

HERE . NOW

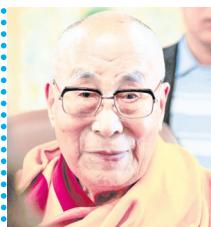
Orissa POST



Deepika's priority

Deepika Padukone reflects on new motherhood, sharing joyful moments and revealing her biggest obsession

LEISURE | P2



Grammy for Dalai Lama

China deplores the Grammy given to the Dalai Lama, opposing the recognition's possible use as a tool for anti-China 'political manipulation'

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Bullions crash

Silver prices extend its steep fall for the third straight day, tumbling ₹52,000 to ₹2,60L/kg, while gold falls to ₹1,52L/10g

BUSINESS | P11



Anahat makes history

Seventh seed Anahat Singh defeats top seed and World No 10 in the Squash on Fire Open final, clinches maiden PSA Bronze-level title

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 3, 2020

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

Prez begins 6-day tour

BHUBANESWAR: President Droupadi Murmu arrived here Monday a six-day visit to Odisha during which she will attend religious and academic programmes across five districts, officials said. President Murmu was received at the Biju Patnaik International Airport here by Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and others. She was accorded a ceremonial welcome as different cultural troupes performed at the airport and on the way to Lok Bhawan. According to her itinerary, she will attend programmes across Khurda, Jajpur, Balasore, Puri and Mayurbhanj districts over the next few days.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



For the past 75 years, all budgets were life changing. They just didn't change mine

US, India agree on trade deal: Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Feb 2: India and the US agreed on a trade deal under which Washington will bring down reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from current 25 per cent, US President Donald Trump said Monday after a phone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Prime Minister said he was delighted that "made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18 per cent".

"Big thanks to President Trump on behalf of the 1.4 billion people of India for this wonderful announcement," Modi said on X without mentioning the trade deal.

Trump claimed India will move forward to reduce its "tariffs and non tariff barriers" against the US to zero.

"Out of friendship and respect for Prime Minister Modi and, as per his request, effective immediately, we agreed to a trade deal between the United

States and India, whereby the United States will charge a reduced reciprocal tariff, lowering it from 25 per cent to 18 per cent," the US President said on social media.

India will "likewise move forward to reduce their tariffs and non tariff barriers against the United States, to zero". Trump said Modi also committed to "buy American" at a much higher level, in addition to over USD 500 billion dollars of US energy, technology, agricultural, coal, and many other products.

"Our amazing relationship with India will be even stronger going forward. Prime Minister Modi and I are two people that

get things done something that cannot be said for most," he said.

In his remarks, Modi said, "When two large economies and the world's largest democracies work together, it benefits our people and unlocks immense opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation."

"President Trump's leadership is vital for global peace, stability, and prosperity. India fully supports his efforts for peace," he said. "I look forward to working closely with him to take our partnership to unprecedented heights," he added.

Trump said Modi and he also discussed ending the war between Russia and Ukraine.

"He agreed to stop buying Russian Oil, and to buy much more from the United States and, potentially, Venezuela," the US President said.

"This will help END THE WAR in Ukraine, which is taking place right now, with thousands of people dying each and every week," Trump said.

CM launches ₹600-cr projects in Rayagada



jighariani Temple with an investment of ₹37 crore.

"As per demands of district MLAs and local leaders, work on indoor stadiums will start soon in all blocks of the district," he said. Education, health, transportation system will be strengthened and the proposal for setting up a medical college in Rayagada is under consideration of the government, he said.

While attending the 'Subhadra Shakti Mela' at Rayagada, Majhi inaugurated 22 projects worth ₹238 crore and laid the foundation stones for 87 others valued at over ₹366 crore.

The projects include infrastructure development works such as roads, bridges, healthcare, schools and women empowerment initiatives.

The CM also laid the foundation stone for the improvement and beautification of Maa Ma-

MORE P9



ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ

ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର ଯୋଜନା

ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ରତ୍ନ ମାଝୀ

କରକମଳରେ



ଶ୍ରୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋଦୀ
ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ



ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ରତ୍ନ ମାଝୀ
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଶ୍ରୀ ବିଭୂତି ଭୁଷଣ ଜେନା
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ଇମ୍ପ୍ରୋତ୍ପଦନ ଓ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

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ପୃଷ୍ଠା, ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଓ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

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ସାଂସ୍କାରିକ, କ୍ରିତ୍ୟୁଲ୍ୟ

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ସାଂସ୍କାରିକ, ଆସ୍ତିକ

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ସାଂସ୍କାରିକ, କନ୍ତପାଳ

ଏବଂ ବିଧ୍ୟାୟକ ବୃଦ୍ଧି, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ

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ମହିଳା ଓ ଶିଶୁ ବିକାଶ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST



accuracy • reliability • trust

FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

You will focus your attention today on your beloved. You will feel very energetic, but your commitment to work will falter. So don't be surprised if your superiors are annoyed. However, Ganesha says today is a day for romantic pursuits.



TAURUS

Professionals in all spheres of work are due for a field day today. The day will be particularly outstanding for Administrators and executives are likely to get richer by the end of the day. Even if you are engaged in some other work, you will stand out and get noticed for your overall excellence.



GEMINI

A hectic and busy day awaits you, which will probably leave you feeling bored and listless. Find creative ways to beat the boredom, or take a break and do things which appeal to you today, says Ganesha.



CANCER

You wish to display your social prestige and monetary clout in front of your relatives. But you have to pay a heavy price for that. Your past experience will teach you something, which will stand in good stead for future dealings.



LEO

You will see some change in your daily schedule today. It is a good day to start a new job or business activity. You will focus more attention on your personality today. You will try to improve yourself and bring your hidden talents to the fore. Make the most of this opportunity to implement your plans, says Ganesha.



VIRGO

Today you will feel monetarily much stronger than you have ever felt, says Ganesha. You will realise the need to make monetary arrangements for some unforeseen financial instability that may occur in the future. Your leadership qualities will be appreciated by people around you.



LIBRA

Ganesha says today you may be able to undertake travel for business or pleasure purposes. It may be a busy day for you work wise and you may not be able to completely focus on your family or family issues. Try your luck in the stock market today, as it may prove beneficial to you. If there are certain issues or problems they will be sorted out today because of your varied skills and past experiences.



SCORPIO

Your sixth sense would work wonders today, as per to what Ganesha has to say. Trust your instincts and work accordingly. Work enthusiastically and dedicatedly. When the pressure of work mounts on you, take a break and unwind with the help of soft music.



SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha foresees a day full of promises. People in the creative field, especially artists are going to benefit more. Radio jockey and television anchors can make a note of this day in their diary, as it may serve as a memorable day, says Ganesha.



CAPRICORN

Opportunities don't knock on the door twice. Today, you'll answer the door and utilise the opportunity to the most, predicts Ganesha. Positive results will be visible and you'll stand a chance to overtake your competitors. Even if the competition is fierce and opponents try everything to pull you down, you'll not let them win the battle.



AQUARIUS

The game is set; you are put up against those who are holding a grudge against you and are waiting for an opportunity to pull you down. But, the Lion - the King of the jungle doesn't fear anyone. You are confident, skilful, and know your strengths very well. No matter how hard the opponents try, they will be no match to you, predicts Ganesha.



PISCES

You will find yourself in a philosophical state of mind today. You will be able to see things for what they really are, rather than what they appear to be. You are unlikely to try and swim against the flow today, given your mental state. You will take things as they come to you, one at a time.



VIN DIESEL CONFIRMS FAST & FURIOUS FINALE

Actor Vin Diesel has officially confirmed that the next chapter of the *Fast & Furious* saga will mark the end of an era. Titled *Fast Forever*, the film is positioned as the grand finale of the franchise's core story.

RINGWALD REFUSES THE IDEA TO REMAKE THE BREAKFAST CLUB

Molly Ringwald says *The Breakfast Club* is unlikely to be remade, revealing John Hughes never wanted his films remade. Speaking at Sundance, the actress added she agrees with his wishes, stressing the cult classic shouldn't be recreated without the late director's consent.



Bad Bunny, Lamar create history



GRAMMY AWARDS 2026

Spielberg joins EGOT club



Legendary filmmaker Steven Spielberg has finally earned the EGOT status after the documentary *Music by John Williams*, on which he served as a producer, won in the Best Music Film category at the Grammy Awards. Spielberg's Grammy win adds to his four Emmys, three Oscars and Tony Award for producing the Broadway musical *A Strange Loop*, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Spielberg is just the 22nd person to achieve EGOT status, joining an elite group that includes Audrey Hepburn, Sir Elton John and Whoopi Goldberg.

Before that, Olivia Dean was named best new artist.

"I never really imagined that I would be up here, she said, receiving her first Grammy while wiping away tears. I'm up here as a granddaughter of an immigrant. I wouldn't be here ... I am a product of bravery, and I think that those people deserve to be celebrated." Adding to the spectacle, electrifying performances by Sabrina Carpenter, Pharrell Williams, Alex Warren, and Lolla Young ensured the Grammys delivered unforgettable moments both on and off the stage. AGENCIES

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE'S DRAMA FEST BEGINS TODAY



Bhubaneswar: International Theatre (IT) is organising the IT National Theatre Festival 2025-26, a four-day event beginning Tuesday at Rabindra Mandap, marking the completion of its golden jubilee celebrations.

The festival celebrates 50 years of IT's theatrical journey and will feature productions by theatre groups and personae from different parts of the country and .

The festival opens February 3 with two plays — *Barsha* (Hindi) by Natya Chetana, Bhubaneswar, directed by Subodh Patnaik, and *Sakhi Sajer Chudu* (regional language) by Ekalavya, Tripura, directed by Jishu Debnath.

The host troupe will present the Odia play *Agami*, directed by Mihir Kumar Meher, followed by the Bengali play *Mitali* by Naya Natua Production, West Bengal, directed by Goutam Halder February 4 and 5 respectively.

A national seminar on Social Reformation in Drama, featuring foreign delegates and eminent Indian theatre experts, will be held February 5 at 10 am at Rabindra Mandap.

The festival will conclude February 6 with the Hindi play *Bharat Vaakya* by Kalakar Theatre, Bhubaneswar, directed by Hara Prasad Patnaik.

While NSDian Dolgovind Rarth will be conferred with International Theatre Award 2025-26, several other theatre and media persons will be felicitated during the event, shared festival director and IT's chief functionary Mihir Kumar Meher.

PNN

Los Angeles: Bad Bunny won album of the year at the 2026 Grammy Awards for his critically-acclaimed *Debi Tirar Mas Fotos*, closing out a surprising and history-making night filled with anti-ICE sentiments from music's top artists. It is the first time a Spanish-language album has taken home the top prize.

"Puerto Rico, believe me when I tell you that we are much bigger than 100 by 35," he said in his acceptance speech in Spanish, referring to a Puerto Rican colloquialism about the island's small size. "And there is nothing we can't achieve. Thank God, thank you to the Academy, thank you to all the people who have believed in me throughout my career."

Harry Styles presented the award - the English singer previously took home the top prize in 2023 for *Harry's House*.

Kendrick Lamar and SZA won record of the year for *Luther*.

Cher presented the award and mistakenly said it goes to "Luther Vandross" instead of Kendrick Lamar and SZA.

One of the song's producers, Sounwave, began the acceptance speech by saying, "Let's give a shoutout to the late and great

Luther Vandross." Lamar also won the first televised award of the night, rap album for *GNX*, accepting the trophy from Queen Latifah and DoeChii.

"It's an honour to be here," he said in his acceptance speech. "Hip-hop is always going to be right here ... We're gonna be having the culture with us."

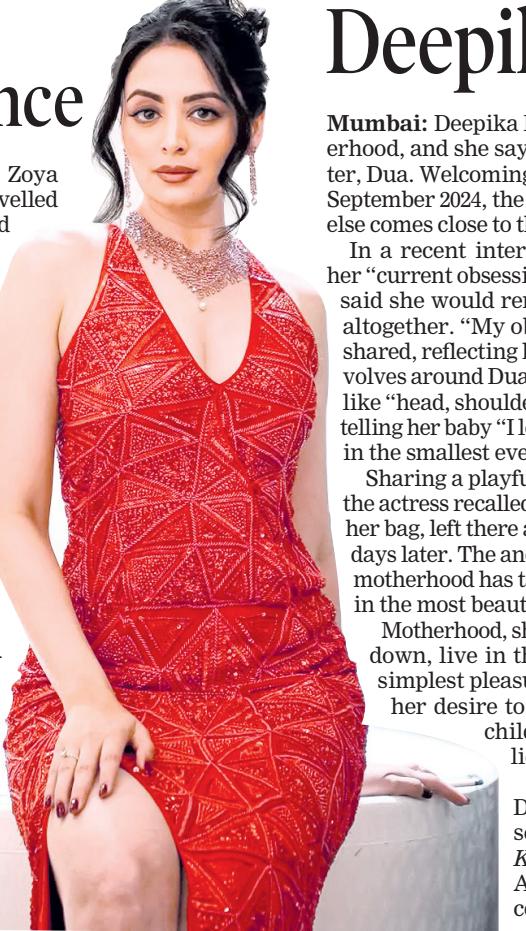
The victory means Lamar broke Jay-Z's record to become the rapper with the most career Grammys. Jay-Z has 25; after he took home rap album and record of the year, Lamar's total is 27.

Billie Eilish won song of the

year for *Wildflower* and used the moment to add her voice to the chorus of musicians criticising

immigration authorities Sunday. Immigration was a pointed theme of the night.

Zoya shares her journey of persistence



Mumbai: Actress Zoya Afroz, currently receiving praise for her performance in Netflix's *Taskar: The Smuggler's Web*, recently opened up about the remarkable journey that led her to the series. In a heartfelt social media post, the actor reflected on the perseverance, timing, and preparation behind landing the role.

Zoya revealed that she was visiting her mother's hometown in Assam after 12 years when she received an unexpected call to audition. Located nearly 3,000 kilometres away and hours from the nearest airport, the timing was anything but convenient. Having packed for a long stay, she had been there just two days when the call came, asking her to audition immediately.

The urgency intensified when she learned the audition was for a Netflix series created by Neeraj Pandey.

Without hesitation, Zoya packed overnight, travelled for 16 hours, completed the test, and was soon approved for the role. What followed was an intense transition, with only a three-day gap between her audition and stepping onto the set. She found herself preparing and shooting simultaneously while carrying a powerful seven-episode character arc.

Reflecting on the experience, Zoya highlighted the importance of years spent working quietly behind the scenes, believing that preparation eventually finds its moment. AGENCIES

Deepika's obsession

Mumbai: Deepika Padukone is fully immersed in motherhood, and she says her biggest obsession is her daughter, Dua. Welcoming her baby girl with Ranveer Singh in September 2024, the actress admits that nothing else comes close to the joy her child brings her.

In a recent interview, when asked about her "current obsession," Deepika laughed and said she would remove the word "current" altogether. "My obsession is my daughter," she shared, reflecting how completely her life now revolves around Dua. From singing nursery rhymes like "head, shoulders, knees and toes" to constantly telling her baby "I love you," Deepika finds happiness in the smallest everyday moments.

Sharing a playful glimpse into her new routine, the actress recalled discovering a piece of thepla in her bag, left there after Dua had been eating it, two days later. The anecdote perfectly summed up how motherhood has taken over every corner of her life, in the most beautiful way.

Motherhood, she says, has encouraged her to slow down, live in the moment, and appreciate life's simplest pleasures. Deepika has also expressed her desire to give Dua a grounded, peaceful childhood, away from constant public scrutiny.

On the professional front, Deepika is set to return to the big screen with Shah Rukh Khan's *King*, directed by Siddharth Anand, scheduled for release December 24, 2026.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES

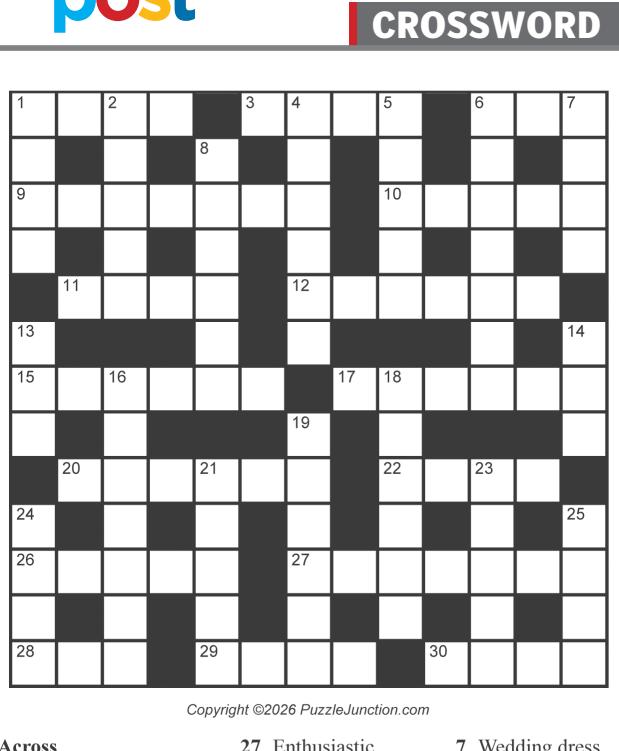


BREVITY



FUN POST

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Ill-mannered (4)
- 3 Chicken or turkey (4)
- 6 What you might do with hat in hand (3)
- 9 Heavy thick yellow fog (3,4)
- 10 Scarecrow stuffing (5)
- 11 Muffin topper (4)
- 12 Partner (6)
- 15 Church officers (6)
- 17 Cuba, e.g. (6)
- 20 Help out (6)
- 22 Military group (4)
- 24 Enthusiastic approval (7)
- 28 Realtor's offering (3)
- 29 Optimistic (4)
- 30 Orchard item (4)

Down

- 7 Wedding dress (4)
- 8 Red or blue (6)
- 13 Asian money (3)
- 14 Eccentric (3)
- 16 Last course of a meal (7)
- 18 Building material (6)
- 19 Butchers' offerings (6)
- 21 Bury (5)
- 23 Picture (5)
- 24 Pickle flavoring (4)
- 25 Arab chieftain (4)

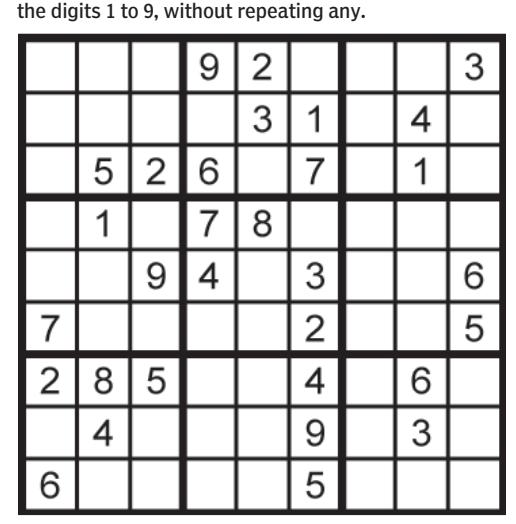
- 2 Ready for picking (4)
- 2 Southern speak (5)
- 4 Express opposition to (6)
- 5 Dogie catcher (5)
- 6 Coffee bar worker (7)
- 26 Like helium (5)

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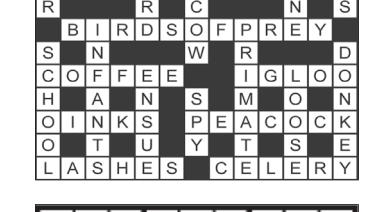
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



Not father of all deals: Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: The Congress took a swipe at the Narendra Modi government Monday after President Donald Trump announced that the US and India have agreed to a trade deal, saying it appears the Prime Minister has capitulated finally and that this cannot be the father of all deals.

India and the US agreed to a trade deal under which Washington will bring down the reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from the current 25 per cent, Trump said Monday after a phone conversation with PM Modi. On his part, PM Modi said he was delighted that made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18 per cent.

"He (Trump) announced the halt of Operation Sindo from Washington DC. He announced the updates on India's oil purchases from Russia and Venezuela from Washington. He's now announced an India-US Trade Deal from Washington, the full details of which are awaited," Ramesh said in a post on X.

"President Trump clearly seems to have some leverage over Prime Minister Modi -- who is now mortified of even being seen with him, let alone engaging in the usual bout of hugs. It appears Mr Modi has capitulated finally. Surely this cannot be the father of all deals," he said.



UP IN ARMS: Students of Patna University climb on barricades during a march in support of the University Grants Commission's 'Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations, 2026, Monday'

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Monday said the Centre has allocated ₹10,928 crore for the railway sector development in Odisha in the Union Budget for 2026-27 financial year.

Addressing a press conference through virtual mode from New Delhi, Vaishnaw said railway projects worth ₹90,659 crore are under progress in the state. "We had promised to invest more than ₹1 lakh crore in Odisha. Now, with the recent budget allocation, the total investment in the railway sector will cross ₹1 lakh crore soon," he said.

"The present allocation exceeded 13 times the average allocated amount of ₹338 crore Odisha had received each fiscal during the UPA regime between 2009 and 14," he said. The state in the 2025-26 financial year was allocated ₹10,599 crore.

The Railway Minister said Odisha will also benefit from the East-West freight corridor project. The 2,052-km corridor will connect Dankuni in West Bengal with Surat in Gujarat.

It will pass through Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The corridor will boost industrial development and economic activity across Odisha, he stated.

Stating that six pairs of Vande Bharat Express and

six pairs of Amrit Bharat Express are currently operational in Odisha, Vaishnaw said that the state will



stations-Cut-

tack, Baripada, Baripada, Bimlagarh, Paralakhemundi and Talcher-- have been completed.

About 88 per cent of the total budgetary allocation made for the ECoR for the year 2025-26 has been utilised so far. When it comes to the state of Odisha, the total expenditure stood at 91 per cent, he informed media persons.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the Railway Minister for the railway budget.

This initiative of the Central government towards the progress of Odisha has further strengthened the resolve of building a 'Prosperous Odisha', Majhi wrote on X.

"I firmly believe that the 'East-West Freight Corridor', which was approved in the current budget, will usher in a new era in the industrial and commercial fields in Odisha," he said.

SC notice to Centre, Odisha, 11 more states

PTI & AGENCIES



by a five-judge SC bench judgement.

Besides the Centre, the bench also issued notices to Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Himachal Pradesh.

On September 16, 2025, the SC had sought the stand of several states on other pending pleas seeking a stay on their respective anti-conversion laws.

The SC had made clear that it would consider the prayer for staying the operation of such laws once the replies were in. It was hearing petitions challenging the constitutional validity of anti-conversion laws enacted by several states. The court had appointed advocate Shrishti as the nodal counsel for the petitioners and advocate Ruchira as the nodal counsel for the respondent states to streamline communication in the case.

Arora said that a few state laws are such that it 'incentivises vigilante groups to complain' against so-called conversions, and hence many complaints are being filed. Mehta opposed the submissions and said that these laws are covered

BJD unhappy over not getting poll data

BHUBANESWAR: Opposition BJD Monday raised concerns over alleged "lapses" on the part of the Election Commission for not uploading Form 17C data on the official website even after 19 months of the 2024 state and Lok Sabha elections. The regional outfit said the party is seeking certain answers on electoral transparency not with any political motive, but as a responsible political party committed to strengthening India's democracy. BJD supremo Patnayak's political secretary Santrup Misra and BJD senior general secretary Lekhshree Samanta Singhra said the party had met the EC twice and submitted written representations regarding alleged irregularities in the 2024 elections, but had not received clear responses to several unresolved questions.

SMARTPHONES FOR 46K MISSION SHAKTI CRPS

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: The Odisha government will distribute smartphones to about 46,000 community resource persons (CRPs) working under the Mission Shakti Department, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida said Monday.

Speaking to reporters, Parida said the government will also provide uniforms and identity cards to all the community support staff of Mission Shakti from April 1, coinciding with Utkal Divas.

Parida, who also holds charge of the Mission Shakti department, said the move addresses a long-pending demand of the community-support staff and aims to strengthen grassroots implementation of women-centric programmes across the state. The CRPs will be given smartphones to ensure wider and effective use of the LokOS app, a digital platform supporting the Lakhpati Didi programme, she informed.

@mahanadiccoal



FEEL THE BREEZE CONQUER THE DISTANCE



MCL HIRAKUD INTERNATIONAL HALF MARATHON

2026

15TH FEB SUNDAY

STARTING POINT:
LEFT DYKE, HIRAKUD DAM,
SAMBALPUR, ODISHA
5:00AM ONWARDS

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Join us for a historic run at
World's Longest Earthen Dam
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150+ Prizes
₹55 LAKHS PLUS
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1ST ₹5 LAKH

2ND ₹4 LAKH

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5TH ₹1 LAKH

RACE CATEGORY:

HALF MARATHON 21.09 KM

A true test of endurance, spirit, and achievement.

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A high-energy challenge driven by passion and confidence.

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A run that celebrates balance, commitment, and joy in every stride.

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PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: Subarnapur District Collector Nruparaj Sahu has courted controversy for allegedly making a political statement at an official meeting attended by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi.

Delivering a speech at the 'Subhadra Shakti Mela' in Sonepur Sunday, Sahu, while apparently referring to a change in governance style after the formation of the BJP government in the state, said, "There was a time when the rulers adopted 'touch me not, speak me not, see me not' culture. The present government has completely eradicated this culture."

Though the Collector, a senior Odisha Administrative Service officer, did not name any party or person,



his speeches were widely perceived as a veiled criticism of the previous BJD regime led by Naveen Patnaik from 2000 to 2024.

The District Collector's remarks sparked a sharp reaction from the opposition BJD, which viewed it as an indirect attack on its 24-year rule in the state.

The District Collector has made these remarks to appease his political mas-

ter and intends to enter politics. There is no harm in doing politics. He should resign and join politics, but cannot misuse his official position," BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said.

Taking to X, Mohanty strongly condemned Sahu's remark and raised question on his impartiality as an officer.

"Has the Collector of Subarnapur, Mr Nruparaj

Sahoo, joined the BJP? BJD condemns the conduct of the Collector of Subarnapur, Mr Nruparaj Sahoo, for allegedly trying to act as an agent of a political party, keeping in mind his vested interests for the future. How can the common man expect justice from such officers," Mohanty asked in a social media post.

The BJD leader also expressed concern over what he termed the erosion of administrative neutrality, saying such politically tinged remarks undermine public confidence in the fairness of governance.

He questioned how a common man could expect justice from a District Magistrate-cum-Collector with such an attitude.

Repeated attempts to contact the Collector for his response to the BJD's criticism were unsuccessful.

Odisha begins ward delimitation process for municipal elections

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: The Odisha government has set in motion the process for delimitation of wards and reservation of seats ahead of the general elections to Municipalities and Notified Area Councils (NACs) across the state.

The Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department Monday directed District Magistrates of 18 districts to complete the statutory exercise within a fixed timeline, in accordance with the provisions of the Odisha Municipal Act, 1950.

The move follows the state government's decision to constitute 28 new Notified Area Councils and seven Municipalities for the first time. However, the delimitation and reservation process in some newly-formed urban local bodies, including Odagaon NAC, is yet to be finalised.

The State Election Commission (SEC), Odisha, has informed the government that completion of ward delimitation and seat reservation under Sections 11 and 12 of the Act is mandatory before further election-related steps can be taken.

As per the instructions issued by the H&UD department, District Magistrates are empowered to divide municipal areas into wards and determine reservation of seats after inviting objections and suggestions



from the public. Any appeals against the provisional notification will be forwarded to the state government for disposal.

According to the approved schedule, draft notifications on delimitation and reservation will be issued by February 12, while objections and suggestions can be submitted till February 21. Provisional notifications will be published February 26, and appeals may be filed with the government between February 26 and March 13.

The government will hear and dispose of appeals between March 16 and March 28, following which District Magistrates will issue the final notification by March 31, 2026. Copies of the final notification will be forwarded to the State Election Commission and the concerned urban local bodies.

The government has asked District Magistrates to take immediate steps to complete the

District Magistrates are empowered to divide municipal areas into wards and determine reservation of seats after inviting objections and suggestions from the public

Draft notifications on delimitation and reservation will be issued by February 12, while objections and suggestions can be submitted till February 21

process within the prescribed timeline and keep the department informed of progress, paving the way for municipal elections in the newly constituted urban bodies.

Meanwhile, the state government also initiated the process of ward delimitation and seat reservation for the upcoming Sambalpur and newly-formed Puri Municipal Corporation elections. The H&UD department directed municipal authorities to divide city areas into wards and finalise reservations under the Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, 2003, based on 2011 Census data. Municipal authorities must submit details in Forms I and II, along with ward maps and resolutions, by February 11.

Draft notifications for public objections will be issued by February 21, with March 2 as the last date for receiving suggestions, ensuring timely conduct of elections.

OUAT hosts training on viral disease mgmt in horticulture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: A two-day training programme on the identification and management of viral diseases in horticultural crops, aimed at enhancing yield and productivity, was organised at the Directorate of Extension Education (DEE) of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT). Progressive farmers from Puri, Cuttack, Nayagarh, Jajpur and Dhenkanal districts took part in the programme.

Inaugurating the programme, OUAT Vice-Chancellor Pravat Kumar Roul said sustainable agricultural development depends on close interaction and mutual understanding between farmers and agricultural scientists. He stressed that viral diseases severely impact productivity and quality of horticultural crops, making timely identification and scientific management crucial to minimise losses.

The award was received by SAI Angan Principal Rashmi Pandey on behalf of the school. This consistent national recognition reflects the institution's commitment to early childhood education focused on joy, care, and meaningful learning.

On receiving the award, Pandey said SAI Angan is recognised for its child-centric approach, emphasis on emotional well-being, and learning

SAI Angan retains No. 1 Bhub preschool ranking



POST NEWS NETWORK

experiences that nurture curiosity, confidence, and holistic growth.

Sharing her message on the occasion, SAI Angan Chairperson Sipili Sahoo said, "This recognition by EducationWorld reaffirms our belief that the foundation of education lies in happiness and meaningful engagement. At SAI Angan, we strive to create an environment where children feel secure, joyful, and inspired to explore the world around them. I sincerely thank our parents for their trust and our educators for their dedication."

The milestone reflects the collective efforts of the SAI Angan community and reinforces the school's commitment to creating strong foundations and beautiful beginnings for every child.

The event began January 30 with a ceremonial procession and the inauguration of the exhibition pavilion. Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, the chief guest, was joined by senior dignitaries and key stakeholders. The inaugural evening featured vibrant cultural performances highlighting Odisha's classical, folk, and tribal traditions, giving audiences an immersive glimpse of

TOSHLI LIT FEST

Jayanta Mahapatra National Award for Robin S Ngangom

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: The fourth Toshali Literature Festival, organised by the Udaygiri Foundation, Bhubaneswar, concluded here recently. On the occasion, the prestigious Jayanta Mahapatra National Award for Literature 2026 was conferred on eminent poet Robin S Ngangom for his outstanding contribution to Indian English poetry.

Festival Director Paresh Kumar Patnaik welcomed the dignitaries on stage, including Pratibha Ray, Haraprasad Das, K.V. Dominic, Chandrasekhar Hota, Robin S Ngangom and Mazrooh Rashid.

Udaygiri Foundation president Jay Jagadev highlighted the Foundation's efforts to promote Odia literature at the pan-Indian level and abroad. On the occasion, the Toshali Anthology of Poetry and new books—Unbridled by Divya K. Unni, Where Peace Begins by Sweta Kumari, Durgapur Review (ed. Braja Kumar Sarkar), The Snake and Ladder Game by Manoranjan Sahu, and Architects of Odisha: An NRI's Perspective by Sambit Dash—were released by the guests.

In his keynote address, Das urged writers to move beyond Western-centric literary paradigms and reclaim India's indigenous narrative traditions. Chief guest Pratibha Ray described literature as a lived experience and emphasised the need to give voice to women and marginalised communities. A special film on the life and times of Jayanta Mahapatra was also screened.

1ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

JHW honours 'living heritage' personalities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, Feb 2: The first anniversary of Jagatsinghpur Heritage Walks (JHW) was celebrated recently. On the occasion, the organisers felicitated 'living heritage' personalities for their contribution to the preservation, popularisation and awareness of Jagatsinghpur's heritage, as well as for their service to society and humankind.

Prominent among those honoured was 76-year-old Sagarbala Patnaik, popularly known as "Basanti Apa", a native of Jagatsinghpur. A former actress with the renowned Anna Purna Theatre Group in Cuttack during the 1960s, she acted in hundreds of plays and films such as Sesha Sravan, Mana Akash and Samay Bada Balaban. Despite age-related frailty, she continues to earn a living by running a tea stall, supporting her accident-stricken son and exemplifying remarkable resilience and maternal sacrifice.

The team led by Mihir Nana was felicitated for preserving and promoting the traditional "Ghanta Patua" dance of

Goddess Salara in Odisha and beyond, including abroad. Their stage performance of the unique tradition filled the session with a distinct sense of divine bliss.

Shyam Chacha, a well-known Muslim devotee of Lord Jagannath, often described as the "present-day Salabega", and Sheikh Sahil Mohammad, a native of the district and ardent Odissi dancer, were also felicitated. Mohammad later performed Mangalacharan on stage, earning applause from the audience.

Among others felicitated by JHW were Shishir Kumar Panda, president of Kala Sanskruti Sangh in Tirtol block of Jagatsinghpur district, for his over five decades of contribution to preserving ancient art forms, and Hemant Kumar Raut for

sustaining the traditional folk dance form "Ghoda Nacha" in the modern era.

Priests Subash Panda and Babaji Panda were felicitated for their leadership in preserving spiritual traditions at the Trilochaneswar Temple in Kundeswar village and the Ajaiapada Bhairava, Saptashrungi and Siddheshwar temples in Sathalpur village.

Priests Shiva Prasad Panda and Shankar Prasad Panda were also honoured for their stewardship of the Ishaneshwar Temple in Kostimalikapur village, where they have been safeguarding ancient sculptures for future generations.

The Sahu family of Lunahar village was honoured for building a small temple for an ancient Nrusimha deity discovered in their pond and for con-

Two restaurants serving alcohol without licence raided; 2 held

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: The Bhubaneswar Excise department, during a special drive, raided two restaurants at separate locations in the City for serving alcohol without a valid liquor licence, seized 22.5 litres of liquor, and arrested the owners, excise officials said Monday.

Excise officials raided Hunger Hacker near Pandra and Mawa Restaurant in the Patia area, seizing 7.5 litres of liquor and 15 litres of beer, respectively. The owners—Mohammad Sobani Khan of Hunger Hacker and Kishor Chandra Rout of Mawa Restaurant—were arrested and later produced before a court.

According to Bhubaneswar Excise DSP Raj Sekhar Swain, the department received a tip-



off about restaurants in the City serving alcohol without a valid liquor licence.

"Our team raided the restaurants and found them

■ Excise officials raided Hunger Hacker near Pandra and Mawa Restaurant in the Patia area, seizing 7.5 litres of liquor and 15 litres of beer, respectively

■ The owners—Mohammad Sobani Khan of Hunger Hacker and Kishor Chandra Rout of Mawa Restaurant—were arrested and produced before a court

serving liquor without a valid licence. We seized the liquor and forwarded the owners to court after their arrest," said Bhubaneswar Excise DSP Raj Sekhar Swain.

He added that the crackdown is part of a special drive to curb illegal circulation of alcohol in the City and warned of stringent action against violators, adding that such raids will continue.

IIT-Bhub releases study on TPCODL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Bhubaneswar has released a comprehensive study assessing the performance of TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), highlighting significant improvements in network reliability, operational efficiency and customer service over five years of distribution sector reforms.

TPCODL, a joint venture between Tata Power and the Odisha government, supplies electricity to around 1.36 crore people across 29,354 square kilometres in Central Odisha.

The assessment was conducted by Chandrasekhar Bhende, Chandrasekhar Perumalla and Abhineet Prakash of the institute's department of



Electrical Engineering.

A key finding of the study is a nearly 50 per cent reduction in outage duration, as reflected in improvements in the System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI). This indicates enhanced network stability supported by better fault detection, quicker isolation and faster restoration processes.

Operational efficiency has improved markedly, with Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses reducing from about 30 per cent at the beginning of the reform period

to 18.94 per cent in FY25. Additionally, capital investments exceeding ₹1,500 crore have been made during this period.

Bhende said the assessment demonstrates how automation and a safety-first work culture can drive sustainable public service improvement. Perumalla added that while urban areas have seen significant gains, further strengthening of networks in remote regions is needed to achieve uniform reliability.

The study highlights consumer centricity, noting the expansion of a 24x7 call centre, 20 Customer Care Centres, digital payment platforms, and over 900 Fuse Call Centres for decentralised fault response—measures that boosted customer satisfaction to 96 per cent in FY25.

ODISHA PARAB 2026 CONCLUDES

Event strengthens cultural & tourism ties with NE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Guwahati/Bhubaneswar, Feb 2: The department of Tourism concluded Odisha Parab 2026 at Radisson Blu Hotel in Guwahati, wrapping up a vibrant three-day cultural and tourism showcase that strengthened cultural ties, diaspora engagement, and tourism and business collaborations between Odisha and the Northeast (NE).



the state's living heritage.

Day two focused on institutional engagement and collaboration through the Odia Diaspora Meet, G2B and B2B meetings, and the Odisha Tourism Roadshow.

The Diaspora Meet was attended by Deputy CM Parida, Assam Health and Family Welfare & Irrigation Minister Ashok Singh, Odisha Tourism Commissioner-cum-Sec-

retary Balwant Singh, senior officials from both states, and members of the Odia diaspora in Assam and the Northeast.

Addressing the gathering, Parida described Odisha Parab as a key platform to reconnect the Odia diaspora with the state's evolving identity, cultural heritage, and growing tourism opportunities. Minister Singh appreciated the initiative, highlighting the role

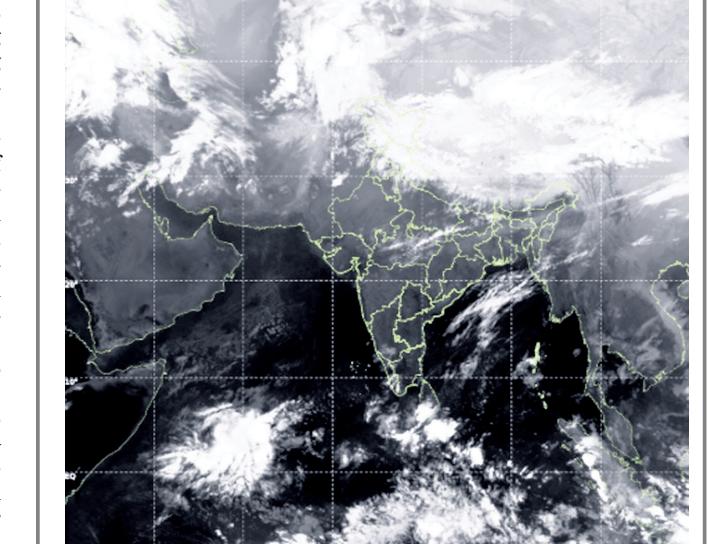
of such cultural and tourism exchanges in fostering mutual understanding and cooperation between states, especially in eastern and northeastern India.

The Diaspora Meet enabled open dialogue between dignitaries and community members on cultural preservation, tourism promotion, and collaboration opportunities. G2B meetings saw strong interest from stakeholders, with investors expressing plans to invest in Odisha—particularly in tourism and hospitality—reflecting confidence in the state's business environment and policy framework.

B2B meetings connected tour operators, hospitality players, and tourism stakeholders from Assam and the Northeast with Odisha Tourism officials to discuss destination promotion, connectivity, and partnership opportunities.

MARKET WATCH

CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	91.65 ▲ 0.39	SENSEX	81666.46 ▼ 943.52	GOLD	₹143,206 ▲ 98
EURO	108.80 ▲ 0.99	NIFTY	25088.40 ▼ 262.95	SILVER	₹238,162 ▼ 279



WEATHER

	Max Temp	Min Temp	Humidity	Rainfall	CTC	FORECAST
	30.8°	15.8°	85%	Nil	28.6°	Dry weather likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha
					14.4°	
					87%	
					Nil	

Admin reaches out to Kotia border villagers

NARENDRA RAUT, OP



BUILDING TRUST

Issues related to voter list amendment were discussed in details with officials guiding residents on the process to correct or include their names to ensure their democratic rights are protected.

Rural housing scheme was another major focus, as officials assessed ground-level requirements and identified eligible beneficiaries for housing support.

Adopting a door-to-door approach, the administration reached individual households to explain government schemes, verify documents, and select deserving beneficiaries on the spot.

Aimed at supporting women, elderly and economically weaker sections.

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names to ensure their democratic rights are protected. The rural housing scheme was another major focus, as officials assessed ground-level requirements and identified eligible beneficiaries for housing support.

Adopting a door-to-door approach, the administration reached individual households to explain government schemes, verify documents, and select deserving beneficiaries on the spot. This direct engagement helped build trust among residents and ensured transparency in the implementation process.

The public relations campaign was widely appreciated by villagers, who expressed satisfaction over the administration's proactive efforts. The initiative reaffirmed the government's commitment to inclusive development, welfare outreach, and sustained administrative presence in the strategically important Kotia border region.

PITABAS MURDER

15 accused produced before Sessions Court

POST NEWS NETWORK



Berhampur, Feb 2: Fifteen accused, including former legislator Bikram Kumar Panda, appeared before the court of District and Sessions Judge Ashanta Kumar Das in connection with the murder of Berhampur-based lawyer and BJP leader Pitabas Panda.

The case was earlier committed from Berhampur Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) court and subsequently transferred to the district court that scheduled the hearing for Monday. Accordingly, 14 accused, including Bikram, who are lodged in Berhampur Circle Jail, were produced before the court. Former Berhampur mayor Shibashankar Das, also known as Pintu, who is lodged in Phulbani jail, was also brought to court under tight security.

Another accused in the case, BJD leader Madan Dalai, could not appear as he was reportedly un-

Farmer alleges assault by paddy mandi secy

Dhenkanal: A farmer has alleged assault, intimidation and "illegal" deductions (katni-chhatni) during paddy procurement at a mandi under Gadashila Society in Odapada block of Dhenkanal district. According to the complaint, farmer Sudhakar Parida was threatened and subjected to heavy "deduction" from his paddy, and was allegedly beaten by the society secretary when he protested. Parida, with support from members of Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NNKS), staged a protest Monday by placing paddy bags in front of the Collector's office. Parida alleged that there was no facility at the mandi to test paddy quality, yet forcible deductions were imposed at the rate of 5 kg per quintal. From a total of 38 quintals, 1 quintal and 90 kg were allegedly deducted.

When he objected, the mandi secretary allegedly assaulted him. The issue was brought to the notice of FS&CW Minister Krishna Chandra Patra, who said no farmer would be subjected to illegal cuts and that strict action would be taken against those involved. A team of officials are conducting inspections at several locations from where such complaints are arriving, he added.

Farm mechanisation hits livelihoods in Bhadrak



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Feb 2: Unregulated mechanisation in agriculture is fast emerging as a serious threat to straw-dependent livelihoods in Bhadrak district, where the widespread use of paddy harvesting machines has sharply reduced the availability of paddy straw.

Farmers, facing high labour costs and tight harvesting windows, have increasingly turned to machines that complete the work faster and at significantly lower cost. While the economic rationale is strong, the social impact has been substantial.

Machine harvesting destroys paddy straw at the source, depriving cattle rearers, mushroom growers and households

that rely on straw for fodder and roofing. As straw becomes scarce, many small farmers and cultivators are being pushed out of traditional occupations.

Experts warn that the lack of regulatory guidelines or alternative straw-management strategies could deepen rural distress. They argue that mechanisation must be paired with policy safeguards to protect allied agricultural sectors.

Bhadrak's experience highlights the urgent need for balanced agricultural reforms, ensuring gains in efficiency do not come at the expense of sustainability and rural employment," said an agrarian expert, on condition of anonymity.

state

Curb illegal tree felling: NGT to Bolangir admin

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Feb 2: Hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed over large-scale tree felling in the name of several development projects in Bolangir district, the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) Eastern Zone bench in Kolkata has directed the district administration, Forest and Environment department and State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) to take proactive steps to prevent the indiscriminate tree cutting in the district.

The apex green body, which passed the order January 30, 2026, was hearing the PIL (113/2025/EZ) filed by Bolangir-based RTI activist and social worker Hemant Kumar Panda. The bench, comprising Judicial Member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and environmen-



tal expert Ishwar Singh, directed the Bolangir Collector, the divisional forest officer and the secretary of State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) to act with due vigilance and take preventive measures to stop illegal tree cutting.

The tribunal said that if specific complaints are raised again, the authorities concerned must take legal action.

Panda informed the NGT that official records obtained from de-

partmental offices shows about 4.45 lakh trees were cut down across the district over the past five years to pave way for various projects

partmental offices shows about 4.45 lakh trees were cut down across the district over the past five years to pave way for various projects. Of these, more than 15,000 trees were felled solely for road widening projects.

He said the felled trees included old and environmental vital as well as shade-giving species such as neem, peepal, banyan, mango, jamun and

ashoka. Panda argued that had road-widening projects been planned and executed with due legal scrutiny and environmental safeguards, such large-scale loss of trees could have been avoided.

According to the petition, the extensive felling has led to rising temperatures, soil erosion, lack of roadside shade, a decline in birds and wildlife, loss of biodiversity and adverse impacts on rural life in the district. Panda stressed that development must maintain a balance with environmental protection.

In a press statement issued after the ruling, Panda said he would again seek legal remedy if indiscriminate and unscientific tree felling continues across the district in the name of road widening.

210 missing women, kids rescued in 10-day drive by Angul police

Angul: Angul police rescued 210 missing persons, including 192 women and 18 children, during a 10-day special drive titled Operation Anveshan-2, officials said. The operation was conducted from January 21 to 30 under the direction of Angul SP Rahul Jain to strengthen women and child safety. Multiple police teams were deployed across the district and outside Odisha, based on missing-person complaints lodged over the past several months. Police used technical surveillance, mobile tracking, CCTV footage analysis and coordination with railway police, and other district police units. All rescued persons were safely reunited with their families after completing legal formalities.

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

For & on behalf of President of India, Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TR) TATA, S.E. Railway invites E-Tender for the under mentioned work: Open E-Tender Notice No. RS-TATA-14-2025-26; Description of Work : Loco body washing, inside cleaning, Loco body filter cleaning, grating/cover opening, Loco blowing, grating/cover fitting of electric locomotives of Electric Loco Shed, Tatanagar for two years. Tender value : ₹1,08,29,910.00; E.M.D. : ₹ 2,04,200.00; Cost of Tender Form : ₹ 5,000.00; Date & time of closing of tender: 15.00 hrs. of 23.02.2026; Date of opening of tender: 23.02.2026 at TRS/Tatanagar. Manual offers are not allowed against the E-Tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Tenderer can be viewed at website: <http://www.reps.gov.in>; Complete detail particulars of the E-Tender are available on the website. If the date of opening happens to be a BANDH or HOLIDAY, the tender will be opened at same time on the next working day.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Farmer dies as Kharif paddy payment goes to Kerala a/c

POST NEWS NETWORK

Delay in paddy lifting irks Kesinga farmers

Kesinga: Around 4,000 quintals of paddy belonging to 82 farmers remain uncollected at Kandel PAPS mandi in Kalahandi district's Kesinga block, triggering widespread discontent among cultivators. The paddy has been lying in the open yard, forcing farmers to guard their produce day and night amid severe cold and heavy dew. With no covered storage facilities available, farmers have been using polythene sheets to protect the stock from moisture damage. Although the District Collector had directed five rice mills to lift the paddy, millers have allegedly failed to comply with the order. Farmers also accused millers of making arbitrary deductions of 6 to 7 kg per quintal during procurement.



Balaram Pradhan

to the tragic outcome.

The government maintains that payments are credited to farmers' bank accounts within a week. However, despite a long lapse after selling his paddy, Balaram did not receive the money in his local bank account. He repeatedly checked his account but grew increasingly frustrated

when no credit appeared.

After making inquiries, he learned that the proceeds from this year's paddy sale had been deposited into a bank account he had opened in Kerala several years ago. To repay crop-related loans, Balaram traveled to Kerala last Thursday with an associate to withdraw the money. He fell ill after reaching there Saturday. With the help of locals, his companion admitted him to a nearby hospital. Doctors later declared Balaram dead, his brother-in-law, Subal Sahu said.

PACS secretary Ranjan Sahu said hundreds of farmers

are registered with the cooperative, making it difficult to immediately access details of an individual case. He said the government now makes payments through direct benefit transfer, and since the Kerala account was active, the money was likely credited there.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Notification No. : SBP/Pers/Staff/Re-engagement/Operating, Dated : 29.01.2026

INDICATIVE NOTICE

Re-engagement of Retired Operating staff (SS, SM, CHC & SCR) in Sambalpur Division, East Coast Railway

The detailed Notification No.: SBP/Pers/Staff/Re-engagement/Operating, Dated : 29.01.2026 is available in East Coast Railway website on the following Path : www.ecr.indianrailways.gov.in → About us → Division → Sambalpur Division → Recruitment.

PR-1078/Q/25-26 Assistant Personnel Officer/Sambalpur



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
BHANDJANAGAR IRRIGATION DIVISION, BHANDJANAGAR

Phone No.06821-291004, e-mail ID : bnjirrigation2010@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice No. e-BNID-03/2025-26

1. Name of work	: Canal Linining works
2. Total No of works	: (10) Ten (only)
3. Estimated cost	: Rs.45.63 Lakhs to 49.65 Lakhs
4. Period of completion	: 03 (three) calendar months
5. Date & time of availability of Bid Document in the portal	: 10.00 hours of 05.02.2026 to 5.00 hours of 16.02.2026
6. Last date/Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	: 16.02.2026 upto 5.00 hours
7. Date and place of opening of Bid	: 17.02.2026 at 11.00 Hours in the office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhandjanagar Irrigation Division, Bhandjanagar
8. Name and address of the O.I.T (Officer Inviting Tender)	: Superintending Engineer Bhandjanagar Irrigation Division Bhandjanagar

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>".

Sd/- Superintending Engineer
Bhandjanagar Irrigation Division
Bhandjanagar

OIPR-32001/14/2526

Class I student dies in Rayagada SSD hostel

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada/Kolnara, Feb 2: A Class I student residing at a Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe Development (SSD) department-run residential hostel in Rayagada district died Monday after suffering from fever.

The deceased was identified as Thabir Mandangi, 7, a student of SSD High School at Badakhalipadar under Kolnara block.

Sources said Thabir developed fever Monday morning. An auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) at the school administered him medicine but in the afternoon, he collapsed while trying to get up.

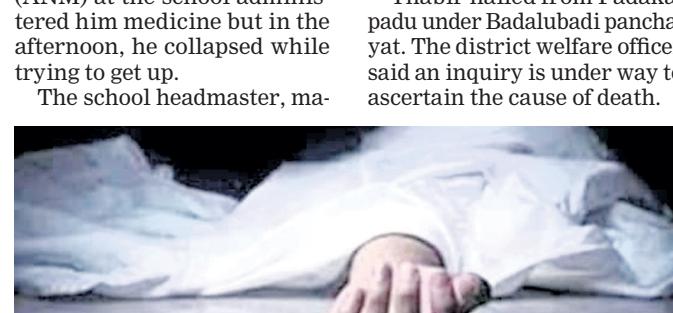
The school headmaster, ma-

tron and staff rushed him to the Badakhalipadar primary health centre (PHC). As no medical staffer was present there, they were advised to take him to Kolnara CHC where the doctors declared the child dead.

When asked about the sudden death of the student, the headmaster said there was no negligence in providing treatment.

Kolnara block welfare extension officer Debashish Munda and Chandili IIC Uttam Kumar Sahu visited the hospital and began a probe.

Thabir hailed from Padakapada under Badalubadi panchayat. The district welfare officer said an inquiry is under way to ascertain the cause of death.



OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, JALESWAR, BALASORE

No. 249 Date - 30.01.2026

"e" Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. PSJLS_03/2025-26
No.19001/8/2526 : Bid Documents consisting of Work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD, time of completion, class of contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Government website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in

1. Name of the Work	: Building Works
2. No. of works	: 04 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost	: 13,72,269.00 to 15,35,295.00
4. Period of Completion	: 120 days
5. Bid Submission Start Date	: 04.02.2026 at 10:00 A.M.
6. Bid Submission Closing Date	: 16.02.2026 upto 11:00 A.M.
7. Bid Opening Date	: 16.02.2026 at 1:00 P.M.
8. Name of Officer inviting Bid	: Block Development Officer, Jaleswar

Further details can be seen from the procurement portal i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/- Block Development Officer Jaleswar

OIPR-19001/19145/1/25-



When we have passed
beyond knowings, then
we shall have Knowledge

SRI AUROBINDO



UK woos China

China's President Xi Jinping now finds himself in an enviable position enjoying kind of a special superpower status as countries, including US allies in the NATO, are going out of their way to forge ties with China. Irony is that the position has been thrust upon him in a changed global geopolitical scenario following US President Donald Trump's new policy of antagonizing his country's trusted, age-old allies with tariffs and war threats. On the other hand, Trump himself is trying to woo Xi, while he warns others against doing so. One of the countries rushing to Beijing to cement ties is the UK. Its Prime Minister Keir Starmer recently met Xi ostensibly to sign agreements for trade and investment. The underlying intent could be to create a balancing factor so as not to be too reliant on the US which has become unpredictable under Trump. Starmer might be counting on economic deals with China to prevent the US President from dictating terms to the UK and other European countries.

This becomes clear from the fact that no big trade deals have been signed by the two countries during Starmer's visit. Sending a message to Trump appears to be the main concern rather than making any dramatic shift in the UK's economic policies vis-à-vis China. Xi would also likely be happy to use the opportunity that the changed situation has provided to have China become the refuge of countries that find their traditional friendships with the US under strain and uncertainty in recent times. In the case of the UK, Starmer appears not too touchy about China not being a democratic country and its controversial human rights track record. Xi has said the UK's relationship with his country has gone through "twists and turns" over the years but a more "consistent" approach is in both their interests.

Before talks with Starmer in Beijing, Xi said the two men would "stand the test of history" if they could "rise above differences." For many years China's status as a second global superpower has become a cause for concern for the world's democracies. But, Trump's recent conduct as President of the first-placed superpower makes the challenges more acute. China accounts for just under a fifth of global gross domestic product. Its manufacturing output is greater than all G7 nations combined. It has a formidable AI sector, the only one in the world that competes with the US. It leads the world in green energy technology – a field the current climate-sceptic White House administration is happy to neglect.

In this backdrop, it seems rational for countries like the UK to begin a fresh dialogue with China. Starmer has understood this geopolitical reality and dismissed his opponent and conservative party leader Kemi Badenoch's claim that he is kowtowing before Xi.

Conservatives in the UK surely have a point, considering the fact that China has trampled on civil rights in Hong Kong, imprisoned Jimmy Lai, a pro-democracy businessman and British citizen, and ruthlessly repressed the Uyghur minority. Starmer promised to raise these issues during his visit to Beijing. The contradiction between upholding values of democracy and befriending President Xi is stark but out of necessity. There may not be a reason to refuse engagement, especially when the US under Trump has been dumping one ally after another.

After their meeting, Starmer said his talks with Xi had been productive and the relationship between the countries was in a "good, strong place." He made a series of announcements that could unlock new opportunities for British businesses. In a significant move, China agreed to a visa waiver for British tourists and business travellers, ending the requirement for travel to be no more than 30 days and bringing the UK into line with 50 other countries. The UK also signed a number of agreements with China on closer economic cooperation, including greater trade and services, making it easier for British firms to operate there.

Xi played his cards well, reminding the British PM of the ups and downs in the relationship between the two countries and at the same time emphasizing the need to not "shy away from difficulties" and press ahead. He said the two countries should take a broad perspective, rise above differences and respect each other. Then only, he concluded, "we will prove ourselves able to stand the test of history."

It might be time for Trump to pay attention and recalculate his strategies. His policies might quite literally be creating a new world order with changed axis and geopolitical alliances.

WISDOM CORNER

↳ All major religious traditions carry basically the same message, that is love, compassion and forgiveness the important thing is they should be part of our daily lives.

DALAI LAMA

↳ Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.

HELEN KELLER

↳ Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh and the greatness which does not bow before children.

KAHLIL GIBRAN

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1870: On this day in 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was ratified, guaranteeing the right to vote regardless of race and intending to ensure, with the Fourteenth Amendment, the civil rights of former slaves.

1917: Not yet involved in World War I, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany after the Germans announced their intention to practice unrestricted submarine warfare.

1960: The Italian drama La dolce vita, which was directed by Federico Fellini, had its world premiere, and it became widely hailed as one of the most important films in cinema.

1966: Luna 9 touches down on the Moon. The unmanned Soviet spacecraft was the first to achieve a soft landing there.

1969: Yasser Arafat becomes leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Even after his death in 2011, Arafat remained a highly controversial figure, many Arabs praising him as a freedom fighter while many Israelis denouncing him as a terrorist.

1972: The deadliest snowstorm in history kills 4000. The Iran Blizzard lasted a week and left whole villages without survivors.

1989: Paraguay's dictator, Alfredo Stroessner, is overthrown. Stroessner had come to power in 1954 with a military coup.

power post

FOCUS DEVELOPMENT

FAR AWAY FROM THE PATH

An important observation about the presentation of the Budget by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is that the speech was just too long and unilluminating, making it come across as a rather tired effort. The speech, despite its length, did not dive into the broad strategy or the overall approach underlying the myriad schemes and the numbers. In that sense, we heard many items but not much clarity on critical directional issues that is particularly required at this time of international turmoil and its cascading effects on the domestic economy. Instead, the FM spent too much time on the minutiae of the expenditure on different schemes. As a result, we missed hearing from the executive about the big picture of the Budget.

The main expenditure is on capital goods. The budget proposes to spend Rs.17.15 lakh crores used on creating capital assets. This is a positive. Capex builds for future and is an investment that is meant to deliver long term physical assets that offer a multiplier effect and can attract private investment as it stimulates demand in the economy. As regards the budget expenditure, the highest share in total expenditure is on interest payment or debt servicing (26.20%), followed by defence (14.67%), transport (11.20%) and civil pension (5.54 %) which goes up to 8.75% when defence pension is added. We remain low on expenditure on education (2.60%), health (1.96%) and social welfare (1.17%).

The emphasis on Vikas Bharat is to be welcomed. Who would not want India to be developed fully but there remain huge questions in terms of the direction of this development and what the nature of development ought to be in



The budget has either excluded our serious problems or given a kind of lip service to them. The country can never achieve sustainable development with such a budget

an India where inequality remains high, health services are poor and education poses many challenges that have been highlighted time and again. Consider that the total percentage on education (Centre and State expenditure on education combined) is merely 3.3% of GDP, and on health it stands at just 1.5%. This is a shockingly low number, unbelievable because it is well acknowledged that with a population that is not healthy and is poorly educated, the nation can never achieve the goals of Vikas Bharat. Our experience in the last decade shows that unless both, education and health sectors are put under the government's management, these cannot reach the bottom 40% of population. Yet, matters have moved in the reverse direction in recent years and the budget has been unable or is unwilling to take a bold stance on this.

Note that the push toward privatisation of health, most visibly seen in the rise of private equity investments in hospitals, is a trend that in effect works to raise treatment costs and reduce health access, not widen it. The expenditure on all centrally sponsored schemes in this current year is much less than the expenditure budgeted last year. That is, these schemes are not taken seriously by the government. And the increase in the budget on these schemes is only marginal. Considering price rise, one can state that overall, the expenditure on the centrally sponsored schemes has remained almost stagnant. This gives the picture of schemes that cannot and will not deliver as intended or advertised.

The expenditure on scientific departments is a mere 1.04% of the budget expenditure. How will India achieve Vikas Bharat goals with not enough investment in evidence-based high quality scientific impetus and efforts alongside to build a scientific temper and the right attitude of the people? Considering the fact that India is lagging far behind other emerging countries in R&D, this low number is a big negative.

Anecdotal evidence shows that scientific temper has taken a hit with what is sometimes called "cow-dung science" and reports that money has been spent on research that may not meet the strict demands of modern science.

A proper allocation with a cautionary note on where this money would go would have helped correct this slide.

Apart from this there are several urgent problems which are not even covered in the budget. To start with,

these are related to MSMEs, rising inequalities of wealth and income in India, and climate change. MSMEs are expected to play a critical role in the implementation of EU-India FTA. There are several challenges with regard to the implementation of the FTA. These are particularly related to non-tariff barriers: the FTA requires that production of goods should be of standard quality. Also, production of goods should be without the use of child labour, strict environmental norms should be followed, and so on. Our MSMEs today do not mostly follow these norms. However, nothing has been included to help in these fields by the budget.

There is a lot of discussion on wealth and income inequalities these days. It seems that the goals of Vikas Bharat cannot be achieved with these wide inequalities. Climate change, according to the government, is limited to solar energy. However, it also includes widespread pollution, flooding experienced by almost all regions and deforestation including the worsening conditions of the Himalayas – there is no attempt to address these emergencies.

Unemployment, particularly of youth, is rising continuously in India. The budget does not even mention this burning problem. To sum up, the budget has either excluded our serious problems or given a kind of lip service to them. The country can never achieve sustainable development with such a budget. The path is not right and to that extent the dreams of development will remain just dreams.

The writer is Professor of Economics at the Centre For Development Alternatives, Ahmedabad, and Associate, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, New York.

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UNEMPLOYMENT, PARTICULARLY OF YOUTH, IS RISING CONTINUOUSLY IN INDIA. THE BUDGET DOES NOT EVEN MENTION THIS BURNING PROBLEM



Indira Hirway

SPECTRUM UNION BUDGET

Rhetoric over realities



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, ECONOMIC POLICY MUST MOVE BEYOND CELEBRATORY NARRATIVES AND CONFRONT THE LIVED REALITIES OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF CITIZENS

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has made history by presenting her ninth consecutive Union Budget, drawing close to the record of ten Budgets presented by former Prime Minister Morarji Desai over different periods.

While presenting the Budget, the Finance Minister outlined a three-fold strategy inspired by "tri-kartavya": accelerating and sustaining economic growth; fulfilling people's aspirations by enhancing their capacities; and aligning policies with the vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas." She proposed interventions in six broad areas—scaling up manufacturing in seven strategic sectors, rejuvenating legacy industries, creating champion MSMEs, pushing infrastructure development, ensuring long-term economic security and stability, and developing city-centric economic regions.

However, a closer examination of budgetary priorities reveals a stark contrast between proclamations and outcomes. While the Finance Minister claims that the Budget reflects "reforms over rhetoric," it increasingly appears to be rhetoric over realities. The economy today is beset with multiple structural challenges: rising household debt, widening inequality, subdued corporate investment, deceleration in ag-

ricultural growth, and massive unemployment. Yet, these fundamental issues remain largely unaddressed.

The government has reiterated its commitment to Aatmanirbhar Bharat, claiming gains in domestic manufacturing capacity, energy security and reduced import dependence. Contrary to these assertions, the share of manufacturing in GDP has continued to decline, while import dependence—especially on China—has increased.

Claims of significant poverty reduction are equally misleading. The continued need to provide free food assistance to nearly 80 crore people itself reflects persistent mass deprivation. Moreover, poverty estimates are increasingly based on subsistence or deprivation lines. Even if absolute poverty has marginally declined, relative poverty and inequality have unmistakably increased.

The government also claims to have undertaken over 350 reforms, including GST simplification, labour law notifications and rationalisation of mandatory quality control orders. However, these claims to have undertaken over 350 reforms, including GST simplification, labour law notifications and rationalisation of mandatory quality control orders. However,

the gains have largely failed to benefit poorer sections and the working class. The gains have remained disproportionately skewed towards corporates and affluent sections.

The size of the Budget as a

percentage of GDP has fallen to around 13.6%, down from 15% in 2025-26 (BE) and 17.7% in 2020-21. This is abysmally low by international standards.

According to IMF, combined public expenditure of the Centre and states stood at 28.38% of GDP in India in 2024, compared to 57.17% in France, 50.56% in Italy, 48.4% in Germany, 45.34% in Spain, 39.1% in Japan and the UK, and 37.92% in the US.

Total revenue receipts have also shrunk in the revised estimates to Rs 33.42 lakh crore in 2025-26, from the budgeted Rs 34.20 lakh crore, growing at their slowest pace since 2022-23—despite massive dividends from public sector enterprises and RBI.

The FM asserted that over the past 12 years, India's economic trajectory has been marked by stability, fiscal discipline, sustained growth and moderate inflation. These claims do not withstand scrutiny. Fiscal deficit remains elevated at around 4.3%, well above the 3-3.5% FRBM target. The debt-GDP ratio is estimated at 55.6%, far exceeding the stipulated 40%.

Individual taxpayers are now contributing more than corporate entities. Prior to 2019-20, corporates contributed more to tax revenues. However, after corporate tax cuts, this trend has reversed. In 2024-25, corporate

taxes accounted for 17% of total receipts, while income taxes accounted for 19%. In 2026-27, corporate taxes are estimated at 18%, while income taxes will rise to 21%, further deepening inequity.

Improving living standards requires universal access to free education and healthcare. Yet, expenditure on education has declined from Rs 1.28,650 crore in 2025-26 (BE) to Rs 1.21,949 crore (RE), with only a marginal increase to Rs 1.39,289 crore in 2026-27. Health expenditure has also been cut from Rs 98,311 crore (BE) to Rs 94,625 crore (RE), with a modest rise to Rs 104,599 crore in 2026-27.

Similarly, expenditure on rural development has sharply declined from Rs 2,65,817 crore (BE) to Rs 2,12,750 crore (RE) and remains stagnant in 2026-27. Allocation to agriculture and allied sectors has fallen from Rs 1,58,833 crore (BE) to Rs 1,51,853 crore (RE), with only a marginal rise projected for 2026-27.

The Budget has left middle class and savers neglected. For inclusive and sustainable growth, economic policy must move beyond celebratory narratives and confront the lived realities of the vast majority of citizens.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate,
Bhubaneswar-751010

Last old man standing

Sir, In a sporting world obsessed with youth, Novak Djokovic, at 38, is an ancient by tennis standards. With his two greatest rivals – Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal having left the field, Djokovic is the last old man still going on and pushing himself in his relentless pursuit of winning his 25th Grand Slam. At 38, his epic victory over Sinner in the Australian Open semi-final suggested and raised hopes that the Serbian great had come very close to achieving it. But agonisingly it wasn't to be as Alcaraz stymied it. Nevertheless, that Djokovic has amassed all the records he has over the years is amazing in itself and that he continues to compete at such a level in a young man's game is simply astounding. Probably for the next couple of years, it will still be fascinating to see the old battler wield his racket against young aces like Alcaraz and Sinner, matching them shot for shot. And who knows, the legendary Serb, for one last time, may lay his hands firmly on his eluding 25th Slam trophy!

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Unabated harassment

Sir, This refers to the news report "Mamata moves SC against SIR," Orissa Post, February 2. I think the step taken by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was imperative as the harassment in the name of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) continues unabated. Even the senior most citizen having physical disability are not spared and are forced to attend SIR hearings. The so-called logical discrepancies prompting the electorates to address are all stuff and nonsense. The documents submitted by electorates during SIR hearings are not properly acknowledged by the AERO concerned. There are other serious deficiencies in services on the part of Election Commission of India (ECI) which need to be rectified.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

J&K tourism braves all odds

Jammu and Kashmir recorded 1.78cr tourist visits in 2025 despite security incidents, natural calamities



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 2: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that tourism continues to be a vital pillar of Jammu and Kashmir's economy, with the Union Territory recording 1.78 crore tourist visits in 2025 despite security-related incidents and natural calamities.

"Despite challenges arising from security-related incidents and natural calamities, the Union Territory recorded 1.78 crore tourist visits in 2025," Sinha said while addressing members of the Legislative Assembly on the inaugural day of the Budget session beginning Monday.

The lieutenant governor referenced security incidents and natural calamities, including the Pahalgam attack, Operation Sindoar, and last year's floods.

Sinha noted that tourism has been accorded industry status to attract investment and generate employment in the region. He highlighted the opening of the first-ever Chrysanthemum Garden, Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood, for tourists in October 2025, which aims to promote Kashmir as a year-round destination.

Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar and Ratle, having a combined capacity of 3,014 MW, under execution.

He said that in the last five years, 5,708 MVA capacity has been added to the distribution sector and 4,239 MVA to the transmission sector. "Installation of smart prepaid meters is underway in mission mode, with 10.44 lakh meters already installed and 100 per cent coverage targeted by 2026-27," he said.

The lieutenant governor mentioned that power losses have reduced by nine per cent, while revenue realisation has increased by 16 per cent. He added that solarisation of government buildings and households under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana has further strengthened renewable energy adoption, with over 6,700 government buildings and more than 16,800 households already solarised.

Sinha also described the railway connectivity to Kashmir as a historic milestone, saying that the Valley has now been linked with the rest of the country, opening new avenues for trade, tourism and economic progress. He informed that a full-fledged railway division has been sanctioned for Jammu and Kashmir, and expansion and modernisation of the Jammu Tawi railway station is underway.

Emphasising infrastructure development, the lieutenant governor said the road sector has witnessed unprecedented investment of Rs 61,528 crore, including expressways, national highways, ring roads and tunnels, significantly improving connectivity.

Sinha said that 19 new National Highway projects worth Rs 10,637 crore have been sanctioned for 2025-26, including key works such as the Pir Ki Gali Tunnel, Sadhna Tunnel, Lal Chowk-Parimpura Flyover and Magam Flyover, aimed at easing traffic congestion and improving urban mobility.



Children play on a snow-covered road after fresh snowfall, in Tangmarg, Baramulla district, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Stalin announces Tamil Biennale in Jan 2027

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mamallapuram (Tamil Nadu), Feb 2: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Monday announced the launch of a first of its kind Tamil Biennale in January next year to position the state as a global hub for art and cultural tourism.



These projects are expected to generate employment for 65,937 people across various segments, including heritage, adventure, and eco-tourism

MK STALIN | CM, TAMIL NADU

adventure, and eco-tourism," he added.

The chief minister noted that under the 2023 Tourism Policy, the state nodal agency SIPCOT will identify and develop new tourist destinations in two phases.

While the first phase covers sites in Kanyakumari, Kallakurichi, Erode, and Thoothukudi, the second phase has identified 31 locations for theme parks, camping sites, and nature stay.

This expansion is projected to create job opportunities for sev-

eral lakh people across the state. During the event, the chief minister virtually inaugurated completed infrastructure projects worth Rs 40.25 crore, including a glow garden in Mamallapuram and a new hotel in Chidambaram.

He also laid the foundation stone for additional facilities in Thirukkudaiyur and Tharangambadi.

The summit was attended by state ministers TM Arbarasan, R Rajendran, and TRB Rajaa, alongside special guest and Indian cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin.

The event also featured the distribution of prizes to winners of the Tourism Innovation Hackathon, which focused on culinary, rural, and digital tourism innovations. Winners, including Thamizh Nilam Thamizh Pannai, an organic farm located in Thirukulandram near Mamallapuram, and Xera Robotics Private Limited, received cash prizes of Rs 1 lakh each.

CONFUSE, DISTRACT, RECRUIT

ISI pushes homegrown terror to overwhelm Indian agencies



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 2: Indian agencies have busted several plots hatched by ISI-backed terrorists, which were aimed at carrying out strikes in India. What the Indian agencies have learnt in recent months is that Pakistan has set up multiple networks within the country aimed at disturbing peace.

Another official said that there is also heightened drone activity in the bordering areas. The drones are sent in to drop off drugs and arms in Punjab. The intention is to revive the Khalistan movement there, officials say. The ISI has also instructed its proxy, the Lashkar-e-Taiba, to carry out a sustained campaign in Jammu and Kashmir whereby prominent individuals would be targeted and labelled anti-Pakistan and anti-Kashmir. This operation is aimed at maligning such individuals and attempting to get the locals to act against such persons.

Last week, the Lashkar-e-Taiba targeted noted counter-terrorism expert Junaid Qureshi. He has been critical of the ISI, and hence, the threat was issued to him. Qureshi's father, Hashim Qureshi, was one of the hijackers of the Air India flight IC-405 in 1971. However, Qureshi does not subscribe to his father's view.

With no terrorist being able to infiltrate, Pakistan has reactivated existing modules in Jammu and Kashmir. Those terrorists who had infiltrated much earlier were kept on standby mode, and now they have been instructed to strike in Jammu and Kashmir

TVK's political journey has been marked by rapid mobilisation, large conventions, and a clear intent to position itself as a serious electoral force in TN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 2: The third anniversary celebrations of the Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) began on a high note at the party's Panaiyur office, with party President Vijay striking an energetic and celebratory tone that seemed to underscore both revival and resolve ahead of the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

The event marked three

CAMPAIGN COMEBACK



years since the formal launch of Tamil Nadu Vetti Kazhagam February 2, 2024, when Vijay announced his political entry and unveiled the party's name.

Since then, TVK's political journey has been marked by rapid mobilisation, large con-

ventions, and a clear intent to position itself as a serious electoral force in Tamil Nadu.

The TVK's first major party convention was held at Villupuram district, where the overwhelming public response surprised even

seasoned political observers. Riding on that momentum, the party organised its next major convention in Madurai, further expanding its grassroots presence and volunteer base across regions.

Vijay later launched his first full-fledged election campaign from Tiruchirappalli, signalling the TVK's readiness to contest the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections with determination.

However, the campaign hit a temporary pause following tensions and disruptions linked to the Karur stampede incident, which affected a TVK public meeting.

After a brief lull, the party has now resumed its political activities, with the Panaiyur event seen as a symbolic restart.

On the occasion of the third anniversary, Vijay arrived at the Panaiyur party office to a warm welcome by TVK General Secretary N Anand, senior leader Aadhav Arjuna, and other administrators.

As part of the ceremony, Vi-

Cleanup drive at Adyar estuary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 2: A nature walk and clean-up drive at the Adyar Estuary were organised here Monday to mark World Wetlands Day.

Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission organised the event to raise environmental awareness and foster public participation in conservation.

World Wetlands Day is observed February 2 every year, as a tribute to the adoption of the Ramsar Convention in the Iranian city of Ramsar February 2, 1971 and to highlight the ecological importance of wetlands and promote their sustainable management.

The event, held at 6.30 am in coordination with the Chennai Forest Division and SRM Institute of Science and Technology,



saw the collection of 86 kg of solid waste, including soft plastics, from the wetland area.

The collected waste was handed over to an authorised agency entrusted by the mission for scientific waste management. The soft plastic waste gathered during the drive is slated to be recycled into eco-friendly flower pots as part of a circular economy initiative.

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

Srinivas R Reddy, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Member Secretary of the Tamil Nadu State Wetland Authority, and SN Thejasvi, Conservator of Forests (Chennai Circle) were among those participated.

Reddy felicitated the Dean of SRM Institute of Science and Technology for the institution's active contribution to wetland conservation. Participation certificates and mementos were also distributed to students who participated in the drive.

"The programme significantly contributed to enhancing environmental awareness among students and reinforced the importance of active public participation in wetland conservation initiatives," an official statement said.

Naushera Day is celebrated February 6 at the Jadunath War Memorial to commemorate the victory of India troops in the 1947-48 Indo-Pak war. The memorial honours Brigadier Mohd Usman, who died in the Naushera battle and is remembered as the 'Lion of Naushera' or 'Naushera Ka Sher'.

The Tricolour, symbolising courage, sacrifice and national pride, stands prominently in the region, reminding citizens of the valour and supreme sacrifice of the brave soldiers who defended the area with unwavering spirit in the 1947-48 war, the spokesperson said.

The event concluded with a salute to the flag and a pledge to uphold the values of unity, service and national integrity, the spokesperson said, adding that the ceremony reinforced the strong bond between the armed forces and the local community.



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The event concluded with a salute to the flag and a pledge to uphold the values of unity, service and national integrity, the spokesperson said, adding that the ceremony reinforced the strong bond between the armed forces and the local community.

national

of the day quote

Even amid the global hardship and recession, the strength of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's good governance has continuously sustained the strong and successful journey of the Indian economy with credibility and stability by overcoming the external turmoil and internal disruptions



MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

When policies are clear and intent is firm, the outcomes are evident. India's rapid progress on the global economic stage reflects this clarity



YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

The land border remains closed. Overland trade routes to Europe and Asia, and onward to Europe, which are the most cost-effective and efficient for Punjabis, are unavailable. Exporters are forced onto long and expensive sea routes, eroding competitiveness even before products reach European markets



PARTAP SINGH BAJWA | SENIOR CONG LEADER

SHORT TAKES

2 held in crackdown on cyber criminals

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested two alleged cybercriminals after conducting a massive countrywide search operation across 35 locations as part of a sweeping multinational crackdown on cyber-enabled financial crimes, officials said Monday. Operation CyStrike was launched January 30 in coordination with the FBI in the United States and agencies of the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Ireland, and Singapore. The CBI officers searched 35 locations across 10 states, including Delhi, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Telangana and West Bengal.

AIADMK demands Bharat Ratna for J Jayalalithaa

New Delhi: A demand for conferring Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour, on former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa was made by her party MP in the Rajya Sabha Monday, terming her as the 'mother of welfare schemes'. Raising the issue through a zero-hour mention, AIADMK's M Dhanapal said Jayalalithaa was a transformational leader who combined compassion with administrative efficiency and political courage.

Human skull, skeletal remains found in tank

Palghar: A human skull and skeletal remains were found in a 30-year-old abandoned water tank in Vasai in Palghar while the structure was being demolished, a police official said Monday. The tank is located in Manikpur area, Assistant Commissioner of Police Umesh Mane Patil said.

Bomb threat turns out to be hoax

Junagadh: The Junagadh district court and the Rajkot collector's office received bomb threats Monday, which were later found to be hoaxes following searches conducted by the police, officials said. The Registrar of the district court received an email stating three bombs planted in the building will go off at 2:10 PM, said Deputy Superintendent of Police, Junagadh city, Hitesh Dandhalia.



The Budget also includes significant provisions to strengthen women's empowerment, security and economic participation, as well as to improve agricultural infrastructure, market access for farmers and risk mitigation

BHajanlal SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

SEYCHELLES PRESIDENT TO VISIT INDIA FROM FEB 5-10

Seychelles President Patrick Herminie will undertake a six-day visit to India beginning Thursday with a focus on boosting bilateral ties in a range of areas including trade and defence. It will be President Herminie's first visit to India since assuming office last October



WB'S SIR FIGHT REACHES DELHI

Mamata storms out of CEC meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee, in South Avenue area, New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

New Delhi, Feb 2: The TMC-EC faceoff over the special intensive revision of electoral rolls in poll-bound West Bengal intensified Monday as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee walked out of a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging he was being "arrogant" and that the poll panel was working at the behest of the BJP.

Election Commission officials claimed that she left without listening to the response of the poll panel top brass on the issues raised by her. On the other hand, the BJP hit back at Banerjee, alleging that she was protesting against an "imagined grievance" and enacting a "drama".

The TMC supremo, who has been demanding a halt to the voters' list cleanup exercise in West Bengal, is in Delhi along with SIR-affected families from her state. She reached Delhi Sunday. Earlier in the day, she confronted police personnel deployed outside Banga Bhawan in Chanakyapuri here and alleged harassment of the families by the Delhi Police. The force refuted the claim, stating that the deployment outside the Banga Bhawan was part of security. In the afternoon, she went to the poll panel's office here, wearing a black shawl as a mark of "protest", accompanied by party MPs Abhishek Banerjee and Kalyan Banerjee, and 12 members from "SIR affected families" from West Bengal to meet Kumar and fellow ECs.

She later said that they "boycotted" the meeting in protest, while poll panel officials claimed she left in a huff without listening to the response of the EC top brass.

Talking to the media after coming out of the Election Commission's headquarters here, the West Bengal CM launched a fresh tirade against the poll panel, accusing it of working as

the BJP's "dalal" (middleman).

"So many people have died, who is responsible? The EC is responsible. They are working at the behest of the BJP," Banerjee alleged. "They behaved very badly with us, I said I am sorry we came here for justice; we did not get that, and you are lying. He is a great liar..." she said.

"We said we will fight it on the ground. You have the power of the BJP, we have the power of the people. We boycotted the meeting and came out. They have insulted us, humiliated us... I have not seen this type of Election Commission; they are very arrogant... He talks with an attitude like he is Zaminadar, and we are servants," she alleged. However, EC officials said that the TMC leaders were given a patient hearing.

First TMC leader Abhishek

Banerjee spoke, followed by Mamata Banerjee, the officials said, adding that the points raised by them were duly noted down by CEC Kumar and Election Commissioners S S Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. The delegation submitted a memorandum, alleging "grave procedural, legal and Constitutional violations in the conduct of the SIR".

In it, West Bengal's ruling party demanded the EC immediately withdraw all SIR hearing notices, abandon the "logical discrepancy" framework, stop the "interference" of micro-observers, disengage all non-statutory personnel immediately, and take "full institutional accountability for the tragic loss of lives".

An EC official said, "When the CEC started to respond, the TMC leaders interjected on multiple occasions. She was agitated and left the meeting in a huff."

The CEC explained that the "rule of law will prevail" and anybody taking the law into their own hands will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the provisions of law and powers vested in the commission.

Kumar told the TMC leadership that its MLAs are openly using abusive and threatening language against the commission and especially against the CEC. There have been incidents of vandalism of the electoral registration officers by TMC workers and MLAs, Kumar told TMC leaders.

"No pressure, obstruction, or interference of any kind by anyone should be exerted on officers engaged in SIR work. Honorarium payable to Booth Level Officers (BLOs) should be released in a timely manner without any further delay," the CEC told the delegation.

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Mehta said Wangchuk referred to the central government as "them" and separated people of Ladakh as "us" and called for "plebiscite" and "referendum", the calls which were made once in Jammu and Kashmir.

"There is no them or us but we are all Indians. Ladakh is a place which shares borders with two countries -- China and Pakistan. The area is very fragile.

"The speeches made by him have to be taken into account in totality. He was misleading young people and carefully using the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi to cover it.

"Gandhi ji never instigated people against their own government," Mehta said.

Wangchuk tried to incite Gen Z protests: Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: The Centre and the Union Territory of Ladakh administration told the Supreme Court Monday that jailed climate activist Sonam Wangchuk tried to instigate Gen Z for protests like in Nepal and Bangladesh.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P V Varale was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that Wangchuk even referred to 'Arab Springs' like agitation which has led to the overthrow of multiple governments in countries of the Arab world.

"He carefully crafted his speech to instigate Gen Z and asked for agitations like in Nepal and Bangladesh and used speeches of Mahatma Gandhi to cover the real intention," Mehta said.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Gitanjali J Angmo, the wife of jailed climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, against his detention under the stringent National Security Act (NSA).

The NSA empowers the Centre and states to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India".

The maximum detention period is 12 months, though it can be revoked earlier.

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"There is no them or us but we are all Indians. Ladakh is a place which shares borders with two countries -- China and Pakistan. The area is very fragile. "The speeches made by him have to be taken into account in totality. He was misleading young people and carefully using the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi to cover it.

"Gandhi ji never instigated people against their own government," Mehta said.

Air India grounds plane over fuel switch defect



The functioning of the fuel control switch is in focus following the crash of Air India's Boeing 787-8 aircraft, or Dreamliner, that killed 260 people last June, as the preliminary probe report mentioned about fuel supply being cut off soon after take-off

in contact with Air India and was supporting their review of this matter.

There was no immediate comment from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) said it has been insisting on checking the electrical systems of Dreamliners after the AI171 crash.

In a statement, FIP, which is also party to a litigation related to AI171 crash, listed various incidents involving the Dreamliners.

"Today again history has repeated at Heathrow where the left fuel control switch was cutting off after moving the switch to run during start. Also, we have been insisting that all B-787 be grounded and checked for the electrical systems," it said.

Not-for-profit group Safety Matters Foundation Monday said that during the operation of the flight, the crew reported abnormal behaviour of the left engine fuel control switch of the aircraft.

After receiving this initial information, we have grounded the said aircraft and are involving the OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) to get the pilot's concerns checked on a priority basis. The matter has been communicated to the aviation regulator, DGCA."

"Air India had checked the fuel control switches on all Boeing 787 aircraft in its fleet after a directive from the DGCA, and had found no issues," the airline said in a statement. According to pilots' grouping FIP, the malfunctioning of the fuel control switch might have happened at London Heathrow itself. In a statement, Boeing said it was

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national



Our government is sensitive. The earlier BJP government was insensitive - Yediyurappa reduced the rice given under the Anna Bhagya scheme and even resorted to firing when farmers demanded fertilizers

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

DIGANTARA, SINGAPORE'S DEFENCE ARM INK PACT

India's Digantara Industries has joined hands with Singapore's defence arm to develop tools for space situational awareness and also to protect their national satellites from collision with space debris



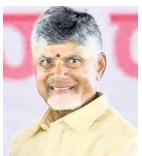
of the day quote

We will not allow the state elections to take place with erroneous electoral rolls. If the poll process is not completed in Bengal by midnight May 5, President's Rule will automatically be invoked, and the state would be ruled from the Lok Bhawan



SUVENDU ADHIKARI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

Maintaining law and order is paramount, and that no violation will be tolerated under any circumstances, irrespective of political affiliation



N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

Through MGNREGA, a total of nearly 4,879 crore person-days of employment have been generated. As a result, nearly 10.10 crore rural assets have been created



MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

X POST OF THE DAY

Aap chronology Samajhiye
On 31st aug 2025, Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping
On 14th Jan 2026, Chinese party officials met RSS leaders
Today, when Rahul Gandhi went to Parliament to expose DS agents of China in India, he was not allowed to speak on the issue.
Why BJP is saving those anti-nationalists?

@DrNimoYadav

SHORT TAKES

7 cops, 2 others hurt in violence

Gariaband (Chhattisgarh): Seven cops and two villagers were injured in stone-pelting and violence that erupted in a village in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district after a vandalism case accused out on bail, along with two others, went on an attack spree, police said Monday. The out on bail accused and his two associates allegedly assaulted four persons at different locations, one of them a witness in a 2024 temple desecration case.

Two tigers electrocuted

Bhopal: A tiger and a tigress died of electrocution in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district Monday, taking the death toll of big cats in the state this year to nine, an official said. The two carcasses were found less than 100 metres apart in agricultural land in North Shahdol forest division, some 75 kilometres from the district headquarters, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Subharanjan Sen told PTI. "The tigers died due to electrocution. Wires used in the incident have been recovered. With these two deaths, nine tigers have died in Madhya Pradesh since January 1 this year. Seven of these deaths took place in January," Sen said. Another official said such electric traps are laid by farmers to protect crops from herbivores but they often end up electrocuting tigers.

NIA raids six places in Kashmir

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency Monday carried out searches at six locations in three districts of Kashmir as part of an investigation into the terror ecosystem in the Valley, officials said. The searches were carried out at Rafiabad, Sopore and Baramulla district, Bandipora, and the Parimpura area of Srinagar, the officials said.

Rahul triggers political storm

NARAVANE MEMOIR ROW



false accusations, in defiance of Speaker Om Birla's ruling.

The ruling party's leaders, including ministers, asked Gandhi to stop "speaking the language of anti-India elements".

Speaking with reporters, Gandhi claimed that he was not being allowed to quote from Naravane's unpublished book in the Lok Sabha because it indicts Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, evoking a backlash from BJP leaders who accused him of misleading the House and belittling the armed forces.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla disallowed Gandhi from raising the issue, but he did not relent and several Opposition leaders also rallied behind him. The House was adjourned twice and later for the day amid uproar as heated exchanges took place between the treasury and Opposition benches.

While Gandhi said the government is "afraid" of a line that he wants to quote from the book and asserted that he would state that line in the Lower House, the BJP alleged that the Congress leader undermined the dignity of Parliament and hurt the morale of the Indian soldiers with his

"Naravane ji has written about the prime minister and Rajnath Singh ji clearly in his book, which has appeared in an article, and I am quoting from that article. They are scared because if it comes out, the reality of Narendra Modi ji and Rajnath Singh ji will be revealed. What happened to the 56-inch chest when China was before us and advancing?" Gandhi said.

Congress and its leaders also shared on social media excerpts from an article in a magazine that quoted Naravane's unpublished book.

Earlier, as Gandhi rose to speak on the Motion of Thanks

to the President's Address, he said he would first like to respond to the charges made by the previous speaker, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, against the Congress on nationalism and began quoting from what he said was the "memoir" of Naravane talking about the India-China conflict of 2020.

However, Defence Minister Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah strongly protested and asked Gandhi to clarify whether the book had been published or not.

The uproar went on for about 50 minutes with Speaker Om Birla repeatedly saying that no book or newspaper clipping can be quoted on a matter not related to the proceedings of the House, and Gandhi insisting that the document was authenticated and he could quote from it.

Government sources said Gandhi was reading "concocted things" on China. They said there was ample material in the public domain on the decisions taken by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, on China, and alleged that he "surrendered thousands of acres of land just to further his

advancing".

Attacking the ruling BJP, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha has raised an extremely serious issue related to national security in the House but the government is evading the questions on it.

The legislature party meeting will be held days ahead of the expiry of the second spell of the President's rule, which was first imposed February 13, 2025, for six months and then extended for another six months in August 2025.

own statesmanship".

Rajnath Singh maintained that the book had not been published. Gandhi then said he was quoting from a magazine article to put forth his views.

Birla again disallowed it and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju called for the Speaker's ruling to be adhered to.

Rijiju said if the Leader of Opposition repeatedly ignores the Speaker's ruling and flouts rules, the House will have to discuss what action should be taken against such a member.

When Gandhi persisted, the Speaker repeatedly warned him against quoting the book.

Singh then got up and asked if the book was not allowed to be published as alleged, why didn't Naravane go to court against it. The defence minister also accused Gandhi of "misleading" the House.

When the House reassembled at 4 pm, Gandhi said he was raising a matter of national security.

"It is uncomfortable for the defence minister and the prime minister, I understand. I consider national security the most important issue. If it was not uncomfortable, they would have let me speak, but the fact that they are not allowing me to speak shows that they are uncomfortable," Gandhi said.

Several opposition leaders, including TMC's Mahua Moitra and Kalyan Banerjee, RJD's Manoj Jha and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, supported Gandhi on the issue.

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■ Manipur has been under the President's rule since February 13, 2025, following months of ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities

■ The central rule was imposed after the BJP-led government headed by Biren Singh resigned February 9, 2025

■ The 60-member state assembly, whose tenure is till 2027, was put under suspended animation

Those who have arrived in the national capital include former chief minister N Biren Singh, Assembly Speaker Satyabrata Singh and former minister Y Khemchand Singh. BJP state president A Sharda Devi is also in Delhi.

The BJP central leadership had held several rounds of separate meetings with its Meitei and Kuki MLAs, allies NPF and NPP and a few Independent legislators over the last few months to gauge their views on whether the political situation was conducive for the formation of a popular government, the sources said.

On December 14, 2025, BJP's national general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh and the party's Northeast coordinator Sambit Patra met BJP MLAs from both the warring Meitei and Kuki communities in Delhi under one roof.

Budget: J'khand gets over ₹7,500 crore for rail infra augmentation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



An artiste performs Tibetan dance during the 'Kala Ghoda Arts Festival', at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

MOMO CRAVING TURNS COSTLY

Boy's snack run leads to family losing ₹85L

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



on the Deoria-Kasya road, officials said.

Police said the boy, who lives in the village for his studies, had developed a habit of regularly consuming the snack. According to the complaint, the stall operators initially sold him momos for cash. Once his money ran out, they allegedly

lured him into bringing jewellery from home, insisting that he hand over ornaments in exchange for the snacks.

Over several days, the boy allegedly kept bringing gold items from the family cupboard and giving them away to the youths.

Following a written com-

plaint by the boy's father, Vishwesh Mishra, a temple priest in Varanasi, an FIR was registered against three accused under Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita (BNS) Section 305 (theft) at Rampur Karkha-

na police station.

Station House Officer (SHO) Devendra Kumar Singh said police acted promptly after receiving the complaint.

"Two accused -- a young man and a woman -- have been arrested, and some of the jewellery has been recovered on their pointing out. One accused is still absconding, and efforts are on to nab him," he said, declining to disclose their names at this time.

Circle Officer Sunil Reddy confirmed the arrests and informed that police teams are conducting raids to locate the remaining suspect and recover the rest of the stolen jewellery.

Speaking to PTI, the CO said, "The incident has taken place, and the police are taking all necessary steps. The remaining accused will be arrested soon."

Jharkhand's railway connectivity is going to improve significantly, Vaishnav said.

A press statement issued by the railways said the network in Jharkhand has expanded rapidly since 2014. "Since 2014, around 1,400-km of tracks have been constructed, which is more than the entire rail network of UAE," it added.

A total of 57 stations in Jharkhand have been identified for complete redevelopment under the Amrit Station Scheme at a total investment of ₹2,153 crore, it said.



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international

of the day quote

Groundhog Day: Punxsutawney Phil is said to have seen his shadow



Those who say that we need a European army, maybe those people haven't really thought this through practically. If you are already part of NATO then you can't create a separate army

KAJA KALLAS |

EUROPEAN UNION FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF

BALLOONS FROM BELARUS CROSS INTO POLISH AIRSPACE

Balloons used to smuggle cigarettes from Belarus have been reported crossing into Polish airspace for a third night in a row. Polish authorities Monday said the "hybrid incidents" were part of the threat to the country's eastern border posed by Russia's ally Belarus.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Punxsutawney, Feb 2: Punxsutawney Phil is said to be predicting six more weeks of wintry weather after he saw his shadow Monday.

His annual prediction was translated by his handlers at Gobbler's Knob in western Pennsylvania.

The Punxsutawney Groundhog Club says that when Phil is deemed to have not seen his shadow, that means there will be an early spring. When he does see it, it's six more weeks of winter.

Phil tends to predict a longer winter far more often than an early spring.

Tens of thousands of people were on hand at Gobbler's Knob

for the annual ritual that goes back more than a century, with ties to ancient farming traditions in Europe.

Punxsutawney's festivities have grown considerably since the 1993 movie "Groundhog Day," starring Bill Murray.

Lisa Gibson was at her 10th Groundhog Day, wearing a lighted hat that resembled the tree stump from which Phil emerges shortly after daybreak.

"Oh man, it just breaks up the doldrums of winter," said Gibson, accompanied by her husband - dressed up as Elvis Presley - and teenage daughter.

"It's like Halloween and New Year's Eve all wrapped up into one holiday."

Gibson, a resident of Pittsburgh, had been rooting for



Phil to not see his shadow and therefore predict an early start to spring.

Rick Siger, Pennsylvania's secretary of community and economic development, said the

outdoor thermometer in his vehicle read 4 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 15 degrees Celsius) on his way to Gobbler's Knob.

"I think it's just fun - folks having a good time," said Siger,

attending his fourth straight Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney. "It brings people together at a challenging time. It is a unifying force that showcases the best of Pennsylvania, the best of Punxsutawney, this area."

Last year's announcement was six more weeks of winter, by far Phil's more common assessment and not much of a surprise during the first week of February. His top-hatted handlers in the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club insist Phil's "groundhogese" of winks, purrs, chatters and nods are being interpreted when they relate the meteorological marmot's muses about the days ahead.

Groundhog Day falls on February 2, the midpoint between the shortest, darkest day of the year on the winter solstice and the spring equinox. It's a time of year that also figures in the Celtic calendar and the Christian holiday of Candlemas.

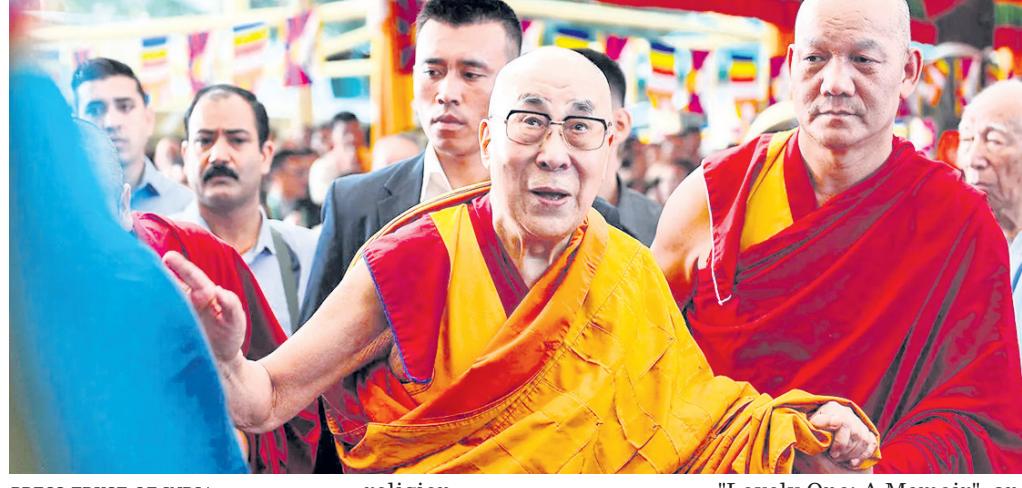
ly Monday some clouds moved into Punxsutawney overnight, bringing flurries he called "microflakes."

Pastelok said the coming week will remain cold, with below-average temperatures in the eastern United States.

Phil isn't the only animal being consulted for long-term weather forecasts Monday. There are formal and informal Groundhog Day events in many places in the US, Canada and Beyond.

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China criticises Grammy Award for the Dalai Lama



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

religion.

The Dalai Lama is not purely a religious person, Lin told a media briefing here.

"He is a political exile committed to anti-Chinese separatist activity under the guise of religion," Lin said.

Beijing firmly opposes the relevant party using the award as a tool for anti-China "political manipulation".

The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, won his first Grammy on Sunday in the category of best audiobook, narration, and storytelling recording for his spoken-word album, "Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama", at the 60th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

Asked for his reaction to the Dalai Lama winning the award, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian reiterated China's allegation that the 90-year-old spiritual leader is carrying out separatist activity in the name of

"Lovely One: A Memoir", and Fab Morvan for "You Know It's True: The Real Story of Milli Vanilli".

Reacting to the prestigious international recognition, the Dalai Lama expressed gratitude and humility, saying he did not view the award as a personal achievement.

"I receive this recognition with gratitude and humility. I don't see it as something personal, but as a recognition of our shared universal responsibility," the Dalai Lama said.

"I firmly believe that peace, compassion, care for our environment, and an understanding of the oneness of humanity are essential for the collective well-being of all eight billion human beings. I am grateful that this Grammy recognition can help spread these messages more widely," he said.

Hasina, kin sentenced to prison term after trial in absentia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 2: A Bangladeshi court Monday sentenced deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to 10 years in jail in two separate corruption cases related to alleged irregularities in allocations of land in a government housing project.

Dhaka's Special Judge's Court handed 79-year-old Hasina 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for using her official influence in allocating residential plots to others, including her niece, UK Labour MP and former British minister Tulip Siddiq, under the Rajuk New Town Project in Purbachal on the outskirts of the capital.

Judge Robiul Alam simultaneously handed down Hasina's two nieces and a nephew, to different prison terms.

Siddiq's younger sister, Azaman Siddiq and brother Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby were sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment, while the deposed premier and her relatives were handed down the prison terms after trial in absentia.

Only one of the 16 accused, a senior official of Rajuk, which allocates the plots, Khurshid Alam, was tried in person and was present at the court as the verdict was delivered.

The other accused in the case were sentenced to five years' imprisonment, including a former junior minister for housing, a former secretary of the ministry, a former Rajuk chairman and officials of the state-run entity.

Rightwing populist Fernández wins Costa Rican presidency



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

San Jose, Fernández, 39, thanked Chaves for giving her "the confidence to be president-elect of Costa Rica" and said his legacy was in good hands.

She vowed to "fight tirelessly" to ensure Costa Rica "continues on the path of economic growth, freedom, and above all, the progress of our people".

The country of 5.2 million people, famous for its white-sand beaches, has long been seen as an oasis of stability and democracy in Central America. But in recent years, it has gone from transit point to logistics hub in the global drug trade.

Drug trafficking by Mexican and Colombian cartels has seeped into local communities, fuelling turf wars that have caused the murder rate to jump 50% in the past six years, to 17 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Fernández cites the iron-fisted Salvadorean president Nayib Bukele, who has locked up thousands of suspected gang members without charge, as an inspiration on how to tackle crime. Bukele was the first foreign leader to congratulate her.

India's beautiful Triumphal Arch: Trump on India Gate



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Feb 2: Describing the India Gate in New Delhi as "India's beautiful Triumphal Arch", US President Donald Trump said a similar monument in America will be "the greatest of them all."

The 42-metre-high India Gate, an "Arc-de-Triomphe", honours the memory of the 70,000 Indian soldiers who were killed fighting for the British Army during World War I and the Third Anglo-Afghan War.

"India's beautiful Triumphal Arch. Ours will be the greatest of them all!" Trump said in a post on Truth Social, posting a photograph of the iconic Indian monument. While talking to reporters onboard Air Force One over the weekend, Trump had said that his administration is considering building an arc, similar to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

"For 200 years, they wanted to build an arc. They have 57 cities throughout the world that have them. We're the only major city, Washington, DC, that doesn't," he said, adding that the arc that will be built in Washington "will be the most beautiful in the world."

Trump said he is setting up a committee for the construction of the arc.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Norway crown princess' son held

Oslo:

The eldest son of Norway's crown princess has been arrested, just before his trial opens on charges including rape in a case that has been an embarrassment to the royal family, police said Monday. Marius Borg Hoiby was arrested Sunday evening and is accused of assault, threats with a knife and violation of a restraining order, police said in a statement. They requested four weeks' detention on grounds of risk of reoffending. His lawyers couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

Tit-for-tat: UK expels Russian diplomat

London:

Britain's government

Monday it revoked the accreditation of a Russian diplomat in response to Moscow's decision to expel a British diplomat last month over allegations of spying. The Foreign Office said it summoned Russian ambassador Andrey Kelin to condemn "Russia's unprovoked and unjustified decision" and "baseless accusations" against British embassy staff.

"It is deeply disappointing that Russia continually seeks to disrupt the work of the UK's diplomatic missions and deter our support for Ukraine," it said in a statement. "Any further action taken by Russia will be considered an escalation and responded to accordingly."

The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, won his first Grammy on Sunday in the category of best audiobook, narration, and storytelling recording for his spoken-word album, "Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama", at the 60th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

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day quoteIndia's budget
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a gradual path
of government debt reduction
balanced against a still-robust
capex program to enhance growth
prospectsJEREMY ZOOK | DIRECTOR AND PRIMARY
SOVEREIGN ANALYST, FITCH RATINGSOn the
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expansion in
the country. The government's
focus on elevating public capex
reinforces demand momentum for
tyres across both passenger and
commercial vehicles

ARUN MAMMEN | CHAIRMAN, ATMA

Q3 RESULTS**Ather Energy loss
narrows to ₹85cr**

New Delhi: Electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy on Monday reported narrowing of the net loss to ₹85 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2025. The company reported a net loss of ₹198 crore in the October-December quarter of the previous fiscal. Total income increased to ₹996 crore for the third quarter as against ₹650 crore in the year-ago period. Ather Energy said in a regulatory filing. The company said it recorded its highest-ever quarterly volumes of 67,851 units, delivering 50 per cent year-on-year growth, it added. Ather said its losses continued to shrink, with EBITDA loss down to ₹29.9 crore, and the quarterly loss narrowing by 45 per cent as compared to Q2 FY26, underscoring steady progress toward profitable, sustainable growth.

**Mahindra Lifespace
posts ₹109cr profit**

New Delhi: Realty firm Mahindra Lifespace Developers Ltd Monday reported a consolidated net profit of ₹108.88 crore for the December quarter on higher income and exceptional gains. The company, which is part of Mahindra Group, had posed a net loss of ₹22.47 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to ₹469.08 crore during the October-December period of this fiscal year from ₹185.77 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year, according to a regulatory filing. The company reported around ₹96 crore as exceptional gains and share of profit from joint ventures and associates. During the third quarter of this fiscal, the company's sales bookings rose to ₹572 crore as compared to ₹334 crore in the year-ago period.

**UPL Ltd profit down
43% to ₹490 crore**

New Delhi: UPL Ltd Monday posted a 43 per cent drop in consolidated net profit to ₹490 crore for the December quarter on higher base effect. The company had reported higher net profit of ₹853 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year because of tax refunds to the tune of ₹499 crore, according to a regulatory filing.



We are
still
considering, and
inter-ministerial
consultation is
on for raising FDI
cap to 49 per cent

M. NAGARAJ | FINANCIAL
SERVICES SECRETARY**WEAK GLOBAL TRENDS**

Billions stay in red

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: Silver prices extended its steep fall for the third straight day, tumbling ₹52,000 to ₹2,60 lakh per kg in the national capital Monday, while gold fell to ₹1.52 lakh per 10 grams amid weak global trends and a firm US dollar.

According to the All India Sarafha Association, the white metal nosedived ₹52,000, or nearly 17 per cent, to ₹2,60,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes).

On Saturday, the metal tanned 19 per cent, or ₹72,500, to ₹3,12 lakh per kilogram.

In the last three sessions, silver prices have fallen ₹1,44,500, or nearly 36 per cent from ₹4,04,500 per kg -- its all-time high -- recorded January 29.

Gold price of 99.9 per cent purity also bore the brunt of the sell-off, crashing by ₹12,800, or 7.73 per cent, to ₹152,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes)

on Monday. It had settled at ₹1,65,500 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Over the last three sessions, the metal has plunged ₹30,300, or nearly 17 per cent, from its record high of ₹1,83,000 per 10 grams on January 29, as investors rushed to book profits after a sharp rally.

Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk,



Silver slides to ₹2.6 lakh/kg

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Gold drops to ₹1.52 lakh/10g

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said, the Union Budget 2026-27 delivered no changes to gold and silver import duties in the domestic markets, contrary to market expectations, removing a potential near-term catalyst for prices in the country.

Gold and silver languished after the US dollar surged amidst President Donald Trump's tariff negotiations, and de-escalation between US and Iran with US shutdown fears also being delayed once again with a liquidity push

**MANAV MODI | ANALYST, COMMODITIES
AT MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Spot silver prices also slipped \$1.2, or 1.42 per cent, to \$83.49 per ounce in the overseas trade.

"Market participants will focus on developments in Middle East, alongside monetary policy decisions from Europe, the UK, and India," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the global market, gold and silver mirrored the bearish trend, with spot yellow metal slipping \$83.75, or 1.72 per cent, to \$4,781.60 per ounce.

"Spot gold began the week on a negative note and continue to reel under intense sell-

ing pressure, driven by firm dollar and President Trump's nomination of Kevin Warsh as the next Fed Chair," Praveen Singh, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said.

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On the economic front, traders will also monitor US key data releases, including non-farm payrolls, the unemployment rate, and speeches from several Federal Reserve officials, are expected to influence the precious metals market this week, he added.

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No Indo-Pak match: ICC stares at \$250mn loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: An India-Pakistan fixture in an ICC event generates revenue to the tune of a staggering "USD 250 million (over Rs 2200 crore)", as per some estimates and the absence of the cash-cow fixture from the upcoming T20 World Cup is certain to cause heavy losses to all stakeholders.

Such is the pull of the contest between the arch-rivals, who only play in multi team competitions due to the tense relations between the two countries, that the ICC places them in the same pool in every world event.

The Pakistan government announced its team's boycott Sunday of the marquee clash

in Colombo February 15.

If Pakistan remain adamant, they would risk losing millions in revenues and a no-show would cause significant financial damage to the ICC coffers and India media rights holder JioStar which is already trying to renegotiate a USD 3 billion deal with the world body.

The host broadcaster could incur advertisement revenue losses in the range of Rs 200 crore to Rs 250 crore for a marquee game whose 10 second commercial slot can cost up to Rs 40 lakh.

While a walkover would hand full points to India, the ICC retains the authority to impose financial penalties on the PCB.



A former ICC and PCB communications head, Sami-ul-Hasan Burney, summed up the magnitude of the money riding on just one game.

"As regards the sanctions or the losses, as I said, the one match is costing USD 250 million (everything accounted for

not just broadcaster's loss). Pakistan's annual revenue is USD 35.5 million, so there is a big, big difference," he told PTI.

The Sydney Morning Herald quoted industry sources with knowledge of confidential negotiations on the costs involved in the game with a billion plus

audience.

Each game between India and Pakistan has an estimated value of around USD 250 million, it stated.

The tone and tenor of ICC's

T20 WORLD CUP

statement following the Pakistan government announcement also underlined the undisputed value of the contest.

"This position of selective participation is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premise of a global sporting event where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms per the event schedule," the ICC said.

"ICC tournaments are built

on sporting integrity, competitiveness, consistency and fairness, and selective participation undermines the spirit and sanctity of the competitions."

Amid the drama, Pakistan left for Colombo to play its other games in the showpiece starting February 7.

With the ICC, PCB and BCCI agreeing to a hybrid model for the India-Pakistan games till 2027, the Pakistan board would find it tough to justify the selective pullout.

It all started with Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman's removal from the IPL on BCCI instructions, leading to the withdrawal of the national team from ICC event co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

Tata Steel Masters

Abdusattorov wins, Gukesh best Indian



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Wijk Aan Zee (The Netherlands), Feb 2: Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan clinched the Tata Steel Masters title with a black-piece victory against out-of-form Arjun Erigaisi while world chess champion D Gukesh emerged as the best Indian with a joint eighth finish as the tournament concluded here Monday.

Gukesh drew with Vincent Keymer of Germany in the final round to end as the top performing Indian on 6.5 points. But, his fifty per cent score was below par and the Indian ace slipped below the 2750 rating mark.

Praggnanadhaa also drew the last round with Jorden van Foreest of the Netherlands to end on 5.5 points and there are some lessons to be learnt for the Indian if the performance here is any indication ahead of the Candidates tournament.

Erigaisi had the biggest deficit in terms of rating as he lost a whopping 29 points to find himself out of top 10 in world rankings in a while.

In fact, Gukesh is the only Indian player ranked at number 10 on the live rating list and much to the surprise of the chess buffs, there is no Indian above 2750 ratings.

Abdusattorov scored a commendable nine points out of 13 games while his junior compatriot and World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov made it an Uzbek domination by finishing second a half point behind.

ANAHAT SMASHES INTO RECORD BOOKS

Seventh seed Anahat Singh defeats top seed and World No 10 in the Squash on Fire Open final, clinches maiden PSA Bronze-level title

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, Feb 2: Teenage sensation and seventh seed Anahat Singh defeated top seed and World No 10 Georgina Kennedy of England with scores of 12-10, 11-5, 11-7 in the Squash on Fire Open final, earning her first PSA Bronze-level title.

This is the biggest title of young Anahat's career and her 15th overall on the PSA Tour, where the Indian world No 31 has competed in 26 tournaments.

Kennedy had beaten Singh 3-0 in their only previous encounter at this season's Canadian Women's Open, and she made a strong start here, too, bringing up two game balls at 10-8 in the first.

But Anahat, displaying more of the free-flowing squash we've seen all week, proceeded to reel off four points on the bounce to close out the game, letting out a big scream of emotion before the players headed off court.

She was then 3-2 down in game two, but from that moment on, barely took a step back, mixing her game up well with attacking boasts, sharp kills and well-placed lobs.

A run of four straight points moved the teenager 6-3 in front, and she would only lose another two points in the game, moving within one game of glory.

A fast start to game three was always likely to be key to



Kennedy's hopes of staging a comeback, but instead it was Anahat who charged out of the blocks, moving 5-1 in front in less than two minutes.

5-1 soon became 10-6 and four match balls, and while the first came and went, Anahat would not have to wait long for her moment of glory, with a clinical forehand boast winner providing a fitting finale to a sensational week.

"I'm extremely happy. I knew I wanted to do well in these events, get my ranking up and also put on a performance, and

I'm glad I was able to do that this time," Anahat said after her victory against the World No 10.

The 17-year-old reached her maiden PSA Bronze-level final at the Squash on Fire Open in Washington with a 3-1 win over US World No 23 Sabrina Sobhy (11-9, 11-3, 9-11, 11-5) in the semifinals and booked herself a date with England's Kennedy in the final.

Earlier in the tournament, Anahat staged a remarkable comeback from 2-0 down to defeat No 2 seed Sana Ibrahim (8-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-7), show-

casing her resilience and skill.

She has been in excellent form this season, reaching the semi-finals of the Silver-level Canadian Women's Open, finishing runner-up at the British Junior Open Under-19, helping India win the first-ever Squash World Cup, and claiming the Daly College Cup PSA title in Indore.

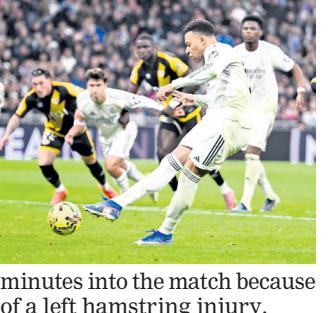
At the British Junior Open, she lost a tight four-game final to France's Lauren Baltyan (9-11, 11-7, 3-11, 9-11), marking her ninth BJO final across different age groups and underscoring her rising stature on the PSA Tour.

Mbappe's last-gasp penalty lifts Real

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madrid, Feb 2: Kylian Mbappe came through for Real Madrid again, converting a penalty kick 10 minutes into second-half stoppage time to salvage a 2-1 win over Rayo Vallecano and move Madrid back within a point of Spanish league leader Barcelona.

Vinicius Junior also scored for Madrid Sunday after again being jeered by fans early on at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Jude Bellingham, also booted when the lineup was announced, had to be replaced 10



minutes into the match because of a left hamstring injury.

Madrid was coming off a 4-2 loss at Benfica that dropped the team out of the eight automatic spots for the round of 16 of the

Champions League. It will face Benfica again in the playoffs.

It was a thriller at the Bernabeu Sunday, with Mbappe giving Madrid the victory by coolly converting the last-gasp penalty for his eighth goal in five matches. The result allowed Alvaro Arbeloa's side to keep pace with Barcelona, which won 3-1 at Elche Saturday.

The boos toward Vinicius were subdued after he scored a superb goal in the 15th minute. The Brazil international cleared a couple of defenders before curling a right-footed shot into the top corner.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SAFF U19 C'ship
Young Tigresses lose to B'desh



AI set to transform Indian athletes' training

FROM INJURY TO DIET TO AGE VERIFICATION: HOW AI IS RESHAPING THE QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 2: From dietary recommendations to injury predictions and from age verification to psychological mapping -- Artificial Intelligence is set to become a force of change in Indian sports with a centralised data management system that would not just customise training but also track athletes' progress like never before.

At the Sports Ministry's National Centre for Sports Science and Research (NCSRR) here, India's first Athlete Management and Sports Science platform has been developed and put into operation.

It covers the elite athletes

vigorously for now but is intended to penetrate the junior-most level going forward so that "catch them young" becomes a planned reality of Indian sports.

It allows coaches and sports science experts to track the smallest details of an athlete's day, right down to the quantity of their lemon water intake or the number of soaked almonds consumed in the morning.

It's a platform developed by NASSCOM DeepTech startup Darwin, incubated with IIT Bombay, which is also a shareholder in the company.

Designed "specifically for Indian training needs", SPEED AI (Sports Performance Enhancement and Evaluation



through Digitization) has myriad data from Sports Authority of India's (SAI) 14 National Centres of Excellence (NCOE), covering over 6000 athletes right now. Every NCOE head has access to the data of the athletes based there while the collated information is available only to the top leadership

of NCSRR in Delhi.

"We want to map everything from the baseline, whether it is wrist strength, shoulder strength, or postural balance because only then we start the training in areas where there is scope for improvement," NCSRR head Brigadier (Retd) Bibhu Kalyan Nayak told PTI at

the centre, which held a workshop on sports sciences in precision disciplines (shooting and archery) just last week.

Nayak has previously served as the head of International Hockey Federation's (FIH) Health and Safety Committee, was in-charge of the Safdarjung Hospital's Sports Injury Centre and travelled with the Indian contingent to the Tokyo Olympics as its Medical Officer during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. He took over as NCSRR's first head in 2022 and can barely hide his excitement while talking about the possibilities that AI will open up.

Early detection of injury risk would not just reduce downtime to prevent loss of training

days but also enhance athlete longevity.

The company that has developed the platform, promising a 360 degree Athlete Performance System, says the biggest benefit would be injury detection and management.

Tackling Age fraud

Age fraud has been a bane of Indian sports for decades now with manipulation of paper records being rampant despite the introduction of The Tanner-Whitehouse 3 (TW3) test, that assesses skeletal maturity to verify age.

The AI-driven age verification system promises to automate TW3 methods for "highly accurate growth-plate assessment."