


Shriya's observation

Actor Shriya Saran says the emotional impact of pregnancy often affects the husband first


LEISURE | **P2**



First female Archbishop

Sarah Mullally was confirmed as Archbishop of Canterbury, becoming the first woman to lead the Church of England


INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



Factory output rockets

India's industrial production grew at an over 2-year high pace of 7.8% in December 2025 on the back of robust output in manufacturing

BUSINESS | **P11**



Djoko vs Sinner

10-time Australian Open winner Novak Djokovic will meet two-time defending champion Jannik Sinner in the semifinals

SPORTS | **P12**

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Ease of business should match ease of living: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, Jan 28: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday launched 20 industrial projects worth ₹8,884 crore in Rourkela.

These include the inauguration of 11 projects at an investment of ₹5,708 crore and foundation stones for nine projects worth ₹3,176 crore.

Attending the silver jubilee celebration of Enterprise Odisha 2026 here, Majhi said, “The event represents a new way of thinking for us; a mindset where we aspire to be the best in every sector. We will be the best, and we will compete with the best. With this confidence, we are moving forward.”

“Industrial development must create employment opportunities, enhance living standards, and ensure that ease of doing business is matched with ease of living. Industrial growth should bring better opportunities into the lives of every citizen,” he said.

Highlighting the state government’s industrial strategy, the CM said, “Our strategy is clear- establish a few anchor industries in every region and develop hundreds of MSMEs around them as suppliers, vendors, logistics partners, fabricators, maintenance providers, packaging units, and technology partners. This will ensure that our youth no longer need to migrate for jobs; opportunities will come to their doorstep.”

Officials said 22 MoUs worth ₹43,349 crore were signed during the event, which are expected to generate 18,985 jobs. The state also received five investment proposals worth ₹8,877 crore, they added.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also handed over the letter offering 1,447.927 acres at Kamakhyanagar in Dhenkanal district to Vedanta Aluminium Ltd for its proposed 3 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) aluminium smelter and 4,900 MW Captive Power Plant (CPP) project.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

DEADLY CRASH: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's plane in flames after it crashed during landing, at Baramati, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Ajit Pawar, 4 others killed in plane crash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baramati, Jan 28: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four other persons on board an aircraft were killed after it crashed near the Baramati airport in Maharashtra’s Pune district Wednesday.

Pawar had taken off from Mumbai in the morning to address four rallies in the day in Pune district for the February 5 zilla parishad elections.

The others killed in the tragedy were Captain Sumit Kapoor, who had a flying experience of 15,000 hours, co-pilot Capt. Shambhavi Pathak with 1,500 hours of flying, Personal Security Officer (PSO) Vidip Jadhav and flight attendant Pinky Mali.

The aircraft, a Learjet, was cleared for landing in Baramati Wednesday morning after a go-around due to poor visibility, but having finally received a clearance it did not give any read-back’ to the ATC, and moments later burst into flames on the edge of the runway.

The aircraft was trying to

land amid poor visibility, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammo-han Naidu told reporters in Pune. President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and several other leaders expressed grief over Pawar’s demise.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who reached Baramati, described Ajit Pawar’s tragic death as unbelievable, and said he had lost a good friend. According to an eyewitness, the ill-fated aircraft appeared “a bit unstable in the air” and exploded the moment it crashed on the ground. Maharashtra government declared a three-day state mourning till January 30.

MORE P9

SC slams states over lax stray dog control

The Supreme Court delivered a scathing rebuke to states for systemic failures in controlling the growing stray dog menace, with rising dog-bite cases underscoring ineffective implementation of animal birth control rules. Flagging inadequate sterilisation, poor shelter infrastructure, and lax removal of stray dogs from sensitive areas such as hospitals and schools, the top court warned that authorities must act or face consequences. The court urged states to safeguard public health while balancing animal welfare

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 28: The Supreme Court Wednesday flagged concern over state governments not complying with its directions to enhance their stray dog sterilisation capacity, saying, “They are all building castles in the air.”

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and NV Anjaria, which commenced hearing states’ submissions on compliance of its earlier directions, expressed its unhappiness

over the progress and said they were engaged in “storytelling.”

Senior advocate Gaurav Agarwal, who has been appointed amicus curiae in the matter, summarised the initiatives taken by different states, while flagging the deficiencies. He pointed out that some states have taken steps in consonance with the top court’s direction, but there was still a long way to go for total compliance.

The governments will have to step up animal birth control (ABC) facilities, ramp up sterilisation of stray dogs, set up dog pounds (animal shelters), fence up institutional areas and remove stray animals from roads and highways, the advocate said. The bench said, “They are all

building castles in the air. None of the states have given data on how many stray dog bites happened, except for Assam.”

The top court also expressed surprise over the data on dog bites in Assam. “Look at the statistics of bites. It is astonishing. In 2024, there were 1.66 lakh bites. And in 2025, only in January, there were 20,900. This is shocking,” it observed.

The bench said that states cannot make vague statements, and all vague averments are made on affidavits. “We are going to pass strong strictures against states that make vague averments,” Justice Nath said.

The apex court, which also heard the submissions of Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Gujarat, observed non-compliance of directions for fencing of institutional areas to prevent ingress of stray animals into schools and hospitals.

“Every public building should be fenced, not only because of stray dogs or other animals but also to protect the property from theft,” the bench observed.

12 Kotia villages belong to Andhra: Jana Sena Party

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pottangi, Jan 28: Leaders of Andhra Pradesh-based Jana Sena Party (JSP) allegedly entered a border village under Kotia gram panchayat (GP) in Koraput district and claimed that 12 villages presently under Odisha’s jurisdiction belonged to Andhra Pradesh, raising fresh questions over border security and administrative vigilance.

The incident reportedly took place at Upper Sembli under Pottangi block Tuesday, where JSP representatives convened a meeting of villagers and local heads. During the meeting, the party leaders asserted that the disputed villages had historically been part of Andhra and promised to raise the issue with Andhra CM N Chandrababu Naidu for resolu-

tion. The development has raised concern over the role of Pottangi block administration, as Odisha-Andhra border dispute involving Kotia GP remains sub-judice before the High Court.

According to sources, JSP representatives entered Odisha territory and addressed residents in Telugu, claiming that the 12 villages had remained under Odisha “for the past 60 years” despite belonging to Andhra.

Kotia sarpanch Liu Gemel criticised the administration, alleging a lack of visible effort to prevent the entry of Andhra officials and political workers.

Pottangi tehsildar Debendra Bahadur Singh Dharua confirmed that he is aware of the Jana Sena delegation’s visit to the village and the meeting held there.

Half-hearted response to Odisha bandh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: The eight-hour Odisha bandh call given by Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NNKS) over the alleged plight of farmers due to mismanagement in paddy procurement in the state Wednesday evoked a mixed response, an official said.

Railway services were not affected due to the bandh, while road transport was partially disrupted as protesters blocked roads in various districts. Protesters were seen burning motor tyres on the road at several places. Many passengers were stranded at bus terminals in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Shops and business establishments remained closed in several places in the state due to the bandh. The strike, which began at 6 am and continued till 2 pm, was supported by the Opposition Congress and CPI(M), while BJD complemented the NNKS for observing the shutdown to safeguard the interests of farmers.

“The bandh was observed peacefully across the state. The protesters requested the people to cooperate. The essential services were kept out of the purview of bandh,” NNKS convener Akshay Kumar said.

P5

‘Doomsday Clock’ closer to midnight than ever

Atomic scientists set their ‘Doomsday Clock’ Tuesday closer than ever to midnight, citing aggressive behaviour by nuclear powers Russia, China and the United States, fraying nuclear arms control, conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East and AI worries among factors driving risks for global disaster.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, founded in 1945 by scientists including Albert Einstein and J. Robert Oppenheimer, has now set the clock to 85 seconds before midnight, the theoretical point of annihilation. That is four seconds closer than it was set last year. The Chicago-based nonprofit created the clock in 1947 during the Cold War tensions that followed World War II to warn the public about how close humankind was to destroying the world.

The scientists voiced concern about threats of unregulated integration of AI into military systems and its potential misuse in aiding the creation of biological threats, as well as AI’s role in spreading disinformation globally. They also noted continuing challenges posed by climate change.

“Of course, the Doomsday Clock is about global risks, and what we have seen is a global failure in leadership,” nuclear policy expert Alexandra Bell, the Bulletin’s president and CEO, told Reuters. “No matter the government, a shift towards neo-imperialism and an Orwellian approach to governance will only serve to push the clock toward midnight.” It was the third time in the past four years that the scientists moved the clock closer to midnight.

Bell pointed to Russia’s con-

tinued war in Ukraine, the US and Israeli bombing of Iran and border clashes between India and Pakistan. Bell also cited continuing tensions in Asia including on the Korean Peninsula and China’s threats toward Taiwan, as well as rising tensions in the Western Hemisphere since President

Donald Trump returned to office 12 months ago.

The last remaining nuclear arms pact between the US and Russia, the New START treaty, expires February 5. Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed in September that the two countries agree to observe for another year the limits set

under the pact, which caps each side’s number of deployed nuclear warheads at 1,550. Trump has not formally responded. Western security analysts are divided about the wisdom of accepting Putin’s offer.

Trump in October ordered the US military to restart the process for testing nuclear weapons after a halt of more than three decades. No nuclear power, other than North Korea most recently in 2017, has conducted explosive nuclear testing in more than a quarter century.

No country would benefit more from a full-scale return to such testing than China, given its continued push to expand its nuclear arsenal, according to Bell, a former senior official at the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Arms Control, Deterrence and Stability.

REUTERS

Next attack will be far worse: Trump to Iran

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 28: US President Donald Trump urged Iran Wednesday to come to the table and make a deal on nuclear weapons or the next US attack would be far worse, but Tehran said that if that happened it would fight back as never before.

“Hopefully Iran will quickly ‘Come to the Table’ and negotiate a fair and equitable deal - NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS - one that is good for all parties. Time is running out, it is truly of the essence!” Trump wrote in a social media post.

“The next attack will be far worse! Don’t make that happen again,” Trump wrote. He

also repeated that a US “armada” was heading toward the Islamic Republic.

Iran’s mission to the United Nations responded in kind.

“Last time the US blundered into wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it squandered over \$7 trillion and lost more than 7,000 American lives,” it said in an X post quoting Trump’s statement.

Trump said a US naval force headed by the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln was approaching Iran. The warships started moving from the Asia-Pacific region last week as US-Iranian tensions soared following a bloody crackdown on protests across Iran by its clerical authorities in recent weeks.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST



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ARIES

Your progress will be abundant, enabling you to save quite a lot for a rainy day. More agreements are on the cards, and these may prove milestones in your business. Ganesha says that you have worked hard and its fruits lie in the future.




TAURUS

You are likely to show a strong streak of selfishness today, says Ganesha. He urges you not to too possessive about people or acquisitive about things and objects. Be very particular about this as your self centred tendencies could cause you a lot of grief. Your judgments plans and decisions may not be too reliable. Your arguments, too, could fall flat.



GEMINI

You may or may not be too open about it, but you love those around you. You can easily sacrifice your ego to ensure that the sentiments of the ones you love are not hurt. But this can take its toll. You are probably planning a trip today – business or pleasure, whatever the excuse may be, the idea is to take a break.



CANCER

In order to protect the feelings and sentiments of those dear to you, you may tend to hide your emotions under the garb of a calm demeanour, predicts Ganesha. In the afternoon, you may set out on a short trip out of town. In the evening, you may spend a handsome sum of money to make yourself look better.




LEO

Lady Luck and the goddess of wealth both seem to favour you on this very unique and dynamic day, says Ganesha. So, it should come as no surprise when you gain both – money and power – on the business front. The latter half of the day might find you splurging a bit on jewellery for your sweetheart. Remember, diamonds are a girl's best friend.




VIRGO

There are chances that today, you will turn to your family for happiness, predicts Ganesha. Of course, you may have to spend a small fortune to please them. Later in the day, you may pen the first chapter of a long-term platonic relationship.




LIBRA

Today promises to be a joy ride for your hidden corpulent side. Relish what you eat, as today you shall take a keen interest in the same. Career wise, you may find yourself standing at crossroads. But the good part about that is there are many paths to choose from. The latter half of the day promises to bring some monetary gain.



SCORPIO

It is highly likely that you will be on the move today, predicts Ganesha. You will be actively shuttling from one location to the other for work or social purposes. Business meetings and conversations will be the basis of all your thoughts. Business proposals may take shape later in the day, feels Ganesha.




SAGITTARIUS

Mysteries that have perplexed and plagued you for the past few days will unravel as the curtain draws from the clandestine, laying bare the aspects you needed an insight into. Any associations you make today will be beneficial in the long run. Your day will end with a feeling of gratitude and emotional attachment to loved ones, beyond the sweet veneer of material love.




CAPRICORN

You may get bogged down with work, and experience enormous stress today, says Ganesha. But, an adept professional, you will not give up easily. Your opponents will take a beating and will start to acknowledge your potential and abilities.



AQUARIUS

Straighten your tie and pull in your tummy, it's time to make an impression! And that's not all; you need to be sharp as important decisions await you. Haste will not do, as these decisions may have a long-term impact, cautions Ganesha.



PISCES

You will be full of energy and enthusiasm today, a fact which owes nothing to the revitalising pills you have added to your diet. You will have a great time making new acquaintances and splurging on someone you think is special, and this too should probably not have anything to do with aforementioned pills. If it does, however, you ought to be wary of starting new 'projects', says Ganesha.



STONE TALKS TO SPIRITS TO INSPIRE HER PAINTINGS

Sharon Stone has opened up about how she uses 'universal consciousness' to inspire her artwork. She told *Extra*: "So many members of my family died in three and a half years. I genuinely hear this higher consciousness speak to me. When these portraits started coming through, they really talked to me."

CHLOE ZHAO TRAINS TO BE A DEATH DOULA

Chinese filmmaker Chloé Zhao is training to be a death doula to help her overcome her fear of the end of life. The 43-year-old is undertaking a specialist course to learn how to provide physical and emotional support to people with terminal illnesses and their families before and after their deaths.



Curtains down on a vibrant celebration of cinema



Biswaprakash director Susant Mishra during post-screening conversation

Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: The 15th edition of Indian Film Festival of Bhubaneswar (IFFB), organised by Film Society of Bhubaneswar, wrapped up Wednesday with screening of two Odia films—one of the classics *Biswaprakash* released in the year 1999 by Susant Mishra and *Bou Buttú Bhuta* released last year and directed by Jagdish Mishra.

Biswaprakash—a film that has multi-layered plot with complex characters—claimed the Grand Prix prize at the Sochi International Film Festival in Russia and was screened at the coveted Cannes Film Festival.

2025's box office hit and one of the most successful films that has released in theatres recently, *Bou Buttú Bhuta* follows supernatural events in the life of a fish farmer.

Both of the directors of the films joined for a post screening discussion and QnA with the audience, briefed their working principles and shared a different perspective from the makers' point of view.

The day also witnessed Suman Mukhopadhyay's *Putulnacher Itikatha*, an adaptation from Manik Bandopadhyay's 1936 eponymous novel—a landmark work of 20th century Bengali literature.

The film is a period drama about a sensitive individual, caught between the pull of ambition and the weight of his social circumstances.

Orissa POST and *Dharitri* were the print media partners for the event.

IFFB 2026:
DAY 7

PNN



I'm an old soul: Bhagyashree

Hyderabad: Living fully in the present is at the top of Bhagyashree Borse's bucket list for 2026. In a conversation with a news portal, the actress, who received praise for her performance in *Kaantha*, shares, "I want to live in the present because it soon becomes the yesterday we look back at and miss."

After *Kaantha*, critics and audiences alike have pointed out that Bhagyashree possesses an old-world charm that's rare in artistes nowadays. Reacting to the sentiment, she states, "I think that's such a beautiful compliment. I am unabashedly in love with cinema. And that makes me want to be very sincere in my work. Not sure about oldworld charm, but I do believe I'm an old soul. As I grew up watching all the classic actors, I may have imbibed the good qualities I liked in each one of them."

She admits that it isn't easy when her film underperforms at the box office. "It does sting, honestly. When you put so much of yourself into a film and it's appreciated critically but doesn't do well commercially, there's a moment of disappointment. But it's important to look at the positives, mainly to take what you've learnt from the experience and keep going," said the actress.

AGENCIES



Shriya on men, fatherhood

Mumbai: Actress Shriya Saran, in an exclusive conversation with this agency, has spoken candidly about how pregnancy and parenthood bring emotional turmoil not just for women, but also for husbands.

She highlighted how to-be and new fathers often struggle to understand and cope with the changes their partners go through during pregnancy.

Shriya reflected on how the emotional impact of pregnancy often affects the husband first, even though he may not completely understand what the woman is experiencing.

"Unfortunately, the first person who bears the impact is usually the husband, and most of the time, he doesn't fully understand it. Not because he doesn't want to, but because he isn't emotionally trained or informed," she said.

Shriya said that men are deeply affected, and are rarely prepared for what lies ahead.

She added how at times, for a pregnant woman, not having her husband around during vulnerable times is extremely difficult to cope with. "When you want someone to pass you a pillow or just call you silly for no reason, and they are not there, it really hurts. The husband not being there feels terrible," Shriya said.

On the professional front, Shriya has been receiving great reviews for her performance in her recently released web series *Space Gen*. She is also geared up for her movie *Drishyam 3*.

IAN5

UTTAR PURUSH'S 3-DAY THEATRE FESTIVAL



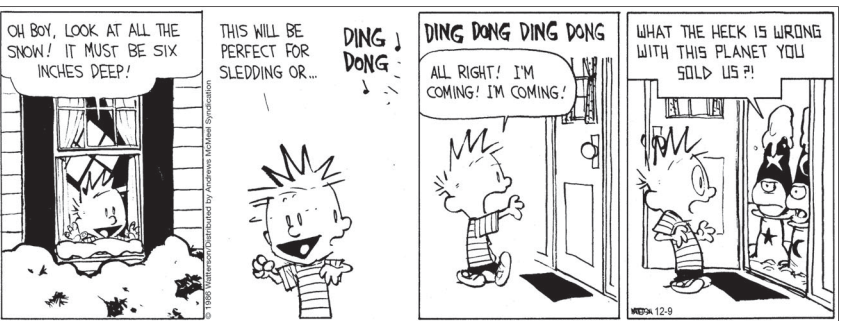
A scene from Odia play *Karna* staged at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. Written by Bijaya Kumar Satpathy, the play was directed by Prasanna Mishra on the second day of the event. The members of Uttar Purush performed the drama under Nataka Parikrama-2026

PIC: BIKASH HAYAK

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

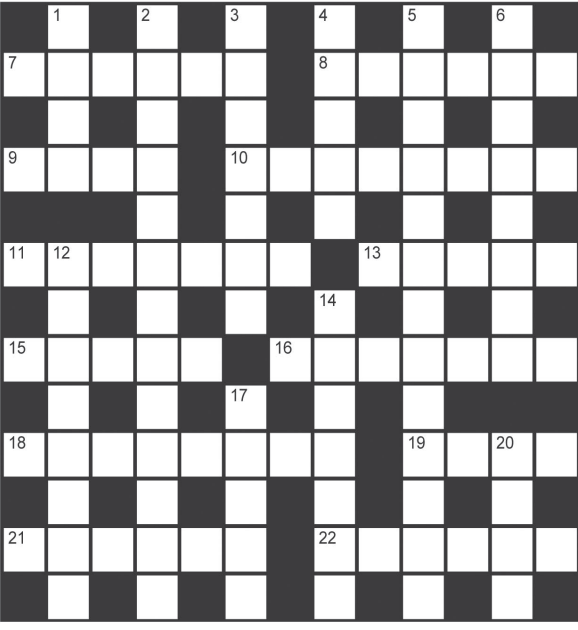


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 7 Rough texture
- 8 Puff the Magic ___
- 9 Oil grp.
- 10 Washes clothes
- 11 Scram
- 13 Suspect's excuse
- 15 Arm part
- 16 Sporting dog

- 18 Worked up
- 19 Cut of meat
- 21 Pen name
- 22 Overwhelm

Down

- 1 Progresso product
- 2 Diamond or emerald (8,5)
- 3 Pablo Casals was one
- 4 Smell

- 5 Common insect that doesn't bite (5,8)
- 6 Dreadful
- 12 Overly self-important
- 14 Young child
- 17 Logger's leftover
- 20 Like some chatter or hands

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | A | M | B | L | E | S | P | A | R | S | E |
| A | A | A | E | A | O | N | | | | | |
| S | Y | M | P | T | O | M | S | T | O | U | T |
| C | B | V | B | T | S | I | | | | | |
| A | I | O | L | I | E | L | A | S | T | I | C |
| L | A | R | A | R | E | | | | | | |
| A | R | E | N | A | S | T | A | R | T | | |
| O | E | A | R | S | | | | | | | |
| S | U | C | C | E | S | S | U | P | S | E | T |
| P | L | A | H | M | E | O | | | | | |
| R | O | U | T | S | E | M | P | E | R | O | R |
| E | S | E | S | E | V | K | | | | | |
| Y | I | E | L | D | S | A | T | H | E | N | S |

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CDMS 3.0 to transform contractor management

Department aims to curb corruption, improve construction quality and boost sector productivity using AI, ML, data analytics and the ‘One PAN–One Licence’ system



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: In a major push for transparency, efficiency and technology-driven governance, the Works Department Wednesday launched Contractor Database Management System (CDMS) 3.0, marking a key milestone in contractor management reforms in the state.

The upgraded digital platform was launched by Law, Works and Excise Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan to simplify contractor registration, strengthen accountability and improve delivery in the state's infrastructure sector.

The Department first introduced the CDMS application in 2018 as part of its e-governance initiative to streamline contractor registration and overcome limitations of the manual system. Building on this foundation and factoring in future needs, the platform has now been upgraded to CDMS 3.0, featuring a modern technological architecture and an enhanced operational framework.

“CDMS 3.0 will serve as a centralised digital repository, housing comprehensive contractor data, including personal and firm details, licences, certificates and performance records. The platform features

CDMS 3.0 to store comprehensive information, including personal and firm details, licences, certificates and performance records

The platform offers workflow management, analytical dashboards, MIS reports and integration with other government systems

workflow management tools, analytical dashboards, Management Information System (MIS) reports and seamless integration with other government systems,” officials said.

According to the Department, the adoption of cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and data analytics—along with the ‘One PAN–One Licence’ system—will help curb corruption, improve construction quality and enhance overall productivity in the sector.

Officials said the upgraded system is expected to benefit

both contractors and government departments. Contractors can update profiles online, track application status and receive timely notifications, while departments will be able to efficiently manage contractor data, monitor performance and make faster, informed decisions.

With the launch of CDMS 3.0, the Department has taken a decisive step towards creating a more transparent, efficient and technology-enabled infrastructure ecosystem in Odisha.

e-IB portal to accept PWD IB bookings

Bhubaneswar: Marking a significant step towards digitising the booking process of Public Works department (PWD) Inspection Bungalows (IBs) located at Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark, Law, Works and Excise Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan launched e-IB portal here Wednesday. The newly introduced platform has been developed to simplify and streamline the procedure for room booking and allotment in PWD IBs, under the Works department through a seamless digital interface. The initiative is expected to benefit both government officers and the general public by ensuring ease of access and faster service delivery. Key features of the portal includes online room booking and cancellation facilities, availability of all booking-related information at a single point, easy access from any location through the internet, ability to track booking and allotment status in real time. Officials said the digital initiative would make the booking system more transparent and accountable compared to the existing manual process. By eliminating delays and reducing paperwork, the e-IB portal is expected to play a crucial role in improving efficiency and convenience for users.

NAT'L MYGS COMPETITION EMRS ODISHA BAGS POSITION



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS), Hirli brought national recognition to the state by securing the second position at National Level Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) competition recently. The prestigious competition was held among nearly 200 EMRSs across the country under the aegis of Central government's Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

The MYGS National Award Ceremony was held January 28 in New Delhi. Students of EMRS Hirli, accompanied by principal and guide teacher, were felicitated for their outstanding performance. The team received a cash award of 75 lakh along with a memento.

The success reflects the school's commitment to nurturing leadership, civic awareness and participatory democratic values among tribal youth.

CLASSIFIED LOST

I Smt. Snehalata Rout aged about 39 years wife of Manmath Kumar Malla resident of At-S-2-183, Niladri Vihar, PO- Sailashree Vihar, PS- Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar, Dist- Khordha, Odisha, PIN- 751021 stated that, I am lost my registered lease deed vide document No. 11082209939 registered dtd.13.07.2022 in favour of Satyanarayan Mishra in between my residence to Nalco square on dtd.14.01.2026. Hence I am not responsible if the above said lease deed misused some where.

Mayurbhanj Utsav 2026 from Jan 30

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: The Mayurbhanj Cultural Association, Bhubaneswar, will organise the historic Mayurbhanj Utsav 2026 from January 30 to February 1 at the Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya Campus, the organisers said at a press meet here Wednesday.

The three-day festival will bring together people from Mayurbhanj living in and around the Capital, promoting cultural bonding and vibrant interaction on a shared platform.

A key highlight of the Utsav will be its focus on nurturing young and emerging talent from remote areas of Mayurbhanj, giving them a prestigious platform to showcase their artistic skills. The festival will also feature performances by renowned dancers, musicians, singers, actors and literary figures of Odisha, adding grandeur and diversity to the celebrations.

The audience will enjoy spellbinding performances of the world-famous Mayurbhanj Chau Dance, along with Jhumar, folk and tribal dances, and modern contemporary presentations. These cultural extravaganzas will unfold on a grandly decorated stage over three vibrant evenings, promising a visual and artistic treat.

Beyond performances, visitors can savour the authentic flavours of Mayurbhanj, including delicacies like Mudhi-Mansa, Dala Khechudi, Ram Ruchuka Curry, and other traditional dishes. A craft me-la featuring exquisite works in stone, bamboo and sabaigrass will further enhance the festive experience.

Mayurbhanj Utsav 2026 promises a vibrant celebration of tradition, talent, taste and togetherness, giving Bhubaneswar a unique window into the rich cultural heritage of Mayurbhanj.

BMC presents ₹1,050cr Draft Budget for 2026–27



In a major public health decision, the general council resolved to strictly enforce the state government's ban on gutkha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Wednesday presented its draft budget of ₹1,050 crore for the financial year 2026-27 during the 38th General Council and Special Budget Meeting at BMC headquarters here.

Out of the total proposed outlay, ₹300 crore is expected from BMC's own revenue, while ₹750 crore will come as government grant

Addressing the council, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das stressed the importance of enhancing BMC's own revenue collection, stating that increased revenue would directly impact the quan-

tum of grants received from the 15th and 16th Finance Commissions. She advised all officials to work strictly within rules and regulations to strengthen the corporation's financial position.

Delivering the welcome address, BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana sought the coordination of corporators to make the upcoming Patha Utsav at In-focity attractive and successful.

In a major public health decision, the general council resolved to strictly enforce the state government's ban on gutkha. The council resolved that sale of gutkha in BMC vending zones, OMFED booths, and all BMC-controlled areas will invite strict action. Enforcement drives against gutkha will be intensified across the City. No gutkha-related hoardings will be allowed within BMC limits. Agencies found installing such advertisements will be penalised. The council emphasised strict implementation of the state government's gutkha prohibition law to safeguard public health.

The council discussed the future of Urban Health and Wellness Centres (UHCW) operating from rented premises. As per government directions, rent payments will no longer be made, and these centres will be shifted to government or own buildings. However, the council unanimously decided that no UHCW under BMC will be shut down.

Work on a state-of-the-art fish market near Pandara has already begun, the council was informed. Directions were issued to complete the ISCKON and Rasulgarh drainage projects before the onset of the monsoon. Desilting of major drains as well as drains in inner lanes is also to be completed before the rainy season.

The council further decided to immediately start the renovation of the Chandrasekharpur Kalyan Mandap and to rehabilitate the affected families of Hatapodi No 1 within 30 days. The mayor also proposed the construction of ward offices in all wards by the end of the next financial year.

Saveful app launched to cut food waste, grocery costs



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: Australian food-tech platform Saveful was launched here Wednesday, marking its entry into the Indian market with an AI-driven app aimed at reducing household food waste and rising grocery costs.

Launched in collaboration with Centurion University of Technology and Management (CUTM)—the national hub for Saveful's India rollout—the app helps households plan meals using existing kitchen ingredients while tracking financial and environmental savings.

Speaking on the occasion, university Vice Chancellor Supriya Pattanayak said the initiative aligns with the university's commitment to sustainability and the circular economy. She described Saveful as more than a digital tool,

calling it a practical extension of the university's Zero Waste Campus philosophy that empowers students and communities to practise responsible consumption in daily life.

Co-Founder and CEO of Saveful Kim McDonnell said India is a key market in the platform's global expansion. She noted that launching Saveful in Bhubaneswar with Centurion University would help drive community-led change while delivering tangible economic and environmental benefits to households.

Under the partnership, Saveful will be rolled out across Centurion University campuses and integrated into community outreach programmes in and around Bhubaneswar. Users will be able to track food savings, cost reductions and environmental impact through a personalised dashboard.

57-year-old sage pedals across Char Dham Yatra

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP



Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: Carrying profound devotion in his heart, Sanjay Janardan Kharat, a 57-year-old sage from Maharashtra's Ahilya Nagar, pedals his bicycle through harsh weather and risky roads to complete the Char Dham Yatra and visit 12 Jyotirlingas.

Kharat began his spiritual journey November 1, 2024, carrying only a bedsheet, food and basic essentials on his old bicycle. Since then, he has covered 11 Jyotirlingas and three dhams, undeterred by the challenges along the way.

“I have now reached the final phase of my journey. I am on my way to visit the Puri Jagannath Temple, and after that, I will head to Kedarnath,” said Kharat.

Despite harsh weather, his devotion has kept his spirit unbroken. He cycles as far as his body allows each day and rests at petrol stations or bus depots. “I cycle as much as possible daily and then rest to recover. In this journey, I have traveled fourteen thousand kilometers on cycle so far. I eat very little, and I never face difficulty finding food, as offerings from people and devotees are enough to

WINGS INDIA 2026

Odisha showcases future-ready aviation vision

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad/Bhubaneswar, Jan 28: The Odisha government is making a strong, aspirational presence at Wings India 2026, Asia's largest civil aviation event, with its dedicated pavilion themed “Odisha Takes Flight”, showcasing the state's growing role in India's aviation sector.

At the Odisha Pavilion, visitors are experiencing how the state is building a future-ready, inclusive and investment-friendly aviation ecosystem, driven by progressive policies, expanding regional and international connectivity, focused skilling initiatives and long-term infrastructure planning.

The pavilion highlights Odisha's vision of “Aviation for All”, showcasing opportunities across airport development, aviation training, drone ecosystem, MRO potential and human capital development, aligned with the state's long-term roadmap under Viksit Odisha 2036 and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Adding momentum to the state's participation, Commerce & Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Pad-



hee participated as a panelist in the “Women in Aviation” Round Table Session, reinforcing Odisha's commitment to gender-inclusive growth and leadership across the aviation value chain.

Speaking on the occasion, Padhee said that the state is focused on encouraging girls to explore aviation early in their careers and, through convergence of departments and partners, creating an enabling ecosystem that allows women to enter, grow and lead in the aviation sector.


As part of its skilling-led development approach, the Commerce & Transport department

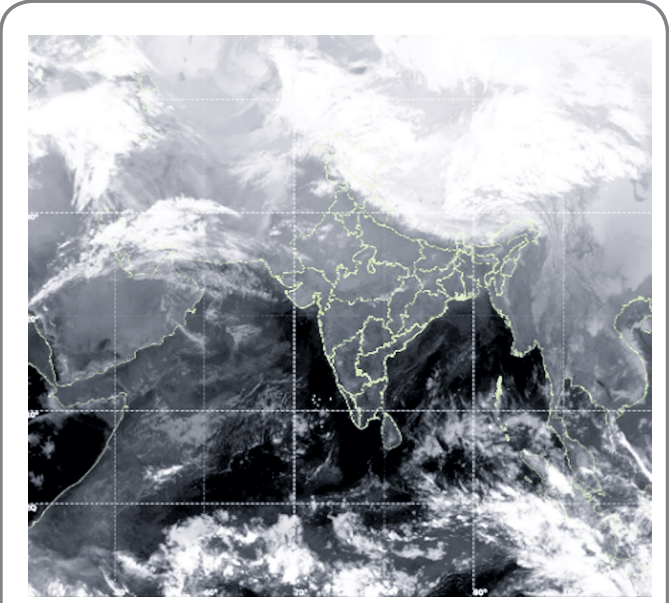
signed two Memoranda of Understanding Wednesday to strengthen aviation training infrastructure in Odisha.

A MoU with M/s Alchemist Aviation will facilitate the establishment of a Flying Training Organisation (FTO) at Dandbose Airport, Mayurbhanj, with an annual training capacity of around 50 pilots.

Another MoU with M/s BonV Aero will enable the setting up of a UAV (Drone) Training and Testing Centre at Rangeilunda Airstrip, Berhampur—the first such facility in the state—capable of training over 100 UAV pilots annually.

Odisha's aviation develop-

| MARKET WATCH | | | | | |  | |
|--------------|-----------|--------|---------|-----------|-------------|---|-------------------|
| CURRENCY | | | BOURSES | | COMMODITIES | | |
| INDEX | VARIATION | | INDEX | VARIATION | | INDEX | VARIATION |
| DOLLAR | 92.08 | ▲ 0.62 | SENSEX | 82344.68 | ▲ 487.20 | GOLD | ₹163,892 ▲ ₹6193 |
| EURO | 110.07 | ▼ 0.05 | NIFTY | 25342.75 | ▲ 167.35 | SILVER | ₹382,000 ▲ ₹25721 |



| WEATHER | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|--|
| | BBSR | CTC | FORECAST |
| Max Temp | 31.2° | 28.0° | Dry weather likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha |
| Min Temp | 16.6° | 14.6° | |
| Humidity | 82% | 90% | |
| Rainfall | NIL | NIL | |



BARGARH BANDH SPONTANEOUS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Jan 28: The Odisha bandh call given by Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NNKS) received spontaneous support across this district as business establishments and markets remained closed and vehicular movement came to a standstill from 6am to 2pm Wednesday.

All government and private establishments remained shut as agitators prevented officials from attending their offices while all the educational institutions were also closed during the period.

No untoward incidents were reported from any part of the district, said reports. As a precautionary measure, police were deployed in sensitive areas to maintain law and order, an official said.

The bandh call by NNKS assumes significance as problems regarding the sale of Kharif paddy remain unresolved, even if Rabi cultivation has begun. This has triggered growing resentment among farmers in Bargarh district, known as the rice bowl of Odisha.

Against this backdrop, Sanjukta Krushak Sangathan also called for an eight-hour bandh in the district, pressing for a four-point charter of demands. The demands included the resignation of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo over allegations of mocking farmers instead of



A deserted road in Bargarh

All government and private establishments remained shut as agitators prevented officials from attending their offices while all the educational institutions were also closed during the period

addressing their grievances, immediate resolution of paddy procurement issues, withdrawal of fines imposed in the name of pollution, a halt to smart meter connections, and provision of 300 units of free electricity to farmers.

In Bargarh town, bandh supporters staged a sit-in by parking vehicles on the main road at Gandhi Chhak. Representatives from several political parties and organisations, including the Congress, Aam

Aadmi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Koshal Sena, Bargarh Nagarik Manch, Samvidhan Suraksha Manch, Bhim Army and various voluntary organisations, participated in the protest.

Addressing a protest meeting, leaders including Sanjukta Krushak Sangathan adviser Ramesh Mohapatra, Utpanna Bhoi, Niranjan Pradhan, Rabishankar Pradhan, Ishant Bhoi, Sudam Patra, Abhimanyu Pradhan, Koshal

Sena leader Birbal Mahakud, district Congress president Hardeep Singh, Pandab Karana, Pradeep Debata, AAP leader Bhavani Sahu, former Bargarh MLA Sadhu Nepak, Bargarh Nagarik Manch president Bhisimadev Saraf, Shayan Panda, Samvidhan Suraksha Manch's Pabitra Deheri, Purandar Bhosagar, farmer Sudam Sahu, Jugunu Jagadala and Purna Pradhan strongly criticized the state government.

During the protest, an effigy of the Deputy Chief Minister was burnt at Gandhi Chhak. The bandh was led by farmer leader Arabind Panda at Gaisilet. The bandh call was also total in Atabira block with normal life coming to a standstill.

Van hits bike; 5-year-old boy dies, parents critical

Bhadrak: A family's journey from Mayurbhanj to Bhubaneswar on a motorcycle turned tragic as a five-year-old boy died and his parents sustained critical injuries when a pickup van hit their two-wheeler near Dahanigadia on National Highway 16 here Wednesday. The crash occurred around 9am, when Rajat Jena, a resident of Jhinkiria in Mayurbhanj district, was riding with his wife, Milli Singh, and their son, Akash. Police said the van hit the motorcycle near Dahanigadia overbridge, causing the rider to lose control. The bike slammed into the bridge guard wall and fell off the bridge, while the child died on the spot. Jena and his wife fell nearly 18 feet from the overbridge onto the service road below and sustained serious injuries. Some locals rescued the couple and rushed them to the district headquarters hospital in Bhadrak in a car. Both are undergoing treatment. Police sent the child's body for postmortem and seized the damaged motorcycle. "A case (79/26) has been registered and based on a complaint filed by Jena's sister, an investigation is underway," said inspector-in-charge Prabhanshu Mishra.

Sambalpur/Kuchinda, Jan 28: A gupchup vendor was found murdered at Domuhani forest under Kuchinda police limits in Sambalpur district, Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Jagannath Palei, 36, of Khadiapali village. Kuchinda police arrested Rohit Behera, 45, in connection with the case and are questioning him, police said. According to sources, Palei left home as usual Tuesday morning to sell gupchup but did not return home for several hours. After an extensive search, frantic family members found his body inside the forest and informed the police.

Police recovered the body

and brought Rohit, who was lying unconscious near the body, to the police station for interrogation. Locals alleged that Rohit may be involved in the killing, though police have not confirmed this.

Police sources said the victim and Rohit were friends but had developed differences over an issue a few days ago. Injury marks found on Rohit's body suggest a possible scuffle between the two prior to the killing, the sources said.

A sniffer dog and a scientific team collected blood samples as part of the investigation. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination, while a further investigation is underway, said SDPO Pradeep Kumar Das.

Cylinder blast, no bomb: Cops

Chhatrapur: Police Wednesday cleared the air over a suspected bomb explosion that occurred in the wee hours of Tuesday at the backyard of the house of G Kamaraju Reddy of Chikalkhandi under Chhatrapur police limits. Chhatrapur SDPO Chandan Kumar Ghadei, along with IIC Sabyasaachi Malla, told the media that Reddy had lit an 'akhanda deepa' near a gas cylinder. The flames of the lamp caused fire to the already leaking gas cylinder. This resulted in explosion of the cylinder causing severe damage to the house.

Chorus grows louder for whale skeleton museum in Balikuda



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balikuda, Jan 28: Residents of Balikuda block in Jagatsinghpur district have urged the state government to preserve the skeleton of a whale recently found dead near the Devi River mouth, and establish a museum in Bandar village area to house it.

The carcass of the massive whale was discovered four days ago at Nadiakhia under the Marine Police Station limits. Forest officials conducted a postmortem and destroyed the flesh using chemicals, while deciding to send the skeleton to Nandankanan Zoological Park or Bhitarkanika National Park, according to Bandar forest ranger Priyabrata Choudhury.

As soon as the news of the plan to shift the skeleton spread, strong reactions started pouring in from locals, who argued that the whale's remains should be preserved in Bandar village itself.

They maintained that the area, home to Maa Bandarei shrine, already attracts thousands of visitors during the tourist season. The tourists pay visit to the temples, organise feasts in the nearby forests, enjoy boat rides and make trips to the sea. A museum showcasing the whale skeleton, they contend, would further boost tourism and compel the government to recognise Bandar village as a tourist destination.

Community organisations including Mal

Marichpur Development Council, Talamal Bikash Mancha, Voice of Balikuda, Maa Bandarei Youth Union, Kinaram Biswal Foundation, Pragati Pathe Ama Sangathan, Lotus Club and the Coastal Action Committee have warned that the skeleton should not be moved elsewhere.

Many have echoed the demand, saying the museum would enhance the region's cultural and ecological significance. A signature campaign is underway, with petitions being submitted to the District Collector, legislators, ministers and MPs.

Several social media groups are also pressing the state government to act in favour of the community's interest.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
GANJAM (R&B) DIVISION NO.1, BERHAMPUR
Phone/Fax (0680) 2233683, e-mail:eerb1_bam@yahoo.com
“e” Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.SE R&B Divn. No.1 Bam 56/2025-26
No.B-1009 Lr.No.607, dtd.19.01.2026
Name of Work : Building & Road Works
No. of Works : 5 (Five) Nos.
Estimated Cost : Approximately Rs.5.29 Lakh to Rs.43.19 Lakh
Period of Completion : 2 (Two), 3 (Three) & 4 (Four) Calendar Months
Date and Time of availability of bid document in the Portal : From 10.00 Hours of 30.01.2026 to 16.00 hours of 05.02.2026
Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : Upto 16.00 hours of 05.02.2026
Name & Address of the Officer : Superintending Engineer
Inviting Bid Name of Work : Ganjam (R&B) Division No.1 Berhampur
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer
Ganjam (R&B) Division No.1, Berhampur
OIPR-

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
ADDITIONAL SPILLWAY DIVISION, BURLA
PHONE NO.:0663-2430080
E-mail:- eeadshirakud@gmail.com or seadadditionalspillway@gmail.com
Lr.No.105 Date:22.01.26
‘e’ Procurement Notice No.ASD-06/2025-26 (Online)

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | Name of Work | Supply, Installation and commissioning of 25 KVA transformer and overhead 11 KV lines near the Lunch Station site for the office building of the Additional Spillway Project of Hirakud Dam for the year 2024-25 |
| 2. | Nos of Work | 01 (One) No. |
| 3. | Amount Put to tender | Rs.16.75 Lakhs approximately |
| 4. | Period of Completion | As per D.T.C.N. 60 days |
| 5. | E.M.D. | Rs.17,000/- |
| 6. | Date and Time of availability of Bid document in the portal | Date:29.01.2026 at 11.00 AM to Date: 10.02.2026, upto 01.00 PM |
| 7. | Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the Portal | Date:10.02.2026, upto 01.00 PM |
| 8. | Last date & time of seeking tender clarification | Dt.10.02.2026 upto 12.00 PM |
| 9. | Date of Opening of Bid | Dt.10.02.2026 at 4.00 P.M. |
| 10. | Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid | Superintending Engineer, Additional Spillway Division, Burla At/Po-Burla - 768017 Dist.-Sambalpur Email:eeadshirakud@gmail.com/ seadadditionalspillway@gmail.com |

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd./- Superintending Engineer,
Additional Spillway Division, Burla
OIPR-

No.A-1324

Blackbuck census in Ganjam starts today

DWARKA PRASAD PATNAIK, OP

Chhatrapur/Bhanjanagar, Jan 28: The annual blackbuck census in Ghumusar South, Ghumusar North and Berhampur Forest Ranges will begin Thursday.

According to reports, altogether 18 units have been formed comprising forest officials and students who have been imparted training on the procedure of the census at a special camp organised inside Lalsingh nursery of North Ghumusar Wednesday.

During the training session, divisional forest officer (DFO) Himanshu Sekhar Mohanty explained to the officials about the necessary steps to be taken to ensure smooth conduct of the census.

Assistant conservator of forests (ACF) Bibek Das held a detailed session on the rules and

regulations of the survey. He said that no one is allowed to take selfies with the endangered species.

He further mentioned to strictly maintain the integrity of the census reports. The exercise will be conducted in two phases during the day – one phase will be conducted from 6am to 9am and the other between 4pm and 6pm. The ACF said they anticipate an increase in the blackbuck population from the count of 404 last year.

“Conservation of these animals has been satisfactory so far, as there are chances of a rise in their count,” Das added.

Among other trainers were ACF Bimal Pradhan, Mujagarh ranger Bimbadhar Sahu, Tarasingh ranger Prasant Behera, central range forest officer Prithviraj Pradhan and forest animal expert Uma Biswal.

Stir over Utkal Alumina’s unmet promises continues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada/Tikiri, Jan 28: Displaced and project-affected people in KSHIPUR block of Rayagada district have launched an agitation, demanding basic civic amenities and a 0.01 per cent equity share in Utkal Alumina International Ltd.

Despite more than 18 years of bauxite mining operations at Baphlimali, residents allege that promises of development have remained unfulfilled. They claim that access to education, healthcare, drinking water, housing and road connectivity is still lacking in the affected villages.

Under the banner of Utkal Alumina Land Losers and Project-Affected Association, the project-affected villagers



Tuesday began a dharna near the company's RMP gate, warning of an intensified agitation if their demands are ignored.

Association president Natha Majhi alleged that the company has failed to provide permanent jobs to eligible displaced families and has discontinued allowances promised earlier. Protesters also raised concerns over pollution from red mud ponds, ash ponds and conveyor belts, claiming it has led to

20-yr RI for rape

Baripada: A fast-track special court (FTSC) here in Mayurbhanj district Wednesday sentenced a man to 20 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for raping a woman, finding her alone in 2022. The Ad-Hoc Additional District and Sessions Judge, FTSC, Santosh Kumar Nayak convicted the accused and imposed a fine of 10,000. The court ordered that the convict would undergo an additional six months in jail in case of default in payment of the fine. The court further directed the Mayurbhanj district legal services authority (DLSA) to provide compensation of ₹2 lakh to the survivor. The convict has been identified as Jishunath Hembram, 38, a resident of Tilaposi village under Morada police limits in the district. According to the prosecution, the incident took place around 7pm September 2, 2022, when the victim was returning home after attending a funeral. Hembram allegedly took advantage of her being alone, dragged her to a secluded place and raped her. Following the incident, a complaint was lodged with Morada police who registered a case (235/22), conducted an investigation and produced the accused before the court, said Public Prosecutor Manoranjan Pattnaik.

health problems and agricultural losses.

Among their key demands are - permanent employment with family benefits, financial assistance for higher education of children, pollution control measures, compensation for crop damage, reopening of night schools and establishment of a 50-bed hospital in the area.

Company authorities had not responded till Wednesday as the protest continued.

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER
Open E-Tender Notice No. RS-TATA-13-2025-26. For & on behalf of President of India, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS)/TATA, S.E. Railway invites E-Tender for the under mentioned work. Manual offers are not allowed against the E-Tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **Description of work :** Polyurethane (P.U.) Painting and provision of Retro reflective tapes on the body of Electric Locomotives at ELS/TATA. **Tender Value :** ₹ 47,80,810.20. **E.M.D.:** ₹ 95,600/-. **Cost of Tender Form:** NIL. **Date and time of closing of tender:** 15:00 hrs. of 17.02.2026. **Date of opening of tender :** 17.02.2026 at TRS/TATA. Tender can be viewed at website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> Complete detail particulars of the E-Tender are available on the website. If the date of opening happens to be a BANDH or HOLIDAY, The tender will be opened at same time on the next working day. (PR-1111)

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RWSS DIVISION, BERHAMPUR
Near Jarada Bungalow, Pin - 760004, Ph. - 0680-2296344
eerwss_bam@nic.in, rwssbam@gmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
Bid Identification No. EERWSSBAM-25/2025-26
No.25001/6/2526 - The Superintending Engineer, RWSS&S Division, Berhampur, Ganjam on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites bids in Single Cover system according to the norm of "e" Procurement system in online mode for Supplying all labour, material and T&P for Construction of Meeting Hall for Additional Chief Engineer, RWSS&S Circle, Berhampur inside premises of RWSS&S Division, Berhampur in Ganjam District from the eligible contractors as per DTCN.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Name of the work | Supplying all labour, material and T&P for Construction of Meeting Hall for Additional Chief Engineer, RWSS&S Circle, Berhampur inside premises of RWSS&S Division, Berhampur in Ganjam District. |
| 2 | No. of Work (Tender) | 01 No. |
| 3 | Estimated cost (Approximate) | Rs.11.81 Lakhs |
| 4 | Period of completion | 180 days |
| 5 | Date & Time of availability of bid document in the Portal | From 02.02.2026 at 11.00 hrs to 16.02.2026 up to 17.00 hrs |
| 6 | Last date & time for seeking clarification | 13.02.2026 up to 17.00 hrs |
| 7 | Date of opening of Bid | 17.02.2026 at 11.00 hrs |
| 8 | Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the Portal | 16.02.2026 up to 17.00 hrs |
| 9 | Name & address of the Officer inviting tender | Superintending Engineer, RWSS Division, Near Jarada Bungalow, Berhampur-760004, Dist. Ganjam, Odisha |

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> Sd./- Superintending Engineer RWSS&S Division, Berhampur
OIPR-25001/250351/125-26/0006

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
PANCHAYAT SAMITI : NARAYANPATNA
PR & DW DEPARTMENT, ODISHA
E-Mail ID : ori-narayanpatna@nic.in
Letter No.247/2026/TCN.09/2025-26 **Dated : 28.01.2026**
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Bid Identification No. 09 of 2025-26 of B.D.O.,Narayanpatna
1. Bid documents consisting of specification, the Bill of Quality and the Tender Call Notice can be seen in the Govt. website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in/nicgep/app>.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Work | Amount put to Tender (Approx. In Lakhs) | Class of Contractor | Cost of Tender Paper | E.M.D. (Bid Security) in Rs | Period of completion (Calendar Month) |
|---------|---|---|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Construction of Additional Classroom at Bari PS | 7,88,971.00 | “C” & “D” | 6000/- | 7900/- | 06 Months |

01 (One) No. of work only

Tender documents are available on website

Bid documents available date and time

Bid clarification start date & closing date

Offline documents received through Speed Post/Registered Post

Date, time and venue of opening of bid online

Offline documents shall be opened in presence of participate bidders in chamber of BDO, Narayanpatna

If stipulation arises the tender will be decided through Lottery System

Can be downloaded from Website (<http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>)

From **31.01.2026** at 11.00 hours to **16.02.2026** up to 17.30 hours

31.01.2026 to **16.02.2026** during office hours

From **31.01.2026** at **17.30 hours** to **18.02.2026** at 11.00 hours

(18.02.2026 at 11.00 hours), Office of the Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti, Narayanpatna

18.02.2026 at 11.00 hours onwards

(18.02.2026 at 02.30 hours) Office of the Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti, Narayanpatna

Sd./- Block Development Officer
Narayanpatna

The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.

THE MOTHER



Bloody Minnesota

The Trump administration’s “flood the zone” strategy can make it difficult to see when a turning point occurs in the United States’ slide into authoritarianism. Some might say this is an objective of the strategy, which is built on gradual encroachments on people’s rights and institutional checks. But the killing of two US citizens by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in Minneapolis this month may just be that turning point.

A key distinguishing feature of authoritarian governments is their ability to use excessive force against opponents. Every government uses coercive tactics in policing, but there are clear thresholds. The British government can use force to clear some spaces of protesters. But various institutional checks and the strength of norms against authoritarianism make it unthinkable for the police to engage in the indiscriminate killing of protesters in the United Kingdom.

In contrast, there was no surprise whatsoever when then-Syrian President Bashar al-Assad responded murderously to protests during the Arab Spring. Most people understand that authoritarian governments can and will use such force against opposition, independent media, and other pillars of civil society.

Such violent suppression of opposition in democratic or broadly non-authoritarian societies faces several barriers. First, a similar crackdown would generate shock and indignation from both other branches of government and civil society, thus likely becoming counterproductive. Second, the government cannot even be certain that its security forces will follow such an order. During Trump’s first term, US military leaders made it clear that they would not.

ICE expanded significantly during 2025 and, by all evidence, has recruited young men who are highly sympathetic to the more extreme version of Trump’s anti-immigrant agenda. It has also been given an extremely broad mandate and allowed to use tactics that would have been viewed as unthinkable for any federal agency in the past. The Department of Justice has shown unwavering support for ICE’s arguably illegal actions, even refusing to investigate them.

The symbolism of the events in Minnesota is unmistakable. ICE has now killed two innocent civilians: Renée Good, a mother of three who had just dropped her son off at school, and now Alex Pretti, an intensive-care nurse who was observing and recording an ICE raid. These federal agents routinely use threats and violent tactics against protesters who document their activities. Most significantly, however, by granting ICE agents de facto immunity, the Trump administration has given them a green light to ratchet up their violent tactics.

If this violence goes unchecked, it could indeed be a turning point, because it will create a template for other security forces more closely aligned with Trump to use force against any manifestation of opposition

Already, the two branches of government that are supposed to check the presidency (Congress and the Supreme Court) have proven to be highly solicitous of Trump’s agenda. And the equally important institutional check from independent agencies has also been weakened, especially by the president’s ability to appoint allies and cronies to key positions. As I recently argued elsewhere, the administration’s overarching aim is to form a type of unfettered imperial presidency – which is exactly how authoritarianism is consolidated, as contemporary examples from Hungary to Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Turkey, and Venezuela illustrate.

There is another sense in which this moment could prove to be a turning point. In January 2017, I argued that the first Trump administration could be contained only by peaceful protests. Even then, it was obvious that other branches of government would not constrain Trump effectively, and that even if they tried, Trump would bend the norms in his favour.

But while protests turned out to be a potent defense against the first Trump administration’s efforts to expand its powers and edge toward authoritarianism, by 2025 the energy that had propelled them in 2017 was gone. This was partly because many pundits and much of the population interpreted the outcome of the 2024 election, in which Trump won the popular vote, as giving a bigger mandate than 2016, when he did not.

There was a more important reason, however: Democratic Party activists had exhausted their legitimacy during the Biden years. In the civil service, universities, NGOs, and even in the private sector, Democratic activists had overplayed their hands and lost a lot of support by suppressing legitimate concerns about their desired social changes. So, in January 2025, civil society’s defense against Trump, who now had a much more radical agenda, was inchoate.

Minneapolis may change that. The energy and solidarity among people supporting their immigrant neighbours and protesting ICE’s brutal tactics herald a defining showdown. The outcome will be decided in part by how willing Trump’s allies in Congress are to go along with official violence and lawlessness, and by Trump himself and the tight group of like-minded advisers around him. But the biggest factor will be the resolve of civil society itself, starting in Minnesota.

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

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.

STEPHEN HAWKING

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself and you are the easiest person to fool.

RICHARD P. FEYNMAN

The optimist thinks this is the best of all possible worlds. The pessimist fears it is true.

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

FOCUS PUBLIC HEALTH

PROTECTING THE CURRENCY OF CARE



Instead of making the sector more responsive to the needs of citizens, the red carpet rolled out to private equity has added in new and complex ways to age-old sectoral burdens

India’s heath sector has historically suffered from poor public investments and weak private sector alignment with the end goals of delivering quality care that is available, accessible and affordable. The nation’s response has been, in one part, to allow the injection of private equity into the sector to attract capital and drive expansion. The latest PE sector reports released in recent months tell us how these investments have surged in India’s heath sector. The policy has now been playing out for the last two decades or so, with a new fillip in the National Health Policy, 2017, which called the private sector “strategic partners” for “critical gap-filling” towards universal health coverage, suitably reinforced by the Niti Aayog highlighting investment opportunities.

But instead of making the sector more responsive to the needs of citizens, the red carpet rolled out to private equity has added in new and complex ways to age-old sectoral burdens. Total PE investments into healthcare and pharmaceuticals reached \$5.5 billion in 2023, representing a 25% increase from the previous year with further “notable growth” in deal activity from 2024 to 2025, according to Bain and Company, a global management consultancy firm which released a global PE report earlier this month. The investments will lead to more hospital beds, but the logic of PE investments and PE-led growth sits at odds with the mission of healthcare to reach all sections of a society marked by inequities, imbalances in development and a rural-urban divide that may be getting more pronounced as a result. More significantly, PE-led growth can colour the entire institution of healthcare, including non-PE hospitals, in ways that may not help India meet its goals of universal health coverage. This is because the imperatives of equity often looking for exits as they hop to more lucrative shores, turns the game toward premiumisation, tourist healthcare or complex and advanced procedures where returns can be higher, by forsaking simpler or lower cost remedies. The oft-heard refrain is that a clear business orientation has taken root, coupled with some sharp practises that are increasingly being normalised in a sector that is increasingly being corporatised. Managers in suits sit at fancier front desks to sign off on higher billing rates that make the hospitals and their exceedingly qualified set of doctors and surgeons less available to the majority of the population.

Take the example of a leading and widely respected hospital group in Mumbai that uses home glucometers to test patients’ blood sugar levels twice and often thrice a day with insta-strips that cost less than ₹30 a piece but bills these to the patients at ₹500 per test, a markup so outrageous and unsophisticated that many insurance companies refuse to honour the expense. In general, lived experience, anecdotal evidence and a small but persistent

voice from doctors against this new trend tell us that matters are going from bad to worse, not merely in the immediate but also in terms of a larger and longer-term loss in an altered ecosystem. Care cedes to commerce when the health system imports the language of a returns-hungry private equity, normalises newer revenue metrics and in the process redefines broad engagement (not to speak of purpose) in overly business terms.

The Global Healthcare Private Equity report published by Bain said India accounted for about 25% of Asia-Pacific healthcare PE deal volume in 2024, making it the largest PE market in the region by volume, reported in a graph for which underlying data was not published.

An indication of the frustration and anger at the state of affairs was a statement last year by Mohan Bhagwat, the chief of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological vanguard of the BJP, that health (and education, he added) is out of reach of ordinary people. For an organisation that wields untold influence and control over the government, the remarkable silence and lack of energy in the government to look for correctives signalled



Jagdish Rattanani

INDIA ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT 25% OF ASIA-PACIFIC HEALTHCARE PE DEAL VOLUME IN 2024, MAKING IT THE LARGEST PE MARKET IN THE REGION BY VOLUME

SPECTRUM AGRICULTURE

Modern farming, old problems

The growing mechanised harvesting of paddy in rural Odisha has significantly improved agricultural productivity. It has reduced dependence on manual labour, shortened harvesting time, and helped farmers cope with increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. However, in the absence of sustainable residue disposal and input management practices, this shift has begun to generate environmental challenges that require urgent attention.

In recent years, Delhi has emerged as a cautionary example of how unchecked crop residue burning can severely degrade air quality and threaten public health. Seasonal smog episodes in the national capital demonstrate how agricultural practices, when combined with other emissions, can push pollution levels beyond safe limits. While Odisha does not yet face pollution levels of similar severity, early warning signs are becoming visible during post-harvest periods in several districts.

One major factor contributing to this trend is the declining usefulness of paddy residues in rural households. Traditionally, paddy straw served multiple purposes, including cattle fodder, compost, roofing material, and domestic fuel. However, the steady decline of household cattle due to changing livelihoods and rural migration has reduced these traditional uses. Changes in household energy

practices have further reinforced this shift. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has successfully reduced dependence on biomass fuels, improving indoor air quality and household well-being. At the same time, reduced domestic use of agricultural residues has led to their accumulation in fields. During short turnaround periods between crops, open burning has emerged as the quickest and most accessible disposal method.

Air pollution from stubble burning is only one part of a broader environmental challenge. Groundwater pollution caused by excessive and often unregulated use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is an equally serious but less visible concern. In the pursuit of higher yields, chemical inputs are frequently applied without adequate guidance on dosage or long-term impact. Over time, these substances leach into the soil and contaminate groundwater, affecting drinking water sources and soil fertility. This form of pollution accumulates slowly but persistently, posing risks to human health, agricultural sustainability, and local ecosystems.

Several national programmes including PM-PRANAM, the Soil Health Card Scheme, the National Integrated Pest Management Programme, the Namo Drone Didi Scheme, and the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana reflect policy intent to encourage balanced fertilizer use and

reduced dependence on chemical pesticides. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives ultimately depends on how well awareness and practical knowledge reach the grassroots level.

Addressing these challenges requires moving beyond enforcement and focusing on practical, economically viable alternatives. One promising approach is to encourage small-scale and cottage industries to use paddy residues as raw material. With appropriate technological support and targeted subsidies, paddy straw can be converted into biodegradable products such as disposable plates, bowls, and cups. Creating assured demand by encouraging government offices, educational institutions, and public facilities to use these products, can help build sustainable markets while reducing plastic waste. Another effective intervention is the wider promotion of bio-decomposer solutions that can be sprayed on crop residues to accelerate natural decomposition. These biodegradable formulations allow stubble to break down within a short period, enabling timely field preparation without burning.

The centrally sponsored Crop Residue Management (CRM) Scheme provides a framework to support such efforts through both in-situ and ex-situ residue management. Effective utilisation of this mechanism, combined with simplified access and

region-specific planning, can reduce operational burden on farmers. Long-term sustainability will also depend on innovation tailored to local conditions. Technical universities and research institutions in Odisha can play a vital role in developing alternative technologies for using paddy residues in household applications, construction materials, energy generation, or soil improvement. Stronger collaboration between academia, industry, and farming communities can help translate research into practical solutions.

Odisha stands at a critical stage in its agricultural transition. Mechanisation and modern inputs have improved productivity, but they must be complemented by responsible residue management, soil protection, and water quality preservation. Without timely and coordinated action, the combined challenges of air and groundwater pollution could intensify in the coming decades.

Agricultural progress and environmental protection need not be competing goals. The choices made today will determine whether Odisha moves toward a cleaner, more resilient future or faces escalating environmental stress for generations to come.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR.

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The writer is a Researcher, Institute of Materials and Systems for Sustainability, Nagoya University, Japan.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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Neutral content

Sir, With AI technology having embedded into our lives and providing instant answers and solutions to problems, it forces one to ask questions on what is the role of a legacy platform like Wikipedia, and whether this human-powered encyclopedia has become an obsolete relic. But the answer is an emphatic NO. While AI search, no doubt, is a powerful tool for summarization, it is not a substitute for deep, verifiable knowledge. In fact, one of the most pressing issues in AI is the “black box” problem, which describes the lack of transparency in its systems, particularly those based on complex models like deep learning. Whereas, Wikipedia’s foundational principles of transparency, human collaboration, and verifiable sourcing serve as a vital anchor of accountability in the often-opaque world of AI-generated content. When AI provides an answer, the exact process, including which specific sources it prioritized and how it synthesized them, are hidden. This lack of a clear, verifiable trail from claim to source is a critical issue to trust the information received through AI. On the contrary, Wikipedia’s reliability comes from its open, human-centric structure governed by non-negotiable content policies. .

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Trusted source


Sir, Even in today’s fast-paced digital age, where news items flood our mobile phones every second, newspapers continue to hold their ground as a trusted source of reliable, in-depth, and analytical reporting. While digital media and social media platforms provide instant updates, newspapers—both print and e-paper—remain unmatched in their ability to verify facts, provide context, and offer thoughtful analysis. The rise of e-papers has allowed traditional newspapers to evolve with the times, combining the convenience of digital access with the credibility and structure of print journalism. Readers can now enjoy the familiar layout of headlines, columns, and photographs on tablets or iPads, experiencing the best of both worlds: speed and authenticity. In a democratic society, newspapers remain indispensable, guiding citizens with integrity, insight, and a deeper understanding of events, even as the world moves faster than ever.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

of the day


note

While Waqf Tribunals are currently functioning in Chennai and Madurai, an additional tribunal will be established in Coimbatore district. In places where there are no burial grounds or Kabristans, lands will be identified and established by the Municipal Corporations




M K STALIN | TAMIL NADU CM

Gogoi comes like a tourist. He does not have any responsibility towards Assam. He has been announcing to make a greater Assam. What is the primary condition of making a greater Assam?



HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER


The Holocaust did not begin with the extinguishing of life. It began with words, words of hatred, words of dehumanisation, words of exclusion. It began when prejudice was normalised, when discrimination was institutionalised and when silence replaced conscience



VIKRAM MISRI | FOREIGN SECRETARY

X

POST OF THE DAY



GEMS EVERYWHERE

After paying 30 income tax If you want clean water — use water purifier If you want clean air — use air purifier If you fall into a pit — learn to swim If you fall ill — go to a private hospital If you want good education — go to a private school

@IndianGems_

SHORT TAKES

ED attaches fresh assets of Reliance Group cos

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate Wednesday said it has attached fresh assets worth more than ₹1,800 crore as part of its ongoing money laundering investigation against the companies of Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani. With the latest action, the total value of attachment by the federal probe agency in the case now stands at about ₹12,000 crore. The ED said in a statement that it has issued four separate provisional orders in this context under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

BJP accuses K'taka govt of phone tapping

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Assembly Wednesday witnessed chaotic scenes after the BJP accused the Congress government of "tapping phones" at Lok Bhavan, after Minister H K Patil claimed that Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot was getting calls from Delhi and functioning under instructions of the Centre. BJP MLAs called the Siddaramaiah-led government a "phone tapping government", and questioned how the state ministers were accessing information on the phone calls received by the Lok Bhavan and the governor.

3 sharpshooters held

New Delhi: Three sharpshooters of the Wasim Hasmat gang were arrested following a late-night shootout with police in Delhi's Rohini, ending a manhunt for the killers of a property deal in the Shastri Park area, officials said Wednesday. The arrested accused have been identified as Rehman (23), Adil (23) and Md Ayan (19), all residents of Delhi.



It is the Congress which has appealed both minority and majority communalism and adopted a soft stand towards the BJP

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

PARTS OF NORTH INDIA UPTICK IN MINIMUM TEMPERATURES

Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan witnessed wet weather Wednesday, even as multiple places experienced an uptick in minimum temperatures in northern India, including Jammu and Kashmir, where the National Highway was fully restored after being closed due to heavy snowfall earlier



FINAL MINUTES OF PAWAR FLIGHT

Multiple landing attempts, then crash

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Jan 28: The aircraft carrying Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was cleared for landing in Baramati Wednesday morning after a go-around due to poor visibility, but having finally received a clearance it did not give any 'read-back' or response to the ATC, and moments later burst into flames on the edge of the runway.

The aircraft was trying to land amid poor visibility, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu said earlier. A statement by his ministry recounted the final minutes of the ill-fated Learjet 45 belonging to VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd that crashed, leading to the death of all five persons on board including Pawar.

Baramati has an 'uncontrolled airfield', and traffic information is provided by the instructors/pilots from the Flying training Organisations at Baramati. The aircraft VI-SSK first came in contact at 8.18 am, as per the Baramati Air Traffic Control (ATC).

Its next call was at 30 nautical miles inbound to Baramati. It was advised to descend in "visual meteorological conditions" at the pilot's discretion. The crew enquired about the winds and visibility, and were informed that the winds were calm and visibility was around 3,000 metres.

"Next the aircraft reported on the final approach of Runway 11 and the runway was not in sight to them. They initiated a go-around in the first approach," the civil aviation ministry statement said. After the go-around, the crew was again asked if they could spot the runway.

The reply was: "Runway is currently not in sight, will call when runway is in sight". After a few seconds, the crew reported that they could spot the runway.

"The aircraft was cleared to land on runway 11 at 0843 IST



- The death of the 66-year-old leader, fondly known as Dada (elder brother) in the state, has not only left a vacuum in the BJP-led state coalition government, but also cast a shadow on the future of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which he headed
- His uncle and NCP founder Sharad Pawar said the plane crash was an accident which shouldn't be politicised
- The "black box" (comprising the Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder) from the aircraft will be analysed after recovery to determine the cause of the accident, an official said

(8.43 am). However, they did not give a readback of the landing clearance (did not respond to ATC). Next, the ATC saw the flames around the threshold of runway 11 at 0844 IST (8.44 am)," the statement said. The emergency services then

rushed to the crash site, but it was too late. A specialised team from the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) arrived at the Baramati crash site Wednesday evening to initiate a forensic probe into the tragic accident.

The investigation is expected to focus on the technical factors that led to the crash of the Learjet 45 aircraft, operated by Delhi-based VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd, during its second attempt to land at Baramati table-top air strip.

The last rites of Ajit Pawar will be held with full state honours Thursday in Baramati, Pune district. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are expected to attend the funeral, which will be held at Vidya Pratishthan ground at 11 AM. Leaders cutting across the political spectrum will be present, the Nationalist Congress Party said. The state government declared a public holiday Wednesday and announced a three-day period of state mourning.

Plane crashed after losing control, say eyewitnesses

Mumbai: The ill-fated aircraft carrying Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar appeared "a bit unstable in the air" and exploded the moment it crashed on the ground, according to a woman eyewitness. Another person who witnessed the incident said that after the crash, the aircraft burst into flames, followed by four to five consecutive blasts. A local woman resident said she noticed the aircraft as it circled the Baramati airport in the morning. "It took a round in the air, appeared a bit unstable and as it was approaching the runway to land, it hit the ground hard and exploded. There was a loud sound and could be heard at our home," the woman told a news channel. Another eyewitness also said the aircraft appeared to be losing control as it descended. According to Flight Radar, the flight took off from Mumbai at 8.10 am and it disappeared from radar around 8.45 am.

Oppn leaders back Mamata's demand for SC-monitored probe

New Delhi: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday called for a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the death of Ajit Pawar, alleging that "all other agencies" have been "completely compromised", with several Opposition leaders including Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge backing her demand. Speaking in Kolkata, Banerjee stressed that the truth would not emerge through existing mechanisms and only a probe under the supervision of the apex court would be credible. "We trust only the Supreme Court. All other agencies have been completely compromised," she told reporters. Banerjee also hinted that Ajit Pawar was planning to return to the Nationalist Congress Party faction NCP (SP) led by his uncle Sharad Pawar, noting that reports circulating in recent days had pointed to such a move.



Maharashtra Governor Acharya Devrat, right, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, second left, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, left, and NCP leader Supriya Sule mourn the demise of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

PTI PHOTO

‘India-EU FTA being termed game-changer’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday said the "historic" FTA agreed upon between India and the EU a day ago will accelerate the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign, strengthen the resolve of 'Make in India, Make for the World' and open countless opportunities for lakhs of Indian youths.

Addressing a gathering at the annual National Cadet Corps (NCC) PM Rally at Delhi Cantonment here, he said the world is praising the India-European Union (EU) free trade agreement (FTA) as the "mother of all deals" and asserted that it would mean "Freedom to Aspire" for the Indian youths. Modi said it is also being termed as a "game-changer



deal" for the world and the Indian start-up ecosystem. Creative economy, including film, gaming, fashion, digital content, music and design, will benefit from it, he added.

Oppn protests G RAM G during Prez address

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 28: Opposition members Wednesday protested against the VB-G RAM G Act during President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of Parliament drawing strong condemnation from the government with Union minister J P Nadda demanding that they apologise for their conduct.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju alleged that the Opposition members embarrassed the country with their conduct and also insulted Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr B R Ambedkar, Birsu Munda, Bhupen Hazarika, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay by raising slogans during the president's address which paid tributes to them, remembering their

contributions. "The way these people undermined the dignity of Parliament is highly condemnable. No amount of condemnation is enough. They should apologise to Parliament and the country," Nadda said.

Members of the Congress and its allies in the opposition briefly raised slogans against the Viksit Bharat "Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)" (VB-G RAM G) Act, demanding its rollback as soon as President Murmu

began her address to the joint session of Parliament. As the president referred to the VB-G RAM G Act and began speaking about provisions in her address, Opposition members, including Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, rose from their seats and began protesting. President Murmu paused for a moment during her address as the Opposition began

raising slogans, demanding the rollback of the VB-G RAM G Act. Reacting sharply to the opposition protest, Nadda said, "The Budget session of Parliament began today with the address by President Droupadi Murmu. But, the way the leaders of the Congress and Opposition parties habitually violated parliamentary decorum was utterly reprehensible and cannot be condemned enough."

"In her address, when the president was mentioning the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram and paying tributes to the immortal scholar Bankim Babu remembering his works, the anarchic Congress and the 'IN-DI Alliance' created a ruckus and started shouting slogans," the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha added in a video message.

Ajit Pawar's death puts question mark over NCP's future

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 28: The tragic and untimely demise of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in a plane crash Wednesday has not only left a vacuum in the BJP-led state coalition government, but also cast a shadow on the future of the NCP.

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is likely to face a leadership crisis following Ajit Pawar's death, as there is no clear second-in-command, say political observers.

As the 'clock' symbol lost its undisputed leader, questions loomed over the party's survival and its future equation with founder Sharad Pawar, whose Rajya Sabha tenure ends in April this year.

There has been speculation whether the NCP might reunite with the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP), especially as ties between the factions have softened in recent months.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will need to ensure that the 41 MLAs aligned with Ajit Pawar do not drift back toward Sharad Pawar, political analysts say.

Ajit Pawar's wife, Sunetra, is currently a Rajya Sabha member and has been politically active, though she lacks administrative experience.

The NCP has one Lok Sabha member, Sunil Tatkare, and two Rajya Sabha MPs - Praful Patel and Sunetra Pawar.

With NCP founder Sharad Pawar staying away from the public glare during the re-

Prominent figures who died in air tragedies

Homi Jehangir Bhabha

India's pioneering nuclear physicist Homi Jehangir Bhabha died in a tragic crash aboard Air India Flight 101 January 24, 1966. The plane crashed into Mont Blanc in the Swiss Alps due to a miscommunication with the Geneva air traffic control.

Sanjay Gandhi

Congress leader and son of then prime minister Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi died in a tragic crash June 23, 1980. Attempting aerial stunts in a Delhi Flying Club aircraft near the Safdarjung Airport, the plane lost control and crashed.

Madhavrao Scindia

Senior Congress leader Madhavrao Scindia, himself a former civil aviation minister, died September 30, 2001 in a plane crash en route a political rally in Kanpur.

K S Sowmya

Famous South Indian actress K S Sowmya, popular as Soundarya, lost her life in an air crash April 17, 2004.

O P Jindal and Surender Singh

Industrialist and Haryana minister Om Prakash Jindal lost his life in a helicopter crash in 2005 along with Agriculture Minister Surender Singh.

Y S Reddy

Then chief minister of Andhra Pradesh Y S Rajasekhara Reddy (2009), popularly known as YSR, died September 2, 2009, when his Bell 430 helicopter crashed in the dense Nallamala forest due to bad weather.

Dorjee Khandu

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu and four others were killed April 30, 2011, when a helicopter carrying them from Tawang to Itanagar crashed in the West Kameng district of the state.

CDS General Bipin Rawat

India's first Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, died in a helicopter crash December 8, 2021. The incident occurred near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu while he was en route from Sullur to Wellington with his wife and 11 others.

Vijay Rupani

Former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani died in a plane crash in Ahmedabad June 12, 2025.



cently held local bodies and civic elections, his daughter and N CP (SP) working president, Supriya Sule, campaigned for the party candidates, but was no match for her cousin Ajit Pawar, who campaigned statewide.

State politics was abuzz with speculation about a possible merger of NCP (SP) with the NCP under Ajit Pawar's leadership. However, his untimely death in a plane crash has cast uncertainty over the future of his faction.

Apart from state NCP president Sunil Tatkare and national working president Praful Patel, the party lacks a senior leader capable of succeeding Ajit Pawar.

The only other mass-based leader, Chhagan Bhujbal-recently acquitted in a money laundering case-is currently unwell.

While Patel and Tatkare have been key organisational figures, they lack the statewide grassroots connect that Ajit Pawar commanded.

In the ruling Mahayuti, which won a massive mandate in the 2024 Assembly polls, the BJP has 132 MLAs, followed by Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena with 57 and Pawar's NCP 41.

of the day

quote

Because of his insane policies and ideologies, if elected, the United States of America will no longer help Iraq and, if we are not there to help, Iraq has ZERO chance of Success, Prosperity, or Freedom

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

Our country will unveil plans to further bolster its nuclear programme at the upcoming ruling party congress

KIM JONG UN | LEADER, NORTH KOREA

There is no situation here that would indicate danger (for Indian diplomats). It is entirely their internal matter. They (India) can ask their officials or families to leave at any time

MD TOUHIJ HOSSAI | FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER, BANGLADESH

SHORT TAKES

Police open fire on protesters, journalists

Lagos: Nigerian police fired tear gas to disperse residents protesting in Lagos Wednesday over demolition work in one of Africa's largest floating slums that has displaced thousands of people, with one protester reportedly injured. Lagos state officials, with the help of armed police and excavators, have been demolishing homes in the Makoko slum on the edge of the commercial capital, arguing that residents illegally built their houses - mostly wooden shacks built on stilts above the water - near high-voltage power lines. More than 1,000 angry residents and affected families marched to the Lagos State House of Assembly to express their outrage over the demolitions Wednesday. The demonstrators refused a police order to disperse and instead demanded to be addressed by the Lagos state governor, whose office is nearby.

Switzerland to boost defence spending

Zurich: Switzerland plans to inject an additional 31 billion Swiss francs (\$40.38 billion) into defence and security spending starting from 2028 and will increase sales tax for a decade to help fund it, the government said Wednesday. Citing a deterioration in the geopolitical situation, the governing Federal Council said defence must be strengthened in Switzerland, where spending on the military is not currently scheduled to reach 1% of gross domestic product until 2032. Under the new plan, sales tax is to be increased by 0.8 percentage points for 10 years starting in 2028, it said. "The world has become more volatile and insecure, and the international order based on international law is under strain," the government said, noting various European countries have responded by strengthening their defence capabilities.

Storm Kristin kills at least 3 in Portugal

Lisbon/Madrid: Storm Kristin killed at least three people and left over 800,000 residents of central and northern Portugal without electricity Wednesday, as it toppled trees, damaged homes, and disrupted road and rail traffic before moving inland to Spain. One person died when a tree fell on their car in Vila Franca de Xira, on the outskirts of Lisbon, according to emergency services. Two more were killed in the central district of Leiria - one of the most affected areas - according to the local council.

Starmmer arrives in China

UK PM encourages firms to seize opportunities

REUTERS

Beijing, Jan 28: Keir Starmer began the first visit to China by a British prime minister since 2018 Wednesday, encouraging businesses to seize opportunities on a trip aimed at strengthening ties with Beijing as relations with the US become more volatile.

Starmer, whose approach to China has been criticised by some British and US politicians, said that while courting the world's second-largest economy, Britain must also remain vigilant about potential security threats.

"They say that eight days is a long time in politics. Try eight years, because it's eight years since a British prime minister stepped on Chinese soil. So on this delegation you're making history," Starmer told more than 50 business leaders visting with him.

"You're part of the change that we're bringing about ... Because everything you're doing here, everything I'm doing here is focused on how do we benefit people at home," he said before meeting President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang



Thursday.

The visit could mark a shift in ties between Britain and China after years of deep acrimony over Beijing's crackdown on political freedoms in Hong Kong, China's support for Russia in the Ukraine war and allegations by British security services that China regularly spies on politicians and officials.

For China, the visit offers the country a chance to portray itself as a stable and reliable partner at a time of global disorder.

TENSIONS WITH TRUMP
SHADOW STARMER'S TRIP

"It doesn't make sense to stick our head in the ground

■ STARMER'S VISIT IS FIRST BY BRITISH PM SINCE 2018

■ PM ENCOURAGES COMPANIES TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES

■ VISIT MAY HELP MEND UK-CHINA RELATIONSHIP AFTER YEARS OF ACRIMONY

■ STARMER SAYS 'PROGRESS' ON CHINA VISA-FREE TRAVEL

■ CONCERNS OVER SECURITY RISKS REMAIN

and bury it in the sand when it comes to China, it's in our interests to engage," Starmer

SK court jails former first lady for bribery

REUTERS

Seoul, Jan 28: A South Korean court sentenced former first lady Kim Keon Hee to 20 months in jail Wednesday for accepting Chanel bags and a diamond pendant from Unification Church officials in return for providing political favours.

The wife of ex-President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was ousted from office last year, was cleared on other charges of stock price manipulation and violating the political funds act. Prosecutors will appeal against the not-guilty verdicts, media reports said.

The ruling comes amid a series of trials stemming from investigations into Yoon's brief imposition of martial law in 2024 and related scandals involving the once-powerful couple.

Kim had denied all the charges and her lawyer said the team would review the ruling by Seoul Central District Court and decide whether to appeal the bribery conviction.

The lead judge of the three-judge bench said the position of first lady does not come with any formal power allowing involvement in state affairs, but is a symbolic role representing the country.

"A person who was in such a position might not always be a role model, but the person must not be a bad example to the public," Woo In-sung said in the ruling. The court fined her 12.8 million won (\$8,990) and ordered the confiscation of the necklace. Kim has been detained since August while under investigation.



Riders compete during the Kyrgyz Open Championship in Kok-Boru near the town of Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. Kok-Boru is a traditional Central Asian horseback sport in which riders fight to grab a goat or sheep carcass and deliver it into their opponents' goal

JAPAN'S LAST PAIR OF PANDAS BACK IN CHINA

Japan's last pair of pandas have returned to China, leaving Japan without the lovable bears for the first time in half a century. The bears are heading back as diplomatic relations between the two countries are at their lowest point in years. The twins Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei have an adoring fan base in Japan, where thousands of people flocked to Tokyo's Ueno Zoo ahead of their departure



Texas halts H-1B visas at State universities, agencies



The freeze will remain in effect through May 2027

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Houston (US), Jan 28: Texas Governor Greg Abbott has ordered state agencies and public universities to immediately halt new H-1B visa petitions, tightening hiring rules at taxpayer-funded institutions, a step likely to impact Indian professionals.

The freeze will remain in effect through May 2027. The directive issued Tuesday said that the state agencies and public universities must stop filing new petitions unless they receive written approval from the Texas Workforce Commission.

The governor's order, in a red state that is home to thousands of H-1B visa holders, comes as the Trump administration has initiated steps to reshape the visa programme.

"In light of recent reports of abuse in the federal H-1B visa programme, and amid the federal government's ongoing review of that programme to ensure American jobs are going to American workers, I am directing all state agencies to immediately freeze new H-1B visa petitions as outlined in this letter," Abbot said.

Institutions must also report on H-1B usage, including numbers, job roles, countries of origin, and visa expiry dates, the letter said.

US President Donald Trump September 19 last year signed a proclamation 'Restriction on entry of certain non-immigrant

workers' that restricted the entry into the US of those workers whose H-1B petitions are not accompanied or supplemented by a payment of \$1,00,000.

The H-1B visa fee of \$1,00,000 would be applicable only to new applicants, ie all new H-1B visa petitions submitted after September 21, including those for the FY2026 lottery.

Indians make up an estimated 71 per cent of all approved H-1B applications in recent years, according to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), with China in the second spot. The major fields include technology, engineering, medicine, and research.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is the second-highest beneficiary with 5,505 approved H-1B visas in 2025, after Amazon (10,044 workers on H-1B visas), according to the USCIS.

Other top beneficiaries include Microsoft (5,189), Meta (5,123), Apple (4,202), Google (4,181), Deloitte (2,353), Infosys (2,004), Wipro (1,523) and Tech Mahindra Americas (951).

Texas public universities employ hundreds of foreign faculty and researchers, many from India, across engineering, healthcare, and technology fields.

Date from Open Doors - a comprehensive information resource on international students and scholars studying or teaching at higher education institutions in the US - for 2022-2023 showed 2,70,000 students from India embarked on graduate and undergraduate degrees in US universities, accounting for 25 per cent of the international student population in the US and 1.5 per cent of the total student population.

Man sprays US lawmaker Ilhan Omar with liquid

REUTERS

Minneapolis, Jan 28: Police arrested a man who sprayed Democratic US Representative Ilhan Omar with a foul-smelling liquid in Minneapolis Tuesday as she condemned the actions of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials in Minnesota.

Omar, the frequent target of political insults from President Donald Trump, was uninjured. A security guard immediately grabbed the man and took him to the ground, according to a Reuters witness and video of the town hall event.

Police said they arrested the man for third-degree assault. Trump said Tuesday night that he had not seen the video and hoped he did not "have to bother."



"No. I don't think about her. I think she's a fraud. I really don't think about that. She probably had herself sprayed, knowing her," Trump told ABC News.

In her remarks, Omar was criticizing ICE and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, demanding that Noem resign after the recent shooting deaths of two US citizens in Minneapolis during Trump's immigration enforcement surge.

Mullally will be formally installed as bishop of the diocese of Canterbury March 25 at Canterbury Cathedral, in a ceremony marking the beginning of her new role

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Jan 28: Sarah Mullally was confirmed as archbishop of Canterbury Wednesday, becoming the first woman to lead the Church of England.

The worldwide Anglican Communion, which includes the Episcopal Church in the US, has no formal head, but the archbishop traditionally has been seen as its spiritual leader.

Mullally, 63, a cancer nurse turned cleric, officially took up the responsibilities of her new

job as judges presided over a legal ceremony confirming her appointment, which was announced almost four months ago.

The so-called Confirmation of Election service marks a major milestone for the Church of England, which ordained its first female priests in 1994 and its first female bishop in 2015. The church traces its roots to the 16th century, when the English church broke away from the Roman Catholic Church during the reign of King Henry VIII.

George Gross, an expert on theology and the monarchy at King's College London, highlighted the church's continuing divergence from the Catholic Church, which forbids women from being ordained as priests, much less from serving as the religion's global spiritual leader.

"It is a big contrast," Gross

buildings in Silwan now, many via forced evictions.

Settler group Ateret Cohanim had offered to buy him and other Palestinians out, he said, but most had refused.

He said he was among 32 families in the neighborhood who have now been ordered to leave, with him and his brothers given until the end of Ramadan - mid-March - to depart under an order from Israel's Supreme Court that he showed Reuters.

"They want to force me out of the house I was born in, where

said. "And in terms of the position of women in society, this is a big statement."

But Mullally's appointment may deepen rifts within the Anglican Communion, whose 100 million members in 165

my eyes first opened to life," said Rajabi, explaining that his family had lived there since 1967 and bought the land from a Jordanian officer. Daniel Luria, the executive director of Ateret Cohanim, called Palestinians in Silwan "illegal squatters", saying the land was owned by Yemeni Jews before 1929 and that moving back was rectifying a historical injustice. Rajabi said that account was untrue.

Palestinians seek East Jerusalem, which Israel captured in a 1967 war, for a future state

and say that leaving their homes there could put an end to their hopes for ever. Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has said the aim is to 'bury' the idea of a Palestinian state.

Israel deems all of Jerusalem its capital - a status not recognised internationally - and has encouraged Jewish settlement of predominantly Palestinian areas. Settler incursions, sometimes violent, have ramped up since the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023 triggered the Gaza war.

FIRST WOMAN TO LEAD CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Sarah Mullally confirmed as archbishop of Canterbury



countries are deeply divided over issues such as the role of women and the treatment of LGBTQ people.

She will also have to confront concerns that the Church of England hasn't done enough to stamp out the sexual abuse scandals that have dogged it for more than a decade.

Gafcon, a global organisation of conservative Anglicans, says Mullally's appointment is divisive because a majority of the Anglican Communion still believes only men should be bishops. Rwandan Archbishop Laurent Mbanda, chairman of the Gafcon council of senior bishops, known as primates, also criticised Mullally's support for the blessing of same-sex marriages.

"Since the newly appointed archbishop of Canterbury has failed to guard the faith and is complicit in introducing prac-

tices and beliefs that violate both the plain and canonical sense of Scripture and 'the Church's historic and consensual' interpretation of it, she cannot provide leadership to the Anglican Communion," Mbanda said in October.

Mullally replaces former Archbishop Justin Welby, who announced his resignation in November 2024, after he was criticised for failing to tell police about allegations of physical and sexual abuse by a volunteer at a church-affiliated summer camp.

She was nominated by a 17-member commission composed of clerics and laypeople and her appointment was confirmed by King Charles III, who is the supreme governor of the church.

But there is still one more step in the long process of appointing the new archbishop.

of the day

quote

Defence technology is emerging as a source of high-skill, credible and globally relevant jobs



ADITYA NARAYAN MISHRA
| MD AND CEO, CIEL HR

The India-EU Free Trade Agreement represents a significant milestone for Indian industry, and we thank the Government of India for its strategic vision in deepening economic partnerships



SUDARSHAN YENU | CHAIRMAN AND MD, TVS MOTOR COMPANY

This agreement will unlock opportunities for the two-wheeler industry to expand their footprint and support 'Make in India' products to the European markets



HARSHAVARDHAN CHITALE | CEO, HERO MOTOCORP

Q3 RESULTS

L&T profit falls 4% to ₹3,215cr

New Delhi: Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Wednesday reported 4.2 per cent drop in consolidated profit after tax at ₹3,215 crore for December quarter FY26 on the back of higher expenses. The company had posted a profit after of tax (PAT) of ₹3,359 crore in the year-ago period, L&T said in a filing to the BSE. However, revenue from operations in the October-December period rose to ₹71,450 crore from ₹64,668 crore in the year-ago period, the filing said.

ACC net profit falls 63% to ₹404.25cr

New Delhi: Cement maker ACC Ltd Wednesday said its consolidated net profit declined 63 per cent year-on-year to ₹404.25 crore in the December quarter of FY26. The company recorded a profit of ₹1,091.79 crore in the October-December quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from ACC, now a part of Adani Cement. However, revenue from operations rose 21.7 per cent to ₹6,391.17 crore in the December quarter, which is the highest-ever quarterly revenue. It was at ₹5,251.70 crore in the corresponding period a year ago. This was highest ever quarterly revenue which was driven by higher premium product, which was up 33 per cent on a YoY basis.

Star Health profit falls 40% to ₹128cr

New Delhi: Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Wednesday reported a 40 per cent decline in net profit at ₹128 crore for the third quarter ended December 2025. The standalone health insurer had earned a profit of ₹215 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal. During the quarter, gross written premium improved to ₹4,624 crore as against ₹3,796 crore in the same quarter a year ago, Star Health said in a regulatory filing.

NIIT MTS PAT up 20pc to ₹74.3cr

New Delhi: Corporate training solutions provider NIIT Learning Systems (NIIT MTS) Wednesday reported a 20.4 per cent increase in consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) to ₹74.34 crore in the December-ended quarter. The company had registered a PAT of ₹61.73 crore in the year-ago period. The company's revenue from operations climbed 19.2 per cent to ₹499.69 crore in Q3 FY26, as compared to ₹418.87 crore in Q3 FY25.



Our joint venture, Vodafone Idea, has stood in the eye of this storm, navigating one of the most protracted periods of uncertainty in the industry's history

KM BIRLA | CHAIRMAN, ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

GOVT LIKELY TO EXPAND DEFINITION OF STARTUPS

The government is likely to expand the definition of startups to further strengthen the country's ecosystem for budding enterprises, an official said Wednesday. The expanded definition would include deep-tech, cooperatives and allow startups to pivot to deep-tech



Factory output grows at 2-yr high of 7.8% in Dec

NSO also revised the industrial production growth for November 2025 to 7.2 per cent from the provisional estimate of 6.7 per cent released last month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 28: India's industrial production grew at an over two-year high pace of 7.8 per cent in December 2025 on the back of robust output in manufacturing, mining and power sectors, according to government data released Wednesday.

The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), expanded by 3.7 per cent in December 2024.

"Industry momentum further strengthened in December 2025 as the IIP rose by 7.8 per cent, reaching its highest level in over 2 years, after registering a high growth of 7.2 per cent in November 2025," the National Statistics Office (NSO) said in a statement. The NSO also revised the industrial production growth for November 2025 to 7.2 per cent from the provisional estimate of 6.7 per cent released last month.

During the April-December period of FY26, the country's industrial production growth slowed to 3.9 per cent compared to 4.1 per cent in the same period a year ago.

According to the NSO data, the manufacturing sector's output grew by 8.1 per cent in December 2025 compared to 3.7 per cent in the year-ago month.

"In manufacturing, highest growth recording industries are computer, electronic and optical products (34.9 per cent),



During the April-Dec period of FY26, industrial production growth slowed to 3.9 per cent compared to 4.1 per cent in the same period a year ago

.....

According to the NSO data, the manufacturing sector's output grew by 8.1 per cent in Dec 2025 compared to 3.7 per cent in the year-ago month

8.1 per cent in capital goods, 7.5 per cent in intermediate goods, 12.1 per cent in infrastructure/construction goods, 12.3 per cent in consumer durables and 8.3 per cent in consumer non-durables.

Based on use-based classification, the top three positive contributors to the growth of IIP in December 2025 are infrastructure/construction goods, primary goods and intermediate goods.

Within the manufacturing sector, 16 out of 23 industry groups have recorded a positive growth in December 2025 over the year-ago month.

The top three positive contributors to December 2025 IIP numbers include the manufacturing of basic metals (12.7 per cent), motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (33.5 per cent) and pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products (10.2 per cent).

motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (33.5 per cent) and other transport equipment (25.1 per cent)," it said.

Mining production rose by 6.8 per cent against a growth of 2.7 per cent recorded a year ago.

Power generation grew by 6.3 per cent in December 2025, compared to 6.2 per cent expansion in the year-ago period.

The corresponding growth rates of IIP as per use-based classification in December 2025 over December 2024 recorded at 4.4 per cent in primary goods,

Markets rally for 2nd day; Sensex jumps 487 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 28: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended higher Wednesday, extending their previous day's rally, on optimism over the India-EU landmark free trade agreement.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 487.20 points or 0.60 per cent to settle at 82,344.68. During the day, it soared 646.49 points or 0.78 per cent to 82,503.97. The 50-share NSE

Nifty surged 167.35 points or 0.66 per cent to end at 25,342.75.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics surged nearly 9 per cent post its December quarter earnings.

Eternal, Bajaj Finance, Power Grid, Trent, Mahindra & Mahindra and UltraTech Cement were the other major gainers.

However, Asian Paints dropped over 4 per cent after the firm reported a decline of 4.83 per cent in consolidated

net profit at ₹1,073.92 crore for December quarter FY26 on a year-on-year basis on account of exceptional items as implementation of the new Labour Codes and impairment of loss in a subsidiary. Maruti, Sun Pharma, Infosys and Bharti Airtel were among the other laggards.

India and the European Union Tuesday sealed a landmark free trade agreement-billed as the mother of all deals -- to create a market of two bil-

Rupee falls 11p to close at 91.79 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 28: The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day in the negative territory, down 11 paise at 91.79 (provisional) against the US dollar, as the support from the retreating dollar index was negated by sustained foreign fund outflows.

Forex traders said the rupee opened higher as the US dollar index softened and a long-awaited trade breakthrough with Europe offered quiet reassurance. However, selling pressure from foreign funds and ongoing geopolitical tensions dented investors' sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 91.60 and touched an early high of 91.50, but pared the gains to touch an intra-day low of 91.83 against the greenback.

The domestic unit settled at 91.79 (provisional), down by 11 paise from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee rebounded from its all-time low levels and gained 22 paise to close at 91.68 against the US dollar.

Forex traders said the rupee opened higher as the US dollar index softened and a long-awaited trade breakthrough with Europe bolstered investor sentiment.

India and the European Union Tuesday announced the conclusion of negotiations for the free trade agreement (FTA), under which a number of domestic sectors such as apparel, chemicals and footwear will get duty-free entry into the 27-nation bloc, while the EU will get access to the Indian market at concessional duty for cars and wines, an official said.

Amazon cuts 16K corporate jobs

REUTERS

Seattle, Jan 28: Amazon confirmed 16,000 corporate job cuts Wednesday, completing a plan for around 30,000 since October while leaving open the possibility of further reductions.

Although 30,000 represents a small portion of Amazon's 1.58 million employees, who are mostly in fulfillment centers and warehouses, it is nearly 10% of its corporate workforce.

Reuters first reported last week that Amazon was planning a second round of job cuts as part of the broader goal.

"The cuts were necessary to strengthen the company by reducing layers, increasing ownership, and removing bureaucracy at Amazon," its top human resources executive, Beth Galetti, said in a post.

Galetti left open the possibility of further losses, saying some teams will continue to make adjustments as appropriate.

The latest cuts mark the second major round of layoffs in three months after Amazon pared 14,000 jobs in October saying at the time that artificial intelligence and concerns over shifting corporate culture were to blame.

Amazon has also said it overhired during the COVID-19 pandemic, when demand for online shopping skyrocketed.

"Some of you might ask if this is the beginning of a new rhythm -- where we announce broad reductions every few months," Galetti said in Wednesday's note. "That's not our plan," she said.

Amazon Tuesday mistakenly sent an email appearing to refer to the layoff plan as Project

Dawn to some Amazon Web Services staff, unsettling thousands of workers.

RIISING AI ADOPTION

The job cuts also underscore how artificial intelligence is changing corporate workforce dynamics. Significant improvements in AI assistants are helping enterprises execute duties from routine administrative tasks to complex coding problems with rapid speed and precision, driving widespread adoption.

Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said last summer that the increased use of AI tools would lead to more automation of duties, resulting in corporate job losses.

Executives at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos said last week that while jobs would disappear, new ones would spring up, with two telling Reuters that AI

would be used as an excuse by companies planning to cut jobs anyway.

Tech giants, including Amazon, Facebook-parent Meta Platforms and Microsoft had sharply ramped up hiring during the COVID-19 pandemic demand surge and have lately been restructuring their workforce. Amazon began the cuts Tuesday by announcing it planned to close all remaining brick-and-mortar Fresh grocery stores and Go markets, a further retreat from its physical store strategy.

The company has been investing in robotics at its warehouses to speed up packaging and deliveries for its e-commerce segment, reduce the reliance on human labour and cutting costs.



Jagatsinghpur: AM/NS India marks National Girl Child Day

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), in collaboration with Humana, celebrated National Girl Child Day through a week-long series of educational and community activities across 16 Anganwadi centres in Jagatsinghpur district. Organised under the company's CSR project 'Padhega Bharat' as part of its Smart Anganwadi Initiative, the programme aimed to promote the welfare, education and empowerment of the girl child. Adolescent girls, women's groups and children participated in competitions such as rangoli, mehendi and drawing to showcase creativity and skills. Awareness marches were also held to highlight the importance of gender equality and a brighter future for girls. Participants received prizes to encourage confidence and continued engagement. Dr Vikas Yadvendu, head of corporate social responsibility at AM/NS India, said empowering girls was key to building a progressive society.



Silver, gold continue record run

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 28: Gold and silver prices showed no signs of cooling as both precious metals scaled fresh records in the national capital Wednesday amid a weak US dollar and strong buying trends in global markets.

According to the marketmen, silver extended its gains for the third straight day by soaring ₹15,000, or 4.05 per cent, to touch an all-time high of ₹3,85,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). In the previous session, the white metal jumped sharply by ₹40,500 to ₹3,70,000 per kg, from Friday's close of ₹3,29,500 per kg.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also climbed by ₹5,000, or 3 per



White metal glitters to record ₹3.85L/kg; yellow storms ₹1.71L/10g

cent, to a fresh peak of ₹1,71,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) in the bullion markets. It settled at ₹1,66,000 per 10 grams Tuesday, according to traders.

Gold and silver continue to witness a strong and sustained rally, with bulls finding fresh catalysts almost every day to push prices higher, Saumil Gandhi,

Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Gandhi said the uptrend was primarily supported by heightened geopolitical tensions and persistent trade-related uncertainties, which boosted safe-haven demand for precious metals. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's

strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower, which further supported international bullion prices.

According to FOREX.com, gold gained USD 74.57, or 1.44 per cent, to USD 5,256.35 per ounce. In the intraday session, spot prices appreciated by USD 130.13, or 2.51 per cent, to touch a new record of USD 5,311.38 per ounce in the global markets.

Spot gold has extended its winning streak to the eighth consecutive day Wednesday as it hit a fresh record high of USD 5,311 per ounce in the overseas markets amid weakness in US dollar, Praveen Singh, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said.

Puma's long slide: Rise and fall of a German sports icon

While Adidas boomed, Puma climbed too and its stock hit a peak of 115 euros in late 2021. Since then, though, it's slid, losing 80% of its value

REUTERS

Herzogenaurach, Jan 28: Germany's Puma and fierce rival Adidas have their roots in the very same house where brothers Rudolf and Adolf Dassler launched their shoe business a century ago, before a major fall-out between the siblings split the company in two.

From the split of the original company Geda, Rudolf founded Ruda - later renamed Puma - while Adolf founded Adidas. The two firms' headquarters remain just a short walk from each other in the Bavarian town of Herzogenaurach.

Now Puma is set to come under the wings of China's top sportswear firm Anta, which would become its biggest shareholder in a \$1.8 billion deal aimed at turning around one of Europe's most iconic sports brands that has fallen sharply from grace.

Puma, with its leaping wildcat logo, has struggled to win consumers to its sportswear and Speedcat sneakers, even as Adidas has streaked ahead with its retro Terrace shoes - widening a sales gap between the two firms.

"Puma became too dependent on maybe lifestyle products



rather than performance sports shoes, which really drove this

industry," said Morningstar analyst David Swartz, adding

«Puma, Adidas originally set up by two feuding German brothers

«Puma lost ground in recent years to new brand like On, Hoka

«Weak distribution one of main problems, analysts say

«Wider retail sector hit by trade war impact

«China's Anta to become biggest shareholder at Puma

"So they don't have the visibility." CHALLENGES FROM EMERGING BRANDS

Puma was the no. 3 in sportswear after Nike and Adidas until recent years, competing to churn out cool sneakers and win top athletes and soccer-team sponsorships. But as newer brands like On Running and Hoka grew, Puma fell off the pace.

Puma has become too commercial, over-exposed in the wrong channels, with too many discounts, Puma's CEO Arthur Hoeld, formerly sales chief at arch-rival Adidas, said in October.

NZ win big; Dube's blitz in vain

4TH T20I

Shivam Dube hit a marauding 65 but the hosts eventually finished at 165 all out as the Kiwis reduced the margin to 3-1 in the five-match series



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, Jan 28: Shivam Dube flickered brightly with a fifty of exceptional quality but it was insufficient to prevent India's 50-run defeat against New Zealand in the fourth T20I here Wednesday.

The clean-hitting Dube 65 (23 balls, 3x4, 7x6) batted all but his own in India's steep chase of 216, but the hosts eventually finished at 165 all out as the Kiwis reduced the margin to 3-1

in the five-match series.

With Ishan Kishan sitting out with an unspecified injury, Abhishek Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav were expected to lead the chase.

But Abhishek fell in the first ball of India's innings, skying Matt Henry to Devon Conway at deep point.

Suryakumar's meek push was converted into a brilliant return catch by Jacob Duffy as India slumped to 9 for 2.

Rinku Singh (39) and Sanju

Samson (24) tried to keep India afloat but they struggled to force the pace either in the Power Play or after that.

Rinku fell leg before to Zak Foulkes and Samson, who hit a delicious flicked six off Duffy, was foxed by Mitchell Santner's straight delivery to get castled.

Dube batted fearlessly, and hardly displayed the pressure of an ever-climbing asking rate that hovered around 14 almost all the while.

Dube, who was saved by DRS from a leg-before decision on 46, raised the hopes in the Indian camp, biffing 29 runs off leg-spinner Ish Sodhi's third over that included a sequence of 4, 6, 4, 6, 6.

The left-hander brought up his fifty in just 15 balls with a six over square leg off Duffy. The sixth wicket of Dube and Harshit Rana added 63 runs and the latter's contribution was a princely four runs.

But Dube's fortune finally deserted him when Rana's rasping straight drive shattered the stumps at non-striker's end after taking a deflection off Henry's hand.

That effectively signalled the end of India's chase.

Earlier, New Zealand's innings revolved around Tim Seifert's blistering fifty.

Seifert (62 off 36 balls, 7x4, 3x6) was the standout Kiwi batter but he did not have enough followers to fully drive home the advantage after India produced tight bowling in the middle overs.

In the pacer's next over, Seifert eked out a six and four in successive balls before sending a Jasprit Bumrah delivery to the sight-screen for another maximum.

New Zealand reached fifty in the fourth over and ended the Power Play at 71 for no loss.

The Indians did not bowl any magic spell but the visiting batters were overly eager to maintain a run rate of 12 that the Seifert-Conway combine was scoring at.

But that overzealous attempt resulted in them losing wickets in a cluster. Daryl Mitchell (39 not out, 18b) made some strong hits in the death overs to take New Zealand past 200.

BRIEF SCORES

New Zealand: 215/7 in 20 overs (Tim Seifert 62, Devon Conway 44, Daryl Mitchell not out 39; Arshdeep Singh 2/33, Kuldeep Yadav 2/29) **beat India:** 165 all out in 18.4 overs (Shivam Dube 65, Rinku Singh 39; Mitchell Santner 3/26) by 50 runs

TATA STEEL MASTERS

Gukesh faces loss, Arjun draws easy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Wijk Aan Zee (The Netherlands), Jan 28: World Champion D Gukesh suffered yet another defeat in the Tatat Steel Masters, this time against Matthias Bluebaum of Germany in the ninth round while Arjun Erigaisi was forced to settle for a quick draw with Hans Moke Niemann of United States.

World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov played out a draw with sole leader and Uzbek compatriot Nodirbek Abdusattorov leaving the latter still in command on six points. Sindarov was joined in the second spot by Jorden van Foreest of Holland on 5.5 points along with Yagiz Kaan Ergodmus of Turkey.

The trio is followed by Niemann with four rounds still to come in the event.

Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Arjun continue to struggle with four points apiece and for the World champion it was another heart-breaking result with white pieces.

Playing the King pawn game, Gukesh tried the Bishop's opening that has not been very popular off-late in elite level tournaments.

Bluebaum was quite up to the task in finding his counter play right from the opening and came up with some imaginative display as Gukesh's light squared Bishop found itself trapped by its own forces.

The initiative was in the

favour of the German and he played fearlessly to win a rook for a minor piece after which it was just a matter of a few more moves. Gukesh resigned on his 37th turn.

Praggnanandhaa defeated Aravindh Chithambaram outplaying the former in what should have been a drawable rook and pawns endgame. This was Pragg's first victory in the tournament and one wonders if it came too late in the day.

The day's most impressive game was played by Jorden van Foreest who has been a former winner of this super-tournament. The Dutchman has been the best performing player of his country after Anish Giri for some time and here he is displaying his best form this year.

The most inspiring story thus far has been Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus who won another game defeating Thai Dai Van Nguyen of Czech Republic. At just 14, Erdogmus is set to be written in the history books as the strongest ever 14-year old player in the world if not more.

Results round 9: D Gukesh (Ind, 4) lost to Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 5); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 4) beat Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 2.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 4.5) drew with Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 4.5); Arjun Erigaisi (Ind, 4) drew with Hans Moke Niemann (Usa, 5); Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 5.5) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 6); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 5.5) beat Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4); Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze, 3) lost to Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur, 5.5).

THAILAND MASTERS

George, Manjunath enter second round

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, Jan 28: India's Kiran George and Mithun Manjunath advanced to the second round of the men's singles with contrasting wins over their respective rivals at the Thailand Masters Super 300 badminton tournament here Wednesday.

Seeded seventh, George took just 27 minutes to get the better of world no 45 Sholeh Aidil 21-15 21-9, while world no 60 Manjunath stunned eighth seed Magnus Johannesen of Denmark 21-12 9-21 21-17 in a 59-minute battle.

Tharun Mannepalli also entered the second round, beating Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen 22-20 21-17.

But it was curtains for the likes Priyanshu Rajawat, Manraj Singh and S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian in their respective men's singles matches. While Rajawat lost 21-15 13-21 20-22 against fourth seed and world no. 33 Brian Yang of Canada, Manraj was shown



the door by China's Zhu Xuan Chen 21-16 21-14. Subramanian gave tough fight to fifth seed and world no. 37 Arnaud Merkele before losing 13-21 21-14 19-21.

In the women's singles, fast-rising Anmol Kharb beat Lo Sin Yan Happy of Hong Kong 21-12 21-12 to enter the second round, but Tasnim Mir exited in the opening round losing 9-21 19-21 against fifth seed Huang Yu-Hsun of Chinese Taipei.

Kharb will next play Yu-Hsun in the next round.

Among other Indian results in women's singles, Anupama Upadhyaya crashed out in the opening round losing 13-21 20-22 against Peng Yu Wei of Chinese Taipei, but Shriyanshi Valishetty advanced beating Wen Yu Zhang of Canada 14-21 21-13 21-19.

Tanya Hemanth, however, lost to seventh seed Julie Jakobsen of Denmark 11-21 13-21.

Sinner books SF showdown with Djoko

Novak advances to the semifinals after Musetti retires with injury

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Melbourne, Jan 28: World No 2 Jannik Sinner strengthened his case for a third successive Australian Open title and made his way into the final four after defeating local favourite Ben Shelton 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 at Rod Laver Arena Wednesday to extend his win streak to 19 matches at Melbourne Park.

The two-time defending champion extended his winning streak to nine consecutive victories and 22 straight sets against the formidable lefty, setting up Friday's semifinals match against Novak Djokovic.

In his ninth Grand Slam semi-final and third at the Australian Open, the four-time major champion faces a major challenge against record 10-time winner Novak Djokovic. Sinner has previously beaten Djokovic in the semi-finals



at the Australian Open (2024), Roland Garros (2025), and Wimbledon (2025), ATP reports.

Novak Djokovic was the first to admit he's lucky to be back in the Australian Open semifinals instead of Lorenzo Musetti.

Despite being two sets down, slowed by a serious blister on his foot and already thinking about his flight home, the

24-time major winner won quarterfinal when fifth-seeded Musetti retired with an injury.

Musetti took the first two sets 6-4, 6-3 but needed a medical timeout for treatment on his upper right leg after being broken in the third game of the third. The 23-year-old Italian played on for almost two games but couldn't continue.

ASIAN C'SHIPS

B'desh shooters to travel to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 28: The Bangladesh government has approved its shooters to travel to India for next month's Asian Rifle and Pistol Championships, days after refusing to send its national cricket team to the country to participate in the upcoming T20 World Cup due to security concerns.

While the T20 showpiece will be held in venues across India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8, the shooting event will take place at the Dr Karni Singh Range here from February 2 to 14, with 17 countries sending more than 300 shooters.

Bangladesh will field two rifle shooters, who will compete in a total of three events.

There had been speculation that after Bangladesh pulled out of the global T20 cricket tournament, its shooting team might also withdraw over "security concerns". However, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) told PTI on Wednesday that the players from the neighbouring country is set to compete.

Bangladesh will be represented by 21-year-old women's rifle shooter Arefin Shaira and 26-year-old Olympian Md Robil Islam. The two 10m air rifle shooters will compete in the individual events before teaming up for the mixed team competition. A report in Dhaka's Daily Sun Wednesday stated that the Bangladesh government had approved the shooting team's tour of India.

According to the report, Bangladesh government believes the shooting championship will "not pose significant security risks, as the competition is set to be held indoors at a secured venue (Karni Singh Range)".

The uncertainty had arisen after Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) refused to let its team travel to India for the World Cup, citing security concerns in the wake of Mustafizur Rahman's ouster from the Indian Premier League.

Mourinho praises new Real coach Arbeloa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madrid, Jan 28: Jose Mourinho praised new Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa ahead of Benfica's match against his old club in the Champions League Wednesday.

Mourinho coached Arbeloa at Madrid in the early 2010s. He called him "one of my boys" and one of the "special players" that he was in charge of during his career.

"From a human point of view, from a personal relationship point of view and an empathy point of view, Alvaro was one of my all-time favorite players," Mourinho said Tuesday. "Obviously he wasn't the best player that I coached at Real Madrid, but for sure he was one of the best men who played for me at Real Madrid."

Arbeloa was promoted to Madrid's helm two weeks ago after coaching the club's B team. He replaced Xabi Alonso. When he was introduced, the 43-year-old Arbeloa acknowledged he was heavily influenced by the Portuguese coach, but said he would not try to be the new Mourinho at the Spanish powerhouse.

A two-time Champions League winner, once with Porto and once with Inter Milan, Mourinho needs Benfica to beat Madrid at home on Wednesday and hope other results go its way in order for the Portuguese team to make it to the playoffs.

Benfica is 29th in the 36-team league-phase standings, five spots out of the last qualifying places. Madrid is third but still isn't certain to finish in the top eight that automatically advance to the round of 16.

I-League to be rechristened as Indian Football League

PARTICIPATING CLUBS WILL BECOME MAJORITY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE VENTURE FROM THE UPCOMING SEASON

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 28: The I-League, the country's second-tier football competition, will be restructured and rechristened as Indian Football League (IFL), with the clubs becoming majority stakeholders in the venture from the upcoming season beginning February 21.

A decision to rechristen the I-League was taken during a meeting of the club representatives and All India Football Federation (AIFF) officials Wednesday. It was later announced during a press conference here.

The AIFF's Executive Committee is yet to approve the decision though it is just a formality.

"We have decided in today's meeting that the I-League will be restructured and re-

christened as Indian Football League. It is a landmark decision, though it will need the approval from the AIFF Executive Committee," said Shillong Lajong owner Larsing Ming at the press conference.

"We are making a fresh start of the league. The clubs themselves will majorly involve in running the league just like it is done in other top leagues of the world like the English Premier League."

The announcement came in the backdrop of a crisis in Indian football after the AIFF and its previous commercial partner FSDL failed to renew the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) beyond December 8 last year.

The top-tier Indian Super League (ISL), organised by FSDL, and the I-League were paused



only to restart after the intervention of the sports ministry.

The ISL is set to begin February 14, a week before the I-League (Indian Football League).

The country's top-tier league was originally called National Football League (NFL) which ran from 1996 to 2007 when it was re-branded as I-League. The ISL started in 2014 and it became the top-tier league. The I-League became the country's

second tier competition.

Diamond Harbour of West Bengal and Chanmari FC of Mizoram were promoted from the I-League 2024-25, making it an 11club affair for a truncated 2025-26 season.

There is a big question mark on whether Goa's Churchill Brothers would compete this season or not. They were initially announced as last edition I-League champions and promoted to the ISL.

But the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) later ruled that Inter Kashi were the champions, and the Varanasi-based club was subsequently promoted to the ISL. Churchill had knocked the doors of the Delhi HC against the AIFF, and the case is still pending. The 10 clubs are Diamond Harbour,

Chanmari FC, Real Kashmir, Gokulam Kerala, Rajasthan United, Dempo SC, Namdhari FC, Shillong Lajong, Sreenidi Deccan and Aizawl FC.

How many clubs will ultimately participate will be known after February 2, which is the deadline for the clubs to pay their share of the total cost of running the 2025-26 season. The total cost of the league for 2025-26 has been pegged at Rs 3.25 crore, out of which the clubs will have to contribute 60 per cent or around Rs 2 crore, which means each club's share will be around Rs 20 lakh.

The AIFF's share is set to be 40 per cent (30% + 10%), as the commercial partner which is to contribute 30 per cent is unlikely to be roped in before the start of the league.