



Shruti's battle

Actor Shruti Haasan reveals her long struggle with 'crippling anxiety', which led her to step away from acting in 2018

LEISURE | P2



EU hits Iran

EU lists Iran's Revolutionary Guard as terrorist organisation in the aftermath of Tehran's bloody crackdown on protests

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Gold demand dampens

India's gold demand declines by 11% in 2025 and is expected to be around 700 tonne this year

BUSINESS | P11



Supreme Sabalenka

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka overpowers Elina Svitolina to move within one victory of a third Australian Open title in four years

SPORTS | P12



WORTH A CAPTURE: People click photos of the partially frozen Great Falls in Paterson, New Jersey, US

AP PHOTO

NOT 2012, 2024 BASE YR IN NEW CPI SERIES

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 29: The January retail inflation data will reflect price movements in airfares, e-commerce platforms and subscription rates of OTT channels, with the statistics ministry expanding constituents of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The new CPI series, which will also have the base year as 2024 instead of 2012, is being introduced with an aim to look at the key macroeconomic indicators more accurately and assess the broader consumption pattern of households.

The first set of inflation data based on the revised base year will be released February 12 for January, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said. The basket of new CPI will comprise 358 items, representing the pace of price hike across sectors. In the existing series, prices are collected for 299 representational items. P11

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You are still stuck with petty issues like water, jobs and education while I am busy arranging a cheaper BMW for you

Silver goes past ₹4L; gold hits record ₹1.83L

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Silver prices Thursday breached the ₹4 lakh per kilogram-mark in the national capital, while gold touched a fresh record high of ₹1.83 lakh per 10 grams, tracking a sharp rally in global markets amid rising geopolitical and economic uncertainty.

According to the All India

Sarafa Association (AISA), silver extended gains for the fourth consecutive day, surging ₹19,500, or 5.06 per cent, to an all-time high of ₹4,04,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes).

The white metal had closed at ₹3,85,000 per kilogram Wednesday. "Silver prices surged past the ₹4 lakh per kg milestone Thursday, while gold rallied to a record high on the back of strong

investor demand and a powerful global rally in precious metals," Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

In the bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent purity also jumped sharply, gaining ₹12,000, or 7.02 per cent, to touch a record of ₹1,83,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close of ₹1,71,000 per 10 grams, as per AISA.

Eco Survey pegs FY27 GDP growth at 6.8-7.2%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: India's economy is projected to grow by 6.8-7.2 per cent in the financial year starting April, the government's pre-Budget Economic Survey 2025-26 said Thursday. The forecast for 2026-27 is slower than the 7.4 per cent projection for the current financial year, driven by consumption and investment. The cumulative impact of policy reforms over recent years appears to have lifted the economy's medium-term growth potential closer to 7 per cent, from 6.5-6.8 per cent earlier, it said.

While the current year GDP growth estimate of 7.4 per cent is higher than the 6.3-6.8 per cent range that the survey had forecast last year, the projection for the next year retains India's world-beating economic expansion despite trade tensions with the US. The report called for setting age-based limits on access to social me-

- FY27 growth projection is lower than 7.4% growth estimated for current fiscal
- FY27 inflation is likely to be higher than the current fiscal
- Survey bats for marketing ban on ultra-processed foods from 6am to 11pm
- Study pitches for age bar for social media access, cutting online classes

dia apps to counter 'digital addiction'. As well as reducing dependence on online teaching tools, which expanded during Covid-19, in favour of offline engagement.

It also suggested promoting simpler devices for children, such as basic phones or education-only tabs, with content filters.

The survey advocated a ban on marketing on ultra-processed foods (UPFs) from 6am to 11pm across all media platforms, and restrictions on the marketing of infant and toddler milk and beverages. P11

Global media, leaders hail India-EU FTA



PM Narendra Modi with European Council President António Costa (L) and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 29: The conclusion of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has drawn strong and positive reactions globally, cutting across international media, foreign political leadership, global business heads and policy experts. The deal is widely being described as his-

toric, strategic and timely, both economically and geopolitically.

Leading global media outlets have highlighted the scale, ambition and strategic timing of the FTA. The Telegraph, in an article by James Crisp titled 'Modi is real winner in 'mother of all trade deals' with EU', described the agreement as the 'mother of all trade deals', arguing that



- The SC sought responses from the Union government and the UGC over the issue by March 19
- The apex court revived the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012

the bench revived the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012. "Issue notice returnable on March 19. The Solicitor General accepts notice. Since issues raised in 2019 plea shall also have bearing while examining constitutionality.. let these petitions be tagged with the same. Meanwhile, let the UGC Regulations 2026 shall remain in abeyance," it said.

The 2026 regulations triggered protests at various places, with student groups and organisations demanding its immediate rollback. The CJI suggested that the matter be revisited by a committee comprising eminent jurists and experts familiar with social realities.

At the outset, the bench flagged concerns with the 2026 regulations and questioned the need for a separate definition of 'caste-based dis-

crimination' under regulation 3(1)(c) when regulation 3(1)(e) already provides a broad definition of 'discrimination'. It also questioned why ragging had been left out of the scope of the regulations, despite being a common form of harassment within educational institutions. The bench said the language of the regulations appeared to be 'prima facie vague' and 'capable of misuse'.

Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for one of the petitioners, assailed Regulation 3(1)(c), which defines caste-based discrimination as discrimination 'only on the basis of caste or tribe' against members of SCs, STs, and OBCs.

Jain said the definition excludes discrimination against persons belonging to the general category and creates a presumption that only certain sections face caste-based discrimination. He sought a stay on its operation.

Advocate Indira Jaising, appearing in the 2019 PIL filed by the mothers of Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadvi, which led to the framing of the 2026 regulations, defended the regulations. The CJI cautioned that the regulations could have 'very sweeping consequences' and may end up 'dividing society' with a 'dangerous impact'.

The SC was hearing pleas challenging the validity of the regulations filed by Mritunjay Tiwari, Vineet Jindal and Rahul Dewan.

CM, Banga discuss boosting cooperation in key devpt sectors



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi met World Bank (WB) Group President Ajay Banga at Lok Seva Bhavan here Thursday to discuss strengthening cooperation across key development sectors and advancing the state's long-term growth and reform agenda.

The meeting was attended by senior state government officers, including Chief Secretary Anu Garg, Development Commissioner DK Singh, and WB representatives.

Discussions focused on accelerating inclusive and sustainable development, skilling youth for private sector employment, enhancing infrastructure, improving social sector outcomes, and promoting resilient, technology-driven growth.

The CM highlighted Odisha's flagship initiatives and reform measures aimed at boosting economic growth, including increased investment in infrastructure, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), agriculture and allied sectors, and tourism, with a focus on generating employment opportunities for youth and women. He noted that reforms in acts and rules have made Odisha more business-friendly, helping attract significant investments. As per CMIE data published in December 2025, Odisha ranked second in the country after Andhra Pradesh, with investments worth ₹2.5 lakh crore.

'Extraordinary' trove of ancient species found in China

Almost a hundred new animal species that survived a mass extinction event half a billion years ago have been discovered in a small quarry in China, scientists have revealed.

The treasure trove of fossils offers a rare glimpse into a cataclysmic event that brought a sudden end to the greatest explosion of life in our planet's history.

The site where the fossils were found in the southern Chinese province of Hunan was 'extraordinary', Han Zeng of the Chinese Academy of Sciences told AFP Wednesday.

"We have collected over 50,000 fossil specimens from a single quarry that is 12 metres high, 30 metres long and eight

metres wide," added the lead author of a new study in the journal Nature. In this small space, the Chinese team uncovered more than 150 different species - 91 of them new to science - between 2021 and 2024.

Han described wonderful experiences when they realised that those animals were right there on the rock. "Many fossils show soft parts including gills, guts, eyes and even nerves," he added.

Among the species discovered were ancient relatives of worms, sponges and jellyfish.

They also found many arthropods - a family that includes modern - day crabs and insects - including spiny, stalk-eyed creatures called radiodonts which were the apex predator of the time.



The discovery is particularly exciting for scientists because of the period when these strange animals lived.

Evolution's big bang

Life first emerged on Earth more than 3.5 billion years ago - but was little more than a layer of slime for most of our planet's history. Then came the Cambrian explosion, known as

evolution's 'big bang', roughly 540 million years ago. Suddenly, most of the major groups of animals alive today - including vertebrates which would eventually include humans - evolved and started populating the world's oceans.

This burst of life is thought to have been driven by a rise in oxygen in Earth's atmosphere.

However, it came to a sudden end when up to half of all animals died off 513 million years ago. This mass extinction, known as Sinsk event, is thought to have been caused by declining oxygen levels.

The animals in the Chinese quarry, which were dated to around 512 million years ago, represent the first major discovery of soft-bodied fossils that lived directly after the Sinsk event, Han explained. This means the fossils - dubbed the Huayuan biota after the county where they were found - 'open a new window into what happened', he added.

Safety in the cellar

Michael Lee, an evolutionary biologist at the South Australian Museum not involved in the

research, said 'the new fossils from China demonstrate that the Sinsk event affected shallow water forms most severely'.

A deep-water fish called coelacanth similarly survived the mass extinction that wiped out all the dinosaurs that did not evolve into birds, he pointed out.

"The deep ocean is one of the most stable environments through geological time, in a similar way to how the cellar of a house is buffered from daily and seasonal changes and has less temperature fluctuations than the attic," Lee told AFP.

Scientists have warned that Earth is currently going through another mass extinction - this one caused by humans. AFP

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you will appreciate beautiful things and exotic artefacts. You may even seriously think of pursuing a business related to such commodities. However, you may not be able to make up your mind, says Ganesha. However, you will decide to keep an open mind about it.

TAURUS
You may find it hard to stop the impending outflow of cash while shopping today, says Ganesha. You aren't the one to be dominated and God help anyone who tries to dictate terms to you today. You may end up spending a small fortune, more than lavish to be precise, on the opposite sex today.

GEMINI
Today, you are likely to get encouragement and support for your endeavours from all quarters. You have a gift of gab and your ability to dispel tension with even the simplest of your remarks will be put to test. Still, you will rise to the occasion and prove your mettle. Taking good care of your health is important, and you are no exception.

CANCER
Today is a good day for you. However, don't expect a windfall. It is just one of those days when you will be in a good mood, irrespective of your problems, if any. You will treat your subordinates well, and they will show their appreciation. But if you think the atmosphere at your workplace is good, wait till you reach home.

LEO
Everyone wants to be different. But little do they realise that they already are unique, says Ganesha. Today, you may meet a lot of such different people at work, some of whom may even test your patience. Always remember that working in a team means balancing a variety of egos and opinions.

VIRGO
Take time off all by yourself and introspect today, says Ganesha. Office cubicle looks set to be a war front and pay due attention there, lest things turn to be more difficult, advises Ganesha. New love may just blossom today, and you may even enjoy a nice quiet evening with friends.

LIBRA
Gear up to play the peace maker today! Your ability to handle a 'Brady Bunch' hasn't gone unnoticed. So expect to be put in charge of handling disputes among your subordinates at work today, hints Ganesha. Research work may slow to a crawl today, but the offshoot is that it's an auspicious day to enter into new contracts.

SCORPIO
You shall be completely immersed in your routine today. It's the same old humbug of a day for you, says Ganesha. But this exhausting day may transform into an exciting evening - so be prepared to get surprised.

SAGITTARIUS
Your ship may be rocked by stormy controversies today. Ganesha advises you to steer clear of people looking to give you a piece of their mind. The storm looks to ease away if you lend a patient ear to all such elements, and try and accommodate their views.

CAPRICORN
It's a lucky day for your sweetheart! Wonder why it's written in your horoscope? You will pamper him/her to the hilt, take them out on a shopping spree and buy whatever they lay their eyes on, even if it's way beyond reasonable, says Ganesha. You will go overboard to make your love feel that nothing else matters, and although this lavish outing will serve the purpose, you may later repent not keeping a count of your cash.

AQUARIUS
Good news from across the seven seas brings cheer! If you're seeking a visa, you may get one today. Everything looks positive and it reflects in your mood. Share your happiness with your family, says Ganesha, and you will find it multiplies manifold.

PISCES
Conflicts galore will come your way at the workplace today. Keep a calm head over your shoulders and do keep tabs on your tongue. Differences only crop up if there are substantial thought processes involved, and keeping this in mind ought to give you the perspective needed to get ahead, says Ganesha.



ROB SCHNEIDER, PATRICIA AZARCOYA FILE FOR DIVORCE

Hollywood comedian Rob Schneider and his TV producer wife, Patricia Azarcoya, have ended their 15-year marriage. Reports state that Patricia filed for divorce in Arizona's Maricopa County Superior Court, citing irreconcilable differences. The petition notes that the marriage is irretrievably broken, with no possibility of reconciliation

MINAJ DECLARES HERSELF AS TRUMP'S NO. 1 FAN

Rapper Nicki Minaj has spoken up on her controversial support for President Donald J. Trump with a short speech at a special session. She told the assembled audience that Trump is being "bullied" and "smeared" and declaring herself "probably the president's Number 1 fan", reports *Variety*



Shruti's honest confession

Mumbai: Shruti Haasan recently opened up about her long battle with what she described as "crippling anxiety," revealing that it played a major role in her decision to step away from acting in 2018. The actor and musician shared that for years, her anxiety had reached a point where it interfered with her ability to carry out everyday activities, leaving her mentally exhausted and unsure of herself.

In a recent interview, Shruti explained that taking a break became essential for her mental well-being.

The pause allowed her to slow down, reassess her life, and finally address the anxiety she had been struggling with for much of her adult life. She admitted that during this

period, she was uncertain about who she was and what she truly wanted, making self-reflection unavoidable.

Living alone in London proved to be a turning point. Away from familiar expectations, Shruti focused on healing through music, writing, and routine daily tasks, which brought her a sense of grounding and independence. She spoke about rediscovering joy in simple activities and re-connecting with creativity without pressure. Looking back, Shruti described this phase as deeply transformative, saying that confronting her anxiety head-on helped her rebuild confidence, regain balance, and emerge stronger both personally and professionally.

AGENCIES

Bhumi: Good cinema needs viewers' backing

Mumbai: It is heartbreaking when good films don't work at the box office, says actor Bhumi Pednekar, who believes some of the responsibility also lies with the audience as their feedback decides what gets made next.

Citing the example of cally-lauded films such as and *Afvaah*, which failed in theatres despite good for tackling issues like and migrant crisis as well of fake news, Bhumi said are not getting an op-their stories.

"It really breaks your like *Bheed* or *Afvaah* mi told this news

"*Bheed* has a platform on the audience, it is want good content and to watch that film. those films came I don't it. All I work, small

"Word-tire bracket which has taken away. such good es don't get actor added.

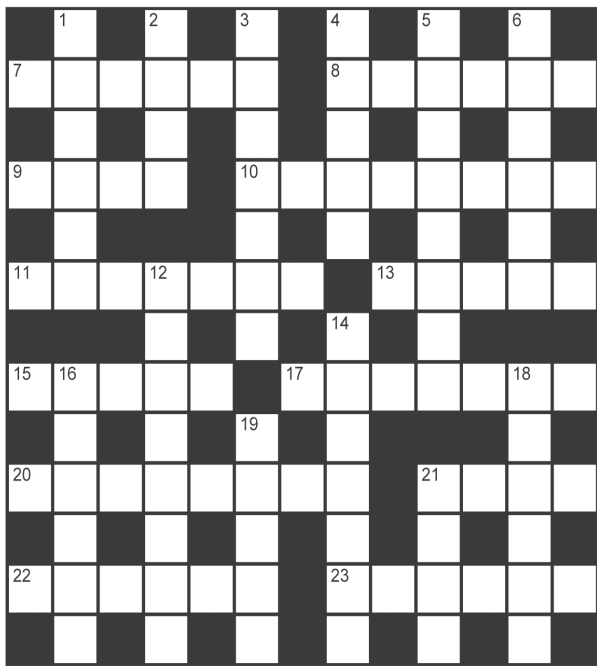


criti-
Bheed
to stay
reviews
pandemic
the menace
right voices
portunity to tell

heart when a film doesn't do well," Bhu-agency. (OTT). The onus is also not just on the filmmaker. If you a good film to be made, you've If you don't watch that film, then will not be made. It's like, what first, the chicken or the egg? really have an answer for know is if you want good you have to go support films," she said. of-mouth was an en-within our films, just completely been That's why I feel films and newer voic-an opportunity," the

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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- Across**
- 7 Whacked
 - 8 Housetop labourer
 - 9 Iridescent gem
 - 10 Summer quencher
 - 11 Ice cream flavour
 - 13 Pool action
 - 15 Apia locale
 - 17 Sun hats for ladies
 - 20 Volcanic glass
 - 21 *La Dolce Vita* setting
 - 22 A place to view relics
 - 23 Leon Uris title
 - Down**
 - 1 Perfect world
 - 2 Face-off, of sorts
 - 3 Island strings
 - 4 Leftover
 - 5 Everest, e.g.
 - 6 Interfere
 - 12 Puts on a pedestal
 - 14 Sporting dog
 - 16 Framework for plants
 - 18 Adipose tissue
 - 19 Motion pictures
 - 21 Tooth part

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Ranveer lands in soup

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Police have lodged an FIR against Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh for allegedly insulting the gods and sacrosanct Daiva traditions at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), officials said Thursday.

The High Grounds police in Bengaluru have filed the FIR following the complaint in this regard by law practitioner Prashanth Methal.

Ranveer Singh has been booked under Sections 196 (threat to public order and social cohesion), 299 (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage the religious feelings of any class by in-

sulting its religion or beliefs) and 302 (deliberate, intentional wounding of religious feelings. It applies to anyone who speaks words, makes sounds, gestures, or places objects with the intent to offend) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) Act.

The complainant charged that the act of the accused actor was deliberate, intentional and malicious, intended to outrage religious feelings, not only his, but also millions of Hindu devotees prompting enmity, hatred and disharmony between different groups based on religion in society, and insult his religious beliefs towards 'Chavundi Daiva', thereby promoting disrespect towards a sacred tradition and disturbing communal harmony.

It is also alleged that the accused actor enacted the emotional 'Chavundi Daiva' scene from *Kantara: Chapter 1* despite an alleged request not to perform the 'Daiva' act.

IANS



Curtains down on Nataka Parikrama-2026



The annual theatre festival organised by Uttar Purush, one of the oldest theatre troupes of the state, came to an end with the play *Rajajema*. Written by Gourahari Das, the drama was directed by troupe's secretary Debadutta Pati. Gourab Panigrahi scored the music.

OP PHOTO

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

S	P	C	O	D	H
C	O	A	R	S	E
U	E	L	O	D	E
O	P	E	L	A	U
I	R	A	Y	I	
V	A	M	O	O	S
R	U	I	T	T	O
W	R	I	S	T	P
O	S	S	D	G	
A	G	I	T	A	T
A	O	U	L	E	D
A	N	O	N	Y	M
T	E	P	R	S	E

SUDOKU

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

Three held for ₹94.62 lakh online investment fraud

Police seize three mobile phones, an SBI ATM card and a UDYAM registration certificate from the accused

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: The Commissionerate Police has arrested three persons in connection with a large-scale online investment fraud involving fake trading applications, in which a man was cheated of ₹94,62,461 lakh, police said Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Lala Basantara (21), Manas Kumar Sahu (30) and Chinmaya Sahoo (19), all residents of Debagarh district.

Acting on reliable intelligence, a special team of the Commissionerate Police, including the Cyber Crime and Economic Offences Wing (EOW) conducted raids and apprehended the accused.

According to police, the accused posed as representatives of SEBI-registered financial institutions and added the complainant to multiple WhatsApp groups, luring him with promises of high returns through stock trading, share investments and IPOs. The groups falsely assured compliance with SEBI norms to gain the victim's trust.



THE APPS SHOWED FABRICATED TRADING PROFITS, CREATING AN ILLUSION OF GENUINE MARKET ACTIVITY

VICTIM TRANSFERRED MONEY VIA UPI, NEFT AND RTGS TO VARIOUS THIRD-PARTY BANK ACCOUNTS AS INSTRUCTED BY THE ACCUSED

Complainant was lured to invest through two mobile trading apps—BOB Caps (BOB Capital Markets, Mumbai) and Chola Pro (Cholamandalam Securities, Chennai)

The complainant was induced to invest money through two mobile trading applications named BOB Caps (BOB Capital Markets Limited, Mumbai) and Chola Pro (Cholamandalam Securities Limited, Chennai). These applications displayed fabricated trading profits to create an illusion of genuine market activity.

Believing the claims to be genuine, the complainant transferred money through UPI, NEFT and RTGS to various third-party bank accounts as directed by the accused. When he later attempted to withdraw the amount, he was asked to pay additional charges, including a 30 per cent service fee in the name of tax and processing charges.

Despite making further payments, withdrawal was not allowed.

Subsequently, the applications showed the account status as abnormal and all related WhatsApp groups became inactive, raising suspicion of fraud.

The victim then lodged a complaint with the cyber police, following which the case was registered and investigation was taken up.

Police seized three mobile phones, one SBI ATM card and one UDYAM Registration Certificate from their possession.

After completion of all legal formalities, the accused were forwarded to the court. Further investigation is underway to trace other accomplices and the money trail, police added.



STAGING PROTEST: Members of the Odisha State Electricity Employees Federation stage a demonstration in front of TPCODL office in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, to press for fulfillment of their demands

PIC-BIKASH NAYAK

ECoR GM, AP CM review key rly projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal participated in a high-level review meeting chaired by Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to assess the progress of major railway infrastructure and development projects across the state.

During the meeting, several key East Coast Railway projects were reviewed, including the doubling of the Kottavalasa-Koraput railway line, the fourth line between Kottavalasa and Vizianagaram, and the proposed third and fourth lines between Vi-



zianagaram and Naupada on the busy Howrah-Chennai main line. The progress of the Vizianagaram-Titlagarh third-line project, a crucial capacity enhancement corridor linking Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, was also discussed.

The meeting also reviewed the ongoing upgradation of Visakhapatnam railway station, which is being modernised to

provide world-class passenger amenities and state-of-the-art infrastructure.

Emphasising the need for close coordination between the state government and Indian Railways, CM Naidu directed concerned departments, including Revenue and Forest, to expedite statutory clearances for timely completion of projects.

He assured full support from the state government in matters related to land acquisition, clearances and inter-departmental coordination.

The meeting was attended by the General Managers of East Coast Railway, South Central Railway and South Coast Railway, along with senior officials from Indian Railways and the Andhra Pradesh government, including officers from the Revenue and Forest departments.

The deliberations focused on strengthening rail infrastructure, enhancing line capacity and improving connectivity to support economic growth, passenger convenience and freight movement.

CM pays tribute to soldier Jitu Behera

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday expressed deep sorrow over the untimely demise of brave Army soldier Jitu Behera, a native of Anandapalli village in Nayagarh district, who was serving in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I am deeply heartbroken to learn about the untimely demise of brave soldier Jitu Behera from Anandapalli village in Nayagarh district. Losing a son of Odisha who dedicated his life to the nation's security is an irreparable loss for the state and the country," Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said in a condolence message.

He added that Behera's dedicated service and unparalleled patriotism in the Indian Army would continue to inspire the youth of the state.

Extending his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, Chief Minister Majhi prayed to Lord Jagannath for the peaceful repose of the departed soul during this time of profound grief.

According to reports, the 31-year-old jawan, who was serving as a 'Naik' in the Army's NK Rank, collapsed while on duty in the Tangdhar area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district January 26. He was rushed to a nearby health centre following a suspected cardiac arrest but could not be saved.

Jitu's mortal remains were brought back to his native village on Wednesday evening. A large number of people gathered to pay their final respects



31-year-old jawan, serving as a Naik in the Army, collapsed on duty in Tangdhar, Kupwara district, January 26 and was rushed to a nearby health centre following a suspected cardiac arrest, but could not be saved

as the last rites were performed with full state honours.

A solemn procession was taken out, during which police personnel from Itamati and Nayagarh district also paid tribute to the fallen soldier.

The entire village remains in shock following his sudden demise. Jitu had married only a few months ago.

H&UD Min reviews CMC, CDA projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: Housing & Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra Thursday reviewed the status of ongoing and proposed development projects in Cuttack at a high-level meeting at Unnati Bhawan here.

The review focused on works being executed by the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) and the Cuttack Development Authority (CDA) to strengthen urban infrastructure and improve civic amenities in the Silver City.

During the meeting, CMC Commissioner and CDA Vice-Chairman Kirandeep Kaur Sahota made detailed presentations on priority initiatives, including the development and beautification of the historic Gora Kabar cremation ground, rejuvenation of revenue water bodies, modernisation and expansion of gosala projects, upgradation of public amenities such as multi-purpose parks and the fish market, and other citizen-centric projects aimed at sustainable and inclusive urban development in Cuttack.

Minister Mahapatra directed CMC and CDA officials to take immediate, coordinated action for effective implementation of the projects. He reiterated the state government's commitment to fulfilling the aspirations of Cuttack residents and stressed adherence to timelines, quality standards and seamless inter-departmental coordination.

TRAI conducts consumer outreach programme



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 29: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), in association with Sri Sri University (SSU), Thursday conducted a Telecom Consumer Outreach Programme here to create awareness among telecom consumers about their rights and privileges.

A large number of students, staff, telecom consumers, representatives of telecom service providers and Consumer Forums participated in the programme. Ch Bhiksham, Senior Research Officer, TRAI, Hyderabad, welcomed the gathering and explained the objectives of organising the programme.

Prof RN Satpathy, Dean, Faculty of Engineering and

Technology, Sri Sri University, thanked the TRAI Regional Office, Hyderabad, for choosing the university to conduct the programme and urged students to use the opportunity to update their knowledge in pursuit of their goals.

G Suresh Reddy, ITS, Joint Advisor, TRAI Regional Office, Hyderabad, delivered the keynote address and explained the growth of the telecom sector and TRAI's role in its orderly development, while safeguarding consumer interests.

In his presentation, Reddy detailed the steps taken by TRAI to address unsolicited communications, the telecom complaint redressal mechanism, maintenance of quality of service, mobile number portability and EMF radiation among other things.

Activists protest limited Mahanadi flow

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kalma (Chhattisgarh), Jan 29: Activists and members of Mahanadi Bachao Andolan Thursday visited the Kalma Barrage in Chhattisgarh, staged a protest and attempted to dismantle the sand embankment constructed over the barrage downstream, highlighting the serious concerns over restricted water flow in the Mahanadi.

The team, led by the outfit's convener Sudarshan Das, marched from Kanakot near Odisha border to the Kalma Barrage in the morning. During the inspection, the delegation walked across the barrage and observed that only one of its 66 gates was open. They expressed serious concern after noting that even the limited water released through the open gate was being blocked by a sand embankment.

Following the inspection, protesters gathered near the embankment and symbolical-



ly attempted to break it, calling the act a warning to the Chhattisgarh government. Das said the protest was aimed at drawing attention to the worsening inter-state water dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh. He warned that the agitation would intensify if corrective measures were not taken immediately. Spokesperson Prasanna Bisoyi also reiterated the demand for urgent action.

The protest saw participation from social activists, river conservationists, and farmer leaders from both Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Prominent leaders from various organisations and the Hirakud submergence area were present.

FROM P1

Global media, leaders...

The Washington Post called it a historic deal with its headline saying 'India and EU clinch the 'mother of all deals' in a historic free trade agreement'.

Associated Press highlighted the scale of the deal with its headline saying that 'India and the European Union reach a free trade deal representing a third of global trade'.

On Fox News, Pakistani journalist Qamar Cheema said India is set to benefit from this agreement, as tariffs will be reduced to zero in several key sectors. He said that neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh will no longer be able to compete with India in the European market.

Several senior political leaders across Europe publicly welcomed the FTA.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called the conclusion of negotiations a 'very

positive sign' and urged swift implementation to boost growth and prosperity.

Finland President Alexander Stubb described the FTA as historic and the largest trade deal ever concluded by either side, saying it would significantly intensify economic and political ties.

Sweden Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said the agreement marks the launch of a new era of cooperation, strengthening prosperity, competitiveness and security through trade and partnership.

Denmark Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen extended full support to the FTA, calling it geopolitically crucial and highlighting the first-mover advantage in a combined market of two billion people.

Global business leaders

operating in India responded with strong optimism, calling the FTA a long-awaited breakthrough.

Jürgen Westermeier, President and Managing Director for India and South Asia at Airbus and President of the Federation of European Business in India, described the FTA as a 'big moment' after 20 years of discussions and said it would act as an accelerator of opportunities for both sides.

Jan Noether, Director General of Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, said the FTA brings together two billion people and nearly a quarter of global GDP, describing it as the 'mother of all free trade agreements'.

Leading industry representatives, including CEOs from key German carmakers such as Volkswagen, BMW,

and Mercedes-Benz, praised the deal's potential to boost German exports to India and strengthen global supply chains.

Global policy experts and think tanks described the FTA as substantively strong and strategically well-timed.

Richard Rossow, Senior Advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the deal brings together a quarter of the world's population and a massive share of global trade, adding that the positive optics reflect strong substance.

Michael Kugelman, Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, called the FTA the 'right deal at the right time', stressing that it goes beyond cushioning US tariffs and instead consolidates a broader, fast-growing strategic partnership.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	91.91 ▼ 0.10	SENSEX	82566.37 ▲ 221.69	GOLD	₹162,769 ▼ ₹3.14
EURO	109.61 ▼ 0.41	NIFTY	25418.90 ▲ 76.15	SILVER	₹368,000 ▼ ₹490

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	31.2°	28.6°	Dry weather likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha
Min Temp	16.8°	15.6°	
Humidity	85%	94%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

BBC’S VOICE OF INDIA



For Mark Tully, journalism was literally the first draft of history where the instincts of a reporter with an ear to the ground took over from all else. His commitment was to the story unfolding before his eyes, not to power or pelf

India bureau chief and made brand BBC a household name. I recall travelling through Uttar Pradesh with my camera person in the mid-1990s. We reached a village near Lucknow where a mango orchard owner invited us to his house for tea. He showed us an album with a photo he had taken with Tully a few years earlier. ‘It was my fan moment,’ he gushed. Tully Saab was a celebrity in an age where you didn’t have to raise your voice to make a mark. It was enough to speak in measured tones with calmness and authority. I too had my fan moment with the great journalist. I had just moved to Delhi in 1994, finding my way through the capital’s power corridors. Frankly, I wasn’t as keen to meet politicians as I was to call on Tully. When I rang up to seek an appointment, Tully instantly responded and said that he would be delighted to meet. Where pompous editors would rarely step out of their cabins to meet their reporters, Tully was happy to engage with a twenty-something young journalist. He enjoyed being in the company of fellow journalists, sharing

lay on his head: he may have been English in blood and colour but had a streak of quintessential Indian curiosity and infectious energy that set him apart. Not surprisingly, Tully wasn’t enamoured with television. He did do the odd television documentary, including a memorable one on great Indian train journeys, but the radio was always his first love. Maybe it was the simplicity of the medium that attracted him. I once invited him to a debate on the ‘Big Fight’ programme I anchored at the time on NDTV. He did come after a fair amount of persuasion but didn’t really seem to enjoy the experience. ‘It’s all a bit too loud, isn’t it,’ he remarked politely. What was most striking about Tully was his ability to rise above the din of political India. He was expelled from India during the Emergency but that didn’t stop him from analysing Indira Gandhi up close and personal. He was targeted by Hindutva forces during the Ayodhya movement but that didn’t prevent him from engaging in candid conversation with an LK Advani. How would Tully have reacted to the ascent of ‘godi’ or embedded media? It’s a question I never quite got down to asking him. But I do recall one of our last conversations at the India International Centre where he would often be spotted with a group of close friends. ‘I guess it isn’t easy being a journalist in today’s India!’ he smiled with a twinkle in the eye. The BBC offices in India had just been searched by the income tax authorities within weeks of the broadcaster airing a documentary critical of Prime Minister Modi and the 2002 Gujarat riots. I smiled back and gently nodded. Sometimes a facial expression says more than a thousand words ever can. As his book is aptly titled, there are no full stops in India. Farewell Sir Mark, travel well.

The writer is senior journalist and author.

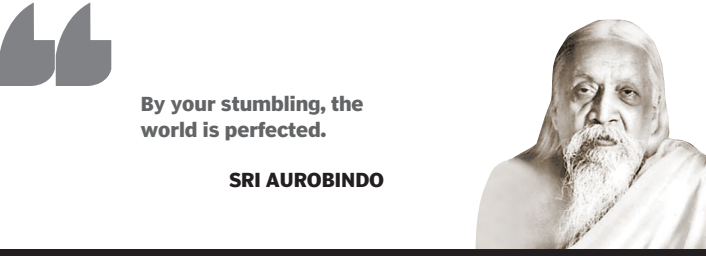
Long before the TV screen or mobile phone took over our lives, there was the humble radio. For anyone who grew up in the India of the 70s, the radio was our window to a wider world. This was my universe where I fell in love with Hindi film music as Vividh Bharti played popular songs every day, where I imbibed the joy of listening to the redoubtable Ameen Sayani conduct the Sunday afternoon Bournvita quiz contest, where I embraced the ecstasy of India winning the 1975 hockey World Cup as Jasdev Singh’s excited voice radiated with patriotic fervor, where I would switch on my pocket transistor in class to get the latest cricket score.



Rajdeep Sardesai

HE WAS A CELEBRITY IN AN AGE WHERE YOU DIDN’T HAVE TO RAISE YOUR VOICE TO MAKE A MARK. IT WAS ENOUGH TO SPEAK IN MEASURED TONES WITH CALMNESS AND AUTHORITY

And then there was BBC radio service. Every morning my late grandfather, a police officer, would listen to the daily bulletin after an hour of yoga and meditation. ‘If it is news, follow the BBC..’ he would tell me. A wide-eyed kid obsessed with the news whirl, the BBC became an early companion. As did Mr BBC for us, the one and only Mark Tully (later Sir Mark Tully). I remember being at a hair salon in 1984 when the news first broke on BBC that Indira Gandhi had been assassinated. All India Radio was playing mournful music but it was the eloquent voice of Tully that confirmed the terrible news. Years later, in 1992, I was a reporter in Mumbai when the Babri Masjid was demolished; it was again the BBC and Tully that we turned to for the most concise on the spot reportage. Tully had been chased by a mob of frenzied kar-sevaks threatening to kill him but the harrowing experience didn’t stop him from telling the story as lucidly as possible. His was the voice of trust and credibility, attributes built over time and years of painstaking travels across the length and breadth of a vast country. He was witness to cataclysmic events over several decades as the BBC’s



By your stumbling, the world is perfected.

SRI AUROBINDO

West Betrayed

Among the more remarkable features of US President Donald Trump’s meandering speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos was his invocation of the cultural bonds that made the West so prosperous. But Trump obviously did not believe a word he said when he praised the “special culture” and “spirit that lifted the West.” After all, that culture was liberal, market-oriented, and committed to providing dignity to all people. It challenged entrenched hierarchies and rejected absolute authority. The West prospered by rejecting the type of regime he is seeking to create in America, embraced in Hungary, Turkey, and elsewhere, and would like to see take root across Europe. Economists and sociologists have studied this culture to understand where the West’s dynamism came from. The most recent Nobel laureates in economics, Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, and Peter Howitt, have made this their life’s work, and their findings are wholly incompatible with the Trump administration’s policies. When US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick declares that “capitalism has a new sheriff in town,” he mischaracterizes the essence of markets. They do not need sheriffs. They need credible rules and competition. Having a supervisor-in-chief is closer to the Chinese model than to the “spirit” to which Trump paid lip service in Davos. Like China, the Trump administration has also tried directing resources that are better allocated through markets, as well as bluntly demanding shares of private firms. Trump even coercively engineered the sale of TikTok to ensure that one of the biggest stakes in the new US entity went to his billionaire buddy, Larry Ellison of Oracle. This is virtually crony capitalism, Kremlin-style. The traditional Western form of capitalism, mostly recently espoused by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, would leave firms – and central banks – alone to do their work of building prosperity. The “special culture” also rejected permanent castes and inherited status. The Athenian spirit that led to the rise of the West slowly did away with these, not least by ending absolute monarchy. The “divine right of kings” gave way to democratic elections and other mechanisms of public accountability. Trump’s assertion that he is guided by nothing other than his own morality returns us to the Hobbesian world of the Leviathan. That system helped preserve royal privilege until liberal ideas – as espoused by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and many others – undercut the rationale for the kind of absolute authority that Trump craves, and which the conservative majority on the US Supreme Court has been enabling. The curbing of royal privilege led to greater inclusion and opportunities for all members of society to make a decent living by drawing on their own free thoughts and labor. The hierarchy of the countryside was replaced with the liberty of the city. Stadtluft macht frei – city air makes you free – said the Germans. Towns won out over the countryside and the old feudal order. Now MAGA wants to return us there. Liberal capitalism has been the great engine of inclusion, advancing what the economic historian Deirdre McCloskey calls “bourgeois dignity.” It allowed professions to flourish and cut down old barriers to class mobility (thus falsifying Marxist predictions), and it subsequently overrode gender, race, ethnic, and national biases, as well as toppling hierarchies such as slavery and colonialism. One of the more beautiful and enduring legacies of the culture of the West is liberal arts education, which aims to free the imagination and inculcate a belief in open-mindedness and an allergy to intellectual rigidity or dogma. Until the end of the 18th century, the prevailing assumption was that only the propertied classes could think freely. Liberal arts freed minds from the bonds of birth, a movement with roots in the Renaissance, with Machiavelli tying good governance to virtue rather than fortune. This culture also afforded dignity to all professions. Until the 18th century, art was considered a frivolous activity, suitable only under royal patronage. But with the ever increasing commercialization of the arts, the creative professions flourished. Whereas opera on the Old Continent depended on subsidies and patronage, the Americans invented the Broadway musical and, later, Hollywood. Such market-oriented creations (all examples of creative destruction) produced the American culture that would achieve unrivaled global influence in the 20th century. The addition of Trump’s name to the Kennedy Center in Washington symbolically returns us to the days of royal patronage, albeit without even an opera company. Trump boasts of the \$250 million in patronage he has brought in, but as usual, the facts tell a different story: ticket sales have dwindled, and artists will not sing and dance at a venue that has been dragged into advancing an illiberal vision of America. The “pinnacle of human achievement” that Trump appeared to praise in his Davos speech rests not on authoritarianism, but on policies to encourage and attract virtue and creativity. In a recent finding, Aghion and his colleagues show that IQ, more than the fortunes of birth or economic privilege, overwhelmingly accounts for inventors and inventions. Openness to global talent is part of America’s “precious inheritance.” The rise of the West is a simple story to tell culturally. It’s about Europe moving toward openness, cosmopolitanism, intellectual freedom, the deepening of markets, transparent rules, and, above all, institutional checks and balances. Trump’s actions and policies negate these achievements at every turn. His administration claims that Europeans face “civilizational erasure,” even as it encourages white Christian nationalism at home. Trump and the MAGA faithful know nothing of the “spirit that lifted the West.” On the contrary, they represent everything that it swept away centuries ago.



JP Singh

TRUMP AND THE MAGA FAITHFUL KNOW NOTHING OF THE “SPIRIT THAT LIFTED THE WEST.” ON THE CONTRARY, THEY REPRESENT EVERYTHING THAT IT SWEEP AWAY CENTURIES AGO



Chander Gupta

CASH LYING IDLE LOSES ITS VALUE OVER A PERIOD OF TIME ASSUMING INFLATION IN THE ECONOMY

Having retired from a Public Sector Bank after rendering service for 35 years as an officer, I am privileged to have grasped some of the fundamental concepts related to banking and finance. One such concept worth discussing about, for the benefit of even a layman, is ‘Non-Earning Asset’. We are somewhat familiar with the nomenclature Non-Performing Assets (NPA) having commonly heard and read about the term. NPAs are those loans and advances where instalments and interest remain in default continuously for 90 days. In other words, when a loan/ advances account stays irregular continuously for 90 days, it is classified as a Non-Performing Asset (NPA) by the lender bank. It will be pertinent to elucidate here that loans and advances portfolio of a bank is reflected on the asset side in the balance sheet. A balance

sheet has two sides: liabilities and assets. Liabilities are sources of funds and Assets are uses of funds. Capital from promoters/ investors and deposits from public are main sources of funds for a Bank. On the other hand, loans & advances, and cash to some extent, are main uses of funds. Therefore, when a loan/ advances account remains irregular for the specified period of time (90 days) it is classified as Non-Performing Asset (NPA). It is classified NPA because the borrower stops servicing interest/ instalment commitments as per repayment schedule. It is an early warning system requiring the bank to step up follow-up and vigilance. A skewed practice needs to be touched upon here before I come to the topic of Non-Earning Asset. In the banking sector, interest on loans and advances is applied at monthly rests, while interest on deposits is applied at quarterly

rests. In other words, interest gets compounded at monthly intervals in the case of loans and advances and at quarterly intervals in case of deposits. A borrower is supposed to pay interest every month at the contracted rate. If the interest is required to be paid at monthly rests, banks should prescribe/ quote rate of interest in monthly terms rather than annual terms. For example, when a bank quotes 12% per annum rate of interest on a loan, it is misleading. It is actually levied 1% per month. If interest of 1% is applied on an amount per month and compounded for 12 months, the total interest will be more than 12% at the end of one year. Having looked at what is a non-performing asset, let us now finally come to the term ‘non-earning asset’. Cash is a non-earning asset. Cash lying with you at your home does not earn any interest. Suppose you are keeping a cash amount

of Rs 1 lac for one year at your home. At the end of one year, it will remain just 1 lac only. Had you kept this amount in fixed deposit in a bank, you would have earned about Rupees seven to eight thousand as interest. Rather, cash lying idle loses its value over a period of time assuming inflation in the economy. Banks, therefore, keep minimum possible cash balances in their branches at the end of each day. At the end of every working day, Bank branches try to transfer surplus cash to RBI’s currency chests as efficiently as possible. Unnecessary cash lying at bank branches not only increase non-earning assets but there is also exposure to burglary risks. The same principle applies to individuals also. One should keep minimum of cash in hand as far as possible.

The writer is a retired banker.

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

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



Prevent future tragedies

Sir, The shocking and unexpected reports of the death of Ajit Pawar, in an air crash at Baramati have once again turned public attention toward aviation safety in India. The tragedy has sparked urgent questions about the standards governing chartered flights and the readiness of smaller airstrips that often handle VIP movement. Preliminary indications suggest that poor visibility may have played a decisive role in the mishap. Worryingly, Baramati airport is said to lack advanced navigational aids that can assist pilots during adverse weather and low-visibility conditions. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has initiated a probe, whose findings are expected to establish the precise cause of the crash. More importantly, the investigation must lead to concrete corrective measures. India’s long history of losing political leaders to such disasters underlines the need for stricter oversight, upgraded infrastructure, and uncompromising safety protocols to prevent future tragedies.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Hoax mails

Sir, Hoax bomb threat emails hit 45 schools in Mohali, like many recent cases in Delhi NCR, Amritsar, and Ahmedabad. These easy pranks, often by teens skipping exams, use hidden emails to cause panic and shutdowns without checks. Authorities should act only after quick verification: check email trails, IP addresses, and logs to prove it’s fake. Skip fast police rushes that help pranksters; use digital proof for arrests instead. Focus should be on new cyber tools, forced logging, and global help to trace and stop them.

RS Narula, PATIALA

India-EU FTA

Sir, The recent conclusion of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on January 27, 2026, coinciding with Republic Day celebrations, marks a historic milestone in bilateral ties. This landmark deal eliminates or reduces tariffs on over 99% of Indian exports to the EU and 96% of EU goods to India, boosting sectors like textiles, leather, gems, jewellery, marine products, and pharmaceuticals. It will drive economic growth by enhancing exports, creating jobs in labour-intensive industries, attracting investments, and fostering technology transfer for sustainable development.

TS Karthik, CHENNAI

WISDOM CORNER

Work of art is not a hypothesis worked out into a neat theorem. It is full of contradictions and inconsistencies.

GURU DUTT

I don't dream at night, I dream at day, I dream all day; I'm dreaming for a living

STEVEN SPIELBERG

It would be wonderful if I could see the end of civilization during my lifetime.

HAYAO MIYAZAKI

Vijayan calls for overseas Keralites' expertise for state's development

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 29: Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Thursday said Kerala needs the cooperation and expertise of its overseas community for the state's overall development.

He was speaking after inaugurating the fifth edition of the Loka Kerala Sabha, a conference of the diaspora organised by the state government here.

"The role of the overseas community should not be viewed only in terms of remittances, but also in terms of their expertise across sectors, which could play a key role in Kerala's development. The country also owes a great deal to expatriates for their contribution to the economy," Vijayan said.

Referring to rapid changes in science and technology, the chief minister said Kerala needs to modernise accordingly and build a new state driven by scientific and technological progress, for which the cooperation of the diaspora is essential. "The aim is inclusive development so that all sections benefit," he said.

Vijayan said Keralites have reached almost every country in the world and many among them, including scientists, technocrats, academicians and businesspersons, have established themselves abroad.

He said though expatriate



Keralites remain emotionally connected to the state, they earlier lacked a platform to contribute their ideas and expertise for Kerala's progress.

To ensure such cooperation and assistance, the Loka Kerala Sabha was created in 2018, he said.

He said the Sabha has now become a rare and globally admired model, with legislators, MPs and overseas Keralites as its members.

"After the launch of the Loka Kerala Sabha, the Centre even asked other states to consider similar initiatives," he said.

Vijayan said the Sabha has evolved from being merely a forum for expression to one that offers concrete suggestions for Kerala's growth, and that its major achievement was its ability to influence policy.

He recalled the support extended by the overseas community during crises such as floods, the covid-19 pandemic and the Wayanad landslide in 2024, and thanked non-resident Keralites for their solidarity.

"Participation in the Sabha has grown from representatives of 35 countries in 2018 to 103 countries in the last edition," he said, adding that the state government has always stood with overseas Keralites and has set up a separate department for them.

Highlighting infrastructure development that took place in the last 10 years in the state, Vijayan said national highway expansion, once considered unrealistic, has become a reality, and several stretches will be inaugurated in the coming months.

Mizoram observes 'Girls in Aviation Day'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, Jan 29: In a significant move to break the glass ceiling in the aerospace sector, Mizoram Thursday became the first state in the Northeast to host Girls in Aviation Day.

The event, held at the state's Information and Public Relations department's Lianchhiari Run (Hall), was jointly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Women in Aviation International (WAI).

The programme brought together students from high schools and higher secondary institutions across the region, transforming the venue into a hub for aspiring pilots, engineers, and aviation executives.

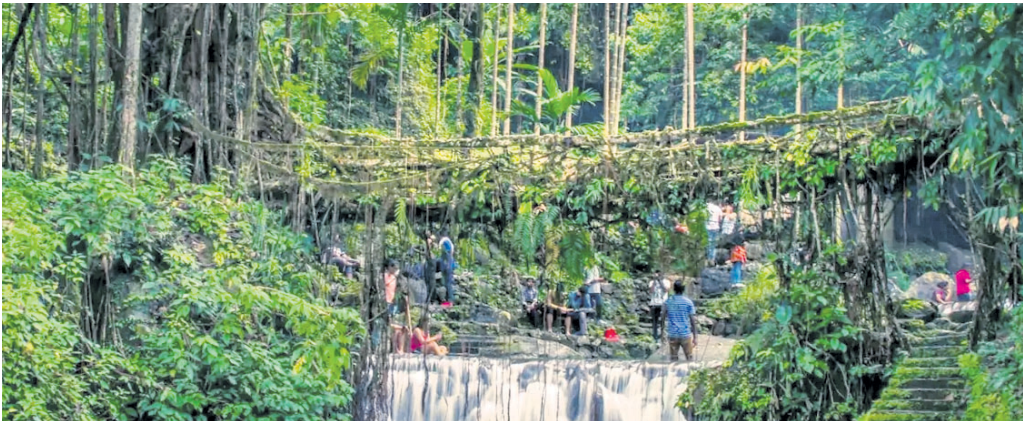
Addressing a packed room of students, School Education Minister Vanlalhlana emphasised that Mizoram is no longer just a spectator in India's aviation growth.

"Mizoram holds a strategic position in the nation's regional aviation roadmap," he said.

The minister also called for stronger collaborative efforts among the government, industry and professional bodies to "unlock the full potential" of the state's youth.

The day was marked by high-energy interactive sessions where industry experts broke down emerging trends and technical "best practices". For many students, the event served as a first-of-its-kind bridge between classroom theory and high-flying career opportunities.

India nominates Meghalaya's root bridges for consideration



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, Jan 29: India has submitted to UNESCO in Paris the nomination dossier of Meghalaya's living root bridges for consideration to include in the World Heritage list 2026-27, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said Thursday.

The dossier was handed over by India's Ambassador Vishal V Sharma to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre Director Lazare Assomo Eloundou, a statement said.

"We are hopeful that the living root bridges will be inscribed this year, ensuring that the indigenous communities, the true guardians of this living heritage, receive the global recognition they so richly deserve," Sangma said on X.

While submitting the dossier,

Sharma, the Permanent Representative to UNESCO, thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and the Meghalaya CM for their support to the nomination, the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO said in a statement.

Sharma also acknowledged the role of Meghalaya Principal Secretary Frederick Kharkongor, officers of the Archaeological Survey of India, the Ministry of External Affairs, experts and the local communities in safeguarding the property and preparing the nomination.

Located across the southern slopes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of the northeastern state, the nominated property represents a living cultural landscape shaped over centuries by

indigenous Khasi and Jaintia communities.

"The landscape reflects a deep-rooted and harmonious relationship between people, nature and spirituality, embodied in traditional systems of land use, governance and ecological stewardship," the statement said.

The indigenous worldview underpinning the cultural landscape is anchored in principles of respect, reciprocity and responsibility towards Mei Ramew (Mother Earth), it said.

"The submission of this nomination underscores India's commitment to recognising and preserving living cultural traditions and indigenous knowledge systems, and to advancing global heritage conservation efforts through UNESCO," the statement added.

'ASIA'S CLEANEST VILLAGE' TO REMAIN SHUT SUNDAYS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, Jan 29: Mawlynong in Meghalaya's East Khasi district, widely known as Asia's cleanest village, will remain closed to single-day tourists Sundays from now on, as the local authorities decided to suspend all visitor-related activities on that day.

Noting that Sunday is a day of religious observance for most residents, the 'Dorbar' or the village council, said Mawlynong will remain open to visitors from Monday to Saturday.

"From January 2026 onwards, Mawlynong village would remain closed to all one-day tourists and visitors on Sundays. The place would be open on weekdays only," the Dorbar said in a statement.

All tourist-related services, including restaurants, shops, stalls and public toilets, would also be closed, it said.

"In Mawlynong, Sunday is when almost everyone has to attend religious services in the churches for most of the day, hence they would not be able to offer or render any kind of services or hospitality to the



visitors," the statement said.

The Dorbar said the restriction was also aimed at avoiding inconvenience to visitors, especially elderly tourists, and preventing dissatisfaction that could harm the village's reputation.

However, tourists staying overnight in guest houses or homestays during weekdays and extending their stay till Sunday, as well as those checking in on Sunday nights, will be exempted from this restriction, it said, adding that in such cases, the responsibility of providing services will rest with the respective accommodation owners.

Several other tourist locations in Meghalaya, including Nongrong sunrise village, have also adopted similar measures by discouraging or banning one-day visits on Sundays, following local community decisions, officials said.

Manipur aims to resettle over 40k IDPs by March 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, Jan 29: Manipur Chief Secretary Puneet Kumar Goel Thursday said the state government aims to resettle over 40,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) by March 31.

He said 16,500 IDPs have so far been resettled in the northeastern state.

At least 260 people were killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic clashes between Meitei and Kuki communities since May 2023 in Manipur. The state has been under President's Rule since February 2025.

Goel said a state level committee is monitoring the rehabilitation process.

"The primary aim of the government is to gradually and securely rehabilitate IDPs, restore stable living conditions, and enable resumption of livelihoods, education and normal community life," he said. "The government's vision extends beyond mere relocation of IDPs from camps to their homes... with focus on livelihood, education and overall wellness of the IDPs," the chief secretary said in a statement.



Around 7,000 houses have been sanctioned under the Special PMAY-G (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin) for the reconstruction of fully

damaged houses, and these units are in various stages of completion, he said.

The Manipur government has so far released about ₹124 crore for the resettlement of IDPs at various locations.

"The government aims to resettle more than 10,000 displaced IDP families consisting of more than 40,000 IDPs by March 31, 2026," he added.

Tripura set to become data storage hub: CM Manik Saha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Jan 29: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha Thursday said the state is poised to become a hub of data storage in the northeast region with growing academic and economic activities.

He said the state has three such facilities, but they fail to meet the growing demand for data storage.


The CM laid the foundation stone for Airtel's data centre worth ₹200 crore with 5 megawatt storage capacity at Chandmari in West Tripura district and termed the initiative as a

timely intervention.

The move will develop an ecosystem for setting up IT and IT-enabled industries in the state, he said.

"Tripura has several advantages to become a hub of the data storage industry with the state receiving substantial investment proposals and speedy business reforms," he said.

The three existing data centres' storage capacity stands at 1800 terabytes, which often fails to meet the growing demand, he said. Mumbai leads the country's data storage capacity with 50 per cent of the total storage facility, the chief minister said.

**CUTTACK DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**
Arunodaya Bhawan, Link Road, Cuttack-12

NOTICE
This is to inform all landowners of village Ratagarh Lenkasahi and Chandiprasad, Cuttack, that a public meeting is proposed to be held in connection with the Proposed Town Planning (TP) Scheme-1.
The meeting has been scheduled:
Date: 31st January 2026 Time: 10 AM,
Venue: Block Office, Baranga
The objective of the meeting is to discuss matters related to land, planning proposals, development provisions and allotment policy. All landowners are requested to be present at the meeting.
Vice-Chairman
Cuttack Development Authority, Cuttack

AI-POWERED ROBOTIC CANAL-CLEANING SYSTEM

Thiruvananthapuram attempts to eliminate manual scavenging



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Jan 29: In a major step to phase out manual scavenging and ensure the safety of sanitation workers, the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation commissioned G-Spider, an AI-powered robotic canal-cleaning system, at the Amayizhanchan canal near the railway station premises at Thampanoor here, officials said Thursday.

The system was launched by Minister for Local Self-Governments MB Rajesh at a function presided over by Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Mayor VV Rajesh Wednesday.

The AI-powered canal cleaning project is a joint initiative of the city corporation and Technopark-based

Genrobotic Innovations, which developed Bandicoot, a robotic scavenger. As per the agreement, Genrobotics will bear the full cost of deploying the robotic system, while the corporation will supervise its operation and maintenance.

Speaking at the event, the minister said Genrobotics has set an example of how innovative ideas can be transformed into impactful entrepreneurship. He said that of the seven compressed biogas (CBG) plants to be commissioned in the state for solid waste management, one will be set up in the state capital.

Rajesh said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the ₹100-crore CBG plant at Brahmapuram in Kochi February 28, adding that 90 per cent of the nine lakh met-

ric tonne of accumulated waste at the site has already been removed.


He further said work on the Palakkad plant will be completed in February, while construction of another plant in Thrissur is progressing, and a plant at Changanassery is in the pipeline.

The minister added that the construction of four sanitary plants will be inaugurated next week.

In his address, the mayor reiterated the corporation's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge technologies for waste management and lauded the Genrobotics team, stating that the civic body would explore all possible ways to utilise the company's technology.

Repeated manual cleaning efforts in the area had led to serious safety incidents, including the death of sanitation worker Joy in 2024.

In this backdrop, the corporation initiated the deployment of robotic cleaning technology in strict compliance with the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, with the aim of eliminating human entry into hazardous canal-cleaning operations, officials said.

**Bank of India**
बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
Bank of India

BOI
Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Mob.: 7008973027

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
E-Auction Sale Notice Under Rule 8(6) of security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

(E-Auction) Sale of secured movable / immovable Assets under SARFAESI Act, 2002
E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISIO TO RULE 8(6) / 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/Partners/Mortgagor that the below described properties mortgaged/charged to the **Bank of India**, the possession of which have been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Bank of India**, will be sold on "**As is where is**", "**As is what is**" and "**Whatever there is**" basis on Auction Date mentioned hereunder, for recovery of balance due to the **Bank of India** from the Borrower as mentioned in the table. Details of Borrower/Partners/Mortgagor, amount due, short description of the properties and encumbrances known thereon, possession type, reserve price, earnest money deposit and Bid increment amount are also given as under.

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Partners/Mortgagor / Total Dues	Description of the Properties	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount
1.	ARB, CUTTACK, PH.: 8249067773 / 7008973027/ Borrower: M/s. Tapaswini Food Products, Address-1: At: Gilinasi, P.O.: Siala, Krushnaprasad, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, Address-2: At: Plot No.: 1890, Sriram Nagar, Old Town, Bhubaneswar / Partners: 1) Mr. Lalit Mohan Pradhan, 2) Mrs. Tapaswini Parida, Both are at Plot No.: 1890, Sriram Nagar, Old Town, Bhubaneswar / Total Dues: ₹2,50,18,991.05 + interest, costs and expenses less any part amount repaid.	All that part & parcel of Plant & Machinery of Chuda Mill: 1) Pan for Chuda, 2) Flacker Machine For Paddy, 3) 100KVA, 11/0.133 KV, 3 Phase Transformer, 4) Conveyor For Paddy Shifting Belt, 5) Roster Set, Paddy Cleaner, Blower, Eliminator Box, Paddy Challana, Vibrator, Blower For Furnish, 6) 9*3 Mtrs Weighbridge Platform and other utility & services situated over Khata No.: 109/113, Plot No.: 10, Mouza: Gilinasi, Tahasil: Krushnaprasad, Thana: Krushnaprasad, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, standing in the name of M/s. Tapaswini Food Products	₹26.83,000/- (excluding GST & other statutory dues) / ₹2,68,300/- / ₹ 50,000/-

Date & Time of E-Auction: 25.02.2026 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.
Last Date & Time for submission of EMD & Documents: 25.02.2026 upto 4.00 P.M.
Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 24.02.2026 with prior appointment of the authorised officer
***Successful Bidder to deposit 25% of the bid amount by next working day which includes EMD money. The balance amount to be paid on or before 15th Day of confirmation of sale.**
The sale shall be subject to the terms and conditions and provisions prescribed in the SARFAESI Act 2002 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. This is also a 15/30 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan account for settlement of their outstanding dues with the Bank and to participate in the public auction on the above mentioned date. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://baanknet.com>
Place: Bhubaneswar Date: 30.01.2026
Authorised Officer Bank of India

of the day

quote

For some weeks now, we have been seeing with increasing clarity the emergence of a world of great powers. Rough winds are blowing in this world, and we will feel their effects for the foreseeable future



FRIEDRICH MERZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

India believes that the challenges facing the Middle East are interconnected and require comprehensive, inclusive, and sustained diplomatic engagement and humanitarian support



PARVATHANENI HARISH | INDIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN

A government born of exclusion cannot unite a divided nation



SHEIKH HASINA | OUSTED PM, BANGLADESH

SHORT TAKES

China relaxes visa rules for UK citizens

Beijing: China agreed to relax rules to allow some visa-free travel for British citizens Thursday during a visit by Prime Minister Keir Starmer to Beijing, as part of a partnership deal which London hopes will help expand its service sector. British citizens will be allowed to visit China without a visa if they are travelling for under 30 days, Starmer said following his talks with President Xi Jinping, in what he cast as a win for business. Companies had been "crying out for ways to grow their footprints in China", a statement from Starmer said, adding that visa-free travel would help facilitate expansion in that market, boosting jobs at home. Injecting growth into Britain's relatively sluggish economy is one of the main aims of his four-day trip.

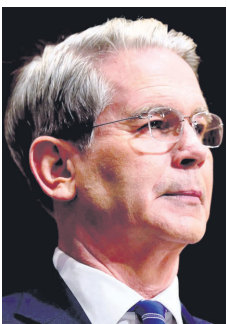
Dhaka-Karachi flight resumes after 14 yrs

Karachi: A special ceremony will be held Thursday night at the Karachi airport to celebrate a direct flight between Pakistan and Bangladesh, restoring non-stop air connectivity between the two countries after over a decade. A state-run Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight G-341 from Dhaka will land at the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi at 11 pm, aviation sources said. This would be the first direct Dhaka-Karachi flight since 2012. The development comes amid growing bonhomie between Bangladesh and Pakistan after prime minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted following massive student-led protests in Bangladesh August 5, 2024.

China executes 11 in cross-border crime case

Bangkok: China executed 11 members of a Myanmar-based family crime syndicate that killed 14 Chinese citizens and ran scam and gambling operations worth more than \$1 billion, authorities said. The Wenzhou city Intermediate People's Court announced the execution in a statement Thursday morning. It sentenced the 11 people to death in September. They included Ming Guoping and Ming Zhenzhen, who the court found led the scam and gambling operations, as well as key group members Zhou Weichang, Wu Hongming and Luao Jianzhang. The group filed an appeal that was rejected by the court in November.

India started buying sanctioned Russian oil, and guess who was buying the refined products? The Europeans. So, the Europeans have been funding the war against themselves and like something that you couldn't have made up



SCOTT BESSENT | TREASURY SECRETARY, US

NIPAH SCARE REACHES CHINA

China has started screening of travellers arriving on flights from areas where the Nipah virus outbreak has been reported, including India. Swab tests were being conducted on passengers, said some of the Indian travellers arriving in Beijing



EU adds IRGC to terrorist list

The decision by the 27-nation bloc marks the latest Western response over the violence, which activists say has killed over 6,300 people

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, Jan 29: The European Union has listed Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation in the aftermath of Tehran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests, the bloc's top diplomat said in a post on X Thursday.

Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief, said that foreign ministers unanimously agreed on the designation. She said that "any regime that kills thousands of its own people is working toward its own demise."

The listing came after the 27-nation bloc sanctioned 15 Iranian officials, including top commanders in its Revolutionary Guard, over the violent crackdown on protesters.

Six Iranian organisations, including bodies responsible for monitoring online content in Iran, were also included in the sanctions list.

The decision by the 27-nation bloc marks the latest Western response over the violence, which activists say has killed over 6,300 people.

The measures add to international pressure on the Islamic Republic as it faced US threats to potentially launch a military strike against it.

US forces have moved the USS Abraham Lincoln and several guided-missile destroyers into the Mideast that can be used to launch attacks from the sea. It remains unclear whether President Donald Trump will use force against Iran, after he threatened military action in response to the killing of peaceful demonstrators and over possible mass executions. At least 6,373 people have been killed in Iran's protests, activists said.



This will put them on the same footing with al-Qaida, Hamas, Daesh. If you act as a terrorist, you should also be treated as a terrorist

KAJA KALLAS | FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF, EU

For its part, Iran has said it could launch a pre-emptive strike or broadly target the Mideast, including American military bases in the region and Israel. Iran issued a warning to ships at sea Thursday that it planned to run a drill next week that would include live firing in the Strait of Hormuz, potentially disrupting traffic through a waterway that sees 20 per cent of all the world's oil pass through it.

Iran had no immediate comment, but it has been criticising Europe in recent days as it considered the move, which follows the US sanctioning the Guard in 2019.

France had objected to listing the Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organisation over fears it would endanger French citizens detained in Iran, as well as diplomatic missions, which provide some of the few communication channels between the Islamic

Republic and Europe and its allies. However, the office of President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday signalled Paris backed the decision.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Thursday before the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels that France supports more sanctions in Iran and the listing "because there can be no impunity for the crimes committed."

"In Iran, the unbearable repression that has engulfed the peaceful revolt of the Iranian people cannot go unanswered," he said.

A notice to mariners sent by VHF radio from Iran on Thursday warned that it planned to conduct "naval shooting" in the Strait of Hormuz Sunday and Monday. The Associated Press saw a copy of the message, which was initially reported by the firm EOS Risk Group.

"Today, Iran and its allies have their finger on a trigger that, at the first enemy mistake, will sever the world's energy artery in the Strait of Hormuz and bury the hollow prestige of billion-dollar Yankee warships in the depths of the Persian Gulf," the newspaper said.

Plane crash in Colombia kills 15, including politician



REUTERS

Bogota, Jan 29: A plane crash in northeast Colombia Wednesday killed all 15 people on board, including a local lawmaker, state-run airline Satena said.

The Beechcraft 1900 twin-engine turboprop plane took off before noon from Cucuta, on the border with Venezuela, for a short flight to the town of Ocana, Satena said.

Air traffic control lost contact with the plane 12 minutes into

the flight, the carrier added. Satena did not say what caused the crash and said the plane's emergency beacon had not been activated.

Lawmaker Diogenes Quintero and members of his team were aboard the plane, as well as Carlos Salcedo, a candidate for Congress ahead of elections in March, according to a passenger list released by the airline.

Images released by local media showed the crashed plane, including what appeared to be significant damage to the fuselage.

The area where the plane crashed is a mountainous region planted with coca leaves, the raw material for cocaine, and where illegal armed groups such as the National Liberation Army and a dissident faction of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia operate.

Aid cuts threaten Ghana's malaria vaccine success

REUTERS

London, Jan 29: New vaccines are helping Ghana approach a long-sought goal of ending child deaths from malaria, demonstrating the potential of the shots to drive back a disease that kills nearly half a million young children every year in Africa, according to the international vaccine aid group Gavi and the country's health service.

But aid cutbacks by the Trump administration and other wealthy governments could mean fewer children benefit on the continent where malaria hits hardest, Gavi told Reuters.

Ghana is among the countries that had already made significant progress reducing malaria mortality by scaling up interventions such as the distribution of bed nets treated with

insecticides and improving access to both preventive drugs and prompt treatment.

Two new vaccines - one developed by British drugmaker GSK, the other by Oxford University and the Serum Institute of India - are helping close the remaining gap, said Dr Selorm Kutsoati, who heads Ghana's immunisation programme.

"For me, the malaria vaccine is a gamechanger," she told Reuters.

Gavi is currently the only organisation purchasing malaria shots for African nations. It anticipates it will be able to spend just over \$800 million on the programme over the next five years - 28% less than the expected need - after falling \$2.9 billion short of its overall funding goal for the period, according to internal estimates prepared for



its board of directors in December, seen by Reuters.

An additional 19,000 lives could be lost as a result due to lower vaccination rates, the documents say. The estimate, which has not previously been

RIGHTS CONCERNS

UK, 23 other OSCE members launch probe into Georgia

REUTERS

London, Jan 29: Britain, Canada, Germany and 21 other OSCE members Thursday said they would launch an expert mission to examine the deteriorating human rights situation in Georgia, amid concerns in Europe of democratic backsliding in the EU candidate country.

Once among the most democratic and pro-Western of the successor states to emerge from the Soviet Union, Georgia has turned increasingly authoritarian since the outbreak of war in Ukraine and has deepened economic ties with neighbouring Russia.

In a joint statement, the countries said that in December 2024, 38 participating states invoked the OSCE's Vienna Mechanism to express concern about developments in Georgia and to request further information from the authorities. The statement, published on the British government's website, said their concerns over the authorities' implementation of international human rights obligations had increased.

It lists restrictions on freedom of expression, legislative reforms constricting civil society and legal actions against opposition groups among areas of concern. The South Caucasus country secured EU candidate status in December 2023, but Brussels has accused Georgia of "serious democratic backsliding" and said in November it was now considered a candidate nation "in name only".

Georgia has since abolished an anti-corruption body established on the EU's recommendation amid a crackdown on opposition politicians that has seen several of the most prominent ones jailed. The ruling Georgian Dream party, in power since 2012, has signalled it will try to ban the main opposition groupings outright on the grounds they pose a "real threat to the constitutional order". The opposition groups say the effort is politically motivated.

Bangladesh EC issues referendum warning

The poll body orders govt officials to refrain from 'yes' vote campaign in referendum



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 29: The Bangladesh Election Commission Thursday ordered government officials to refrain from campaigning for 'yes' vote in the upcoming referendum which is scheduled to be held alongside the general elections on February 12, calling such acts a "punishable offence".

The interim government of Muhammad Yunus had engaged government officials to campaign for the 'yes' vote in the referendum.

"Engaging in such campaigning could influence the outcome of the referendum and would therefore be treated as a punishable offence under Section 21 of the Referendum Ordinance, 2025 and Article 86 of the RPO, 1972," an Election Commission (EC) letter sent to returning officers read.

It said "persons employed in the service of the Republic might inform or raise awareness among the public about the referendum but they are strictly prohibited from urging voters to cast ballots in favour of either 'Yes' or 'No'" under the laws of the land.

Deputy commissioners, who are administrative chiefs of districts, are appointed as returning officers during the election.

EC officials said copies of the directive were also sent for "information and effective enforcement" to the cabinet secretary,

Yunus' principal secretary, all ministries and law enforcement agencies, including Bangladesh police.

The government apparatus earlier was engaged to spearhead a campaign for the 'yes' vote in the plebiscite while the EC order came amid growing criticism and questions if the interim government could conduct such a campaign.

In line with a Bangladesh Bank order, the commercial banks too display 'yes' vote banners alongside the government offices while the central bank also asked the banks to use their CSR funds to support NGO campaigns for the plebiscite.

Several legal experts said since the referendum asks voters to choose either "yes" or "no", the interim government was expected to maintain an impartial position instead of adopting an openly partisan role, when doing so involved spending a considerable amount of public money.

Some jurists also questioned the legitimacy of the referendum itself since the Bangladesh Constitution kept no provision for such a plebiscite while the government got the proposal signed by President Mohammed Shahabuddin and subsequently issued an official gazette.

The referendum is set to be held to elicit public consent on a Yunus announced 84-point reform proposal called "July National Charter-2025".



This image taken from video by Max Shapiro shows Alex Pretti, left, scuffling with federal immigration officers in Minneapolis Thursday

PTI PHOTO



of the day

quote

Some services in aerospace will now benefit from the reduction in tariffs after the India-EU trade agreement

JÜRGEN WESTERMEIER | PRESIDENT AND MD FOR INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA, AIRBUS

India's urban rental housing market is at an inflection point, shaped by a young and mobile population, and rental housing is essential to enhance mobility, particularly for students, young professionals, and migrant workers

VIPUL ROONGTA | CEO, HDFC CAPITAL

The rate at which we are growing, I think it appears that the industry volumes for the entire year are likely to cross the earlier peak of FY19 in absolute numbers

GRISH WAGH | MD & CEO, TATA MOTORS

Q3 RESULTS

Vedanta PAT surges

New Delhi: Mining major Vedanta Ltd Thursday reported a 60 per cent jump in consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) at ₹7,807 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2025 on the back of strong base metal prices. The company had posted a consolidated PAT of ₹4,876 crore in the year-ago period. The consolidated revenue from operations of the company during the quarter rose 19 per cent to ₹45,899 crore over ₹38,526 crore in the year-ago period.

Canara Bank profit up

Mumbai: State-owned Canara Bank reported a 25 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit for the December 2025 quarter at ₹5,254 crore. The bank had reported a net profit of ₹4,214 crore in the year-ago period. On a standalone basis, its net profit for the quarter grew to ₹5,155 crore from ₹4,104 crore a year ago, as per an exchange filing. The core net interest income increased by just 1.13 per cent to ₹9,252 crore despite a 13.59 per cent growth in the global advances, but was impacted by a 0.33 per cent narrowing in the net interest margin.

Tata Motors net dips

New Delhi: Tata Motors Thursday said its consolidated net profit declined 48 per cent to ₹705 crore for the third quarter ended December 2025, hit by one-time provisions for the new labour code and the demerger process. The commercial vehicle maker had reported a net profit of ₹1,355 crore in the October-December quarter of the last year. Its total revenue from operations stood at ₹21,847 crore for the third quarter against ₹18,819 crore in the year-ago period, Tata Motors said in a statement.

Swiggy loss widens

New Delhi: Food delivery and quick commerce major Swiggy, which owns Instamart, Thursday reported a widening of its losses for the third quarter ended December at ₹1,065 crore, on continuing losses from the quick commerce segment and rising advertising and sales promotion expenses. The company had reported a loss of ₹799 crore on a consolidated basis for the corresponding October-December period of the previous financial year. Swiggy's losses from the quick commerce business Instamart increased to ₹791 crore in the third quarter, from ₹528 crore a year ago.

Excessive regulatory burdens impede the competitiveness of enterprises and slow down industrial growth. MSME-related reforms need to cut across multiple departments and levels of government-Centre, State, and local bodies

K SANJAY MURTHY | COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

INFRA PROJECTS SEE COST OVERRUN

Several infrastructure projects worth above ₹150 crore each registered a cumulative cost overrun of ₹5.42 lakh crore, according to a monthly government report for December 2025. The 'Flash Report on Central Sector Infrastructure Projects' (worth ₹150 crore or more) for December last year showed that the revised cost of these 1,392 projects monitored by the statistics ministry stood at ₹35,10,920 crore compared to their original cost of ₹29,68,248 crore



Survey pegs marathon-sprint strategy

India sees 6.8%-7.2% growth next year, flags risks from geopolitics, weak exports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: In a world of geopolitical turbulence, India must run a 'marathon and sprint' simultaneously, or run a marathon as if it were a sprint, the Economic Survey 2025-26 said Thursday.

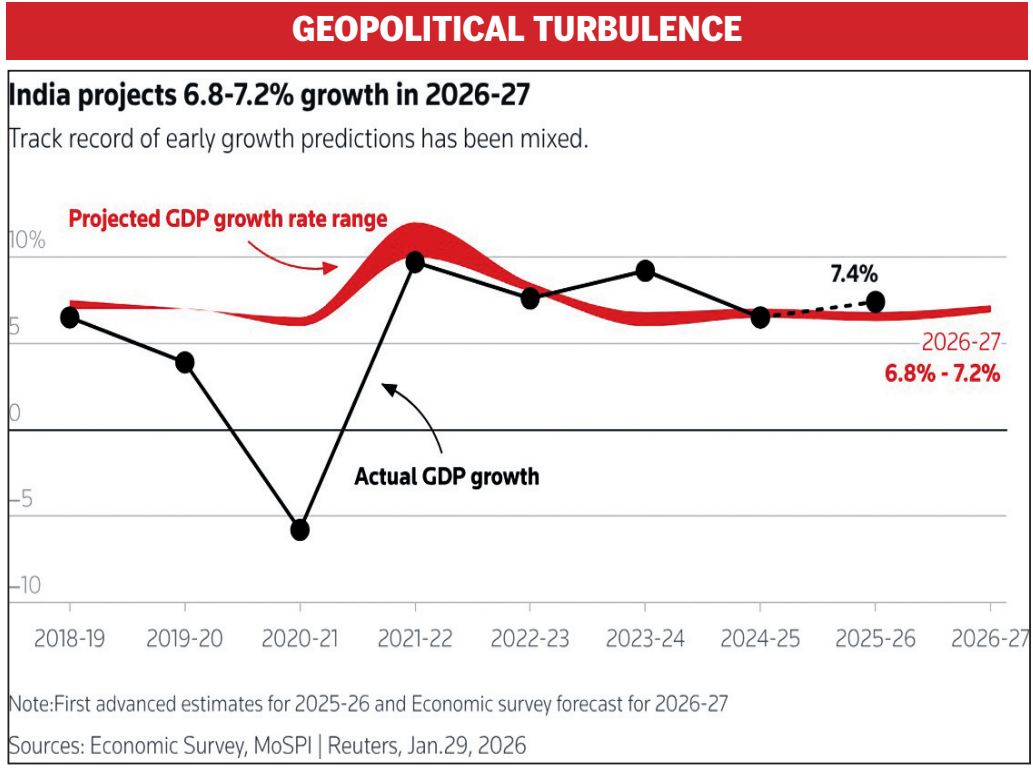
The pre-Budget document tabled in parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman further said that the global environment is being reshaped by geopolitical realignments that will influence investment, supply chains and growth prospects for years to come.

"Against today's global churn, India must choose to build resilience, innovate relentlessly, and stay the course toward Viksit Bharat, rather than seek quick fixes to visible, short-term pressures," it said.

The Survey said 2026 may mark the point at which policy credibility, predictability and administrative discipline cease to be mere virtues and instead become strategic assets in their own right, with lasting relevance.

"Put differently, India must run a marathon and sprint simultaneously, or run a marathon as if it were a sprint," the document said.

According to the Survey, the



appropriate stance for 2026 is therefore one of strategic sobriety rather than defensive pessimism.

"The external environment will require India to prioritise both domestic growth maximisation and shock absorption, with a greater emphasis on buffers, redundancy, and liquidity," it said

In a world of geopolitical turbulence, the Survey said, this may not be confined to a year but could be a more enduring feature.

"In response, India needs to generate sufficient investor in-

CII concurs with the survey's assessment of India's growth outlook, with the projected growth rate of 6.8-7.2 per cent in FY27 appearing realistic amid global uncertainties and external headwinds

CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE | DIRECTOR GENERAL, CII

will invariably accompany rising incomes," it said, adding that this has been the historical global experience.

The Survey pointed out that India is relatively better off than most other countries due to its strong macroeconomic fundamentals, but this does not guarantee insulation.

While noting that the country benefits from a large domestic market, a less financialised growth model, strong foreign exchange reserves and a credible degree of strategic autonomy, it said these features provide buffers in an environ-

CM inaugurates Energy department pavilion at CII Enterprise Odisha Conclave

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 29: The Energy department, Government of Odisha, has set up a pavilion at the ongoing CII Enterprise Odisha Conclave in Rourkela to showcase Odisha's energy vision Wednesday.

Through its presence at the pavilion, TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) is sensitising consumers and promote important government schemes and in-house initiatives.

The pavilion was inaugurated by the Mohan Charan Majhi, Chief Minister of Odisha in the presence of Bhawani Shankar Bhoi, Deputy Speaker, Odisha Legislative Assembly; Sampad Chandra Swain, Minister for Industries, Skill Development and Technical Education; Durgacharana Tanti, MLA, Raghunathpali; Hemant Sharma, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha, along with other senior officials, industry leaders and stakeholders.

Through interactive displays and awareness sessions, TPCODL highlighted the benefits of Smart Metering and the PM Solar ULA Model, focusing on consumer empowerment, energy efficiency and sustainable power solutions. The initiatives aim to en-



hance transparency, improve service delivery and encourage the adoption of renewable energy among consumers.

The Enterprise Odisha Conclave, now in its 25th edition, stands as a landmark platform celebrating Odisha's journey in industrial growth, entrepreneurship, innovation and investment. Over the past two and a half decades, this flagship initiative has played a pivotal role in shaping policy dialogue, fostering collaborations, empowering MSMEs and start-ups and attracting new business opportunities across the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Arvind Singh, CEO, TPCODL, said, "The CII Enterprise

Odisha Conclave is a significant platform to engage with industry leaders and policy-makers. Our participation in the Energy Department pavilion reflects TPCODL's strong commitment to consumer awareness and sustainable development. By showcasing initiatives such as Smart Metering and the PM Solar ULA Model, we aim to empower consumers through greater transparency, improved service delivery and the adoption of clean energy solutions. TPCODL will continue to work closely with the Government of Odisha to build a resilient, efficient and future-ready power distribution ecosystem for the state."

Markets advance for 3rd day on trot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: Rising for the third consecutive day, benchmark stock index Sensex advanced 221 points and Nifty settled above 25,400 Thursday following a rally in Larsen & Toubro and the Economic Survey projecting the GDP growth of 6.8-7.2 per cent for the next fiscal.

Erasing its early losses, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 221.69 points or 0.27 per cent to settle at 82,566.37. During the morning trade, it tanked 636.74 points or 0.77 per cent to 81,707.94.

The 50-share NSE Nifty edged higher by 76.15 points or 0.30 per cent to end at 25,418.90. The broader index fell 182.95 points or 0.72 per cent to a low of 25,159.80 in early trade.

A rally in global markets and fresh foreign fund inflows helped key indices recover from lows, analysts said.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Tata Steel jumped the most by 4.41 per cent. Larsen & Toubro climbed 3.66 per cent after its consolidated revenue from operations in the October-December quarter rose by 10 per cent to ₹71,450 crore from ₹64,668 crore in the year-ago period.

Axis Bank, Eternal, NTPC, Adani Ports and ICICI Bank were also among the gainers. However, Asian Paints, Inter-Globe Aviation, Maruti and Bharat Electronics were among the laggards.

ment where financial volatility is imminent, and geopolitical uncertainty is permanent.

The Survey observed that the paradox of 2025 is that India's strongest macroeconomic performance in decades has collided with a global system that no longer rewards macroeconomic success with currency stability, capital inflows, or strategic insulation.

On global trade tensions, the Survey said, although the President of the United States announced reciprocal tariffs of 25 per cent on India in April, India was expected to strike an early agreement with the US administration and lower them.

So, it said in August, when the American President announced an additional penal tariff of 25 per cent on most of India's merchandise exports to the United States on top of the reciprocal tariff of 25 per cent announced in April, it surprised many since India was expected to be one of the early winners in the new tariff regime of the United States.

"Growth forecasts were revised downward. But in reality, growth accelerated due to a slew of structural reforms and policy measures," the Survey said.

"The Economic Survey 2025-2026 delivers a powerful message: while the global economy is fragmenting under geopolitical stress and supply-chain realignments, India is accelerating -- and that divergence is our strategic advantage," said Naveen Aggarwal, Office Managing Partner, Delhi-NCR, KPMG, in India.

Record prices pull gold demand in '25

Global demand for gold has crossed 5,000 tonne to reach a new all-time high in 2025, mainly driven by investments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 29: India's gold demand declined by 11 pc in 2025 and is expected to be around 700 tonnes this year, weighed down by record-high prices and changing consumer buying patterns, the World Gold Council (WGC) said in a report Thursday.

Overall gold demand in India fell 11 per cent to 710.9 tonne in 2025 and is expected to be between 600 and 700 tonne in 2026, according to the WGC's Full-Year 2025 Gold Demand Trends report.

In 2024, the overall gold demand stood at 802.8 tonne.

However, in value terms, skyrocketing prices boosted demand by 30 per cent to ₹7,51,490 crores, compared to ₹5,75,930 crores in the previous year.

The average gold price January 1, 2025, rose by 67 per cent to ₹1,01,572 per 10 grams in 2025, compared to ₹70,754 in January 2024.

Demand for gold in India for the October-December quarter declined by 9 per cent at 241.3 tonne as compared to 265.8

₹ breaches 92 barrier against \$

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

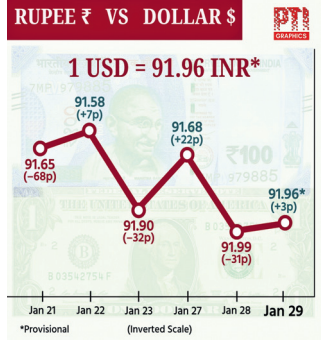
Mumbai, Jan 29: The rupee settled at its all-time closing low at 91.99 against the US dollar, amid selling pressure from foreign funds and risk-off sentiment in global markets.

Forex traders said the rupee hit its all-time intra-day low of 92 against the US dollar amid geopolitical uncertainty and foreign outflows. Moreover, a surge in crude oil prices weighed on the rupee.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 91.95 and touched an early high of 91.82, but pared gains to touch an intra-day low of 92 against the greenback.

The domestic unit eventually settled flat at 91.99. On Wednesday, the rupee settled 31 paise down, revisiting its lowest-ever closing level of 91.99 against the greenback. On January 23, the rupee hit an all-time intra-day low of 92 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.07 per cent lower at 96.37.



India's gold market in Q4 2025 clearly reflected the dual impact of record-high prices and shifting consumer behavior

SACHIN JAIN | REGIONAL CEO, WGC

tonnes in the corresponding period of the previous year.

However, demand value surged by 49 per cent to ₹3,03,470 crores from ₹2,03,070 crores in the same period of 2024.

Total Jewellery demand in India for the whole of 2025 decreased by 24 per cent to 430.5 tonne compared to 563.4 tonne in 2024. The value of jewellery demand increased by 12 per cent at ₹4,54,390 crore, compared to ₹4,04,510 crore recorded in 2024.

In contrast, investment demand emerged as a clear bright spot during the quarter. Total investment demand rose 26 per cent year-on-year to 96 tonnes, while its value more than doubled to ₹120,700 crore, up 108 per cent compared to the fourth quarter (Q4) 2024, he said.

January inflation data to be based on new CPI series

New CPI series to use 2024 as base year instead of 2012

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: The January retail inflation data will reflect price movements in airfares, e-commerce platforms and subscription rates of OTT channels like Amazon Prime, with the statistics ministry expanding constituents of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The new CPI series, which will also have the base year as 2024 instead of 2012, is being introduced with an aim to look at the key macroeconomic



indicators more accurately and assess the broader consumption pattern of households in the country.

The first set of inflation data

based on the revised base year will be released February 12 for January, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said.

The basket of new consumer price index will comprise 358 items, representing the pace of price hike across sectors. In the existing series, prices are collected for 299 representational items.

The statistics ministry has released the report of the expert group on the comprehensive updation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The report has recommended the adoption of the latest Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP) 2018 framework up to the subclass level for classification of items, updation of CPI item basket and their corresponding weights using Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)

2023-24, and use of the latest technology for price data collection and compilation.

Other recommendations include the inclusion of administrative and online/e-commerce data, methodological improvements in index compilation, including the house rent index and more granular data dissemination.

In the existing CPI having base year of 2012, all data are collected from physical or brick-and-mortar shops.

To improve the quality of data, enhance the robustness of CPI and reduce burden on the data collector, price collection mechanisms for several items were explored by Price Statistics Division (PSD) in collaboration with State Regional Of-

fices (ROs) of FOD, in CPI 2024.

Further, it was also noted that the share of expenditure by households, through online platforms, was 4 per cent in rural and 10.5 per cent in urban areas, the report said.

"In view of this, 12 online markets are added across the towns having more than 2.5 million population. All items of CPI basket are mapped to the most popular platform available in the town," it said.

Airfare will be collected from online/e-commerce platforms, and prices of online media service providers/streaming services form websites of major service providers (Amazon Prime Video, Netflix, Jio Hotstar, SonyLiv, YouTube Premium, and Zee5).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Real Madrid, PSG drop into playoffs

Dramatic, last-gasp header by a goalkeeper caps a climactic Champions League opening round

REUTERS

London, Jan 29: Real Madrid missed out on automatic qualification for the Champions League knockout rounds as they crumbled to a 4-2 defeat at Benfica on a frenetic final night of group-stage action across Europe Wednesday.

Kylian Mbappe's goal had put the 15-time winners on course for the win they needed to secure a top-eight finish, but their night ended in chaos as Jose Mourinho's Benfica roared back.

Benfica were still heading for elimination despite leading 3-2 but goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin scored their fourth goal in the 98th-minute -- a header that meant the Portuguese giants crept into the playoffs on goal difference in 24th spot.

Real, who began the night third but ended it ninth and could face Norwegian upstarts Bodo/Glimt in the playoffs, also had Raul Asencio and Rodrygo sent off in stoppage time.

Holders Paris St Germain also slipped out of the top eight as they could only draw 1-1 at home to Newcastle United - a result that left both sides facing a playoff despite starting the final night in the automatic places.

Liverpool thrashed Qarabag 6-0 to end their group campaign in style and finish in third place -- Alexis Mac Allister scoring twice and Mohamed Salah also among the goals.

Barcelona began the evening in ninth spot but spared themselves a playoff tie as they came from a goal down to beat Copenhagen 4-1. Goals from Robert Lewandowski, Lamine Yamal, Raphinha and Marcus Rashford ensured they finished fifth, one place behind surprise package Tottenham Hotspur who won 2-0 at Eintracht Frankfurt.

Chelsea trailed 2-1 at Napoli but two goals by Joao Pedro earned them a 3-2 win to clinch sixth spot while defeat left Napoli down and out in 30th place. That meant five of the six



INTO ROUND OF 16:
Arsenal, Bayern Munich, Liverpool, Tottenham, Barcelona, Chelsea, Sporting Lisbon, Manchester City

English clubs are in the last 16 and could yet be joined by Newcastle.

DRAMA GALORE

Portugal's Sporting grabbed a last-gasp 3-2 win at Athletic Bilbao thanks to a goal by Alisson Santos to snatch a top-eight spot and effectively relegate Real Madrid to the playoffs.

Manchester City beat Galatasaray 2-0 at home to jump from 11th to eighth and spare themselves a repeat of last season when they failed to reach the last-16 after losing to Real Madrid in the playoffs.

Arsenal, who like Bayern Munich were already assured of a top-eight finish, became the first club in the new 36-team group format to finish with a 100% record, beating bottom club Kairat Almaty 3-2. Runners-up Bayern ended with a 2-1 victory at PSV Eindhoven that left the Dutch club eliminated.

The start is probably the most physical portion of a race, especially in the 500 meter.

Just like last season, UEFA's expanded Champions League group stage has proved a masterstroke with the suspense lasting to the final seconds of the eighth round of fixtures.

Before the 18 matches kicked off only four of the 36 clubs were definitely eliminated and only Arsenal and Bayern Munich were guaranteed to be in

the last 16.

Several who started outside the top eight needed wins and other results to go in their favour with Barcelona, Manchester City and Sporting seizing their chance.

Erling Haaland and Rayan Cherki were on target for City.

Inter Milan got the win they required, beating Borussia Dortmund 2-0 away but, like fellow Italians Juventus, will have to take their chances in the playoffs.

Juventus could only draw 0-0 at Monaco. Dortmund missed out on being seeded for the playoffs, ending 17th.

Nowhere was the drama more compelling than at Atletico Madrid's Metropolitano Stadium where Diego Simeone's side hosted Norway's Bodo/Glimt. Atletico led through Alexander Sorloth's goal and at one point were into the top eight but Bodo, who stunned Manchester City last week, hit back with goals by Fredrik Sjovold and Kasper Hogh for a remarkable 2-1 win to put the Arctic Circle debutants in 23rd and into the playoffs.

Atletico ended 14th and will have to be content with being one of the seeded teams in the two-legged playoffs.

Napoli and PSV Eindhoven were not the only illustrious clubs to finish below the elimination trapdoor. Marseille had eyes on a top-16 place and a seeded playoff berth, but a 3-0 hammering at Club Brugge meant they finished 25th with Brugge grabbing a playoff spot at their expense.

The teams who finished ninth to 24th will learn who they will face in the playoffs in Friday's draw.

Supreme Sabalenka storms into final

Top-seeded Belarusian edges past Svitolina to enter 4th consecutive final

REUTERS

Melbourne, Jan 29: Aryna Sabalenka swept to her fourth successive Australian Open final with a 6-2 6-3 win over Ukrainian Elina Svitolina Thursday in a semi-final overshadowed by geopolitical tension.

Top-seeded Belarusian Sabalenka will bid for a third crown at Melbourne Park in four years and fifth Grand Slam title overall against the winner of the late semi-final between Jessica Pegula and Elena Rybakina at Rod Laver Arena.

"I just cannot believe that. It's an incredible achievement but the job is not done yet," world number one Sabalenka said on court. "I'm super happy with the win. She's such a tough opponent and has been



playing incredible tennis the whole week."

Since Russia's invasion of

Ukraine in 2022, for which Belarus has been a staging ground, Russian and Belarusian players

People's Armwrestling Federation of India receives affiliation from PCI



POST NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai, Jan 29: The People's Armwrestling Federation of India (PAFI) has received official affiliation from the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), marking a significant milestone in the growth and formal recognition of Para-Armwrestling in the country.

The affiliation represents a major step forward for Para-armwrestling in India, strengthening its pathway towards structured competition, athlete development, and long-term inclusion in the global Paralympic ecosystem.

Armwrestling has already gained important international momentum, having been included in the recent Asian Youth Para Games 2025 in Dubai. It is also one of the few sports where Para athletes are included in the main competition. Building on this progress, PAFI now looks ahead to the sport's inclusion in

the Asian Para Games and the Asian Games.

In India, PAFI and Pro Panja League have shown dedicated support to Para Athletes with special categories integrated in the league and across state championships. The Pro Panja League has ensured inclusivity by bringing male, female, and Para Athletes to compete on the same platform, with Para Athletes paid equally based on their rankings, in line with all other athletes."

Together, PAFI and the Pro Panja League have played a crucial role in creating a sustainable ecosystem for Para-Armwrestlers, providing them structured tournaments, visibility, and professional opportunities and have ensured the domestic competitions match international standards.

The affiliation with the Paralympic Committee of India further strengthens these efforts, bringing Para-Armwrestling closer to its long-

term goal of being included in the Paralympic Games and offering Indian athletes a pathway to compete on the world's biggest sporting stage.

On the occasion, Preeti Jhangiani, President of the People's Armwrestling Federation India (PAFI), Vice President of the Asian Armwrestling Federation (AAF), and Co-Founder of the Pro Panja League stated, "We are deeply honored to receive official recognition from the Paralympic Committee of India as the official governing body for armwrestling in India. This milestone is not just an achievement for PAFI, but a validation of our unwavering commitment to transparent governance, athlete welfare, and inclusive growth. It strengthens our resolve to create fair opportunities and a clear pathway for Indian armwrestlers to represent the nation with pride at national and international platforms."

SHORT TAKES

African Cup chaos: Both finalists fined

Cape Town: Senegal coach Pape Thiaw has been banned for five games and fined \$100,000 and Senegalese and Moroccan players also received suspensions following a walk-off during a chaotic African Cup of Nations final. The sanctions announced Wednesday by the Confederation of African Football included fines totaling \$615,000 for the Senegalese soccer federation and \$315,000 for the Morocco federation for unsporting and improper conduct by their players, coaching staff and supporters, among other offenses. The January 23 African soccer showpiece was marred by Senegal players walking off led by Thiaw in protest against a late penalty awarded to host Morocco.

B'desh shooters set to visit India

New Delhi: Bangladesh has approved its shooting team's tour to New Delhi for next month's Asian Shooting Championships days after the cricket team's refusal to play in India due to safety concerns cost them a place at the Twenty20 World Cup. Bangladesh have been replaced by Scotland in the T20 World Cup, which runs from February 7 to March 8, after they insisted they would not tour India, highlighting security concerns following soured political relations between the neighbours. The International Cricket Council (ICC), citing independent security assessment reports, dismissed Bangladesh's demands to play their World Cup matches in tournament co-hosts Sri Lanka instead, arguing the late change in schedule was "not feasible".

Hockey Pro league: Manpreet dropped from probables' list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: Midfield stalwart and one of the most recognisable faces of Indian hockey, Manpreet Singh is the biggest name missing from the list of 33 probables announced by Hockey India for the senior men's national coaching camp ahead of the upcoming FIH Pro League season, set to begin in Rourkela next month.

The 33-year-old former India captain, a member of two Olympic bronze medal-winning teams and just one game away from becoming the joint highest-capped Indian player alongside current Hockey India

president Dilip Tirkey with 412 appearances, has failed to make the probables' list for the camp for the first time in 15 years.

The camp will be held from February 1 to 7 ahead of the FIH Pro League matches scheduled in Rourkela from February 10 to 15.

Among the other notable names missing from the list is goalkeeper Krishan Bhabur Pathak, while Princedeep Singh has been elevated following his stellar performance in the Junior Asia Cup in Rajgir late last year, which India won.

Additionally, Poovanna Chandura Boby, Yashdeep Siwach and Amandeep Lakra are the new entrants in defence,



while Rosan Kujur has been inducted into the side on the back of his impressive showing in the Junior Asia Cup.

India, who had finished eighth among nine teams last season, will open their campaign against Belgium February 11 followed by the game against Argentina a day later. The Harmanpreet Singh-led

SENIOR MEN'S CAMP:	
Goalkeepers:	Pawan, Suraj Karkera, Mohith Shashikumar, Princedeep Singh.
Defenders:	Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay, Harmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sumit, Poovanna Chandura Boby, Yashdeep Siwach, Nilam Sanjeep Xess, Amandeep Lakra.
Midfielders:	Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Hardik Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Vishnu Kant Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, Nilakanta Sharma, Rosan Kujur.
Forwards:	Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Shilanand Lakra, Mandeep Singh, Arajeet Singh Hundal, Angad Bir Singh, Uttam Singh, Selvam Karthi, Aditya Arjun Lalage, Maninder Singh.

side will then take on Belgium in the return fixture February 14, followed by the match against Argentina a day later.

The team will then fly to Ho-

bart where they will take on Spain (February 21 and 24) and Australia (February 22 and 25). The European leg of the tournament will be held in June.

2036 OLYMPIC BID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 29: In the corridors of power where India's 2036 Olympic bid is taking shape, infrastructure is hardly a concern given "how prepared" contender city Ahmedabad already seems to be.

But what's keeping the officialdom occupied is the brainstorming over some foundational changes in India's medal strategy to ensure that the country finds its footing in disciplines like aquatics and cycling. Both these events offer over a 100 Olympic medals combined but none so far for India.

"Would it look nice if at our home Olympics, our athletes end up 71st in the overall tally with six medals, like it hap-

pened in Paris (2024)? We have to address that most urgently. Host countries scale up their Olympic performances to ensure that they don't feel left out of their own party," a Sports Ministry source, privy to the developments with regards to the high-profile bid, told PTI.

This is exactly what China did in the 2008 Beijing Games, drastically improving its performance in disciplines that it didn't do well previously, such as boxing, canoeing and archery, for a record tally of 100 medals.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has kept the host selection process on hold to reassess its criteria after taking feedback from member nations.

"That process will restart in



another six months," the source said. "India is at an inflection point in its sporting journey. And the challenge is to make sure that we rise and not fall from here. It's not infrastructure that is a concern, that's the easiest box to tick and perhaps the most visible, that's

why the obsession with it. The bigger concern is our standing as a sporting nation," he pointed out.

And that's why the increased focus going forward would be on schools where the potential stars of 2036 are currently scattered across the length and

breadth of the country.

The disciplines in which India does not have much of a standing but which yield a high medal count are the ones where talent identification programme would turn its aggressive attention. So, aquatics, rowing, and cycling are set to figure high on the priority list.

Aquatics, which includes swimming, diving, waterpolo, artistic swimming, and open water swimming, will offer 55 of the more than 350 overall medals that will be up for grabs across 36 disciplines in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. But India is not expected to get any.

Ditto for rowing, which has 45 medals at stake in Los Angeles across 15 events, and cycling, where 22 events will

throw up 66 medals.

"The challenge is to shift our focus from events that we have mastered to a great extent to events, where the medal yield is high but we are nowhere in the picture," said another official closely linked to the country's athlete development programme.

Before the 2036 ambitions, India has the task of hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games, also in Ahmedabad. It's an event struggling for relevance but one in which India has almost always managed excellent results across disciplines.

The challenge, in this case, therefore is to deliver within a budget that doesn't cause public outrage and the operations pass off smoothly.