidential. "In the meantime, there shall be stay of the order dated January 27, 2025 passed by the

Lokpal of India...," it added. The SC was dealing with a suo motu case initiated after the Lokpal passed the order January 27. When the bench assembled, Justice Gavai told 14 (1) of the 2013 Act.

A bench of Justices BR Ga- Mehta, "We propose to issue notice to the Union of India.' "Something very, very disturbing," said Justice Gavai.

The complaints allege that he influenced an additional district judge in the state and a judge of the same HC slated to deal with a suit filed against the complainant by a private company to favour the firm. The private company, it was alleged, was earlier a client of the HC judge in question while he was practising as an advocate at the Bar.

In its order, the Lokpal directed the complaints and relevant materials received in its registry in two matters be forwarded to the office of the C√II for his kind consideration. It added, "We make it amply clear that by this order we have decided a singular issue finally - as to whether the judges of the high court established by an Act of Parliament come within the ambit of Section 14 of the Act of 2013, in the affirmative. No more and no less. In that, we have not looked into or examined the merits of the allegations at all.

The order noted it would be 'too naive' to argue that a HC judge would not come within the ambit of expression 'any person' in clause (f) of section

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kamakhyanagar, Feb 20: A school headmistress was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a locked garage outside her home in Dhenkanal district Thursday morning.

The victim, identified as Pra-

bhati Dehuri of Guneibilli village under Tumusinga police limits of the district, was the headmistress of Panchasakha interest of the state. Government High School. Her family members suspect she had been strangled to death as ligature marks were found on her neck. Dehuri's father-in-law Dhedia Pradhan lodged a complaint with police alleging that the suspect called her outside home be-

fore killing her. Dehuri's husband had passed away two years ago, leaving her with a son and a daughter. When the school van came to pick her up Thursday morning, Pradhan realised she was missing. After a search, her body was found inside the locked garage outside house.

Tumusinga IIC Manaswini Mohanty said the exact cause of death would be ascertained after the post-mortem report comes. "Dehuri's necklace and her two mobile phones were missing," added Mohanty.

# barrages on Mahanadi Prasanna Acharya, BJD

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday informed the Assembly that 16 dam and 15 barrage projects have been planned for securing sustainable water development with equity for Mahanadi water in the

In a written reply to a query by BJD legislator Ranendra of the Mahanadi Water Dis-Pratap Swain, the CM said, "Due to excess unplanned use of Mahanadi water in the upstream catchment of Mahanadi basin by Chhattisgarh, flow of water to the downstream of Odisha is gradually reducing as observed at Hirakud dam site located near the interstate border of Chhattisgarh and



state has taken the shelter putes Tribunal and filed its claims through a number of pleadings and the matter is now sub-judice, he said. Similarly, in another writ-

ten statement to the House. Majhi said that the government has also planned to build 41 in-stream storage structures on Mahanadi river.

deputy leader in Assembly. had raised the issue during Question Hour. "The previous BJD government had planned several in-stream storage projects on the river and invited tenders for the same. However, we heard that the tenders have been cancelled now," the BJD Replying to Acharya, on

behalf of the CM, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling said the BJP government has been in power for the last eight months. A dam cannot be constructed in such a short period, he said. About the tender cancellation matter Mahaling said he will look

# Wordsmith: How interesting is your lore?

ast June, Lucy Wilson shared a chilling memory with her son Robin: In her 20s, she had witnessed her uncle dying in a fire mishap. For an enthralled Robin, who recorded the story on his phone, it was a mom lore that would definitely captivate the internet.

Lore, a finalist for Oxford Word of the Year 2024, has been a currency for people on social media. The Old English word for knowledge has become slang for dramatic and often traumatic details that define a person's

"It makes your life sound like something that has



Wall Street Journal. Dan said, "Instead of just saying, 'I had depression when I was 16,' it sounds more mystical to say, 'That's my lore.'"

Confessions have always been a method for gaining likes and views on social

intimate, sometimes painful personal stories as a way to build connections with viewers. Now, many of those videos include lore drops.

Much of the lore shared online is second-hand knowledge. "I'm in a group chat with some friends, and we were talking about these hidden facets that media. Influencers use 'get some incident from five or people would really want to ready with me' videos to pair six years ago when some-

said, adding, "Someone said, 'somebody who knows better, please recount this again. This is lore that has to be preserved.

Several people said they traced the word back to the fictional lore that undergirds popular franchises and online fandoms. For those trying to understand the world of 'The Lord of the Rings' or videogames like 'The Elder Scrolls, lore is a shorthand for the rich back story necessary to appreciate a work fully. "It contributes to a sense of immersion, a sense that you're playing in this much larger world, and you're only in a small portion of it," said Walden, a longtime

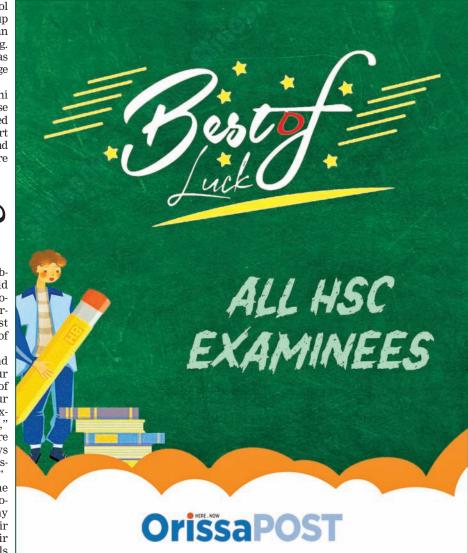
"It's a word of the heart know about," Dan Walden, a their makeup routines with one was catfished," Walden and not the head," Peter from their lives.

'Elder Scrolls' player.

Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large, told WSJ. "Lore conveys emotion somehow, in that organic way, and that's just a beautiful repossession of this word," Peter said.

"Online, there is a kind of consciousness of your identity, an awareness of how you're projecting your qualities, and so to that extent, you are playing a role," Peter said, adding, "And lore conveys character, conveys narrative, conveys deep history, like ancient history."

After Robin posted the video of his mother on social media platforms, many people started sharing their mom lore - stories of their mothers revealing details







**Nawazuddin gets** 

Mumbai: Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui,

who is known for Gangs of Wasseypur, The

Lunchbox, Bajrangi Bhaijaan and others,

has said that the film industry is like a gar-

den with a variety of flowers that blossom

The actor refused to compare his craft

with his contemporaries or the actors of the

past generation. His admirers may laud his

ability to immerse himself into diverse char-

acters but Nawaz says that he is just doing his

job with honesty. Talking about the same, the

actor said, "I am not like a great actor, but every

person has been given a lot by the higher power.

It is necessary to find it out. Everything is within

you; you are the universe. Find it out, and that

is life. We are also searching. I don't know what

I am searching for, but I am making an effort to

find it. That is the necessity to make an effort to

He further mentioned, "And you know, there is

a garden everywhere, and in it, there are different

kinds of flowers. In it, there is Irrfan Khan, there

is Shah Rukh Khan, there is Om Puri. So, all these

flowers together make a garden, and each flower has

its own value. You can't compare a black rose to a red

philosophical

in the form of talent.

discover oneself.'

rose; each has its own beauty.'

#### MINDY KALING HONOURED WITH HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME STAR

Actress, producer and writer Mindy Kaling was recently honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, celebrating her outstanding contributions to the entertainment industry. The ceremony was attended by Kaling's peers, friends and family, including her ex-boyfriend BJ Novak.

#### TAYLOR DISTANCES HERSELF FROM **BLAKE AMID LEGAL DRAMA**

Taylor Swift is reportedly distancing herself from Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds after being mentioned in a legal dispute involving Lively and co-star Justin Baldoni. According to a report, the singer feels upset and believes she has been unfairly drawn into the situation



accuracy • reliability • trust

Whip up some excitement in your life - put on your walking shoes and go explore some unknown destination, suggests Ganesha. Keep yourself busy, but take care not to overdo anything. Today, you will be the centre of attention in group activities.

#### **TAURUS**

You will find yourself at the crossroads and each turn and twist will come with its share of pros and cons, says Ganesha. Your sentiments may have an ill-effect on your health. You may spend quality time with family members and friends, hoping to shed the burden thrust upon

**GEMINI** 

Today, you are likely to be rather emotional and sentimental, says Ganesha. Your love for performing arts may make you take up lessons in classical music or traditional dance. And much to your delight, your sweetheart will treat you to a surprise candlelit dinner.

#### CANCER

You will be in a joyous mood. You will be de-lighted in whatever task you do. Financial matters will confound you, with even a petty issue causing tension. Ganesha says it will be a colourful day, with happy tidings.

The passionate Scorpio might be the master of arousing passionate emotions, but it is the very same emotions that enslave it. But today is different, says Ganesha. You are all set to be lively on this lovely day, as your energy levels touch new peaks. Ganesha guesses it's your healthy eating habits that are the reason behind this super-charged feeling!

#### VIRGO The booster rockets of your

ambitions and spirit to work will kick in at the maximum today. Seek recreation after a hard day's work and look to relax at private parties, social-dos and even weddings, says

#### Today is the day when you

seem to agree with every-thing that people say, without striking even a note of criticism. It's just one of those days when you are amazed by all things around you. Such an elastic approach will enable you to be reasonable in your views and sensible in your ways.

#### SCORPIO

You will find yourself thinking with your heart rather than your head today, says Ganesha. You may not be able to repress your feelings, and you should not even try. But you should be careful about how you express them, particularly in public as people may judge you wrongly on the basis of it. advises Ganesha.

#### **SAGITTARIUS**

No wonder, if you feel like you are stuck in a rut. Your energy level and enthusiasm has gone for a toss due to mundane routine. Unfortunately, your stars too seem to be lazy today, and there's nothing on the cards that can cheer you up. Ganesha advises to let the day pass calmly and wait for a better tomorrow.

#### **CAPRICORN**

Duping the wisest with your extraordinary power of convincing may have been your forte, but you may have to prove yourself all over again, for Ganesha says you will be tested today. This apart, you are likely to find answers to questions lingering in your subconscious mind for long.

#### AQUARIUS

For a moment, it seems that you're swamped with problems. But you are brave enough to deal with any ugly issue that crops up suddenly. Ganesha hints at a romantic evening, which may just be time together in a jacuzzi, or simply preparing a meal together. Pure ecstasy!

#### PISCES

All the dieting that you have been undergoing will finally begin to show results, with compliments galore coming your way from your friends. Your energy and enthusiasm levels are likely to be high. A bright and beautiful day waits, says Ganesha.



Mumbai: Bollywood diva Malaika Arora relived 90s fashion and recreated retro magic in her new post on social media.

Malaika took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself. In the clip, the actress is seen wearing wide-legged jeans paired with a striped shirt. She steps into the changing room and comes out wearing a thigh-length dress with floral design. She completed her look with knee length boots and a half high pony.

For the background score, the actress chose the iconic 1978 number "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor.

Last week, Malaika cele-

brated 10 years of her furry

The actress-dancer wrote in the caption: "Jus some 90s retro."

friend Casper, a white Pomeranian. She shared a video featuring the four-leggedfriend, from the time when he was just a little puppy. The photographs also featured her son Arhaan Khan from his younger days playing

> Some glimpsalso es showed that

with Casper.

Casper joined the actress for yoga and workout.

For the caption, she wrote: "And just like that's our baby casper is 10 today .... The centre of our lives happy birthday my caspuuuuuu #mymosthandsome."

Rashmika defines kindness

cently took to social media to reflect on the true essence of kindness, emphasising how it often lies in the "little things."

The actress shared her thoughts on how acts of kindness can be expressed through a smile, words, actions, or even silence. She also encouraged her fans to embrace a kindful language in their

daily lives. Sharing of her photos, the Animal actress wrote, "Kindness is truly in the tiny little things. Sometimes it's in the smile, sometimes in the words you use, sometimes in vour actions. and sometimes it's in the silence. What's your #kindful lan-

> The actress also posted a series of her photos And the other slate read. 'Care can be as simple as saying, You have had

with quotes written on love, care, empathy, and kindness. The text on the first read, "Love feels a lot like.. "I saw this and thought of you."

### Hasrat Jaipuri's lesson of love Mumbai: education and how falling in

The late lyricist Iqbal Husain, who professionally known as Hasrat Jaipuri, once narrated the story of how he had his brush with first love, and how it contributed to his craft as a lyricist.

An old video of Hasrat Jaipuri surfaced on social media, and it shows him talking about his

love served as a catalyst to his career as a lyricist.

He said in Hindi in the video, "My name is Iqbal Hussain. I was born in Jaipur. In front of my house, there was a beautiful girl named Radha. Love has nothing to do with religion or caste. It can be with anyone. I fell in love with her. I studied poetry. I got my education from my late grandfather. Wahan se mujhe Ishq ka sabak mila (Radha taught me the lesson of love). From there, I became a poet. I wrote my first poem for her. She used to come to jharokha often. When you look at jharokha, I ask so much. When you look at jharokha, I ask so much, should I love you or not?'

Iqbal studied English till medium level in Jaipur and then acquired his taalim (education) in Urdu and Persian from his maternal grandfather, the poet Fida Husain 'Fida'. He began writing verse when he was around twenty years old. Around the same time, he fell in love with Radha.

Meanwhile, Mandanna is currently bask-

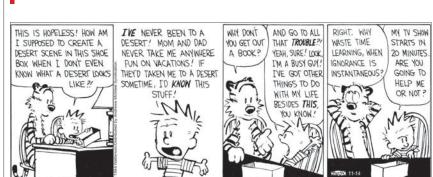
ing in the success of her recent release Chhaava, where she played Maharani Yesubai opposite Vicky Kaushal, who essayed the role of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Produced by Maddock Films, the historical drama also

starred Akshaye Khanna as Mughal Shahenshah Aurangzeb, Ashutosh Rana as Sarsenapati Hambirao Mohite, Divya Dutta as Soyarabai, and Diana Penty as Zinat-un-Nissa Begum Aurangzeb's daughter. guage? #RnR #Rashmika&Ru #TTTRashmika.'

#### **PEANUTS**



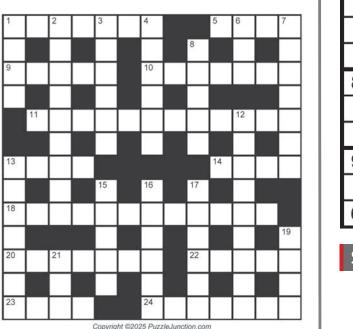
#### CALVIN AND HOBBES



#### BREVITY



#### **CROSSWORD**



#### 20 Inactivity 22 Chilean range

23 Small high-

24 Banderas of

film

pitched flute

1 Immortal winged horse of myth

DOST

- 5 Stomach woe
- 9 Blood line 10 Rattle
- 11 Irrational
- belief 13 Boast

Across

- 14 Kittiwake
- 18 First

- hieroglyphics key(7,5)
- 2 Chatty

Down

- 3 Climbed
- 4 Crush

1 Pinnacle

6 Mangy mutt

7 Everlasting

12 Herbivorous bipedal

block

8 Blacksmith's

- dinosaur 13 City in Wales
- 15 Condition 16 Type of split
- 17 Hellespont,
- e.g. 19 Sonja Henie's
- birthplace 21 Grimm
  - character

#### 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**

SUDOKU

CROSSWORD M L E L N BISCUIT PASTE U N V N

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





# ACCELERATING AGRICULTURE ...





# ANNADATA AT THE HEART OF PROGRESS

SPECIAL INITIATIVES FOR OUR FARMERS
THAT PAVE THE WAY FOR A SELF-RELIANT
AND DEVELOPED BHARAT



PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana to enhance productivity in 100 districts, benefitting 1.7 crore farmers



Making India's seafood businesses and fish farmers thrive with reduced import taxes. Basic custom duty on frozen fish paste slashed from 30% to 5%, and tax on fish hydrolysate dropped from 15% to 5%



'Grameen Credit Score' framework to serve the credit needs of Self Help Group members and people in rural areas



Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) loan limit increased to ₹5 lakh, potentially helping 7.7 crore fishermen, farmers and dairy farmers



Comprehensive Rural Prosperity
and Resilience programme to boost
local agriculture and job
opportunities; making migration a
choice, not a necessity (starting
with 100 agri-districts)



Launch of mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses with a special focus on Tur, Urad and Masoor



# owntown





SUICIDE ROW: AIDSO members stage a protest at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Thursday demanding stringent action against those responsible for the alleged suicide of Nepali student Prakriti Lamsal at KIIT recently

### 5 KIIT staffers held; protests rock City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Infocity police Thursday arrested five KIIT staffers, including four security guards and an assistant field officer, in connection with the assault on protesting students at the university following the suicidal death of a 20-year-old B.Tech student Monday, even as protests against the institutional brutality and police inaction continued in the City

An officer at Infocity police station identified the arrested staffers as Ajay Kumar Swain, 46. Saroi Kumar Routray, 45. Chandan Kumar Swain, 29, Sudhansu Sekhar Behera, 41, and Ramakanta Sethi, 37. The officer said they were booked under Sections 126 (2), 296, and 115 (2) of BNS. They were later sent to judicial custody by a local court which reviewed the CCTV footage produced by

Commissioner of Police S Dev Datta Singh said it has obtained a three-day remand of

a 21-year-old engineering student Advik Srivastav who was arrested on charge of abetting the woman's suicide.

"The accused has been brought on a three-day remand during which the police will further interrogate him and verify certain facts, Singh said.

Police sources also said the accused will undergo a voice spectrography test to ascertain facts. The test is a non-invasive procedure that uses a spectrogram to analyse the sound waves of a person's voice, they said.

Meanwhile, scores of protestors burnt effigies of KIIT founder Achyuta Samanta in front of the institution Thursday, demanding quick and stringent action against the officials for their alleged high-

handedness towards the Nep-

alese students. They called out

the soft stance of City police

towards university officials

which led to the early bail of

five men barely hours after their arrest. Dramatic scenes unfolded in the evening after a huge rally led by Bajrang Dal and ABVP activists clashed with police personnel in front of the university, triggering tension in the area. The police later detained a few student activists who were

# State-of-the-art ICU

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 20: The Orthopaedic department at SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) will soon have a state-of-the-art six-bed Intensive Care Unit (ICU), equipped with advanced machinery. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will inaugurate the facility during the first week of March, according to medical sources.

The Orthopaedic department at SCBMCH treats hundreds of patients daily. The department also performs over five surgeries each day. Previously, patients requiring post-surgical ICU care were transferred to Hospital's central ICU. With the opening of the advanced ICU, patient crowding will be managed more effectively.

# to open at SCBMCH

20 to 23, the IMD said, "People are advised to keep a watch on the weather and take safe shelter during the thunderstorm activity to protect themselves from lightning and follow traffic advisories in urban areas.' The weather office also suggested that harvesting of crops

Around 70 per cent of the work has been completed, with the remaining 30 per cent to be completed before the inauguration, confirmed senior medical official.

# States urged to share knowledge for SDGs



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam called on Odisha and other states and UTs to enhance knowledge sharing for a greater collective impact at a workshop on fast-tracking and reporting sustainable development goals (SDGs) at an event here Thursday.

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting thunderstorms and lighting in the state for three days till Sunday, the Odisha government put at least 25 districts on alert Light to moderate rainfall took place Thursday morning at many places, including the Capital City and in the districts of north coastal Odisha, including some places in the remain-

Special Relief Commission-

er's (SRC) office, in a letter to

District Collectors, said that

the places identified by the

IMD should keep administra-

tive machinery ready to face

Forecasting thunderstorms

with lightning, gusty surface

wind and hail over the dis-

tricts of Odisha from February

ing districts.

any eventuality

The one-day event was jointly organised by the Odisha government, NITI Aayog, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under NITI Aayog's State Support Mission.

Policymakers, senior government officials, and experts from various states and UTs participated, exchanging insights on accelerating SDG implementation through integrated plan-

ning, financing and monitoring. Chief Secretary Manoi Ahuia provided an overview of Odisha's key SDG achievements, stressing their role in achiev-

'Viksit Odisha @ 2036 and 'Viksit Bharat @ 2047.' He emphasised data-driven SDG localisation and decentralised governance for faster development. NITI Aayog vice chairman

till February 23: IMD

may be regulated judiciously

and advised farmers to use

It said that the trough from

Gangetic West Bengal to Tel-

angana now runs from north

Bangladesh to Telangana

across Gangetic West Bengal,

interior Odisha and south Ch-

of minor damage to unse-

The IMD also warned

structures, banana

hattisgarh.

hail nets to protect crops.

Suman Bery, in his keynote address, underscored the need for an evidence-based, multi-stakeholder approach to bridge development gaps, strengthen governance, and mobilise sustainable financing for inclusive growth.

Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg outlined Odisha's initiatives in SDG implementation and monitoring, highlighting achievements and the need for integrated strategies to accelerate progress.

UNDP India resident representative Angela Lusigi stressed the importance of institutional architecture and a strong monitoring framework.

remaining districts trees and ripe paddy crops in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, and Angul districts.

**Light to moderate rainfall took place** 

Thursday morning at many places, including

the Capital City and in the districts of north

coastal Odisha, including some places in the

Light to moderate rain may occur in several parts of the state till the morning of February 25, the IMD said, adding there will, however, be no large change in the night temperature during the next four-five days.

#### **EV** charging stations at 100 places soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: The state government has decided to set up electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at 100 places in the first phase, the Assem bly was informed Thursday.

Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena said 21 charging stations would be established in Bhubaneswar, 38 in various regional transport offices (RTOs), 23 in truck terminals and 18 in other places of the state.

Work for setting up the charging stations has already been started.

The state government has selected through a tendering process a private firm to install charging stations in the first phase, Jena said while replying to a query by BJP legislator Tankadhar Tripathy.

A total of 1,57,081 electric vehicles plying in the state of which 1,32,692 are battery-operated ones, 23,563 are pure EVs and 826 are strong Hybrid EVs.

Notably, the state government has been providing subsidies to EV owners according to the Odisha Electric Vehicle Policy, 2021.

#### Jena urges CM to impose 25% cess on minerals

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Srikant Jena Thursday urged Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to impose a 25 per cent cess on minerals and mineral-bearing land in

In a letter to Majhi, he also demanded the suspension of mineral auctions and called for state control over mines through the Odisha Mining

Corporation (OMC) Citing Supreme Court rulings from July and August 2024, Jena claimed Odisha could generate over ₹50,000 crore annually, boosting the state budget to ₹3.90 lakh crore. He criticised the long-term linkage policy, arguing that it benefits select mining operators at the state's expense.

He highlighted that bauxite is sold to Vedanta at ₹465 per tonne, while the global market rate ranges between ₹6,000 and ₹7,000 per tonne, leading to massive profits for private firms. Jena warned that auctioning 10 mineral blocks at the Centre's behest would result in revenue losses, particularly amid a recession in the metal market. Instead, he suggested allocating these mines to OMC for better revenue generation.

He accused a "mining syndicate" of controlling Odisha's political landscape and blamed unregulated mining for environmental damage, including the drying up of major rivers.

Jena also demanded action on past mining dues of ₹1.5 lakh crore and proposed using additional revenue to increase Subhadra Yojana allowances.

### 52 cyclone shelters announced sans funds: Min

later let off.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: In an apparent dig at former chief minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide VK Pandian, state Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari Thursday said the '5T' had announced the construction of 52 new cyclone shelters without sufficient funds

for those. Pandian was the secretary of 5T (transformational initiative) of the previous BJD government.

During Question Hour of the Assembly, senior BJD legislator Pratap Keshari Deb asked why the work for the

construction of new cyclone shelters sanctioned by the Revenue department during the previous government was not progressing during the past nine months.

The work responsibility has been given to the Works and Rural Development department but the work has not yet started even after the issuance of tender. Deb said.

What was the reason behind the delay in the execution of the projects even after sanction?" he asked.

Replying to Deb, the minister said. "The Revenue department had not taken the decision to construct 52 new cyclone shelters in the

state. The '5T' had taken the decision. Wherever the '5T' was visiting, he was making announcements on the spot without any paperwork."

In the case of cyclone shelters too, it was announced that 52 cyclone shelters would be constructed from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CM-RF), he said.

"As the '5T' was most powerful at that time, the Rural Development department immediately prepared the detailed estimate and tenders were invited. But, when the work order was supposed to be issued, it was seen that sufficient funds were not available in the CMRF," Pujari said.

# Sisters donate land worth ₹3cr for Holi celebrations

*The selfless act of the* three siblings has ensured that the historic Holi festival is celebrated on its rightful grounds without any hassles, thereby preserving Odisha's rich art and cultural heritage

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pipli, Feb 20: In a show of exceptional generosity, three sisters of a Bengali Zamindar family have donated 35 decimals of their prime ancestral land in the appliqué hub here valued at over ₹3 crore to Pipli Bazaar Panchu Dola Melana Committee.

The historic festival of Holi congregation, which was struggling due to lack of dedicated space and was on the verge of



being discontinued due to encroachment, has now found a permanent home thanks to this noble gesture by the siblings. The three sisters' selfless act has been widely applauded

by people from all walks of life. The institution had been facing difficulties due to shrinking land availability for over a

gesture, the three sisters have strengthened the festival's future by donating 35 decimals of their prime ancestral land. ensuring that this cultural tradition continues for generations.

By contributing their valuable property to the festival committee, the three sisters – Rina Pal, Smita Bhattacha-

rya, and Anita Dey, daughters of late Sushil Adhya, - have become a source of inspiration for others.

The land was officially transferred to the committee. granting them full ownership rights through a settlement at Pipili Court February 19. In celebration of this mo-

mentous occasion, the com-

mittee hosted a grand ceremony to honour the three sisters. Committee president Bamadev Mishra, along with several distinguished guests. presented the sisters with certificates of honour, traditional shawls, and a sacred appliqué of Lord Jagannath as tokens of appreciation.

The committee, which is as old as 150 years, had been facing the challenge of losing its traditional Melana ground, which originally belonged to the sisters' family. Recognising the importance of preserving this cultural heritage, the sisters took the extraordinary step of donating their land for the greater good.

The selfless act of these three sisters has ensured that the historic Holi festival is celebrated on its rightful grounds without any hassles, thereby preserving Odisha's rich art and cultural heritage

#### WEATHER

**BBSR** CTC Max Temp Min Temp Humidity 2.8 Rainfall Cloudy sky

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SES	SENSEX	75735.96	*	203.22				
BOURSE	NIFTY	22913.15	•	19.75				
ENCY	DOLLAR	86.66	•	0.33				
CURR	DOLLAR EURO	90.49	•	0.49				
RSES	GOLD	₹85,763	<b></b>	₹44				
BOUR	SILVER	₹96,900	<b>4</b>	₹675				

#### century now. In a remarkable FOR CLASSIFIED VERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING AD

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.

# Silk City storm water drainage in bad shape



Berhampur, Feb 20: Storm water management continues to be a major issue in the Silk City here as the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) authorities are yet to find out a permanent solution to waterlogging that grips almost every

ward during monsoon. Last year, the civic body's Sanitation department directed agencies responsible for desilting the drains to act on a war footing. However, these agencies failed to execute the

work properly. Consequently, from the main roads to different wards, drains overflowed, spilling onto the streets. In several areas, roads and drains merged, making it difficult to commute.

A tragic incident occurred in ward number 2, where an 11-year-old student, Sairam Patra, died after being swept away in the open drain. Following this, BeMC took urgent steps to barricade and cover the open drains and put up warning signs. However, despite these measures, many large drains in

In order to address waterlogging in the city, the state Urban Development department floated a proposal asking BeMC authorities for a project report regarding improvement in drainage from Brajanagar to Jyoti Nagar. The department emphasised on reducing urban

State Disaster Management department sanctioned ₹1.63 crore for the project December 15, 2023. Later, a resolution was passed in the corporation meeting September 26, 2024. Subsequently, the standing committee approved a tender proposal September 5, 2024.

Accordingly, Sajan Acricet, a private firm, was assigned the responsibility of preparing the project design. The company was also set to receive 1.5 per cent of the approved funds, excluding survey and soil testing costs.

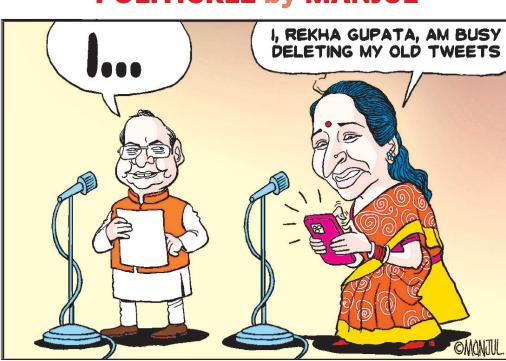
However, neither the design has been submitted nor the work has been commenced. The project is stuck at proposal level, with funds allocated for it remaining unspent, according to BeMC sources.

Meanwhile, during the last session of state Assembly, Berhampur MLA Anil Kumar raised questions about measures taken for rainwater drainage, sewerage, and drainage systems in the city. He inquired why the municipal corporation had not acted on the proposal. When contacted. BeMC Commissioner Bhabani Prasad Mishra did not provide

#### **HC orders status quo in** case against paper mill

**CUTTACK:** Orissa High Court has directed that the current status of government land allocated to Ballarpur Paper Mill for industrial purposes be maintained. The land, which was originally designated for industrial use, is allegedly being repurposed for resale. An application has also been allegedly submitted to change the land classification. A hearing Wednesday addressed the plea for annulment of the MoU between the state government and Ballarpur Paper Mill regarding the land. The division bench, comprising Chief Justice Arindam Sinha and Justice MS Sahoo, issued an order to maintain the status quo on the disputed land. Additionally, the bench directed the state government and other respondents to submit affidavits detailing their positions on the matter. The next hearing is scheduled for March 19. Petitioners Ramesh Chandra Nayak and others are represented by advocate BPB Bahali.

#### **POLITICKLE by MANJUL**



### SU student critical in brutal attack; male friend arrested

Sambalpur, Feb 20: A female post graduate (PG) student of Sambalpur University was left critically injured after being hit with a brick on head by her male friend here Wednesday night.

The woman was rescued in a pool of blood along the VIP Road Wednesday night. The incident occurred near the VIP Road connecting the varsity and Atal Chowk at Burla. Police have arrested the accused, identified as Rakesh Dash, 50, a married man and an employee of Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) in the town. This was stated here by IG (North) Himansu Kumar Lal and Sambalpur SP Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo at a press conference

organised at the district police office here Thursday.

Police recovered the victim's missing mobile phone and the cement brick used in the attack. Meanwhile, the victim, a second year PG student of the library science department and a resident of Burla, was shifted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar for advanced medical treatment due to the severity of her injuries.

The woman's father filed a

complaint at Burla police station, leading to the registration of case (76/25) under Sections 109(1) and 3(5) of BNS. The accused was produced in the court and remanded to judicial custody. Police have stated that an in-

vestigation into the incident is underway. Preliminary findings indicated that the girl had been in a relationship with the accused for the past two months.

Rakesh called the girl to meet him near the Metakani temple Wednesday afternoon. Accordingly, the girl arrived at the location much earlier and was engaged in a conversation with someone on her mobile phone. Seeing this, Rakesh suspected that she was talking to another man and asked her to discontinue the call.

quest, the accused lost his temper and repeatedly attacked her with a cement block lying nearby. The victim sustained severe head injuries, leading to excessive bleeding, and collapsed on the spot.

Rakesh fled the scene leaving her in a critical condition. The girl remained unconscious for an extended period. Later in the evening, some local residents and passersby spotted her and alerted the police, who rushed to the spot and rescued the woman. She was first taken to VIMSAR, where doctors observed deep head wounds and significant blood loss.

Later, police scanned the CCTV footage from various locations in the area and tracked down the accused person.

### AAI to conduct OLS survey soon at Rourkela Airport

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 20: Significant progress has been made regarding Rourkela Airport, with the Airport Authority of India (AAI) set to conduct a crucial Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) survey. The AAI has requested the state government to deposit ₹ 48,48,620 for the purpose.

This survey is vital as it assesses various factors such as nearby hills, high tension wires, feasibility of aircraft landing, runway length, and potential expansion. Following this, the AAI's civil engineering department will carry out a technical survey. Both surveys are important for the airport's development.

This comes after Usha Padhee, Principal Secretary of Commerce and Transport, wrote to Vipin Kumar, Chairman of AAI, requesting the upgradation of Rourkela Airport to 4C CAT 1 FR operations. In her letter, dated February 15, 2025, Padhee highlighted the need for a master plan and OLS survey based on the proposal, with the costs to be borne by the

In response, AAI has requested the necessary funds, and once this is settled, the OLS survey will proceed. After its completion, the process of land acquisition will be initiated. Experts view this survey as a positive step forward for the

Additionally, top officials from Sundargarh, including the District Collector, ADM of Rourkela, and other revenue officials, have been conducting meetings and studying the land status for the airport. These discussions signal a high level of commitment to making the airstrip fully operational, with spot verification

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has expressed concerns over the irregular services offered by the stateowned Alliance Air on the Rourkela-Kolkata-Bhubaneswar route. A source within the ministry indicated that if such situation persists after the Mahakumbh, the ministry may consider inviting private operators such as IndiGo or Star 1 to ensure reliable service on this route.

# Mineral theft from abandoned crusher unit busted in Joda

Joda, Feb 20: Large-scale theft of minerals has been detected from an abandoned crusher unit near Behera hutting on the outskirts of this town in Keonjhar district. The matter came to the fore after the Mines department and Joda police recently conducted a joint raid and seized a vehicle that was illegally transporting minerals. Officials said that an investigation is underway at the site.

Sources said the crusher ceased operations in 2008-09, leaving behind thousands of tonnes of high-grade iron ore at the site. Mining officer Deepak Kumar Dhurua stated the balance of the mine closure and amount of minerals dumped in the crusher unit had been officially reported to the department.

The raid was executed in the wee hours of Monday under the direction of senior mining officials. The crackdown resulted in seizure of a trailer (CG 10 BU 7791) loaded with stolen minerals while the illegal operators fled under the cover of darkness. Authorities also recovered a mobile



phone from the vehicle.

Joda Deputy Director of Mines Dinesh Agrawal dispatched a team of officials to the site to investigate the incident. Additionally, Forest department officials, led by forest guard Nilam Mohanta, conducted their own inspections.

Minerals worth over ₹100 crore remain in several abandoned crusher units and inactive stockpiles in Joda mining circle.

Owing to lack of coordination between the Mines and Railway departments, iron ore worth around ₹200 crore is lying at various railway sidings. The minerals have been seized by the Mines department.

Mines officials said since Railway authorities have not granted permission for transportation. these minerals remain idle and unutilised. Although the Mines department has written to Commercial Divisional Railway Manager, Chakradharpur regarding auction of minerals lying idle on railway sidings, there is no response from the latter. Also, several petitions have been filed in Orissa High Court over stockpile of minerals at several abandoned crusher units, but the matters are sub-judice.

Meanwhile, the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) has auctioned some of the seized iron ore which has drawn the attention of illegal mineral traders from neighbouring states.

Reports indicate that certain corrupt government officials and anti-social elements are involved in these illegal operations. According to Mining Deputy Director Agrawal, millions of tonnes of minerals have been dumped in several abandoned places. Authorities have been unable to relocate the minerals to a secure site due to lack logistic support, he said.

He, however, clarified that efforts are underway to coordinate with OMC and take necessary steps. The owner of the stockpile at Behera hutting has been issued a notice to disclose the quantity of iron ore stored there. Agrawal added.

#### EAST COAST RAILWAY

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR CLOSURE OF MANNED LEVEL CROSSING GATE BETWEEN SAMBALPUR - ANGUL STATIONS

THE FOLLOWING 'C' CLASS MANNED LEVEL CROSSING WILL BE CLOSED PERMANENTLY FOR ROAD USERS SINCE A LIMITED HEIGHT SUBWAY (LHS) HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED AT THIS LEVEL

ROAD USERS MAY PLEASE NOTE THIS NOTICE WITH EFFECT

Route	Between Stations	LC No.	Railway Kilometer of LC	Manned / Unmanned
ambalpur - Angul	Rairakhol - Bamur	ST - 45	77/3-4	Manned

Note: As per Collector & District Magistrate, Sambalpur's Letter No.: 1149/Judl, Dtd. 20.06.2012.

Divisional Engineer (East) / Sambalpur PR-1003/P/24-25

#### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE **APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSONS**

See Section 84 BNSS

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused persons 1. Ravil Ansari S/o Muneem Baksh B/o B-29. Har Enclave, Kh. No. 88, 1st Floor, Kirari Suleman, Delhi, 2. Jugla Ganda S/o Rangasae Gond R/o Village Naktisimada Raighar, Distt. Nabarangpur, Odisha, 3. Bhagwan Khila S/o Chaitan Khila & 4. Povitra Nayak S/o Madhu Sudan Nayak both R/o Village Kamerbelgam, P.S. Nandpura, Distt. Koraput, Odisha have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence case FIR No. 259/54 u/s 20/25/29 NDPS Act dated 16.07.2024 IPC at P.S Patparganj Indl. Area, Delhi and it have been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said above said cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said above said have absconded (or is concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 84 BNSS has been initiated in the case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said 1. Ravil Ansari, 2. Jugla Ganda, 3. Bhagwan Khila & 4. Povitra Nayak accused of FIR No. 259/54 u/s 20/25/29 NDPS Act dated

16.07.2024 IPC at P.S. Patparganj Indl. Area, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on 28.03.2025.

By Order: Sh. Alok Shukla By Order: Sh. Alok Shukla Addl. Sessions Judge-02, Spl. Judge (NDPS), (East)

Room No. 311

Karkardooma Court, Delhi

#### **Sarpanch suspended** for embezzling funds

JAJPUR: The state government has placed a woman sarpanch in Jajpur district under suspension on the charge of misappropriating public money, an official order said Thursday. It is alleged that Sanjukta Mohanty, sarpanch of Gramnandipur panchayat under Dasarathapur block, embezzled government funds of Rs 11,72,500, according to the order issued by the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water department. The funds were meant for the development of the panchayat under various schemes and sanctioned by the Central Finance Commission (CFC). Mohanty was not immediately available for comment. A social activist, Jayant Sadangi, brought the misappropriation issue to the notice of the Jajpur Collector last year. Collector P Anvesha Reddy asked the district panchayat officer to inquire into the allegation and it was found to be true, officials said. The government order said that Mohanty had violated provisions of the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, and abused her power, acting in a manner prejudicial to the interests of

the panchayat's residents.

# Doc invited to Rashtrapati Bhavan for her heroic act

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Feb 20: A lady doctor, having set an inspiring example for others by showing immense courage in the face of a fire mishap and saving the lives of a woman and her newborn child at Pandit Raghunath Murmu (PRM) Medical College and Hospital here, has received an invitation from the Rashtrapati Bhavan in appreciation for her heroic deed. Recognising her dedication and

service, President Droupadi Murmu will also confer an award on Dr Ranjana Bhandari Rath, a specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology.

According to reports, a fire broke out on the third floor of the seven-storeyed PRM Medical College and Hospital in Mayurbhanj district, August 18, 2023. The blaze, caused by a short circuit, erupted while a procedure was being conducted in an operating theatre, filling the room with thick smoke.



The fire in the obstetrics and gynaecology department created panic among patients and their attendants. In a desperate attempt to escape, patients, their kin and hospital staff rushed toward the exits.

Meanwhile, Dr Ranjana was performing a surgery on a pregnant woman when she received news of the fire. Without hesitation, she risked her own life to save two others. Moving the patient from the operating table to another room, she completed the procedure ensuring both the mother and the newborn survived.

Such selfless act earned her widespread praise from various quarters at both district and state levels. Dr Ranjana remarked that she believed it was God's will for her to carry out this duty. For six years, she has been diligently serving at the PRM Medical College and Hospital.

In the wake of an invitation arriving from Rashtrapati Bhavan, she expressed her joy at the prospect of being honoured by President Droupadi Murmu.



#### राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी **National Testing Agency**

(उच्चतर शिक्षा विभाग, शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के तहत एक स्वायत्त संगठन)

(An Autonomous Organization under the Department of

Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India)







#### Online Applications Form for Joint Integrated Program in **Management Admission Test 2025**

The National Testing Agency (NTA) will be conducting the JIPMAT 2025 for admission to 5-year Integrated Program in Management at IIM Bodh Gaya and IIM Jammu for the academic year 2025-26, as per following details:

deddenne year 2023 20, da per fonoving details.				
11 <sup>th</sup> February, 2025 to 10 <sup>th</sup> March, 2025 (upto 11.50 P.M.)				
11th February, 2025 to 11th March, 2025 (upto 11.50 P.M.)				
13 <sup>th</sup> March, 2025 to 15 <sup>th</sup> March, 2025				
26 <sup>th</sup> April, 2025 (Saturday)				
03.00 P.M. to 05.30 P.M.				
Computer Based Test (CBT)				
Multiple Choice Questions				

Scheme/duration/medium/syllabus of examination, eligibility criteria, tentative intake, reservation of seats, exam cities, important dates, etc., are mentioned in the Information Bulletin hosted on <a href="https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/">https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/</a>. Candidates who desire to appear in the exam may read the detailed Information Bulletin for JIPMAT 2025 and apply online only at https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/. The exam fee is required to be paid online, by using SBI & HDFC Bank Payment Gateway through Net Banking/Debit Card/Credit Card/ UPI. Applicants should check the eligibility criteria of the respective IIMs. Candidates are advised to be in touch with the NTA website <a href="https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/">https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/</a>. Candidates can write to NTA at jipmat@nta.ac.in or call NTA at 011-40759000.

Sd./- Director (Exams) cbc 21354/12/0007/2425



We must march on with the quiet certitude that what has to be done will be done.

THE MOTHER



Daron Acemoglu

Al, properly

and used, can

indeed make us

better - not just

by providing "a

bicycle for the

mind," but by

our ability to

think and act

with greater

independent

of coercion or

manipulation

understanding,

truly expanding

developed

### The AI Opportunity

was fortunate to participate in the recent AI Action Summit in Paris, where many discussions emphasized the need to steer AI in a more socially beneficial direction. At a time of increasingly loud calls for AI acceleration from Silicon Valley – and now from the US government – the opportunity to focus on what we want from the

As I noted in one of my speeches, we should start by asking what is valuable and worth amplifying in human societies. What makes us so special, or at least successful in evolutionary terms, is our ability to devise solutions to problems large and small, to try new things, and to find meaning in such efforts. We have a capacity not only to create knowledge, but also to share it. Though the human journey has not always been smooth – our capabilities, machines, and knowledge sometimes cause profound harms – constant inquiry and prolific sharing of information is essential to what we are.

For more than 200,000 years, technology has been central to this story. From the days of stone tools to the present, we have built the solutions to our challenges; and from oral storytelling and the invention of writing to the printing press and the internet, we have developed new and better ways of sharing knowledge. Within the past 200 years, we have also figured out how to experiment better and more freely, and we

have communicated this knowledge, too. The scientific process gave us established facts, allowing each generation to build on

Some may question whether we need AI for this purpose. After all, we already live in an age of information abundance; everything one might want – and much that one does not want - is technical ly accessible through the internet. But useful information is scarce. Good luck finding what you need to address a specific problem in a particular context, in a timely fashion.

It is relevant practical knowledge, not mere information, that makes factory workers more productive; enables electricians to handle new equipment and perform more sophisticated tasks; helps nurses play a more critical decision-making role in health care; and generally allows workers of all skills and backgrounds to

viding "a bicycle for the mind," but by truly expanding our ability to think and act with greater understanding, independent of coercion

dained. We can devise better ways to govern our societies, and choose a direction for technology that boosts knowledge acquisition and maximizes human flourishing. We can also ensure that AI creates more good jobs and enhanced capabilities for everyone – regardless of their education and income level.

path is technically feasible. AI will move in a pro-human direction only if technologists, engineers, and executives work together with democratic institutions, and if developers in the United States. Europe, and China listen to the five billion people who live in other parts of the world. We desperately need more thoughtful advice from experts and inspiring leadership from politicians, whose focus should be on incentivizing pro-human AI through policy and regulatory frameworks.

But we also need more than regulation. One hopes that European AI companies and researchers can show that there are alternatives to the Silicon Valley model. To achieve this demonstration effect, European society must encourage the more socially beneficial direction of AI and European leaders will need to invest in the necessary digital infrastructure, design regulations that do not discourage investment or drive away talented AI researchers, and create the kind of financing mechanisms that successful startups need to scale up. Without a robust AI industry of its own, Europe will have little to no influence on the direction of AI globally.

> The writer, a 2024 Nobel laureate in economics, is Institute Professor of Economics at MIT.



technology was like a breath of fresh air.

its predecessors' advances.

It also underpinned spectacular growth in most countries over the past two centuries. While economic development has created tremendous inequality between and within countries, people almost everywhere today are healthier and more prosperous than they would have been in the eighteenth century. AI could invigorate this trend by complementing human skills, talents, and knowledge, improving our decision-making, experimentation, and applications of useful knowledge.

fill new and more productive roles.

AI, properly developed and used, can indeed make us better - not just by pro-

or manipulation.

Yet owing to its profound potential, AI also represents one of the gravest threats that humanity has ever faced. The risk is not only (or even mainly) that superintelligent machines will someday rule over us; it is that AI will undermine our ability to learn, experiment, share knowledge, and derive meaning from our activities. AI will greatly diminish us if it ceaselessly eliminates tasks and jobs; overcentralizes information and discourages human inquiry and experiential learning; empowers a few companies to rule over our lives; and creates a two-tier society with vast inequalities and status differences. It may even destroy democracy and human civ-

I fear this is the direction we are heading in. But nothing is preor-

But first, the public must recognize that this socially desirable

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

#### WISDOM CORNER

Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.

I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is.

**Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more** you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for.

ZIG ZIGLAR

FOCUS DIPLOMACY

# **ELEVATING BILATERAL TIES**

known in Indian political community for its mediatory role in Middle East crises, mainly Israel-Gaza conflict, for contacts with militant group Hezbollah and for world economic summits in its capital Doha. Qatar occupies a strategically crucial position in West Asia being a middle power in the Arab world and as a non-NA-TO ally of the US. The visit of Emir of Qatar, Seikh Tamin bin Hamad Al-Thani is significant for the foregoing reasons as well as for resetting India's bilateral relations. The recent episode of hanging of Indians which was commuted at the behest of Prime Minister Modi rings loud in Indian communities in Qatar and their relations in India.

The Emir was on a two-day visit to India which resulted in elevating bilateral ties to a strategic partnership. Note that Qatar is the fifth GCC country (Gulf Cooperation Council) with which India has signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement. Four countries preceding Qatar are UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait. Qatar committed to investing \$10bn in India; the Qatar Investment Authority will set up an office in India: the current bilateral trade of \$14bn is to be doubled in the next five years. It was discussed that a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement should be signed in near future. An FTA is also in the offing.

There were six other deals fixed during this visit. These are: setting up of Joint Ministerial Commissions at the level of Foreign and Commerce Minister; deepening energy partnership through trade and mutual investments; extension of Indian E-visa facility for Qatar nationals; operationalisation of India's UPI in Qatar; India and Qatar to celebrate year of culture and friendship in future, and a revised agreement for avoiding



**How will India hedge between Qatar and US** when the former was providing cheaper **LNG to India? India should be careful** in undermining long-standing mutually beneficial partnership with Qatar

double taxation.

Qatar has been ruled as a hereditary monarchy held by Thanis since Mohammed bin-Thani signed an agreement with colonial Britain in 1868 to recognise Qatar as a separate entity. After Ottoman rule, Qatar became a British protectorate in 1916 and gained independence in 1971. The current Emir holds all powers under the Constitution of Qatar. It has the fourth-highest GDP per capita in the world. It is a high-income economy with the world's third-largest natural gas and oil reserves.

India-Qatar relationship consists of two main elements Qatar supplying liquefied natural gas to India and the Indian expat community. Indian expats constitute a formidable 27% of Qatar's population. They are a major source of foreign remittances for India. World Bank data suggests that Indian expats in Qatar send around \$4.14bn in remittances to India. Both these elements are facing challenges in the changing geopolitical context. Indian expats are the backbone of Qatar's robust economy.

The construction industry which is the predominant sector of Qatar is a major employer of Indian blue-collar workers. So the mutual dependence - India for gas and Qatar for skilled manpower - is often underplayed in diplomatic niceties. The harsh punishment imposed on Indians has alarmed the expat community. Whether they were guilty is a matter of separate discussion.

The supply of LNG faces competition from the US. For various reasons, India is moving closer to the US. It is inclined to import LNG from the US. Then what happens to Qatari LNG supplies? How will India hedge between Qatar and US when the former was providing cheaper LNG to India? India should be careful in undermining long-standing mutually beneficial partnership with Qatar. Remember, the recent 20-year LNG deal with Qatar is estimated to have saved India \$6bn. There is an attempt by European countries to buy Qatari gas in the wake of Russia-Ukraine war. Yet, Qatar signs a 20-year agreement with India in recognition of India as an emerging world power as well as a potential market.

The challenges which still persist between India and Qatar include issues related to labour rights, expat welfare and regional tensions. The last one fully occupies Qatar as it is often made to play the interlocutor. Persistent conflict between Israel and Palestine, the instability caused by internal conflicts in Syria, rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran for regional leadership, unrelentingly occupy Qatar. New Delhi could team-up with Qatar to give a hand to the latter in dealing with the regional tensions.

India and Qatar have had a steady relationship. It needs to be deepened. New Delhi should engage more with Qatar in West Asian security situation. As such, Indian-Qatar relationship is too crucial for both countries to be taken for granted. The relation should enhance by constant nurturing, strategic foresight and a clear understanding of the dramatically changing global geopolitics. In that sense, the Emir's visit to India is quite impactful. Qatar should expand its investment in India. Modi should reciprocate by helping Qatari economy in many other areas where India is strong.

New Delhi cannot cold-shoulder any West Asian country, let alone Qatar. India has huge a diaspora in Middle East. Indian economy is bolstered by remittances from the expats. Indians are increasingly getting involved in the growth and development of the West Asian countries which they have embraced as their places of work and stay

New Delhi is not short of diplomatic initiatives and Prime Minister's Modi personal warmth with leaders of West Asia. As said, Modi's personal intervention precluded a major tragedy when Indian Navy officers and others were given death sentence by Qatari iudiciary. Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's strategic visits to Doha are indicators of New Delhi's deft diplomacy. That should continue in the interest of consolidation of India-Qatar bilateralism.

The writer is Professor, NIIS Group of Institutions, Odisha.

**SPECTRUM STATE BUDGET** 

**NEW DELHI** 

**SHOULDER ANY** 

**WEST ASIAN** 

**COUNTRY, LET** 

**ALONE QATAR** 

**CANNOT** 

COLD-

# Seed sown for a healthy tree



Sashikanta Khuntia & Piyush Pratik Mohanty

**SOME SPECIFIC SCHEMES ARE CURATED IN LINE WITH THE UNION BUDGET TO GENERATE EXTRA POWER** TO ADVANCE THE **STATE ECONOMY** 

budget of the new gova watershed moment for the state of Odisha. The change in regime marked with 'Odia Asmita' and "Double Engine" portrays to document rising growth with undiluted pride of Odisha's ownness. The overall Rs 2.9 lakh crore budget of 2025-26 embarks a 42% hike in comparison to the last government's final full-fledged budget. Additionally, impressive budgetary provision for education, healthcare, social security, rural/urban development, and women empowerment depicts 360-degree attention for holistic growth. Given the complex view of the total budget, here, an exclusive effort is given to scan the budgetary provision towards agriculture and the allied sector, as 48% of the workforce is still dependent on it. The development of this sector is significantly essential and needs the attention and understanding of all stakeholders.

Low productivity, lack of crop diversification, over-dependence on other states for

lute reliance on the monsoon, ernment has ushered and preservation of surplus production are some significant issues related to the state's agricultural sector.

With 80% of the state's population residing in rural parts of Odisha and agriculture being the principal source of income, the government enhanced the allocation by 12% to Rs 37,838 crores. Notably, some specific schemes are curated in line with the Union budget to generate extra power to advance the state economy – which seems parallel to a double engine in automobile setup. Initiatives such as CM-Kisan, with a ₹2020 crore allocation, can complement the PM-Kisan scheme for additional input benefits. Further, PM-Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana and the Cotton Technology Mission will amalgamate with the state's own 'Crop Diversification Programme' to promote non-paddy crops like millet, oilseeds, pulses, and other high-value crops. Additionally, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampad Yojana and Mukhyamantri Matsyajibi

Kalyan Yojana can strengthen the state's fisheries sector and make the state self-reliant. Further, emphasis has been

given to minimise the dependence on other states for potatoes. A new programme for Rabi potato cultivation has been announced where 1.80 lakh farmers are targeted for growing potatoes and the government will be streamlining the process for the same throughout the farming season. Thus, the same could result in building the foundation for the required production for self-consumption in the state soon. In addition, an exclusive allocation of ₹252 crore towards a cold storage policy can become a value addition for crops like potatoes and similar others.

With an ambition to add 2.77 lakh hectare of irrigation in the year 2025-26 and 15 lakh hectare by 2029-2030, the water resources department has been allocated ₹14,895 crore to make agriculture less dependent on monsoon. Additionally, ₹2,277 crore has been allocated for the cooperatives, which can

lead to the socio-economic development of farmers, as well as for modernising mandis and instilling in them modern test ing and grading facilities along with other provisions.

With agriculture and allied sectors, irrigation, and rural development getting the majority share of approximately 32% of the total budget, it clearly showcases the government's plan for agriculture and the rural landscape of the state. Yet many times, a reasonable budget is followed by mediocre implementation, which results in no development of the sectors, and hence, the money spent becomes purposeless. To a great degree, the budget 2025 has something for the countryside and the "Annadatas." Overall. the calculative provision conveys that a seed has been sown to germinate a healthy plant.

Khuntia & Mohanty are associated with the School of Rural Management, XIM University, Bhubaneswar, as faculty and master students, respectively. Views are personal.

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Fuel fraud

Sir, Short fueling and rigging of petrol dispensing machines are common fraudulent practices that are indulged in a lot of petrol bunks right under the nose of the customers. Not setting the meter to zero is the commonest way to indulge in short fueling because a busy driver may not always be on his toes to detect the mistake. Petrol dispensing machines are amenable to be rigged by unscrupulous owners. Installation of electronic chips into the fuel machines so that inadequate petrol is pumped into the vehicle while the meter displays full amount is a common modus operandi. Filling synthetic oil is one of the latest tricks. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas should ensure regulatory and penal power on erring fuel station. If punitive actions do not work, blacklisting the petrol bunk dealers and even shutting them till they comply with fair practices should be the rule. Customers have a proactive role to play as well..

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

#### Dangerous tradition

Sir, Elephants running amok and causing destruction and loss of lives have become a frequent occurrence during festival season in South India, especially Kerala. Consequently, the presence of elephants on temple compounds during festivals creates a tense and scary situation. State governments and temple authorities must understand the hazards of parading elephants during festivals and effective action must be taken to end this centuries-old tradition. It is relieving to know people have started bringing in replacement for real elephants. Mechanical elephants are a viable alternative to real elephants. A few temples in Kerala have already started using them. They look like real elephants. Also, they are made of eco-friendly materials. By using such alternatives dangers caused by real elephants can be averted and a lot of money can be saved. Gone are the days when people enjoyed and admired the spectacle of caparisoned elephants. The safety of people coming to attend festivals is of utmost importance. Those who give permission to parade real elephants in festivals must be held accountable for the consequences

Venu GS, KOLLAM



# TWO STATES





# **Bangaloreans to pay** more for filter coffee

The Bruhat Bangalore Hotels Association has decided to increase coffee prices by 10-15 per cent next month due to rising global coffee bean prices

IN A STATEMENT, THE INDIAN

SEVENTH-LARGEST COFFEE

LAKH TONNES OF COFFEE IS

COMPRISING BOTH FILTER

AND INSTANT COFFEE

its good filter coffee at nomi-

nal rates. We charge very rea-

sonable prices. The minimum

price of filter coffee starts at Rs

12 and goes up to Rs 40, depend-

Highlighting Bangalore's

ing on the hotel," he told PTI.

large coffee-loving customer

base, he added, "We don't want

to burden our customers, but

due to unavoidable circum-

stances, we are increasing pric-



Bangalore, Feb 20: After the recent metro fare hike, Bangaloreans will now have to shell out extra not just for their commute but also for the city's iconic filter coffee.

The Bruhat Bangalore Hotels Association (BBHA) has decided to increase coffee prices by 10-15 per cent next month due to rising global coffee bean prices. According to BBHA Presi-

dent PC Rao, coffee bean and powder prices have been steadiy increasing since January. The cost has risen by Rs 200 per kg, and further hikes are expected in March.

Citing a global shortage of coffee beans, he said coffee powder prices would rise further and hinted at a potential increase in milk prices as well.

"Hence, we have advised all member hotels to hike coffee prices by 10-15 per cent, depending on their current selling rates. Bangalore is known for

es only by 10-15 per cent. So, if a coffee currently costs Rs 12 at a particular hotel, it may rise to Rs 14. If it is Rs 15, it may go up to Rs 18, depending on the percentage hike implemented by each hotel."

esponding to a query on whether coffee prices in hotels have already been hiked, Rao said some establishments have increased prices by 10 per cent, while those planning a 15 per cent hike will do so by March. Others will wait until milk prices rise before making adjustments.

In a statement, the Indian Coffee Roasters Association noted that India is the seventh-largest coffee producer in the world, producing approximately 3.6 lakh tonnes of coffee annually-70 per cent Robusta and 30 per cent Arabica.

Currently, about 1.2 lakh tonnes of coffee is consumed domestically, comprising both filter coffee (roast and ground) and instant coffee.

"Coffee plantations worldwide are subject to extreme climate variations, impacting both quality and quantity of production, thereby significantly affecting pricing. Until a year ago, Robusta coffee prices were about one-third of Arabica prices," the association said.

"Now, both are trading at nearly the same levels. India has exported a significant portion of its coffee production this year due to price volatility, earning Rs 10,000 crore in foreign exchange," it added.

According to Perikal M Sundar, President of the Indian Coffee Roasters Association, coffee prices have been steadily increasing for over a year.

Following this, the Revenue

Minister instructed officials

to ensure there is no drinking

water shortage across the state

and to take necessary precau-

The cabinet sub-committee

also reviewed the current wa-

ter storage in major reservoirs.

voirs currently hold 535.21 TMC

of water, around 60 per cent of

the average storage. Last year,

at the same time, the storage

was 332.52 TMC," a statement

from the Revenue Minister's

lower water levels in some res-

ervoirs, Gowda emphasised

the need to carefully manage

available water, considering

irrigation requirements and

Expressing concern over

office said.

"Karnataka's 14 key reser-



### 'Ladki Bahin' scheme mainly benefits married women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 20: Married women make up as many as 83 per cent of the beneficiaries of the Maharashtra government's 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana', as per official data.

The scheme, which is supposed to have played a role in the BJP-led coalition's victory in the November 2024 Assembly elections, provides monthly assistance of Rs 1,500 to women aged 21 to 65 who are married, divorced, widowed, deserted, or destitute, and whose family income is below Rs 2,50,000 per year. The benefit is also provided to one unmarried woman per family.

The scheme has, as of now, some 2.5 crore beneficiaries,



though the government is now carrying out a scrutiny to omit those who are ineligible.

Data indicates that married women constitute 83 per cent while unmarried women constitute 11.8 per cent of the beneficiaries, a senior official said

cent of beneficiaries, while 'divorced, destitute or deserted' women collectively make up less than 1 per cent of the cohort. Divorced women account for 0.3 per cent, deserted women 0.2 per cent, and destitute women for 0.1 per cent of beneficiaries.

The highest 29 per cent of beneficiaries are from the 30-39 age group, followed 25.5 per cent from 21-29 age group and 23.6 per cent from 40-49 age group. Women aged 60 to 65 account for only five per cent of beneficiaries.

Pune district has recorded the highest number of applications for the scheme, followed by Nashik and Ahmednagar. On the other hand, Sindhudurg

recorded the lowest number of applications.

The scheme was rolled out in July last year. Before the November elections, the ruling Mahayuti alliance of the BJP NCP and Shiv Sena promised to increase the amount under the scheme to Rs 2,100 per month After coming to power, the new Devendra Fadnavis-led government said the promise would be kept, and an announcement to this effect is expected in the coming Budget.

After coming to power, the new Mahayuti government ordered a review to remove in eligible recipients. So far, five lakh beneficiaries have been excluded, with officials estimating that the number could

#### **PRE-MONSOON SEASON**

# K'taka to experience above normal rainfall

Officials reported that February has already recorded higher-than-normal temperatures, with a 2.5 degree Celsius increase over the average PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 20: Karnataka is expected to witness above normal rainfall during the pre-monsoon season, with

This February, temperatures were 2.5 degree celsius higher than usual, but the pre-monsoon season is expected to bring above-average rainfall. they added.

significant rainfall in April and

May, officials said Thursday.

A cabinet sub-committee meeting, chaired by Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, was held Thursday to discuss the 2025 Rabi and Monsoon seasons, agriculture, drinking water supply, weather conditions, and reservoir water levels.

Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister



Priyank Kharge, and Agriculture Minister N Cheluvarayaswamy attended the meeting.

Officials briefed the ministers, stating, "Above-normal rainfall is expected during the pre-monsoon season, with good rainfall in April and May. There is also a likelihood of increased rainfall in the last week of February and March. However, rainfall during the Rabi season has been below average, and precipitation from October to December is expected

Officials reported that February has already recorded higher-than-normal temperatures, with a 2.5 degree celsius increase over the average.

However, a temperature drop is expected in the last week of the month.

The Water Resources department has been directed to provide a clear report on expected reservoir levels in the coming months and to ensure that drinking water needs are prioritised before releasing water

future drinking water needs.

"Due to long-term water scarcity and water quality issues, drinking water is being sup plied via tankers and borewells to 66 villages across 13 taluks in five districts—Chikkaballapur, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, Bengaluru Urban, and Ramanaga

ra," the statement said. "Similarly, tankers and borewells are supplying drinking water to 56 wards in urban local bodies across Chikkaballapur, Bengaluru Urban, and Kolar districts. The meeting also discussed identifying additional villages that may face water shortages in the near future,

it added. The Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department has been instructed to make comprehensive preparations by reviewing past measures and considering additional steps to address drinking water issues.

# **CHAFB** conducts major organ retrieval operation

Bangalore, Feb 20: Command Hospital Air Force Bangalore (CHAFB) conducted a significant organ retrieval operation, marking a milestone in its commitment to organ donation and life-saving medical interventions.

The operation was carried out Wednesday, officials said Thursday. The donor, a serving soldier on leave, suffered severe head trauma in a road traffic accident in Kasaragod, Kerala. He was evacuated to CHAFB February 17 after being

stabilised, they said. "He was subsequently declared brain dead. His relatives. including his wife and brother, selflessly agreed to donate his organs to save the lives of other patients," the Defence PRO said in a statement

According to the statement, after coordination with the Karnataka State Organ Transplant Authority, an organ retrieval team immediately flew in from Army Hospital (Research & Referral). New Delhi, aboard an



321 to retrieve the corneas, liver, and one kidney.

"Another kidnev was transplanted locally at CHAFB. A team from Chennai, using a commercial flight, arrived to retrieve the heart and lungs for MGM and Gleneagles Hospitals, respectively, to provide life-saving transplants to patients in urgent need," it stated.

A Defence official noted that to ensure seamless transportation of the retrieved organs, the Command Hospital closely coordinated with Bangalore police to establish a 'green corridor'.

"This meticulously planned route facilitated the swift and uninterrupted transfer of organs from the operating theatre to the airport terminal, significantly reducing travel time and preserving organ viability," the statement said.

Noting that CHAFB has been a key institution in organ donation initiatives, the official highlighted its role in conducting multiple organ retrieval procedures in the past

"However, this is the first time organs were transported to multiple cities, underscormedical institutions in ad

ing the growing collaboration between military and civilian dressing critical healthcare needs," the official added.

#### **AWAITING DEPORTATION**

### Mumbai Police station becomes home for Pakistani national

Nadir Munir Khan, a cloth merchant from Karachi, has been living in a room at Mata Ramabai Ambedkar (MRA) Marg police station since last October

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 20: For the last four months, a police station in south Mumbai has become the temporary home of a 65-yearold Pakistani man who has served a sentence for illegal entry into India and is now awaiting deportation.

Nadir Munir Khan, a cloth merchant from Karachi, has been living in a room at Mata Ramabai Ambedkar (MRA) Marg police station since last

He can not leave the police station until the deportation, said senior inspector Santosh Dhanavate. Police have issued him a restriction order, forbidding him from stepping outside the premises.

Khan was arrested by officials of the MRA Marg police station April 11, 2024, after he was found roaming in a suspicious manner near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in the city.

He told police that he was a Pakistani national. But he had no visa and other necessary documents, so the police arrested him on the charge of illegal entry into India under the Foreigners Act and the



PTI Thursday. In view of his nationality, the Intelligence Bureau and R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing) too questioned Khan besides the police, the official said.

He was then prosecuted for illegal stay in the country, and a local court sentenced him to six months in prison. He was



released October 11, 2024.

After completing the prison sentence. Khan was again sent to the MRA Marg police station, where he is now waiting for deportation.

"We have contacted Pakistani authorities. We are waiting for their response," the official said.

The police are looking after

his daily needs, including food. According to Khan's statement to the police, he ended up in India via Nepal

In 2023, he travelled to Kathmandu on a business trip. Some local vendors who had ordered leather jackets cheated him by not making payment for the goods, he told police.

When he confronted them, he was allegedly assaulted and his passport and other documents were stolen.

The Nepal authorities imposed a fine on him for overstaying, following which he crossed into India through Sonauli land port in Uttar Pradesh, from where he went to New Delhi, Khan told police.

After staying in New Delhi for some days, he came to Mumbai in November 2023.

#### Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS ELECTRICAL DIVISION. **SAMBALPUR**

Bid Identification No.EE/RWELECT/SBP/29/2024-25

No.O-1514:1. Name of the Work: Shifting for construction of HI Bridge over under Nallah at 1.6 KM on Sreikela to Sangamunda Road under R.W.E.S., Bolangir. 2. Shifting and Construction of 33 KV, 11 KV and LT line from PWD Road (Kuturia) to Akhupa via Padapatia R.W.E.S., Dhenkanal.3. Shifting of 3P, 3W, 11 KV Line due to Construction of Bridge from Hamamira to Kantamalia Village under RWES Dhenkanal, 4, Shifting of 11 KV HT Line Telibandh feeder for construction of Road from Rampur to Kampara Under RWES Boudh.

2. Estimated Cost: 1.Rs.6,98,068.00/- 2.Rs.11,09,390.00/-

3. Rs.5,64,358.00/- 4. Rs.8,48,597.00/-3. Availability of bid document in the website: 11.30 Hours of

24.02.2025 to 17.00 Hours of 04.03.2025 4. Date of Opening of Tenders: 11.30 Hours on dt.06.03.2025. Further details and any corrigendum/Addendum/ Cancellation of tender can be seen from the website www

**Executive Engineer** 

tendersodisha.gov.in. only.

OIPR-34175/11/0012/2425 R.W. Electrical Division, Sambalpur

# national



Who said I do not respect my religion? Remember religion belongs to an individual but festivals are for all. In our country, we have several states and each has different languages, education, way of living, cultures and beliefs

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

#### WITNESS PROTECTION SCHEME

Taking a big stride towards implementing the three new criminal laws, the Haryana government has rolled out a new programme -- the Haryana Witness Protection Scheme, 2025 -- to ensure the protection of witnesses in the state



Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will address the sion on Wednes day where two presentations on semiconductors and Numaligarh Refinery's Bio Refinery will be also made

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

The budget is a blueprint for systematically implementing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' through public welfare schemes BHUPENDRA PATEL | GUJARAT CM

The main bus of the satellite is being done by India, and we are going to launch. But if India has

spent x amount of money for this satellite mission, the money spent by the US is five times x

S SOMANATH | FORMER ISRO CHAIRMAN

#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### BSF apprehends smuggler with gold

Bithari (WB): The BSF apprehended a smuggler who attempted to smuggle 1.406 kg of gold biscuits, valued at over ₹1.24 crore, by concealing them in his rear body cavity, the force said Thursday. Acting on specific intelligence regarding the smuggling of gold across the India-Bangladesh border, the BSF personnel deployed at Bithari Border Outpost in North 24 Parganas district conducted a thorough search

#### **Bus catches fire**

Ramgarh (Jharkhand): A bus carrying devotees to the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj from Ranchi caught fire near a village in Ramgarh district, police said Thursday. However, none of the 35 pilgrims on board were injured in the incident that took place close to Hesagarha village along National Highway-33 around 1 am, Ramgarh Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Parameshwar Prasad said. The driver of the vehicle suffered multiple injuries while jumping off the bus, and he has been admitted to a local hospital, Prasad said.

#### Four militants held

**Imphal:** Security forces have arrested four militants belonging to at least two different outfits from Manipur's Churachandpur, Thoubal and Imphal East districts, police said Thursday. Those arrested include an active member of the United Kuki National Army from Churachandpur Tuesday, and three active cadres of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (PWG) from Thoubal and Imphal East Wednesday.

#### **CBI books IAS officer**

Jammu: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said on Thursday that the probe agency has booked two family members of a Jammu and Kashmir IAS officer, who had earlier been booked personally in an FIR pertaining to disproportionate assets amassed by the officer. CBI sources said that the agency has now booked two members of 2010 batch IAS officer, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan for amassing assets beyond their legal income. Rajeev Ranjan has already been booked by the CBI. Kumar is presently posted as secretary revenue and secretary labour and employment departments in Jammu and Kashmir.

# VULGARITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA Centre issues advisory to OTT platforms

In an advisory to over-the-top (OTT) platforms and self-regulatory bodies, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also asked them to strictly adhere to the Code of Ethics prescribed under the IT Rules-2021 while publishing content, including stricter adherence to the age-based classification of content

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Amid a row over vulgar jokes on social media, the Centre has cracked the whip and warned OTT platforms against transmitting content that is pro-

In an advisory to over-the-top (OTT) platforms and self-regulatory bodies, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also asked them to strictly adhere to the Code of Ethics pre-

while publishing content, including stricter adherence to the age-based classification of

It also asked self-regulatory bodies of OTT platforms to take appropriate proactive action for violation of the Code of Ethics by the platforms. The ministry said it has received complaints from Members of Parliament, statutory organisations and public grievances regarding the alleged spread of obscene, pornographic and vulgar content published by



certain publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) and social media.

"In view of the above it is advised that the OTT platforms

sions of applicable laws, and the Code of Ethics prescribed under IT Rules, 2021 while publishing content on their platforms, including stricter adherence to the age-based classification of content prescribed under the Code of Ethics," the advisory said.

It said the Code of Ethics, inter-alia, require OTT platforms not to transmit any content that is prohibited by law, undertake age-based classification of content, based on general guidelines the Rules, implement access control mechanism for 'A' rat ed content to restrict access to such content by a child, and also exercise due caution and discretion.

in the wake of the Supreme Court suggesting regulation on content on social media platforms. The apex court had flagged the "vacuum" in law when it comes to sharing content on platforms such as YouTube and said "all kinds of things were going on".

# **Rahul slams BJP** govt, urges people to embrace love



**Urging** 

people not

remain" a country

of love

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raebareli (UP), Feb 20: Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi Thursday accused the BJP-led Union government of diverting attention from real issues and promoting capitalists while asserting that a country steeped in hatred can never progress

Urging people not to accept hate, the Congress leader stressed that India "was and shall always remain" a country of love

Kickstarting a twoday visit to his parliamentary constituency Rae Bareli. Gandhi interacted with party workers and youths in Bachhrawan and then went to Jagatpur in Unchahar where he unveiled a statue

of Rana Beni Madhav Singh, a hero of the 1857 Indian Mutiny. Speaking at a public event, he took a jibe at the news media. "I have to say they (media) are our friends, but in reality, they are friends of Modi,

Adani and Ambani." "This is because they don't talk about the public, have you seen any news about farmers. labourers or inflation on TV? They will show you weddings of the Ambanis and Adanis, dance shows and watches worth ₹15 crore," Gandhi said. "Their work is to put pressure on the

government. If the government does anything wrong, they hold it accountable. But they are not doing their work properly now," he added.

Recalling the contributions of Rana Beni Madhav Singh and Beera Paasi in the 1857 mutiny, the former Congress chief said all great men who fought for India's Independence, "fought for the Constitution and if the poor, labourers and farmers in the country have a voice today it is because of the Constitution. This Constitution

is the voice of India. Gandhi, Ambedkar and Nehru gave this Conthe Congress leader stitution. They fought the Britstressed that India ish and went was and shall always to jail. Before them. Rana Beni Madhav Singh and Beera Paasi fought. They all fought

> for the Constitution." "Political parties have a dutv towards saving the Constitution and so does the media. But these days they (media) are not working to protect the constitution and that's why I talked

about them," Gandhi said. He alleged that the country was being "sold". "Airports, ports, infrastructure, coal, railways, everything is being sold. The Congress is fighting, I am fighting on the streets. But the media is not helping us. But we will fight and show you we

#### MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN KOLKATA

#### **Autopsy finds two** women, girl of family 'murdered' at home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 20: Post-mortem examination conducted on two women and a teenage girl, whose bodies were found inside their house in Kolkata, Thursday found that they were murdered, ismissing speculations that the three died by suicide, a police officer said.

The three members of a family were found dead inside their house, while three others were injured after their car crashed into a Metro Rail pillar in the city on early Wednesday. One of the injured persons told the police about the deaths in their family home.

The autopsy conducted bodies of the two women, with wrists slit and deep injury marks on their throats, suggest ed that they died due to the effect of the injuries which were ante-mortem in nature. The minor girl died due to poisoning, the officer said. Two brothers – Pranay and Prasun Dey – lived in that house in Tangra area with their wives Sudeshna and Romi, respectively. Pran-

ay's son and Prasun's daughter

were the other occupants of the

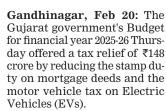


Bodies of the three female members of the family were found in separate rooms of the house while the male members were in the car that crashed into the pillar early at around 4 am Wednesday. "Romi Dey had a single slash

injury and both of her wrists were slit. The cause of her death is due to the effect of the antemortem injuries. The same was found on Sudeshna Dey's body. "The minor girl had several bruises all over her body, legs and lips. The fluid found in her stomach had the smell of medicine and the cause of her death was due to poisoning, the officer told PTI

Sudeshna's body bore some superficial injury marks other than those on her throat.

## Gujarat govt presents ₹3.7lakh crore budget



Finance Minister Kanubhai Desai presented the ₹3.70 lakh crore budget in the legislative assembly here without proposing any new tax. Among other things, it proposed to set up the 'Guiarat Reforms Commission' to bring in necessary changes in administrative procedures and integrate new technologies.

The budget outlay of ₹3,70,250 crore was an increase of ₹37.785 crore or 11.3 per cent over the previous fiscal, Desai said. Reduction of stamp duty on mortgage deeds, and that of vehicle tax on EVs would amount to tax relief of ₹148 crore, he said.

Announcing a host of new schemes and projects, Desai said the budget was based on five pillars -- social security, human resource development, infrastructure development, green growth



and development of economic activities. The state government has prepared a roadmap for 'Viksit Gujarat 2047' to realize Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, the minister said.

Six "growth hubs", including the Surat Economic Region, will be developed, he said. For this, regional economic plans are being developed for Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Rajkot, Coastal Saurashtra region and Kutch to facilitate a "comprehensive and balanced economic development of the state," the minister added.

To tap the potential of the services sector, a new Commissionerate of Services will be set up, Desai announced.

# The advisory also comes



People commute on a cycle during a rainy day in Nadia, West Bengal

#### 'ENTHIRAN' PLAGIARISM CASE

#### **ED** attaches director's assets of ₹10 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Assets worth more than ₹10 crore of the director of 2010 movie Enthiran facing charges of plagiarism and copyright violations have been attached under the anti-money laundering law, the Enforcement Directorate said Thursday.

This is possibly the first attachment of assets in the country under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PM-LA), on grounds of plagiarism or copyright violation while making a movie, as per officials. A provisional order was issued February 17 under the PMLA attaching three immov able properties of the director, S Shankar, the ED said. The money laundering case stems from a complaint filed by Aaru Tamilnadan, author of a story titled 'Jiguba', against Shankar before a court at Egmore in Chennai May 19, 2011. The complaint alleges that the storyline of the Tamil movie 'Enthiran' (Robot) directed by Shankar, was copied from 'Jiguba' thereby rendering Shankar liable for violations under the Copyright Act, 1957 and some sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the ED said

#### **NO MORE SOFT DRINKS, MOUTHWASH**

# Loco pilots in Southern Railway face new restrictions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Thiruvananthapuram division of the Southern Railway Zone has banned the consumption of some dietary items that produce false breathalyser test impacting the crew deployment and smooth train operations.

An Extra Ordinary Circular issued by the division Februarv 18 said that the presence of alcohol in the exhaled air detected by the Breath Analyzer while Sign On and Sign Off at crew lobby is on the rise

and the reasons cited for such

unwarranted occurrences by

the crew are mainly due to

the consumption of Homoeo medicines, soft drink, tender coconut water, some kind of plantain fruits, cough syrup, mouth wash etc.

"While analyzing the blood sample taken in such cases at the Chemical Examiner's Laboratory, owned by the government, almost all blood samples were found with NIL content of alcohol in it," the circular said.

"But the disturbance created due to alcohol presence in the exhaled air is too high which directly affects the smooth operation of crew links. Hence, it is instructed to all running staff that the consumption of the above-mentioned items

before Sign On and Sign Off which leads to alcohol detection in the BA test is totally

prohibited," it added. According to the circular,

if the loco pilots want to consume any of such items in unavoidable circumstances, they should inform it in writing to the CRC (crew controller) on According to the circular, if the loco pilots want to consume any of such items in unavoidable circumstances, they should inform it in writing to the CRC (crew controller) on duty with the justification for it before conducting the **Signing On or Signing Off** 

duty with the justification for it before conducting the Signing On or Signing Off.

"CRC on duty should inform the same to the CCRC (a loco pilot who works in the Central ized Control Room Complex) and ADEE/OP (Assistant Divisional Engineer, Operation) immediately. Consumption of medicine containing alcohol should be continued with the written approval of Railway Medical Officers Only," the circular said. "Detection of alcohol in

BA test without unavoidable reasons will be treated as a wilful attempt made by the crew to disturb the train traffic and appropriate DAR action (disciplinary action) will be initiated against them," it added.

# national



Wherever the Congress is strong or in power, it harbours hostility and casteist attitudes towards BSP and its followers. But in states like UP, where it is weak. it tries to mislead people by talking about an alliance with BSP. If this is not hypocrisy, then what is?

#### **DELHI COURT JUNKS DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST BANSURI SWARAJ**

A Delhi court Thursday dismissed a criminal defamation against BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj saying her statement was a reiteration of the information already put in the public domain by the ED





about Urdu. He

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

The truth is that Urdu is an Indian language originating from the region around Meerut

The Frontier Highway is going to be the largest road project in the his

going to be around 1,400 kilometres long, and close to ₹42.000 crore will be invested. It is going to transform the border

KIREN RIJIJU | UNION MINISTER







BJP is now officially in power. Do not forget to collect your 21,000 Rupees and 6

Nutrition Kits. Start collecting it from tomorrow. along with your 2500 /- Per Month. @RoshanKrRaii

# **Delhi Cabinet approves Ayushman Bharat scheme**

New Delhi, Feb 20: The BJP formed its government in Delhi Thursday after more than 26 years, with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and her six ministers being sworn in at the Ramlila Ground and the new Cabinet approved the implementation of Avushman Bharat Yojana in its first meeting.

Addressing a press conference soon after the Cabinet meeting, the Chief Minister announced allocation of portfolios among the newly appointed ministers and said that 14 pending CAG reports will be tabled in the first session of the Delhi Assembly.

While Gupta has kept with her finance, services, vigilance, revenue, and women and child development, among other departments, her Cabinet colleague Parvesh Verma has been allotted PWD, water, legislative affairs, irrigation and flood control, and gurdwara elections portfolios. Ashish Sood got home, power, education, and urban development, among other departments.

After being administered the oath, Gupta, the first-time legislator from Shalimar Bagh, said that not a single day will be wasted in realising the mission of "Viksit Delhi" and assured that the new BJP government will fulfil all the promises made to people of the national capital.

The swearing-in ceremony at the sprawling Ramlila Ground was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the top BJP brass and NDA leaders. Gupta is Delhi's fourth woman Chief Minister after her party's Sushma Swaraj, Congress' Sheila Dikshit and AAP's Atishi.

The 50-year-old Chief Minister, who took charge of her office at the Delhi Secretariat in the afternoon, is also the only woman in the NDA team

**Addressing a press** conference soon after the Cabinet meeting. the Chief Minister announced allocation of portfolios among the newly appointed ministers and said that 14 pending CAG reports will be tabled in the first session of

the Delhi Assembly

of chief ministers and the second in the country after TMC supremo Mamata Baneriee in West Bengal. The former student leader presides over an all-male cabinet that includes giant slayer Parvesh Verma, who defeated Arvind Keiriwal in the elections, Hindutva poster boy Kapil Mishra and BJP's Sikh face Manjinder Singh Sirsa. Besides, Ashish Sood, Ravinder Indraj Singh and Pankaj Singh were also administered the oath of office by Lt Governor V K Saxena.

At her first presser, Gupta said the previous AAP government did not allow the Avusman Bharat scheme in the city, preventing the people from availing its benefits. During his election rallies for the February 5 Assembly polls, Prime Min-

ister Modi had promised that the central health insurance scheme would be approved in the first Cabinet meeting if the BJP formed its government in Delhi. She has kept a total of 10 portfolios, the highest among her Cabinet ministers, with finance, services, vigilance, revenue, women and child development among other

The CM said that her Cabinet colleague Parvesh Verma was given charge of PWD, water. legislative affairs, irrigation and flood control, while Ashish Sood got home, power, urban development and education portfolios. Kapil Mishra got law and justice, labour and employment, and tourism, while his Cabinet colleague Manjinder Singh Sirsa received industries, forest and environment, food and supply departments.

Pankaj Singh was allocated health, transport and information technology departments, while Ravinder Indraj got social welfare, SC & ST welfare, cooperative and elections.

The Mahila Samriddhi Yojna promising ₹2,500 per month to eligible women every month was also discussed in the Cabinet meeting, the Chief Minister said, adding that further discussion on the scheme was required as the payments to the women can not be done without putting in place a system for their registration.

#### Lokayukta police files 11K page final report to court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 20: The Karnataka Lokayukta Police submitted a 11,000 page final report in the MUDA site allotment case to the court Thursday.

The development came a day after the clean chit given to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah by the Lokayukta police was officially made public. Lokavukta police have submitted the 11,000 page final report to the Special Court that exclusively deals with criminal cases related to former and incumbent MPs/MLAs in Bengaluru, a senior official told PTI. Siddaramaiah is facing

allegations of illegalities in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA)

allotting 14 sites to his wife Parvathi B M.

**MUDA** 

**CASE** 

Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law B M Mallikarjun Swamy, Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others were named in the FIR registered by the Lokayukta police establishment located in Mysuru September 27 after the special court gave an order to this effect.

The FIR was registered based on a complaint filed by RTI activist Snehamavi Krishna On Wednesday in a notice to Snehamayi Krishna, the Lokayukta police had said that they conducted the investigation and the allegations against the first four accused have not been proven due to lack of evidence, and they are submitting the final report to the court.

The notice stated that the Lokavukta police have found that the case was civil in nature, not fit for investigation, a case of misinterpretation of law or facts, and not fit for

#### **MANIPUR CRISIS**

# Guv urges people to deposit looted illegal weapons



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

However,

la asserted

Imphal, Feb 20: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has urged the people of the strife-torn state to voluntarily surrender looted and illegally held weapons within seven days, assuring no punitive action would be initiated against those giving up arms during this period.

Bhal-

"strict action" would be taken after the expiry of the seven days. "People of Manipur, both in the valley and hills, have suffered ACCORDING TO A NOTIFICATION SSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS immense hardship for the last over 20 months due to a series of unfortunate incidents affecting peace and communal harmony," he said in an appeal issued Thursday. He said all communities in the state must come forward to ensure cessation of hostilities and

maintenance of peace and or-

der in the society so that people

can return to their normal day-

to-day activities. "It is in this

regard that I sincerely request

the people of all communities,

particularly the youths in the

valley and hills to voluntari ly come forward and surrender looted and illegally held weapons and ammunition to the nearest police station/outpost/ security forces camp within next seven days, effective from today," he said.

The governor said this single act of returning weapons can be a powerful gesture towards ensuring peace. "I want

> action would be initiated such weapons are turned within the stipulated time. Thereafter, strict ac tion will be taken for possession of

to assure you that

punitive

such weapons," he said. The Centre had imposed President's rule in Manipur February 13, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh re signed from his post led to political uncertainty in the northeastern state. The Manipur Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of

#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### Minor girl physically assaulted at madrasa

Bangalore: A 11-year-old girl has been physically assaulted by a man at a madrasa here, police said Thursday. The incident that occurred February captured by the CCTV cameras installed inside the madrasa, they added. The victim's mother, in her complaint lodged Wednesday, alleged that her daughter was admitted to the 5th class in the Madrasa and its hostel in July 2024. Mohammad Hasan, son of the hostel incharge, would frequently visit the hostel, police said.

#### Passenger detained for bomb remark

Kochi: A passenger who jokingly responded that his luggage contained a 'bomb' when an airport security official questioned about its weight, has been booked, police said Thursday. Kochi International Airport security officials handed over Rasheed, a native of Kozhikode, to Nedumbassery police following the incident that occurred around 11.30 pm Wednesday. The security officer inquired about the weight of Rasheed's luggage after he completed boarding procedures for a flight from Kochi to Kuala Lumpur. In response, Rasheed remarked that it was a bomb, prompting officials to take immediate action and alert the police.

#### Cops summon **Goa AAP chief**

Panaji: Police have summoned Goa Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) president Amit Palekar Friday in connection with a video released by a man accused in multiple land grab cases who escaped from cop custody, but was arrested later. The Old Goa police Thursday issued summons to Palekar and asked him to appear before them on at 11 am for questioning.

#### SNIPPETS

#### Police receive threat to blow up Shinde's car

MUMBAI: Mumbai police Thursday received mails threatening to blow up Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's car, an official said. According to the official, mails threatening to bomb Shinde's car were received at Goregaon and J I Marg police stations in the morning, after which a probe began in the case, "The IP address of the sender is being tracked. All angles are being probed," the official informed. A senior Mumbai police official had earlier said a threat call had been received. The opposition parties, meanwhile, attacked the state government over the law and order situation. A threat to Shinde has created doubt among people law and order exists in the country, The deputy CM must be given appropriate security, Patil added.

#### Shah asks Northeast insurgents to surrender

**NEW DELHI:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday appealed to insurgents in the Northeast to lay down their arms and join the mainstream saying their participation in India's development journey is most welcome. Participating in the 'Unity Utsav - One Voice, One Nation' organised by the Assam Rifles here, Shah also said everyone knows that the Northeast wants peace and development and the region wants to work as an integral part of the country. "I appeal to all those insurgents who have not surrendered yet to lay down the arms and join the mainstream. Your participation in India's development journey is welcome," he said.

#### **Mob attacks Assam Congress MP Rakibul**

**GUWAHATI:** Congress MP Rakibul Hussain and his personal security officers (PSOs) were attacked by a mob in Assam's Nagaon district Thursday, prompting Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to announce that the Opposition leader's security will be beefed up while he is in the district. Hussain, who represents Assam's Dhubri constituency in the Lok Sabha, is unhurt but his two PSOs sustained minor injuries, a police officer said. The state Congress demanded 'immediate arrest of those involved in the attack. Hussain was on his way to attend a party meeting at Gunomari village under Rupohi police station on a two-wheeler when he was attacked with cricket bats by a group of people who had their faces covered with black cloth and were shouting slogans against the MP, police said.



Tourists at Solang Valley amid fresh snowfall in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh

# WHO identifies encephalitis as increasing global threat

New Delhi, Feb 20: The World Health Organization and Encephalitis International have launched a critical Technical Brief on encephalitis which identified the infectious and autoimmune disease as an increasing global threat, making it an urgent public health priority.

The Technical Brief outlines the worldwide burden of encephalitis, key actions required to improve prevention, data collection and surveillance, diagnostics and treatment, aftercare and awareness, and research innovation.

"Encephalitis is an increasing global threat. Without urgent attention and investment, we will see more needless deaths and disabilities from the condition," said Dr Ava Easton,

the chief executive of Encephalitis International.

Encephalitis, caused by infectious and autoimmune factors, is an often-deadly brain inflammation that can affect anyone regardless of age, sex or ethnicity. It can lead to severe neuro-

permanent brain injury. It arises either from an infection invading the brain, such as Japanese Encephalitis and Scrub Typhus which are more

logical consequences, including

global threat. Without urgent attention and investment, we will see more needless deaths and disabilities from the condition DR AVA EASTON I

Encephalitis is an increasing

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF **ENCEPHALITIS INTERNATIONAL** 

prevalent in India or from the immune system mistakenly attacking the brain. According to a survey in 2024, as many as 1,548 Japanese Encephalitis cases were reported from 24 states and Union Territories

in the country WHO and Encephalitis International urged policymakers, public health professionals, healthcare providers, and researchers to implement its recommendations to save lives and reduce disability associat-

ed with encephalitis.

"WHO's recognition of encephalitis as a growing global threat marks a pivotal moment. We must act decisively to improve prevention, diagnosis, and care for those affected. Encephalitis disproportionately affects individuals in low-tomiddle-income countries, where healthcare resources are often limited," Dr Easton said.

The technical brief aims to focus attention on the increasing global threat of the disease, prevention strategies and existing gaps in the diagnosis, treatment and care which will help enable more people affected to receive the treatment and care they need to live fulfilling and healthy lives, said Dr Tarun Dua, Brain Health Unit, Department of Mental Health, Brain Health and Substance Use.

#### **Govt extends CEA V Anantha** Nageswaran's term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: The government Thursday extended the tenure of Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran for two years till March 2027.

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the tenure of Nag eswaran on a contract basis up to March 31, 2027. With the approval of ACC, the tenure of V Anantha Nageswaran as Chief Economic Adviser on contract basis is extended up to March 31, 2027, or until further order whichever is earlier, an office

order said. Nageswaran assumed charge of the CEA January 28, 2022, for a three-year term. The office of CEA is responsible for giving advice to the government on various economic policies and drafting the Economic Survey which is tabled in Parliament a

Nageswaran, an academic and former executive with Credit Suisse Group AG and Julius Baer Group, succeeded K V Subramanian. His extension comes weeks after the Economic Survey 2024-25 projected a growth of 6.3-6.8 per cent for the next financial year amid Asia's third-largest economy showing signs of moderation.

day ahead of the Union Budget

As per the government's advance estimates, the economy is expected to grow at 6.4 per cent in the current financial year. Prior to taking over as CEA. Nageswaran worked as an author, teacher and consul tant. He has also been a parttime member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister from 2019 to 2021.



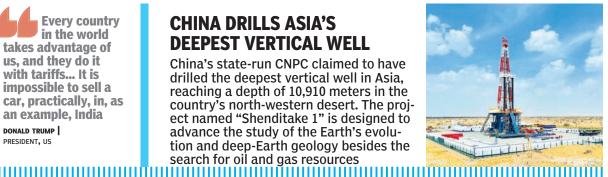
# international



**Every country** in the world takes advantage of us, and they do it with tariffs... It is impossible to sell a car, practically, in, as an example, India DONALD TRUMP

#### **CHINA DRILLS ASIA'S DEEPEST VERTICAL WELL**

China's state-run CNPC claimed to have drilled the deepest vertical well in Asia, reaching a depth of 10,910 meters in the country's north-western desert. The project named "Shenditake 1" is designed to advance the study of the Earth's evolution and deep-Earth geology besides the search for oil and gas resources



reached between the government of the government of India to establish solar power plants capacity of 50 Megawatt (stage 1) and 70 Megawatt (stage

NALINDA JAYATHISSA | OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN AND HEALTH MINISTER, SRI LANKA

**UK's support** matters indeed, and we will never forget the respect the **British people have** shown for Ukraine and our citizens



good conver sation with FM @VivianBala of Singapore, this time in Johan

sidelines of G20 FMM. Discussed the state of the world and our work in furthering bilateral ties

S IAISHANKAD I EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

#### **SHORT TAKES**

#### S Korea, US conduct combined exercise

Seoul: The US and South Korean militaries conducted an aerial exercise involving at least one US B-1B bomber and multiple fighter jets in the allies' first joint air force drill of President Donald Trump's second term. Seoul's Defence Ministry said South Korean F-35 and F-15 fighter lets and American F-16s were involved in the exercise over the Korean Peninsula, but it didn't specify how many. The training was conducted to demonstrate the US deterrence capabilities against North Korean nuclear and missile threats and improve interoperability between South Korean and US forces, the ministry said in a statement.

#### Indian deportees from **US arrive in Panama**

Panama City: Panama has safe arrival of a group of Indians deported from the US and the Indian mission in the country is working closely with the host government to ensure their wellbeing after obtaining consular access to them. The Embassy of India in Panama, Costa Rica & Nicaragua took to X Thursday to share the information but did not provide data on the number of Indians arriving in Panama. The group of Indians is part of a larger group of 299 migrants sent to Panama by the US government. These people arrived in the country on three flights last week after President Jose Raul Mulino agreed that Panama would become a "bridge" country

#### Rubio visits UAE

Abu Dhabi: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met Wednesday with the leader of the United Arab Emirates. wrapping up an overseas trip that saw the highestlevel outreach between the United States and Russia since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Rubio's talk with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zaved Al Nahvan, also the ruler of Abu Dhabi, comes as the US also tries to continue a shaky ceasefire in the Gaza Strip between Israel and the militant Hamas group. The UAE, which diplomatically recognised Israel in 2020 during President Donald Trump's first term, also has been key in mediating prisoner swaps between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Sheikh Mohammed

# uote NASA lowers asteroid 2024 YR4's impact risk

The asteroid 2024 YR4, estimated to be 130 to 300 feet wide. was first discovered **December 27, 2024** 

Asteroid 2024 YR4's chances of hitting the Earth have dropped to 1.5 per cent from 3.1 per cent days ago, NASA has confirmed. NASA said the 3.1 per cent probability was the highest the agency ever recorded for an asteroid of this size or more. It may hit the planet after seven years, in 2032.

The asteroid, estimated to be 130 to 300 feet wide, was first discovered December 27, 2024. It drew astronomers' attention when it appeared on the NA-

SA automated Sentry risk list December 31, 2024. While the initial risk of the asteroid was concerning, it has now dimin-

What's being done about Asteroid 2024 YR4

The astronomers are regularly monitoring the situation to improve the understanding of where 2024 YR4 could be December 22, 2032. They also highlighted the importance of gathering data to determine the future risk to the planet. The US Space Agency said the impact probability will most likely change when further observations of the asteroid are made in the following days.

In an X post, NASA said, "New observations of asteroid 2024 YR4 helped us update its chance of impact in 2032. The



current probability is 1.5 per cent. Our understanding of the asteroid's path improves with every observation.'

NASA further said that the probability of the asteroid hitting Earth is likely to drop to zero. "For the impact probability to drop to zero, the Earth would need to fall outside of the range of potential locations of

asteroid 2024 YR4 Dec 22, 2032,' it added. There is also a smaller chance that the 2024 YR4 could impact the Moon, where the probability is estimated to be around 0.8 per cent. The space rock will be so far away by April 2025 that it will be difficult to detect by Earth-based telescopes, and the updates will not be possible until 2028, the

What could happen if Asteroid 2024 YR4 hits Earth

The amount of damage caused by an asteroid is influenced by its size and composition. While the actual size of the asteroid 2024 YR4 is still unknown, an airburst is a likely option given its size range. If this enters the atmosphere above the ocean, studies show that air-bursting objects of this size are unlikely to create substantial tsunamis. In 2027, NASA also plans to launch a mission to help discover unknown asteroids.

Experts say that an object of this size is not a threat to the entire planet, but it may cause massive damage if it hits a big city and may unleash an energy equivalent to 8 megatons of TNT.

#### SK's Yoon attends first trial hearing for insurrection

Seoul, Feb 20: South Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol appeared in a Seoul court Thursday for his first trial hear ing on charges of insurrection in the country's first criminal prosecution of an incumbent

Last month prosecutors indicted Yoon after accusing him of leading an insurrection with his short-lived imposition of martial law December 3.

A justice ministry motor cade took Yoon from the Seoul Detention Centre, where he is being held, to the court, outside which were parked lines of police buses to ensure security.

Prosecutors called for swift proceedings considering the gravity of the case, but Yoon's lawyers said they needed more time to review records. The court also heard a bid by Yoon's lawyers to cancel his detention, saying the matter had been investigated in an illegal manner and that there was no risk of Yoon trying to destroy evidence

It was unclear when the cour would rule on the detention, but a judge set the next hearing of the criminal case for March 24

After the criminal case, Yoor

also attended Thursday afternoon a parallel impeachment trial by the Constitutional Court that has entered its final phase. The court's acting chief justice Moon Hyung-bae said Thursday that the next hearing will be held February 25, during which Yoon and the parliament, which is presenting the case against him, will give final remarks.

# Zelenskyy calls for **US** pragmatism

Kyiv, Feb 20: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he was counting on unity at home and in Europe as well as pragmatism from Washington, striking a conciliatory tone after US President Donald Trump gave him a public scolding.

Trump said Wednesday that Zelenskyy was a "dictator without elections" who should act quickly to secure peace or lose his country. It was hitherto unthinkable rhetoric from a US leader given Washington's role as a key ally of Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion three years ago

The US president is pushing for a quick deal to end the Ukraine war and has alarmed Washington's European allies by leaving them and Ukraine out of initial talks with Russia and blaming Ukraine for the February 2022 invasion.

European leaders have responded by pledging to step up spending on defence and some are considering a US-backed European peacekeeping force for Ukraine, a plan the Kremlin says is a major cause for concern but which Zelenskyy has welcomed.

"We are standing strong on our own two feet. I am counting on Ukrainian unity, our courage on the unity of Europe and the pragmatism of America," Zelenskyy told Ukrainians in

tone after war of words

■ Trump envoy Kellogg to meet Zelenskyv later Thursday

US seeks quick outline deal on minerals, sources say

Kremlin alarmed by reports of European peacekeeping force

his video address late Wednesday. "Because America needs success just as much as we do," he added. Zelenskyy told Ukrainians

that he would be meeting visiting US envoy for Russia and Ukraine Keith Kellogg Thursday and said it was crucial that both that meeting, and cooperation with Washington in general, were "constructive". Trump is seeking to reestab-

lish ties with Russia and also invest in Ukraine's resources of minerals critical to the energy transition. Ukraine rejected an initial US plan as it did not entail security guarantees and Zelenskyy accused Trump Wednesday of repeating Russian disinformation about the war.

White House national security adviser Mike Waltz said on Thursday that Ukraine should rein in its criticism of the United States and agree the minerals deal.

'They need to tone it down and take a hard look and sign that deal," he told Fox News.

#### top European diplomats at G20 meeting in SA ASSOCIATED PRESS Johannesburg, Feb 20: Rus-

**Russia's Lavrov joins** 

sian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived in South Africa Thursday for a two-day meeting of the Group of 20 nations, where top European diplomats are expected to reinforce their support for Ukraine and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is a high-profile absentee.

Lavrov travelled to Johannesburg for the G20 foreign ministers' meeting two days after landmark bilateral talks between the United States and Russia over ending the war in Ukraine. Those talks sidelined the US' European allies and Ukraine, who were not involved US President Donald Trump further upended the West's po sition by criticising Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and falsely blaming Ukraine for the war, which marks its third anniversary next week.

Rubio decided not to attend the G20 meeting amid tensions with South Africa over some of its policies that the Trump administration has condemned as anti-American.

# Hamas hands over bodies of youngest Gaza hostages **Red Cross vehicles drove away from the handover site in the Gaza Strip**

with four black coffins that had been placed on a stage

Jerusalem, Feb 20: Hamas handed over the bodies Thursday of Israeli infant Kfir Bibas and his four-year-old brother Ariel, the two youngest captives taken by Hamas in their October 7, 2023 attack and among the most potent symbols of the trauma inflicted that day. Red Cross vehicles drove

away from the handover site in the Gaza Strip with four black coffins that had been placed on a stage. Each of the caskets had a small picture of the hostages. Armed Hamas militants in

black and camouflage uniforms surrounded the area. United Nations rights chief

Volker Turk called the parading of bodies in Gaza abhorrent and cruel and said it flew in the face of international law. "Under international law.

any handover of the remains of deceased must comply with the prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, ensuring respect for the dignity of the deceased and their families", he said in a statement. After the hostages were

handed over by the Red Cross, the coffins were scanned for explosives, according to the military, before being transported to Israel.

Israelis lined the road in the rain near the Gaza border to pay their respects as the convoy carrying the coffins drove by.

"We stand here together, with a broken heart, the sky is also crying with us and we pray to see better days," said one woman, who gave her name only as Efrat.

In Tel Aviv, people gathered, some weeping, at what has

nation 'in tatters,' President Herzog says

Prospects for deal on further hostage releases

come to be known as Hostages Square outside Israel's defence headquarters

"Agony. Pain. There are no words. Our hearts — the hearts of an entire nation — lie in tatters," said President Isaac Herzog.

One militant stood beside a

poster of a man standing over coffins wrapped in Israeli flags. Instead of legs he had tree roots in the ground, suggesting the land belongs to Palestinians. The poster read "The Return of the War=The Return of your Prisoners in Coffins".

The two boys, their mother Shiri Bibas and a fourth hostage, Oded Lifschitz, were handed over under the Gaza ceasefire agreement reached last month with the backing of the United States and the mediation of Qatar and Egypt.

The Red Cross Wednesday urged the handover be kept dignified. The Hamas-directed public hostage release ceremonies have come under growing criticism, including from the United Nations, which denounced the "parading of

# In Russia, dozens of dissenters held as psychiatric patients

London, Feb 20: Dozens of Russians are being subjected to compulsory psychiatric treatment because of their political views, according to lawyers and human rights groups - a trend they say has gathered pace since the start of the war in Ukraine. The practice carries echoes of

a method of control used widely in the Soviet Union and known as "punitive psychiatry", even if the current scale falls far short of that seen from the late 1960s until the early 1980s. For this story, Reuters anal-

ysed data from an international expert and two Russian human rights groups, interviewed three lawyers and reviewed case materials of two female activists sent by court order to undergo psychiatric assessments at a Siberian hospital.

The women, whose accounts are reported here in detail for

the first time, were released after a few weeks but described the experience as a scarring ordeal. Yekaterina Fatyanova, 37,

was interned April 28 last year at the KKPND No.1 psychiatric hospital in her home city of Krasnoyarsk after being accused of discrediting the Russian armed forces by publishing an article in a small opposition newspaper she ran in her spare time. She was not the author of the piece, which argued the war in Ukraine was driven by imperialist motives.

While in hospital she was subjected to painful, degrading and unnecessary procedures including a gynaecological examination, she wrote in letters of complaint to authorities, reviewed by Reuters.

Fatyanova was discharged from the hospital May 27 after doctors determined, in a document seen by Reuters, that she had no mental disorders or diseases "I believe that the real pur-

pose of placing me there was moral suppression and isolation from society, possibly as a position," she said.

punishment for my active civic Robert van Voren, a Dutch professor and human rights campaigner who has spent

decades studying what he de-

scribes as the political abuse

of psychiatry in Russia, said he had documented around 23 such cases a year since 2022, when the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, up from an annual average of around 5 between 2015 and 2021 "DISTURBING" SCALE

In the Soviet era, thousands

of dissenters were hospitalised for political reasons, based on the premise that only someone mentally ill would oppose the Rights group records nearly political cases

**」**uman rights groups report Hincrease in cases since

Youngest was investigated as teenager for 'fake news'

omen activists describe Women activists accuming degrading ordeal in clinic

Communist state. Among the best known cases were those of dissident Vladimir Bukovsky and Nobel prize-winning poet Joseph Brodsky.

While far below that scale, the current trend is nonetheless "disturbing," van Voren said in an interview. Reuters has previously reported a revival of other Soviet-era practices during the Ukraine war, including citizen denunciations of suspected dissidents.

In Russia, compulsory treatment "is now again used for political purposes, like it was in the time of the Soviet Union,' he said.

Russian rights group Memorial has identified 48 people it says are currently undergoing such treatment in politically motivated cases. Of those, 46 are psychiatric inpatients and two are receiving out-patient treatment while in prison.

The most common charges against them related to criticism of the war. Thirteen of the people had been prosecuted under censorship laws passed shortly after Russia's invasion, the rights group said.

According to Memorial, the youngest person subjected to compulsory psychiatric treat ment for war protests turned 20 in hospital last week. He was investigated as a teenager in 2023 for seeking permission to organise an anti-war rally, and a court ordered his hospitalisation in February last year.



# susiness



India has witnessed a substantial rise in the electricity consumption, reaching 1,543 TWh in 2023-24 (7 per cent increase over last year)

VINAYAK WALIMBE PRESIDENT (INTERIM), IESA

#### **PHONEPE STARTS IPO PREPARATIONS**

India's biggest fintech firm PhonePe has started preparing for its potential initial public offering (IPO) for listing on the country's bourses, the company said Thursday. The company was valued at \$12 billion during its last funding round held in 2023





right time for this brand to grow at scale in India, where we see significant

opportunities to serve a growing population that has begun to travel domestically before venturing overseas KEVIN JACOBS | CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER &

ICRA's interaction with large auto component suppliers indicates that the industry is estimated to spend ₹15.000-20.000 crore in

FY2025 and another ₹25,000-30,000 crore in FY2026 VINUTAA SRIRAMAN | VP AND SECTOR HEAD,

CORPORATE RATINGS, ICRA



bridging skill gaps, and fostering innovation through technology and global partnerships. A multi-pronged, tech-driven approach will be key to unlocking inclusive and

sustainable growth SANGEETA GUPTA

#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### PNB cuts retail loans rates by 25 bps

New Delhi: State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) Thursday announced reduction in interest rates by up to 25 basis points on retail loans, including housing and auto loans, following the RBI rate cut. The revised rates apply to a wide range of products, including home loans, car loans, education and personal loans, ensuring that customers continue to receive diverse financing options, PNB said in a statement. After a gap of five years, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced the reno rate, the rate at which banks borrow from the central bank. by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent February 7. Following the rate cut, PNB has revised the home loan rate to 8.15 per cent under various schemes

#### Adani touts cash to reassure investors

New Delhi: Adani Group Thursday said it has enough cash to service debt obligations and that its business achieved record pre-tax profits in the 12 months ending December 2024 as it looked to reassure creditors and investors of a robust business profile. Cash balances exceed long-term debt repayments for the next 28 months, while portfolio-level cash balances were at ₹53,024 crore, the port-to-power conglomerate said in a report for the first nine months of the financial year ending March 2025 released Thursday. The cash balance as of September 30, 2024, compared with the ₹59,791 crore balance generated in the full 2023-24 financial year (April 2023 to March 2024 or FY24 fiscal).

### GDP growth to slow

to 6.4%: Moody's New Delhi: Moody's Analytics Thursday said India's growth will slow to 6.4 per cent in 2025, from 6.6 per cent in 2024, as new US tariffs and softening global demand weigh on exports. In its report titled 'Asia-Pacific Outlook: Chaos Ahead', Moody's Analytics said growth across the Asia-Pacific economy will slow in 2025 as trade tensions, policy shifts, and uneven recoveries knock the region's fortunes. "Growth across the region will slow as new tariffs and softening global demand weigh on exports," it said.

# Vedanta gets demerger nod GOLD PRICES

The conglomerate's shareholders, creditors clear path for five-way split

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Vedanta Ltd Thursday said its shareholders and lenders have approved the splitting of the metals to oil conglomerate into five independent, sector-focused entities

In a stock exchange filing, Vedanta said 99.99 per cent of shareholders who voted for the demerger scheme, supported the move. Parallelly, 99.59 per cent of

the secured creditors, and 99.95 per cent of unsecured creditors of Vedanta Ltd voted in favour of the demerger. Mining tycoon Anil Agarwal

launched the plan to overhaul the business in 2023 after failing to take Vedanta private in 2020. The five entities being cre-

ated from the split would include Vedanta Ltd, which would house the company's base metals. According to Vedanta's de-

merger scheme, every Vedanta shareholder will receive 1 additional share in each of the 4 newly demerged companies on the completion of the demerger process. The other companies that

will be created out of the demerger are Vedanta Aluminium, one of the world's largest producers of aluminium; Vedanta Oil & Gas, India's largest private-sector crude oil producer; Vedanta Power, one of India's largest generators of power; Vedanta Iron and Steel - a company with a highly scalable ferrous portfolio; and Vedanta Limited - which will in-



The other companies that will be created out of the demerger are Vedanta Aluminium, one of the world's largest producers of aluminium; Vedanta Oil & Gas, India's largest private-sector crude oil producer; Vedanta Power, one of India's largest generators of power; Vedanta Iron and Steel - a company with a highly scalable ferrous portfolio; and Vedanta Limited - which will include the world's second largest integrated zinc producer and third largest silver producer - in Hindustan Zinc.

clude the world's second largest integrated zinc producer and third largest silver producer in Hindustan Zinc.

Vedanta Ltd will also act as an incubator for new businesses, including Vedanta's technology verticals.

Of the 391.03 crore shares of the company, 324.58 crore or 83 per cent, voted on the demerger scheme. Of these, all but 42,186 shares were polled in favour of the demerger, according to the filing.

As per Vedanta's demerger scheme, the demerger will create five independent companies of a global scale focussed

on the mining, production and/or supply of aluminium, iron-ore, copper, oil & gas, and on generation and distribution of power.

It will enable greater focus of the Vedanta management on the relevant businesses thereby allowing further streamlining of operations and more efficient usage of assets and leveraging of opportunities.

Similarly, the demerger scheme has emphasised that over time, each of the independent companies can attract different sets of investors, strategic partners, lenders, and other

**BSE SENSEX** 

#### Valuation **jumps** Shares of Vedanta Ltd Thursday

climbed nearly 3 per cent after the firm's demerger announcement. The company's market valuation jumped ₹3,969.04 crore to ₹1,69,534.87 crore. The stock advanced 2.40 per cent to settle at ₹433.55 on the BSE. Intra-day, it rallied 2.85 per cent to ₹435.50. At the NSE, it climbed 2.79 per cent to ₹435.35.

collaboration and expansion in these specific companies without committing the existing organisation in its entirety.

The demerger will enable investors to separately hold investments in businesses with different investment characteristics and market potential thereby allowing them to select investments which best suit their investment strategies and risk profiles.

As per Vedanta's demerger scheme, it will also enable for cused and sharper capital market access (debt and equity), thereby unlocking the value of the demerged entities.

Vedanta Ltd currently operates a diversified portfolio with interests in metals, mining, oil and gas, power generation, and other emerging sectors. As listed companies have to

seek various approvals under relevant sectoral and capital market regulations, the proposed demerger scheme will remain subject to receipt of other applicable statutory, government and regulatory approvals, including inter alia from the National Company

#### **SAFE-HAVEN DEMAND**

# STAY AT PEAK

The yellow metal gains to hit fresh all-time high of ₹89,450 per 10 gm, silver rallies ₹700

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Gold prices hit a fresh high of ₹89,450 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, advancing ₹50 amid firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at ₹89,400 per 10 grams Wednesday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity went up ₹50 to establish a record of ₹89,050 per 10 grams.

President Trump stated Wednesday that he would impose tariffs on timber, vehicles, semiconductors, and pharmaceuticals over the next month or sooner.

Silver prices also climbed

from ₹99,600 per kg in the previous market close.

Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for April delivery jumped ₹500 to ₹86,410 per 10 grams.

According to experts, the yellow metal futures increased amid reports that President Trump stated that a trade agreement with China would be possible.

The geopolitical worries arise after Trump said Ukraine initiated the conflict with Russia and hinted that it was time to reimburse the US for all the money it had given.

The news fuelled market fears that Trump's trade tariffs policy could spark a global trade war, boosting safe-haven gold prices

SAUMIL GANDHI | SENIOR ANALYST (COMMODITIES), HDFC SECURITIES

#### **GOLD & SILVER** 1kg = ₹1,00,300\* 10g = ₹89,450\* ₹99,600 ₹99,000 GOLD 10g 1kg Feb 20 Feb 20

#### L&T to set up alumina refinery in Odisha



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Larsen & Toubro Thursday said it has secured a large order from Hindalco for setting up an 850 KTPA (kilo tonne per annum) greenfield alumina refinery plant in Odisha.

The order has been secured by its Minerals & Metals (M&M) business vertical, Larsen & Toubro (L&T) said in an exchange filing.

According to the company's classification, a large order ranges between ₹2,500 crore and ₹5.000 crore.

The scope of work includes engineering, manufacturing, supply, construction & installation in collaboration with reputed technology providers.

L&T's M&M vertical offers world-class end-to-end solutions in the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) domain across sectors such as mining, minerals processing, industrial products and material handling

# Indices fall for 3rd straight session

**FEBRUARY 20, 2025** 

In the three straight days to Thursday, **Sensex dipped 260** points while Nifty skidded 46 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai. Feb 20: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined for the third day Thursday as fresh tariff threats, weak Asian markets and foreign fund outflows hurt investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 203.22 points or 0.27 per cent to settle at 75,735.96. During the day, it tanked 476.17 points or 0.62 per cent to 75,463.01.

The NSE Nifty dipped 19.75 points or 0.09 per cent to

Selling in frontline stocks HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, ITC and Maruti dragged down the kev indices.

Broader markets, however, bucked the trend with midcap and smallcap indices gaining

more than 1 per cent. From the Sensex pack, HDFC Bank fell the most by 2.35 per cent. Maruti, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, ITC, ICICI Bank,

CHANGE: -203.22 (-0.27%) Today's Closing 75,939.18 75,735.96 M&M +3.01% -1.91% TOP ADANI PORTS +2.85% -1.69% GAINERS LOSERS

Kotak Mahindra Bank and Bajaj Finance were among the major laggards. NTPC, Adani Ports, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel and IndusInd Bank were among the gainers

+1.58%

+1.33%

•

TATA STEEL

TATA MOTORS

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹3.311.55 crore on net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data.

"Benchmark indices closed slightly lower on expiry day after a rangebound and volatile session. The FOMC minutes hinted that the US Federal Reserve might pause rate cuts due to inflation concerns, Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

Among BSE sectoral

-1.33%

indices, bankex dropped 0.50 per cent, followed by financial services (0.25 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.10 per cent) and FMCG (0.04 per cent). Power jumped the most 2.19 per cent, followed by utilities (2.17 per cent), metal (2.02 per cent), services (1.86 per cent), oil & gas (1.66 per cent) and industrials (1.55 per cent). The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.32 per cent and midcap index climbed

**Domestic equity indices** experienced minor losses as rising concerns over potential **US tariffs on Indian goods** led to capital outflows. Additionally, the proposed

trade policy is expected to exert inflationary pressures, with the latest Fed Minutes indicating that an interest rate cut may be delayed GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

1.18 per cent.

Weak Asian market cues kept the mood sluggish with a negative bias through the session in the domestic market as investors continue to trade with caution. FIIs exiting Indian equities in droves over past few months have been making investors jittery, thus leading to risk averseness," Prashanth

Tapse, Senior VP (Research),

Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Among Asian markets, Seoul, Tokvo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the negative territory. European markets were trading mostly higher. US markets ended in positive territory Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent

crude went up 0.08 per cent to \$76.10 a barrel

#### **LIQUIDITY IN MARKETS**

#### India leads global private capital exits with \$27.9bn in '24

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 20: Private investors pulled out maximum funds from India when compared to the rest of the world in 2024 as they sold \$27.9 billion via 224 exits in their bid to capitalise on high valuations and ample liquidity in public mar kets, according to a report from Global Private Capital Associa-

tion (GPCA) Public market exits accounted for \$19.1 billion, the highest

since 2008. Notable exits in 2024 include EQT and Temasek selling O2 Power to JSW Neo Energy for \$1.5 billion, Swiggy raising \$1.3 billion via IPO and providing exits to 360 ONE, Alpha Wave Global, Kotak, Amansa Capita and others, Advent International selling Bharat Serums to Mankind Pharma, Vishal Megamart raising \$943m via IPO providing exits to Kedaara Capital and Partners Group and Blackstone exiting Mphasis

via block trade for \$806m. According to GPCA India's exit performance outpaced Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) which recorded \$11.9 billion in exits, and the West Asia where exits totalled \$4 billion.

Despite the robust exit activitv. private capital investment in India declined 17 per cent year on-year to \$22.7 billion in 2024, in contrast to other global markets The slowdown was primarily driven by weaker infrastructure and private credit deals though venture capital bucked the trend, rising 37 per cent to \$10 billion, stated the report.

The consumer goods & ser vices and financial services sectors saw heightened inves tor interest, growing 39 per cent and 73 per cent year-on-year respectively. Large financing rounds for e-commerce delivery services such as Zepto, lenders such as HDFC Credila, and Shriram Finance contributed to this momentum.

Meanwhile, fundraising for India also dipped 7.4 per cent to \$8.7 billion, across 65 funds, with private equity being the only asset class to experience growth.

# derscoring the urgent need for

Mumbai, Feb 20: Home ownership, entrepreneurship and financial independence are the top three long-term goals of Indian millennials, according to

More than 41 per cent of millennials surveyed aspire to own a house and are under the age of 30, the study based on 'Fibe-Millennial Upgrade Index' stated.

Single women indicated greater ambitions of buying a house compared to single men, it said

The study was conducted among 8,000 individuals across metros and non-metros. The majority of the respondents (47 per cent) were below 30 years old, followed by 26 per cent from 30-35 years of age, 14 per cent from the 35-40 years age group, and



13 per cent are above the age of

Around 21 per cent of individuals surveyed aim to start or grow their business, and 19 per cent wish to become financially independent in the long term, the study said.

On the other hand, professional growth, buying a new gadget or vehicle, and personal improvement such as dental treatments, eye surgery, and getting fitter top the charts among short term goals of millennials, the study found.

indicated that they would seek credit from financial institutions to fulfill short-term aspirations, valuing accessibility, convenience, flexibility, and addressing immediate financial gaps

AKSHAY MEHROTRA co-founder & ceo, fibe

Millennials in metros are more concerned about securing a better job due to increased competition, with 60 per cent of metro respondents indicating it as a key goal

Fibe's co-founder & CEO Akshay Mehrotra said, "Our study uncovers their vibrant aspirations alongside the formidable challenges they encounter, un-

On major barriers, 35 per cent of millennials indicated other family expenses taking priority, and 15 per cent cited a lack of long-term financial planning as a hurdle.

tailored financial solutions.

Around 39 per cent of respondents said they would save up and plan finances strategically, 21 per cent would explore other sources of income, and 29 per cent would seek credit to meet their long-term goals.

The study shows the urgent need for tailored financial solutions and how the company remains committed to educate these youngsters on responsible borrowing practices so that they can confidently pursue their dreams while managing their credit profile.

# Home ownership, starting biz top goals of millennials

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facing 10 balls.

Though

over-watchful

Virat Kohli

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of

Shami impresses

India also found

another shining shard

of positive in Shami's

Shami also eased

a lot of worries over

the absence of in-

jured pace ace Jas-

prit Bumrah with

a five for 53 effort,

and during the spell

he also became the

fastest Indian bowler to

reach 200 ODI wickets.

# GIII stands strong india Eye consistency

The vice captain's classy 100, Shami's fivewicket haul power India to 6-wicket win over Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Feb 20: Shubman Gill was more artisan than artist en route to his eighth ODI hundred after Mohammed Shami's satisfying five-wicket haul, propelling India to a workmanlike six-wicket win over Bangladesh in their Champions Trophy opener here Thursday.

Gill's unbeaten innings (101, 129b, 9x4. 2x6) had a mirror image in Bangladesh innings through Towhid Hridoy's 100 (118b) that lifted them to 228 from the depths of 35 for five after batting by choice.

But India negated various pressure points, including a sluggish surface, during their chase effectively through Gill's knock full of substance, and ended up at 231 for four in 46.3

It's also a nerve-settling victory for India ahead of their much-awaited clash against a more accomplished Pakistan at the same venue February 23.

Gill, the world's No 1 ODI batter, played a massive role in it, dishing out a century which was more remarkable for its restraint than the customary flair.

It was also a reflection of his growing stature as India's new generation batting star.

Chasing a modest 229, openers Rohit Sharma (41, 36b) and Gill gave India a rollicking

added 69 runs in 9.5 overs before Rohit got out to

situation many times before and like I said many times, there's a pacer Taskin Ahmed while lot of experience in that attempting a dressing room to handle that composure where it's needed and KL and mighty heave, ing India at 69 Gill at the end were quite composed

> his stay for 22. Gill and Rahul added 87 runs for the unbroken fifth wicket alliance to carry their side home. Earlier, a cramping Hridoy, who made a courageous maiden ODI hundred and an equally gutsy Ali (68, 114b, 4x4) added 154

We've been in that

for a doughty sixth-wicket stand to give some respectability to

owler to reach 200 ODI

Bangladesh: 228 all out in

48.4 overs (Towhid Hridoy 100,

Jaker Ali 68; Mohammed Shami

India: 231/4 in 46.3 overs

(Shubman Gill 101 not out,

Rohit 41, KL Rahul 41 not out;

5/53), Harshit Rana 3/31)

Rishad Hossain 2/38)

**Brief scores**:

ohit becomes second fastest to complete 11,000 ODI runs

**FIH PRO LEAGUE** 

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: From inconsistent performances to a poor rate of penalty corner conversion, India men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh has plenty to worry when his team takes on Ireland in the FIH Pro League here Friday.

Having ended 2024 on a high following their Paris Olympics bronze-winning show and a bagful of accolades at the FIH annual awards, the Indians are finding it difficult to gather momentum and perform consistently in the ongo-

The hosts opened the tournament with a 1-3 defeat to Spain, bounced back with a 2-0 win against them last weekend but were outplayed 1-4 by Germany.

The team then eked out a 1-0 win over the world No 4 side with Harmanpreet and his deputy Hardik Singh, who missed the first leg against Germany due to injury, returning to the

But as world number five India gear up for the contest against Ireland, ranked five places below the hosts, captain Harmanpreet said being consistent is the way forward.

India's penalty-corner conversion still doesn't instil confidence and continues to be their Achilles' heel, and the captain once again pointed it out ahead of the clash Friday.

The team members also tends to come under pressure the lead as was evident during their 1-3 loss to Spain in the Pro League opener here.

Despite leading by a goal, India was swamped in the last

#### Inconsistent eves look to turn things around

aving registered just one victory in four games so far, an inconsistent Indian women's hockey team will look to turn around its fortunes when it takes on Germany in an FIH Pro League match here Friday. After a challenging start, India is determined to bounce back and collect crucial points to improve their position in the standings. The Salima Tete-led side is currently placed eighth with four points from as many matches. The Indians began their campaign with a thrilling 3-2 win over England but fell short in the second match against the same opponents, losing 1-2 in a shootout after a 2-2 draw in regulation time. In their third game, against Spain, India fought hard but lost 3-4. The script was the same in their next match, where they were edged out 1-0 by Spain. The Indian team has shown flashes of brilliance, but now it will be hoping to find consistency as it gears up for the German challenge.

two quarters when they became ultra-defensive and conceded several penalty corners.

Despite earning 14 penalty corners across four matches, the Indians have yet to convert any of these opportunities into goals. The team did well to bounce back in the second game against the Spaniards, but the

perennial issue resurfaced against Germany.

Historically, India has had the upper hand against the European side, having won seven out of the nine encoun ters between the two teams since 2013. Ireland has managed just one win, while one tie ended in a draw.

#### SHORT **TAKES**

#### India blank Jordan 2-0

Sharjah: India kicked off their Pink Ladies Cup 2025 campaign with a commanding 2-0 victory over Jordan here Thursday. Midfielder Naorem Priyangka Devi (23') and winger Manisha (54') struck in each half to give India their first win with Crispin Chettri as the head coach. Priyangka opened the scoring for India with a longrange strike that caught Jordan's goalkeeper off guard. India nearly doubled their lead soon but Manisha missed from close range. Jordan pressed early after the changeover, but India's defence, led by captain Ngangbam Sweety Devi and voungster Purnima Kumari, stood firm, India capitalised on a counterattack in the second-half when Manisha broke free and finished at the near post.

#### Messi's goal gets **Inter Miami 1-0**

Kansas City: Lionel Messi scored from the right side of the box in the 56th minute to lift Inter Miami past Sporting Kansas City 1-0 on a bitterly cold Wednesday night in the first leg of the CONCACAF Champions Cup's first round. Both teams struggled to find consistency on the hard, slick field for much of the night in front of 15,178 bundled-up fans at Children's Mercy Park, where the game-time temperature was 3 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 16 Celsius) with a wind speed of 9 mph, resulting in a wind chill of minus 11 Fahrenheit (minus 24 Celsius). On his goal, Messi collected a pass from Sergio Busquels, let it fall to his feet, eluded the nearest defender and then fired it past Sporting KC keeper John Pulskamp.

#### **Swiatek loses** to Andreeva

**Dubai:** No 2-ranked Iga Swiatek lost to a player younger than 18 for the first time on tour when she was stunned by Mirra Andreeva in the Dubai Championships quarterfinals on Thursday. The 17-year-old Andreeva won 6-3, 6-3 to become the youngest semifinalist in Dubai's 24-year history. Swiatek took their only previous match last August in Cincinnati, losing the first set and winning 7-5 in the third. She conceded the first again and was a break up in the second, but Andreeva reeled off the last five games. "I was nervous before the match," No 14-ranked Andreeva said. "I told myself I played great in our last match and I just need to keep playing aggressive." It's her fifth win over a top-10 player and second over a No 2 - she beat Aryna Sabalenka in the French Open quarterfinals last year.

### Ex-Spain football boss guilty of sexual assault



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Madrid, Feb 20: Spain's former football federation president, Luis Rubiales, has been found guilty of sexual assault for kissing player Jenni Hermoso without her consent, Spain's High Court ruled. He was fined 10,800 euros but acquitted of coercion charges. The incident occurred as Spain's players received their medals after winning the 2023 Women's World Cup in Sydney when Rubiales grabbed Hermoso's head and kissed her on the lips. The act sparked widespread protests and calls for his resignation.

The court also barred Rubiales from approaching Hermoso within 200 metres or communicating with her for one year.

Three of his former colleagues - World Cup-winning coach Jorge Vilda, ex-RFEF marketing chief Rubén Rivera, and former sporting director Albert Luque - were acquitted of coercion charges. The prosecutors called for a prison sentence for Rubiales, who recently told a court that he was "absolutely sure" Hermoso had consented to the kiss. He described the act as an "affectionate gesture" and claimed it was "completely spontaneous" at the time.

However, in her testimony earlier this month, Hermoso maintained that she had not given her consent, stating that the incident "stained one of the happiest days of my life".

#### NATIONAL PARA ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP



Odisha's Suchitra Parida wins gold in the Women's F55 Javelin event and also creates a new national record with a throw of 18.79m

Odisha's Kamalakanta Nayak clinches silver in the men's F53 Javelin

# Madrid dump City out of UCL

Kylian Mbappé was celebrating a perfect night with Real Madrid, one that included his third Champions League hat-trick and his club securing a spot in the round of 16

London, Feb 20: Kylian Mbappé scored a hat trick, Erling Haaland stayed on the bench injured and Real Madrid dumped Manchester City out of the Champions League Wednesday.

Mbappé's stellar trio of goals in the fourth, 33rd and 61st minutes in a 3-1 win gave Madrid a 6-3 victory on aggregate over the 2023 champion in their twoleg knockout playoff.

"This has been the complete performance — attack, defense, with the ball and without the ball, we showed such high levels of quality," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "Almost the perfect night.'

One superstar striker was watched by another from the sidelines. Haaland was not fit to start for an ultimately overmatched Man City because of a knee injury sustained late in a Premier League game Saturday. Mbappé's first goal of the two-leg playoff in Manchester was a lucky miscue, a looping effort off his shin to level at 1-1

in what ended a 3-2 win. His three goals in Madrid were classy and decisive. A first-time lob over City goalkeeper Ederson - who perhaps advanced too far, too soon was followed by a low shot after leaving defender Joško



I want to play well; I want to mark an era KYLIAN MBAPPÉ STRIKER, REAL MADRID

Gvardiol on the turf.

The third was a powerful left-footer from the edge of the penalty area when he had lured six Man City players toward encircling him.

"I have always said I didn't come here simply to complete a dream," said Mbappé, a boyhood Madrid fan who never won a Champions League at Monaco and PSG.

Coach Pep Guardiola's injury-hit side — with Ballon d'Or

winner Rodri out since September and Kevin De Bruyne now rarely starting — has looked like a shadow of the heavyweight rival that met Madrid in each of the past three seasons, when each time the winner went on to lift the trophy.

The round of 16 is in a new. tennis-like seeded bracket for the knockout stage in the ex-

panded competition format. Madrid, as the 11th-place team in the standings and No 11 seed already knew its next opponent would be Atletico or Leverkusen, who respectively

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD WINTER GAMES** 

#### 49-member contingent to represent India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: India will be represented by a 49-member contingent at the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2025, to be held in Turin, Italy from March 8 to 15.

The contingent includes 30 athletes and 19 support staff, who will be participating across six disciplines -- alpine skiing, cross country skiing, floorball, short-track speed skating, snowboarding and snowshoeing.

The 12th edition of the Special Olympics World Winter Games will feature eight disciplines and are expected to draw over 1,500 athletes, 621 coaches and 1,00,000 spectators from 102 countries.

Additional special programs, including the Special Olympics Global Youth Leadership Summit, Healthy Athletes Screenings, and the Motor Activity Training Program will also be organised for athletes, families and spectators during the event.

India's have bagged 167 medals over the years in these Games, including 73 gold, 49 silver and 45 bronze medals across various disciplines.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Doha, Feb 20: Indian cue sports maestro Pankaj Advani has once again showcased his brilliance on the international stage, capturing an unprecedented 14th gold medal at the Asian Snooker Championship

The triumph comes just days after he won the National Snooker Championship in Indore, proving yet again why he remains the country's most celebrated cueist.

Advani's victory in Doha adds to an already staggering list of accolades. He now holds five Asian snooker titles (across 15-red, 6-reds, and team formats) alongside nine Asian billiards titles, and his two Asian Games gold medals (2006, 2010) further highlight his dominance.

With this latest win, he inches closer to an unprecedented achievement -- winning the National, Asian, and World Snooker Championships in a single calendar year. Having already accomplished this feat in billiards, completing it in snooker would make him the only player in history to do so in both disciplines.

The final against Iran's Amir Sarkhosh was a battle of champions. Sarkhosh, a former Asian and world IBSF 6-red snooker champion, struck



first, seizing an early lead. But Advani, known for his composure under pressure, responded in style.

With breaks of 93 and 66, he took control of the match and never looked back, outclassing his opponent with his signature precision and tactical brilliance

Reflecting on his victory, Advani said, "Winning my 14th Asian title is incredibly special, especially in snooker. It has been a tough tournament and I'm thrilled to add another gold to my collection. I hope to carry this momentum forward

and keep making India proud.

The triumph also further so lidifies his place in cue sports history. As he sets his sights on the World Snooker Championship later in the year, everyone is eagerly watching to see if he can achieve vet another land mark in a glorious career.

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placed fifth and sixth.