

Shruti's revelation Actor Shruti Haasan says she used a fake name to not associate with her illustrious parents' fame

LEISURE | P2

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 325 I www. orissapost.com

Three years of war

Ukraine hosts European leaders to mark three years of all-out war with Russia, while top US officials stay away

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**

BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 25, 2025



Sensex tanks 850 pts

Falling for fifth straight session, equity benchmark BSE Sensex plunges over 850 points to drop below 75,000 level

BUSINESS | P11

Eves suffer defeat

The Indian women's hockey team waste chances galore to lose 2-4 to reigning Olympic champions Netherlands

34.98L farmers

in state receive

PM-KISAN aid

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Prime

Minister Narendra Modi Monday released the 19th instal-

ment of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

scheme under which 9.8 crore

farmers across the country,

including 34.98 lakh from Odi-

sha, received ₹22,000 crore

Principal Secretary to state

Agriculture & Farmers' Em-

powerment department Ar

abinda Kumar Padhee said, "The state government has

successfully included 3,43,447

additional beneficiaries under PM-KISAN scheme through a

This initiative was taken fol

lowing Chief Minister Mohan

Charan Majhi's announcement

to identify and include farmers

who were previously excluded despite their eligibility for the

"The Chief Minister had

announced a special drive to

identify and include eligible

beneficiaries who were left out

of PM-KISAN. As a result of

our saturation drive, 3,43,447

more farmers will now receive the benefits of the scheme

compared to last time," Padhee said, while addressing the

special saturation drive."

POST NEWS NETWORK

assistance.

scheme.

media here

SPORTS | P12

12 PAGE |₹5.00

Survival hope of 8 T'gana tunnel workers dims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Feb 24: After being trapped for more than two days under debris and muck, the chances of survival of the eight persons in the SLBC tunnel following a partial collapse appear bleak, even as every effort is made to reach them.

Despite relentless efforts by Indian Army, Navy, NDRF, and other agencies, no breakthrough has been achieved so far in the rescue operations as the teams had to navigate through thick muck, tangled iron rods, and cement blocks to reach the accident spot in the tunnel to extricate the persons who have remained trapped for over two days inside the tunnel after a section of it collapsed in the Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) project in Telangana's Nagarkurnool district on Saturday morning.

A team of 584 skilled personnel of Army, Navy, Singareni Collieries and other agencies along with central and state disaster response teams, have conducted tunnel inspections seven times, official sources said adding gas cutters to cut the metal rod are continuously working.

dogs were also Sniffer brought in to locate those in-



side the tunnel. However, due to the presence of water, they were unable to move forward. Minister Jupally Krishna Rao Monday said the chances of their survival are "very remote", and rescuing the trapped individuals would take

at least three to four days, as



SHORT CUT: A passenger tries to board an overcrowded train through its emergency window at Patna railway station, Monday, as several trains were cancelled amid rush ahead of the holy dip on 'Maha Shivratri' at the ongoing Prayagraj Mahakumbh

Top court comes to consumers' relief

In what has come as a relief for the common man who is duped day in and day out by companies placing misleading advertisements for their healthcare prod-

advertisements, the Supreme Court Monday emphasised on the importance of the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, 1954 and the need for a mechanism

Siddha, and Unani drugs. The bench was informed that in Karnataka, no prosecution was initiated in 25 cases of alleged misleading advertise-

UN votes for withdrawal of troops by Russia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Feb 24: The UN General Assembly Monday approved a Ukrainian resolution demanding an immediate withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine on the third anniversary of the invasion.

The vote in the 193-member world body, whose resolutions

Youth kills lover over failed affair

POST NEWS NETWORK

Soro, Feb 24: In yet another

incident of tragic end to a failed

love affair, a youth allegedly

murdered a woman in broad

daylight at Lingapada under

Soro Municipality in Balasore

MAN SLAPS WIFE TO **DEATH OVER CURRY**

Dhenkanal: A woman died after her husband thrashed her on her ear lobe following an argument over preparing chicken curry at Dhanianali, Munda Sahi under

Gondia police limits in Dhenka

the accident site is filled with muck and debris, making it a daunting task for the rescuers.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Tough times for the airline! The minister has come prepared – with his own seat

ucts, the Supreme Court Monday made a terse observation on the lacunae in the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 that failed to provide a mechanism for redressal of consumer grievances. While hearing a petition filed by Indian Medical Association (and others) in connection with vague advertisements put up by pharmaceutical companies, the top court told the amicus curiae that it will direct creation of some dedicated phone lines, 'or something', so that people can file complaints. Nevertheless, the court's pro-active stand is likely to herald a new chapter in consumer

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: Hearing a petition filed by Indian Medical Association (IMA) in 2022 pertaining to misleading medical

empowerment in the country

under it to enable citizens to file complaints.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Drug and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act. 1954 was of vital importance. It said a machinerv has to be set up for the citizens who wanted to file complaints over misleading advertisements.

The bench said it would consider the aspect March 7, 2025.

It also dealt with the issue concerning compliance of Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 by Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Union territory of Puducherry. The top court had August 27 last year stayed a notification issued by the Ministry of Ayush, which omitted Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 that prohibits misleading

advertisements of Ayurvedic,

ments due to lack of material particulars.

"According to us, these are only excuses given by the state of Karnataka. They have their own police machinery, cyber cell. It is very easy for them to find out the sources of these advertisements, provided there is a will on the state's part to do so," the bench observed.

It asked Karnataka govern ment to ascertain the wrongdoers and place a compliance report before it within a month. Senior advocate Shadan Farasat, assisting the court as an amicus curiae, said as far as Kerala was concerned, there was proper implementation of

the Rule in the state. While hearing the matter February 10, the SC had slammed several states over the "failure" to act against illegal advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani drugs.

are not legally binding but are seen as a barometer of world opinion, was 93-18 with 65 abstentions. The European-backed resolution was approved ahead of a vote on a dueling US proposal that calls for a swift end to the war but never mentions Russia's invasion of Ukraine February 24, 2022.

Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Mariana Betsa said her country is exercising its "inherent right to self-defense" following Russia's invasion, which violates the UN Charter's requirement that countries respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations INDIA ABSTAINS

India, however, abstained from the draft resolution that called for de-escalation, an ear ly cessation of hostilities and a peaceful resolution of the war against Ukraine.

district Monday. The victim was identified as Jyotirmayee Rana, 25, daughter of Manoranjan Rana of the village

According to sources, the accused. Biswaranjan Kuanr. had been harassing Jyotirmayee after she refused his marriage proposal

The victim was working for a private company in Bangalore but had returned home two months ago. When she was alone at home Monday, her throat was slit in a gruesome attack. When her family members returned, they found Jvotirmayee lying in a pool of blood. They rushed her to Soro Hospital, where doctors declared her dead. Soro police reached the spot and began an investigation.

Jyotirmayee had filed a complaint at Soro police station two days ago against a young man from Chudamani village, under

nal district Sunday night. The deceased was identified as Kuni Pingua, 30, wife of Jena Pingua, 40. Police said the couple got into a heated argument when Kuni refused to prepare chicken curry for dinner. The dispute escalated as Jena allegedly struck Kuni with a forceful slap on her left ear, causing her to collapse and die on the spot. The couple has three children- two sons, and a daughter. Gondia police reached the spot and registered a murder case (75/25) and arrested Pingua. The body was sent to district headquarters hospi tal in Dhenkanal for post-mortem. "The accused will be produced in the court Tuesday," Gondia police station inspector-in-charge (IIC) Shantanu Pradhan said.

Basudevpur police limits, for harassing her. It is suspected that the man, enraged by her rejection, committed the murder. Soro police has registered a case (162/25) in this regard. The accused, however, was at large till the last reports came in.

Ensure speedy justice to **KIIT victim: Nepal NHRC**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal has urged its Indian counterpart to investigate the unnatural death of a 20-year-old girl student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) here and ensure speedy justice to her.

The alleged death by suicide of B Tech student Prakriti Lamsal and the subsequent attack on protesting Nepalese pupils at KIIT and their eviction from the campus created a furore, prompting the Nepal government to intervene in the matter. Nepal NHRC, in a press release, said it has written to the NHRC of India requesting it to probe the suspicious death of the woman, who hailed from Kathmandu, and provide speedy justice to the students who were allegedly beaten up and mistreated at KIIT

university officials and indi-

It urged India's NHRC to ensure security for Nepalese students and ensure that they can study in a fear-free environment, besides bringing the

viduals involved in the incident to book. Based on the complaints received, the commission also Nicosia sought information from the Nepal Embassy in India about the incident and the condition of the

REUTERS

Akaki (Cyprus), Feb 24: In a back-to-basics approach, organic farmers in Cyprus have recruited hundreds of retired hens to fertilise olive groves in a pilot project they say boosts vields, counters disease, and helps to manage food waste.

Saved from slaughter after their egg-laying years, hens peck and poop to their hearts' content among olive trees at the organically certified Akaki Grove, on the green foothills of the Troodos mountains west of

Setting a classic example of increasing productivity through organic farming, farmer and grove owner Elena Christoforos

and soil engineer Nicolas Ne tien have launched the Kot-Kot project. They collect food waste donations to feed hens, which in turn provide natural fertiliser for olive trees producing oil high in inflammation-busting polyphenols.

"We provide them with an old hens' home, they come here and retire," said Christoforos, surrounded by clucking chickens while emptying bins of food waste donated by schoolchildren.

Hens reduce the presence of pests such as olive fly, a scourge for olive farmers in the Mediterranean, by pecking at larvae while simultaneously clearing surface weed cover.

Their droppings enrich the



Organic farmer Elena Christoforos stands amidst retired farm hens at a farm in Akaki, Cyprus PHOTO: REUTERS

soil, and feeding them with food waste reduces the amount of methane-producing organic matter going into landfill.

The hens can enjoy a long retirement among the olive trees, living for 8-10 years despite only laving eggs until the age of 2.

"The goal here is to create a biodiverse, self-sustained ecosys tem that can sustain really high temperatures and long droughts So when I bring animals into the system by eating ground cover and pooping, it speeds up the cycle," Netien said.

Netien, who holds the world record for producing olive oil with the highest polyphenol content, said olive tree growth and yields had improved markedly since the hens arrived.





students, the release said.









Retired hens revitalise Cyprus olive groves



ISUre



to win

PATRICK WISHES HE DIDN'T **HAVE HIS LAST NAME**

Actor Patrick Schwarzenegger, who is the son of Hollywood legend Arnold Schwarzenegger and his ex-wife Maria Shriver, sometimes wishes he had a different last name as people assume he only got into acting because of his legendary parents.

JUSTIN BIEBER WANTS TO **TEACH SON ICE SKATING**

Singer-songwriter Justin Bieber, who is enjoying his fatherhood, has revealed that he's not going to waste any time when it comes to getting his 6-month-old son Jack Blues onto the ice skating.



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JNE FORECAST Ganesha Speaks.com

accuracy • reliability • trust

Ganesha sees a wonderful time ahead for you. Today. you will meet many people who will prove reliable and trustworthy in the future. You aim to think and work perfectly. For that, says Ganesha, you will have to remain your practical and head-on-shoulders self.

TAURUS

Today, you will strike a great balance between your profes-sional and personal life, predicts Ganesha. You vill save your money from being swindled

by others. You may be lagging in the race to catch up with your goals, but will not be disappointed by what you achieve. It is an auspicious day to undertake business deals and start new projects, feels Ganesha.

GEMINI

Today, you will have a tendency to remain possessive about your personal

belongings, says Ganesha. You are likely to join personality development courses to achieve your ultimate goals. An un-pleasant occurrence is likely to throw you off guard. But remember, there is hope when there is life.

CANCER

Today, you will use money to fulfil your needs. If there is anything that according to you needs changing, you will throw some money to get it changed. Your loved ones will celebrate your financial gains and spend some more of it in the process.

LEO

You may not have a halo around your head, but that most certainly does not deter you from playing the spiritual card today, says Ganesha. On this auspicious day, it is through religious scriptures that you satiate your desire to attain the intangible Spend some time meditating on the finer aspects of life; you will be amazed at the answers such contemplation can throw up

VIRGO

Something you achieve in a most unexpected manner will make you very happy today. But your happiness may possibly be marred by getting agitated about the problems you are facing. You may expect new funds for new projects, savs Gane

sha. Your business will flourish today. LIBRA

A wistful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesha. This day, just like 'on the summer day that we flew kites', may be the standard

when it comes to wanting to have a

MUMBAI: Shraddha Kapoor's dia. With a massive global fan following, she work has always spoken for itself. Ever since she ventured into films. continues she has delivered several hits and hearts with her talhas become one of the finest actressent and charm. Her es in Indian cinema. Known for her record-breaking success with Stree strong screen presence, she captivates audiences every time she ap-*2* is proof that she is pears on screen. She last starred in one of the best in the Stree 2, one of the biggest blockbustindustry. ers of 2024. In the sequel, Shraddha Kapoor

Shraddha on her limited screen time in Stree 2

spirit central to the storyline. However, her presence left a lasting impression, adding depth and intrigue to the narrative.

Shraddha broke her silence on her role in Stree 2, revealing how she surrendered to the director's vision, trusting the storytelling to make her character impactful despite fewer appearances. Shraddha told an agency, "As always, I surrendered to the director's vision. I mean, no one knows the film or its characters better than him, so who best to take guidance from.'

Shraddha stole the spotlight in Stree 2. She is currently at

the top of her game, de-MUMlivering consistent BAI: While hits and breakmany versions of Mahabharata has already been ing records released including a cult televion social sion classic of the mythological saga mewhich wooed the audiences in the

90s, top actor Aamir Khan too had expressed his keen desire to bring it to life on the silver screen. Although he reveal any details any confirmation about the cast

insisted



like think about doing a film on the epic tale of Mahabhara*ta*. At an event hosted by a news portal, Aamir said, "I had this dream of making Mahabharata. I can think about that dream now.

When the host de-Aamir's update cided to prod further information and asked if the acon *Mahabharata* tor would be a part of it

too, Aamir initially hesitated with a pause and after thinking for a bit, he answered, "Let's see." Readers would be aware that the excitement for this project has always remained high. Furthermore, fans of Khan are ex-MUMcited to see him BAI: venture into this mythological sa-

not

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ga too.

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or provide

Aamir Khan

that

did

or

Actress Kangana Ranaut Sunday shared a

series of notes on her Instagram story, criticizing films that, according to her, promote divorce. While she did not mention any specific film, her comments sparked discussions among netizens, who speculated that she was addressing the ongoing debate around a recent release, Mrs, starring Sanya Malhotra.

The film in question, which features a protagonist navigating a difficult marriage, has received support from many Indian apsee and now Sanya.

> THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. TRY THE OTHER DIRECTION ...

Fame is transient in real life: SHRUTI

BANGALORE: Shruti Haasan has gradually built a name and recognition for herself through her own merit and hard work, despite being a star kid. Recently, the Coolie actress revealed a time when she preferred to use a fake name to avoid being associated with her illustrious parents.

Speaking with a news portal, the Luck actress said, "Fame is transient in real life. Despite all the glory attached to it, I believe it is temporary.

The actress shared that growing up as the daughter of well-known actors helped her grasp the concept of fame, but it also made her realize that it had nothing to do with her personally. To emphasize her independence, she once adopted a pseudonym, allowing others to see her for who she truly is, rather than just as the child of her famous parents.

Shruti said, "My parents were famous, and I had this identity rebellion. I even used a fake name so that people would treat me as an individual and not associate me with my parents' fame.

She went on to reveal that she now understands it is useless to build a career solely based on fame. Shruti recalled watching her father, Kamal Haasan, put in immense hard work—burning the midnight oil and preparing all night for his roles—just so he could perform well the next day on stage. AGENCIES

COMMENT ON DIVORCE

KANGANA faces backlash

women for highlighting patriarchal norms. However, Kangana expressed concern that such narratives could negatively influence societal perceptions of marriage. Her remarks did not sit well with a section of the internet, leading to backlash on social media platforms.

Several users called out the actress for what they perceived as hypocrisy, questioning her stance on marriage and traditional values. One Reddit user commented, "Why doesn't she get married, have kids, take care of her parents, cook, and not eat out... set an example and fulfill her dharma?" Another user drew parallels between Kangana's criticism and her past remarks about fellow actresses, stating, "She is just scared that another curly-haired girl will usurp the throne. She did the same to Ta-

FUN

better future. Ganesha expects a sea of our outlook thanks to sweetheart's noble gesture today.

SCORPIO

Dear friends and soul mates will bring you much relief and calm today, says Ganesha. Spend as much time as possible with them. Romantic escapades with your beloved will be heaven in itself. Blood relations will stand true and strong in matters of importance, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

You take the path of spirituality for the peace of mind and to stay away from the daily humdrum of life. You will not only seek love, but also spread love around you. In a nutshell, a pleasant day in store for you, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Your outstanding intellectual ability will not only yield exciting results for you,

but will also help your close associates who will have progressed a great deal in their career because of your valuable advice, says Ganesha. Scores of problems may come your way, but you will have nothing to worry about. You will deal with each one of them with ease.

You have managed to carve a niche for yourself. Today, you may see the tangible benefits of all your past hard work. But business rivals may poke and pinch; even your health may trouble you. However, you will manage to smile and take things in the right spirit, approves Ganesha

PISCES

An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesha.



CALVIN AND HOBBES



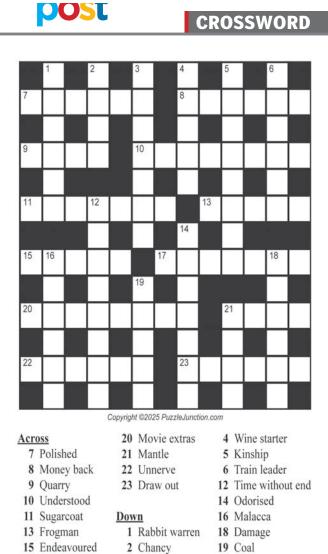
PEANUTS

BREVITY

YOU KNOW I WANTED TO HAVE A POLLINATOR GARDEN, BUT I CAN'T DECIDE IF I WANT OUR BUMBLING FRIENDS AROUND THE YARD.







CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

21 Golf shot

3 Suggested

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.

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		2	6	1			7	
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SOLUTIONS

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2	Μ		R		Е		Ν		Е		С		G
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4 3 9 4 8 3 5 7 6 3 4 1 2 9 5 8 1 2 9 3 8 5 7 6 4 8 5 4 6 9 7 1 3 2









17 Synthetic fibre



SUDOKU



owntown

IN MEMORIAM

People from various walks of life pay tribute to Kantakabi Laxmikant Mohapatra on the death anniversary of the noted poet at an event organised by Utkal Sammilani near Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Monday



CM proposes Odisha Bhawan in Ayodhya

RESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has proposed to set up an Odisha Bhawan in Ayodhya as a large number of people visit the place seeking Lord Ram Lalla's blessings.

During his three-day visit to Uttar Pradesh, Majhi took a holy dip at the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj and had a darshan of Lord Ram Lalla at Ayodhya Sunday

"A number of people from Odisha visit Ayodhya for darshan of Lord Ram Lalla. I think an Odisha Bhawan should be built in Ayodhya for the Odia people. I will take up the matter with UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and request him for land in Ayodhya," Majhi said in a post on X.

Accompanied by his wife, an Odisha minister and an MLA, Majhi also visited Dhamek Stupa at Sarnath Monday

"It is an honour to visit Sar-

nath, a place where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon, a message of peace, wisdom. and enlightenment. I am deeply moved by the efforts made to preserve and showcase this

heritage, signifying our timeless values of compassion and knowledge, to visitors from around the world. My heartfelt gratitude to the people who have been instrumental in maintaining this historic site,' Majhi said in another post.

The CM also visited the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi and offered prayers. He also attended the closing

ceremony of the Kashi Tami Sangamam at Kashi. "The Kashi Tamil San gamam is not just an event

it is a bridge between the North and South, a celebration of shared traditions and cultural harmony. It reminds us that while our languages. customs, and practices may differ, our core values of love, respect, and spirituality remain the same. This cultural integration is what makes India a truly unique and vibrant nation," Majhi was quoted as saying in a release issued by the Chief Minister's Office.



SUMMER'S HERE: Amid soaring temperatures, a Fire Services personnel sprays water on walkway near the Lion's Gate of Srimandir in Puri, Monday

DRI recovers 1,448 Indian flapshell turtles



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials arrested a man after recovering 1,448 Indian flapshell turtles from his possession at Godipada Toll Plaza late Sunday night, official sources said Monday.

"Acting on intelligence inputs, DRI officials nabbed the man and also seized the vehicle used in carrying the turtles. He has been booked under provisions of Section 50(1)(c), read with. Section 9 and Sl.No.44 of Schedule-I of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972," they said.

Indian flapshell turtles, classified as a Schedule I species, are accorded stringent protection under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. "The DRI remains committed to combating wildlife trafficking and enforcing the laws that protect endangered species," they added.

EOW nabs 'money-doubling' fraudster from Hyd AGENCIES Budheswari area in the City, deposited money with Mutual

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The economic offences wing (EOW) of Odisha Police arrested a man for allegedly duping people by collecting deposits with the false promise of doubling their money in 10 months, police said. The accused, identified as

Dhanajaya Sahoo, was arrested in Hyderabad and brought to the state on remand Monday. A case has been registered

against him under various sections of the IPC and the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, police added. He was arrested following a

complaint by Govinda Chandra Sahoo of Jaipur district, who had

Alliance Global Private Limited, a company owned by Dhanajaya. Investigations revealed that between 2011 and 2021, Dhanajaya established at least five companies — Goodland Happy Home Infra Limited., Goodland Construction Private Limited. PURIFIO Technology Private Limited, Coinex Technology Private Limited, and Mutual Alliance Global Private Limited, where he served as managing director.

Through these companies, he lured investors by promising exorbitant returns, claiming that the deposited funds would be reinvested in real estate marketing, blockchain-based real

According to the probe so far, **Dhanajaya collected** around ₹5 crore in unregulated deposits from around 200 investors between 2020 and 2021

estate ventures, e-commerce, and online gaming platforms. In 2020, he founded his latest company, Mutual Alliance Global Private Limited, operating from Chintamaniswar Temple,

police said.

According to the probe so far, Dhanajaya collected around ₹5 crore in unregulated deposits from around 200 investors between 2020 and 2021

The victims were from Cuttack, Khurda, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Keonjhar, and Mayurbhanj dis tricts, police added.

Authorities have seized several incriminating materials from the accused, including a laptop, mobile phone, pen drive, bank account documents, ATM cards, and a passport.

Police also discovered that Dhanajaya had traveled to foreign countries such as Dubai. Thailand, and Germany.

WATCO bags nat'l level e-governance award



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Water Corporation of Odisha (WAT-CO), under the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department, has been honoured with the prestigious 'Technology Sabha Award 2025' in the Enterprise Application category for its pioneering Water monitoring

It aims to provide a comprehensive solution for water quality sample collection, testing, and data surveillance monitoring using web-enabled and mobile app-driven technologies across urban areas of the state

"The system facilitates real-time quality surveillance, ensuring a safe water supply to every household," they said WATCO MD Gurucharan Das and senior officers from the or ganisation presented the award to H&UD department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee. H&UD department Special Secretary Debasis Singh was also present While congratulating the WATCO MD and his team, Padhee said that this achievement is a testament to Odisha's commitment to leveraging digital governance for improved public service delivery. "The Water Quality Data Acquisition and Monitoring System is a significant step forward in ensuring water safety and enhancing citizen satisfac tion across urban areas," Pad hee added.



'Ankita' delivers cub POST NEWS NETWORK

Barang, Feb 24: Tigress Ankita, one of the major attractions at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here, delivered a cub Monday, official sources said. With this, the tiger population at NZP reached 28. Ankita was born to 'Rishi' and 'Sara' at Nandankanan January 13, 2013.



MATTER OF FAITH: A long serpentine queue of devotees outside Lord Loknath temple in Puri on the occasion of Pankodhar Ekadashi, Monday

Quality Data Acquisition and Monitoring System, official sources said Monday.

The national-level e-governance award recognises excellence in leveraging technology for public service delivery. The award was conferred during the Technology Sabha event held in Hyderabad from February 21 to 23.

Developed in technical collaboration with NIC, Odisha State Centre. Bhubaneswar. the Water Quality Data Acquisition and Monitoring System is an online, inteworkflow-oriented grated. platform that combines Government-to-Citizen (G2C) and Government-to-Government (G2G) services with real-time

IIT-Ramco Cements pact for sustainable construction

The

research

focuses on

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Indian Institute of Technology-Bhubaneswar (IIT-B) Monday signed an MoU with Ramco

Cements Limited to establish a centre of excellence (CoE) in the area of sustainable construction and climate resiliency.

The agreement aims to conduct high-quality research related to sustainable construction materials and tech-

niques themed on climate resiliency, an official said. The CoE has been named

Ramco Sustainable Construction and Climate Resiliency Centre (RAMSCON).

The research focuses on the development of advanced and

sustainable concrete solutions for durability, efficiency and specialised applications. The agreement is aligned with the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) to improve the

sustainability index of the Indian construction industry, the official the development said. Speaking

of advanced and sustainable concrete on the occasion, IIT-Bhusolutions for durability, efficiency and baneswar Dispecialised rector Shreepad Karmalkar said, applications This collaboration

will enhance the ecosystem in industry-academia interaction in the field of sustainable and climate-resilient construction.

Officials of the company said the MoU will bring transformation in research and development activities

Risk of Asteroid 2024 YR4 hitting Earth, Moon low

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 24: The risk of Asteroid 2024 YR4 hitting Earth and Moon in December 2032 is relatively low, said scientists Monday.

The asteroid discovered in December 2024, has been dubbed as the large 'city-killer'. Scientists have reported its enhanced chances of hitting Earth in December 2032.

'The mass of that asteroid is not very high as compared to Earth. So as far as Earth as a whole is concerned, the impact of the asteroid hitting Earth would be negligible,' Astrophysicist Professor Varun Bhalerao from IIT Bombay told IANS. But, if the asteroid blows up in the atmosphere, it can create some explosion which will damage a lot of things, the

expert noted. Initially, NASA estimates showed it had a 3.1 per cent

chance of striking Earth in 2032. However, recent observations have reduced this risk to just 0.28 per cent.

Confirming this, NASA in a post shared on social media platform X said: "New data gathered last night (Feb 19-20) dropped the December 2032 impact odds of asteroid 2024 YR4 to 0.28 per cent. Monitoring continues.'

"The possibility that 2024 YR4 could impact the Earth in 2032 is really remote. We know that disaster is going to come close to the Earth in 2032 to within one and a half times the distance to the moon as of today," said Davide Farnocchia, a navigation engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in a post on X.

"The probability of impact is only 0.3 per cent we're going to keep updating this impact probability as we collect additional tracking data," he added, stating that the probability might



go down to zero.

Bhalerao explained that scientists measure the orbit of the asteroid to understand how it can impact Earth.

"Earth is a heavy body, so it keeps moving but for asteroids, based on what other objects they pass by, it will make very small deflections in their path. While uncertainty is always there, as you get closer and closer to the mark, the uncertainty decreases, because now vou can update based on your data," the Astrophysicist said

Amid reports that the Moon can now be a possible target, Bhalerao said "The probability of hitting the Moon is actually a bit smaller, because Moon is physically smaller, and the as-

teroid is not massive enough to do something like that".

"The chance of impact with the Moon is about 1 per cent, added NASA.

So what are the odds of other asteroids hitting the Earth?

"Every time you see a meteor shower, it is asteroid hitting the earth, except they burn up in the atmosphere. They look beautiful. We all enjoy the sight, so our atmosphere is kind of working like a shield to protect us from these things. Bhalerao said.

"Now, no matter how good your shield is, if something is bigger, it can penetrate the shield. And as you go to large and larger sizes, something the size of a kilometer or so proba bly is enough to wipe out all life on Earth. Something like that probably killed the dinosaurs, as far as our best understand ing goes," he said, emphasising the need to keep monitoring.

















CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVI



By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Notary LAKHANPUR, dated 06.12.2024, I, Pitambari Dhurua wife of Pabitra Dhurua permanet resident of At/P.O. Machida, P.S. - Rengali, Dist. - Jharsuguda, Odisha - 768226 declare that I have changed my daughter's name Deepte Dharua to Babita Dhurua. Henceforth, she shall be known as Babita Dhurua for all purposes.

(Pitambari Dhurua)



By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Lakhanpur dated 21.01.2025 I, Godabari Bhoi, Address At - Nuamunda, P.O. - Rajpur, P.S. Brajrajnagar, Dist. -Jharsuguda (Odisha), PIN - 768216 dated 21.01.2025 declare that I have changed my name from Gadabari Bhoi to Godabari Bhoi. Henceforth, I shall be known as Godabari Bhoi for all purposes. Godabari Bhoi

Affidavit before Magistrate, Khalikote, Ganjam No.- A/409/ 06.02.2025 I Rilu Sethy (43) S/o- Rabi Sethy, At/P.O.- Bikrampur, P.S./ Tahasil-Khalikote, Ganjam as per my Aadhaar Card but I changed mv name Rilu Sethv to Bhagaban Sethy. Henceforth, I shall be known as Bhagaban Sethy for all future purposes.

By an affidavit, I, Champamani Bhatra @ Damayanti Bagh 49, D/o Jakaba Khosla @ N. Bauri, Vill-Sapsil, PO: Dumuriput, PS: Koraput, PIN-764021 hereby state that my name wrongly mentioned as Champamani in my Savings Passbook Ac No.-544310110002673 instead of Damavanti Bagh. Hence both Champamani Bhatra and Damayanti Bagh are one and same person. By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, dated 20.02.2025 I, Nafise Hussain, Address At-Karanjia, Ward No.5, PO/PS.-Karanjia, Dist: Mayurbhanj, Odisha, PIN-757037 declare that I have changed my daughter's name from Nafia Hussain to Alina Hussain. Henceforth, she shall be known as Alina Hussain for all purposes. Nafise Hussain

6TH ODISHA TRAVEL BAZAAR 'Odisha must shine globally in tourism'

OrissaPOS

TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 25, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

The three-day event seeks to boost investments and elevate Odisha's tourism industry

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat emphasised Odisha's rich cultural heritage and globally renowned temples, urging the state to actively showcase its attractions in national and international tourism forums.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 6th Odisha Travel Bazaar, he stressed the need for enhanced infrastructure, expanded tourism experiences, and strong branding to position Odisha on the global tourism map.

The three-day event, organised by the Tourism department in collaboration with FICCI, aims to attract investments and promote Odisha's tourism sector. Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida called for private sector participation, highlighting the state's diverse tourism offerings, including nature, heritage, and spiritual tourism. She noted that tourism growth would create employment, drive economic progress, and contribute to Odisha's transformation into a developed state.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahu-

ja reaffirmed the government's commitment to boosting tourism infrastructure and creating investor-friendly policies. He stressed that Odisha's untapped tourism potential needs strategic development. Tourism Commission-

er-cum-Secretary Balwant Singh assured stakeholders that the government would act as a facilitator, welcoming investments for developing tourism destinations and improving visitor experiences.

Tourism Director Samarth Verma highlighted the progress made in strengthening Odisha's tourism sector and expressed optimism for future collaborations

Co-chair of the FICCI National Tourism Committee and HRAO's lifetime chairman JK Mohanty proposed an extended seven-night stay for travel agents and tour operators in Odisha to provide them with an immersive experience of the state's attractions.

The event also features interactive competitions like the "Explore Odisha Quiz" "Odisha Tourism Tagline and Competition" to engage partic-



Odisha students to join Manali adventure camp

The camp will include trekking, rock climbing, river crossing, and rafting, aiming to enhance students' personality, teamwork, and adventure skills

POST NEWS NETWORK

'Financial literacy key



MAHAKUMBH FRAMES: Visitors explore a Mahakumbh Mela photo exhibition by Raskesh Roul at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Monday

Spl handloom expo kicks off at Ekamra Haat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: A special handloom expo dedicated to women self-help groups (SHGs) was inaugurated at Ekamra Haat here Monday.

owntown

Organised by the State Agency for Development of Handloom Clusters (SADHAC), the event aims to empower women weavers by providing them with a platform to showcase and sell their handmade prod-

The expo was officially inaugurated by Boyanika managing director Pranati Chhotray in the presence of Textiles & Handloom director Bikramad itya Barik, special officer Indira Behera, Sericulture additional director Surva Naravan Pat



tnaik, joint director of Textiles Debjit Nandy, and other senior officials.

Sponsored by the Handloom, Textiles & Handicrafts department, the event is being

organised by the Directorate of Textiles, Odisha, under the Promotion of Handloom Industry (POHI) scheme for 2024-25.

The expo brings together women SHGs from Bargarh, Cuttack, Subarnapur Athagarh, Boudh, Bolangir, Khurda, Baripada, Balasore Berhampur, Nayagarh, Dhenk anal, Koraput, and Sundargarh.

The artisans will display a variety of handloom products including dress materials, fab rics, and home décor items giving them an opportunity to boost sales and secure regular employment.

Shoppers will have access to authentic, handcrafted textiles from across the state at reason able prices. The expo is open to the public until March 10, with daily timings from 11am to 10 pm. The initiative highlights the state's commitment to pro moting traditional handloom arts and supporting women entrepreneurs in the sector.

TEDX IIM AT SAMBALPUR

to women's prosperity' Visionaries inspire change

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 24: IIM Sambalpur recently hosted an inspiring TEDx Talks event, bringing together distinguished speakers from diverse fields. Themed "ANAGAT: The Unmanifested Future," the event served as a platform for thought-provoking discussions aimed at shaping the aspirations of young professionals. The event featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including Mewar of Udaipur Maharaj Kunwarani Sahiba Nivritti Kumari, first runner-up Miss Trans Queen 2023

Ella D'Verma, Mrs India World 2016 Mohini Sharma, Delhi University professor Itisha Nagar, Kerala's first transgender lawyer Padma Lakshmi, Bhubaneswar Assistant Commissioner of Police Anjana Tudu, Rohit Shrivastav (Founder, Food Findo and Nomadic Narstudents with the opportunity to engage with pioneers, question norms, and redefine the future.'

By bringing together vision aries, we aim to inspire the next generation of leaders to challenge the status quo and drive

meaningful change," he added The TEDx session was further enriched by the presence of fac

ulty members, university asso

ciates, and students, fostering

an environment of intellectual

curiosity and open discussions

The exchange of ideas encour

aged critical thinking, fresh

perspectives, and actionable in

sights for students to implement

in their professional journeys.

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Over 100 students from Odisha are set to participate in a Winter Adventure Camp in Manali, Himachal Pradesh, from February 27 to March 5.

The students embarked on their journey Monday after a send-off ceremony at Kalinga Stadium, where Higher Education, Sports & Youth Services Minister Survabanshi Suraj extended his best wishes. He emphasised that the camp would not only offer new experiences but also help students represent Odisha as youth and cultural ambassadors.

The event was attended by Utkal University VC Sabita Acharya, Sports & Youth Services director Deepankar Mahapatra, and additional secretaries Bijav Kumar Swain and Ashok Kumar Panda.

The camp will include trekking, rock climbing, river crossing, and rafting, aiming to enhance students' personality, teamwork, and adventure skills while providing a memorable learning experience.



Empowering women through financial knowledge to enhance their economic independence and decision-making abilities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: "Financial literacy among women is crucial as they play a significant role in shaping society, managing households, and driving economic growth.' said RBI Bhubaneswar regional eirector Sarada Prasan Mohanty at the inauguration of the 10th edition of Financial Literacy Week (FLW) here Monday. The annual initiative by the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI), observed from February 24 to 28, carries the theme "Financial Literacy – Women's Prosperity" and focuses on empowering women with financial knowledge

Mohanty highlighted the increasing need for women to understand financial planning, risk management, savings, and credit opportunities in the

evolving financial landscape, ensuring their long-term security and independence.

To spread awareness, RBI Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with banks and financial institutions, will conduct educational programmes in all 30 districts of Odisha.

These initiatives specifically target homemakers, working women, and women entrepreneurs, equipping them with tools to make informed financial decisions.

The event saw the participation of senior officials from RBI, the state government. Nabard. SIDBL and various banks. Key attendees included RBI general manager Anita Patnaik, Nabard CGM SK Talukdar, Finance department DIF Pragyansmita Sahoo, and SLBC GM-cum-Convenor Goutam Patra.

Since 2016, RBI has been organising Financial Literacy Week annually, focusing on different population segments to promote financial inclusion.

This year's campaign aims to empower women by enhancing their understanding of financial growth strategies and credit access, reinforcing their role in economic development. Sedentary life harms teen mental health Those who spent more than three

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 24: Teenagers and adolescents who spend more than three hours a day engaged in sedentary behaviours -- which includes playing video games or increased screen exposure -- have a higher risk of facing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. according to a study.

The study, published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, showed that adolescents who spent more than 180 minutes a day on screens for leisure were associated with greater psychological distress at age 17. Video games were particularly influential, with each additional hour associated with a 3 per cent increase in psychological distress.

rator), and Captain Dharamveer Singh (Founder, FORCE & Ambassador).

Welcoming the esteemed guests, IIM Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal remarked. "TEDx at IIM Sambalpur transcends beyond an event; it is a movement towards transformative thinking. It provides

hours a day reading for leisure

(especially boys) also reported

At the same time, moderate

screen exposure (between 60

more psychological distress.

example.

analysing total sitting time, but

we can have positive sedentary

activities, such as attending

class and doing homework, for

WEATHER BBSR СТС Max Temp 32.5° 30.8° Min Temp 21.39 20.0° Humidity 80% 87% Nil Nil Rainfall FORECAST Partly cloudy sky

		and 119 minutes per day) in-
RKET WATCH	MARKE	vested in educational activities, such as doing homework or at-
X VARIATION	INDEX	tending classes, was considered a "protective" factor associated with loss psychological distance
ISEX 74,454.41 🕴	SENSEX	with less psychological distress. "Sedentary behaviour in-
		cludes a variety of activities, such as using a computer,
LLAR 86.71 🛉	DOLLAR	watching television, reading, listening to music, or attending
20 90.89 	EURO	class. Most research focuses on

N	IAKKE	I WAI	H	-
11	NDEX	VARIATIO	DN	
RSES	SENSEX	74,454.41	¥	856.65
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ENCY	DOLLAR	86.71	4	0.05
CURRE	EURO	90.89	4	0.57
SES	GOLD	₹ 85,880	٠	₹85
BOUR	SILVER	₹ 95,039	¥	₹1,183

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state

Sambalpur Regional Archives in disarray

Despite the approved staff strength of 11, the facility currently operates with just one officer and two assistants

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 24: Maintenance of records at the Sambalpur Regional Archives, a crucial repository of historical data, has been severely hit due to shortage of staff and insufficient resources

On account of lack of adequate workforce to manage and organise the archives, researchers are facing difficulties in accessing information and are often forced to travel to Bhubaneswar for data collection, sources said.

Established in April 1993 under the Odisha State Archives in Bhubaneswar, the facility initially ran from the District Red Cross building in Bhatapada, Sambalpur. In 2014, it was relocated to a newly constructed three-storeyed building in Hirakud Colony and continues to function there.

Sources said despite the approved staff strength of 11, the office currently operates with just one officer and two assistants. Key positions such as record keeper, stenographer, photocopy operator, peon, security guard, and maintenance worker remain unfilled. A single contractual worker is handling both janitorial and security duties, sources added.

Additionally, the building has seen little maintenance since its construction in 2014. leading to visible damage on the walls and plasters chipping off the ceiling. The insti-



tution has also stopped receiving newspapers with the last approved subscription dating back several years. While old newspapers from the period before 1993 remain archived, the absence of new subscriptions is hampering research efforts, sources said, adding that authorities have been urged to approve immediate funding for newspaper procurement.

The archives house invaluable historical records, including the Bihar and Odisha Gazette, rare books, legislative debates, and documents related to eminent figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, Gopabandhu Das, and Madhusudan Das. Other important records include those on the Jagannath temple administration, Odisha's re-organisation movement, history of Odisha,

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar's archaeological remains and memory of Bengal citizens. Research journals such as Odisha Itihas Anusandhan Patrika, Odisha Samiksha, and Utkal Prasanga are also available here

Furthermore, documents on freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai--the rebellious zamindar of Ghens, the Independence movement in western Odisha, the region's role in the freedom movement, list of freedom fighters and martyrs, the language movement in Sambalpur for the creation of Odisha as a separate province, the pioneers of the language movement, the history and establishment of Sambalpur and the Samaleswari Temple, royal lineage and heritage of Sambal pur, traditional festivals of the region, folk arts, the Hirakud

Dam project, Kosalananda Ka vya, Patna Deepika, and Patna State Gazette, along with Khosla's report on these, serve as valuable historical records. These resources are highly beneficial for history students and researchers.

As a key institution for preserving non-contemporary administrative and historical records, the archives are responsible for acquiring scientifically preserving, and laminating documents to benefit both administrators and researchers. Given its significance as a national heritage repository, chorus is growing for urgent staffing, maintenance, and improved preservation efforts of the archives.

Kishore Naik, Curator of Sambalpur Regional Archives. said the ongoing staff crunch arose after positions across departments remained vacant following the retirement of the incumbent employees. "Those posts have not vet been filled.' he said.

Naik said the facility urgently requires bookbinders to preserve important records, but none have been hired. "Managing a three-storey office and carrying out operations have become increasingly difficult with just three employees," he said adding that when employees remain absent for official work or take leave, the office has to shut down, causing inconvenience to students, researchers, and historians.



FESTIVE BUYING: A woman vendor selling Ketaki flowers on the roadside at Hinjilicut in Ganjam district ahead of Maha Shivaratri, Monday

Man gets 20-yr RI for raping disabled minor

deal to her father, who then

filed a written complaint at

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 24: Fast Track Court Judge Vijay Kumar Mishra Monday sentenced Sambari Juang (30) of Dhanurjaipur village under Telkoi police station to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) and imposed a fine of ₹10,000 for raping a 15-year old differently abled girl.

The court further ordered another six months RI to the convict in case of non-payment of the fine amount.

According to sources, Sambari raped the disabled minor girl when she was alone in her

Telkoi police station the next house 12 May, 2023. When the victim's father reached at the morning. spot, Sambari ran away, Lat-Based on the complaint er the victim narrated her or-

police arrested the accused under Section 6 of POCSO Act and forwarded him to court



VILLAGERS PROTEST ORDER TO DUMP FLY ASH IN QUARRY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 24: A discussion between residents of Mahipani and the Sundargarh district administration ended halfway, with the administration requesting seven more days to review the issue. The villagers are protesting the decision to dump fly ash in a local stone quarry, a vital water source for both humans and animals.

The Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) ordered a corporate conglomerate from Jharsuguda to dump fly ash in the quarry, located in Mahipani. The quarry, nearly 40 feet deep, serves as a yearround water source for the villagers, and both domestic and wild animals.

hired for ₹2,000.

The incident occurred when Bolangir/Deogaon, Feb 24: the procession, traveling from Gaibahal village to Babijor Eight persons were arrested village, neared the bride's after a failed attempt to murder a groom and his associates home. Chaos ensued, and one of the attackers dropped an during a wedding procession in Deogaon area of Bolangir disiron hammer, allowing viltrict Sunday night. The attack, lagers to capture him. Upon believed to be orchestrated over questioning, the suspect cona land dispute, was allegedly fessed to a plot to kill groom carried out by contract killers Rajkumar Padhan and his associate, Santosh Padhan.

8 held after bid to kill groom during wedding procession

Police seized two mobile phones, two motorcycles, a country-made pistol, knives, iron rods, and other weap ons. Authorities arrested eight of the ten attackers, with two prime suspects still at large.

The motive for the murder plot was reportedly tied to an agricultural land dispute.

Santosh reportedly harassed his in-laws over land issues.

A case has been registered, and police are continuing efforts to apprehend the remaining suspects.

Public hearings conclude for MCL Kulda open cast project PNN & AGENCIES

village February 20, 2025, where some individuals obstructed the road leading to the venue.

Reddy expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the residents for their

UPGRADATION MAINTENANCE FACILITIES FOR POWER SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT WITH IMPROVEMENT OF ILLUMINATION IN PIT LINE AND SICH LINE AT COACHING DEPOT PURI 8 BHUBAENSWAR. Approx Cost of the work (₹): 6,69,99,580.27, EMD (₹): 4,85,000.00 Completion period : 06 Months Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 17.03.202 No manual offers sent by Post / Courier

The mastermind, a resident of Mahalei village, allegedly planned the attack at a poultry farm in Katapali village. The accused has family ties to Gaibahal, where Rajkumar and

A consent order issued December 4, 2024 (No. 5740) permits fly ash dumping in an area of 1.5 acre in Mahipani. The order is valid until 31 March 2025, allowing the filling of approximately 150,000 cubic metre of fly ash.

Over 400 villagers, led by environmental activist Nisha Mahato, demonstrated outside Bisra block office, demanding a meeting with Sub-Collector Bijava Navak, Mahato reported that Nayak refused to halt the project, stating the government decision was final and that water would be supplied by tankers, which she called an inadequate solution.

Sarpanch Bicha Minz confirmed that the gram sabha unanimously opposed the dumping and no NOC was issued. Attempts to contact Nayak for comment were unsuccessful.

20 years jail term

for rape of minor

da Open Cast Project (OCP) under the Basundhara Area of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) were successfully concluded across five locations in Sundargarh district.

Bhubaneswar/Sundargarh,

Feb 24: The public hearings for

the proposed expansion of the Kul-

The hearings were conducted under the directions of the Orissa High Court, focusing on the expansion of the mining area from 634.205 hectare to 921.305 hectare.

MCL sources Monday stated that the public hearings took place in various villages, including Siarmal, Baliga, Bankibahal, Saradega, and Tumulia, where residents gathered to share their valuable opinions on environmental and pollution control measures.

General Manager of the Basundhara Area, MCL, PB Reddy, who attended the meetings, highlighted MCL's proactive steps to mitigate dust pollution and improve the living conditions of nearby communities. The company's

M.C L

plans to enhance environmental safeguards were also discussed during the hearings.

Residents from nearby villages such as Baliga, Bankibahal, Siaramal, Tetelgadi, Tumulia, Pharakbahal, Kundaren, and Saradega participated in the discussions. The villagers voiced their concerns and provided valuable suggestions on pollution control while also raising demands related to infrastructure development. including lighting, drinking wa ter, and sanitation.

The hearings were conducted peacefully by the district administration and police, except for some disturbances before the start of the hearing in Tumulia

cooperation and active participation in the public hearings. He also thanked the Sundargarh district administration, police, and officers from the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) for their efforts in ensuring the successful conduct of the hearings

"We are proud that MCL continues to provide the best compensation in the industry and invest in the welfare of peripheral communities," the General Manager said, emphasising the company's commitment to sustainable energy production while addressing the concerns and needs of people living around the operational areas.

The successful conclusion of these public hearings marks a significant step toward expanding the Kulda project, which will contribute to the country's energy needs while safeguarding the interests of the local population.

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PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, Feb 24: A local court in Mayurbhanj district Monday sentenced a 30-yearold man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) for raping a minor girl last year.

The sentence was pronounced by Mayurbhanj district POCSO court Special Judge Santosh Kumar Nayak.

The court also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on the convict, Biju Bindhani, said Special Public Prosecutor Manaranjan Pattnaik. It directed the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to pay ₹2 lakh to the victim.

The incident took place December 10, 2024, in Bhandan village when the minor had gone to attend nature's call.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Reinforcing its commitment to community healthcare as well as aiming to serve 21 more remote villages, Vedanta, India's largest producer of aluminium, has expanded its Mobile Health Unit (MHU) services to Kashipur block in tribal-dominated

Vedanta expands MHU

service to Kashipur block

Rayagada district. In his reactions, Dr Netrananda Nayak, Head, Community Health Centre (CHC), Kashipur, said, "I would like to thank Vedanta for providing quality healthcare at the doorsteps of nearly 10,000 people in the Kashipur region through its Mobile Health Unit. This vital initiative will not only enhance medical access, but also raise health awareness fostering a



healthier community.

Emphasising the company's dedication to community welfare, Sunil Gupta, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Vedanta Aluminium, said, "At Vedanta, we believe that access to quality healthcare is a fundamental right. Our Mobile Health Units are a testament to this commitment, bringing essential medical services to some of the most underserved regions of the country. Through this initiative, we aim to create a lasting impact on the health and well-being of rural communities.'

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POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Feb 24: A supervisor was killed while working at the hot strip mill (HSM) of an industrial plant at Meramandali in Dhenkanal district in the wee hours of Monday.

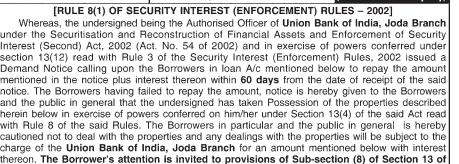
The victim was identified as Abdul Rauf, 42, a supervisor employed with Tata Steel Technical Services Ltd., a subsidiary of Tata Steel and a resident of Narayanpur area in Jamtara district of Jharkhand. He was working at the hot strip mill when the accident occurred, resulting in a severe head injury. Company officials rushed him to the plant's medical centre and later to the district headquarters hospital in Dhenkanal, where doctors pronounced him dead.

Following the incident, tensions ran high on the plant premises. On being informed, Hindol SDPO launched an investigation.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), PR-1016/P/24-25 Khurda Road	OIPR-25104/11/0025/2425 R.W.Division, Jharsuguda
for this tender.	Sd./- Superintending Engineer,
note any changes / corrigendum issued	(2) Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the above website.
days before the date of closing of tender to	available in website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
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REGIONAL OFFICE: BALASORE

NOTICE

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power post

FOCUS AMERICA

A smile acts upon the difficulties as the sun upon the clouds - it disperses them.



THE MOTHER

Conservatives Win

ermans have just voted the conservative opposition to power in a general election that was dominated by worries about the years-long stagnation in Europe's largest economy and a growing sentiment against immigrants. The Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian-Social Union (CDU/CSU) alliance led by Friedrich Merz has won 29 per cent votes, the most, while the Far-Right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) has become the second largest party, securing 21 per cent of votes, nearly doubling its tally as against the last election.

The results indicated that Merz's Christian Democrats and the centre-left Social Democrats secured a majority of seats in the national legislature, as smaller parties did not meet the electoral threshold. This positions Merz favourably for becoming the country's next chancellor. He has, however, dismissed the idea of forming a coalition with the AfD. In fact, all the major parties have committed to upholding a "firewall" that prevents any formal collaboration with the anti-migrant, pro-Kremlin AfD. It is pertinent to note here that the AfD has received considerable endorsements from figures such as US President Donald Trump's advisor, Elon Musk, and US Vice President JD Vance during the brief but intense campaign.

Merz's conservative party secured 208 seats in the 630-seat Bundestag, while the AfD garnered 152 seats. The three parties that comprised the previous governing coalition experienced a loss of seats, with the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SDP) led by outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz dropping to 120 and the Greens to 85. The pro-business Free Democrats, which instigated early elections by withdrawing from the coalition, did not achieve the 5 per cent of the vote necessary to gain any seats. The Left party obtained 64 seats, while the leftist Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance fell just short of the 5 per cent threshold.

Incidentally, the German elections threw up two interesting contrasts. The 69-year-old Merz, who stands 6'5" tall, is a known misogynist and has barely any women in his leadership group. Throughout his political career. Merz has consistently advocated for conservative values and emphasized the significance of family. In the 1990s, he opposed the liberalization of abortion laws and voted against pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. Infamously, he also voted against the criminalization of marital rape in 1997. A lawyer by profession, Merz has faced delays in reaching the top position, largely due to former Chancellor Angela Merkel's influence in the early 2000s. After leaving parliament in 2009, he stepped away from active politics for several years, during which he practiced law and led the supervisory board of the German branch of BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager. Despite his extensive political background, Merz is approaching the chancellery without any prior experience in government.

On the other hand is Alice Weidel, the woman who heads the AfD. Weidel is in a same sex marriage with a Swiss citizen of Sri Lankan origin. The couple has two adopted sons and splits their time between Switzerland and Germany. Weidel is an economist by profession and has previously worked with Goldman Sachs and the Bank of China. Her grandfather, Hans Weidel, was a Nazi judge who was appointed directly by Adolf Hitler to pass judgments on those who opposed the Third Reich.

For now, under Merz's leadership, it will be interesting to observe how Germany, a key NATO member, navigates the challenges posed by Russia and, more recently, by the United States, where Donald Trump's return has created global turmoil. Merz has emphasized that his primary focus is to foster unity in Europe in response to these challenges. At a time when the US, under Trump's influence, is disregarding established norms of international cooperation and international law, a robust and united Europe is more essential than ever. What remains to be seen is whether Merz, as the leader of the European Union's most populous country, can ensure that.

WISDOM CORNER

Be more concerned with your character than your reputa-**6**6 tion, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.

'SHOCK AND AWE'

n 21 March, 2003, ITN network's John Irvine reported from Baghdad the launch of "shock and awe," the US Pentagon's encoding for immeasurable death and destruction that rained on Iraq, in the following words: "This is on a completely different scale from what has gone on before. This isn't just an attack on bricks and mortar. It is an assault on the human senses ...

Some 22 years later, "shock and awe" has come to the US. a nation so contorted and disordered that it will take a while for Americans (and their allies) to figure out what hit them. On the surface, it is the 1.5 leadership of Trump and Musk that is systematically dismantling the US, eroding institutions, upending con-

stitutional guarantees and demolishing the federal apparatus. Musk's chainsaw-waying to depict the rapid cutting of federal services is as perversely vaudevillian as the 2003 defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's delight when he announced "shock and awe' over Iraq. The latter was said to be in search of what most of the world knew were non-existent Weapons of Mass Destruction, WMDs, in Iraq, while the chainsaw is said to be in the hunt for corruption and waste in the US bureaucracy that is equally likely to be non-existent. The real purpose of both is different: to exert power and dominance, to control resources, to give more to themselves while snatching more away from those who have less. It is known that slavery was the original American big business; it becomes clear that some version of slavery remains the main US business to this day.

In this assessment, it is possible to defend Trump by argu-



The values of dominion and imperialistic control that the US has pushed to game others are the very values that it now sees in play with full force when the game has turned inward

ing that he has only ripped the mask off the face of the US. He has torn away the pseudo sophistication and shown America like it always has been right till he took over the presidency in his second term, sans filters. The pretence of diversity, equity and inclusiveness or the talk of democracy, freedom and peace or indeed the idea of civil rights, racial equality or fairness was the big US hoax that Trump is calling out now. Forget the globe, we don't celebrate democracy in the US itself, Trump appears to say, as he indeed went on to tell the Governor of Maine at a televised meeting: "I am the federal law.' While sections of the US in-

telligentsia berate the Trump-Vance government, it might be useful for those indignant now to study the language of power and control as standard US behaviour, at how it has always been in the DNA of the US and how such abuse has landed on others in the world. Americans have typically either supported it or remained steadfastly oblivious to the deep damage it delivers to "aliens," the American term for those "others." The values

of dominion and imperialistic control that the US has pushed to game others are the very values that it now sees in play with full force when the game has turned inward.

Forget older interventions, wars and coups the US has engineered while spending a reported \$10 trillion dollars since the Cold War erupted to stay in charge with "shock and awe," which in Iraq alone left half a million people dead, according to an academic report. Look only very recently, to those considered among the more "decent" leaders of our times. What was Joe Biden doing when he went on supplying Israel with all the tools of its genocide in Gaza while staying completely silent on the havoc that has been brought to that land?

Or consider the Nobel Peace Prize winning Barack Obama. He killed more people in drone strike across Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere than any other US President. A report from the 100-year-old US Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) notes that Obama ordered a total of 542 drone strikes, killing an estimated 3,797 people, including

324 civilians. That translates to murdering 1.3 people a day for every day of his presidency. And this reported quote from Obama to senior aides in 2011: "Turns out I'm really good at killing people. Didn't know that was gonna be a strong suit of mine." So, who is better - Obama. the erudite, polished, every-word-matters Harvard law graduate, or Trump, the non-sequiturs-mouthing rambler?

We may leave the US to its woes. But the overwhelming reach of US power combined with its recklessness means that what happens there imperils global peace and security. If the world is not be left to suffer US excesses, leaders must engage more cautiously with an intemperate leadership. Some lessons that shine brighter than ever now.

It is good to be ever wary of a nation and a leadership that is and has historically been all about itself at the cost of others, driving others to misery as it gobbles up resources and pushes the idea of American exceptionalism. Some will argue all foreign policy works that way. But in practice, the US has the means, the willingness and the arrogance to translate its nefarious thinking to action.

There is a lot right with the US, probably, but today it can be clear that a lot more is wrong within that nation. India needs to note that and etch some of these lessons into Indian foreign policy for now and for the future. This is a time that makes the Tito-Nehru-Nasser vision of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) look like a very bright idea indeed.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal. ©THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

The Amazon's future will be decided in 2025

etween November 2023 and October 2024, the Amazon rainforest faced yearly average temperature increases above 2° Celsius. Record-breaking heat waves, droughts, and fires have ravaged the region; deforestation is still too high; and indigenous peoples and local communities have faced proliferating threats against their livelihoods and well-being. The threat these trends represent can hardly be overstated. The Amazon is rapidly approaching a tipping point, beyond which forest dieback could cause permanent degradation. The region's transformation into self-drying areas of open vegetation would wreak havoc on the biome's unmatched biodiversity, its food systems, and the livelihoods of its 47 million inhabitants. It would also destroy a vital carbon sink and a powerful source of moisture for South America - the "flying rivers" that sustain rainfall systems far south of the Amazon Basin. Despite ample opportunity for multilateral efforts to protect and restore the Amazon, the outcomes so far have been woefully inadequate. Just last October, leaders gathered in Cali, Colombia, for the COP16. A few weeks later, they headed to Baku, Azerbaijan, for the COP29. But neither gathering yielded the necessary results. To be sure, COP16 brought

the adoption of a new "program of work," which should enhance the ability of indigenous 2024 Leaders' Summit in Rio de

peoples and local communities

includes a reduction of net GHG emissions to about 60% below 2005 levels by 2035 - atarget that is critical to halting deforestation. Moreover, as host of the G20

ing-should be to secure a global commitment to achieving zero deforestation in the Amazon by 2030 and net-zero global GHG emissions before 2050.

Targeted funding and support will be needed to restore ecosystems, enhance resilience, conserve biodiversity, and protect the rights and livelihoods of the indigenous peoples and local communities who depend on the Amazon and are its stewards and protectors. Increased climate finance and the expansion of protected areas and indigenous territories are essential. Global climate talks have produced no shortage of lofty promises and high-profile partnerships, but when it comes to real action, they have consistently fallen short. Now, with the Amazon's survival in the balance, we need immediate, concrete, collaborative efforts to slash emissions and channel more resources toward climate-change adaptation and ecosystem conservation. If COP30 fails to deliver, we risk losing the Amazon altogether.



Jagdish Rattanani

WE MAY LEAVE

THE US TO ITS

REACH OF

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COMBINED

RECKLESSNESS

WHAT HAPPENS

THERE IMPERILS

GLOBAL PEACE

AND SECURITY

MEANS THAT

WITH ITS

WOES. BUT THE

OVERWHELMING

- IOHN WOODEN
- One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers. 66 but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.

CARL JUNG

So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose 66 it had a creator. But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be. What place, then, for a creator?

STEPHEN HAWKING

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1570: As pope, Pius V excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I of England from the Roman Catholic Church.
- 1943: British musician George Harrison—lead guitarist of the Beatles, one of the most important and influential bands in the history of rock and roll-was born
- 1947: The state of Prussia is dissolved. At its peak, the most important state of the German empire encompassed parts of modern-day Germany, Poland, and Russia
- **1964:** American boxer Muhammad Ali, known at the time as Cassius Clay, became the world heavyweight champion by knocking out Sonny Liston in seven rounds.
- 1986: Ousting of Marcos in the Philippines. On this day in 1986, Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos, under pressure from the United States, fled his country for Hawaii after a fraudulent electoral victory over Corazon Aquino, who replaced him as president.
- 1991: The Warsaw Pact is declared disbanded. Following the end of the Cold War, the defense treaty between 8 communist states had lost its purpose. It had been signed in 1955 as an antagonist of NATO.

Decently, the Psychic Hotline and Psychic Friends Network have launched hotlines for frogs. Here is the story of one frog and his discussing with his psychic. A frog telephones the Psychic Hotline and is told, "You are going to

PSYCHIC HOTLINE

LOL



meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you. The frog says, "This is great! Will I meet her at a party, or what?' "No," says the psychic. "Next semester in her biology class.'

Carlos Nobre & Marielos Peña-Claros

IF COP30 FAILS TO DELIVER, WE RISK LOSING THE AMAZON ALTOGETHER to contribute to biodiversity conservation. It also featured the launch of the Cali Fund, which facilitates the equitable distribution of profits from the use of sequenced genetic information that has been collected from the natural world. But only 44 of the 196 parties at the event managed to produce new national biodiversity plans.

COP29 Likewise, while brought the launch of the Baku Forest Declaration, climate-financing commitments fell far short of developing economies' needs, and negotiators failed to reach a new agreement on cutting GHG emissions. Neither deforestation nor land use were so much as mentioned in the COP29 Presidential Action Agenda.

Despite these disappointments, some countries showed initiative and leadership in 2024. At COP29, Brazil - home to about 60% of the Amazon rainforest - became the second country to launch its new Nationally Determined Contribution under the 2015 Paris climate agreement. The plan

Dominance prevails

Sir, India's dominance over Pakistan in white ball cricket continues as the Men in Blue registered a resounding win against their archrivals at Dubai in the Champions Trophy 2025. In the process of hitting his 51st ODI hundred and crossing the milestone of 14,000 runs, chase master and King Kohli not only marked his return to form much to the delight of the team and his fans, but importantly as well took Team India closer to the semi-final stage. In fact, Kohli's following base knows no borders, as evidenced by his supporters even in Pakistan, cheering for his century against their own team. During a special screening of the match in Islamabad, numerous Pakistan fans were seen celebrating as Kohli completed his match-defining century. It was a moment that transcended rivalry and represented a great victory for cricket.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Janeiro in November, Brazil secured backing for the Tropical Forest Forever Facility, an innovative new fund - expected to attract \$125 billion in initial investment - that will reward countries for conserving tropical forests, including areas from the Amazon to Borneo to the Congo Basin.

Brazil has matched its global leadership with a push to reduce deforestation at home. In 2024, its deforestation rate reached a nine-year low. Some other Amazonian countries are following suit. Colombia, for example, reduced deforestation to a 23-year low in 2023, halving primary forest loss compared to the previous year. But others are moving in the opposite direction: in Bolivia, primary forest loss increased by 27% in 2023.

This year's COP30 in Belém, Brazil - the first such conference to be held in the Amazon – offers a chance to build on recent progress and bridge important gaps. A top priority for the conference - for which countries should already be prepar-

Carlos Nobre is a professor at the University of São Paulo. Marielos Peña-Claros is a professor at Wageningen University. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Trump (U)SAID it Sir, In his typical "speak first, think later" style, Donald Trump has set the cat among the pigeons by referring to humongous amounts that were (allegedly) given to his friend, Narendra Modi by USAID to "influence voter turnout" (whatever that means). The Congress has now got a stick to beat the BJP with. Incidentally, it is the same stick that a week ago was used by the BJP to settle scores with the Congress. It is perplexing to note how a remark (not yet substantiated by a fact check) made by a President who is a congenital liar, can raise a storm in India's political ecosystem. All political parties must reach an understanding that they will not jump the gun and start a slander contest on the basis of what an individual of dubious credibility has said, even if he happens to be the President of the most powerful nation on the planet. Trump must be grinning from ear to ear to see the impact of his words on the politicians of India who are leaving no stone unturned to paint their opponents in the darkest of colours.

Avinash Godboley, DEWAS



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



B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

























Guj to host AICC session after 64 yrs

The All India Congress Committee session April 8 and 9 will deliberate on the challenges posed by the BJP's "anti-people" policies and its alleged attack on the Constitution, as well as on charting the outfit's future road map, the opposition party said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 24: When the Congress holds its AICC session in Ahmedabad in April, it will only be the third time in the party's 139-year-old history that Gujarat will host this mega conclave with the last one held 64 years ago in 1961 in Bhavnagar.

Gujarat Congress president Shaktisinh Gohil Monday thanked the party's high command on behalf of the people of Gujarat for deciding to organise the key session in the state.

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) session April 8 and 9 will deliberate on the challenges posed by the BJP's "anti-people" policies and its alleged attack on the Constitution, as well as on charting the outfit's future road map, the opposition party said in New Delhi Sunday.

"The party has given a chance to Gujarat to organise the AICC session on April 8-9 in Ahmedabad city, the biggest centre of independence struggle where an ashram of Mahatma Gandhi (Sabarmati Ashram) is located. I thank the working committee and high command for deciding to organise the session here," Gohil said while addressing the media.

He said the party wanted to organise the session at Mahat-



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, Feb 24: The Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) and Teacher Aptitude Test (TAT) exam candidates from across Gujarat staged a protest demanding a faster and more structured teacher recruitment process.

The large-scale protest has prompted the deployment of heavy police security to prevent any untoward incidents. The demonstrators also urged the government to increase the number of vacancies in the recruitment drive.

In response, Education Minister Praful Pansheriya assured that the recruitment process would be completed soon, urging candidates not to be misled into unnecessary agitation.



Gujarat, which houses birthplaces of independence heroes Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, will host an AICC session for the third time in the Congress history with the last one organised at Bhavnagar in 1961 when Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy was the party's president, Gujarat **Congress president Shaktisinh Gohil said**

ma Mandir in Gandhinagar "but have been told unofficially that the venue will not be provided for the purpose".

Gujarat, which houses birthplaces of independence heroes Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, will host an AICC session for the third time in the Congress history with the last one organised at Bhavnagar in 1961 when Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy was the party's president, the Rajya Sabha MP said

The AICC's first session in Gujarat was organised at Haripura near Bardoli in 1938, when Sardar Patel had taken the responsibility for the event, he said.

It was organised to mark the 10th anniversary of Bardoli satvagraha, a non-violent farmer

protest led by Patel which was launched to oppose the British government's excessive taxation

"At the Haripura session, Subhash Chandra Bose was elected as the AICC president. It was at that very session that the declaration of 'purna swaraj' (full self-rule) was reaffirmed and a blueprint was issued by Bose on how to run the government after independence." Gohil said.

At the Haripura session, Bose had first proposed the idea of establishing a planning commission and launching five-year plans, the GPCC president maintained.

"The blueprint issued by Bose in the 1938 session was implemented by the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru 12 years later," he said.

The second AICC session in Gujarat was organised in 1961 in Bhavnagar, when Neelam Sanjiva Reddy was the party's national president, Gohil said, The session in Ahmedabad

will commence April 8 with an extended Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, followed by the AICC Delegates' meeting April 9, the party said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge will preside over both the meetings, which will be attended by Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, all chief ministers of the Congress-ruled states, national office bearers, senior party leaders, and other AICC delegates, it added.

During the press conference, GPCC president Gohil also accused the BJP government of providing "wrong" figures regarding Gujarat's budget size and public debt during the budget presented in the assembly last week.

"The government claimed the state budget size was ₹3.77 lakh crore (Rs 3.70.250 crore as per govt). It is for the first time that the BJP government presented wrong figures in the Vidhan Sabha," he alleged.

Gohil said in reply to a question asked by him in Parliament, the BJP government cited an RBI report and said the Gujarat's has a debt of ₹4,67,476.4 crore, which was much more than the state's annual budget.

'This is the Gujarat model, where the debt surpasses the annual budget even when no benefit is passed on to farmers, women and youth in the form of electricity and government jobs, etc. This is because a few industrialists are looting the state treasury," the Congress leader claimed.

Kedarnath temple's earnings more than double since 2020-21

The famous Himalayan temple's earnings rose from ₹22.04cr in 2020-21, to ₹52.9cr in 2023-24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

UTTARAKHAND

Dehradun, Feb 24: The Ke darnath temple's earnings from offerings, donations and different services offered to devotees have more than doubled since March 2021, an RTI query has revealed.

From ₹22.04 crore in 2020-21, it rose to ₹52.9 crore in 2023-24, the Sri Badrinath-Kedarnath Mandir Samiti said in response to the query filed under the Right to Information Act by Noida-based RTI activist Am-

it Gupta. Giving a yearly break-up, the committee said the income of the famous Himalayan temple in Uttarakhand was 22.04 crore in 2020-21, it dropped to ₹16.52 crore in 2021-22 in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic but rose again to ₹29.67 crore in 2022-23 and to ₹52.9 crore in 2023-24.

The rise in the temple's income during the period was 2.3 times.

A delayed opening of the temple for devotees in 2021, coupled with restrictions such



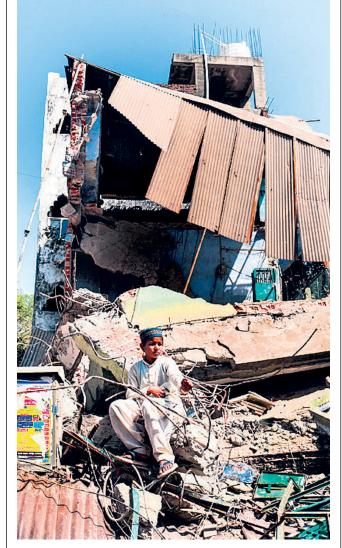
as mandatory negative R' PCR test reports, a daily cap on the number of devotees vis iting the shrine, besides compliance with mask-wearing and social-distancing norms had severely affected the inflow of pilgrims during the pandemic.

However, as the number of Covid cases declined and the yatra norms were relaxed, the number of pilgrims surged the following year, increasing the temple's earnings once again.

The trend continued in 2023 24, the temple committee said The income of the temple comes from the offerings and

donations made by devotees

as well as the priority dar shan facilities offered to those coming by helicopter services for which an additional fee is charged by the committee.



Funds for reviving forests misused

CAG report exposes ₹607cr scam as Uttarakhand misuses *forest funds for iPhones*, *laptops* purchase

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dehradun, Feb 24: A central audit has uncovered massive financial irregularities in Uttarakhand, revealing that funds earmarked for forest conservation were misused for purchasing iPhones, office decor, and other non-sanctioned expenses.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India's report for the financial year 2021-22 found that the hill state's Forest and Health Departments, along with the Workers Welfare Board, utilised public funds without proper planning or necessary approvals. The report, presented in the Uttarakhand Assembly during the Budget Session, revealed that the Workers Welfare Board spent ₹607 crore without government authorisation between 2017 and 2021. It also flagged violations of regulations concerning the transfer of forest land.



Nearly ₹14 crore from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) -- in-

ed irregularities in land selection under the CAMPA scheme, along with violations of forest land transfer

The report also flagged irregularities in land transfers, poor afforestation efforts, and expired medicines in government hospitals

benchmark set by the Forest Research Institute.

Additionally, the audit flagged the distribution of expired medicines in government hospitals. At least three facilities were found to have stocks of 34 expired drugs. some of which had been outdated for over two years. The report also underscored the need for new policies to address the shortage of super-specialist doctors in the state. It found that 70 per cent of specialist posts in hill regions and 50 per cent in the plains remained vacant. Moreover, 250 doctors continued to work despite violating lockdown regulations. Uttarakhand Forest Minister Subodh Uniyal has said that he has ordered an investigation into the allegations concerning his department.

The Gujarat government had earlier announced the recruitment of 24,700 teachers, but the process has been delayed due to various reasons, including the enforcement of the election code of conduct.

Addressing the ongoing protest, Education Minister Praful Pansheriya stated that while there has been some delay, the government remains committed to fulfilling its recruitment promises. He urged candidates not to be influenced by misinformation, emphasising that the recruitment will take place as planned.

With a large number of candidates participating in the protest, heavy police deployment has been put in place to maintain law and order. Preventive measures, including detaining individuals creating unrest, are being undertaken to ensure a peaceful demonstration. Authorities are monitoring the situation as negotiations between the government and protesting candidates continue



The Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) and Teacher Aptitude Test (TAT) are pivotal examinations in Gujarat, designed to assess and qualify candidates aspiring to teach in the state's primary and secondary schools.

TET is bifurcated into TET-1 and TET-2, targeting different teaching levels, while TAT focuses on evaluating the aptitude of candidates for teaching positions. These exams encompass subjects such as Pedagogy, English, General Studies, and Gujarati, ensuring that educators possess the requisite knowledge and skills.

A child sits on debris during an anti-encroachment drive by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC), in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

tended to offset the ecological impact of forest land diversion -- was misdirected towards non-forestry expenses. These funds were used to purchase laptops, refrigerators, and coolers, as well as for building renovations and legal expenses, the report stated.

According to CAMPA guidelines, afforestation should be undertaken within one to two growing seasons after receiving funds. However, the audit found that compensatory afforestation was delayed by more than eight years in 37 cases. The report also highlight-

rules. Although the Central government had granted preliminary approval for non-forestry projects such as roads, power lines, water supply systems, and railways, necessary permissions from Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) were not obtained. Between 2014 and 2022, work on 52 such projects commenced without

DFO approval. The CAG report further raised concerns over the survival rate of planted trees, which stood at just 33 per cent between 2017 and 2022 -- far below the 60-65 per cent

2023 UTTARKASHI TUNNEL COLLAPSE

Trapped workers suffered time disorientation: Study

On Nov 12, 2023, the under-construction tunnel in Uttarakhand's district of Uttarkashi collapsed trapping over 40 workers for 17 days before rescue efforts

were successful

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: A study that examined the mental health of the workers who got trapped in Uttarakhand's Silkyara tunnel that collapsed in 2023 revealed that about a third of them suffered from time disorientation, thereby resulting in sleep issues.

On November 12, 2023, the under-construction tunnel in Uttarakhand's district of Uttarkashi collapsed. Over 40 workers had been trapped for 17 days before rescue efforts were successful.

Experts from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh, explained that partly due to a disruption of light-dark cycles, victims of a tunnel collapse experience mental health and sleep problems which are different to those reported in other disasters

Eight people have been trapped after a section of a tunnel, part of the Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) project in Telangana's Nagarkurnool district, collapsed on Saturday. A team of rat mining experts, who had rescued the construction workers trapped in the Silkyara Bend-Barkot tunnel in Uttarakhand in 2023. has joined the rescue teams to extricate the men.



The findings of the study on the mental health of the workers who were trapped in the Silkyara tunnel, published in the journal Sleep Medicine in January, reveal "a need for triaging (among victims) while providing mental health and sleep-related interventions in such circumstances.

The researchers interviewed

33 Uttarkashi tunnel workers about their daily regime, concerns, sleep routines, circadian rhythm and orientation to time during the time they were trapped. The participants also responded to questionnaires assessing their anxiety, depression and sleep.

The workers reported "a mix of hope and worry in the initial days", the experts said.

The experts found that onethird of the trapped Silkyara tunnel workers were disoriented about the passage of time which was related to difficulty in falling asleep and more nappings. Further. the de pressed had more difficulty in the onset, maintenance

the healthy are affected not by a loss of personal property or displacement, but due to uncertainties stemming from an extended rescue The operation. "In this paexperts found per, we are highlight-

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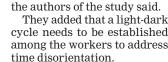
with dwindling hope for

ing

that one-third of the trapped Silkyara tunnel workers were disoriented about the passage of time which was related to difficulty in falling asleep and more nappings persons find themselves

and termination of sleep and reported a reduced total sleep time.

The researchers said emotions and sleep-related problems have never been looked at in a disaster situation such as a tunnel collapse in which



their safety across the days,









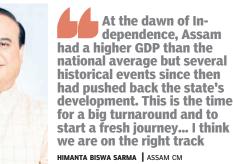








national



STALIN LAUNCHES 1,000 PHARMACIES ACROSS TN

As many as 1,000 'Mudhalvar Marundhagangal' pharmacies providing medicines at subsidised prices to the people across Tamil Nadu was inaugurated Monday by Chief Minister M K Stalin. The initiative not only offered expensive medicines at affordable prices to the members of the public but also ensured employment opportunities for 1,500 B.Pharm and D.Pharm degree\ diploma holders the Chief Minister said



diploma holders, the Chief Minister said

of the uote

These five years you (YSRCP) will not get Opposition status. Be prepared mentally for that. With 11 seats, you will not be given the status of Opposition PAWAN KALYAN AP DY CM



Uttarakhand. Harsil-Mukhba area as well as the whole of Uttarakhand is fully prepared to welcome the Prime Minister PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI U'KHAND CM



order, people felt scared of stepping out late in the day NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

SHORT TAKES

Complaint filed against Sam Pitroda

Bangalore: A complaint has been lodged against Congress leader Sam Pitroda, a close associate of Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, with the Karnataka Lokayukta and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Bangalore a land scam of ₹150 crore. The complaint was lodged by senior BJP leader and activist NR Ramesh Monday along with supporting documents. Ramesh alleged, "Sam Pitroda, who shares a close association with Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, is implicated in a massive illegal land scam involving Karnataka's Forest Department property worth over ₹150 crore."

7 killed in Bihar road accident

Patna: At least seven people were killed when a tempo in which they were travelling collided head-on with a truck



Artisans give finishing touches to an idol of Lord Shiv ahead of 'Maha Shivratri' festival, in Chikkamagaluru district, Karnataka

ONOE won't hurt federal structure: Law ministry

Responding to a set of queries posed by the members of the joint panel, the legislative department in the Union law ministry is learnt to have asserted that simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies were held in the past before the cycle was broken due to various reasons, including imposition of President's rule in some states

New Delhi, Feb 24: Holding

AGENCIES



The joint committee is holding its next meeting Tuesday. Following the adoption of the Constitution, elections to the Lok Sabha and all state assemblies were conducted simultaneously from 1951 to 1967, it noted.

The first general elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies were held together in 1951-52, a practice that continued for three subsequent general elections in 1957, 1962, and 1967. However, this cycle of synchronised elections was disrupted in 1968 and 1969 due to the premature dissolution of some state legislative assemblies. The fourth Lok Sabha was also dissolved prematurely in 1970, with fresh elections held in 1971. Unlike the first. second, and third Lok Sabha, which completed their full five-year terms, the fifth Lok Sabha's term was extended until 1977 under Article 352 because of the declaration of Emergency.

ninth, 11th, 12th and 13th were dissolved early, a government explainer on 'one nation, one election' had earlier said.

State assemblies have faced similar disruptions over the years. Premature dissolutions and term extensions have become a "recurring challenge",

BSF mobilises more troops towards Pakistan border

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The BSF has ordered mobilisation of additional manpower at posts along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab and Jammu as part of its measures to strengthen the anti-infiltration grid and check the intrusion of drones carrying ammunition or drugs, official sources said Monday.

The sources told PTI that the Western Command of the Border Security Force headquartered in Chandigarh has also directed for setting up of nine "tactical" headquarters along the front in these two regions with the maximum intelligence and operations paraphernalia being "shifted" here under the monitoring of a newly created control room.

A tactical or 'tac headquarter' is a forward base which is closer to the border, just near the border post, and ahead of the battalion base in the rear. The 'tac headquarter', as per the sources, will also have the presence of one senior commander from all verticals including the commanding officer (CO)

FIGHT AGAINST OBESITY

PM Modi invites 10 public figures to spread awareness

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday nominated 10 persons from different walks of life, including Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, businessman Anand Mahindra and actor Mohanlal, to help fight obesity, a day after he exhorted people to take measures to curb the health menace.

"I would like to nominate the following people to help strengthen the fight against obesity and spread awareness on reducing edible oil consumption in food," Modi posted on X.

Bhojpuri singer-actor Nirahua, Olympians shooter Manu Bhaker and weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani, actor R Madhavan, singer Shreya Ghoshal and philanthropist and Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty were the other personalities nominated by the Prime Minister. Making a strong pitch for



monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcast Sunday urged people to use less oil in food and also pass on the challenge of reducing oil intake by 10 per cent to 10 others. Omar Abdullah said he was happy to join the campaign against obesity launched by Prime Minister Modi. "Obesity caus es a number of lifestyle-related health issues such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, strokes and breathing problems, not to mention mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. Today I'm nominating these 10 people to join the PM's campaign against obesity and requesting them to nominate a further 10 people each to take this fight forward," Abdullah wrote on X

Punjab LoP 'in touch' with 32 AAP MLAs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 24: Punjab Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa Monday claimed that 32 AAP MLAs were in touch with him to switch sides.

Hitting back, the ruling AAP's state unit president Aman Arora claimed that it was Bajwa who has made an "advance booking" to join the BJP.

Speaking to reporters outside the Punjab Assembly, Bajwa also claimed that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was in touch with the BJP.

"When (Arvind) Kejriwal decides to remove him, he (Mann) will pack his bags and join them (BJP)," he claimed.

The leader of the opposition in the state assembly asserted that in his 45 years of political experience, he has never made any wrong statement.

"We had earlier said the Congress does not have any intention to topple this (AAP) government," he said.

"I am saying this again 32 MLAs are in touch with me. Not only MLAs, but even ministers are in touch with me. Aman Arora is also aware of this matter," claimed Bajwa.

in Bihar's Patha district police said Monday. The accident occurred near Noora bridge in the Masaurhi area Sunday night, they said. Bihar **Chief Minister Nitish Kumar** expressed grief over the death of seven people in the road accident. A statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office said, "The CM has expressed his deep sorrow over the death of seven people in the road accident in Masaurhi. My heartfelt condolences to their families."

19 pilgrims injured as bus overturns

Kaushambi (UP): Nineteen people were injured when a bus carrying devotees returning from the Maha Kumbh overturned in Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi district Monday. Station house officer (SHO) of Kada Dham police station, Dhirendra Singh, said the pilgrims from Sagar and Damoh districts in Madhya Pradesh had come to take a dip at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj. The devotees were en route to Chitrakoot after visiting Ayodhya when their bus overturned near the Lehadri Khateeb village under the Kada Dham police station limits after its driver reportedly dozed off and lost control, the SHO said.

PM targets Lalu

Bhagalpur: In a blistering attack on RJD president Lalu Prasad, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday said "those who had brought jungle raj" in Bihar, were now making "vulgar" remarks about the ongoing Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj. New Defni, Feb 24: Holding simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies is not undemocratic and does not hurt the federal structure, the Union law ministry is learnt to have told the joint committee of Parliament examining the bills on 'one nation, one election'.

on one nation, one election . Responding to a set of queries posed by the members of the joint panel, the legislative department in the Union law ministry is learnt to have asserted that simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies were held in the past before the cycle was broken due to various reasons, including imposition of President's rule in some states.

Sources said while the ministry answered some of the questions, some others were sent to the Election Commission for a calibrated response.

Since then, only a few Lok
Sabha terms have lasted the full
five years, such as the eighth,
10th, 14th and 15th. Others,
including the sixth, seventh,

the government had said.

"These developments have firmly disrupted the cycle of simultaneous elections, leading to the current pattern of staggered electoral schedules across the country," it observed. Citing a report of the high-level committee on 'one nation, one election', the explainer said simultaneous polls promote consistency in governance.

"Due to the ongoing cycle of elections in various parts of the country, political parties, their leaders, legislators, and both state and central governments often focus their efforts on preparing for upcoming elections rather than prioritising governance," it said, citing the 'rationale' for holding simultaneous polls as recommended by the panel headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind officers to be present at their respective tac headquarters "all the time" will lead to command and administration issues.

of the battalion whose unit is

deployed at these vulnerable

border posts, the sources said.

issued to mobilise "maximum"

manpower of the force to border

guarding units all across these

two regions after shifting them

from the battalion headquar-

Sources in the security es-

tablishment said the measure

had been taken late last week

keeping in mind the "vulnera-

bility and the constant threat"

to these border areas from the

point of view of cross-bor-

der infiltration and drone

flights emanating from Paki-

stan. However, officials said

that asking the commanding

ters, they said.

Directions have also been

Vijender Gupta elected Delhi Assembly speaker

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Three-time MLA Vijender Gupta was elected speaker of the eighth Delhi Assembly during the first session of the newly-constituted House Monday.

Gupta's ascension to the speaker's chair marks a full circle-moment for the BJP veteran, who had been marshalled or dragged out of the Assembly multiple times during AAP's 10 years in office. Thanking the members for choosing him as



speaker, Gupta said, "I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the honourable members of this great House for electing me to this position and entrusting me with the serious responsibility of running this House. This House is historic and this position is a symbol of democratic values ??and parliamentary traditions. The first elected speaker in the parliamentary history of India. Vithalbhai Pa tel, had adorned this seat exactly 100 years ago." He added, "It is our good fortune that today we are sit ting in a House that was graced by our freedom fighters, includ ing personalities such as Gopa Krishna Gokhale, Vithalbhai Patel, Madan Mohan Malviya Sundar Singh Majithia, Motilal Nehru, Lala Laipat Rai, and the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who came here twice.

Segregating waste at source important for environment: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Supreme Court Monday said segregation of waste at source was of "vital importance" for the environment and asked the NCR states for the compliances made in adherence to the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said the non-compliance in adhering to the 2016 Rules had affected all cities in the country. "In one of the orders, we have observed that all smart city projects are in progress. How the cities can become smart without compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules?" the bench asked.

The National Capital Region (NCR) comprises Delhi and certain districts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. If there was no proper segregation of waste, the court said, even waste-to-energy projects would create more pollution.

Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, the amicus curiae in the pollution matter, referred to solid waste management in the NCR while flagging the low percentage of segregation of waste. She said sending unsegregated waste to waste-to-energy plants

caused more pollution. "As rightly submitted by the amicus curiae, the segregation of waste at source is of vital importance for the environment. If their is no proper segregation, even waste-to-energy projects will create more pollution," the bench said.

The NCR states were ordered to file affidavits dealing with



the compliances of all the urban local bodies with the provisions of the 2016 Rules so far. They have been asked to file the affidavits by end of March following which the matter would be taken up. The bench has also asked the states to set out a comprehensive plan for waste management along with timelines and implementing agencies and said, "Needless to add that the affidavits will state compliance The National Capital Region (NCR) comprises Delhi and certain districts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan

f there was no proper segregation of waste, the court said, even waste-to-energy projects would create more pollution

in relation to all urban local bodies within the NCR." The authorities were asked to set out the "best practices" they proposed to follow for solid waste management.

The bench in the meantime directed the Central Pollution Control Board to submit a report on the impact of waste-to-energy projects on the environment. While dealing with the issue of solid waste management in the national capital previously, the court said if there was no real solution to tackle the issue of untreated solid waste generated per day, it would consider passing drastic orders to stop certain construction activities.

It had flagged the failure of the Delhi government and the municipal corporation to comply with the 2016 Rules. "We are facing a huge problem which arises due to the fact that approximately 3,000 tonne of solid waste generated every day in Delhi remains untreated. With the passage of time, this figure is bound to increase," it said January 27.

The aspect of solid waste management in Delhi-NCR came about when the apex court was hearing the issue of pollution in the NCR.













national



Recently, Congress leaders in Assam have been attacked both ways – politically and physically! The public will respond to these attacks by forming a Congress government after one year MALLIKARJUN KHARGE CONGRESS PRESIDENT

MAMATA HIKES SALARY **OF GOVT DOCTORS**

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday announced a salary hike for government doctors in the range of ₹10,000 to ₹15,000. Banerjee, who is also the health minister of the state, announced a fund of ₹2 crore for each medical college in the state for their cultural and sporting activities





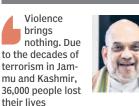
We need AI-driven war doctrine, indigenous AI chips for defence and fire belts for cybe security

RAINATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

Change is beneficial for everyone only if it comes with a consensus. Such changes are called 'reforms'

and amendments are made for reforms, not to show off one's power

AKHILESH YADAV SP CHIEF



AMIT SHAH UNION HOME MINISTER



#MosqesAreMercyYogi govt stopped muslims



houses for the pilgrims who were stampede there and served them with food, water, medicine and shelter. Come visit our mosques

@kparveen2005

SHORT TAKES

PC George in police custody

Kottayam (Kerala): BJP leader PC George, who surrendered before a court in Erattupetta Monday in connection with a hate speech case, has been remanded to police custody until 6 pm today. George appeared before the Erattupetta Munsif Magistrate Court at around 11.05 am. The case was taken up for consideration at 12.30 pm, followed by arguments from

PORTRAIT ROW BJP Vs AAP: War of words intensify PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

that B R Ambedkar and Bhagat

Singh's portraits were removed

from Delhi Chief Minister Rekha

Gupta's office, a charge denied

by the ruling BJP as a "rumour".

sition party of trying to divert

people's attention from the

CAG reports that will be tabled

in the Assembly to expose "cor-

ruption" by AAP when it was

The Delhi BJP shared photos

of the chief minister's office on

social media and said, "The

portraits of Mahatma Gandhi.

Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambed-

kar, Bhagat Singh the Presi-

dent and the prime minister

are displayed in the offices of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta

On the eve of Republic Day in

2022, then chief minister Arvind

Kejriwal directed officials that

only the portraits of Babasaheb

Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh

will be displayed in government

offices, including the CM's of-

fice. Photos of no other political

leader will be displayed in Delhi

government offices, he had said.

Sachdeva said AAP leaders and

Delhi BJP president Virendra

and other ministers.

in power.

The BJP accused the oppo-

Atishi are spreading a "rumour over Bhimrao Ambedkar and New Delhi, Feb 24: The Aam Bhagat Singh's photo which ex-Aadmi Party Monday alleged emplifies their "petty politics".

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi raised the issue in the first session of the newly constituted eighth Delhi Assembly earlier in the day.

"It is unfortunate the Delhi Assembly is being led by a party that is anti-Dalit and anti-Sikh. The BJP has removed photographs of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh from the chief minister's office, showing its anti-Dalit stance," she

alleged in the Assembly. In a press conference, Atishi showed a photo of the CM Office captured on an iPad, and said, 'This is today's photo when our MLAs went to meet the CM. The photos have been removed. which proves that the BJP is an anti-Dalit and anti-Sikh party.' She alleged the BJP has "dis-

respected" Babasaheb and the Sikh community, by removing the portraits. The AAP strong ly opposes this and will protest against it in the streets as well as in the Assembly, she added. AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal said the move has hurt millions of Ambedkar followers





Youngsters play football at Poonthura Beach during sunset, in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

SNIPPETS

CBI submits status report in RG Kar case at Sealdah court

Kolkata: The CBI Monday submitted a status report before a city court on its probe into the rape-murder case at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, in which one person has been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment till death. The CBI stated in the report that it will soon submit before the court a supplementary chargesheet in the rape and murder case of an on-duty medic August 9 last year, a lawyer attached to the matter said. The central agency also opposed before the additional chief judicial magistrate, Sealdah court, a prayer by former officer in-charge of Tala police station, Abhijit Mondal, for the return of sim card of his mobile phone. No order was passed on the prayer Monday by the judge.

ED raids in ₹600 crore crypto conversion case

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate Monday said it has frozen bank deposits worth more than ₹2 crore after conducting multi-state searches against an Indian national accused of illegal conversion of cryptocurrency worth around ₹600 crore through various Indian crypto exchanges. The searches were undertaken on February 20 at Delhi, Jaipur in Rajasthan and Mumbai in Maharashtra under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). The case pertains to the "conversion" of cryptocurrency worth around ₹600 crore at various Indian crypto exchanges and the subsequent transfer of the funds to the beneficiaries, the federal agency said in a statement. "ED investigation was initiated on the basis of a newspaper report that an Indian national named Chirag Tomar was undergoing prison sentence in the USA for stealing more than USD 20 million from hundreds of victims through the use of fake or spoofed websites mimicking the cryptocurrency exchange website Coinbase," it said.

'3 in 5 die after cancer diagnosis' MAHA CYBER QUIZZES

The ICMR study found that India ranked third highest in cancer incidence, after China and the US, and accounted for over 10 per cent of the world's



ity ratio in the US was found

jected that in the coming two decades, India will face a formidable challenge in managing deaths related to cancer incidence, with a yearly increase of two per cent in cases as the population ages.

The team examined trends in 36 types of cancer across age groups and genders in India over the past 20 years, using the Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN) 2022 and Global Health Observatory (GHO) databases. However, women in India were found to bear a "disproportionate burden", as breast cancer continues to be the most prevalent cancer, contributing to 13.8 per cent of new cases from both genders, and cervical cancer the third most (9.2 per cent).

ALLAHBADIA, CHANCHLANI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: Maharashtra Cyber officials questioned You-Tubers Ranveer Allahbadia and Ashish Chanchlani for around five hours Monday in connec-

Raina's YouTube show, which sparked an obscenity case. The show. India's Got Latent. became the focus after Allahbadia made crude comments about parents and sex, leading to widespread backlash.

Parliament panel examining **I**-T Bill

holds first meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Finance Ministry Monday briefed the members of a Select Committee of Lok Sabha on various aspects of the Income Tax Bill as the panel headed by BJP MP Baijayant 'Jay' Panda held its first meeting.

Sources said the finance sec retary told the parliamentari ans that the Bill will simplify the existing Act, enacted over six decades back, and make it more user-friendly.

Lok Sabha sent the Bill to the committee on the request of Fi nance Minister Nirmala Sitha raman after she introduced it in the House in the first half of Parliament's Budget Session.

Sitharaman had said the new I-T Bill will carry forward the spirit of "Nyaya" (justice based on the concept of "trust first, scrutinise later". The Bil seeks to replace terminologies such as "assessment year" and "previous year" with the eas ier-to-understand "tax year" as part of a move to simplify language while removing pro-

visos and explanations. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had constituted the 31-member Select Committee February 14.

both sides. After hearing the submissions, the court adjourned the case for further consideration at 2 pm. George's lawyer argued that he did not incite religious hatred or hurt religious sentiments, asserting that there was no need for custodial interrogation or evidence collection.

Three minors gangraped; 18 held

Khunti (Jharkhand): The Jharkhand Police has arrested 18 minors for allegedly raping three girls in Khunti district, police said Monday. The accused, aged 12-17 years have been sent to a juvenile home, and the girls will undergo a medical examination Monday, they said. Khunti SP Aman Kumar said the incident took place late Friday when five girls were returning home after attending a wedding ceremony in Rania area. Out of the five girls, three of them aged 12-16 years - were raped by the boys, as per a police complaint filed by the family members.

Man kills five

Thiruvananthapuram: In a shocking incident, a 23-year-old man in Kerala Monday allegedly killed five people, including his 13-year-old brother, his grandmother in her 80s, and a young woman said to be his lover. The mass murder took place across three houses in the Venjaramoodu area near the state capital, police said. The incident came to light when the man, identified as Afan, appeared at the Venjaramoodu police station in Thiruvananthapuram in the evening, confessing that he had killed six people, including his brother and grandmother.

cancer-related deaths ranking second after China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Three in every five people in India succumb to cancer following diagnosis with women bearing a "disproportionate burden" compared to men, an analysis of global cancer data has estimated. The incidence to mortal-

to be about one in four, while in China it was one in two, according to the results published in 'The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia' journal.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study found that India ranked third highest in cancer incidence, after China and the US, and accounted for over 10 per cent of the world's cancer-related deaths, ranking second after China. Researchers also pro-

tion with India's Got Latent show controversy after they appeared before the agency to record their statements, officials said.

The duo appeared separately at the cyber headquarters in Navi Mumbai after skipping previous summons issued by the agency.

The Maharashtra Cyber and the Mumbai Police are investigating Allahbadia's controversial remarks on Samay

Allahbadia and Chanchlani appeared at the cyber headquarters around 11.30 am following which their statements were recorded, an official said without elaborating.

Allahbadia, who wore a black face mask to avoid media attention, was seen leaving the headquarters around 5 pm. He boarded a private cab and left, while Chanchlani departed an hour later in his car.

Besides Panda, other BJP members who are on the panel include Nishikant Dubev P P Chaudhary, Bhartruhari Mahtab and Anil Baluni.

Opposition MPs include Deepender Singh Hooda of the Congress, Mahua Moitra of the TMC, Supriya Sule of the NCP (SP) and N K Premachandran of the RSP.

DECISIONS DETERMINE DESTINY

wo personalities at two distinct ends of the Indian socio-political spectrum, one is facing a debilitating fusillade of brickbats, anothera deluging bonanza of bouquets. In facts and foibles, though, there may be little to choose in the metaphors used by the worthies.

Ranveer Allahbadia, the young podcaster and U-tuber with a legendary 27 million following is being roasted by an 'indignant' nation for his comments on Samay Raina's You Tube show. 'India's Got Latent'. Rekha Gupta, BJP's surprise choice as Chief Minister of Delhi, is all blooms and bouquets as her party comes to power after 27 years in the wilderness even as minions furiously worked at defacing her old tweets which not only bordered on slander but went way beyond.

Ranveer's brand of dark humour posed a question to a contestant about incest involving parent

and progeny with an either- or option. It lit the fuse under netizens who went for his jugular. His impeccable academic credentials and profuse apologies were of no avail. Not even the fact that he was presented the 'Disruptor of the Year' award by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the

National Creators Award last year. All manner of ladies and gentlemen of repute moved in with their opinions. Even Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that society has some rules and if anybody violates it action must be taken. The police soon got written complaints as did the national as well as the Maharashtra State Women's Commission. He faces multiple FIRs in BJP ruled Maharashtra, Assam and Rajasthan. Consequently he has approached the Supreme Court seeking consolidation of these FIRs and an interim order granting him protection from arrest. The court granted him protection from arrest, stayed the FIRs, allowed the investigation to continue, imposed conditionalities and gave a tongue lashing for remarks which were offensive to societal norms.

The long line of eager-beaver film stars and political personages including union ministers ever willing to appear on Ranveer's podcast has disappeared in double quick time leaving 'BeerBiceps', as his moniker went, crestfallen and defeated

However no sooner did Gupta take the oath of office, that her past posts on social media targeting the then Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Keiriwal, some of them in inappropriate language, be-



gan surfacing. One such post which insinuates even against his mother is dated October 5, 2016 and has apparently been deleted now though its veracity was never denied in the period thereafter. Another tweet, also deleted, but still making the rounds, uses abhorable language against a constitutional entity and again targets maternity. "Delhi is not your father's property. It belongs to the people, and the people will send you back to your mother's womb". These words are followed by an expletive.

While one holds no brief for either, in terms of their use of language, what is particularly galling is the differing reaction. Ranveer has been strung out to dry by all and sundry while no such reaction is forthcoming in the case of the political entity who crossed the limits of public decency when attacking a political rival holding a constitutional post and

now occupies the same post, opening ones self to similar vulnerabilities in reciprocal conduct. Few murmurs to mark symbolic attendance apart, a deafening silence reigns supreme, both in the media and the party in power.

Fuelling popular imagination to meet political ends has over the years witnessed a transformation from an art-form to an integrated science. In fact the Allahbadia episode seems to have come in handy for ballooning through FIRs in selected states to shackle content on digital platforms. The ruling establishment has been flummoxed by their inability to effectively curb the digital media including the news media which has become a painful boil and remains irresponsive to 'medical' ministrations. Its spiraling viewership is only adding to official discomfort.

Interestingly, the existing laws did not come in the way of the union railway ministry from directing X (formerly Twitter) to remove 285 social media links of the february 15 stampede at the New Delhi railway station. The notice issued February 17 sought compliance in 36 hours trotting the plea that sharing such videos could lead to public unrest and disrupt railway operations. The directive covered major news organisations as well

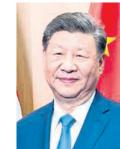
In fact, a bench of the Delhi High Court which is hearing a public interest litigation in the matter had expressed concern at the lack of crowd management and the sale of tickets in excess of the train capacity. It has sought an affidavit from the Railway Board after proper examination of issues involved.

Earlier February 15, the 100 year old Tamil Vikatan groups online magazine Vikatan.com went blank. It was ordered blocked by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting through a referral by the Department of Telecommunications (DOT). The website was blocked following the publication of a cartoon showing Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sitting shackled in chains, next to US President Donald Trump. The magazine's point of view was that it was to articulate deported immigrants being flown to India in chains. The upshot of the blocking has been that the sort of publicity the magazine has got globally would not have been possible for any price. Genius at work but the official intent is a dead giveaway-total control. All the same, be careful what you plant and careful what you say. You will surely have to eat what you planted one day!





international



China-Russia relations have strong internal driving force and unique strategic value, and are not aimed at, nor are they influenced by, any third party XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

JAPAN EMPEROR'S 65TH B'DAY

Japan's Emperor Naruhito, marking his 65th birthday, stressed the importance of telling the tragedy of World War II to younger generations, pledging to contribute to efforts to promote the understanding of history and the determination for peace as the world this year observes the 80th anniversary of the war's end



Securing a trade deal with what is soon-to-be the third biggest economv in the world is a no-brainer, and a top priority for me and this government IONATHAN REYNOLDS | BUSINESS AND TRADE SECRETARY, UK

Human rights are being suffocated by autocrats, crushing opposition because they fear what the

truly empowered people would do and by voices of division and anger who view human rights not as a boon to humanity, but as a barrier to the power, profit and control they seek ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN



sive economic rights. That was not unprecedented, but unusual RICHARD MARLES | DEFENSE MINISTER, AUSTRALIA

SHORT TAKES

One killed, several hurt in B'desh clash

Dhaka: A man was killed and several others injured in a clash Monday between a group of local people and air force personnel at an airbase in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, officials said. The Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the military - in a statement said the "miscreants" attacked the Bangladesh Air Force Base near Cox's Bazar's Samitipara. "Bangladesh Air Force is taking necessary actions in this regard," it said. The ISPR said that "some local miscreants" of the Samitipara area adjacent to the beach resort town "launched a sudden attack" on the airbase after a biker was stopped at a checkpoint as he was crossing the base area without any papers for the vehicle. It said the biker was taken inside the base for interrogation when

THREE YEARS OF INVASION Ukraine showdown looms

European leaders in Kyiv to mark three years of war, but top US officials stay away

Kyiv, Feb 24: Ukraine hosted European leaders Monday to mark three years of all-out war with Russia, while top US officials stayed away in a clear illustration of President Donald Trump's lurch towards Moscow

REUTERS

since returning to power. Still reeling from Trump denouncing President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as a "dictator" and accusing him of starting the war, Kyiv said it was in the final stages of agreeing a deal with Washington to provide ac-

cess to its mineral wealth. "We hope both US and UA leaders might sign and endorse it in Washington the soonest to showcase our commitment for decades to come," Deputy Prime Minister Olha Stefanishyna

wrote on X. The deal is at the heart of Kyiv's bid to win US support, but officials have wrangled over its wording in the shadow of an extraordinary war of words between Trump and Zel**UKRAINE** marks KYIV three years since Russia's UNSURE IT CAN full-scale invasion DEPEND ON MAJOR ALLY UNITED STATES U^{krainian} official says ANY MORE talks on m European leaders Trally around inerals deal in final President Zelenskyv stages

THOUSANDS HAVE DIED, MILLIONS MADE REFUGEES BY WAR

enskyy, who said the US leader was living in a "disinformation bubble"

Zelenskyy refused to sign an earlier draft in which Washington sought \$500 billion in natural wealth, protesting that Kyiv had received nowhere near that much US aid and that the draft lacked the security guarantees Ukraine needs.

Beyond the barbs, US officials opened direct talks with

GULF OF TONKIN

wisdom and unity - with our cooperation VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

the Russian side in Saudi Arabia last week, shutting out Kyiv and Europe in a stunning

This year should be the

lasting peace. Putin will

not gift us this peace,

nor will he give it to us

in exchange for any-

thing. We have to win

peace with strength,

beginning of a real,

year of the

change of policy on the war. Zelenskyy, who has told Europe to create its own army while urging Washington to be pragmatic, welcomed a slew of European and other leaders to a summit in Kviv to commemorate the start in 2022 of the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two.

The visitors included European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Europe an Council President Antonio Costa and the leaders of Cana da. Denmark. Iceland. Latvia. Lithuania, Finland, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

Leaders of Albania, Britain, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Japan, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and Turkey spoke by video link. There was no sign of US representation.

"In this fight for survival, it is not only the destiny of Ukraine that is at stake. It's Europe's destiny," von der Leyen wrote on X.

The European leaders rallied around Zelenskiy in speeches, calling for countries on the continent to step up support for Kyiv, while some spoke of the urgent need to increase defence spending.

'We have to scale up as Europeans, we have to speed up ... My guess is that we have a couple of months to take all necessary decisions. Otherwise we'll be too late," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told the summit.

Washington has made clear it will not send troops as a security guarantee coveted by Kyiv if a peace deal emerges, placing the burden on European powers that are likely to struggle without US backing.

The visitors paid their respects to Ukrainian soldiers killed in the war, standing in silence before a memorial made up of flags on Kyiv's central square. Air raid sirens sounded as they met for talks later, though no missile strike followed.

Israel sends tanks into West Bank

FIRST TIME IN DECADES



ASSOCIATED PRESS

fled cannot return.

struggle against Israel.

Jenin (West Bank), Feb 24:

Israeli tanks moved into the oc-

cupied West Bank Sunday for

the first time in decades in what

Palestinian authorities called

a "dangerous escalation", after

the defence minister said troops

will remain in parts of the terri-

tory for a year and tens of thou-

sands of Palestinians who have

Journalists saw several tanks

move along unpaved tracks into

Jenin, long a bastion of armed

Israel is deepening its crack-

down on the Palestinian territo-

rv and has said it is determined

to stamp out militancy amid a

rise in attacks. It launched the

offensive in the northern West

Bank January 21 — two days

after the current ceasefire in

Gaza took hold — and has ex-

Palestinians view such raids

as part of an effort to cement Is-

raeli control over the territory.

where 3 million Palestinians

live under military rule. The

deadly raids have caused de-

Israeli Defence Minister Israel

struction in urban areas.

panded it to nearby areas.

of residents, and we will not allow terrorism to return and grow ISRAEL KATZ | DEFENCE MINISTER, ISRAEL

Katz said he and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the military to "increase the intensity of the activity to thwart terrorism" in all refugee camps in the West Bank.

The camps are home to descendants of Palestinians who fled during wars with Israel decades ago. It was not clear how long Palestinians would be prevented from returning Katz said Israeli troops would stay "for the coming year". Netanyahu said they would stay "as long as needed".

Tanks were last deployed in the West Bank in 2002, when Israel fought a deadly Palestinian uprising.

The Palestinian foreign ministry called the Israeli moves "a dangerous escalation of the sit uation in the West Bank", and urged the international com munity in a statement to intervene in what it termed Israel's illegal "aggression".

China holds live-fire drills after Vietnam marks territorial claims

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, Feb 24: Chinese authorities said they began live-fire exercises in the Gulf of Tonkin Monday, only days after Vietnam announced a new line



Sea over the Spratly and Paracel Islands and maritime areas.

China has been been growing aggressive in pursuing those claims, and in October assaulted 10 Vietnamese fishermen near the Paracel Islands, three



towards the base. The security personnel tried to stop them. sparking a clash that left four Air Force personnel injured.

over 200 people marched

Congo rebel uprising killed 7K this year

Kinshasa: More than 7,000 people have died this year as Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have captured unprecedented amounts of territory in mineral-rich eastern Congo Congo's prime minister said Monday. Judith Suminwa Tuluka told the UN Human **Rights Council that the** security and humanitarian situation in the region "has reached alarming levels." The conflict has accelerated in recent weeks, with the rebels taking the key city of Goma in January and Bukavu, another provincial capital, a few weeks later. M23 is the most potent of about 100 armed groups vying for a foothold in Congo's east, which contains trillions of dollars of mostly untapped mineral wealth crucial to the world's technology.

Explosion rocks **Russian Consulate**

Paris: An incendiary device exploded outside the Russian Consulate in Marseille early Monday, authorities said, on the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. No injuries were reported. A second device that was thrown but did not explode, and a bomb disposal expert was called to the scene. The suspect fled and an investigation has been launched, an official said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to be publicly named by national police policy.

marking what it considers its territory in the body of water

between the two countries. China's Maritime Safety Administration said the exercises would be focused on the Beibu Gulf area, closer to the Chinese side of the Gulf of Tonkin, and would run through Thursday evening.

It gave no further details, but the drills follow an announcement last week by Vietnam establishing a baseline used to calculate the width of its territorial waters in the Gulf of Tonkin. claims in the nearby South China

State-run Vietnam News reported that the baseline was in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and would provide "a robust legal basis for safeguarding and exercising Vietnam's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction".

Vietnam has not publicly responded to the Chinese drills. China and Vietnam have long had a maritime agreement governing the Gulf of Tonkin, but have been locked in competing of whom suffered broken limbs.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea as its own, though it has not publicly released exact coordinates of its claim other than a map with 10 dashed lines broadly demarcating what it calls its territory.

In addition to Vietnam, China's claims overlap with those of the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, while Indonesia has also figured in violent confrontations with the Chinese coast guard and fishing fleets in the waters around the Natuna Islands.

Washington, Feb 24: US gov-

ernment workers who have

been buffeted by President Don-

ald Trump's chaotic return to

power face more uncertainty

Monday, when many of them

will be required to justify

their jobs to Elon Musk, the

chainsaw-wielding billionaire

tasked with slashing the federal

Musk's demand for the na-

tion's civil-service workers to

submit a summary of their work

by 11:59 pm Eastern time (0459

GMT) has opened up fissures in

Education and Commerce,

have ordered workers not to

People pray outside the Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome, Sunday, where Pope Francis is hospitalized since February 14

ordered to cease working.

Musk, the world's richest

person, has led a downsizing ef-

fort that has laid off more than

20.000 workers and offered buy-

outs to another 75,000 across

wide swaths of the 2.3-million

strong civil service, from bank

In some cases, the govern-

ment has scrambled to re-hire

regulators to park rangers.

Daughter seeks govt help to free British couple detained by Taliban

REUTERS

London, Feb 24: A British couple in their 70s who ran education programmes in Afghanistan have been detained by the Taliban administration, their daughter said, urging the British government to do everything possible to secure their release. Barbie and Peter Reynolds,

75 and 79, were detained by the Taliban's interior ministry February 1, their daughter Sarah Entwistle, who lives in central England, said. Speaking to Times Radio Monday, Entwistle said her parents had initially kept in touch via text messages following their detention - as-

suring their four children that

they were fine - before losing all

sought to honour the Taliban,

so we wanted to give them the

opportunity to explain their

reasons for this detention.

However, after more than three

weeks of silence, we can no lon-

ger wait," she said. "We're now

"Our parents have always

contact three days later.



urgently calling on the British consulate to do everything in their power to get us answers and to put as much pressure as they can on the Taliban for their release.

Britain's Foreign Office said Monday it was "supporting the family of two British nationals who are detained in Afghanistan," without providing further detail.

The BBC, citing official Taliban sources, reported Sunday that two British nationals believed to be working for a non-governmental organisation in the central Afghan province of Bamiyan had been arrested.

Fissures appear in Trump administration

Some US government workers told to justify their jobs to Musk, others told to ignore him

The Department of Health and Human Services told its workers to cooperate, then later told them to hold off while it figured out how to "best meet the intent" of Musk's unusual directive.

Workers at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau also received Musk's email. even though they have been already

Musk demands civil-service workers justify jobs amid budget cuts

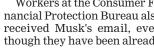
- Agencies divided on complying with Musk's directive
- Mass layoffs impact US economy and government contractors

workers who perform critical functions like nuclear weapons oversight and bird flu response

Trump's administration said late Sunday it would fire 1.600 workers at the US Agency for International Development and put nearly all remaining personnel on leave. Trump has already halted almost all of the agency's funding and opera tions, throwing global humanitarian relief efforts into chaos

The mass firings have suddenly thrust financial insecurity on workers who had counted on their jobs to provide a secure income.

Trump's administration. Agencies like the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Communications Commission have told employees to comply. But many others, including the departments of Defense, Homeland Security,









respond.

REUTERS

budget.









Our farmers have now become energy producers. The total ethanol blending earlier was 1.5 per cent, but now it has reached 19.6 per cent, following which the farmers have been paid more than

HARDEEP SINGH PURI UNION MINISTER FOR PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

RUPEE ENDS 4 PAISE LOWER

past ₹1 lakh crore in 2025 amid

perienced a sharp drop to an

eight-month low as market

sentiment remained subdued.

The decline was primarily

driven by significant losses

in heavyweight stocks, espe-

cially within the IT sector.

This weakness followed re-

ports of declining consumer

confidence in the US, casting

a shadow over the country's

growth outlook. The broader

market felt the impact, pulling

down both small and midcap

indices," Ameya Ranadive,

Chartered Market Technician,

CFTe, Sr Technical Analyst,

In Asian markets, Seoul,

Shanghai and Hong Kong set-

tled lower. Equity markets

were closed in Tokyo for a

to weigh on the domestic mar-

ket, with persistent volatility

causing uncertainty among

retail investors, who general-

ly have a lower risk appetite.

Weak US consumer sentiment

and tariff concerns may fur-

ther pressure export-oriented

sectors such as IT." Vinod Nair.

Head of Research, Geojit Finan-

Global oil benchmark Brent

crude rose 0.04 per cent to USD

cial Services, said.

"Global headwinds continue

StoxBox, said.

holiday.

"The D-Street indices ex-

rising global trade tensions.

The rupee dropped 4 paise to settle at 86.72 against the US dollar Monday amid massive outflow of foreign capital that also dragged down the domestic equity markets by more than 1 per cent. However, a flat greenback against major currencies prevented a sharp fall in the domestic unit, according to forex traders.



of the day uote

India's ability to grow from a USD 4 trillion economy to a **USD 30 trillion**

economy is fundamentally a function of water (management)... Our capacity to grow in an environmentally sustainable manner and improve citizens' quality of life depends entirely on how we manage this critical resource AMITABH KANT | INDIA G20 SHERPA

Social security remains a fundamental pillar of India's commitment to

social justice. The ILO's World Social **Protection Report 2024-26** highlights India's remarkable progress, reaching 48.8 per cent in 2024. We are in the process of further collecting the data with the ILO MANSUKH MANDAVIYA UNION LABOUR MINISTER



mortgage loans in Madhya Pradesh, marks a significant milestone in our journey to become a leading player in the Indian financial services market

SHALYA GUPTA, CEO | CREDIFIN LIMITED

SHORT TAKES

NHAI to monetise 24 road assets

New Delhi: State-owned National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) Monday said it has identified a tentative list of 24 road assets which will be monetised in 2025-26. The total length of the roads assets to be monetised in the next financial year is 1,472 km with cumulative annual revenue from these assets pegged at ₹1,863 crore in 2023-24. "All stakeholders may give their feedbacks on these assets

Sensex sinks below 75k Equity investors from equity markets so far this month, pushing total outflows

become poorer by **₹4.22 lakh crore as** market benchmark indices tank over 1%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: Falling for the fifth straight session Monday, equity benchmark BSE Sensex plunged over 850 points to drop below the crucial 75,000 level, tracking a weak global market trend and unabated foreign fund outflows amid escalating trade tensions.

telecom and metal stocks added to the gloom, analysts said. The 30-share BSE benchmark tanked 856.65 points or 1.14 per cent to settle at 74.454.41.

During the day, it plummeted 923.62 points or 1.22 per cent to 74,387.44. The NSE Nifty dropped

242.55 points or 1.06 per cent to 22.553.35

As many as 2,810 stocks declined, while 1,207 advanced and 183 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"The market is more concerned about the US' likely move to reciprocate higher tariff levies on exporting nations, which could impact developing countries, including India. Also, FIIs showing no signs of



putting brakes on their India exit strategy continue to weigh heavily on markets, with expensive valuations driving investors to curb their equity bets here. Heavy selling in banking, IT, telecom and other old economy sectors saw benchmark Sensex end below the crucial level of 75k mark," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. In the last five trading ses-

sions, the BSE barometer lost 1,542.45 points or 2 per cent, and the Nifty tanked 406.15 points or 1.76 per cent.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech, Zomato, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Tata Steel and NTPC were among the biggest laggards.

Standard Chartered opens priority banking centre in City



ing, Standard Chartered Bank, Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Stan-India.

In contrast, Mahindra & Ma-

hindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank,

Maruti, Nestle and ITC were

Among BSE sectoral indices.

BSE Focused IT dropped 2.65

per cent, IT (2.60 per cent), teck

(2.56 per cent), telecommunica-

tion (2.26 per cent), metal (2.16

per cent), commodities (1.53

per cent) and utilities (1.42 per

cent). On the other hand, Auto

The BSE smallcap gauge

declined 1.31 per cent, and

the midcap index dipped 0.78

Foreign Institutional Inves-

tors (FIIs) offloaded equities

worth ₹3,449.15 crore Friday,

Foreign investors have

according to exchange data.

per cent.

and FMCG were the gainers.

among the gainers.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: India and 20 billion in the next 10 years.

The announcement was official visit.

made a case for faster and liberal issuance of visas for smooth movement of businessmen and professionals, besides a social security agreement to avoid double contribution to social security funds by Indian professionals working for limited period in Britain. The 14th round of negotiations for the FTA, which began January 10 last year, was underway till May 2024 when the process was paused by the UK side due to their elections. The resumption of talks would aim to addressing issues



tors like IT and healthcare in

Gold rises ₹350 to reclaim ₹89,000-mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Gold prices rose ₹350 to trade near a record high at ₹89,100 per 10 grams in the national capital Monday amid firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per

cent purity had closed at ₹88,750 per 10 grams Friday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased ₹350 to ₹88,700 per 10 grams from the previous close

of ₹88,350 per 10 grams. "Gold traded with a modest gain Monday as geopolitical and trade tensions continued to provide a safe haven demand to hedge against uncertainty,' Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Secu-

rities, said. Last week, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity hit fresh peaks of ₹89,450 and ₹89.050 per 10 grams, respectively.

However, silver traded flat at ₹1 lakh per kg.

Further, Gandhi highlighted that the US dollar has provided an additional boost for the precious metal. The dollar index fell for the third week in a row and is trading lower amid mixed US macro data.

Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for April delivery appreciated ₹118

to ₹86,128 per 10 grams. "Gold traded within a range posting minor gains, supported by Comex gold holding above

USD 2,925. Rupee weakness provided additional support to MCX gold," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst -- Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

Comex gold futures for April delivery quoted higher at USD 2,954.71 per ounce in the overseas markets.

Globally, spot gold also rose USD 5.50 to USD 2,941.55 per ounce

"Gold prices continue to hover near all-time highs as the dollar weakens amid escalat ing geopolitical and economic uncertainty," Abans Holdings Chief Executive Officer Chin tan Mehta said.

The precious metal's rally is expected to persist as safe-haven demand remains strong with central banks worldwide continuing to accumulate gold to hedge against economic vol

atility and policy uncertainty, Mehta added.

Adani Group pays ₹58,104cr tax in FY24

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: Ports-topower conglomerate Adani Group has said that the group companies paid ₹58,104 crore in taxes in 2023-24, up from ₹46,610 crore in the previous financial year.

The taxes paid include di rect contributions like global taxes, duties and other charges borne by Adani portfolio of companies, indirect taxes contributions and duties collected and paid on behalf of other stakeholders, and other levies such as social security contributed for the benefit of the employees.

The conglomerate helmed by billionaire Gautam Adani released its Tax Transparency Reports for financial year 2023 24 (April 2023 to March 2024).

pulled out over ₹23,710 crore 74.46 a barrel India, UK resume talks for proposed trade pact

the UK Monday announced resumption of negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA), which is expected to double or even triple bilateral trade from the current USD

made by Commerce and Industry Minister Pivush Goval and UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds, who is here on an

Briefing reporters, Goyal

Besides, deep losses in IT,

and or may suggest additional assets, for revising the list to make it more inclusive. These assets are preferably to be monetised through TOT mode unless not revised at later stage for any other mode of monetization," NHAI said in an office order dated February 24, 2025. According to the order, out of the 24 projects, five road projects are in Maharashtra, four in Jharkhand, three in Uttar Pradesh, two each in West Bengal, Bihar and Telangana and one each in Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala and Odisha.

India Inc to clock 7-8% revenue growth

New Delhi: Domestic rating agency ICRA Monday said Indian companies are likely to clock 7-8 per cent revenue growth during the March guarter of the current fiscal year, led by revival in rural demand and uptick in government spending. ICRA expects the private capital expenditure (capex) cycle to remain measured in view of the uncertainties around geopolitical developments and relatively subdued outlook on merchandise exports from India. Nonetheless, certain sunrise sectors such as electronics, semiconductors and niche segments within the automotive space like electric vehicles (EVs) will continue to see a scale-up in investments, in line with various productionlinked incentive programmes announced by the Government of India, it said. In a statement, ICRA said the recovery in the operating profit margins (OPM) for India Inc witnessed over the past quarter is likely to be sustained at 18.2-18.4 per cent, supported by an increase in demand, led by improved consumer sentiments.

dard Chartered Bank has opened a new Priority Banking Centre at its relocated branch in Rajmahal Square, Bhubaneswar, aiming to serve the city's growing affluent population.

The bank's expansion is part of a broader strategy to cater to high net worth individuals (HNWIs), professionals, and entrepreneurs in India's emerging economic hubs. "With Odisha's growing economy and increasing demand for sophisticated banking services, we are excited to open a Priority Centre in our newly relocated Bhubaneswar branch," said Nitin Chengappa, Managing Director and Head of Affluent

Bhubaneswar has seen rap id growth in technology, real estate, and education, attracting wealthy individuals and returning Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). Recognizing this trend, Standard Chartered has relocated to a larger space to provide tailored financial solutions.

The move follows the bank's expansion in India's top six cities and its plan to scale operations in state capitals and major markets. "This expansion is a testament to our commitment to helping clients grow their investments. secure their family's future, and build their legacy," Chengappa added.

which are vet not ironed out. The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its skilled professionals from sec-

the UK market, besides market access for several goods at nil customs duty.

On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, electric vehicles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items.

Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services, including banking and insurance

According to Goyal, both sides have the flexibility to significantly reduce tariffs to make their businesses more competitive.

India has are really to protect us from non-market and non-transparent economies or economies which are known for predatory pricing or dumping of goods, and I think between the UK and India, we have much more flexibility and ability to significantly reduce tariffs to make businesses more competitive between the two countries," he added.

"Many of the tariffs that

The negotiations have started after a gap of over eight months due to elections. The talks are happening after the UK general elections that resulted into the Labour Party coming to power. The negotiations were launched January 13.2022.

"For financial year 2023 24, Adani Group's total global tax and other contributions to the exchequer amounted to ₹58,104.4 crore, showcasing a significant increase from the previous year's ₹46,610.2 crore through its portfolio of listed entities," it said in a statement.

The details are covered in the independent reports published by seven of the group's listed entities - Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports and Special Eco nomic Zone. Adani Green Energy, Adani Energy Solutions Adani Power, Adani Total Gas, and Ambuja Cements.

NVIDIA'S CHIP DEMAND FACES DEEPSEEK TEST

REUTERS

San Francisco, Feb 24: Demand for Nvidia's pricey artificial intelligence chips will be in focus when the company reports results Wednesday as investors doubt the hefty spending on the technology after low-cost AI models from China's DeepSeek rattled the industry.

The world's second most valuable company has been the top beneficiary of an AI-driven spending spree by big technology companies over the past two years.

But claims that DeepSeek's AI models rival its Western counterparts at a fraction of the cost has led some investors to ask if Nvidia's cutting-edge chips are essential for gaining an edge in AI race.

DeepSeek's sudden rise in January resulted in Nvidia losing \$593 billion in market value, the largest one-day loss for any U.S. company. Its shares were one of the best performers in 2023 and 2024.

"Investors have been very concerned about DeepSeek and the impact that it will have on demand," said Ivana Delevska, chief investment officer of Spear Invest, which holds Nvidia shares in an actively managed exchange-traded fund.

"So if they (Nvidia) can show that they're still able to 'beat and raise', it would be pretty positive for the stock." Nvidia is expected to report a

72% surge in revenue to \$38.05 billion in its fourth quarter, according to LSEG data, its slowest growth in seven quarters. It is likely to forecast a 60% jump in revenue for the first quarter ending April.

In contrast, the companv's revenue has seen five straight quarters of triple-digit growth until the



quarter ended October. So far, demand for Nvidia's AI chips has not faltered. Big customers such as Microsoft and Meta have said they plan

to plow ahead with their steep data-center spending.

"The CapEx plans communicated by Meta, Microsoft, Google and Amazon paint a very positive picture of the near-term demand backdrop for Nvidia,' said John Belton, a portfolio manager at Gabelli Funds which holds Nvidia shares.

Meanwhile, shipments of Nvidia's powerful Blackwell chips are expected to have accelerated in the fourth quarter, boosting its revenue but squeezing its margin due to the cost of ramping a new and complex chip.

Analysts expect Nvidia's adjusted gross margin to shrink by more than three percentage points to 73.5% in the fourth quarter.

With Blackwell series, Nvidia is shifting from selling individual chips to full AI computing systems such as the GB200 NVL72, which bundle GPUs, CPUs and networking equipment.

That has further complicated a costly and time-consuming production ramp-up.

Its contract manufacturer, Taiwan's TSMC, scrambled to expand capacity for advanced packaging - a complex process that glues together chips and is the main bottleneck in AI semiconductor supply chains.

Blackwell's rollout was also hampered by design flaws and low chip yields although Nvidia has since fixed the issues.

In November, it said Blackwell would exceed initial revenue projections of several billion dollars in the fourth quarter.

"Blackwell has been a complicated set of products to launch. said Gabelli's Belton.

"With the magnitude of out-performance that investors have become used to - Nvidia's delivery could be smaller this time around, just given some of these dynamics with the Blackwell launch.









SPORTS



FIH PRO LEAGUE

Missed chances hurt India eves

Women suffer 2-4 defeat against Netherlands

OrissaPOS

TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 25, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The Indian women's hockey team wasted a series of opportunity and lost 2-4 to reigning Olympic champions Netherlands in a FIH Pro League match here Monday.

The Indians had the better share of scoring chances -- 13 penalty corners as against Netherlands' just three -- but they couldn't capitalise on the opportunities.

Netherlands scored through Emma Reijnen (7th minute), Felice Albers (34th, 47th) and Fay van der Elst (40th) to come out winners

India's both goals came from penalty corner conversions by Udita (18th, 42nd).

It was stalwart India goalkeeper and former skipper Savita Punia's 300th international match but she was beaten in the seventh minute by a reverse hit from a Reijnen.

The Indians, however, didn't sit back and secured back-toback penalty corners soon but wasted both.

Netherlands scored through Albers from a rebound after Savita saved the initial flick.

The Indians kept up the intensity in the second quarter and secured two more penalty corners, the second of which was converted by Udita.

Netherlands secured a penalty corner in the 25th minute, but India defended stoutly.

But four minutes after the change of ends, Albers picked up a loose ball on the right flank and dodged past a couple of Indian defenders before slot-

SHORT TAKES

Veer finishes 67th as Kruyswijk wins

Nairobi: India's Veer Ahlawat closed the week with a fine 3-under 68 that included an eagle, his second of the week, but he still finished only 67th at the Magical Kenya Open here. His 68 on the final day of the tournament was his best card of the week, which saw him suffer a 6-over 11 in a single hole. the seventh one on the second day. That messed up his tournament. Ahlawat, who earned a status on the DP World Tour by topping the PGTI Order of Merit, as per the alliance with the Indian body, was

ting it home with a fine reverse hit past second Indian goalkeeper Bichu Devi Kharibam to hand Netherlands 2-1 lead.

Van der Elst then scored from a field effort to extend Netherlands' lead. Udita reduced the deficit, converting another penalty corner in the 42nd minute. The Indians had their chanc-

es, earning two back-to-back penalty corners in the 47th minute but wasted both.

Albers sealed the match for Netherlands, scoring another fine field goal in the 47th minute, her second of the day.

India will again play Netherlands in return-leg match here Tuesday.

Every match, wearing the Indian jersey is an honour: Savita



Goalkeeper Savita Punia completed 300 international caps Monday. The Arjuna Awardee achieved this landmark during India's match against the Netherlands in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Savita now joins Vandana Katariya as one of only two Indian women to have played 300 international matches. Savita is only the second Indian goalkeeper, male or female, to achieve this feat after the legendary PR Sreejesh. A stalwart of Indian hockey, Savita made her senior team debut at the age of 20 and has since established herself as one of the finest goalkeepers in the world. She played a key role in India's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics. Her experience also proved invaluable in the Rio Olympics 2016 and the 2018 Vitality Hockey Women's World Cup, where India reached the Quarter-Finals. As captain, Savita has led India to remarkable achievements, including a bronze medal at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games and a title-winning campaign at the FIH Nations Cup.

India suffer defeat as they committed unforced errors in the defence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The Indian men's hockey team fought hard but England skipper Sam Ward's brace handed the hosts a 2-3 defeat in a FIH Pro League match here Monday.

England struck the first blood through Jacob Payton (15th minute) before Ward (19th, 29th) struck twice to stun the hosts.

India's goals were scored by Abhishek (18th) and Sukhjeet Singh (39th). It was even stevens between

the two sides in the first quarter with both the teams pressing each other for the early goal.

The Indians, however, were guilty of committing unforced errors in the defence, especially skipper Harmapreet Singh, who looked out of sorts.

From one such error, England scored through Payton from a field effort. Abhishek levelled the score three minutes later from a fine field effort.

But England stunned India again a minute later when Ward scored a brilliant field goal after a fine one-two with Payton.

Men lose to Eng in

hard-fought contest

England then secured backto-back penalty corners in the 24th minute but failed to utilise the opportunities.

The Indians were the domi nant side on display as England struggled to get out of the defensive third in the second quarter despite taking the lead.

But the Indian defence crumbled again as Ward scored his second of the day from an unforced error with goalkeeper Suraj Karkera looking clueless

India secured a penalty corner in the 39th minute, which was denied after England took referral. Seconds later, Sukhieet deflected in Hardik Singh's hit after he was served by Sanjay's fine pass.

Minutes later, India secured two more penalty corners but wasted both as Harmanpreet looked off colour.

In the 49th minute, Dilpreet Singh came close to scoring but his reverse hit was brilliantly saved by England goalkeepen James Mazerelo. Minutes later. England keeper Mazerelo made a double save to deny Uttam Singh

'Terror threat' puts CT in trouble

The Pakistan's intelligence bureau alert states that terror outfits based out of Pakistan are planning to kidnap foreigners for ransom

New Delhi, Feb 24: Pakistan's Intelligence Bureau (IB) has reportedly issued a high alert after uncovering an alleged plot by "active covert groups" to kidnap foreign guests during the ongoing Champions Trophy 2025, as per reports. Except for India, all the other teams are playing their matches in Pakistan and if India fail to reach the final. the summit clash will also be played in the country. However, an alert has been issued against a number of terror outfits "including Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ISIS and other Balochistan-based

AGENCIES



Lahore and Rawalpindi. The roster will include 18 senior officers, 54 DSPs, 135 inspectors, 1,200 upper subordinates. 10,556 constables, and over 200 female police officers.

Other than security personnel, the PCB has also arranged the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), the country's national carrier, to have spe cial charter flights for fans and the participating teams available. These flights will reportedly operate between Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore to ensure smooth transportation for players and other high-profile guests throughout the tournament. Meanwhile, the backlash Security has been one of the due to the poor show in the biggest concerns when it comes to international sporting Champions Trophy, including events in Pakistan, especially the humiliating defeat to India, after what happened with the hit the Pakistan team hard and its support staff led by former Sri Lanka team in 2009. While fast bowler Aaqib Javed is set the Indian team refused to travto be overhauled, according to el to Pakistan for the event, the PCB claimed it put in extra a cricket Board source. Pakistan lost to arch-rivals rity for other travelling teams. India by six wickets in Dubai Sunday, after their 60-run According to reports in local defeat to New Zealand in the media, a whopping 12,000 police officers and personnel will Champions Trophy opener in be deployed during matches in Karachi February 19

Mohun Bagan eye

historic double PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 24: Mohun Bagan have etched their name in history, becoming the first-ever team to successfully defend the League Winners' Shield. But

they are not stopping there. After falling short in the ISL final last year with a 1-3 defeat to Mumbai City FC here at the Salt Lake Stadium, the Mariners are campaign and a league-record 14 determined to complete a historic double by clinching the ISL Cup clean sheets, setting a new defenthis time. Coach Jose Molina is sive benchmark. focused on the challenge ahead. Goalkeeper Vishal Kaith has "We are trying to win the two matches remaining in the season and even preparing for the Cup. because we cannot think the season is finished just yet.

Super Cup later," Molina said, as his team gears up for their next match against Mumbai

City FC March 1. Mohun Bagan's season has been nothing short of extraordinary. With an unassailable 52 points and two games still to play, they have shattered records along the way - first team to surpass 50 points in an ISL season, most wins (16) in a single

the first to tee off on the final day. He played alone and birdied the first, the third and then added an eagle on the fourth. He was fourunder through the first holes.

Vidarbha retain 17 member squad

Nagpur: Vidarbha Monday retained their 17-member squad to take on Kerala in the final of the Ranji Trophy which will be played at the VCA Stadium here in Jamtha from Wednesday. "VCA's senior selection committee, which met Monday, decided to retain the same squad that did duty in the semi-final against Mumbai. Akshay Wadkar will lead the side," the Vidarbha Cricket Association said Monday. Vidarbha, who have remained unbeaten in the premier domestic competition this season, qualified for the summit clash after a commanding 80-run win over defending champions Mumbai. It was a repeat of last year's final in which Mumbai had clinched their 42nd title after defeating the twotime winners Vidarbha.

Surfing Federation unveils robust national calendar

Chennai: Following a historic year that saw Indian surfers clinch the first set of guotas for the upcoming 2026 Asian Games in Japan, the Surfing Federation of India (SFI) is doubling down on efforts to provide maximum ocean time for the country's top surfers. With exposure trips in the pipeline, the governing body has also announced an extensive national event calendar to ensure optimal preparation ahead of the sport's debut at the prestigious continental games. The SFI has officially released the 2025 National Surfing and Stand-Up Paddle (SUP) Event Calendar, marking another milestone in the sport's rapid growth in India.

been instrumental, keeping the clean sheets, double than his nearest competitor Phurba Lachenpa (7). Kaith also became the first goalkeeper in ISL his-We still have a semifinal, hopetory to reach 50 career clean fully, a final, and maybe even a sheets





Pakistan

groups" after warnings regarding alleged abduction plots. The report added that the security forces "have deployed high-level protection teams, including rangers and local police".

The Indian cricket team is playing all of their matches in Dubai after the Indian government decided to not send them to Pakistan. In case of India reaching the semifinal and final of the competition, both of the matches will also take place in Dubai with the opposition travelling from

IOA forms ad hoc panel to run boxing affairs, BFI terms it "illegal"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Monday constituted a five-member ad hoc committee to oversee the affairs of boxing in the country on the ground that the sport's national federation failed

to hold elections on time. The Boxing Federation of India (BFI), within hours, termed the IOA's decision as "illegal' and said it will file a petition to the Delhi High Court to quash the order.

The IOA said that the BFI did not hold its elections due February 2 and asked the ad hoc panel, to be headed by former Athletics Federation of India (AFI) treasurer Madhukant Pathak, to hold the polls at the earliest.

"IOA has been closely monitoring the administrative affairs of the Boxing Federation of India. As per the governing norms, elections to BFI were to be conducted on or before 02 February 2025. Despite the pre-

scribed timeline, the elections have not been held, resulting in administrative instability within the federation," IOA President PT Usha wrote in an office order.

"In view of the above and in accordance with the authority vested in the IOA, an Ad hoc Committee is hereby constituted to oversee the affairs of the Indian Boxing Federation and ensure the smooth functioning of its activities until the conduct of free and fair elections.

"The Ad hoc Committee shall also be responsible for routine day to day administration of the BFI." The other members of the ad hoc panel are Rajesh Bhandari (vice-chairman), DP Bhatt, boxer Shiva Thapa and Virendra Singh Thakur.

Within hours of the IOA's order to constitute the ad-hoc panel, the BFI responded.

"The BFI strongly condemns the creation of an ad-hoc panel to manage its affairs, calling it illegal and a blatant attempt to



violate the autonomy of a National Sports Federation (NSF). This has also been communicat ed in a letter by President, BFI to President, IOA," the BFI said in a statement.

"BFI will also be filing a petition for quashing this illegal order before the Hon'ble Delhi High Court immediately. It's pertinent to also mention a verdict of today, wherein the Hon'ble Delhi High Court annulled the IOA's decision to

form an ad-hock panel for the Bihar Olympic Association."

Usha also said that her office has received numerous complaints from stakeholders, including athletes, coaches and concerned authorities. regarding the non-participation of Indian boxers in various important notional/international events in recent months.

"This situation is detrimental to the growth and performance of Indian boxing on the global

stage and necessitates immediate corrective measures.'

measures to ensure full secu-

She said the panel will take immediate steps to address the grievances raised by the boxing community, facilitate athlete participation in the upcoming international competitions, and work towards conducting the BFI elections at the earliest. "The Ad hoc Committee shall

act in a neutral and independent manner, ensuring no conflict of interest. All actions taken must be documented, and records must be maintained for audit and review purposes

"The Ad hoc Committee shall issue the election notice and schedule as per BFI's Constitution and current regulatory guidelines and appoint a Returning Officer and an independent Election Observer to oversee the election process. "The Ad hoc Committee shall

also be responsible for verification of details of all affiliated state boxing associations and for providing an accurate list

of office bearers of such state boxing associations."

Countering the IOA's contention about not holding elections on time, the BFI said, "It is also important to highlight that the correspondence regarding elections of BFI has already commenced with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) February 2, 2025.

"The fact that IOA has still chosen to intervene is surprising and shocking. "IOA did not find it necessary to enquire about the issue with BFI Office or its President before taking such a decision. The IOA has no juris diction over the conduct of elections for a NSFs, yet this order has been issued in a manner that

clearly questions its intent." The BFI claimed that "as per Article 21.5 of the IOA constitu tion, no decision pertaining to NSFs can be made without prior consultation with the parent International Federation, and approval of the IOA Executive

Committee".

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