



Shruti's idols

Actor Shruti Haasan names the global pop icons she looked up to for her stage performances

LEISURE | P2



Middle East crisis

Hamas says it was investigating a possible error in identifying human remains handed over to Israel

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Markets in red

Falling for the fourth straight day, benchmark Sensex declines by nearly 425 points Friday amid relentless foreign fund outflows

BUSINESS | P11



India thrash Ireland

The Indian men's hockey team overcame a goal deficit to beat Ireland 3-1 in the FIH Hockey Pro League

SPORTS | P12



WINTER WONDERLAND: Tourists pose for photos at the snow-covered Solang valley, at Manali in Kullu district, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Premium on pollution

The intolerably high pollution levels in many Indian cities could now have a direct bearing on the health insurance premiums that people pay for securing their wellbeing. In the wake of a massive increase in claims related to air pollution, Indian insurers are planning to hike health insurance premiums by 10 to 15 per cent in New Delhi, which has the dubious distinction of being the world's most polluted city. Once the insurers get the approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), the hike would be applicable in many other cities where air quality levels are severe. Senior citizens, children, outdoor professionals and those with preexisting respiratory conditions would likely pay the highest premiums. The plan, if approved, would make health insurance unaffordable for many who need it the most.

patients with respiratory ailments who needed to be hospitalised rose to 17-18 per cent in the second half of the year versus 5-6 per cent in the first half, Jain said.

Also, respiratory claims rose 8.3 per cent from fiscal year 2023 to fiscal year 2025 in the state of Delhi, which recorded the highest rise in healthcare costs in India during that period, according to a joint report from Boston Consulting Group and Indian healthcare administrator Medi Assist.

Star Health and ICICI Lombard said pollution could soon become a direct factor in determining health insurance premiums if poor air quality persists. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance said the industry could also add new clauses specifically addressing pollution-related health concerns.

The IRDAI and prominent Indian insurers including Aditya Birla Health Insurance, Tata AIG, New India Assurance and Go Digit did not respond to requests seeking comment.

In India, insurers can vary health insurance premiums by city based on factors ranging from hospitalisation costs to demographics.

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 21: Insurers are considering making New Delhi residents pay 10 per cent to 15 per cent more for new health policies after an extraordinary spike in claims related to air pollution in 2024 in the national capital, according to nine executives aware of the matter.

The plan, now in discussion amongst insurers and which would need approval from the insurance regulator, follows record-breaking air pollution in New Delhi last year. If approved, it would be the first time air pollution was used as a direct factor in figuring health insurance premiums in India, and could

be used to justify price hikes in other cities as well.

Toxic air led to more Delhi residents seeking for asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cardiovascular conditions in 2024, higher than in any prior year, five of the executives said. All the executives spoke on condition of anonymity as they are not authorized to speak with media.

"We have to start thinking about pollution as a separate factor in the pricing in the sense that can we then start executing a particular charge for the areas which are impacted by it," said Amitabh Jain, the operating chief of Star Health.

In 2024, the number of

4 Wiki editors booked over 'objectionable' content on Sambhaji

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 21: Maharashtra Cyber registered a case against at least four editors of Wikipedia for not taking down 'objectionable' content on Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj from the open source encyclopedia.

The nodal agency had sent a notice to California-based Wikimedia Foundation, requesting the removal of the content from Wikipedia.

Maharashtra Cyber agency had also mentioned in the notice that the Wikipedia content was inaccurate and could potentially lead to a law and order situation in the state as Sambhaji Maharaj, the son of Maratha empire founder Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, is highly revered in India.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



This water is clean, pure, and drinkable. If you can't see it, you must be anti-Hindu, anti-national, anti...

Class X student dies ahead of board exam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasure, Feb 21: A Class X student, who fell ill three days ago after consuming food at a community feast in Balasure district, died hours before his board examination Friday, police said.

The deceased has been identified as Chandra Sekhar Majhi, 15, from Baripada village under Bahanaga block.

According to police sources, Chandra Sekhar fell ill after the community feast but recovered after receiving medication. "However,

while preparing to leave for his board exam at Kalyani Nuapur High School, about 5 km from his village, he suddenly collapsed. He was rushed to Soro hospital, where doctors declared him dead," police said.

In another incident, at

least 11 students heading for the matriculation examination in Kendrapara district were injured as their vehicle hit a cyclist and fell into a roadside canal Friday, police said. The cyclist was killed in the accident, the police said.

Political row over USAID recipient

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: A political row erupted Friday after a media report claimed \$21 million aid by USAID was meant for Bangladesh and not India, with the Congress demanding an apology from the BJP and the ruling party accusing Rahul Gandhi of colluding with foreign forces to weaken India.

Congress alleged that BJP's narrative was aimed at diverting attention from its own use of foreign funds to 'destabilise' past governments led by it. It also demanded the government come out with a white paper on the USAID funding as well as funding by other such agencies in India.

The BJP dismissed as 'cover up' the media report that the \$21 million fund was for Bangladesh and not India and called Rahul Gandhi a 'traitor'.

Both the parties held press conferences to accuse each other of weakening the governments in India by using foreign funds.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, meanwhile, termed the USAID funding as 'deeply troubling' that has led to concerns over foreign interference in India's internal affairs.

US President Donald Trump claimed the \$21 million funding to India for 'voter turnout' was a 'kickback' scheme, as he continued to attack the previous Biden administration over the now cancelled financial aid.

Citing the media report, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Lies first mouthed in Washington. Lies then amplified by BJP's Jhoot Sena. Lies made to be debated on Godi media."

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia claimed USAID funding came to India to meddle with internal politics and disrupt the electoral process. He said when the US President himself has made a statement on USAID funding to India, nobody else could have better knowledge about it than him.

KIIT INCIDENT ROCKS HOUSE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Cutting across party lines, members of the Odisha Assembly Friday condemned the mistreatment of Nepalese students following the death of a girl on KIIT campus, while the Opposition BJD and Congress staged a walkout from the House, demanding a judicial probe into the incident.

The issue related to the alleged suicide of a 20-year-old Nepalese girl in the women's hostel of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) and the subsequent mistreatment of students from the Himalayan nation allegedly by the private university's staff was discussed in the House.

However, the Opposition members walked out when Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj did not respond to their demand for a judicial inquiry.

The minister assured the House that action would be taken against those responsible, in accordance with the law and the findings of the investigation. **MORE P3**

Indian conservationist among Time's 'Women of the Year'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Feb 21: An Indian biologist and wildlife conservationist has been named by Time Magazine among this year's 'Women of the Year' in a list that honours 'extraordinary leaders' working toward a better, more equal world. Purnima Devi Barman, 45 is the only Indian woman on Time's Women of the Year 2025 list released Thursday.

The list of 13 women also includes actor Nicole Kidman and Gisele Pelicot of France who was drugged by her husband and raped by over 70 different men and who became a global icon in the campaign against sexual violence.

The profile on Barman states



Purnima Devi Barman
PIC: INSTAGRAM BY STORKSISTER

that was home to a family of greater adjutant storks, was being chopped down in Assam, where she lives. As she questioned why the tree was being cut, she said "Everyone surrounded me, started whistling at me."

"But all she could think about were her infant twin daughters. Like the storks, they were so small. Barman was compelled to rescue the birds. Feeling their heartbeats moved her," the Time profile said.

It quoted her as saying that for the first time, she felt the "importance—the call of nature. From that day, my mission started."

It noted that at the time, there were an estimated 450

greater adjutant storks left in the region. "In 2023, thanks to Barman's work, the stork was moved from endangered status under the International Union for Conservation of Nature's classification to "near threatened."

"Their population in Assam has soared to more than 1,800," it added.

Supporting Barman in her efforts is her 'Hargila Army'—a team of "some 20,000 women who protect the birds' nests and educate others about the beauty of these imposing, nearly 5-ft-tall scavengers. It has been expanding, from Assam to other parts of India and now Cambodia, with schools as far away as France teaching students about her work.

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leisure



KATE HUDSON'S SON IS DESTINED FOR STARDOM

Kate Hudson is convinced her son Ryder is destined for stardom because talent runs in the family and "he's got it." The Hollywood actress, 45, is mom to the 21-year-old performing arts student with her rocker ex-husband Chris Robinson.

BALDWIN DIAGNOSED WITH PTSD POST RUST TRAGEDY

Alec Baldwin was diagnosed with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the wake of the *Rust* tragedy and struggled to get out of bed some days. The 66-year-old actor was holding a prop gun on the wet of the Western in October 2021 when it discharged, killing cinematographer Halyna Hutchins.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Since you want to examine things and carry out some research, you will get all the required equipment ready today. You will also be very irritable, and anyone posing a hurdle will face your wrath. Ganesh advises you to be more caring and considerate about the needs of your near and dear ones.

TAURUS

You will be particularly warm and intimate to your friends and family members. Ganesh says that you will miss no opportunity to show them how much they mean to you. Your superiors and, back at home, your elders are likely to be unusually benign and well disposed towards you.

GEMINI

Your heightened sensitivity could be the cause of many a problem today. You need to curb your emotions and keep your feelings in check. You will pay attention to your family and spend more time with them. An auspicious and progressive day awaits you, so make the most of it, says Ganesh.

CANCER

The stars look fiery today, says Ganesh. Now what does that imply? There is a definite possibility of conflicts and an outburst of anger at your workplace. Try to steer clear of arguments and sticky situations as far as possible. You may also need to get your blood pressure checked, for you may feel too restless.

LEO

While the schedule you have planned for today will see some major changes, you will still stick by your decisions resolutely. If you suspect anyone of wrongdoing, now is the time to clear your misgivings. The day may start off on a tense note but by evening, things will be peaceful and calm, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

Today you will serve to be an example of sincerity and punctuality. However, Ganesh warns that the operative word should be: Caution. Ganesh advises you to pay heed to even the smallest of details and read between the lines when it boils down to contracts. Precaution is better than regretting later.

LIBRA

Ganesh says you will try to maintain a place of pride and your status quo in society. You will be able to impress people with your speech and your wit. You will gain popularity amongst people because of your personality and your external appearance. Ganesh assures you that you will have a successful day today.

SCORPIO

Not so good, not so bad, is what you would feel after the day gets over. And average day at business with no major loss, foresees Ganesh. A feeling of insecurity may upset you, making you restless. Try to divert your mind by reading a self-help book. Await for a new dawn in your life.

SAGITTARIUS

After a long long time, the day has finally come when you can your beloved on a date. Professionally, you are on a winning spree. However, keep less expectations from yourself and others and there will not be any occasion of disappointment.

CAPRICORN

You will fully utilise your talents and earn a reputation of perfectionist in your area of work. If you are stuck in a legal battle or dispute, it will come an end on a positive note. You will understand the importance of constructive criticism and learn to improve upon your behaviour, foresees Ganesh. Your opponents will get the hint that you are better than them.

AQUARIUS

It is the day of the creative people like musicians, artists, and orators. You will look beyond the criticism coming your way and develop an understanding to aim for a better future. With unmatched enthusiasm and charm you will outshine others at work. It is your day, make the most of it, advises Ganesh.

PISCES

You might leave for an unplanned work related or social journey today. Small things will give you happiness today. In short, your day after noon time will be easy going and lucky. Ganesh assures you of success at work.

Sharvari finds Mindy iconic

Mumbai: Sharvari has heaped praise on Mindy Kaling after she was feted with a star on the *Walk Of Fame*. The Bollywood actress tagged her as 'iconic, inspirational and just incredible'.

The *Munjya* actress took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture of Kaling posing next to her star at the Hollywood Walk Of Fame and congratulated her.

She wrote: "Iconic, Inspirational & just Incredible @mindykaling Congratulations!!!"

Kaling had taken to Instagram on Thursday, where she posted a gamut of images from her Hollywood Walk of Fame Ceremony and said that it was one of the "most special days of her life."

She expressed herself in the comment section: "Yesterday was one of the most special days of my life! I was surrounded by my dearest friends and family for the surreal and humbling experience of receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. @bjnovak gave such a beautiful speech."

Talking about Sharvari, the actress on February 10 shared photos of herself working out with a tyre at

the beach. In a series of photos, the actress worked out on the beach using a tyre. Alongside the images, she wrote in the caption, "Never tyre'd of a good beach workout #Monday-Motivation."



Shruti's inspirations

Mumbai: Shruti Haasan is all set to perform at the third edition of The Women's Premier League. The diva will be taking the stage at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium during the Royal Challengers Bangalore vs. Mumbai Indians showdown.

Talking about her performance, Shruti Haasan revealed, "The performance at WPL is just a dance performance—I won't be singing this time. But it's a mix of all my songs through am dancing only on stage and celebrating my

The Salaar actress inspiration for stage shared, "There are so comes to stage performer, it was always Stefani—those were while growing up. so many incredible ing the stage and

The stunner add-Sunidhi Chau-incredible. And Ji still sings is so are just so women world ing

years, and it's been amazing. I after ages, just happy to be dancing songs after so many years." further opened up about her performances like these. She many inspirations when it mances. When I was young-Madonna, Pink, and Gwen the artists I looked up to

But over time, I've seen Indian musicians own-doing amazing work." ed, "I love watching han on tour—she's the fact that Asha inspiring. There many incredible from all over the who keep inspir-me to stay on stage."



Rajkumar to play Sourav in biopic

Mumbai: Former Indian cricket team captain Sourav Ganguly opened up about his biopic and shared that Bollywood actor Rajkumar Rao will portray him in the film.

While speaking to the media in West Bengal's Bardhaman Thursday, he said, "From what I've heard, Rajkumar Rao will play the role (the titular role)...but there are issues of dates...so it will take more than a year to hit the screens."

The former skipper played 113 Tests and 311 ODIs for India. The left-handed batter scored 18,575 runs across all formats in his international career. The Prince of Kolkata later went on to become the president of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and later was appointed as the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in October last year.

He led India to 21 Test wins and the final of the 2003 World Cup. The southpaw also served on the BCCI's technical committee and the Cricket Advisory Committee along with Indian greats Sachin Tendulkar and VVS Laxman.

Ganguly called time on his international career in 2008, but he ended up with more than 18,000 international runs.

On the work front, Rajkumar will reunite with Dinesh Vijan of Maddock Films for *Bhool Chuk Maaf*, a quirky time-loop film set in Varanasi, co-starring Wamiqa Gabbi.

Mother India, DDLJ to be screened at The Academy Museum

Mumbai: Indian iconic films such as *Mother India*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Devdas*, and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* will be screened at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles.

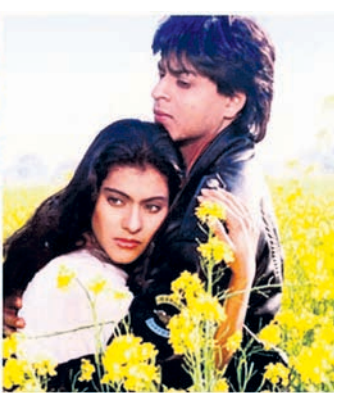
The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles will present "Emotion in Colour: A Kaleidoscope of Indian Cinema," a curated selection of 12 iconic films from India, running from March 7 to April 19, 2025, read a statement.

The program explores the evolution of colour in Indian cinema and its transformative

role in shaping visual storytelling and emotional resonance.

The series aims to emphasize the vast richness and diversity of Indian cinema, spanning decades, regions, languages, and genres. Featured films encapsulate the grandeur of period dramas, the defiant voices of feminist narratives during colonial rule, and the hopes of a newly independent nation.

The eclectic selection includes celebrated masterpieces such as *Mother India*, *Manthan*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Ishanou*, *Kummatty*, *Mirch*



Masala, *Devdas*, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Jodhaa*

Akbar, Kanchenjunga, *Maya Darpan* and *Iruvar*, each offer-

ing a unique lens into Indian cinema's extraordinary relationship with color, culture and storytelling.

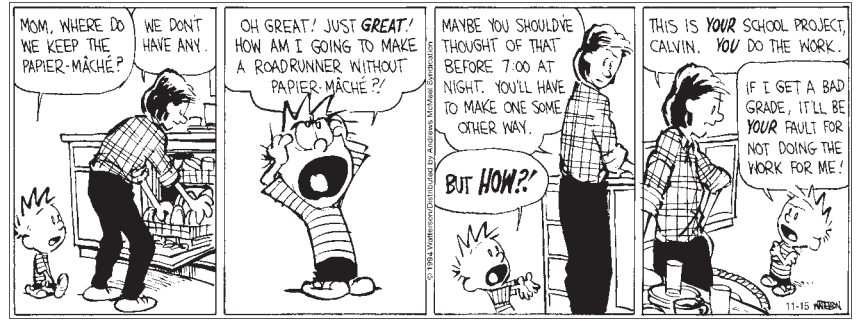
Speaking about it, film archivist Shivendra Singh Durgapur stated, "In India, color is inextricably woven into the fabric of our culture and artistry, and this is profoundly evident in our cinema. When the Academy Museum invited me to curate a program of Indian films, I saw a rare opportunity to present the unparalleled diversity and vibrancy of Indian cinema in color to a largely unfamiliar audience."

He added, "Beyond Hindi cinema, India boasts five major film industries—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Bengali—that collectively produce over 2,000 films annually, alongside a multitude of productions in other languages and dialects from every corner of the country. These twelve films are more than just a celebration of cinematic artistry; they are a vivid mosaic of language, culture and color, offering audiences in Los Angeles a glimpse into the boundless kaleidoscope of Indian cinema."

PEANUTS



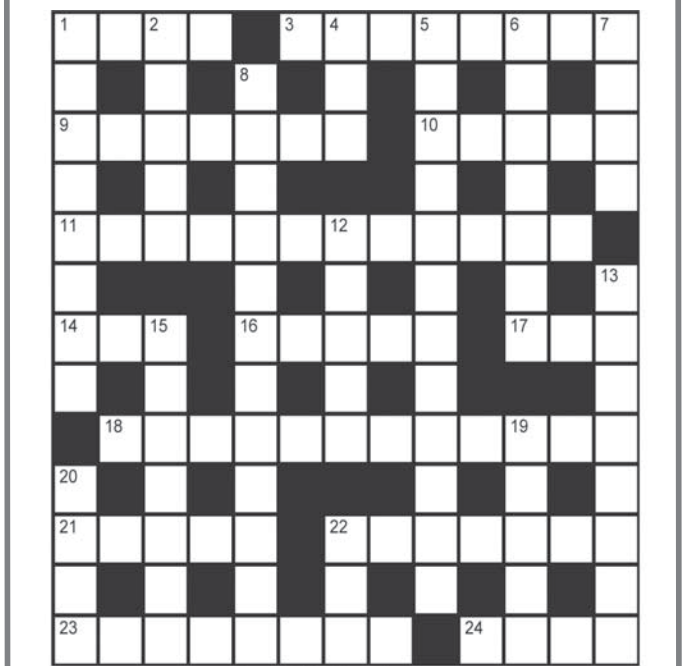
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



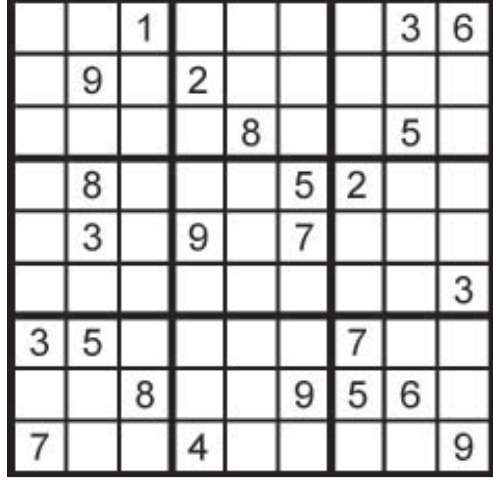
FUN POST CROSSWORD



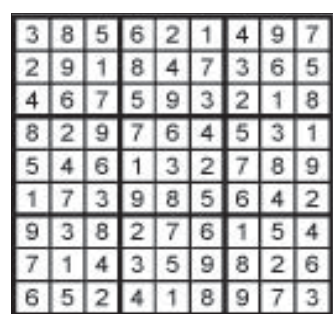
- Across**
- 1 Yield
 - 3 Mali city
 - 9 Dismissal from office
 - 10 Remove errors from a computer
 - 11 Without principles
 - 14 Egyptian cobra
 - 16 Religious law
 - 17 Kind of code
 - 18 Pleasure boat (5,7)
 - 21 Bolshoi rival
 - 22 Type of worker
 - 23 Deviant
 - 24 Greek cheese
 - Down**
 - 1 Round
 - 2 Rubbish heaps
 - 4 Sick
 - 5 Telltale movements, maybe (4,8)
 - 6 Collective
 - 7 Israeli farm or settlement
 - 7 Impulse
 - 8 Athlete who turns out better than expected
 - 12 Go to pieces
 - 13 *The Mikado*, e.g.
 - 15 Grassland
 - 19 Plumbers tool
 - 20 Gumbo pod
 - 22 Game pieces

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



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Budget envisions 'Viksit Odisha' goal: CM

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday asserted that the state Budget for the 2025-26 fiscal was prepared with the aim to build a 'Viksit Odisha' by 2036, when the state completes 100 years of

formation. Majhi made the remarks in the Assembly while replying to a debate on the state Budget. He said thrust has been laid on infrastructure, urban development, agriculture and irrigation, capital investment, port-based development, industrialisation and sports.

The CM said the state will set up new entities like the Odisha Highways Authority for accelerated construction of highways and expressways. "We have prepared a plan to construct 75,000 km of world-class roads by 2029-30," Majhi said. He said the state govern-

ment is keen to make Odisha self-reliant in sectors like fish, milk and egg production. "This will not only increase the income of small and marginal farmers, but also meet the nutritional needs of their children in a sustainable manner," Majhi said.



EXAM TIME: Students check their seating arrangements at Government Girls' High School in Unit IX area of Bhubaneswar as Class X board examination begins, Friday

Samanta questioned by probe panel

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Senior officials of Odisha-based Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), including its founder Achyuta Samanta, Friday appeared before the state government's high-level committee investigating the alleged suicide of a Nepalese engineering student and subsequent attack on students from the neighbouring country.

Former BJD MP Samanta arrived at the state guest house ahead of his scheduled 6:30 pm hearing. Sources said he was questioned for more than two and half hours. A day earlier, he had apologised to the parents of Nepalese students over the incident. The three-member inquiry committee, led by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Satyabrata Sahu, is tasked with examining the circumstances leading to the student's suicide February 16, the alleged high-handedness of the institute's administration, and the decision to suspend specific students and shut down the in-

stitute for them. The panel, which includes the Secretaries of Higher Education and Women & Child Development departments, had earlier visited the KIIT campus and spoken to Nepalese students who claimed mistreatment by institute staff for staging protests. Two suspended senior KIIT officials, Jayanti Nath and Manjusha Pande, appeared before the committee at 4 pm. They were accused of making derogatory remarks about Nepal, claiming that KIIT provided free food to Nepalese stu-

dents and that the institute's budget exceeded that of the Himalayan nation. A purported video of their statements went viral, leading to their summons, an official said. Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Odisha State Committee members met Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Friday and demanded a judicial inquiry into the death of the Nepalese student as well as the mistreatment meted out to other students from the Himalayan country at the KIIT university campus.

MUSICAL EVENT

Artistes perform during 'Odissi Sangeet Mahotsav' organised by Balakrishna Das Foundation at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Friday



Mangrove forests grew by 1.55 sq km in 2 years: Min

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: The mangrove forest cover in the state has increased by 1.55 sq km between 2023 and 2025, according to the India State of Forest Report, 2023.

The report, which was tabled by Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia in the Assembly while replying to a question Friday, said that the area of mangrove forest cover in five, out of seven, coastal districts went up from 257.51 sq km to 259.06 sq km during the last two years.

According to the report, published by the National Forest Survey of India, Balasore district has 4.82 sq km, Bhadrak district has 32.39 sq km, Jagatsinghpur district has 8.42 sq km, Kendrapara district has 212.69 sq km and Puri district has 0.74 sq km of mangrove forests.

Realising the potential of mangrove forests in reducing the impact of cyclones, the government is planting mangrove saplings every year in suitable places in the coastal areas of the state through various schemes, he said.

Between the financial years 2022-23 and 2024-25, mango saplings have been planted on 1,198 hectares under various schemes to create mangrove forest which has helped in increasing the cover of mangrove forests.

'Odisha working to get int'l recognition for Bali Yatra'



Odisha is taking steps to get international recognition for the annual Bali Yatra held in Cuttack city, Culture Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said Friday.

Speaking in the Assembly, he said the state government has formed a team of experts, which is working to get the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage recognition.

During Question Hour, Congress MLA Sofia Firdous and BJD legislator Devi Ranjan Tripathy urged the government to take steps to make Bali Yatra a national festival.

In his reply, Suraj said, "We can promote or give identity to a festival at the national level. But, the government cannot give state or national level recognition to a festival in writing."

"UNESCO gives such recognition to intangible cultural heritages. So, the government

has taken steps to get international recognition for Bali Yatra," he said.

The minister said the government has formed an expert team, which is in contact with UNESCO.

"A delegation from UNESCO will visit the state in the near future. We hope that Bali Yatra will get UNESCO recognition," he said.

The Bali Yatra, considered one of the biggest trade fairs, celebrates the maritime traditions of the region with Southeast Asia.

It is held to mark the return of the ancient voyage of maritime traders from Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, Java and Sri Lanka.

Suraj said the government has also taken steps to get such recognition for Dhanu Yatra, the open-air theatrical programme held annually in Bargarh town.

₹3,088.20 cr spent on 5T school transformation

The state government had spent Rs 3,088.20 crore towards transformation of schools under 5T in 24 districts in four years, School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Nityananda Gond told the Assembly Friday.

While replying to a question of Congress legislator Sofia Firdous, the S&ME Minister said Rs 3,088.20

crore was released for expenditure in 24 districts under the 5T school transformation programme from 2020-21 to 2023-24.

Transformation of schools in remaining six districts and two blocks- Palalaha of Angul and Kankadhada of Dhenkanal - was undertaken with Rs 1,966.99 crore OMBADC/DMF

funds during the period, Gond said.

Smart classrooms, e-library, science laboratory, sports equipment and basic amenities were provided to schools under the high school transformation programme. The transformation programme was undertaken in a phased manner from 2020-21 to 2023-24, he said.

Odisha to benefit from thermal spray tech: Guv

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Odisha, with its rich mineral resources and thriving industrial ecosystem, stands to benefit immensely from advancements in thermal spray technology, Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati said Friday.



Jointly organised by CSIR-IMMT, Bhubaneswar, and Indian Thermal Spray Association, the 2nd National Thermal Spray Conference & Expo brought together experts from academia, industry, and research institutions from India and abroad

applications benefiting industries and society alike.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra highlighted the state's strong metallurgical foundation, saying, "Odisha is known for its natural resources and strong metallurgical expertise. Institutions like CSIR-IMMT, IIT, NISER and other premier research centers are playing a vital role in developing next-generation materials and engineering solutions."

He further emphasized that

thermal spray technology and welding are essential components of modern engineering.

"One of the most significant aspects of this conference is the collaboration between research institutions and industries, ensuring equal participation from both," the minister added.

Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain stated that the conference underscores advancements in material science and surface engineering, which play a vital role in key industries such

as aerospace, automotive, energy, and manufacturing.

Swain emphasized that thermal spray technology enhances the durability and efficiency of critical components, driving economic growth and sustainability.

"Odisha, being a hub of industrial innovation with abundant mineral resources, plays a crucial role in material science and surface engineering," he said.

The state government, he added, is committed to supporting emerging technologies like thermal spray and surface engineering, fostering collaboration between academia and industry.

The event will feature keynote lectures from renowned experts, covering topics such as plasma spray, HVOF, cold spray, suspension and solution precursor spray techniques, composite coatings, corrosion-resistant coatings, and energy-efficient coating technologies.

Jointly organised by CSIR-IMMT, Bhubaneswar, and the Indian Thermal Spray Association (ITSA), the conference has brought together experts from academia, industry, and research institutions from India and abroad.

'Double engine' became 'double misery' for state: Naveen

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the state Assembly, Naveen Patnaik, Friday mocked the ruling BJP's 'double engine' government, asserting that it turned out to be 'double misery' for the state.



The BJD president also claimed that the Central government did not increase the grant-in-aid funds for Odisha.

Patnaik, a five-time former chief minister, was participating in the general discussion on the Odisha Budget, tabled by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi

in the Assembly Monday. "The BJP came to power in the state by promising people that double-engine government would bring in double benefit. But it turned out to be a double misery. The fund from the Central government in the form of grant-in-aid did not increase from previous years," Patnaik said.

Under the double-engine government, Odisha's open market loan burden has risen beyond Rs 46,000 crore, he claimed.

The per capita loan burden is growing every year and this will be a drain on the state's finances and leave little money for development and welfare schemes, the BJD president said.

He asserted that the double-en-

gine BJP government was supposed to take Odisha forward but the state seems to be going in reverse direction now.

"Odisha which was known for transformation earlier is now known only for changing names of schemes and colours," he said and claimed that during his (BJD) regime, Odisha always remained a high-growth state.

Wondering how renaming 'Skilled in Odisha' programme to 'Skilled for the World' would help the youth of the state, Patnaik claimed it is an admission that the government cannot create enough jobs.

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LIC/PI/2024-25/1/Eng
Har Pal Apke Saath

Subhadra Shakti Mela to begin in City today



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will inaugurate Subhadra Shakti Mela, organised by Mission Shakti department at Janata Maidan here Saturday. The occasion will be graced by Deputy Chief Minister Pravatida Parida and Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo as chief guests.

more than just an exhibition. It is a celebration of women's entrepreneurship and a powerful platform for SHG members. The event will connect rural women entrepreneurs with buyers, businesses, and market leaders, opening doors for business expansion, financial growth, and networking opportunities. By showcasing their products on such a large scale SHGs will not only gain visibility but also develop long-term market linkages, helping them increase their incomes and move closer to becoming Lakhpati Didis," Parida said.

ucts, offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience the creativity, skill, and entrepreneurial spirit of women SHGs. Starting from handicrafts, terracotta, bamboo crafts, handloom textiles and home essentials to health and wellness products, organic food items, spices, condiments, and millet-based delicacies, the mela will feature an array of authentic, high-quality and sustainable products. In order to ensure statewide participation and maximum reach, regional fairs will also be organised at Puri, Malkangiri, Sambalpur and Bolangir simultaneously. These regional fairs are aimed at promoting SHG products, attracting visitors locally, and providing more SHG members the opportunity to showcase their products beyond their districts. By expanding the exhibitions across regions, Mission Shakti department is ensuring that women entrepreneurs from every corner of Odisha receive equal opportunities for growth and success, Parida added.



Dharitri, Orissa POST stall opens at Khurda fair

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Feb 21: Khurda district administration, in collaboration with Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS), inaugurated the Zilla Mahotsav, Book Fair, and Exhibition. On the occasion, Additional District Magistrate Pratap Chandra Beura, who attended the event as the chief guest, in-

augurated a stall of Odisha's leading publications, **Dharitri** and **Orissa POST**, and emphasised that the leading Odia daily still continues to uphold its credibility and uniqueness. He lauded several publications of **Dharitri** including 'Dharitri Nabakalebara', 'Sutakhiare Biswa', 'Akalare Arthaniti'. Among those present were NISER vice chancellor Abhay Nayak, Khurda Bar Associa-

tion president Jeevan Jyoti Mishra, block development officer Khirabdi Tanaya Sahu, Khurda Sub-Collector Kishore Chandra Panda, district information and public relations officer Joshnamayee Acharya, district culture officer Chowdhury Arbind Das, and **Dharitri** deputy editor Lala Sunil Rath attended the event as distinguished guests.

The programme was coordinated by the regional daily's Khurda district correspondent Prabhata Panigrahi. OUJ president Tapan Nayak applauded **Dharitri** for its editorial strength, independence, and comprehensive news coverage. He extended congratulations to the Editor and the team on **Dharitri** completing 50 years of its successful journey.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I Rukmini Narendra, W/o- Padma Charan Narendra, Vill- Nanput, Po- Retang, Ps- Tamang, Dist- Khordha, Odisha by affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, dt.19.2.2025 affirm that in Aadhaar Card No-xxxx xxxx 8812 my name has been wrongly mentioned as Rukuni Dei, I shall remain forever Rukmini Narendra for all purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit No. 02/1 sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Kesinga, Dist.: Kalahandi on Dated 20.02.2025, Hari Prasad Tandri, Address: At/P.O.: Laitara, P.S.: Kesinga, Dist.: Kalahandi (Odisha) declare that I have change my surname from Harijan to Tandri. Henceforth I shall be known as Hari Prasad Tandri for all purpose.

I, Bijay Kumar Karna, serving Soldier Army No.- 2513963A Hav Clk Bijay Kumar Karna, permanent resident of Vill- Anantapali, P.O.- Harinapali, Dist.- Subarnapur, State- Odisha, PIN -767062 have applied for change of my father's name from Arjuna Karna to Arjun Karna and my mother's name from Pankajini Karna to Pankajini Khandagiri due to mismatch in my Service documents.

Railway infra push for south Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: With a view to enhancing transportation networks, reducing logistical costs and driving economic growth in south Odisha, the Ministry of Railways has sanctioned several key railway infrastructure projects, according to a statement issued by the ministry. Among the major projects approved is the doubling of Naupada-Gunupur-Theruvail rail line, alongside the 250-km-long Gopalpur-Rayagada new railway line. These initiatives are designed to enhance connectivity between previously remote regions of Odisha, enabling smoother transportation of goods and services. A total of ₹9.65 crore has been sanctioned for final location survey (FLS) for the above two projects February 11, 2025.



Gopalpur-Rayagada new railway line and Gunupur-Theruvail rail line projects will bring immense economic benefits by improving transportation efficiency and reducing logistical costs in the southern part of the state. The new rail line will ensure smooth movement of essential commodities, including agricultural products and minerals. This is expected to lower the transportation cost, enhance supply chain efficiencies and contribute to India's national goals of reducing carbon emissions by promoting sustainable, energy-efficient transportation. The development of sev-

en new stations along Gunupur-Theruvail new route will not only improve access to key areas, including the aspirational Rayagada district, but also unlock new opportunities for trade, employment, and regional growth. Gunupur-Theruvail project is an essential part of the energy, mineral, and cement corridors under Indian Railways, designed to further integrate regional and national economies and drive inclusive growth across the country. The construction phase of these projects is expected to generate substantial direct employment, providing a significant boost to the local economy.

With the establishment of vital infrastructure, the projects align with the government's broader vision of enhancing the state's railway connectivity, providing essential infrastructure to support the region's growing economic needs. The proposed railway lines in south Odisha are crucial for supporting the transportation of key materials to industries in the region. By enhancing connectivity, the project will drive industrial growth, reduce logistics costs, and enable quicker and more efficient transportation of vital goods. Gopalpur-Rayagada and Gunupur-Theruvail projects are set to usher in a new era of economic development, significantly improving the quality of life. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav for sanctioning the new railway projects. The CM said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is continuing to focus on the development of Odisha. "We will achieve the goal of development of Odisha under the guidance of the Prime Minister," said Majhi.

Bajwa's thrust on smooth passage of jumbos on tracks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: In order to have a close co-ordination between Railway authorities and Forest department officials for smooth passage of elephants, prevent wildlife accidents and reduce detention of trains due to excessive elephant caution order, a co-ordination meeting was held between authorities from Khurda Road Division and forest officials at the conference hall of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) office here recently. Khurda Road DRM HS Bajwa chaired the meeting and emphasised on various action plans which have been formulated to prevent elephant deaths on tracks. The divisional forest officials were advised to depute their staff at important railway stations, for timely communication about elephant movement. Underpasses and overpasses will be built at a few locations selected by Ministry of Environment and Forest, namely Byree - Kapilas Road, Dhenkanal-Hindol-Sadashivpur under Khurda Road Division.

Vulnerable locations will be identified and vegetation near the rail tracks will be cleaned for clear visibility. Signage boards will be installed to pre-warn loco pilots. A dedicated channel will be created through intercom devices for smooth communication between station masters and Forest department staff so that the station master can give 'Look Out' advice to the crew. Regular sensitisation programmes will be conducted for loco pilots and guards on wildlife conservation and protection. Instructions will be given to IRCTC and pantry car staff not to throw edible waste on tracks. Some of the vulnerable sections of elephant movement under Khurda Road Division are Byree-Kapilas Road, Kaipadar-Tapang, Gurudujhata-Rajathagarh-Machhapur, Radhakisorepur-Ghantical and Parjanga-Kamalanga. Bajwa also requested the rail users to co-operate to save wildlife from train accidents. Sometimes due to the caution orders at elephant corridors, the punctuality of the trains can be hampered.

'Take measures to protect procured paddy from rain'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department Friday directed all District Collectors to take precautionary measures to protect the procured paddy in the wake of rainfall forecast by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). In a letter, the department's special secretary Sudam Charan Mandal said, "According to forecast by IMD, light to moderate rain is very likely to occur in some districts till February 25. In view of the rainfall forecast, it is crucial to implement precautionary measures to protect procured paddy from moisture damage and quality deterioration." The department suggested measures like creating awareness among farmers about the importance of storing harvested paddy in safe locations, accelerating the evacuation of paddy from paddy procurement centres (mandis), in coordination with the tagged



millers, ensuring that all paddy stacks are covered with high-quality tarpaulin sheets to prevent exposure to rain, maintaining proper drainage systems around storage areas to prevent water logging, using covered trucks with waterproof sheets during transportation, deploying monitoring teams to oversee storage conditions and taking immediate action if needed, the letter said.

Congress slams govt over missing women, children

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: The Congress Friday slammed the NDA government at the Centre and the BJP dispensation in the state over reports of missing of more than 36,000 women and 8,400 children in the state. Addressing the media here, newly appointed All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of Odisha Ajay Kumar Lallu asked "why human trafficking is rampant" in the state. "As per information provided by the Chief Minister in the state Assembly, more than 36,000 women and 8,400 children went missing in the state during the past four years. It is shocking statistics. "When such a large number of women and children are missing, what is the home ministry doing? Is the union home minister sleeping?" he asked. Altogether 36,420 women and 8,404 children went missing in Odisha over the 2020-2024 period, Chief Minister Mohan



Charan Majhi informed the Assembly Monday. In a written statement to the assembly, Majhi said 421 women or girls were trafficked to other states through middlemen, leading to the arrest of 453 such middlemen. The police have been registering cases based on women-trafficking complaints and have taken action to trace the missing women, he said, adding, 1,417 women and 1,857 children were traced out during 2020 to 2024. Besides, the state government has also rescued 784 child labourers, Majhi said. The Congress leader also alleged that natural and mineral

resources of the state have been "looted" and the rights of tribals, Dalits and backward classes have been "squeezed". The Congress would raise these issues and hit the streets to fight for the rights of the people, Lallu said. He said the Congress would work as a strong opposition party in the state. Newly appointed Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Bhakta Charan Das, who took charge Friday, said, "We don't have money power, like the BJP and the BJD, to run the party. We will beg before the people and fight for their rights." In a veiled attack on the state BJP, the Odisha Congress president said, "The people are ignored. Women are not being respected and no importance is being given to the youth." Das said he has no desire to become the chief minister and his only objective is to strengthen the organisation of the party in Odisha.

WEATHER table with columns BBSR, CTC, Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, Rainfall, and FORECAST (Cloudy sky).

MARKET WATCH table with columns INDEX, VARIATION, SENSEX, NIFTY, DOLLAR, EURO, GOLD, SILVER.

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Police seize over 10 tonne of marijuana in Kandhamal



This is the first time that the police have successfully seized such a large quantity of marijuana in a single operation

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Phulbani, Feb 21: Kandhamal district police Friday seized a huge quantity of marijuana in simultaneous raids conducted across five police station areas. According to sources from the Odisha Police headquarters, the police seized more than 10,852 kg of marijuana and arrested one accused. This is the first time that the police have successfully seized

Drug peddlers have been hiding marijuana in underground pits in various abandoned areas of the forest

such a large quantity of marijuana in a single operation. The crackdown was initiated after DGP Yogesh Bahadur Khurania ordered a strict action plan to curb marijuana smuggling from Kandhamal district. Following this, Kandhamal Superintendent of Police (SP) BC Harish formed a special team that conducted raids at multiple locations. Police reported that 6,520 kg was seized from the forest near Darugonda Ghati under Gochhapada police station, 1,520 kg from Majipada forest of Kasinpadar gram panchayat under Firingia police station, 2,052 kg from Sudruju gram panchayat Minyakti forest under Phulbani Sadar police station, 650 kg from Jakripada forest under Baliguda police station, and 110 kg from Sunapanga village

under Tikabali police station. In total, 10,852 kg of marijuana was seized, and one accused was arrested. Investigations into all the cases are ongoing, and the police are continuing raids at various locations to apprehend other individuals involved in the smuggling. Notably, drug peddlers have been hiding marijuana in underground pits in various abandoned areas of the forest. Acting on intelligence reports, the police conducted the raid. The state police are continuing their special campaign against cannabis cultivation as per the DGP's directive to eradicate it. This special campaign will continue at the grassroots level until March 31, with senior officers instructed to ensure the complete eradication of cannabis cultivation within this period.



SOCCER MANIA: Players of Sambalpur district and Nuapada district fight it out at the Second Inter-district football tournament organised by the District Master's Athletic Association in Sambalpur, Friday

Worker dies in mishap

Dhenkanal: A worker died Friday after a crusher came crashing down on him near the hopper at the RMHS 2 unit of Rungta Steel Plant in Nimabahal within the jurisdiction of Balimi police station in Dhenkanal district. The deceased, Biswabharat Sahu aka Dona, was a resident of Gudidaha village under Motanga police station area. Sahu was working near the crusher at the RMHS 2 unit when the accident occurred. The crusher suddenly collapsed and he was trapped under it. Company officials quickly rescued him and rushed him to a private hospital in Cuttack for treatment. Unfortunately, he succumbed to his injuries during treatment. In response to the incident, Sahu's family members staged a protest outside the factory, demanding compensation.

6 'poachers' held

Sambalpur: Police Friday arrested six suspected poachers from Mahulpali area in Sambalpur district, an officer said. Firearms, pellets and similar arms were seized from their possession during investigation, he said. A case in this regard was registered at Mahulpali police station. Further investigation is underway, the officer said.

NIT studies groundwater trends in Sundargarh

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, Feb 21: A study by researchers at the Civil Engineering department of the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela has revealed both reassuring and alarming findings about the quality of groundwater for irrigation in Sundargarh district. The results, published in the Water Quality Research Journal, used machine learning (ML) algorithms to predict future trends based on evaluated irrigation water quality indices from the available physiochemical groundwater quality data from 2014 to 2021.

Groundwater extraction in Sundargarh has increased due to growing agricultural demand, limited surface water, and population growth. This has led to a decline in both the quantity and quality of groundwater, which can negatively affect crop yields and soil fertility. Anurag Sharma, Assistant Professor at NIT-R, and research scholar Souvik Ku-



mar Shaw used advanced data analysis techniques to assess key water quality parameters across the district. The study analysed samples from 360 wells, testing for salts, minerals, and other chemical properties that impact soil and crop health. The findings indicate that groundwater in the southern, southwestern, and eastern parts of the district, includ-

ing Rangaimunda, Lephripara, and Putudihi, is suitable for irrigation. These areas showed stable water quality with acceptable levels of sodium adsorption ratio (SAR), Kelly's Ratio (KR), and other key parameters. However, the western and central parts, including Krinjikela, Talsara, Kutra, and parts of Sundargarh town, have groundwater with high-

Honey badger rescued from Ganjam village well



POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, Feb 21: A rare honey badger was rescued from a well at the residence of Balaram Pradhan, a resident of Sagar Sahi at Fasiguda village in Ganjam district, Friday morning. The honey badger had wandered out of nearby forests in search of food Thursday night and became trapped in the well while navigating in the dark. The following morning, villagers who went to collect water discovered the animal. News of the incident spread quickly through the village, drawing a crowd to the scene. Upon re-

ceiving the information, the Sanakhemundi fire service personnel, along with officials from the Chandragiri forest range, including Bhismagiri forest officer Debasis Satapathy, Podamari deputy ranger Rupak Kumar Pradhan, and Forest guard Sunil Mandal, arrived at the location. After several hours of effort, they successfully rescued the honey badger using expert techniques. The animal was then transported to a nearby wildlife treatment centre for medical care. After receiving the necessary treatment, it will be released back into the forest, according to the deputy ranger.

Coast Guard launches 'Op Olivia' to safeguard Olive Ridley turtles

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara/Paradip, Feb 21: The Coast Guard Thursday said it has launched the annual operation to ensure the safe mid-sea sojourn of breeding Olive Ridley sea turtles and mass nesting of these delicate marine species in the state's coast. The Olive Ridley turtles turn up in millions for mass nesting along the Odisha coast every year between February and March.

Quoting survey reports by the Forest department, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) said that as many as 5,55,638 eggs have been laid by the endangered Olive Ridley turtle species at Rushikulya and Devi River mouth to Astarang, symbolising collective conservation efforts towards wildlife protection.

Conservationists have established protected areas on beaches off Odisha coast where these turtles lay their eggs and thus these areas are regularly monitored to prevent human interference, whether through seaward poaching or disturbance from leisure activities, they said.

Every year since 1991, the ICG has been providing continuous assistance under 'Operation Olivia' to central and state authorities and agencies to protect endangered species under the Wildlife Act, 1972.

Under Operation Olivia, the ongoing season of mass nesting of endangered Olive Ridley turtles at the coast of Odisha has yielded productive results mainly at Rushikulya as the



nesting data show 6,126 nests with 5,51,238 eggs, whereas nesting at Devi river mouth to Astarang is sporadic in nature with 60 nests and 5,400 eggs. Being a maritime law enforcement organisation, the ICG has been entrusted with the charter responsibility of preserving and protecting the maritime environment. In coordination with the state's Fisheries and the Forest departments, Coast Guard is conducting the operation, which commenced November 1 and will continue till May 31. As part of the ongoing operation, ICG conducts periodic social awareness drives and a special community interaction programme for sensitising the coastal populace and fishing communities. During this period, fishing vessels and boats operating close to the marine reserve areas and protected areas are

being regularly monitored by ICG for the usage of the Turtle Excluder Device (TED). ICG ships and aircraft are deployed and tasked towards protection of turtles and to ensure that an appropriate environment is provided to the turtles for mass nesting and to enforce the legislation promulgated by the government. Around 150 fishing boats have either been boarded or investigated during ongoing operations to ensure strict adherence of law. The Gahirmatha rookery in Kendrapara district is widely acclaimed as the world's largest nesting beach of Olive Ridley turtles. Apart from Gahirmatha, these threatened aquatic animals turn up at Rushikulya river mouth and Devi river mouth for mass nesting. An Olive Ridley usually lays about 120 to 150 eggs from which hatchlings emerge after about 45 to 50 days.

Monkey menace forces farmers to approach DC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal, Feb 21: The population of monkeys is rapidly increasing in Baliapal block of Balasore district, and so is the damage they cause, leaving local farmers worried owing to significant crop losses. Things have come to such a pass that fear of monkey attacks is discouraging farmers from cultivating crops. After investing substantial time, effort and money, farmers hoped for a profitable harvest, but monkeys have been invading fields, uprooting plants, and destroying standing crops.

In addition to the damage to crops, bikers and pedestrians on the roads have also been victims of monkey attacks, with



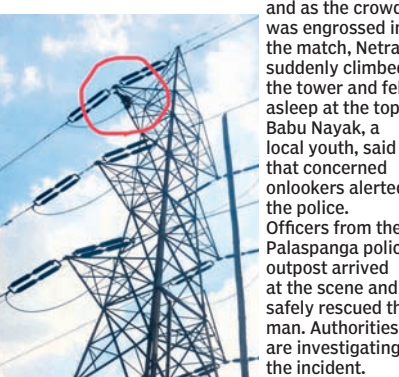
many fearing for their safety. To address the growing crisis, social worker Koshadhvaj Jena, Odisha Soochna Adhikar

Abhijan (OSAA), Baliapal convenor Anuj Mahapatra, and Gopal Gangai, along with numerous villagers and farmers Friday

morning submitted a petition to the Baliapal tehsildar Saishree Loknath Sethy. The petition, addressed to the District Collector of Balasore, demands the capture and relocation of the monkeys into forests to curb destruction caused by them. The Collector had been made aware of the issue during a public hearing in Baliapal, but no action has yet been taken. In response, the petition was resubmitted for further consideration. If no steps are taken, farmers and villagers have warned that they will take to the streets in protest in the coming days. Mahapatra has issued a strong call for immediate intervention to resolve the problem.

Elderly man climbs high-voltage electricity tower, rescued by cops

Keonjhar: Police Friday afternoon rescued an elderly man from atop a high-voltage electricity tower with the help of local residents in Kalanda village in Parjanpur panchayat under Keonjhar Sadar block. The man, identified as 60-year-old Netra Munda from Amritpada village, reportedly climbed the tower, though the reason for his action remains unclear. Locals believe that he is mentally disturbed. According to witnesses, a cricket tournament was being held at the Kalanda playground,



and as the crowd was engrossed in the match, Netra suddenly climbed the tower and fell asleep at the top. Babu Nayak, a local youth, said that concerned onlookers alerted the police. Officers from the Palaspanga police outpost arrived at the scene and safely rescued the man. Authorities are investigating the incident.

SUNDARAM HOME Regd Office: No. 21, Patullos Road, Chennai - 600 002. Corporate Office: Sundaram Towers, No. 46, Whites Road, Chennai - 600 014. Branch Office: C/o Sundaram Finance Limited Plot No. A/167, Metropolis, First Floor, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007, Odhisha.

POSSESSION NOTICE

Issued Under Sec 13(4) read with Appendix IV and Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Whereas the authorized officer of SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD., under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the Borrower, and the Co-Borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the demand notices within 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice. The Borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount in full, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) and the public in general that the Authorised Officer has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of Sarfaesi Act. The borrower's attention is invited to provision of subsection (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The Borrower(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with in the secured property shall be subject to the charge of SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD for the amount mentioned below along with further interest, cost and other charges etc. if any till actual date of payment.

Sl. No.	File Nos.	Borrowers & Co-Borrowers Name and Address	Date of Demand Notice/ Publication	Notice Amount	Date of Possession	Total Outstanding
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2	BBR20 190008	Mrs. Shantilata Jena (Co-Borrower) Mr. Madhusudan Jena (Co-Borrower)	27-11-2024	Rs. 15,76,964/-	20-02-2025	Rs. 16,47,909/-

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FOCUS CLIMATE ACTION

TIME FOR GLOBAL UNITY



The global financial architecture is ill-equipped to address the climate crisis. It was designed for a different era that did not contemplate the interconnectedness of our economies and ecosystems or the dangers of global warming

source efficiency, minimizes waste, and promotes sustainable consumption. Such a shift ultimately hinges on global fraternity. We must recognize that, in an interconnected world, our actions have consequences for others, and that protecting our planet is a shared responsibility. That means equitably distributing the burden of climate change, so that those who have contributed the least to the problem do not suffer its worst effects.

Leading a small island country like Barbados has taught me valuable lessons about the power of community and resilience, as well as the importance of long-term vision. We have learned the hard way how to adapt to changing climate conditions and innovate in the face of adversity. And we have come to realize the value of empowering communities to take ownership of adaptation efforts, and of nature-based solutions in building resilience. These lessons, born of necessity, are not unique to Barbados; they can guide all countries, regardless of size or wealth, toward a more sustainable future.

More than an environmental issue, the climate crisis is a global challenge that demands a collective response. We cannot afford to be divided by national borders, political ideologies, or economic interests. This is a profound test of our shared humanity, and we will need global solidarity—ordinary people taking action every day—to pass it.

The writer is Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Barbados
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The existential threat of the climate crisis casts a long shadow over our planet. Its effects are not equally distributed: vulnerable countries, particularly small island developing states (SIDS) like mine, are on the frontlines. We must contend with rising sea levels, more frequent and intense extreme weather events, and the destruction of our livelihoods. To address these challenges and strengthen the resilience of our people and systems, many leaders, including me, have had to reshape policies and re-conceive the relationship between government and the governed.

While sea-level rise could directly affect 250 million people by the end of this century, it is already a lived reality for tens of millions in low-lying coastal countries and SIDS. Elsewhere, people are plagued by prolonged droughts and fires. These forces are putting our territories, economies, and very existence at risk, and countering them requires not only urgent action but also a fundamental shift in our global consciousness—a recognition of our shared humanity and intertwined fate. Simply put, this crisis demands global solidarity.

As a 2025 honoree of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, I believe that recognizing our responsibility to care for one another is an essential element of the climate response and as important as scientific, technological, financial, and diplomatic measures. Just as a family supports its most vulnerable members, so too must the global community rally around those countries bearing the brunt of a crisis

they did little to create. As it stands, the global financial architecture is ill-equipped to address the climate crisis. It was designed for a different era that did not contemplate the interconnectedness of our economies and ecosystems or the dangers of global warming. The Bretton Woods institutions, for example, were established more than 80 years ago to help European economies recover from World War II.

But the unprecedented scale and urgency of the climate crisis require a new approach to unlock the financing that developing countries need for mitigation and adaptation. The system must be reformed to make sustainable development, climate resilience, and equitable access to finance its top priorities. This is not charity; it is an investment in our collective future. When some people are left to die, all of humanity—present and future—will eventually suffer.

The Bridgetown Initiative, which many vulnerable coun-

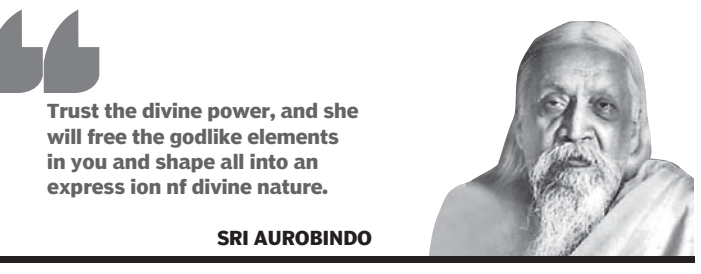
tries have championed, calls for multilateral development banks to expand their lending capacity and to ensure that their risk-assessment frameworks reflect the realities of climate vulnerability. And the initiative proposes innovative mechanisms like debt-for-nature and debt-for-climate swaps, offering a path to debt relief while generating the financial resources vulnerable countries need to take ownership of their climate transitions and build more resilient economies and societies.

But finance alone is not enough. A paradigm shift is needed in how we understand development, moving from the narrow pursuit of GDP growth to a more holistic approach that values social justice, environmental sustainability, and human well-being. This requires a fundamental re-think of our economic models. Infinite growth on a finite planet is simply not possible. We must embrace a circular economy that improves re-



Mia Amor Mottley

WE MUST EMBRACE A CIRCULAR ECONOMY THAT IMPROVES RESOURCE EFFICIENCY, MINIMIZES WASTE, AND PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION



Trust the divine power, and she will free the godlike elements in you and shape all into an expression of divine nature.

SRI AUROBINDO

End of Ambiguity

With the AAP's dramatic downfall and the BJP's resounding victory, Delhi's civil servants finally seem to be breathing easy. Having a 'double-engine' government—one that aligns both the Centre and Delhi—provides clarity in both means and objectives. Over the past decade, since AAP took charge in Delhi while the BJP held sway at the Centre, bureaucrats often found themselves in an uncomfortable limbo. Navigating the tense political dynamics between the two powerhouses wasn't exactly a cakewalk.

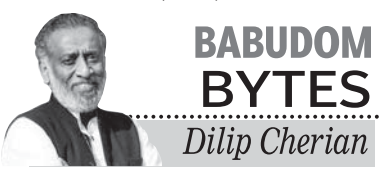
Now, with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) controlling the AGMUT Cadre officers, along with DANICS and DANIPS officers, bureaucrats have a more streamlined command structure. No more second-guessing which way the political winds are blowing. The Delhi government, likely to function as an extended arm of the Centre, may not have the autonomy it once claimed, but at least the bureaucrats can go about their work without walking a political tightrope. And with a fresh Pay Commission and income tax relief in the bag, there's a tangible silver lining.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Secretary Dharmendra has wasted no time in setting the ball rolling for a bureaucratic house cleaning. Even before the new government formally takes charge, all department heads have been ordered to compile a list of AAP-era appointments—specifically those who were allegedly handpicked party members and ministerial aides given cushy non-official posts in possible violation of rules.

With a consolidated government in place, the message is clear: the days of political ambiguity for Delhi's civil servants are over. Whether this ushers in an era of smoother governance or just another round of political manoeuvring remains to be seen.

NITI Aayog sticks to familiar

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has decided to stick with experience, extending B.V.R. Subrahmanyam's tenure as CEO of NITI Aayog for another year beyond February 2025. A veteran bureaucrat with a track record spanning governance, trade, and strategic policymaking, Subrahmanyam's extension signals continuity at India's top policy think tank. But is continuity always a good thing?



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

On the one hand, his leadership ensures stability. Having handled complex policy challenges, from Jammu & Kashmir's administration to India's commerce strategy, he brings deep institutional knowledge. His supporters argue that in a rapidly evolving economic landscape, a steady hand at NITI Aayog is essential.

On the other hand, some question whether this move stifles fresh thinking. India's policy ecosystem thrives on innovation, and a shake-up at the top sometimes brings in new energy. Critics argue that a more dynamic approach—perhaps someone from outside the bureaucratic machinery—could push NITI Aayog into new territory.

Ultimately, the extension suggests the government is prioritising experience over experimentation. Whether that's a masterstroke or a missed opportunity will unfold over the next year. The real test? Whether NITI Aayog can continue shaping policies that keep pace with India's aspirations—or simply maintain the status quo.

Are babus losing touch?

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy stirred the pot recently with his candid remarks about the state of the administration. Addressing a gathering at the IAS Officers' Institute in Begumpet, he lamented that some district collectors today seem reluctant to step out of their air-conditioned offices and engage with the people they serve. It's an unfortunate reality and one that raises serious concerns about the evolving role of civil servants.

Gone are the days, Reddy pointed out, when IAS officers would thoroughly brief political leaders on the pros and cons of policy decisions. Instead, he suggested, many bureaucrats now prioritize pleasing their political bosses, sometimes even encouraging them down misguided paths. That's not governance—it's groupthink with a dangerous ripple effect.

This shift begs the question: Have we institutionalised a culture where career progression trumps public service? Bureaucrats of an earlier era, like retired officer M. Gopalakrishna (in whose honour the book launch was held), were known for their hands-on approach. They spent time in the field, understood ground realities, and served as the bridge between the government and the governed. Today, many officers seem more at home with PowerPoint presentations than public grievances.

Of course, not all babus fit this mould. There are still those who walk the extra mile, defying the "file-pushing" stereotype. But Reddy's remarks are meant to serve as a wake-up call. Governance isn't about paperwork alone, it's about people. And if the system rewards deference over diligence, then we have a bigger problem on our hands than just a few officers preferring their AC cabins over the summer heat.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

The fundamental cause of the trouble is that in the modern world the stupid are cocksure while the intelligent are full of doubt.
BERTRAND RUSSELL

The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them.
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Necessity is blind until it becomes conscious. Freedom is the consciousness of necessity.
KARL MARX

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1848:** The Communist Manifesto, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, was first published; the pamphlet became hugely influential.
- 1866:** American Lucy Hobbs Taylor became the first woman to earn a doctorate in dentistry.
- 1916:** The Battle of Verdun, one of the most devastating engagements of World War I, began.
- 1965:** Malcolm X, who articulated concepts of racial pride and black nationalism in the United States, was assassinated this day in 1965 and became an ideological hero after the posthumous release of The Autobiography of Malcolm X.
- 1972:** U.S. President Richard M. Nixon paid a state visit to the People's Republic of China, ending a 21-year estrangement between the communist country and the United States.

SPECTRUM GOVERNANCE

Municipalities: Driving economic growth

Financial health is the key indicator of the capabilities, opportunities, and challenges of an individual, family, institution, or government. Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), such as city corporations, municipalities, and town panchayats, belong to the third tier of our governance structure. These bodies are responsible for urban growth centers that play a crucial role in the era of aspiration and the vision to achieve a Developed India by 2047. The third tier of governance was established through the 73rd and 74th Amendments Act in 1993, an early stage of our economic reforms. Since then, the third tier has gradually become part of policy discourse due to its mandates and functions.

In the context of the latest NITI Aayog's report on the "Fiscal Health Index 2023," which assesses the fiscal health of states, Odisha ranked at the top. It is also imperative to examine the state of municipal finances as reported by the Reserve Bank of India in its latest "Report on Municipal Finances 2024." This report delineates the sources of revenue generation, opportunities, and challenges faced by the municipal corporations of the states.

Strengthening the overall financial health of the state through its municipal governance is imperative at this critical juncture. There are five Municipal Corporations (MCs) in Odisha: Berhampur, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, and Rourkela. These cities are situated in the eastern, western, and northern regions of the state. According to the 2011 Census, Odisha was one of the least urbanized states in India. However, it is catching up in urbanization, as evidenced by the addition of 34 new notified area councils (NACs) and the upgradation of five municipalities to the list of local urban governments. The state's urban population is expected to reach 21% by 2030.

The Reserve Bank of India's report on the financial health of MCs, released in 2022 and 2024, delved into fiscal reforms and institutional innovations. Since MCs are responsible for providing vital public services such as health, education, water, sanitation, street lighting, public parks, and the registration of births and deaths within their jurisdictions, they play a crucial role in effective urban resource management, urban development, and the upgrading of urban infrastructure.

Odisha is also a mineral-rich state that supports the manufacturing sector across different regions of the country.

Three key points highlighted in the RBI report about Odisha are - Revenue receipts of MCs in Odisha have increased substantially over the last five years, reaching ₹1,266.96 crore in 2023-24 (Budget Estimate, BE) from ₹612.36 crore in 2019-20.

The percentage of Revenue Grants, Contributions, and Subsidies has increased by 21.6%, doubling to 43.87% in 2023-24 (BE) from 22.27% in 2019-20.

The Finance Commission grant has also increased by 15.11%, rising to 21.28% from 6.17% during the same period.

Capital expenditure remains consistently above 95%.

A trend of decreasing own tax revenue (OTR) has been observed over the last three years, from 22.86% in 2021-22 to 14.98% in 2023-24 (BE). This is a matter of concern. However, this trend can be reversed through affirmative actions towards compliance with the guidelines of Finance Commissions, innovations in the local economy, reforms in taxation and revenue generation, and ensuring simple and easy regulation of rules under their authorities. Thus, MCs not only help achieve higher

growth in the state but also set an example for other segments of third-tier governments.

Municipal Corporations in Odisha can play a remarkable role as engines of growth through institutional reforms. Institutional reform is needed not only in the context of Odisha but also for all MCs in the country. City-specific strategies are necessary, considering the local economy and growth potential in key emerging areas such as cultural and creative sectors. Odisha is one of the richest states in terms of its arts, culture, crafts, handlooms, performing arts, heritage, etc. Additionally, there is potential in the green economy, renewable energy, religious and eco-tourism. The expansion of economic activities in tier two and three cities, including through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and investments, can also be augmented. The double-engine governments must scale up infrastructure facilities and services to fuel faster and more inclusive growth and development of regions.

The writer is a Delhi based Independent Consultant who worked with NITI Aayog



Dushyant Meher

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS IN ODISHA CAN PLAY A REMARKABLE ROLE AS ENGINES OF GROWTH THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

KIIT incident: A wakeup call

Sir, Apropos the article titled "Achyuta Summons Over KIIT Suicide Row," published in the Orissa POST on February 21, the suicide of Nepalese student Prakriti Lamsal at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar is tragic and a wake-up call for the Central government. KIIT seemingly disregarded Prakriti's complaints of harassment by an Indian student. Later, without conducting an investigation, it labeled her suicide as a result of heartbreak. When hundreds of other Nepalese students protested, they were escorted to Cuttack railway station and told to stay away. In one viral video, two KIIT staff members are reportedly heard shouting at them that the institute's expenditure on tuition and board exceeds Nepal's budget. Such arrogance! By this logic, Indians in the US should shop at Walmart with a sense of gratitude because the retail giant's revenue exceeds the central government's budget. Many had scoffed when a global survey claimed India was among the most racist countries. Surveys showed how people from Northeast were stigmatized as 'Chinese' during the pandemic. India aims to have 500,000 foreign students a year by 2047, but is currently stuck at the 50,000 mark. Accepting what's wrong might be a good place to start.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Language game

Sir, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan criticised TN CM MK Stalin's letter to PM Narendra Modi, accusing him of raising "imaginary concerns" driven by political motivations. On the other hand, the Deputy CM of TN, Udhayananth Stalin, says the DMK won't accept the National Education Policy (NEP), which includes a three-language formula. It's unfortunate that the freedom of education is being denied to children due to the intransigent stance of the state. DMK leaders talk about fund flow from the Centre, yet they conveniently forget that only TN is opposing the NEP, while no other states have voiced against it. It's all the more ironic that when the schools run by these leaders under the CBSE have Hindi in their curriculum, their act of shifting blame onto the Centre is unsustainable. It appears that even while naming a child, the state might disallow the name 'Mani' and only approve 'Money' in their misguided bargain.

AP Thiruvadi, CHENNAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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





AAROGYA MANDIRS', DIGITISATION IN FOCUS

Delhi BJP plans key healthcare reforms

Many state-run hospitals have been facing an acute shortage of medical superintendents (MS) and medical directors (MD), with some officials managing two hospitals simultaneously, which affects the functioning of health facilities



The newly formed Delhi Cabinet approved the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme in the capital during the first session of the eighth Assembly

New Delhi, Feb 21: With the formation of the BJP government in Delhi, an action plan has been prepared to introduce key reforms in the healthcare sector, which includes digitisation of health services, setting up of 'Aarogya Mandirs', filling up various vacancies of medical superintendents and completion of under-construction hospitals, officials said Friday.

Following the approval of the scheme, other key measures—such as restructuring Mohalla Clinics for better efficiency—may be the next steps towards building a better healthcare system in Delhi

healthcare facilities without any hindrance. Along with that, the Health Information Management System (HIMS) and the enforcement of the Clinical Establishments Act will also be reviewed, a health official told PTL. "For the past year, we have been highlighting gaps in the health sector. Now that all departments have been directed to prepare a blueprint for the first 100 days of work, some key proposals are under consideration," the official added.

hospital management, and its implementation will significantly improve healthcare services," he said.

HIMS, which is free of cost and helps curb corruption, is a government-to-government (G2G) web-based Monitoring Information System launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in October 2008. It aims to provide key inputs for policy formulation and programme interventions but was not approved by the AAP government.

Meanwhile, the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, enacted by the Central government, mandates the registration and regulation of all clinical establishments in the country to ensure minimum standards of facilities and services. The newly formed Delhi Cabinet approved the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme in the capital during the first session of the eighth Assembly.

Following the approval of the scheme, other key measures—such as restructuring Mohalla Clinics for better efficiency—may be the next steps towards building a better healthcare system in Delhi. Mohalla Clinics will not be shut down, as public welfare should not be compromised. Instead, they may be renamed 'Aarogya Mandir' and upgraded with better facilities and improved management, an official told PTL.

Next meeting with protesting farmers Feb 22

Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Purna Chandra Kishan, has sent a letter addressed to farmer leaders Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Sarwan Singh Pandher regarding the meeting



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 21: A fresh round of talks between protesting farmers and the Centre will be held here Saturday evening to discuss their various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP on crops.

Farmers had earlier sought that the next meeting be held in Delhi. However, the Centre has scheduled it in Chandigarh. Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Purna Chandra Kishan, has sent a letter addressed to farmer leaders Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Sarwan Singh Pandher regarding the meeting. The letter dated February 19,

states, "This is in continuation of the previous meeting with the leaders of SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) which was held February 14 in Chandigarh.

"In this sequence, a meeting with the ministers of the Government of India and the Government of Punjab regarding the demands of farmers' unions has been organised February 22 at Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Public Administration in Chandigarh. You are cordially invited to the meeting," the letter in Hindi stated.

Earlier February 14, a meeting between a central team led by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and farmers' representa-

tives was held here, with both sides then saying it was held in a cordial atmosphere.

The meeting was held in the backdrop of agitating farmers' various demands that include a legal guarantee of MSP on crops.

The discussion during the meeting February 14 came after a year-long protest by farmers, centred around the demand of the farmers for a legal guarantee of minimum support price on crops.

While Joshi spoke about the steps taken by the Narendra Modi government for the welfare of the farming community, farmer leaders had said they strongly put forth their views backed by facts.

The February 14 meeting, in which farmer representatives of two forums spearheading the agitation at Shambhu and Khanauri border points took part, was also attended by Punjab Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, state Food and Civil Supplies minister Lal Chand Kataruchak and other state government representatives.

Joshi had said that another round of talks with the farmers' representatives will be held here in which Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will lead the central team. Joshi had said he would also be part of that meeting.

Dallewal had also taken part in the last week's meeting.

Prior to February 14 meeting, four rounds of meetings took place between Central ministers and the protesting farmers in February 2024 but the talks remained inconclusive.

Farmers, under the banner of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, have been camping at the Shambhu and the Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 last year after security forces did not allow them to march to Delhi to press for their various demands.

Besides a legal guarantee for crop MSP, the farmers are demanding a debt waiver, pension for farmers and farm labourers, no hike in electricity tariffs, withdrawal of police cases and "justice" for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

Vintage cars turn heads, bring smiles on Delhi streets

A pilgrimage of sorts for many car enthusiasts, the event has participants from across the country, including the likes of industrialists Yohan Poonawalla, late Tata Sons chairman Rattan Tata's younger brother Jimmy Tata, and renowned car collector and restorer Viveck Goenka, flaunting their well-preserved beauties



cars and 50 motorcycles -- from iconic models such as the exquisite 1939 Delahaye (Figoni et Falaschi, 1903 De Dion Bouton, the oldest in the concours to 1917 Ford Model T Roadster, 1935 Buick 90 L Ex Ayodhya and 1935 Cadillac Fleetwood.

A pilgrimage of sorts for many car enthusiasts, the event has participants from across the country, including the likes of industrialists Yohan Poonawalla, late Tata Sons chairman Rattan Tata's younger brother Jimmy Tata, and renowned car collector and restorer Viveck Goenka, flaunting their well-preserved

beauties. Gujarati businessman Daman Thakore, who has lost the count of rallies and shows he has attended with his bright red, vintage convertible -- the 1950 MG YT, affectionately christened 'Lal Pari' or the Red Angel -- was revved up for the special event.

"I've had this small, one-and-a-quarter engine car with us since I was three, and it brings so much joy to people's faces wherever it goes. That's why we keep it running. The car was manufactured in England in 1950, and only 900 of these were made by MG."

"To showcase these cars in

rallies or shows, we work for at least three to six months beforehand, ensuring everything in the car is in the perfect working order. Even the clock on the dashboard is original and accurate," said the 50-year-old, who drove the tiny 56-horsepower car on a 13,500 km journey to London through 14 countries with his family in 2023.

A flurry of selfies and heads-turning were evident as the rare marques paraded through the streets, painting the town in bygone royal hues from the India Gate to the expansive Ambience Golf Greens in Gurugram, where these

timeless beauties would be on display for the next two days.

Other eminent car collectors and distinguished royal families participating in the show are Diljeet Titus, Gautam Hari Singhania, Harshpati Singhania, and Arjun Oberoi, along with members of erstwhile princely states such as Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Rajkot, Baroda, Gondal, Mysore, Mansa, Karoli, Gwalior, Morbi, Wankaner, Kutch and Santrampur.

Uday Bahadur, another vintage car enthusiast and a regular in such rallies, is participating in the show with two of his cars -- 1957 Bentley S1 Saloon and 1947 MG TC.

Punjab transfers 21 IPS officers

Chandigarh, Feb 21: In a major reshuffle, Punjab government Friday ordered transfer and posting orders of 21 IPS officers with immediate effect which included shuffling of police chiefs of many districts.

Among those transferred include Dhanpreet Kaur, Inspector General of Police, Ludhiana Range, who has been transferred and posted as Commissioner of Police, Jalandhar, in place of Swapan Sharma.

According to a government order, Jagdale Nilambari, DIG Counter Intelligence, Punjab, has been transferred and posted as DIG, Ludhiana Range, Ludhiana in place of Dhanpreet Kaur.

Swapan Sharma, Commissioner of Police, Jalandhar, has been transferred as DIG, Ferozepur Range, Ferozepur. Gurmeet Chauhan, Additional IG, Anti-Gangster Task Force, has been posted as Senior Su-

perintendent of Police, Ferozepur in place of Saumya Mishra.

Akhil Chaudhary, AIG, Personnel-II, Punjab, Chandigarh, has been transferred and posted as SSP, Sri Muktsar Sahib in place of Tushar Gupta. His posting will be issued later on, as per the order. Surendra Lamba, SSP Hoshiarpur has been transferred as AIG, Personnel-I, Punjab, Chandigarh.

Charanjit Singh, SSP, Amritsar Rural, has been transferred as AIG, Intelligence, Punjab, Mohali. Dayama Harish Kumar Omprakash, SSP Gurdaspur, has been transferred as AIG, Intelligence, Punjab, Mohali.

Saumya Mishra, SSP Ferozepur, has been transferred as AIG, Personnel-II, Punjab, Chandigarh in place of Akhil Chaudhary. Sandeep Kumar Malik, SSP, Barnala, has been transferred as SSP, Hoshiarpur in place of Surendra Lamba. Ravjot Grewal, SSP Fatehgarh Sahib, has been transferred as AIG, Technical Services, Punjab, Chandigarh.

New Delhi, Feb 21: It was nothing short of a history lesson on wheels as classic, pristine cars took over the streets of Delhi Friday during the 11th edition of the "21 Gun Salute Concours d'Elegance," showcasing a regal collection of rare cars that left even the finest, modern, high performance cars behind by a margin.

The annual heritage show, flagged off by Union Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at India Gate, featured over 100 vintage

PUNJAB'S ROLLER FLOUR MILLERS URGE CENTRE

Resolve wheat supply crisis

Chandigarh, Feb 21: The Roller Flour Millers Association of Punjab Thursday asked the Centre to resolve the wheat supply crisis being faced by the industry in the state.

The association, which represents the wheat processing industry, organised an awareness workshop here on issues which will add value to enhancing the profitability and legal compliance of the industry.

The function was presided over by Principal Secretary, Food & Civil Supplies, Vikas Garg.

"The roller flour milling industry is an MSME industry, and in Punjab, it is a very important industry for the prosperity of the farmers of this agrarian state. Wheat is a major crop of the state and it is the flour milling industry which adds value to it by converting it into wheat flour which



further reaches the tables of the consumers in different forms," Association President Dharminder Singh Gill and Vice President Anil Popli said in a statement.

Stressing the need to strengthen the industry so that it becomes a valuable asset to the farmers of the state, they said the wheat supply is being controlled by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and requested it to sell more wheat in the market.

"Punjab is contributing 95 per cent of its wheat production to the Central pool through the FCI,

Punjab is contributing 95 per cent of its wheat production to the Central pool through the FCI, hence the industry has to depend upon it in a big way for its requirement

hence the industry has to depend upon it in a big way for its requirement." As per reports, the wheat sowing acreage this year is nearly three to four per cent more this year.

"We can expect a better harvest and request the government to offload at least 10 LMT in the market through OMSS (Open Market Sale Scheme) and facilitate sufficient supply of wheat in Punjab till April 13 when the new wheat crop is harvested," they said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.A-1097:
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
U.K.HEAD WORKS DIVISION,
KOLABNAGAR (KO, PIN.764011
e-Procurement Notice-SE-UKHWD-13/2024-25
Dated 19.02.2025 (ONLINE)

1. Name of Work	:: Civil Works
2. No. of Work	:: 02 (Two) Nos.
3. Approximate Value of Work	:: 17.22 Lakhs to 18.05 Lakhs
4. Class of Contractor	:: Registered & License Contractors of 'C' & 'D' Class (SI.No.02) Reputed Manufacturers/Firms/ Authorised firms by manufacturer/ Authorised dealers by manufacturer (SI.No.01)
5. Period of Completion	:: 02 (Two) Calendar Months
6. Publishing Date on Tenders	:: 21.02.2025
7. Date & Time of availability of bid documents online	:: 24.02.2025 at 11.00 Hours to 03.03.2025 upto 17.30 Hours
8. Date & Place of Opening of Bid Online	:: 04.03.2025 (10.30 Hours) at Office of the Superintending Engineer UKHWD, Kolab Nagar
9. Name of the Officer Inviting Bids	:: Superintending Engineer UKHWD, Kolab Nagar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation, if any, required will be published in Govt. website only.

Sd./ Superintending Engineer,
Upper Kolab Head Works Division
Kolabnagar

OIPR-32015/11/0025/2425

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that M/s Acerise Realty LLP has been granted Environmental Clearance for a Residential Project at Plot No. 929, Khata No. 326/279 in Mouza: Bidyadharpur, Ps: Cuttack Sadar, Tahasil: Barang, District-Cuttack; Odisha vide letter EC Identification No. EC24C3801OR5883389N dated 13.11.2024 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (Issued by the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), ODISHA. The copy of clearance along with the conditions to be complied is available on the website of the MOEF,CC& SEIAA, Odisha i.e., <http://parivesh.nic.in> and at registered office of the LLP at Plot no. A/295 Shaheed Nagar Bhubaneswar -751007 and also on website of the LLP.

CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Tender ID : 2025 ORULB_111045
Bid Reference No. MC(CMC)CTC_Div-II_No.39/2024-25
Tender Call Notice No. 2750 (PW) Date. 21.02.2025
No. C-1718:-

Name of Works	: Civil Works
No. of Works	: 05 Nos.
Bid Value	: Rs. 9.05 Lakh to Rs. 26.36 Lakh
Period of Completion	: One Calendar Month to Three Calendar Months

Date and Time Schedule:

Start	End	Opening
12.00 PM on dt. 24.02.2025	5.00 PM on dt. 06.03.2025	11.00 A.M. on dt. 11.03.2025

Tender Details: can be seen from the procurement portal: www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Executive Engineer, City Div-II
OIPR-13031/11/0150/2425



“The Gujarat government has allocated ₹23,385 crore, a hike of 16 per cent over previous year, for the health sector in the budget presented in the Assembly for the financial year 2025-26
 BHUPENDRA PATEL | GUJARAT CM

SC ASKS MAHA, ASSAM TO REPLY ON CHANCHLANI'S PLEA

The Supreme Court Friday sought responses from the Maharashtra and Assam governments on YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani's plea seeking to quash or transfer to Mumbai an FIR filed over the alleged obscene utterances made during an episode of India's Got Latent show aired recently



of the day quote

I am writing to bring your attention to the repeated instances of sale within Karnataka of contaminated injectable drugs manufactured in other states



The potential of Uttar Pradesh which the world is witnessing today can be linked to the Maha Kumbh Mela. The Maha Kumbh alone is going to help the economy of UP grow by over ₹3 lakh crore



The police have identified the individuals involved in the alleged incident of assault on Congress MP Sri Rakibul Hussain



Language row intensifies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chennai, Feb 21: The language row involving the BJP-led Centre and the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu intensified on Friday with Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan asking the southern state to rise above politics, while the regional party hit back saying it won't budge from its 2-language policy and warned against "throwing stones at beehive."

Pradhan attacked Chief Minister M K Stalin over the implementation of National Education Policy in TN and accused him of "spinning progressive reforms into threats to sustain political narratives". The DMK indicated Tamil Nadu was being asked to implement NEP and the 3-language policy involving Hindi in return for its due share of central funds.

Stalin, also DMK president, said he will not permit any activities inimical to Tamil language, the state and its people, on the soil, so long as he and his DMK existed.

Alleged Hindi imposition has been a sensitive subject in Tamil Nadu, and the DMK successfully led a massive anti-Hindi agitation in 1965 during which a number of pro-Tamil activists killed themselves, mostly by self-immolation, against imposition of the language.

Main opposition AIADMK also hit out at the Centre over NEP. Pradhan Friday wrote to Stalin, asking him to rise above political differences and think about the interests of young learners who will benefit from the new NEP. He was responding to a letter Stalin wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday. The CM had said linking two centrally sponsored initiatives -- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and PM SHRI Schools -- with the NEP was fundamentally unacceptable. Pradhan said, "the letter sent to PM is a complete negation of the spirit of cooperative fed-



eralism promoted by Modi government. Hence, it is inappropriate for the state to view NEP 2020 with a myopic vision and spin progressive educational reforms into threats to sustain their political narratives."

Tamil Nadu and the central government have been at loggerheads over the implementation of NEP in the state, with the DMK government accusing the education ministry of stopping funds for crucial schemes. "The continued opposition to NEP 2020 for political reasons deprives students, teachers, and educational institutions in Tamil Nadu of the immense opportunities and resources that this policy offers. The policy is designed to be flexible, allowing states to customise its implementation to suit their unique educational needs," the minister wrote.

On Tamil Nadu's opposition to the three-language formula, Pradhan clarified that the policy does not advocate the imposition of any language. He said many non-BJP ruled states have implemented NEP despite political differences. Responding, Stalin said Pradhan has replied to the state's plea for ₹2,152 crore funds for the education department by asking Tamil Nadu not to do politics in education.

"Who is doing politics in education - you or us? Is the blackmail that fund release only if the trilingual policy was accepted, not politics? Is imposing Hindi in the name of NEP, not politics? Is convert-

ing a multi-lingual and plural country into a single-language country and one nation, not politics? Is not converting the funds meant for a scheme as a 'condition' for implementing another scheme, not politics," Stalin asked.

Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin asserted the state will only follow the 2-language policy, i.e Tamil and English. Tamil Nadu was seeking only its due share of funds from the Centre from the taxes paid by it, he said. "We are asking our (share of) funds, about ₹2150 crore. They (Centre) want us to accept NEP and the 3-language policy. Tamil Nadu has always been opposed to three language policy and it has been made clear the 3-language policy will not be accepted. So what is there to do politics, I don't understand," he said.

The political face-off also saw BJP's state unit launch an online "GetOutStalin" campaign against the CM.

Although BJP TN chief K Annamalai's initiative was aimed at the overall alleged failures of the DMK government over issues including law and order and women's safety, the choice of the campaign title seemed to have stemmed from the NEP and language row.

Days ago, while flaying the Centre, Udhayanidhi had said TN people will never allow it to 'dump' NEP and the trilingual policy on them and will launch a 'Get out Modi' campaign if any attempt is made to snatch their rights.

Relief for actor Aditya Pancholi in assault case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 21: A sessions court in Mumbai has upheld the conviction of actor Aditya Pancholi in a 2005 parking assault case but modified the one-year jail term handed by a magistrate and ordered his release on a bond of good behaviour.

The sessions court, however, directed the 59-year-old actor to pay a compensation of ₹1.5 lakh to assault case victim Pratik Pashine for availing the benefit of release under the Probation of Offenders Act.

The Metropolitan Magistrate (Andheri) had in November 2016 convicted the actor under IPC section 325 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt) and sentenced him to one-year simple imprisonment for assaulting Pashine over a parking dispute in 2005. Pancholi appealed against his conviction and sentencing in the case.

Additional Sessions Judge D G Dhoble Thursday partly allowed Pancholi's appeal against the magistrate's order and spared him of the jail term.

The sessions judge ruled that the trial court (magistrate) "has not committed any illegality, irregularity and perversity" in convicting and sentencing the accused to one-year jail term. "The impugned judgment and order...convicting the appellant under Section 325 IPC is hereby upheld. But instead of awarding sentence of substantial punishment, I hold that the accused is entitled to be released on probation of good conduct under Section 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act," the sessions court ruled.



India, Pak hold flag meeting along LoC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 21: India and Pakistan held a flag meeting along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district Friday, in an effort to de-escalate tension after several recent incidents of cross-border firing and an IED attack, official sources said.

The brigade commander-level flag meeting took place in the Chakkan-Da-Bagh crossing point area, with both sides highlighting the need to maintain peace along the border, the sources said.

However, no official statement was issued by the Indian Army on the 75-minute-long meeting that started at around 11 am. The sources said the Indian military delegation lodged a strong protest over the recent unprovoked cross-border firing incidents, infiltration attempts by terrorists and smuggling of narcotics and weapons.

The meeting took place in a congenial atmosphere and both sides agreed to honour the ceasefire agreement in the larger interest of peace on the border, the sources said. Ceasefire violations along the border of Jammu and Kashmir have been rare since the two neighbouring countries renewed an agreement February 25, 2021.

Two Indian Army personnel, including a captain, were

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killed and another was injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack carried out by suspected terrorists in the Akhnour sector of the Jammu region February 11.

Two Army personnel were injured in separate incidents of small-arms firing from across the LoC in Rajouri and Poonch districts on February 10 and February 14, while two more Army personnel were injured in separate land-mine explosions in Poonch over the last week. The extent of damage on the Pakistani side in the retaliatory action was not known immediately but officials had said the enemy forces also suffered "heavy casualties".

Meanwhile, the sources said an explosion took place on the zero line in the Nakerkote area of the Digwar sector in Poonch at 9:20 am but there was no casualty. The cause of the blast was not known immediately, they added.

SHORT TAKES

Protests in Manipur valley districts

Imphal: Demonstrators across Manipur's Imphal Valley Friday burnt tyres in the middle of roads to protest the arrest of village volunteers in Kachching district, officials said. Security personnel arrested more than 10 village volunteers in an early morning operation at Panjao Pallumda in the district and later took them to a security forces camp at Phundrei in Thoubal district, officials added.

Five killed in accident

Bhuj: Five persons were killed and 23 others injured in an accident involving a private bus and a truck in Gujarat's Kutch district Friday, officials said. The accident took place around 1 pm near Kera village on a highway and those injured were rushed to a hospital in Bhuj, they said. "There was an accident involving a truck and private bus coming from Mundra to Bhuj. Four persons died on the spot, while one passenger succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

Six killed in Bihar mishap

Arrah (Bihar): Six persons, including four women, were killed in Bihar's Bhojpur district early Friday when their car rammied into a stationary tanker, a police official said. According to Bhojpur SP Raj, the accident took place Dulhin Bazar locality when the driver of the Bolero car lost control and hit the tanker parked on the roadside. All the occupants, who belonged to the same family, died on the spot. The deceased belonged to rural Patna and were returning from Prayagraj after attending the Maha Kumbh congregation, the SP said. The bodies were extricated from the mangled vehicle by police personnel with the help of local villagers, the SP said.

Woman gangraped

Bangalore: A 33-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped at a hotel in Koramangala, police said Friday. Three of the accused have been arrested and the incident occurred around midnight Thursday, they added. The woman works in catering services and serves food at events, police said. In her complaint, the victim—who is married—alleged that she was waiting at Jyothi Nivas College junction when four men in their 20s approached her and started a conversation. After befriending her, they invited her to dinner at a hotel, police added.

SNIPPETS

Top court seeks CBI reply on Partha Chatterjee bail plea

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Friday sought CBI's response on the bail plea of former West Bengal minister Partha Chatterjee, facing corruption charges in the cash-for-jobs case. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh issued notice to the CBI after his counsel M S Khan said Chatterjee spent over two years in custody without trial. The bench then posted the hearing March 20. Khan said his client was granted bail in the money laundering case related to the alleged scam. Though the prosecution sanctioned him was granted, said Khan, the trial court hadn't yet taken the cognisance of the chargesheet for want of sanction against the other accused persons. The top court December 13 granted conditional future bail to Chatterjee, who was suspended from his party, TMC, in the money-laundering case related to the alleged scam. He was named as an accused in eight cases -- three of the ED and five by the CBI.

SC recalls order in UP MLA Abbas Ansari case

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Friday recalled its order asking police to complete a probe against MLA Abbas Ansari in a case under the Gangsters Act within 10 days and instead sought to know whether any investigation was pending against him. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh posted the matter March 6 after senior advocate Kapil Sibal appearing for Ansari said the investigation was complete and a chargesheet was filed in the case registered under the UP Gangsters Act. He said the state filed a wrong affidavit in the matter and there was nothing pending against Ansari. Additional solicitor general K M Nataraj, appearing for the UP government, said he needed further clarification on the matter.

Assam Assembly adjourned twice over attack on Cong MP

GUWAHATI: The Assam Assembly Friday witnessed uproarious scenes over the attack on Congress MP Rakibul Hussain in Nagaon district, leading to two adjournments. The Opposition Congress, which created noisy scenes in the House demanding adjournment of proceedings to discuss the issue, relented after the government assured of a thorough probe into the attack. Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia raised the demand for adjournment motion as soon as the House assembled at 9.30 am. He maintained that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma did not condemn the assault on Hussain in his reply on the matter in the assembly. Hussain, the Dhubri MP, his son Tanzil and his personal security officers (PSOs) were attacked by unidentified persons at Rupohihat in Nagaon district Thursday.



A woman with a child takes a herd of goats for grazing through a paddy field, in Nadia, West Bengal

PTI PHOTO

'Dowry demand not needed to invoke cruelty charge against husbands'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: The Supreme Court has said dowry demand was not a prerequisite to constitute the offence of cruelty under section 498A of the IPC introduced in 1983 to protect married women from the husband and in-laws.

A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Prasanna B Varale December 12, 2024 said the essence of Section 498A IPC lay in the act of cruelty itself and a dowry demand was not necessary to invoke the provision against errant husbands and in-laws. "Therefore, either form of cruelty, independent of a dowry demand, is sufficient to attract the provisions

of Section 498A IPC and make the offence punishable under the law," said the bench.

The top court said it was clear that an unlawful demand for dowry was not a prerequisite element to constitute "cruelty" under Section 498A IPC. "It suffices that the conduct falls within either of the two broad categories outlined in clauses (a) or (b) of the provision, namely, wilful conduct likely to cause grave injury or mental harm (clause a), or harassment intended to coerce the woman or her family to meet any unlawful demand (clause b)," added the bench.

Section 498A (Husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty) was introduced in the IPC in 1983



with the primary objective to protect married women from cruelty of their husbands or in-laws. The provision provides a

broad and inclusive definition of "cruelty" encompassing both physical and mental harm to the woman's body and in ad-

The top court said it was clear that an unlawful demand for dowry was not a prerequisite element to constitute "cruelty" under Section 498A IPC

dition, it covers acts of harassment in pursuit of unlawful demands for property or valuable security, including demands related to dowry.

In the present case, the Andhra Pradesh High Court quashed an FIR against man and others in a case by holding that the allegations against the

accused did not constitute the offence of cruelty under Section 498A IPC as there was no dowry demand. Referring to several judgements, the top court set aside the high court's verdict quashing the FIR against them after taking note of the wife's appeal.

The order referred to the statement of objects and reasons for the introduction Section 498A in the IPC in 1983 in Parliament and said it was brought when dowry deaths were on rise in the country. The bench quoted the statement as saying in Parliament, "The provision was brought to deal effectively not only with cases of dowry death but also cases of cruelty to married women by their in-laws."



“
In this budget, the BJP government has taken a loan of ₹91,000 crore. From Independence till 2017, Uttar Pradesh had a debt of ₹3 lakh crore, but the BJP government led by Yogi Adityanath has taken loans of ₹6 lakh crore in the last eight years
AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

FIVE CHEETAHS RELEASED INTO WILD IN KUNO NATIONAL PARK
 Five cheetahs were released into the wild in Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district Friday, an official said. Jwala, which was brought to KNP from Namibia, and her four cubs were released into the wild from their enclosures, an official statement informed



of the day **QUOTE**

“
We are providing over ₹90,000 crore annually directly to the people through DBT and subsidies, including ₹10,400 crore for senior citizens, disabled persons, widows, and others
SIDDARAMAIAH | K'TAKA CM

“
A good start will be made and we will try to lay a foundation on which we will continue to build upon for the next five years and resolve the problems and demands of the people
OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

“
There is bound to be a sentimental attachment with the Bengali language for the people whose mother tongue is Bengali but one must be equally respectful to other's languages. I am paying tribute to every language on this occasion
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

X POST OF THE DAY

Faecal Coliform in Water (per 100 ml)
 0 MPN - Safe for Drinking
 500 MPN - Safe for Bathing
 13,000 MPN - Yamuna River near Old Naini Bridge on 20th Jan
 49,000 MPN - Ganga River near Sangam on 20th Jan
 Source: CPCB Data
@dhruv_rathe

SHORT TAKES

Death threat to Shinde: Two held
Mumbai: Mumbai police has arrested two persons from Maharashtra's Buldhana district in connection with emails threatening to blow up Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's car, officials said Friday. As per the preliminary investigation, the emails were sent as mischief and not as part of a serious conspiracy, an official said. The duo were identified as Mangesh Woyal, 35, and Abhay Shingne, 22, both residents of Deulgaon Mahi locality in Deulgaon Raja town in Buldhana. Emails threatening to bomb Shinde's car were received at Goregaon and J J Marg police stations in Mumbai Thursday.

Single punch leads to man's death
New Delhi: A 55-year-old man died after he was punched by a man in Delhi's Shahdara over a trivial issue, an official said Friday. The accused, Shadab (23), was nabbed soon after the incident which occurred in Makhhi Sarai area Wednesday, the official said. The deceased has been identified as Dayaram. According to the police, a verbal spat ensued between the two during a conversation. In a fit of rage, Shadab threw a single punch at Dayaram's face after which the 55-year-old man fell unconscious to the ground.

Fire breaks out at Kumbh area
Mahakumbh Nagar: A fire broke out at Ganga Complex in Sector 25 of the Kumbh area Friday afternoon, destroying two tents but there was no loss of life, officials said. The fire department swiftly extinguished the flames, they said. Chief Fire Officer (Kumbh) Pramod Sharma said the fire broke out around 4 pm, and two tents were burnt. There was no loss of life in this incident, he said.

Minor boy shot dead by classmate

Sasaram (Bihar), Feb 21: A minor boy was shot dead, while another suffered injuries following a clash between two groups of students in Bihar's Rohtas district Friday, police said. The Class-X student, Amit Kumar, succumbed to injuries during treatment, and his classmate has been detained for the crime, Superintendent of Police Raushan Kumar said. "Preliminary investigation revealed that an altercation took place between two groups of students inside an examination centre in Sasaram Thursday... When Amit and another student, Sanjit Kumar, were returning home in an autorickshaw, they were stopped by one of their classmates who allegedly shot at them and fled," he said. A police team reached the spot and took them to the nearest government hospital. "While Amit died during treatment, the condition of Sanjit is reported to be stable. A case has been registered and the minor boy who fired at his classmates detained. Further investigation is underway," the SP said. The exact cause behind the clash and the subsequent firing is yet to be known, he added. Police have seized the firearm and the mobile phone of the accused minor. Later, family members of the deceased student blocked a stretch of the nearby highway and disrupted movement of traffic by burning tyres. The protesters also kept the body of the deceased on the highway, demanding immediate action against the accused. The blockade was lifted after the intervention of senior police officers, an official said.

ED slaps ₹3.44 crore penalty on BBC India



New Delhi, Feb 21: The Enforcement Directorate has levied a penalty of more than ₹3.44 crore on BBC World Service India for alleged contravention of foreign direct investment (FDI) regulations, agency officials said Friday. The federal probe agency also fined three of its directors with more than ₹1.14 crore each as it issued an order against the British broadcaster following adjudication under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). There was no immediate response from the BBC on a query sent by PTI in this regard. The adjudication proceedings were initiated after a show-cause notice was issued on August 4, 2023, to BBC WS India, its three directors, and the finance head for various "contraventions" under the said law.

The federal probe agency also fined three of its directors with more than ₹1.14 crore each as it issued an order against the British broadcaster following adjudication under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)

not" reduce their FDI to 26 per cent, and kept it at 100 per cent in "gross violation" of the regulations issued by the government of India, sources said. The press note 4 issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) September 18, 2019, stipulates a 26 per cent FDI cap for digital media under the government approval route, they said. The total penalty levied on BBC WS India stands at ₹3,44,48,850, along with a fine of ₹5,000 for every day after 15.10.2021 till the date of compliance for violation of the provisions of FEMA, 1999, the sources said. Three BBC directors -- Giles Antony Hunt, Indu Shekhar Sinha and Paul Michael Gibbons -- have each been fined ₹1,14,82,950 for their roles in "overseeing" company operations during the period of contravention, they said. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the administrative body for the I-T department, had said in a statement after the 2023 survey that the income and profits shown by various BBC group entities were "not commensurate" with the scale of their operations in India, and that tax has not been paid on certain remittances by its foreign entities. The BBC, after the I-T action, had said they will "continue to cooperate with the authorities and hope matters are resolved as soon as possible".

Oppn MPs question under-utilisation of funds, crime in Delhi

New Delhi, Feb 21: Opposition members in the parliamentary standing committee on home affairs have questioned the under-utilisation of funds and the alleged high rate of crime against women and children in the national capital. Headed by BJP MP Radha Mohan Das Agrawal, the committee met Thursday and Friday to examine the demands for grants for 2025-26 of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). According to a source, MPs from the Trinamool Congress (TMC) raised in the meeting the issue of the Nirbhaya Fund being under-utilised and said almost two-thirds of the fund had not been used. The MHA uses the Nirbhaya Fund to implement projects that make cities safer for women. The TMC MPs also said the government should give an explanation on the increase in the allocation for border infrastructure and management which has been allocated ₹5,597.25 crore in this Budget, an increase of ₹1,840.74 crore from ₹3,756.51 crore allocated last year. They alleged that the Census activities were slow and the budgetary allocation for them was also low. They raised concerns about the under-utilisation of funds for modernisation of prisons, central funds for victims of terrorist and communal violence, and funds for the holistic development of islands



like Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep. A Congress MP raised concern over high rates of crime against women and children in the national capital, and the Delhi Police's record on the pendency of cases. Sources said an MP in the meeting sought the removal of barricades put up at the Singhu border, citing the difficulty it poses to commuters who pass through the area in massive numbers every day. Another MP also supported him. The barricade was installed to prevent farmers from Haryana from entering Delhi following their protests over a host of issues. However, the agitation has lost its steam but the traffic obstacles remain, the MP noted. The home secretary Thursday made a presentation on the demands for grants of MHA, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Central Police Organisations (CPOs). On Friday, the home secretary made presentations on demand for grants for the Delhi Police, Union Territories of Delhi, Puducherry, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Chandigarh, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

1984 ANTI-SIKH RIOTS

Court to rule on death plea for Sajjan Feb 25



New Delhi, Feb 21: A Delhi court Friday reserved for February 25 its order on the quantum of sentence against Congress leader Sajjan Kumar in a murder case relating to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Appearing before special judge Kaveri Baweja, the complainant, whose husband and son were killed by a mob allegedly instigated by Kumar, sought the maximum punishment of death penalty for him. "The accused being the leader of the mobs instigated others to commit a genocide and crime against humanity and cold-blooded murders, and he deserves nothing less than capital punishment," submitted senior advocate H S Phoolka, representing the complainant. Jaswant Singh and his son

Tarundeep Singh were killed November 1, 1984. Kumar was convicted by the Delhi High Court for five murders in Delhi Cantonment's Raj Nagar area in another case related to the riots aside for the murders in the present case, argued Phoolka while claiming that the seven murders were part of a genocide. Kumar, said Phoolka, was leading a mob that killed the two men and person who led and instigated others to kill people in cold blood "deserves higher punishment". He said that Kumar was awarded life imprisonment in the Raj Nagar case, but now he deserved a death sentence. The prosecution had also sought capital punishment for the former Congress MP. The court asked the counsel appearing for Kumar to file his written submissions within two days. The court February 12 convicted Kumar for the offence and Friday it sought a report from Tihar central jail on his psychiatric and psychological evaluation in view of a Supreme Court order asking for such a report in cases attracting capital punishment.



Artistes perform during rehearsal for 'Jhumoir Binandini', an attempt to set a world record for the largest participants in a Jhumoir dance event in Guwahati PTI PHOTO

Kerala HC rejects anticipatory bail plea of PC George

Kochi, Feb 21: The Kerala High Court Friday rejected the anticipatory bail plea filed by BJP leader P C George in connection with a hate speech he made during a television debate recently, saying that it will give a wrong message to the society. The High Court also said that "politicians should be a

role model to the society" and that the tendency nowadays to make statements based on religion, caste, etc "should be nipped in the bud" as they are against the basic structure of the Constitution. It further said that the Parliament and the Law Commission should consider whether an offender who makes such statements should be allowed

to escape by paying a fine. The High Court also drew the attention of the Law Commission and the Parliament to the need for a mandatory jail sentence in cases, like that of George, where such statements are made continuously. Denying the relief to the BJP leader, Justice P V Kunhikrishnan said the High Court had in 2022 granted bail to George in two

hate-speech related cases with the condition that shall not make any statement which would tend to result in the commission of offences under sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion) and 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the IPC.

mRNA vax against tuberculosis shows efficacy in mice

New Delhi, Feb 21: A new mRNA vaccine against tuberculosis has been shown to effectively boost immunity in pre-clinical trials conducted in mice, the results of which pave the way for clinical trials of the vaccine. Developed by researchers from Australia, the vaccine uses messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, in which instructions to create parts of the disease-causing bacteria are transferred to the host. The host's body then produces an immune response, thereby "learning" how to respond to the bacteria. mRNA vaccines were first developed for COVID-19. Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by the bacteria Mycobacterium tuberculosis and spreads

through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms include a persistent cough, chest pain, fever, and fatigue. Currently, the most widely used vaccine against TB is the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG). Developed in 1921, the vaccine works by introducing a weakened version of the TB-causing bacteria into the body. The body then develops immunity against TB. However, the effectiveness of BCG in adults is inconsistent, the team noted. The study, published in the journal eBioMedicine, found that the mRNA vaccine successfully triggered an immune response that helped reduce TB numbers in infected mice. Furthermore, in mice vaccinated with BCG, a booster dose of the mRNA vaccine significantly



improved long-term protection, the researchers observed. Senior author Jamie Triccas, deputy director of the Sydney Infectious Diseases Institute, said the results represent a major advance in TB vaccine research, providing a strong

rationale for further clinical development. "Our findings demonstrate that an mRNA vaccine can induce potent, pathogen-specific immune responses that target TB, a disease that has long evaded effective vaccine development,"

- Developed by researchers from Australia, the vaccine uses messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, in which instructions to create parts of the disease-causing bacteria are transferred to the host
- The host's body then produces an immune response, thereby "learning" how to respond to the bacteria
- mRNA vaccines were first developed for COVID-19

in producing strong immune responses against COVID-19 infection has prompted scientists globally to use the technology against other infectious diseases. "mRNA vaccines offer a scalable, cost-effective, and adaptable platform that can be rapidly deployed against infectious diseases," said co-lead author Dr. Claudio Counoupas from the Centenary Institute, Sydney. "Our study provides evidence that this (mRNA) platform can be harnessed for TB, potentially improving protection and durability of immunity in a way that traditional vaccines cannot," said author Colin Pouton from Monash University. The team is looking to assess the vaccine's efficacy in larger models before moving to human studies.



It would be normal practice where a task group is engaging in exercises for there to be advice given to vessels and aircraft in the area and Aircservices Australia is doing what it should do, which is to give that advice

SWEDEN INVESTIGATING DAMAGED CABLE IN BALTIC SEA Swedish authorities said Friday they were investigating a damaged cable that was discovered in the Baltic Sea, the latest in a string of recent incidents of ruptured undersea cables that have heightened fears of Russian sabotage and spying in the region



of the day quote

Trump's frustration with President Zelensky that you heard is multifold. There's some of the rhetoric coming out of Kyiv, frankly, and insults to President Trump (that) were unacceptable



I have to say when I listened to what the Russians and what Lavrov have just said in the chamber this afternoon, I don't see an appetite to really get to that peace



However, the UK has information that proxies directed by the Russian state have plans to interfere with CAR elections, including through suppressing political voices and conducting disinformation campaigns to interfere in political debate



Netanyahu decries release of wrong body



REUTERS

Jerusalem/Cairo, Feb 21: Hamas said Friday it was investigating a possible error in identifying human remains handed to Israel under a ceasefire deal as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened retaliation for failing to release the body of hostage Shiri Bibas.

Hamas was due to hand over the bodies of Shiri Bibas and her two sons Kfir and Ariel Thursday, along with the remains of the fourth hostage under the ceasefire deal that has halted fighting in Gaza since last month.

Four bodies were delivered and the identities of the Bibas boys and the fourth hostage, Oded Lifshitz, were confirmed. But Israeli specialists said the fourth body was that of an unidentified woman and not Bibas, who was kidnapped along with her sons and her husband, Yarden, during the Hamas attack on Israel October 7, 2023.

Basem Naim, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said "unfortunate mistakes" could occur, especially as Israeli bombing had mingled the bodies

Body of woman released by Hamas not Shiri Bibas

Israeli PM Netanyahu says Hamas violated ceasefire

Hamas says remains of Shiri Bibas destroyed in Israeli strike

Militant group says it will investigate

of Israeli hostages and Palestinians, thousands of whom were still buried in the rubble.

"We confirm that it is not in our values or our interest to keep any bodies or not to abide by the covenants and agreements that we sign," he said in a statement.

Hamas said separately that it would investigate the Israeli assertions and announce the results.

The failure to hand over the body and the staged public handover of the four coffins Thursday, caused outrage in Israel and drew a threat of retaliation from Netanyahu.

"We will act with determination to bring Shiri home along with all our hostages - both living and dead - and ensure

Hamas pays the full price for this cruel and evil violation of the agreement," he said in a video statement, accusing Hamas of acting "in an unspeakably cynical manner" by placing the body of a Gaza woman in the coffin instead of Bibas.

Hamas said in November 2023 that the children and their mother had been killed in an Israeli air strike and Thawabta said Netanyahu "bears full responsibility for killing her and her children."

But the Israeli military said intelligence assessments and forensic analysis of the bodies of the Bibas children indicated that they were deliberately killed by their captors.

Netanyahu gave no details on a possible Israeli response, but the incident underscored the fragility of the ceasefire agreement reached with US backing and with the help of Qatari and Egyptian mediators last month.

Six living hostages are due for release Saturday in exchange for 602 Palestinian prisoners and detainees, according to Hamas, and the start of negotiations for a second phase of the ceasefire is expected in the coming days.

As the tension over the Gaza ceasefire rose, Netanyahu ordered the Israeli military to intensify operations in another Palestinian territory, the occupied West Bank, after a number of explosions blew up buses standing empty in their depots near Tel Aviv.

No casualties were reported but the explosions were a reminder of the campaign of suicide attacks on public transport that killed hundreds of Israeli civilians during the Second Intifada in the early 2000s.



Forensics personnel inspect a bus following its explosion, in Bat Yam, south of Tel Aviv, Israel

REUTERS

G20 CALLS FOR UN REFORMS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johannesburg, Feb 21: The G20 representatives, attending the first Foreign Ministers' meeting under by South Africa's presidency, Friday reaffirmed the urgent need to reform the UN, including changes to the Security Council.

Among the key attendees were External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. "(The G20) support the need to reform the UN to make it fit for purpose and relevant to the current international reality.

"(We) support the need to reform international systems of global governance, inclusive of the international financial architecture; the multilateral trading system and the multilateral development banks," he said.

Flights diverted off Oz as Chinese navy holds 'show of force'



REUTERS

Sydney/Wellington, Feb 21: Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong raised concerns with her Chinese counterpart Friday over inadequate notice given by the Chinese navy of a rare live-fire exercise in international waters between Australia and New Zealand that forced airlines to divert flights.

Airlines including Qantas, Emirates and Air New Zealand modified flight paths between Australia and New Zealand Friday after China broadcast a message that its navy would hold live-fire exercises off Australia's New South Wales coast in international waters.

A People's Liberation Army Navy frigate, cruiser and replenishment vessel entered Australia's maritime approaches last week, and travelled down Australia's east coast this week, monitored by the navies and air forces of Australia and New Zealand.

The Chinese navy broadcast on a civil aircraft radio channel Friday, that it intended to conduct live fire activity in the Tasman Sea 346 nautical miles (641 km) off the Australian town of Eden, an Australian defence spokesperson said in a statement.

"The PLA-N did not inform Defence of its intent to conduct a live fire activity, and has not provided any further information," said the statement provided to Reuters.

Australia believed the live fire activity had most likely ceased because the Chinese navy formation had reverted to

- Qantas, Air New Zealand, Emirates adjusted flight paths
China says navy exercises complied with international law
Message was broadcast to airlines on civil aircraft radio channel

normal, it said. "No weapon firings were heard or seen; however, a floating surface firing target was deployed by the PLA-N and subsequently recovered," it added.

Australia's Defence Minister Richard Marles said the Chinese broadcast was picked up by aircraft flying across the Tasman.

"They complied with international law in terms of providing notice, but it was very short notice and it did put commercial planes in a disconcerting circumstance where, you know, they were needing to divert pretty quickly," he said in an ABC radio interview.

Wong met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of a G20 meeting in Johannesburg on Friday and in opening remarks said they would discuss "safe and professional military conduct".

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese earlier told reporters the Australian defence force had advised there was no imminent risk of danger to Australian or New Zealand assets, and China had complied with international law by issuing an alert. However, Australian officials said it was customary to give 24 to 48 hours notice of live fire activity.

MACRON'S MESSAGE TO TRUMP

'You can't be weak in face of Putin'

Macron is to travel to Washington to meet with Trump Monday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Feb 21: French President Emmanuel Macron said he intends to tell Donald Trump that it's in the joint interest of Americans and Europeans not to "be weak" in the face of Russia's Vladimir Putin amid US-led negotiations to end the almost three-year war in Ukraine.

Macron is to travel to Washington to meet with Trump Monday, the White House said.

In a one-hour question and answer session on his social media Thursday, Macron said he'll tell Trump: "You can't be weak in the face of President Putin.



It's not you, it's not your trademark, it's not in your interest. How can you then be credible in the face of China if you're weak in the face of Putin?"

Trump's recent statements that echo Putin's narrative and plans to have direct negotiations with Moscow have left European allies and

You can't be weak in the face of President Putin. It's not you, it's not your trademark, it's not in your interest. How can you then be credible in the face of China if you're weak in the face of Putin?

EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

Ukrainian officials worried. But Macron suggested Trump's strategy to create "uncertainty" in talks with Russia could actually make Western allies stronger in these talks.

Putin "doesn't know what he (Trump) is going to do, he thinks (Trump) is capable of anything," Macron said. "This

uncertainty is good for us and for Ukraine."

Macron added he would seek to persuade Trump that US interests and Europeans' interests are the same, telling him, "If you let Russia take over Ukraine, it would be unstoppable."

That means any peace deal must be negotiated with Ukrainians and Europeans around the table, Macron reaffirmed.

"We want peace, but we don't want a ceasefire that means Ukraine surrendering, because that's dangerous. And we know that would lead to Russia going further. We've already experienced it," he said.

Macron also appeared ready to answer Trump's call to boost defence spending. "Us, Europeans, we must increase our war effort," he said.

How does space travel affect astronaut health?

REUTERS

Washington, Feb 21: The human body was not built for spaceflight, with its microgravity conditions, exposure to high-energy radiation and other issues. As a result, trekking beyond the Earth's confines causes many physiological changes that affect an astronaut's health.

Here is an explanation of some of the effects on human health caused by space travel.

WHY IS SPACE TRAVEL TOUGH ON THE HUMAN BODY?

The human body evolved over millions of years to function optimally in Earth's environment, which includes its gravity, atmospheric composition and relatively low levels of radiation.

Space travel exposes people to quite a different environment, posing a range of physiological and psychological challenges, especially with prolonged exposure, according to

Afshin Beheshti, director of the Center for Space Biomedicine at the University of Pittsburgh.

As researchers seek new countermeasures to protect space travelers, more data is needed on astronauts with varying health backgrounds and undertaking different kinds of missions in order to map out personalized risk profiles and mitigation strategies, according to Chris Mason, a professor of physiology and biophysics at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York.

WHAT ARE THE HAZARDS OF SPACE RADIATION?

Unlike on Earth, where the atmosphere and planetary magnetic field provide a shield from space radiation, astronauts are exposed to high-energy radiation permeating the cosmos. This can lead to DNA damage, increased cancer risk, neurodegenerative effects, cardiovascular issues and immune system dysregulation.

Earth's magnetosphere - the region of space dominated by



the planetary magnetic field provides some protection for astronauts in missions in low-Earth orbit. But astronauts traveling beyond that - such as on missions to the moon or Mars - would experience much higher radiation doses.

WHAT DOES MICROGRAVITY DO?

Gravity plays a critical role in regulating bodily functions. Its absence triggers widespread physiological adaptations, ac-

ording to Beheshti.

Without gravity, bodily fluids shift upward, leading to facial swelling and increased intracranial pressure, which can affect vision. The lack of mechanical loading on bones and muscles associated with the downward pull of gravity leads to bone density loss and muscle atrophy.

In addition, the cardiovascular system undergoes major changes, including difficulty regulating blood pressure up-

on return to Earth. Prolonged exposure to microgravity conditions also affects vestibular function - the inner ear's ability to sense movement and orientation. That can cause balance and coordination issues.

HOW ABOUT CONFINEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS?

Long-duration space missions require astronauts to live in confined and isolated environments with limited social interaction and exposure to natural stimuli. This, according to Beheshti, can lead to psychological stress, sleep disturbances, cognitive performance declines and mood disorders.

The effects of prolonged isolation and close-quarters living among astronauts - during stints aboard space stations or longer future missions to destinations like Mars - could aggravate interpersonal conflicts, further impacting mental well-being and mission performance.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RETURNING TO EARTH?

How astronauts recover after returning to Earth depends in large part on mission duration. For short-duration missions of a few days in low-Earth orbit, about 95% of the biological damage sustained appears to be reversed upon return.

For astronauts who spend months aboard the International Space Station, or ISS, recovery appears proportional to their time in space. Many physiological systems gradually return to normal. But some issues persist. One example is Spaceflight-Associated Neuro-Ocular Syndrome (SANS), linked to vision impairment due to microgravity-induced fluid shifts and changes in intracranial pressure affecting the eyes. Research suggests that dysfunction in subcellular structures called mitochondria plays a role in SANS. Some astronauts experience lasting impairment that may require corrective lenses.

Business



The proposed bilateral trade pact between India and the US will be the mother of all deals which will provide huge opportunities for Indians and Americans to work together

NEW MAJOR MINERALS

The government Friday said that it has changed the classification of barytes, feldspar, mica and quartz into the category of major minerals. This move would pave the way for an increased exploration and scientific mining of such resources that are primary source of many critical minerals. Earlier, these were classified as minor minerals



of the day quote

Financial entities have a duty to ensure that customers fully understand the risks associated with leveraged products and speculative investing



There are pockets of froth in the market. Some people call it a bubble, some may call it froth. It may not be appropriate to allow that froth to keep building



A lot of steel which can't find other markets end up in India and depress prices here to levels at which the steel company struggle to have healthy cash flows



Stocks continue to bleed for 4th day

This is the second consecutive week of losses for indices as uncertainty over US tariffs dented sentiment, while a persistent moderation in earnings and foreign outflows added to the losses



A combination of negative factors such as relentless FII selling, falling rupee, expensive valuations and the US threat of reciprocating tariff levies continue to drive investors away from Indian equities

Mumbai, Feb 21: Falling for the fourth straight day, benchmark Sensex declined by nearly 425 points Friday due to selling in auto, pharma and banking shares and relentless foreign fund outflows. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex dropped 424.90 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at 75,311.06. During the day, it tanked 623.55 points or 0.82 per cent to 75,112.41. The NSE Nifty declined 117.25 points or 0.51 per cent to 22,795.90. In four trading days, the BSE barometer tumbled 685.8 points or 0.90 per cent while the Nifty declined 163.6 points or 0.71 per cent. From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra tanked over 6 per cent. Adani Ports, Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, Zomato, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India and UltraTech Cement were also among the laggards. Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, HCL Tech, Asian Paints, HDFC Bank and NTPC were among the gainers. "In fact, local benchmarks under-performed both Asian and European indices, which logged significant gains. Barring metals, the slump in domestic markets was led by weakness in banking, IT, telecom, auto, realty and oil & gas shares," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹3,449.15 crore on net basis Friday. The BSE midcap gauge declined 1.18 per cent and small-cap index dipped 0.43 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, auto dropped 2.60 per cent, consumer discretionary (1.49 per cent), oil & gas (1.42 per cent), realty (1.33 per cent), telecommunication (1.19 per cent) and consumer durables (0.87 per cent). Metal emerged as the only gainer and jumped 1.23 per cent. As many as 2,246 stocks declined, while 1,701 advanced and 113 remained unchanged on the BSE.

6-MONTH HIGH

Services, jobs surge fuel business growth



Business confidence for the coming year remained positive this month, edging up from January and reaching its highest point since November

PERFORMANCE IN SERVICES WAS FUELED BY A SURGE IN NEW BUSINESS. JOB CREATION, OVERALL EMPLOYMENT GENERATION AT ALL-TIME HIGH

Bangalore, Feb 21: Growth in India's private sector accelerated at its fastest pace in six months in February due to a surge in services activity that enabled businesses to pass on rising input costs to customers, according to a survey that also showed job creation was at a record high. Strong business growth offers a bright spot for Asia's third-largest economy which is facing global risks such as potential tariffs from US President Donald Trump sparking a wider trade war, likely dragging the rate of economic expansion to a four-year low this fiscal year. HSBC's flash India Composite Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by S&P Global, rose to 60.6 this month marking a significant jump from 57.7 in January. The 50-mark separates expansion from contraction. Growth was led by the dominant services sector

with its index reaching 61.1 this month - the highest since March last year - from 56.5 in January. That offset a slight dip in a manufacturing PMI which fell to 57.1 from 57.7, though still indicating healthy expansion. The strong performance in services was fueled by a surge in new business - a key gauge for demand - touching a six-month high. While new orders for manufactured goods also increased, it was at a tamer pace than last month. International demand followed similar patterns for both industries. But job creation saw an upswing and overall employment generation was at its fastest pace since the survey began in late 2005. Businesses leveraged the positive demand by increasing prices even as input cost pressures eased. For the first time since October, the sub-index for output charges exceeded that of input prices. Cost pressures were more acute in the services sector compared to manufacturing.

Forex kitty snaps 3-week win streak

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 21: India's foreign exchange reserves snapped a three-week gaining streak to drop to \$635.72 billion as of February 14, coming off over one-month highs, data released by the central bank Friday showed. The reserves fell by \$2.54 billion in the reported week, the most in a month. The reserves had risen by a total of \$14.3 billion in the prior three weeks. Changes in foreign currency assets are caused by the central bank's intervention in the forex market as well as the appreciation or depreciation of foreign assets held in the reserves. The rupee has been under pressure amid India's sluggish economic growth, a recent interest rate cut, foreign outflows from local stocks and concerns of a global trade war following US President Donald Trump's tariff plans. In the week for which the reserves data pertains, the rupee slipped to its all-time low of 87.95 against the dollar, but the fall was limited as the central bank intervened by selling dollars in the spot market, traders said.



The intervention helped the rupee gain 0.7% during the reported week, the most since mid-July 2023. The domestic unit ended at 86.7125 against the dollar Friday and was up 0.1% on week. Foreign exchange reserves include India's Reserve Tranche position in the International Monetary Fund.

SHORT TAKES

BOI reports fraud by Gupta Power

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of India (BOI) Friday reported a fraud of ₹226.84 crore by Odisha-based Gupta Power Infrastructure Ltd to the Reserve Bank. The bank has informed that Non Performing Asset (NPA) of Gupta Power Infrastructure Ltd has been declared as fraud, BoI said in a regulatory filing. Against the outstanding amount of ₹226.84 crore, the bank has made provisions of ₹212.62 crore in case of Gupta Power Infrastructure Ltd, it said. For the third quarter ended December 2024, BoI posted a 35 per cent jump in net profit to ₹2,517 crore against ₹1,870 crore in the year-ago period.

Kinetic enters EV battery making

Mumbai: Automotive components maker Kinetic Group Friday announced its entry in the EV battery manufacturing space with the setting up of a battery production facility in Ahmednagar in Maharashtra at an investment of ₹50 crore. The facility will produce 60,000 Range-X brand of batteries for two and three-wheeler EVs. The Pune-based company said. The facility will also be manufacturing both LFP (Lithium-Ion Phosphate) and NMC (Nickel Manganese, Cobalt) type of batteries, it stated.

Bank credit, deposits growth decelerate in Q3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 21: Bank credit as well as deposits witnessed deceleration during the October-December quarter sequentially, showed Reserve Bank data released Friday. Bank credit growth (y-o-y) decelerated to 11.8 per cent in December 2024 from 12.6 per cent in September 2024, while aggregate deposits increased at a marginally lower pace at 11 per cent as compared to 11.7 per cent growth in July-September period. Personal loans, which have large share (31.5 per cent) in total credit, recorded moderation in annual growth to 13.7 per cent (15.2 per cent a quarter ago), according to RBI's data on 'Outstanding Credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks - December 2024'.

BYD launches Sealion 7 electric SUV

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: In a move that redefines innovation and style in the electric vehicle segment, Central BYD launched the highly anticipated BYD Sealion 7 - a high-performance, fully electric SUV, Friday at the Utkal Iconic Building in Bhubaneswar. The launch event was graced by Vishal Dhawan, Managing Director, and Adharsh Dhawan, Director, alongside Pratik Jha, General Manager of Central BYD, and other key staff members. The company, which entered the Bhubaneswar market in October 2024, has already delivered 15 vehicles. "With the Sealion 7, we aim to redefine the electric SUV market, offering a blend of style, power, and sustainability," said Jha. Priced at ₹48.9 lakh for the standard variant and ₹54.9 lakh for the premium model, the Sealion 7 features an ocean-inspired aerodynamic design. It boasts a 567 km range per charge, acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in 4.5 seconds, and a top speed of 215 km/h. Rapid charging allows a 200 km range in just 15 minutes. Available in four colours - Shark Gray, Aurora White, Cosmos Black, and Atlantis Gray - the SUV integrates Cell-to-Body (CTB) safety technology and Intelligent Torque Adaptation Control for optimised performance across terrains.



RBI to hold \$10bn forex swap to inject liquidity

Since mid-Jan, the central bank has infused funds to counter a sharp decline in liquidity caused by its aggressive intervention in foreign exchange market, among other factors

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Feb 21: The Reserve Bank Friday announced a huge \$10 billion dollar-rupee swap auction programme to inject durable liquidity in the banking system. The USD/INR Buy/Sell swap auction of \$10 billion for a tenor of 3 years will be conducted February 28, the central bank said in a statement. The swap is in the nature of a simple buy/sell foreign exchange swap from the Reserve Bank side. A bank shall sell US dollars to the Reserve Bank and simultaneously agree to buy the same amount of US dollars at the end of the swap period. "In order to meet the durable liquidity needs of the system, the Reserve Bank has decided to inject Rupee liquidity for longer duration through long-term USD/INR Buy/Sell swap. Accordingly, the Reserve Bank will be conducting a USD/INR Buy/Sell swap auction of USD 10 billion for a tenor of 3 years," the central bank said. In January also, the RBI had announced liquidity injection worth over ₹1.5 lakh crore through different instruments, including \$5 billion forex swap. The RBI also cut its key interest rate for the first time in nearly five years earlier this month, but market participants say sufficient liquidity is a must to ensure effective policy transmission by lenders. India's banking system liquidity deficit was around ₹1.7



India's banking system liquidity deficit was around ₹1.7 trillion, as February 20

trillion, as February 20. The central bank could inject cash by opting for more open market bond purchases or boost non-resident Indian deposits, said Vivek Kumar, an economist at QuantEco Research. The RBI has so far bought bonds worth ₹1.39 trillion through open market and secondary purchases and infused around ₹440 billion through a \$5 billion dollar/rupee swap. Despite regular fund infusions, the weighted average interbank call money rate has stayed comfortably above the RBI's policy repo rate. IDFC First Bank's Sen Gupta expects the central bank to conduct ₹800 billion of bond purchases and another \$5 billion swap before the end of March. The RBI has also infused ₹1.83 trillion through long-term repos that will mature in early April.

'Drugmakers can retain US dominance even with tariffs'

INDIA IMPOSES ABOUT 10% TAX ON PHARMA IMPORTS FROM THE US WHILE PAYING NEARLY NO TARIFF FOR ITS EXPORTS TO THE COUNTRY, ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY EXPERTS

REUTERS

Hyderabad, Feb 21: Indian pharmaceutical companies will be able to retain their dominant market share in the US in selling generic drugs even if President Donald Trump imposes high tariffs because they are "highly competitive", a government-backed trade body said. The US accounts for nearly a third of India's pharmaceutical exports, mainly cheaper versions of popular drugs, with sales jumping 16% to about \$9 billion last fiscal year. Trump has said he could impose tariffs of 25% or more on pharmaceutical imports and an announcement could be made by next month. India's drug industry has said it hopes bilateral talks will earn them an excep-



tion, though Trump has ruled out any such concession so far. The Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil), set up by the trade ministry, said it believed that the Trump warning was mostly directed at costly imports of patented and other products from other countries. "India pharma will not selectively be imposed high duties and its exports are highly competitive, so it can still compete in the newer environment (with import duties if at all imposed) without losing its share," Pharmexcil Director General Raja Bhanu told Reuters. "The government will certainly have discussions about the changing situations and try to bring the best possible solution." India sells about 65% of all generic drugs in the US, according to Citi Research. According to the Indian government, generic drugs are 50% to 90% cheaper than branded ones, opens new tab. Higher tariffs will further pressure thin margins of up to 15% of core earnings for most Indian generic drugs unless costs are passed onto consumers, analysts said. "Tariffs (if not passed through) may result in a large part of the Indian generic drug supply to the U.S. turning unviable," Citi Research said in a note. "Companies may be forced to rationalize portfolios or (make) exits that may result in massive shortages in the US and resultant drug price increases. If Indian players start exiting from the generics, drug shortages in the US may escalate beyond control." According to research firm IQVIA, overall cheaper generic drugs saved the US healthcare system about \$408 billion in 2022. Sun Pharma, India's largest drugmaker that made 32% of its total revenue through US sales last fiscal year, has already said it will pass on any costs to consumers. Other big Indian players include Dr Reddy's, Cipla and Zydus Lifesciences.

Trump plans to impose tariffs of 25% or more on pharmaceutical imports. US accounts for nearly a third of India's pharmaceutical exports. Tariffs could lead to drug price increase in US, say analysts.

"Companies may be forced to rationalize portfolios or (make) exits that may result in massive shortages in the US and resultant drug price increases. If Indian players start exiting from the generics, drug shortages in the US may escalate beyond control." According to research firm IQVIA, overall cheaper generic drugs saved the US healthcare system about \$408 billion in 2022. Sun Pharma, India's largest drugmaker that made 32% of its total revenue through US sales last fiscal year, has already said it will pass on any costs to consumers. Other big Indian players include Dr Reddy's, Cipla and Zydus Lifesciences.

Men script comeback win

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: The Indian men's hockey team overcame a goal deficit to beat Ireland 3-1 in the FIH Hockey Pro League here Friday.

Harmanpreet Singh's side was stunned in the eighth minute when Jeremy Duncan scored from a field effort. But the Indians bounced back strongly, scoring a field goal through Mandeep Singh in the 22nd minute.

Jarmanpreet Singh (45th) and Sukhjeet Singh (58th) then scored a goal each from penalty corners to guide India to a convincing win.

India will now take on Ireland in the return-leg match here Saturday.

India is currently placed fifth in the standings with nine points from five games.



py with how India started but Mandeep changed that in the second quarter when he scored a sensational goal in the 22nd minute.

He picked up the ball from Abhishek, drove through the right flank and took aim with an ambitious, powerful shot. It was bang on target, finding the corner post.

India dramatically turned their fortunes around in the second quarter, launching lethal attacks and denting Ireland's defence.

The third quarter saw India work tirelessly to take the

lead. The occasion finally arrived in the 45th minute when they were awarded a penalty corner.

Harmanpreet's drag-flick was blocked by the Irish keeper but Jarmanpreet, who had just made a perfect injection, was quick to pick up the rebound and put it past the goalie to give the hosts a 2-1 lead.

The final 15 minutes were eventful with plenty of scoring opportunities. India won a penalty corner with a few minutes left on the clock, while under-pressure Ireland lost a man as Luke Witherow got a yellow card.

With just a little over a minute left for the final hooter, Sukhjeet scored the third goal for India, and this one was sublime. Instead of taking the drag-flick, Harmanpreet adopted a brilliant variation. He passed the ball to Rajinder, who took the shot with Sukhjeet only having to give the finishing touch.

INDIAN EVES' POOR RUN CONTINUES



The Indian women's hockey team continued to disappoint as it lost 0-4 to Germany in FIH Pro League here Friday. The Germans controlled the match from the start to finish, scoring their first three goals -- all field efforts -- through Amelie Wortmann (3rd minute) and Sophia Schwabe (18th, 47th) before Johanne Hachenberg converted a penalty corner in the 59th minute. The Germans secured as many as 10 penalty corners in the match as against India's just two. The Germans struck in the third minute through Wortmann, who shot home from a goalmouth melee. India will next play Germany again here on Saturday. India are currently placed seventh in the nine-team standings on six points from four games, while Germany are a rung above on seven points from six games.

Shami's love affair with ICC events

Dubai, Feb 21: A difficult and painful injury layoff firmly behind him, seasoned India pacer Mohammed Shami says attention to detail and loyalty towards his craft make him lethal in ICC events where he only cares about breakthroughs and not his economy rate.

Shami grabbed a brilliant five-wicket haul in India's Champions Trophy opener against Bangladesh to play a pivotal role in the team's six-wicket triumph. In the process, he also became the fastest Indian and the second quickest overall to reach 200 ODI wickets here Thursday night.

The 34-year-old quick battled a career-threatening 14-month layoff due to an ankle injury during the 2023 ODI World Cup. He returned to international action last month in the limited-overs series against England and is now leading India's attack here in the absence of an injured Jasprit Bumrah.

"I just try to complete my skill with utmost loyalty. Like I have completed my 14 months - How loyal are you to that skill? How hungry are you to achieve your goal...How you will get that rhythm again. You should be hungry," Shami said when asked about his love affair with ICC events.

While wrecking Bangladesh here, Shami became India's leading wicket-taker in 50-over ICC events. His tally now stands at 60, overtaking former India pace spearhead Zaheer Khan.

The retired left-arm seamer had taken 59 wickets in 32 innings while Shami crossed the mark in just his 19th innings. He has 55 wickets in ODI World Cups across three editions, with 24 coming in the 2023 tournament hosted at home.

Shami said he has always focussed on minor details like rhythm, and level of discomfort while bowling to understand where he stood in



terms of his form.

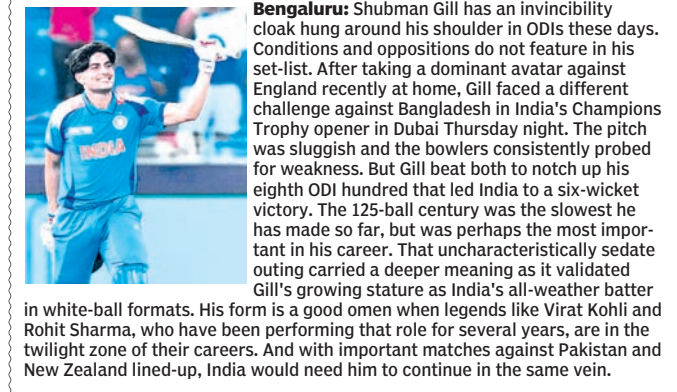
"Is your rhythm good? Do you have any discomfort? I pay attention to those things. I don't pay attention to the result. I pay attention to the present. And I always try to meet the situation that is in demand. Am I good at that or not?" he said giving a peek into his mind.

Shami, who claimed his sixth ODI fiver here, also has the most five-wicket hauls for India in the format. He recalled the frustration he felt while watching India's woes in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy last month when Bumrah shouldered the enormous burden of leading the attack without him at the other end.

"It was very difficult...when you see that your team is very close to the edge, or it's a very close match, at that time you miss your bowlers who you used to bowl along with, or your unit. I wish I was there," he said.

In ICC events, if my ball gets hit a little, that's okay, but I should get a wicket, then that will be better for my team. I always think about this
MOHAMMED SHAMI | BOWLER, INDIA

GILL'S TON GIVES INDIA CONFIDENCE



Bengaluru: Shubman Gill has an invincibility cloak hung around his shoulder in ODIs these days. Conditions and oppositions do not feature in his set-list. After taking a dominant avatar against England recently at home, Gill faced a different challenge against Bangladesh in India's Champions Trophy opener in Dubai Thursday night. The pitch was sluggish and the bowlers consistently probed for weakness. But Gill beat both to notch up his eighth ODI hundred that led India to a six-wicket victory. The 125-ball century was the slowest he has made so far, but was perhaps the most important in his career. That uncharacteristically sedate outing carried a deeper meaning as it validated Gill's growing stature as India's all-weather batter in white-ball formats. His form is a good omen when legends like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, who have been performing that role for several years, are in the twilight zone of their careers. And with important matches against Pakistan and New Zealand lined-up, India would need him to continue in the same vein.

SHORT TAKES

OCA expands Esports program

New Delhi: India's chances of making a significant impact in Esports at the 2026 Asian Games have received a major boost, with the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) announcing an expanded lineup of 11 Esports titles for the event. In a major development, the OCA Executive Board, during its meeting in Harbin, China, approved the inclusion of Street Fighter 6, Pokémon Unite, Honor of Kings, League of Legends - Asian Games Version, PUBG - Asian Games Version, Mobile Legends - Bang Bang, Naraka: Bladepoint, Gran Turismo 7, eFootball Series, and Puyo Puyo Champions as medal events in the 2026 Games.

Kerala enter historic Ranji Trophy final

Ahmedabad: A resilient Kerala Friday sealed their maiden Ranji Trophy final by taking a dramatic two-run first-innings lead over Gujarat, 68 years after making their debut in Indian cricket's premier domestic competition. Going into the final day at 429/7, the home side, who won the Ranji title in 2016-17, needed just 29 runs to take a first innings lead. However, left-arm spinner Aditya Sarwate delivered under pressure, taking all three wickets to bowl Gujarat out for 455 in 174.4 overs to leave them two runs short of the mark. Making only their second semifinal appearance, the visitors had been left frustrated by a dogged 72-run eighth-wicket stand between Jaymeeth Patel (74 overnight) and Siddharth Desai (24 overnight). They started the day needing three wickets with just 28 runs to defend.

Sinner out of Las Vegas exhibition

Las Vegas: Jannik Sinner has been dropped from an exhibition event in Las Vegas next month while the No 1-ranked men's tennis player is serving a three-month ban connected to a pair of failed doping tests. Instead of Sinner, Casper Ruud is now slated to join Alexander Zverev, Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul March 2 as part of the MGM Rewards Slam at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. The switch was announced Thursday in a news release that said Sinner "will not play following his recent suspension." Last weekend, Sinner accepted the punishment as part of a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency.

Haryana and Railways register dominant wins

Cuttack, Feb 21: Services delivered the most commanding performance of the day, while Goa and Rajasthan also registered wins on the second day of the Senior National Kabaddi Championships here Friday.

Services led by Pro Kabaddi League's Naveen Kumar notched up a 70-33 victory over



Chhattisgarh, while Goa edged past Jammu & Kashmir 38-35 and Rajasthan beat Jharkhand 61-43 in another match.

Karnataka demonstrated their talent with a clinical 46-26 victory over Uttarakhand, while Punjab dominated their match against Bengal, securing a 49-24 win.

Defending champions Haryana - which has Ashu Malik at the fore - continued their winning streak, defeating Delhi 39-19 in a Pool A encounter.

OFC look to make playoff bid



Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: After a thrilling 3-1 comeback victory over Hyderabad FC, the Kalinga Warriors head into their final three matches of the league season with their playoff hopes in the balance. The Kalinga Warriors face a monumental challenge against league leaders Mohun Bagan SG at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata, with the home side within touching distance of the Shield.

The warriors have no room for error; they need maximum points from their remaining three fixtures to secure a place in the playoffs. Sergio Lobera's men will go level with Mumbai City with a win, with the Islanders having been held by Hyderabad FC in their last outing.

Odisha FC currently sits in 7th place in the league, with 29 points, with two of their final three games against sides in the top three.

On the other hand, Mohun Bagan SG will look to wrap up the Shield with a win against their eastern rivals. They enter this match after a dominant 3-0 victory over Kerala Blasters FC. With 49 points from 21 games, they are 10 points clear of second-placed FC Goa, and three more points would

India interested in hosting 2030 CWG

New Delhi, Feb 21: India is "interested" in hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games and also conduct all those disciplines that were axed from the 2026 edition to ensure that the country's medal tally is not affected when the event is held in Glasgow, a source in the sports ministry revealed Friday.

The last date to submit an 'Expression of Interest' to host the 2030 CWG is March 31 and the ministry source said the process will get underway soon.

"We are interested in hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games and a formal interaction has taken place with the Commonwealth Games Federation on this. We have also proposed that all the disciplines that have been removed from the 2026 CWG be held in India," the source said.

India last hosted the CWG in 2010. The ministry's push to have the axed events of the 2026 edition in India is a way to ensure that the CWG remains a high medal-yielding competition for the country.

Last year, in a huge blow to India's medal prospects, key sports such as hockey, badminton, wrestling, cricket and shooting were dropped from the programme by host city Glasgow, which announced a pruned roster of 10 disciplines to keep the event budget-friendly.

"We are merely looking to ensure that our medal tally does not suffer. An informal proposal (to have axed disciplines in India) has been put across, we will see how the host city responds to it," the source said.

India had given a similar proposal for the archery and shooting competitions of the 2022 CWG in Birmingham and the CGF, along with the host city, had even approved it by agreeing to add the medals won to the finally tally. However, the idea could not be executed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table tennis, squash and triathlon were also axed by Glasgow in a bid to limit the cost and streamline logistics given that only four venues will host the entire showpiece there. The total number of events at the Games is nine less than the 2022 Birmingham edition.

New Delhi, Feb 21: In a bid to resolve Indian sports' perennial problem of selection furores, the sports ministry will push for trials that are video-graphed in the presence of an observer across disciplines.

The move, ministry hopes, will ensure that no athlete feels aggrieved or hard done during the selection process.

"All selection trials will be conducted under video surveillance to ensure transparency and fairness. You will see the turbulence in sports come down with these efforts," a ministry source said.

The turbulence being referred to is the tug of war that often plagues selection process in the country. Athletes from major sports like shooting and wrestling knocked on the doors of courts before the Olympics last year after complaining of bias and opaque policies.

"The selection trials (from now on) will have observers as well. Ministry and Sports Authority of India (SAI) officials will be present during the process and this will be implemented across sports," the source said.

