HERE . NOW

OrissaPOST

Mrunal's confession

Actor Mrunal Thakur says she is just perfectly imperfect and she loves that

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India-Russia ties

India is free to buy oil from any country, and there is nothing new about its decision to diversify its crude suppliers, says Kremlin

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IndiGo under scanner

The Competition Commission of India orders a detailed probe against IndiGo for unfair business practices

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Storming into finals

India land a seven-wicket win over Afghanistan to reach the ICC U19 World Cup summit clash against England

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VOLUME 15, ISSUE 305 I www.orissapost.com BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 5, 2026 12 PAGES | ₹5.00

Rahul Gandhi displays former Army chief's 'unreleased' memoir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

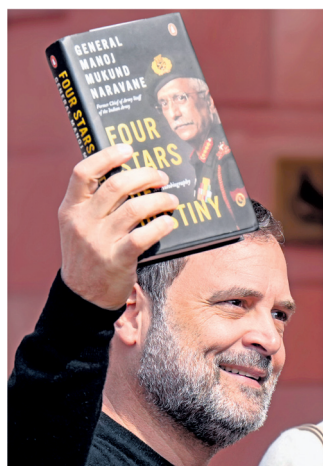
New Delhi, Feb 4: Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi Wednesday cited former Army chief MM Naravane's 'unreleased' memoir to claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi shed responsibility during the India-China conflict in 2020 and passed the buck on to the general.

Addressing reporters in the premises of Parliament House complex, Gandhi held up the 'unreleased' memoir and said he would like the youngsters in India to know that this 'book' exists despite the government claiming otherwise.

"The Speaker has said this book does not exist, the government has said it does not exist, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh ji has said this book does not exist. Every youngster in India should see this book exists," Gandhi said. He said Naravane has written the full account of what happened in Ladakh.

Gandhi said he has been told that he cannot quote from this "memoir" in Lok Sabha.

"The main line is what the PM said -- 'jo uchit samjho woh karo'. The chief of army staff Gen Naravane called Rajnath Singh and said 'Chinese tanks have come on Kailash ridge, what should we do? Rajnath Singh did not reply to him at first. He (Naravane) asked S Jaishankar, NSA (Ajit Doval) and Rajnath Singh ji, but did not get a reply," the Congress leader said citing the 'memoir'.



IN SYNC: Christian Stoinev performs with his chihuahua, Scooby, during the 150th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York

AP PHOTO

4 more medical colleges to come up in state: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

Rairangpur, Feb 4: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said the state government is considering setting up four more medical colleges to address the shortage of doctors in the state.

Majhi made the announcement while addressing a public meeting in Mayurbhanj district, where President Droupadi Murmu laid the foundation stone for an AYUSH Hospital-cum-Ayurvedic College at Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj district.

"In the field of healthcare, four more medical colleges will be opened in the state. This will solve the problem of shortage of doctors in the state," he said, adding that sectors such as Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Dental, Nursing and others will be developed alongside Allopathy.

Apart from this, the Chief Minister said that Arogya Mandirs will further strengthened. "Through this, the rural people will get 24-hour healthcare facilities," he said.

Officials said that Odisha presently has 11 state-run medical colleges and six such facilities in the private sector.

Mahanadi row: State urges Centre to step in

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Seeking further extension of the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT), the Odisha government Wednesday urged the Centre to step in as mediator to help resolve the long-pending water-sharing dispute with neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said the state government has requested the Centre to take the lead in resolving the dispute through negotiations, even though the matter is under consideration of the tribunal.

"We have talked to the central government and also the Chhattisgarh government. Odisha wants that the matter should be resolved amicably. The Centre needs to play the role of a mediator between the two states," Pujari told reporters here.

Pujari said Odisha government's inter-ministerial committee headed by Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo has also held discussion with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai.

"At the same time, the Odisha government has formally written to the Centre seeking a nine-month extension of the tenure of the tribunal, whose current term is nearing completion," he said.

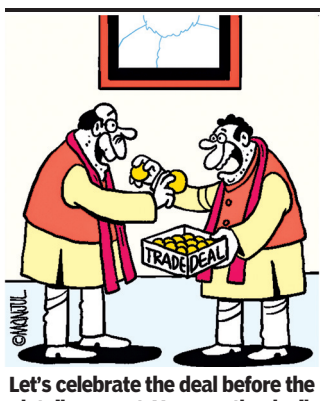
Justifying the demand for extension of the tribunal, the minister said the chairperson of the panel was not available for nine months for which no hearings could be held. Therefore, the tenure of the tribunal need to be extended, he added.

MWDT was constituted in March 2018 under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 to resolve the dispute over water sharing between Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

In 2016, Odisha filed a complaint alleging that Chhattisgarh constructed several dams/barrages at upstream of Mahanadi, thus blocking the free flow of water in the interstate river.

Though the tribunal operates since five years, the statement of only one witness has so far been recorded. Therefore, the tribunal's tenure should be extended, Pujari said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Let's celebrate the deal before the details are out. You see, the devil lies in the details

Malkangiri declared 'Naxal-free' district

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Malkangiri, Feb 4: Malkangiri, once considered a Maoist hotbed, was declared a 'Naxal-free' district Wednesday after red rebel Sukhram Markam, who was carrying a bounty of ₹21 lakh on his head, surrendered before the police, a senior officer said.

The announcement comes days after Nabrangpur district was declared Maoist-free after nine red rebels surrendered in neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

Markam, an area committee member of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), also laid down one SLR rifle, ammunition and other articles, Malkangiri SP Binod Patil H said. "This surrender of operational and ideological CPI (Maoist) leader marks a final blow to the red rebels in the district, making Malkangiri Naxal-free," the SP told reporters.

Markam, alias Suresh alias Yogesh, was present at the press conference. Malkangiri was once considered the breeding ground of left-wing extremism in Odisha.

"Maoist violence started in Malkangiri and spread to 21 of the state's 30 districts. Later, they spread their network across Odisha," said a retired DGP rank officer.

India to lower tariffs on agri goods to 0%: USTR

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer's claim that India will reduce tariffs on American agricultural goods, including fruits and vegetables, to zero per cent could trigger fears of cheaper imports undercutting domestic producers. Indian exports to the US would, however, face 18 per cent tariff which Greer justifies because America has a 'giant' trade deficit with India. In India, where millions depend on farm income and price support, agriculture remains a politically sensitive sector. Any such move to open up the country's agriculture and dairy sectors could likely face pushback unless accompanied by safeguards and protection for small farmers.

AGENCIES

New York/Washington, Feb 4: India will lower tariffs on a 'vast array' of American industrial and agricultural goods, such as 'fruits' and 'vegetables,' to zero per cent under the trade deal announced by President Donald Trump, a top US official has said.

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer described the deal as a 'big win' while noting that India will continue to control 'certain key areas' that enjoy protection.

"This is it. The time has come, and now we have the deal. We'll finish papering it, but we know the specifics. We know the details. It's a very exciting opportunity," Greer told CNBC Squawk Box. Greer said the US will continue to maintain some level of tariff against India - 18 per cent – "because we have this giant trade deficit with them..."

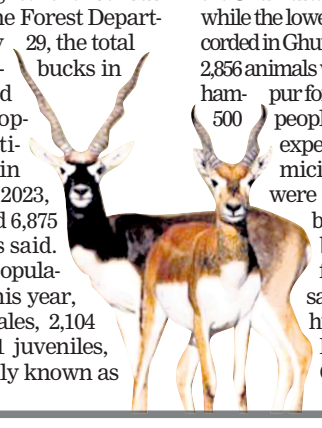
Giving details of the deal, Greer said the average tariff on industrial goods in India is currently around 13.5 per cent. "That's going to go to zero for virtually everything. When I say virtually, I mean 98-99%. On the agricultural side, there's a vast, vast array of agricultural goods. So it will go to zero," he said.

"India, like every country in the world, including the US, has some protection around certain key areas where they'll continue to control that. We'll continue to work on access. But for a variety of things, tree nuts, wine, spirits, fruits, vegetables, etc, they're going down to zero. This is a big win," Greer said.

BLACKBUCK POPULATION RISES SHARPLY IN GANJAM

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Feb 4: The population of blackbucks in Ganjam district has risen by 498 in the last one year, officials said Wednesday. According to the census conducted by the Forest Department January 29, the total number of blackbucks in the district stood at 9,287. The population was estimated at 8,789 in 2025, 7,273 in 2023, 7,358 in 2021 and 6,875 in 2020, officials said.



Of the total population recorded this year, 5,832 were females, 2,104 males and 1,351 juveniles, they said. Locally known as 'Krushnasar Murga', the blackbuck is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, and is categorised as vulnerable in the Red Data Book. The highest number of blackbucks, 5,972, was sighted in the Ghumusar South forest division, while the lowest count of 459 was recorded in Ghumusar North. Another 2,856 animals were found in the Berhampur forest division. Around 500 people, including wildlife experts, activists, academicians and students, were involved. "Locals believe the sighting of blackbucks in paddy fields is a good sign," said Amulya Upadhyaya, president of the Blackbuck Protection Committee (Ganjam).

Korean game addiction: 3 minor sisters jump to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ghaziabad, Feb 4: Three sisters, the youngest just 12, addicted to an online Korean game that involved a series of tasks died after jumping off the balcony of their ninth floor home in the early hours of Wednesday, police said.

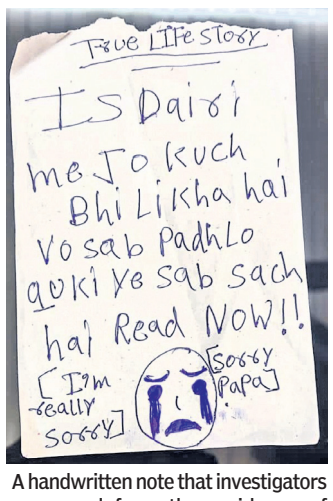
Nishika, 16, Prachi, 14, and Pakhi left behind a chilling note that said, "Read everything written in this diary, it is all here." It was accompanied by a crying face emoji and a handwritten message, "Sorry papa, I am really sorry."

The diary was recovered from the girls' belongings. The three did not go to school and had been home for the last two years, police said. Their father Chetan Kumar, a forex trader, has two wives, both sisters, and there were five children in all - four daughters and a son. The entire family lived together.

Police received information that three girls had jumped from the balcony of their home in Bharat City in Sahibabad area in Ghaziabad, the busy satellite town abutting the national capital, around 2.15 am.

They were rushed in ambulance to a hospital in Loni close by where doctors declared them dead on arrival. Uttar Pradesh DGP Rajeev Krishna told PTI in Lucknow, "We are getting the whole case examined in detail."

Though details were sketchy, Deputy Commissioner of Police Nimish Patil said preliminary investigation revealed the girls were influenced by Korean content and spent a significant amount of time on their mobile phones. He said the girls' education had been irregular and their academic performance was below par.



A handwritten note that investigators recovered from the residence of the three minor sisters

POLICE HANDOUT VIA PTI PHOTO

"But it is evident that the girls were highly addicted to mobile phone usage," he said. Assistant Commissioner of Police (Shalimar Garden) Atul Kumar Singh added that the sisters were addicted to a Korean task-based interactive "love game".

"Their parents had restricted their mobile phone usage for the past few days, which left them distressed. This may have triggered the decision (to take the extreme step)," he said.

The sisters got addicted to online gaming during the pandemic years and played it almost without break.

They had been playing the game for the last two-and-a-half to three years, said the father.

The apparent suicide pact recalled the Blue Whale challenge that is believed to have pushed a 14-year-old Mumbai boy to suicide in 2017. It was a 50-day-challenge believed to have originated in Russia and claimed over 130 lives across Russia and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

It gave a task a day -- each one potentially fatal -- to the player for 50 days.

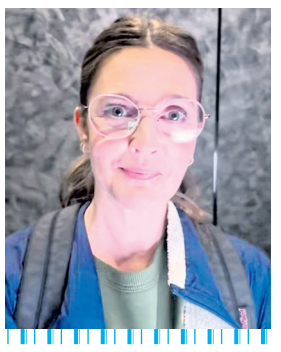
leisure

KIM IS CASUALLY DATING SIR LEWIS HAMILTON

Kim Kardashian has "felt ready to put herself back out there recently". The 45-year-old beauty was spotted in Paris with the seven-time Formula One World Champion, and an insider has confirmed that the celebrity duo is "casually" dating. The source told *Us Weekly*: "She has felt ready to put herself back out there recently."

BARRYMORE WOULD NEVER DATE A MAN IN HIS 20s

Hollywood actress Drew Barrymore has shared that she can't see herself paired up with a younger man. During a show, the actress was asked if she has "tried (dating), like, the 20-somethings?" The *50 First Dates* star replied, "no, I'm totally grossed out by that. No, I have children and it seems wrong now."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

Today is an ordinary day, it is business as usual, but there will be some progress. You can while away your time doing petty chores. And, Ganesha says, while day-dreaming think about that coveted home, as that's how the first plans materialise.

TAURUS

Feel your imagination run wild as you star-gaze throughout the day wondering about the existence of the extra terrestrial. You will paint the workplace in your flavour of innovation, combined with a drive to work equally hard. Add some smooth talk to the equation and you will find a lot of people in awe of your charm, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

Today, you may encounter unusual challenges, says Ganesha. You will come up with new thoughts and tactics, which will bring about positive changes and results. Avoid any confrontation with those living around you. Ganesha advises you to keep your cool during the day.

CANCER

Financially, you may be in a bit of a bother today. Payment of bills, taxes and loans may keep you busy for most part of the day. You may even contemplate borrowing money to meet the demands. However, you are likely to receive one of your pending payments, which will be enough to get you out of the fix.

LEO

Being good to oneself is not vanity. To Ganesha, it seems as if you take this statement to heart, since it looks quite possible that you make your personal care number one priority today. On the flip side though, you become aware of the fact that the harder you try the more it seems you have to.

VIRGO

The time today is ripe to venture into a new business. Projects that have been put-off will finally be completed. Looking into the week ahead, you are most likely to give yourself an energy zap. Parties will be all fun and entertainment. Your kids will bring home joy and pride and this will brighten the mood even more, says Ganesha.

LIBRA

The Bhagavad Gita says, "Do your duty without expecting the fruit." Remember this important lesson and strive hard to put in extra efforts to finish off whatever you undertake to do. Worrying about results will only hamper your progress. Go with the flow and let results come to you.

SCORPIO

At work, you would want to change the perspective with which people see you. Your colleagues recognise you as the emerging alpha-lion. Ideas and opinions will impress your bosses. But keep a level head and learn where to stop when winning, counsels Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Going to private parties is a high probability today. All in all, make the most of it as you get nostalgic with old friends and make plans with new ones. Moreover, relatives will be pleased to meet you after a long time.

CAPRICORN

Whether you're an artist, performer, professional or an entrepreneur, career issues will take the foreground today, while personal matters will wait in queue for your attention, says Ganesha. Your performance will be at its all-time high, and your efforts will be duly rewarded, but credit for this must go to your loved ones who will lend their unceasing support for all your endeavours.

AQUARIUS

Aim. Shoot. Achieve. Today, you will concentrate your energies to execute your plans with precision. Naturally, your work progresses by leaps and bounds. By sundown, you will achieve far more than everyone's estimation. That's the way to go, says Ganesha.

PISCES

Of late, the harder you try, the more it seems you have to do. You are likely to put your foot down today and spend some time taking care of yourself and playing truant with your responsibilities. Recharge your batteries fully while you are at it, says Ganesha.

'I'm perfectly imperfect'

'THE 50'
No pleasing game: Nikki

Mumbai: From the very first day inside the house in reality show *The 50*, Nikki Tamboli made it clear that she would approach the game on her own terms. In a reality show environment where equations often shift based on convenience and approval, Nikki chose a more straightforward route—staying aligned with her personal ethics and values rather than adapting herself to fit expectations.

Known for her candid and assertive personality, Nikki carried that same approach into the show from the outset. While several contestants appeared cautious, carefully weighing their words and early alliances, she opted for transparency. Her decisions and opinions reflected a conscious choice to prioritise honesty over popularity, even if it meant standing alone at times.

What stood out on Day One was Nikki's clarity about why she was there. Rather than attempting to win quick approval, she focused on being consistent in her conduct and communication. Her approach suggested an understanding that respect in such a format often comes from conviction rather than constant consensus. By setting her boundaries early, she established a clear identity within the house.

AGENCIES

Mumbai: Actor Mrunal Thakur says it took her years to accept herself as she felt underconfident for the longest and had many insecurities even after entering the film industry. But she loves her imperfection, the actress said.

Thakur, who is set to feature alongside Siddhant Chaturvedi in Ravi Udyawar's directorial *Do Deewane Seher Mein,* spoke at the trailer launch of the film in Mumbai.

The actor said she had insecurities for the longest time. "When I used to change schools all the time, there were some insecurities. I used to feel underconfident...Up until now...till the release of my film Son of Sardaar 2, I used to feel that way. I realised it took me a lot of time to accept that yes, I am beautiful the way I am. And I'm just so proud of myself with the way I am," she said.

"There was so much noise around, everyone thought, look perfect, do this body, do that, look like this, manicure, pedicure, pretend, just cross your legs. No, man. I'm just perfectly imperfect and I love that," she added.

The film is set to release in theatres on February 20.

AGENCIES

URMILA'S LIFE PHILOSOPHY

Mumbai: Actress Urmila Matondkar shared that 'Life should be about bringing a smile to others' as she expressed gratitude for all the love received by her on her birthday.

Sharing a dazzling black and white picture of herself on her official IG, Urmila wrote, "My heart filled with Great Gratitude and my universe full of unconditional love that I receive from all of you and spread it right back amongst all you lovely people!! (sic)."

Blessed with zillions of precious moments that make up a fulfilling life, she went on to add, "Life should always be about zillions of tiny moments when you can manage to bring a tiny smile on as many faces as possible. By the grace of God I've been blessed with many such memories. And I pray to the Almighty for many more opportunities when I can make a difference to others in any n every way possible...Thank you for all the Love, Support, Goodness and Adulation."

Several members from the film fraternity penned lovely wishes for the Satya actress on her birthday.

IANS

STAGE SHOW

A scene from Odia play *Rajanka Bhuta* performed by the artistes of City-based theatre troupe Mirror, Wednesday at Bhanja Kala Mandap, Bhubaneswar. Written by Zakir Khan, the play was directed by Shibashankar Tripathy. Apart from director Tripathy, Pradipta Swain, Duryodhar Sahoo and Minakshi Pati played key roles in the play.

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Labanya Theatre's drama fest from today

Bhubaneswar: Labanya Natya Mahotsav, a three-day drama festival, organised by Labanya Theatre will kick off here at Bhanja Kalamandap, Thursday.

Three plays – *Baunsa Thengare Swadhinata* (direction- Diliswar Maharana) by Kalaparishad of Dhenkanal, *Rajajema* (direction- Debadutta Pati) by Uttar Purush of Bhubaneswar and January 30, a workshop production by the host troupe – will be staged at the event. Five theatre directors – Chakradhar Patra, Chittaranjan Satpathy, Govind Jena, Pragyan Ranjan Khatua and Bhaswati Basu – and four media persons – Manoranjan Mohanty, Debadalana Rath, Soumyaranjan Rout and Piyush Mohanty - will be felicitated during the festival, said Satyanarayan Jena, the secretary of Labanya Theatre.

PNN

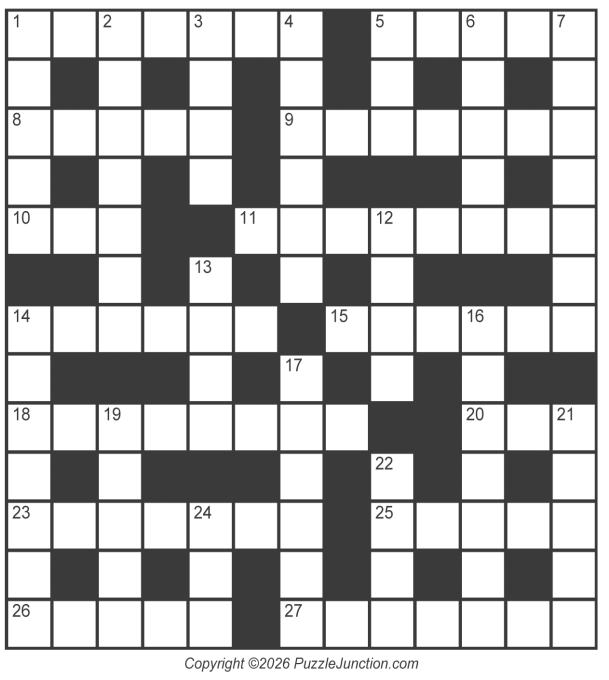
PEANUTS

CALVIN AND HOBBES

BREVITY

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across
1 Passion
5 Bush baby
8 Gallic goodbye
9 Uneasy
10 Before, in poetry
11 Brahms, e.g.
14 Pancake starter
15 TV show type
18 Unstable (3-5)
20 Yoga class need
23 Snubbed
25 Fragrance
26 Clutch
27 Boils slowly

Down
1 Picture holder
2 Clothing (Archaic)
3 Musical composition
4 Sanity
5 Careless
6 Jupiter has many
7 Podium
12 Bluenose
13 Surrender
14 Casino action
16 Fruit dessert
17 Gets around
19 It eats shoots and leaves
21 Snares
22 Mangle
24 Dead letters?

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

AWARENESS IS KEY

People under the banner of 'Modern Organisation for Truth & Economic Reality' create awareness on the occasion of World Cancer Day, at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

Prez unveils MSCB varsity IT campus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo (MSCB) University Information Technology (IT) campus and laid foundation stone for AYUSH Hospital-cum-Ayurvedic College, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology campus, Archery Centre, city beautification and drainage upgradation projects, auditorium and cultural centre, girls' hostel and de-addiction centre at Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj district Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the Purvodaya vision of the Centre gives priority to the development of Odisha, and Mayurbhanj district is benefiting significantly from this vision. She expressed confidence that these development-oriented projects, institutions and schemes will benefit the region and generate new employment opportunities for the people of the region.

The President said that the Centre is making special efforts for the economic development of tribal brothers and sisters. Providing MSP for more than 90 minor forest products through the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana, loans to tribal members of self-help groups through the micro credit scheme and low-interest loans to Scheduled Tribe women under the tribal women empowerment scheme are some examples of the government's commitment.

"The government is also working for better health and education facilities. The PM-JANMAN Yojana has been implemented for the welfare of PVTGs. Electrification has been extended to tribal-dominated areas and 4G internet connectivity has been provided in remote areas," Murmu said, adding that with these efforts, the stream of holistic development is flowing in the tribal regions.

The President said that the goal of upliftment of the poorest of the poor can only be achieved through the development of the tribal community. "The government is continuously working to ensure that tribal communities receive benefit of all the government welfare and developmental schemes," the President said.

She urged all to take advantage of those schemes and make others aware. The President said, "This will ensure local development which will lead to the growth of the state and that will, in turn, lead to the development of the country." She emphasised, "Our resolve of making 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 will be fulfilled only through the collective efforts of the government and the citizens."

MURMU OFFERS PRAYERS AT SRIMANDIR

Puri: President Droupadi Murmu performed the 'pinda daan' ritual at the revered 'Sweta Ganga' tank in Puri Wednesday morning and later visited Srimandir.

Murmu reached 'Sweta Ganga' at 7am on the third day of her visit to the state after spending the night at the Lok Bhavan in Puri, and performed the ritual for the salvation of the souls of ancestors.

After the rituals, the President reached the 'Singhadwar' of the 12th-century shrine at 7.40am. She was received by Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Kumar Padhee were also present.

The temple was out of bounds for the public in view of the President's visit.

Murmu, accompanied by her family, visited the sanctum sanctorum of the temple through the southern gate and had 'darshan' of the sibling deities – Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra. Padhee said this was Murmu's fourth visit to the shrine after becoming the President. "She offered prayers at the sanctum sanctorum and visited the seats of Maa Bimala and Maa Laxmi in the temple complex. A flag (patitapabana bana) was hoisted atop the temple by the administration, seeking fulfilment of the President's wishes," he said.

AI-LED DIGITAL GROWTH IN FOCUS

Two-day Black Swan Summit kicks off today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: The two-day Black Swan Summit India, a conference focusing on artificial intelligence (AI), FinTech and InsurTech, will begin here Thursday, with President Droupadi Murmu and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi scheduled to attend the event February 6, officials said.

Organised by the state government under BharatNetra initiative in partnership with the Singapore-headquartered Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN), the summit positions the state as a nation-building platform for India's next phase of digital-led growth, they said.

Speaking to reporters here, additional chief secretary of Electronics and Information Technology department, Visha Dev, said the conference marks a decisive step in the state's ambition to establish Bhubaneswar as a nationally and globally connected centre for AI-enabled FinTech, InsurTech, and global capability services.

OVER 1,700 DELEGATES FROM ACROSS 24 COUNTRIES AND NEARLY 100 SPEAKERS FROM FIVE CONTINENTS – NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, EUROPE, ASIA AND AFRICA – WILL ATTEND THE 2-DAY SUMMIT

"Odisha is stepping forward to demonstrate how inclusive, tech-led governance, future-ready talent, global collaboration and trusted digital infrastructure can deliver prosperity at scale for India," Dev said.

Odisha is not preparing to merely participate in the global digital economy, it intends to help shape it, as a frontline contributor to Viksit Bharat, he added.

"Our focus is on operationalising AI and digital finance in ways that deliver real economic value and long-term institutional capacity," he said.

With the participation by over 1,700 delegates from across 24 countries and nearly 100 speakers from five continents (North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa), the summit will convene global and national policymakers, regulators, financial institutions, technology leaders, startups, investors, and academics for an execution-oriented dialogue, officials said.

5,451 missing women, children rescued under Op Anweshan-II

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Odisha Police has rescued 5,451 missing children and women and reunited them with their families during a special drive named 'Operation Anweshan-II' conducted across the state from January 21 to 30, officials said Wednesday.

All district and urban police units in the state participated in the drive and succeeded in safely rescuing a record number of 5,451 missing people — 4,665 women, 77 boys and 709 girls, police said in a statement.

Puri police rescued the maximum 613 missing people, while 501 were rescued in Cuttack (rural) district and 429 in Bhadrak district, the Odisha Police said.

Similarly, 413 missing people have been safely rescued from Ganjam police district, 346 persons from Kendrapara, 271 from Jajpur, 236 from Bargarh, 210 from Angul, and 206 from Dhenkanal district, it added.

"The key objective of the special drive is to safely rescue missing children and women and reunite them with their families along with ensuring them the necessary facilities," a police officer said.

The operation was conducted in coordination of the district police, railway police and urban police, he said.

Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania has praised the officers and staff of Odisha Police for the rescue of over 5,400 missing people and has informed that such campaigns will be intensified in the coming days.

A total of 2,417 missing people – 2,059 women and 358 children – were rescued by police during the 'Operation Anweshan-I' conducted from August 18 to 22 last year.

VARSITY TAG: Students of Shailabala Women's College in Cuttack stage a dharna in the Silver City demanding university status to the institution, Wednesday PIC: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

BJD: Ensure women safety before launching MKBY

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has strongly criticised the state government, urging it to guarantee the safety of women before inaugurating schemes like Mukhyamantri Kanya Bibaha Yojana (MKBY).

In a statement, BJD media coordinator Lenin Mohanty said Chief Minister Mohan Majhi launched the scheme in Ganjam district Tuesday while reports surfaced of a shocking attempted rape of minor girl in Kandhamal district.

The girl was allegedly lured into a forest and assaulted before escaping, highlighting a serious lapse in women's safety under the BJP-led "double-engine" government.

Mohanty said Odisha has witnessed a disturbing rise in crimes against women over the past 18 months. He cited the CM's own Assembly reply, noting that 37,611 women-related crime cases were registered in just 15 months, including over 4,000 rapes.

Recalling recent incidents, Mohanty listed a series of atrocities against women and girls across the state: the gang rape at Gopalpur beach, the burning of a minor girl in Balanga, the Tentulikhunti tribal girl murder, misconduct at Bharatpur police station, gangrape of a Dalit minor in Kuchinda, sexual assault at Lamtaput residential school in Koraput, and several other horrific cases in Kendujhar, Berhampur, and Malkangiri.

"These repeated incidents not only endanger women but shake social trust and threaten the safety of educational institutions," Mohanty said. He demanded urgent security measures for girls and swift, impartial action against criminals targeting women and students in Odisha.

Mohanty added that the BJD has consistently raised its voice for women's safety, demanding justice for victims, exemplary punishment for perpetrators, and concrete steps to ensure security in schools and colleges.

The BJD urged the Odisha government to take immediate steps to restore confidence among women and ensure their protection before promoting welfare schemes.

WOMAN ROBBED AT GUNPOINT IN CITY

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: An early-morning robbery here has raised questions over the safety and security of citizens as some miscreants looted gold jewellery from an elderly woman at gunpoint in Gadasahi area under Nayapalli police limits, Wednesday.

The victim, identified as Indumati Baliarsingh, 62, was returning home after completing her daily chores around 5:30am when an armed robber appeared from behind and pointed a gun on her head.

The robber asked her to hand over all the gold ornaments she was wearing. A terrified Indumati gave all of her gold ornaments to the miscreant.

Before anybody could catch the robber, he locked the door of the house and fled the spot.

Locals have expressed concern over the incident that spread panic in the area. "The robbers are now active in the broad daylight. If these incidents continue, we have to think twice before stepping out," said a local.

The family members have lodged a complaint in this regard at Nayapalli police station.

"We have registered a case and initiated a probe into the matter. The miscreant will be nabbed soon," said Nayapalli police officials.

Sundarpada blast prime accused dies

BHUBANESWAR: A little over a week after four persons sustained grievous injuries when a bomb exploded in New Azad Nagar area of Sundarpada under Airfield police limits here, prime accused Sahnawaz Mallik succumbed to the injuries while undergoing treatment at a private hospital Wednesday. Reports said Sahnawaz, along with three others, was assembling a bomb January 27 when it exploded accidently. All the four sustained critical injuries and tried to flee the spot when the locals intervened and foiled their attempt. They were rushed to a private hospital for treatment. Initial police investigation revealed that they were preparing the bomb to carry out a big criminal activity. Preliminary investigation also revealed that Sahnawaz was a history-sheeter. Initially, the National Investigative Agency (NIA) team probed the matter suspecting larger criminal conspiracy. They were unable to question Sahnawaz due to his critical condition and were waiting for his recovery.

State bets on caravan tourism to promote offbeat destinations

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida Wednesday flagged off three luxury caravans aimed at attracting young tourists, adventure seekers and offbeat explorers who prefer experiential and nature-based travel.

Caravan travel, a concept popular in European countries, has been launched under the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme. The first two caravans were launched on the occasion of Magha Saptami January 25.

"These caravans will attract young tourists and nature lovers interested in caravan tourism and adventure travel. These can also fulfill the need for hotels," Parida said.

Caravan tourism is a special travel style where tourists explore destinations while living in specially designed, self-contained vehicles.

The Tourism dept has identified destinations like Hirakud, Similipal, Daringbadi, Deomali, Talsari, Pentha, Mangalajodi, Jiranga and other pristine locations for caravan tourism.

The Tourism dept has identified destinations like Hirakud, Similipal, Daringbadi, Deomali, Talsari, Pentha, Mangalajodi, Jiranga and other pristine locations for caravan tourism

Officials said the 6-seater tour buses will operate in these destinations in the first phase.

Each bus is equipped with air-conditioned interiors, plush seating, sleeping arrangements, a kitchenette and hygienic washrooms, ensuring tourists can enjoy long journeys without compromising on comfort.

The buses have GPS tracking, fire safety equipment and eco-friendly waste disposal systems.

Tourism department director Deepankar Mohapatra said caravan tourism will also facilitate travel beyond conventional destinations, supporting balanced regional development and reducing pressure on traditional tourism hubs.

A couple, Annada Prasad Padhy and Archana Padhy, received their first tickets for the journey to Talsari in Balasore district.

State to use AI, drones to control forest fires

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: With forest fires emerging as a major challenge during summer, the state Forest department Wednesday said it will take help of AI and drone cameras for early detection.

Addressing a press conference here, newly appointed Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief of Forest Force K Murugesan said special emphasis has been laid on technological interventions to combat forest fires.

"Artificial intelligence (AI) enabled cameras and drones are being used to detect fires at an early stage," he said.

Along with the use of technologies, PCCF said 334 special protection teams have been deployed at various ranges and beat levels, who have been provided with more than 5,000 leaf blowers and other fire-fighting equipment.

This apart, more than 631 training programmes are being conducted to enhance the skills of the personnel, while around 200 NDRF personnel have also been given special training in forest fire prevention, he said.

Admitting that forest fire is a threat not only to forests, but also to the livelihood of people dependent on forests, the PCCF said, adding that according to last year's statistics, about 29,709 forest fire sites were identified in the state.

"These incidents were caused by dry weather and human negligence due to dry leaves stored in the forest. However, due to satellite-based warnings and prompt action by forest officials, about 99.7 per cent of the incidents were controlled and the damage was minimised," he said. "Based on this success, special action plans have been prepared for all the districts of the state. Around 20,461 km long fire lines have been created to prevent the spread of fire in forests," the officer said.

The forest department has also appealed to the local community and people living in forest areas for their cooperation. Awareness is being created in around 336 villages through Forest Protection Committees and Eco-Development Committees.

GARG REVIEWS MAHA SHIVRATRI PREPARATIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: A high-level meeting was held Wednesday under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Anu Garg to review arrangements for the smooth conduct of rituals and worship at the Lingaraj Temple during the upcoming Maha Shivratri, scheduled for February 15.

The meeting, held at Lok Seva Bhawan conference hall, focused on the orderly conduct of temple rituals and efficient festival management. Emphasising discipline and coordination, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for well-organised darshan arrangements in view of the expected heavy influx of devotees.

Addressing officials, Garg said Lord Lingaraj, the presiding deity, is revered by devotees across Odisha and that any negligence in rituals or temple management would be unacceptable. She noted that the Jagara festival during Maha Shivratri draws massive crowds, making crowd control and orderly darshan a major administrative challenge.

Stressing collective responsibility, Garg said coordinated efforts by senior officials, police, fire services, temple servitors and nijogs, along with public cooperation, were crucial for the smooth and safe conduct of the festival, warning that even minor lapses could lead to untoward incidents. To address these challenges, officials were advised to draw up a comprehensive roadmap for crowd control, smooth movement of devotees and disciplined darshan, while respecting religious sentiments.

The meeting also discussed measures to ensure timely completion of rituals in coordination with temple servitors, along with arrangements for adequate ventilation, oxygen facilities and fire safety inside the temple. It further deliberated on the dissemination of real-time information on rituals and schedules through television, radio, print media and public announcement systems.

'Madhu Babu, a living chapter of history'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: The life of Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das was a living chapter of history, speakers said while paying tribute to him on his death anniversary at a meeting organised by the Information and Public Relations department to mark the occasion.

Speakers highlighted that Das played a significant role in promoting Odisha's economic growth through handicrafts and indigenous industries, while also taking the state's identity to global platforms. They observed that whenever an Odia attempts to do something new, the inspiration of Madhu Babu continues to guide and encourage them.

Delivering the keynote address, Kantakabi Lakshmikanta Mohapatra's grandson Gurukalyan Mohapatra said that Madhubabu's contribution to Odisha's social, economic, and cultural renaissance is unforgettable.

A pioneer of the movement for the formation of a separate state on linguistic basis, Das, often addressed as Madhu Babu, stood as a living symbol of Odia pride and self-respect. Because of his foresight and national vision, he will remain immortal in the hearts of the people of Odisha, the speakers addressed.

Referring to Das as the first true political leader of the state, Mohapatra stated that he was a pioneering and unparalleled figure in the political history of modern Odisha. "Rather than focusing on personal success, Madhu Babu consistently worked to establish Odisha's identity on the world stage," he said.

Eminent Gandhian thinker and columnist Prahallad Kumar Singh, speaking as guest speaker, described Madhu Babu as the era-defining figure of Odia identity. He stressed the need for introspection on how far today's society reflects the ideals and principles upheld by Madhusudan Das.

'Patience, resilience can help overcome cancer'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: At a time when cancer continues to be a major cause of concern across the world, eminent cancer specialists said that even life-threatening diseases like cancer can be overcome by facing them with patience, courage and determination.

The views were expressed during the observance of World Cancer Day at the Bagchi Shri Shankara Cancer Centre and Research Institute, Bhubaneswar.

On the occasion, several cancer survivors who have successfully recovered were present at the event and shared their personal struggles and journeys, inspiring patients and attendees alike.

Stating that cancer cannot be defeated by fear, the institute's director Deepak Mishra said courage and a positive mindset are crucial in winning the battle against the disease.

As part of the observance, the institute organised free cancer awareness and screening camps in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and several other parts of the state.

Among those present at the programme were Tribikram Panda, Usharshi Das, Saroj Ranjan Sahu, Ravi Shankar Das and Itishree Panda, among others. It was noted that the institute, established just two years ago with world-class infrastructure, is now receiving more than 500 patients daily from different parts of the country for treatment. Equipped with advanced technology and specialist doctors for the management of complex cancer cases, the centre has gained nationwide recognition within a short span of time.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By this affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Jharsuguda, Dt.04.02.2026, I, Jamuna Pun, W/o. Shankar Pun, R/o. Bhuyanpada, Ward No.12, OSAP 2nd BN, P.O.- OMP Line, P.S.- Airport, Dist.- Jharsuguda, Odisha declare that my husband's name has been wrongly mentioned as Sankar Pun in place of Shankar Pun in my son Aditya Pun Birth Certificate. Now I want to change my husband's name from Sankar Pun to Shankar Pun in my son's Birth certificate.

By affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Chandahandi I, Sapuri Nayak mother of Mamata Nayak, permanently residing Village/P.O.- Malgam, Block- Chandahandi, Dist.- Nabarangpur declare that I renounce my daughter's former name Sonali Nayak, and assume her name as Mamata Nayak. She shall henceforth be known as Mamata Nayak for all purposes.

By affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Chandahandi I, Pradeep Sinha father of Saraswati Sinha, permanently residing Village/P.O.- Chandahandi, Block- Chandahandi, Dist.- Nabarangpur declare that I renounce my daughter's former name Swati Sinha, Date of Birth 19.11.2011, and assume her name as Saraswati Sinha, Date of Birth 14.08.2011. She shall henceforth be known as Saraswati Sinha for all purposes.

Govt to ensure timely MSP payment via digital mode

Bhubaneswar: The state government has been working to ensure the timely, transparent and error-free disbursement of Minimum Support Price (MSP) and input assistance for paddy procured from eligible farmers across the state. As a landmark reform to further strengthen transparency and eliminate the possibility of erroneous or duplicate payments, Aadhaar-based e-KYC verification has been implemented for the first time, ensuring that payments are credited exclusively to genuine farmers registered on the P-PAS (Paddy Procurement Automation System) portal. The government has extended financial assistance amounting to `12,703.74 crore to 10,56,693 farmers till now with regards to MSP and Input Assistance. With more than 7.99 lakh farmers benefiting from the procurement operations so far, a limited number of 5,562 bank account related issues have been encountered leading to error cases. These issues are primarily attributable to accounts reaching the maximum ceiling for the type of account namely, Jan Dhan accounts/Airtel Payments Bank/ India Post Payments Bank accounts.

LAND DISPUTE

FOUR ARRESTED FOR ATTACK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: Four persons, including three women, were arrested in Khurda district Wednesday for allegedly attacking two women with deadly weapons over a land dispute, police said.

As per the complaint lodged by Ajay Maha Bhoi (46), the incident occurred between 7 am and 8 am at Kujimahala village under Chandaka police limits when he was not at home.

According to police, the accused—Sukanti Maha Bhoi (24), Lambodara alias Babula Maha Bhoi (60), Janaki Maha Bhoi (55) and Manjulata Jena (55)—allegedly trespassed into the complainant's house and abused his wife and mother-in-law using foul language. They then attacked the two women with sharp weapons, including a knife, iron rod and crowbar, allegedly with the intent to kill.

On returning home, the complainant found both women lying injured with bleeding wounds on their heads and other parts of the body. He immediately shifted them to the Mendhasal Community Health Centre (CHC) for treatment and later lodged a written complaint with the police.

Preliminary investigation revealed a long-standing land dispute among family members. Police said the attack occurred when the victims were digging the disputed land for construction purposes, which was opposed by the accused. The four accused have been forwarded to court, and further investigation into the case is underway, police added.

Apollo Hospitals launches 'Zero to Hero' campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: The Apollo Cancer Centre, Bhubaneswar, Wednesday launched its 'Zero to Hero' campaign to mark World Cancer Day, aiming to promote early detection of cancer at Stage Zero and improve survival and recovery outcomes.

Hospital COO and Director of Medical Services Alok Srivastava said early detection was not just a medical priority but a systemic one, adding that the centre's focus on prevention and early diagnosis could shift cancer care from reactive treatment to proactive control.

Surgical oncologist Prashant Chandra Das said early detection significantly improves outcomes, noting that cancers diagnosed at the earliest stages are often less invasive to treat, more effective, and associated with higher survival rates, while delayed diagnosis makes treatment far more complex.

Radiation oncologist Sandeep Muzumder said Stage Zero cancer requires simpler treatment, fewer hospital visits, and shorter recovery, making it more affordable for patients and families.

Medical oncologist Aditya Misra added that the core of the 'Zero to Hero' campaign is empowering patients—those who prioritise awareness, regular screening, and early care give themselves the best chance to beat cancer.

Noted haematologist Pritish Chandra Patra said, "Treating cancer at Stage Zero stops it before it becomes life-threatening, preventing metastasis and long-term complications."

A cancer survivor at Apollo Cancer Centre said, "When I was diagnosed, the word 'cancer' was terrifying. Catching it early changed everything—treatment was more manageable, recovery faster, and my life didn't come to a halt."

50 YRS OF BONDED LABOUR SYSTEM (ABOLITION) ACT

Call for rehabilitation, curbing distress migration

SURAKHYA highlights alarming human cost of migration, citing 403 Odisha migrant deaths in nine years, including 233 since 2022

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 4: As the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 marks 50 years this February, civil society coalition SURAKHYA has renewed its call for stronger state action, asserting that freedom from bonded labour remains incomplete without effective rehabilitation and the prevention of distress migration.

Addressing the media Wednesday, coalition representatives said the landmark legislation not only outlawed bonded labour but also placed a clear legal obligation on the state to identify, release and rehabilitate bonded labourers, ensuring that liberation does not slide back into exploitation. "The Act envisioned freedom with dignity. Fifty years later, that promise is yet to be fully realised," the coalition said.

Coalition advisor Sudarshan Chhotoray pointed out that despite the rescue of over 2.97 lakh bonded labourers across the country, lakhs more continue to remain trapped in bondage in different and often less visible forms. The coalition said bonded labour today is closely linked to informal employment, unregulated labour markets and distress migration, making identification and enforcement increasingly challenging.

Highlighting the situation in Odisha, the coalition cited official data tabled in Parliament showing that 155 bonded labourers were rescued in the state during 2023–24. While welcoming these rescue efforts, the coalition expressed concern that rehabilitation remains weak, with many survivors still lacking access to sustainable livelihoods, housing, education and social security. "Rescue without rehabilitation only pushes people back into vulnerability," Chhotoray warned.

The coalition also flagged the alarming human cost of migration. Citing civil society reports, SURAKHYA said that 403 migrant (Dadan) labourers from Odisha have died in other states over the past nine years, with as many as 233 deaths reported since 2022 alone. Ganjam, Kalahandi and Bolangir account for the highest number of deaths underscoring the strong link between distress migration and exploitation.

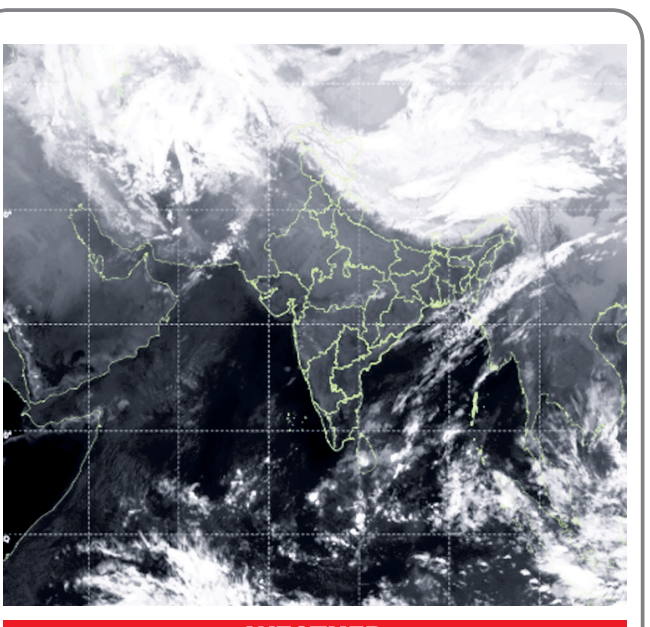
They further criticised the lack of clarity surrounding the functioning of the State Migrant Task Force, despite the government identifying 11 districts as highly prone to distress migration. The coalition demanded that the Standard Operating Procedures and a comprehensive State Action Plan be made public and implemented without delay.

Among its key demands, the coalition urged the state government to formally observe February 9 as Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Day, strengthen inter-state coordination for rescue and rehabilitation, and invest in long-term livelihood and employment opportunities in migration-prone districts.

As the law marks its golden jubilee, SURAKHYA stressed that the anniversary must translate into concrete action, ensuring that the constitutional promise of freedom from bondage becomes a lived reality for every worker.

MARKET WATCH

CURRENCY INDEX	VARIATION	BOURSES INDEX	VARIATION	COMMODITIES INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.55 ▲ 0.21	SENSEX	83817.69 ▲ 78.56	GOLD	₹149,000 ▼ ₹244
EURO	107.13 ▲ 0.48	NIFTY	25776.00 ▲ 48.45	SILVER	₹272,518 ▲ ₹4503



WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	29.6°	27.8°	Dry weather
Min Temp	15.2°	14.2°	
Humidity	68%	79%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

OPHWC employee steps down over 'sexual harassment'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Feb 4: A female employee of the Odisha Police Housing and Welfare Corporation (OPHWC) has resigned from her position, claiming she was denied justice after accusing the project manager of Kalidaspur office here of sexual harassment.

The woman filed a formal written complaint with the corporation's headquarters in Bhubaneswar against Project Manager SK Mohanty. She alleged that Mohanty harassed her over an extended period by sending explicit videos and messages via WhatsApp and making unwanted romantic advances.

According to the complaint, the harassment escalated in January when Mohanty allegedly summoned her to his office under the pretext of work, locked the door, attempted to use physical force and misbehaved with her. The victim further alleged that after she resisted, Mohanty called her father over phone and threatened him. Later, she sought justice from her office headquarters in Bhubaneswar. The woman stated that she decided to resign due to a lack of disciplinary action from the department and mounting professional pressure on her.

Last week, the complainant in a letter sought assistance from Member of Parliament Pratap Chandra Sarangi. Sarangi has since directed Soumendra Priyadarshi, the corporation's chairman and managing director, to conduct a thorough investigation and take legal action if the claims are verified. When contacted, Mohanty has denied all allegations, calling them "completely false and baseless".

"There are CCTV cameras installed in the office. An investigation will reveal the truth. This is a conspiracy against me," Mohanty said.

AP officials' visit to Neredibalsa triggers territorial concerns

NARENDRA RAUT, OP

Koraput, Feb 4: Tension resurfaced in the sensitive Kotia border region after officials from Andhra Pradesh allegedly entered the area and held a meeting with villagers at Neredibalsa village Wednesday. The fresh incursion has raised serious concerns among local residents, who fear repeated interference by Andhra authorities in villages that fall under Odisha's jurisdiction.

A group of Andhra officials reached Neredibalsa and discussed welfare schemes and administrative matters with villagers. The meeting reportedly took place without prior coordination with the Odisha administration, triggering strong reactions from the local community. Villagers alleged that such repeated visits are creating confusion and pressure among residents, especially in border villages where jurisdictional issues have remained contentious for years.

Local residents allege that officials from the neighbouring state have been making frequent attempts to influence villagers by promising various benefits and facilities, which they say undermines Odisha's administrative authority. The villagers expressed that they are proud residents of Odisha and do not want any external interference in their day-to-day affairs.

"We belong to Odisha and our village is part of Kotia. Andhra officials come here again and again and hold meetings, which creates fear and confusion among people. We want the Odisha government to protect our rights and strictly stop such intrusions," Ramesh Kadraka of Neredibalsa said

Another villager, Sukanti Jani, echoed similar concerns, stating, "Because of these repeated visits, villagers are under pressure. Some people get tempted by promises, but most of us want permanent development from Odisha. The administration should take strict steps so this does not happen again."

The incident has once again highlighted the long-standing border dispute and the vulnerability of fringe villages like Neredibalsa. Locals have demanded immediate intervention by senior Odisha officials, increased administrative presence, and awareness programmes to reassure villagers and prevent further intrusions. The situation remains tense, with residents urging the government to safeguard Odisha's territorial and administrative integrity in Kotia.

Admin hears grievances of Raipahad residents

Nandapur/Padua: Amid growing interstate disputes involving border villages in Koraput district, the district administration has begun field visits to assess ground realities and hear public grievances. Several villages along the Andhra Pradesh–Odisha border, similar to Kotia, remain contentious, with residents alleging long-standing neglect due to unresolved disputes between the two states. While villagers reportedly receive certain benefits from the neighbouring state, they claim they have been denied entitlements promised by Odisha. Following repeated media reports, officials of the Koraput district and block administrations Wednesday visited Raipahad village under Golur panchayat in Nandapur block. They interacted with the residents to understand their concerns. Tensions arose when villagers and elected representatives alleged that assurances given by the Odisha government after bilateral meetings between the two states had not been implemented even after a considerable lapse of time. The visiting team included senior district, block and line department officials, along with local panchayat representatives. Officials assured residents that their grievances would be examined and forwarded to higher authorities for appropriate action.

8 arrested as drunken brawl escalates into communal clash

PNN & AGENCIES

Paralakhemundi, Feb 4: Eight people were arrested after a drunken brawl snowballed into a communal clash in Gajapati district, leaving 10 injured, police said Wednesday.

The incident happened in Chandipur village in the Mohana police station area Monday evening, they said.

In the violence, the house of a local BJP leader was attacked, they added.

"We have arrested eight people seen on the CCTV footage of the communal clash and detained four others," Gajapati SP Jatindra Kumar Panda said.

"Those detained are the youths who were involved in the drunken brawl. They could not be seen on the CCTV footage of the clash, but we are verifying their mobile tower locations. They may also be arrested soon," he said.

Panda said the situation is under control in the area at present.

Two platoons (60 personnel) of armed police have been deployed in the area to avoid any further escalation, he said.

Leaders of both the communities are making efforts to bring back complete normalcy in the area, he added.

The SP said two FIRs have been registered in connection with the violence.

Rayagada ITI student critical after assault

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Feb 4: A 16-year-old student of a government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Rayagada was critically injured after being assaulted with an iron rod by a fellow student, police said.

The injured student, identified as Manoj Gouda of Therubali DP Camp area in Kolnara block, was initially admitted to the Rayagada district headquarters hospital. As his condition deteriorated, he was later referred to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for advanced treatment.

According to a written complaint filed at Rayagada Town police station by the victim's uncle Kamadev Gouda, Manoj is enrolled in the welder trade at the government ITI. Another student, identified as Bhuban Lima, allegedly struck Manoj on the head with an iron rod, leaving him bleeding and seriously injured.

After receiving information about the incident, Kamadev reached the district hospital along with villagers and spoke to his nephew and his classmates. He later lodged a complaint seeking action and protection for the injured student.

Police launched an investigation into the incident, Inspector In-Charge Prasanna Kumar Behera said.

Bolangir gangrape: 6 boys held

Bolangir: Six boys have been arrested for allegedly gangraping a 15-year-old girl in Bolangir district, police said Wednesday, adding that the video of the assault was later circulated on social media. According to police, the incident took place in Turekela police station area December 27 last year when the Class IX student was returning home from coaching. The case came to light after the video went viral on some social media platforms. The accused allegedly threatened the victim and asked her not to tell her parents about it, police said. However, when the victim's father lodged a complaint Tuesday, a case was registered at Turekela police station and all the six accused were arrested, a police officer said. "We have arrested all the accused," IG (northern range) Himanshu Lal told reporters in Bolangir. "Six boys, including a 17-year-old who is the mastermind of the crime, have been arrested. We will request the court to treat the prime accused as an adult during trial," Bolangir SP Abilash G said. The mobile phone used to record the video of the incident has been seized, he added.

RAJENDRA UNIVERSITY
PRAJNA VIHAR, BALANGIR-767002, ODISHA (INDIA)
No.133/RUB Date : 31.01.2026
WALK IN INTERVIEW FOR TEMPORARY ENGAGEMENT OF ASSISTANT PROFESSOR/GUEST FACULTY
No.11001/8/2526 : Interested candidates may appear for the walk-in-interview for temporary engagement as Assistant Professor/Guest Faculty in different departments of Rajendra University, Balangir in the subjects :- **Odia, English, Philosophy, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Commerce, Education & Political Science** on 18.02.2026 in the University premises. For further details, please visit **www.rajendrauniversity.ac.in.**
Sd./- Registrar
OIPR-11001/11141/1/25-26/0008 Rajendra University, Balangir

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER
Divisional Railway Manager/ENGG/ Chakradharpur acting For & on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Open Tender. **Sl. No.; Tender Notice No.; Name of the Work; Tender value & EMD** respectively : **(1); CKP-CENTRAL-25-26-62;** (1) Through Ballast Renewal for 4.00 KM from KM along with deep screening/raising of ballast cushion to 35 CM from KM 452.00-456.00 S/L under ADEN/Bondamunda (II) Bondamunda-Barsuan-TBR-44.305 TKM at Km 408.432-452.00=43.568 KM and Km: 0.000-0.737= 0.737 KM, Total 44.305 KM under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Bondamunda (III) TFR 21.638 KM between Dumetra-Bimalgarh, Dumetra-Link C under SSE/P.WAY/Dumetra (IV) TFR Between Dumetra-Bimalgarh & Dumetra-Link C under SSE/P.WAY/ Dumetra Unit for 27.612 KM in between Dumetra-Chandiposi Up Line 413.607-435.000KM = 21.393KM and SJ-Bimalgarh UP Line 445.781-452.00 KM (V) Labour Cost for Addition of track circuit in Tupadih station. (77 Nos. Glued joint) in Bondamunda - Kiriburu Section in Chakradharpur Division of South Eastern Railway; ₹ 3,34,48,288.30; ₹ 3,17,300.00. **(2); CKP-SOUTH-25-26-30;** Balance work for Engagement of Consultant for carrying out Mutation of Railway land existing in South Eastern Railway Boundaries in under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Chaibasa & ADEN/Dangoaposi of Chakradharpur Division under South Eastern Railway; ₹ 2,09,87,271.89; ₹ 2,54,900.00; **Cost of Tender form :** ₹ 0.00 (for Sl. No. 1 & 2); **Date of opening :** 27/02/2026 (for Sl. No. 1) & 23/02/2026 (for Sl. No. 2); The tender can be viewed at Web site **http://www.ireps.gov.in** (for Sl. No. 1 & 2). The tenderer/ bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered under on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-tendering. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored (for Sl. No. 1 & 2). **NOTE:-** e-Tender Forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. (Authority - Rly. Bd.'s letter No.2020/CE-I/CT/3E/GCC/Policy dtd. 16.07.2020) (for Sl. No. 1 & 2); **(PR-1141)**

OFFICE OF THE ROURKELA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Udit Nagar, Rourkela Dist. - Sundargarh (Odisha), Pin-769012
Website: www.rmc.nic.in, Email Id: rourkelamunicipality@gmail.com
No. 1333 Date: 30.01.2026
Tender Call Notice
No.13001/19/2526 : The Municipal Commissioner on behalf of Rourkela Municipal Corporation invites sealed applications in conformation with detailed Tender call notice from the reputed firms /Agencies for **"Supply of 01 No. of Animal Rescue Vehicle with Hydraulic Lifting to Rourkela Municipal Corporation"**.
Detail technical specifications, along with terms & conditions etc. may be seen from the Website of Tender Odisha Portal i.e. www.tenderodisha.gov.in & Rourkela Municipal Corporation i.e. www.rmc.nic.in. Date of issue of tender document 31.01. 2026
Sd./- Commissioner
OIPR-13001/13131/1/25-26/0019 Rourkela Municipal Corporation

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.25001/23/2526
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KENDRAPARA-JAJPUR
AT-CHANDIKHOL, PO-SUNGUDA, JAJPUR-754296, EMAIL-serw_kpd@yahoo.com
No. Tender Online RCK-03/26 Letter No.-276 Date : 28.01.2026
e-Procurement NOTICE
1. Name of the work : Tender for the Road works under (MMSY-TRIP) in the Dist. of Jajpur, 2. Class of Contractor : As specified in the Column-6 of the Annexure. 3. Time of Completion : As specified in the Column-7 of the Annexure. 4. Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached. 5. Other Details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur	Tender Online RCK-03/26	09.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	26.02.2026 to 5.00 P.M.	26.02.2026 upto 2.00 P.M.	27.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**
Sd./- Chief Construction Engineer
OIPR-25001/25129/1/25-26/0023 Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur

2 held for abduction, torture of minor girl

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tumudibandha, Feb 4: Police arrested two persons in connection with the abduction and torture of a 14-year-old girl who was found restrained in a forest under Kandhamal district. The accused, identified as Nitesh Nayak and Sushil Nayak, were taken into custody following an investigation by Belghar police. Baliguda Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Shubham Bhosle confirmed the arrests Wednesday. According to investigators, the incident occurred Sunday when the girl was walking alone to a village stream. The two men allegedly took her into a nearby forest after abducting her and forced her for establishing sexual relationship. When the girl resisted, the accused allegedly tore her clothes, captured her video and threatened to make it viral. Later, they tied her hands and feet. They also gagged her mouth and abandoned her in the forest before absconding.

The victim spent a night in the forest before somehow managing to reach her home Monday. Following a formal complaint, police registered a case (10/26) and conducted a medical examination of the victim. "The victim's statement has been recorded, and the investigation is underway," Bhosle said.

No.27-7/2018-Lib
Government of India
Ministry of Culture
Library Section
RECRUITMENT
This is to inform that the Ministry of Culture invites applications for the post of Director General on deputation (including short term contract) basis in Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry. The detailed advertisement may be seen on the Ministry's website (https://culture.gov.in/).
The last date for submission of the applications is 60 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News/ Rozgar Samachar.
cbc 09101/11/0035/2526

ପୌର ପରିଷଦ, ମାଲକାନଗିରି
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, MALKANGIRI
Odisha, Pin-764045, Ph:-06861-230244, e-Mail:eomalkangiri@gmail.com
ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା
ମାଲକାନଗିରି ପୌର ପରିଷଦ ତରଫରୁ ''ମାଲ୍ୟବନ୍ତ ୨୦୨୫'' ଅବସରରେ ମାଲକାନଗିରି ସହରର ସମସ୍ତ ନାଗରିକଙ୍କୁ ଅନେକ ଅନେକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଇ ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ମୌଳିକ ସେବା ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବାରେ ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ସହାୟତା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବା ଲାଗି ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଅଛୁ ।
୦୧.ସହରର ସମସ୍ତ ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ନିଜ ନିଜର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାନ ଉତ୍ପନ୍ନ ବର୍ଜ୍ୟ ବସ୍ତୁ ପୃଥକ ପୃଥକ ଭାବେ (ଓଦା ଓ ଶୁଖିଲା) ସଂଗୃହୀତ କରି ରଖିବେ ଏବଂ ତତ୍ ପରଦିନ ପୂର୍ବାହ୍ନରେ ପରିଷଦର ଆବର୍ଜନା ବାହନରେ ପକାଇବେ ।
୦୨.ଅଯଥା ନିଜ ଆବର୍ଜନା ନିଜ ଦୋକାନ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଥିବା ନର୍ଦ୍ଦମାରେ/ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପକାଇବେ ନାହିଁ ।
୦୩.କୌଣସି ନାଗରିକ ନିଜ ଗୃହପାଳିତ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ଯଥା:- ଗାଈ, ମହିଷୀ, ଛେଳି, କୁକୁର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଛାଡିବେ ନାହିଁ ।
୦୪.ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ (Building Plan Approval) କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନିର୍ବାହୀ ଅଧିକାରୀ, ପୌର ପରିଷଦ, ମାଲକାନଗିରିଙ୍କ ଅନୁମତି ନିତାନ୍ତ ଜରୁରୀ ଅଟେ । ଅନ୍ୟଥା ତାହା ଆଇନ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ହେବ ନାହିଁ ।
୦୫.ପଲିଥିନ ବ୍ୟାଗ ବ୍ୟବହାରଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ ।
୦୬.ପରିଷଦର ଟିକସ ଆଦି ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ପୈଠ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
୦୭.ସହରର ସମସ୍ତ ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ନିଜନିଜର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାନର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ପ୍ରମାଣପତ୍ର ନିତାନ୍ତ ଜରୁରୀ ଅଟେ । ପୌର ପରିଷଦ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ନିଜ ନିଜର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ପ୍ରମାଣପତ୍ର କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।
୦୮.ସହରକୁ ସୁସ୍ଥ ଏବଂ ନିର୍ମଳ ରଖିବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ନାଗରିକଙ୍କ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ, ତେଣୁ ନିଜ ନିଜର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ପାଳନ କରି ପରିଷଦଙ୍କୁ ସହଯୋଗ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
ଆସନ୍ତୁ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଳିମିଶି ଆମ ସହରକୁ ଏକ ସୁସ୍ଥ ସବୁଜ ସହରରେ ପରିଣତ କରି କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ତଥା ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ସାକାର କରିବା ।
ସ୍ୱା./- କାର୍ଯ୍ୟନିର୍ବାହୀ ଅଧିକାରୀ
ପୌର ପରିଷଦ, ମାଲକାନଗିରି

Man held for killing father

Bissamcuttack: Police Wednesday arrested a 26-year-old man in connection with the murder of his father in Bissamcuttack town of Rayagada district; an incident that shocked the local community. The accused, Shyam Sundar Sahu, allegedly killed his father, Kailash Chandra Sahu, at their residence in the Brahmin Sahi area January 30. Police said the murder stemmed from a long-standing dispute over money lending and unpaid loans. According to investigators, the incident occurred around 4:30pm when the victim was alone in the courtyard of his house. The accused allegedly mixed toilet-cleaning acid with a soft drink and forced his father to consume it. After drinking the mixture, the victim fell seriously ill and began vomiting. Police said the accused then attacked his father with a vegetable cutter (paniki), striking him on the head before slitting his throat. The victim died on the spot. Later, the accused reportedly raised an alarm. Neighbours rushed the victim to Christian Hospital in Bissamcuttack, where doctors declared him dead. A case under Section 103(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was registered at Bissamcuttack police station. Police seized the weapon, acid, soft drink bottle and bloodstained clothes.

Chola Enter a better life
CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED
CORPORATE OFFICE : "CHOLA CREST", C54 & 55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, India
Branch Office : 2nd Floor, Plot No. 394, Bomikhal, Near Santoshi Maa Temple, Cuttack Road, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751 010
POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(1) - FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited**, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 hereinafter called the Act in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13[12] read with Rules 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice on the date mentioned the account calling upon the respective Borrowers, to repay the outstanding amount with Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers in particular and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the Property mortgaged with the Company described herein below on the date mentioned against the account in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Rules made there under. The Borrowers in particular and the Public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with property mentioned herein below and any such dealings will be subject to the charge of **M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited** for an amount mentioned against the account along with Interest and other charges.

Loan Account No. : HE01BHU00000086448 **Name and Address of Borrower / Co-borrower :** **1. Soubhagini Swain (Applicant),** W/o. Pradeep Kumar Swain Anuary Vtc, Gopa, Near Temple, P.O. - Annuary, Sub Dist Banki, District - Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 754 009. **2. Pradeep Kumar Swain (Co-applicant)**, S/o. Pramod Swain Anuary Vtc, Gopa, Near Temple, P.O. - Annuary, Sub Dist Banki, District - Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 754 009. **3. Swadhin Swain (Co-applicant)**, S/o. Pramod Swain Anuary Vtc, Gopa, Near Temple, P.O. - Annuary, Sub Dist Banki, District - Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 754 009. **4. M/s. Sitaram Enterprises (Co-applicant)** Anuary Vtc, Gopa, Near Temple, P.O. - Annuary, Sub Dist Banki, District - Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 754 009. **5. Purna Chandra Swain (Co-applicant)**, S/o. Pramod Swain L-292, Phase-4, HB Colony, Near High School, Dumuduma Khorda Odisha, Pin - 751019.	**Description of the Immovable Property/ies :** **Property 1 :** All that part and parcel of the property bearing Khata No. 227/259, Plot No. 305, Area Ac. 0.120 Decimals, sztatus - Home Stead, Mouza - Gopa, Tahasil - Banki, P.S.- Banki, District - Cuttack (Odisha), Pin-754 009. **Bounded as:** North - Road and Plot No. 298, South - Plot No. 306, East - Plot No. 304, West - Plot No. 269. **Property 2 :** All That part and parcel of the property bearing Khata No. 227/246, Plot No. 269, Area Ac. 0.220 Decimals, Status - Home Stead, Mouza - Gopa, Tahasil - Banki, P.S.- Banki, District - Cuttack, (Odisha), Pin - 754 009. **Bounded as :** North-Plot No. 270, South - Plot No. 267, East - Road, West - Plot No.267, 268, 270 & 272.	**Date of Demand Notice : 17.11.2025** **Outstanding Amount : Rs. 82,44,460.00** (Rupees Eighty Two Lakhs Forty Four Thousand Four Hundred Sixty only) as on **15.11.2025** and interest thereon. **Date of Symbolic Possession : 02.02.2026**
Loan Account No. : HE01TYQ00000064751 **Name and Address of Borrower / Co-borrower :** **1. Samir Kumar Parida (Applicant)**, S/o. Nityananda Parida Japabhuan, P.S. - Ersama, Jagatsinghapur, Odisha,Pin - 754 139. **2. M/s. Samir Kumar Parida (Co-applicant)** Khata No. 451/39, Plot No. 1219, Parida Bhawan, Near RI Office Japa, Japabhuan, Ersama Sub Post Office, Vill - Japa, Ersama, Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, Pin - 754 139. **3. Malati Manjari Parida (Co-applicant)**, W/o. Nityananda Parid Titira, P.O. - Titira, Vtc - Titira, Jagatsinghapur, Odisha, Pin - 754 110.	**Description of the Immovable Property :** All that Part and Parcel of the Property bearing Khata No. 34, Plot No. 1/181, Area-44 Decimal, Mouza - Sunadia Kanda, P.S. - Ersama, Kisam - Gharabari, P.S. - No. 62, Tahasil - Ersama, Tahasil No. 246, District - Jagatsinghpur.	**Date of Demand Notice : 10.11.2025** **Outstanding Amount : Rs. 1,15,53,317.00** (Rupees One Crore Fifteen Lakhs Fifty Three Thousand Three Hundred Seventeen only) as on **10.11.2025** and interest thereon. **Date of Symbolic Possession : 03.02.2026**

Date : 05.02.2026
Place : Cuttack (Odisha)
Authorised Officer
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited

When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence

SRI AUROBINDO

The ICEmen Killeth

When a white police officer in Minneapolis killed George Floyd, a Black man he was putting under arrest, by kneeling on his neck nearly six years ago, the political repercussions were serious, immediate, and felt nationwide. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which emerged in response to police brutality against Black people, gathered steam. Huge protests – mostly peaceful, but not always – took place across America, as well as in many other countries. "Defund the police" became a popular slogan.

It looked like a high point for liberal politics. But in fact, BLM probably ended up hurting the Democrats, as many voters came to regard the party, fairly or not, as elitists who coddled minorities and treated white working-class Americans with contempt.

But the recent killings by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol agents of people observing their raids in that same city could be more consequential. On 7 January, Renée Good, a mother of three, was shot dead through her car window while moving away from federal officers. On 24 January, intensive-care nurse Alex Pretti, with only a phone in hand, was shot ten times in the back after being wrestled to the ground.

Without any evidence, US Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem smeared Good as a "domestic terrorist." Stephen Miller, President Donald Trump's deputy chief of staff and a key adviser on immigration and homeland security, described Pretti in a social-media post as a "would-be assassin."

Ian Buruma

The shootings in Minneapolis were predictable. Sending poorly trained, heavily armed masked men into Democratic cities to kick down doors, shove people into cars, detain children, and arrest people without a warrant or probable cause is a performative kind of brutal violence. ICE agents do not try to hide their aggression; they want people to see their abusive behaviour.

More migrants were deported under Presidents Barack Obama (more than 3.1 million) and Joe Biden (roughly four million) than under Trump (1.9 million in his first term, and 540,000 so far in his second term). But these Democratic presidents were more discriminating in their methods, and mostly targeted convicted criminals. There were no stories of children being used as bait, of half-dressed old men being dragged from their homes in freezing conditions, of people being shipped off to countries whose languages they don't even speak, let alone of US citizens being gunned down in the street.

Autocratic governments – and some revolutionary movements – tend to use performative brutality to intimidate people who could conceivably stand in their way

This orgy of violence is deliberate. It is meant to show that the Trump administration is serious about ridding the United States of "drug dealers, criminals, and rapists." Following the 9/11 attacks, George W. Bush's administration instructed officers to "take the gloves off," resulting in the torture and murder of suspected terrorists. This, too, was intended to demonstrate that the US government would do everything in its power to keep Americans safe.

Autocratic governments – and some revolutionary movements – tend to use performative brutality to intimidate people who could conceivably stand in their way. The Nazis consolidated their power with the help of the Sturmabteilung, brown-shirted thugs who were licensed to beat up Jews, Communists, and other "undesirables."

Many people who might not approve of such tactics prefer to look away not only because they are intimidated, but also because violent regimes are selective in their targets. So long as one wasn't a Jew or a leftist in the early years of Hitler's Germany, one was unlikely to get into serious trouble.

Joseph Stalin was not like that. He was deliberately indiscriminate. Anyone, even loyal party members, could end up in torture prisons or slave labour camps. People in the Soviet Union lived in a permanent state of fear, which was of course Stalin's intention. But this is relatively rare. Most dictators, or aspiring dictators, select specific groups to isolate and persecute.

When ICE agents, in their zeal to fulfill deportation quotas, targeted Hispanics or people of colour, most white Americans did not fear for their safety, even if they deplored such tactics. The murders of Good and Pretti changed that. Not only were they US citizens, but they were about as mainstream as a white American from the Midwest can be. Neither had a criminal record. Pretti was even a gun owner. ICE agents removed his holstered firearm before he was shot, a fact that the administration has used to justify his killing, angering gun-rights activists who support Trump.

But the killings upset many other people, too, across the political spectrum. If Pretti and Good could be executed in broad daylight, anyone could. The Trump administration realized fairly quickly that this could harm their chances in November's midterm elections. Allegations of "domestic terrorism" were dialed back. Miller acknowledged a possible breach of ICE "protocol." Trump even called Good's killing a "tragedy." The man overseeing the raids in Minneapolis, Gregory Bovino, a diminutive bruiser who swaggered before the cameras in a long greatcoat reminiscent of those worn by Nazi SS officers, was demoted and transferred out of Minnesota.

This may come as a relief to some. Public opinion still counts in America, even if it can be fickle. While memories are often short, the footage of two peaceful US citizens killed at close range by trigger-happy government goons won't fade fast. Anger at the government will linger. But we will have to wait and see if it drives Americans, especially those who might be having second thoughts about voting for Trump, to the polls in November.

The writer is the author of numerous books, including Year Zero: A History of 1945 and, most recently, Spinoza: Freedom's Messiah.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

I think the most important thing is to keep active and to hope that your mind stays active.

JANE GOODALL

Things are as they are. Looking out into it the universe at night, we make no comparisons between right and wrong stars, nor between well and badly arranged constellations

ALAN WATTS

It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up.

ECKHART TOLLE

FOCUS LIFESTYLE

CULTURE OF CULINARY KILLING

P. Dalai

IT IS NOT OUR STOMACH BUT OUR MIND WHICH DECIDES OUR MENU

Amongst many exotic cuisines that we have grafted into our urban culinary culture, there is a general taste for eating baby vegetables. This appears to be the most ostentatious appetite of modern gastronomes driven by insatiable consumerism. As inevitable items of what they call 'fine-dining', baby vegetables nowadays are the most vulnerable natural entities in brigade de cuisine. Whether cheap or grand hotels, urban or suburban restaurants, homemade or packed foods, a usual gastronomic fascination for such fashionable cuisines, made of baby vegetables, is the hallmark of our social status and eating habits. Eating them raw, boiled, roasted, singed or steamed, as they appear in verbatim on our exquisite urbane menus, is the exotic symptom of our consumption snobbery, our nouvelle cuisine. Even displaying these green-infants of nature on commercial ads, food exhibitions, food packets, social gatherings, digital platforms, markets and dinner tables does a lot of disgrace to these.

There has been a general amnesia and silence on this issue of culinary ethics of baby vegetables sacrifice. Even religions across the time and space have been silent on this. Most of our debates and diatribes conveniently gaze on vegetarianism vs non-vegetarianism. But baby vegetables are victims of both, the omnivores, which need urgent attention. It is therefore ethical now to intervene in this culinary carnage.

Origins of these culinary carnages may be attributed to the advent of new economies and mushrooming of urban eateries that propel such devouring desires, even in most unlikely places and times. Also, in the contemporary culinary landscape, there is a paradigmatic shift of eating habits from the shared, sustained, and ethical tradition of past to a modern, solitary, and quick hunger taming culture. It is this strange culinary turn that has forced us to transgress the ethics of eating, particularly the virtue of 'sustainable eating'. We now belong to an age of culinary killing!

The sharp decline in the edible-age of vegetables, especially the untimely harvest of vegetables, is something grotesque and abominable

The contributions of food technology, tourism, hotel managements, culinary capitalism, on one hand, and our relentless experimentation with new flavours, colours, tastes and lifestyles largely tempted by 'fusion cuisine', on the other, are some of the gastronomical avarices that have galvanized the increasing and unethical treatment of these baby vegetables -- baby corn, baby jackfruits, baby potatoes, tender drumsticks, onion or garlic shoots, not to mention of tender leaves, buds, and flowers of some other vegetables. We literally nip them at the buds!

Some modern gastronomes taste these natural-poors as appetizers, others snobbishly please their eyes, while some others make status statement by trying with these baby vegetables garnished on their goblets, dishes, or laid naked on their costly salad plates. We are the real hungry-alists of fashionable culinary innovations whose stomachs always rebel against monotonous food/dishes. We hate repeating a dish for very long; we love experimenting our tastes; and the result is the sacrifices of nature and sacrilege of ethics of eating! Several of us who belong to this gluttonous generation love to devour these poor children of nature for mere food-fashions we are intreated into by predominant culinary bourgeoism and late gastroeconomics.

Now, who should be held responsible for this unethical eating-- our stomach, pocket, farmers, restaurateurs,or market? I think it is an organized crime of herbicides committed by our society in general. We can't blame it on our poor stomach because it is most human for it to welcome anything into it. Our pockets? No, because it doesn't have a mind to think of ethics. Food is a mental construction, so is hunger, much like poverty, caste, gender, nationality, and identity. It is not our stomach but our mind which decides our menu. The premature herbicides of vegetables in contemporary gluttonous culture can, therefore, be attributed to this social construction of tastes and food. Can we not deconstruct our desire, our hunger, and our taste to refrain from such infanticides of nature?

It is not that our predecessors did not consume baby vegetables at all. Of course they did; and they did more than us. But they ate those vegetables that offered them in the most appropriateness of their seasons and species. They did not transgress the edible time and species of vegetables. We have defied this appropriateness of seasons and species of nature; we almost promote a sort of vegetable-Darwinism and merely kill them as culinary snobs. I am sure our forefathers were no snobs to prepare exotic dishes out of baby corn or baby jackfruits for their own sport, status, or fun. Somehow, we moderners have made spectacle of our culinary tastes, disrespecting the dignity of nature! Our oldies had respect, patience, justice, and wisdom both in the matter and manner of eating, and these eating virtues are what we mostly lack now, or, at least, despise to practice. The sharp decline in the edible-age of vegetables, especially the untimely harvest of vegetables, is something grotesque and abominable. I think consuming vegetables in their infancy is not a wisdom but greed and snobbery of the urban folks. The oxymoron of our consumption culture is-- 'we rear to kill'. Let us not justify our gluttony for any creative destruction; let us, instead, vow for no destruction at all.

It is too anthropocentric to consider that plants are insentient and, therefore, it is not sinful to sacrifice them for human tummies. Baby vegetables have irresistibly succumbed to the experiments of modern/metro appetite. As part of the deep ecology, we humans must consider this culinary case of vegetable-subalterns as epistemological tool to critique on the urban psychology and culture of consumption. It behooves, therefore, to espouse the ethics of "sustainable eating."

The writer is Professor at Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University.

SPECTRUM DIGITAL SAFETY

Raising digitally wise children

Srikumar Datta

THE REAL CHALLENGE IS NOT LIMITING ACCESS, BUT SHAPING THE WAY CHILDREN THINK, QUESTION, AND RESPOND ONLINE

Children today step into the digital world as effortlessly as they learn to speak. In India, smartphones often enter a child's life long before adulthood. As internet access spreads rapidly across urban and rural homes alike, the central question is no longer whether children should be online, but whether we are equipping them to navigate that space safely and intelligently.

For too long, digital safety has been reduced to restriction. Screen limits, blocked websites, and constant monitoring may delay exposure, but they do not build discernment. Filters can be bypassed. Controls can be evaded. The real challenge is not limiting access, but shaping the way children think, question, and respond online.

Digital safety works best when it feels like guidance rather than surveillance. Adults often ask children how long they were online. A better question would be what they saw and how it made them feel. That single shift replaces interrogation with conversation. Children who feel trusted are far more likely to report disturbing content, cyberbullying, or uncomfortable interactions. Silence thrives under control, while awareness grows through dialogue.

One of the most effective yet underused strategies is shared digital space. When devices remain in common areas and adults actively engage with apps, games, and platforms children use, the internet loses its secrecy. It becomes visible, discussable, and accountable. Just as children are taught critical thinking in classrooms, they must be taught to apply the same skills on screens by questioning sources, recognising manipulation, and understanding consequences.

Schools must move beyond treating cyber safety as an isolated lecture or annual workshop. Digital safety should be embedded into daily learning through discussion, real world scenarios, and reflection. Children need practical skills to identify misinformation, respond to online harassment, protect personal data, and seek help without fear. Online safety is not a technical topic. It is a life skill.

At home, technology must be balanced with culture. Built in filters, strict mode settings on iOS and Android, and age appropriate platforms such as YouTube Kids or curated streaming profiles are useful tools. Third party applications like Qustodio or Net Nanny add another layer of protection. Yet no software can compensate for poor modelling. Children mirror adult behaviour. When parents scroll endlessly at the dinner table or before bedtime, limits lose credibility. Healthy digital habits begin with example, not enforcement.

Equally important is reducing unnecessary screen dependence by offering meaningful alternatives. Outdoor play, sports, creative arts, block building, memory games, and hands on activities support cognitive and emotional development while drawing children away from passive screen consumption. These experiences build focus, creativity, and resilience, qualities no algorithm can provide.

Responsibility does not end with families and schools. Despite the Indian government's prohibition of pornographic websites in 2015, users continue to bypass restrictions using virtual private networks. This reality exposes the limits of blanket bans and highlights the need for smarter regulation. India requires robust, child centric digital policies that mandate age appropriate design, enforce strict content moderation, and demand accountability from technology platforms.

Technology companies must also be held to higher standards. AI driven content filters, privacy by default settings, and transparent moderation mechanisms can significantly reduce children's exposure to harmful material if implemented responsibly. Combined with parental involvement and digital literacy education, these measures can meaningfully strengthen online safety.

Safeguarding children online is not a parental burden alone. It is a collective national responsibility. The strongest filter is not embedded in a device, but in the mind of a child who knows when to pause, question, and speak up. When adults choose curiosity over control and guidance over fear, children learn to protect themselves even when no one is watching. In a young and rapidly digitising nation like India, that may be our most important investment of all.

The writer is an author and a former senior executive in a nationalised bank.

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 HERE . NOW
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Strategic asset

Sir, India is planning a strategic underground railway link beneath the Siliguri Corridor, the narrow "Chicken's Neck" connecting the mainland with the Northeast. The corridor, barely 20–22 km wide, lies close to Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, with China's Chumbi Valley nearby, making it a critical security chokepoint. The proposal envisages a 40-km underground twin-track line, built 20–24 metres below ground, alongside expansion of surface tracks to form a six-line network. As the region falls in Seismic Zone IV–V, the tunnels will incorporate earthquake-resistant engineering, including reinforced linings, shock-absorbing joints and real-time monitoring systems to withstand tremors, landslides and floods. Strategically, the underground alignment reduces vulnerability to sabotage, air strikes and blockades, ensuring uninterrupted military and civilian movement. The project is expected to cost several thousand crore rupees and take 5–7 years. Geopolitically, it strengthens India's posture against China, limits leverage for Bangladesh, and indirectly neutralises Pakistan's strategic interest in the corridor.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Surprising decision

Sir, The dropping of midfielder Manpreet Singh, forward Dilpreet Singh and goalkeeper Krishna Bahadur Pathak from the 33-member probables for the ongoing national preparatory camp leading to the FIH Pro League season beginning late February has come as a surprise for fans. At least a couple of them warranted a place in the team. But the explanation provided by "insiders" is different: India's sub-par performance in the December series against South Africa was partly attributed to "indiscipline" on the part of the three players. Nothing can supplant discipline, but the omission of Manpreet is disturbing as the veteran was part of two consecutive Olympics bronze-medal winning Indian teams. Things could have been handled better because coach Craig Fulton reportedly wanted to step down piqued by Manpreet's exclusion.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Kerala passes resolution urging Centre to 'stop neglecting state'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 4: The Kerala Assembly Wednesday passed a resolution urging the central government to stop its alleged "neglect towards the state and to accept its rightful demands".

The resolution moved by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was passed by the House in the absence of the Congress-led UDF opposition.

The CM, while reading out the resolution in the Assembly, said that the Union government was "neglecting" Kerala's needs and was "discriminating" against it.

Vijayan said that no country can stand tall by weakening its states, but the central government was not giving any consideration to many of the reasonable demands put forward by Kerala in the last few years.

He said this was evident from the fact that there was no mention in the Union Budget about setting up an AIIMS or implementing a high-speed rail corridor in Kerala, both of which are needed in the state.

The CM further said that Kerala was at the forefront in implementing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), but its conversion to the VB-G RAM-G scheme will cause a loss of around Rs 3,800 crore to the state.

> **No country can stand tall by weakening its states, but the central government was not giving any consideration to many of the reasonable demands put forward by Kerala in the last few years**
>
> PINARAYI VIJAYAN | CHIEF MINISTER, KERALA

"It is a major setback for Kerala. In addition to this, the allocation for the rural employment scheme in the Union Budget for 2026-27 has been reduced from the earlier Rs 88,000 crore to Rs 30,000 crore. The cut of Rs 58,000 crore in the national level allocation for the scheme, which Kerala is laudably implementing, will seriously affect the state," he said.

The CM also referred to the state government's repeated requests to provide Viability Gap Funding (VGF) as a grant for the Vizhinjam port project and said that the Centre was only providing the VGF as a loan which has to be repaid.

"The union government, which has granted VGF as a grant to many other states, has adopted a completely discriminatory approach in granting VGF to the Vizhinjam port," he contended.

He also accused the Union government of adopting an "inhuman approach" towards Kerala with regard to providing the necessary financial assistance for the rehabilitation of the disaster-hit areas of Wayanad.

"The central government has not only refused to provide the compensation the state deserves for the efforts to recover from the Mundakkai-Chooralmala disaster, but has also repealed the section on loan waiver for disaster victims through an amendment to the National Disaster Management Act," the CM said.

He said that the Centre was taking an approach of financially restricting Kerala which is "moving forward with a sense of direction by giving equal importance to infrastructure development and welfare activities".

Vijayan said that the central government was undermining welfare activities and infrastructure development initiatives in the last phase of the financial year in a continuation of its "vindictive" approach towards the state.

"This House expresses the strong protest of the people of Kerala against the neglect and discrimination of the central government, which is reducing the financial resources of the state, withholding the central share for centrally sponsored projects and not giving any consideration to Kerala in terms of physical infrastructure development," the CM said.

He urged the Centre to revise its approach towards the state and requested that the demands of Kerala be accepted.

A woman leads livestock across a snow-covered field to a river for drinking water on a sunny day following a fresh spell of snowfall, in Anantnag, Wednesday PTI PHOTO

Kerala to bear half cost of Sabari rail project

Thiruvananthapuram: The state government will bear 50 per cent of the cost of the long-pending Angamaly-Erumely Sabari railway project, with Rs 1,900 crore to be provided through the KIIFB. The decision was taken at the state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Wednesday, according to a CMO release. First proposed in the 1997-98 railway budget, the 110-km railway line is considered a key infrastructure project for the state. It is expected to provide safe and convenient travel for Sabarimala pilgrims and boost economic activity in the eastern highland regions of Ernakulam, Idukki, and Pathanamthitta districts. In a post on 'X', Vijayan said the Kerala government is moving decisively to realise the long-cherished Sabari rail project.

CM Omar highlights heritage conservation initiatives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 4: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Wednesday highlighted the government's ongoing initiatives for revival, restoration and conservation of heritage sites at Parihaspora and Pattan.

Replying to a question by Pattan MLA Javid Riyaz Bedar in the Legislative Assembly regarding promotion of heritage tourism, Abdullah, who also holds the Culture and Tourism portfolios, said the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is mandated to promote heritage tourism and undertake major conservation and development works at the heritage sites of Parihaspora, Pattan and Tappar.

He said the ASI is carrying out conservation, protection and major developmental interventions at these sites.

The chief minister, however, said the J&K tourism department has constructed a tourist cafeteria at Parihaspora to provide basic amenities to visitors, adding that the facility will be further renovated and upgraded to improve services.

Giving details of initiatives taken by the Culture Department, Abdullah said that Goverdhan at Parihaspora was declared a State Protected Monument vide SRO-408 dated September 19, 2013.

Protection measures, including installation of chain-link fencing around the monument, were completed during the 2024-25 financial year under the capex budget at an estimated cost of Rs 39.89 lakh, he added.

He said Divar Yakhmanpora at Parihaspora, declared a state-protected monument on August 31, 1989, comprises an ancient temple complex presently under excavation.

The excavation work was initiated during 2023-24 under Phase-I of the scheme for revival, restoration, preservation and maintenance of architecture and heritage in J&K at an estimated cost of Rs 373.10 lakh, the chief minister said, adding that around 60 per cent of the work has been completed.

Since the process involves manual excavation, the work is likely to continue into the next financial year, he said. The site is being actively maintained by the department.

Abdullah further said that a heritage site comprising a temple and spring near Sukh Nag in Pattan was declared a State Protected Monument vide SRO-517 dated August 29, 2019.

He said that the restoration and development works at the Sukh Nag Spring and Temple were undertaken during 2024-25 under the same scheme at an estimated cost of Rs 229.92 lakh. The site has been fully restored and is being maintained by the department.

Regarding Tappar, the chief minister said the site is a Centrally Protected Monument under the administrative control of the ASI and, therefore, no initiative has been taken by the department at the site.

Guv Arlekar forwards Wildlife Protection Bill for presidential assent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 4: Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar has agreed to forward the new Wildlife Protection (Kerala Amendment) Bill, which seeks to amend certain provisions of the central act to mitigate human-wildlife conflict in the state, to the president for assent without delay, Minister AK Saseendran said.

Saseendran, along with Kerala Industries and Law Minister P Rajeev, met the governor Wednesday and requested him to forward the bill for presidential assent.

"His response was very positive, and he has assured us that he will forward the bill to the president without any delay," the state forest minister told reporters after the meeting.

The assembly passed the Wildlife Protection (Kerala Amendment) Bill, 2025, in October last year.

The ministers also requested the governor to give assent to another law that allows private individuals to grow sandalwood on their properties and sell it to the forest department.

"The wildlife issue falls under the concurrent list, and states have the power to bring in amendments to laws in the concurrent list. Based on this provision, we have introduced the new law. The other bill is an exclusive state legislation, but we have not yet received the governor's assent on it," Rajeev said.

He said the ministers had explained the details of the bill and the relevance of the amendment to the governor, who agreed to examine the matter and do the needful within two days.

"The definition for the classification of dangerous animals in the central act is very vague. No authority is empowered to take immediate action when a wild animal strays into human settlements or agricultural areas and attacks human beings," Rajeev said.

"Following all the procedures under the act is very difficult when it comes to protecting human lives and livelihoods. That is why we have brought in this amendment," he added.

He said the forest minister had discussed the matter with the advocate general and that the cabinet had also deliberated on the issue, taking into account various demands and suggestions submitted by different organisations before introducing the amendment to the central act.

"As per the amendment, if a wild animal enters a human settlement or farmland, the district collector can take action based on the situation, including ordering the animal to be killed, to protect people's lives and livelihoods," Rajeev said.

Saseendran said that once the bill becomes an act, it would be of great help to farmers, especially those in the high ranges, who are frequently affected by human-animal conflict.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO CARE

Kerala's Aksharam Arogyam puts health in young hands

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 4: Kerala is placing students at the centre of a comprehensive school programme titled Aksharam Arogyam, which focuses on teaching children the importance of basic first aid, menstrual hygiene and everyday healthy habits.

The initiative is being rolled out by the state health department with the support of the general education department to ensure the overall physical and mental well-being of children.

It encourages children to grow not just as learners but also as health ambassadors who can carry awareness from classrooms to homes and communities, State Health Minister Veena George said in a release Wednesday.

The programme will cover students from classes 1 to 12 in all government and aided schools, aiming to identify health concerns early and ensure timely care.

The government aims to take health awareness from classrooms to homes and further into the community by empowering children with health knowledge and good habits, it added. George said children could play an important role in influencing healthier lifestyles within their families and society.

Under the programme, students will undergo regular health check-ups and receive a health card that records key health details.

This card will later be converted into a secure electronic health card and stored at the state data centre with complete privacy.

In emergencies, this digital record can offer timely support and guidance for treatment, it added. Schools will also serve as hubs for regular health awareness activities, with health assemblies and health corners to be set up.

Teachers will be appointed as health mentors and trained using modules prepared jointly by the health and education departments.

These mentors will provide structured health education sessions covering 11 themes across four major areas at regular intervals, the release said.

Health education will be delivered in an age-appropriate and student-friendly manner to encourage curiosity, participation and scientific understanding.

To ensure active student involvement, one or two students from each class will be selected as health ambassadors. These students will help share health messages among their peers in a more relatable and engaging way, it said.

The programme will also strengthen existing school health initiatives such as iron and folic acid supplementation, adolescent health programmes, immunisation drives and menstrual hygiene education.

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda

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(For Immovable Properties)

(As per Appendix IV read with Rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **BANK OF BARODA** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice on the date mentioned below, calling upon the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) / Mortgagor(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

The Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) /Mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) / Mortgagor(s) and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken **POSSESSION** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sub Section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules,2002 on the date mentioned below.

The Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) /Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of Baroda** for an amount stated herein below together with further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment .

The borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the Secured Assets .

BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Properties	Demand / Possession Notice Date	Outstanding Amount
KUNJABANGARH BRANCH **Borrower: M/s Mahaveer Medical Agency,** Rep. by **Prop.: Mr Saroj Kumar Sahoo, Guarantor / Mortgagor: Mr Sudhir Chandra Sahoo** and **Mr Jaydev Sahoo,** address At: Durga Bazar, Plot No.2310/4334, Khata No.1057/620, PO.: Daspalla, Dist: Nayagarh, Pin - 752084, Odisha .	Equitable mortgage of immovable property located at Dist: Nayagarh, Tahasil: Daspalla, PS: Daspalla, P.S No. 348, under the jurisdiction of SRO: Daspalla, Mouza: Kunjabangarh Revenue Khata No.1057/620, Plot No.2310/4334, with admeasuring area of Ac.0.01 Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of **Mr Sudhir Chandra Sahoo** and **Mr Jayadev Sahoo**, Bounded by: North - Satyabhama Sahoo, South- Sukumari Sahoo, East- Santosh Kuamr Sahoo, West - Road .	**12.11.2025 / 29.01.2026**	**Rs.11,15,135.85** as on 31.10.2025 and further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment
KUNJABANGARH BRANCH **Borrower: M/s Generic Gadgets,** Rep. by **Proporietor: Mr Manoranjan Behera,** S/o: Mr Chaitanya Behera, **Guarantor/Mortgagor: Mr Chaitanya Behera,** S/o: Khali Behera, address At: Barapurikia, Kunjabangarh, PO/ Tahasil: Daspalla, Dist: Nayagarh, Pin - 752084, Odisha .	Equitable mortgage of immovable property located at Dist: Nayagarh, Tahasil: Daspalla, PS: Daspalla, P.S No. 348, under the jurisdiction of SRO: Daspalla, Mouza: Kunjabangarh Revenue Khata No.1057/705, Plot No.2063/4382, with admeasuring area of Ac.0.02 Dec., and Plot No.2061/4382, with admeasuring area of Ac.0.11 Dec 2 Kadi, Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of **Mr Chaitanya Behera**, Bounded by Plot No.2063/4382: North- Nij, South- Kreta, East- Nij, West- Nij and Asalata Sahoo, Bounded by Plot No.2061/4383: North- Nij, South- Road, East - Nij, West - Asalata Dei.	**12.11.2025 / 29.01.2026**	**Rs.23,90,497.16** as on 31.10.2025 and further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 04.02.2026 **Authorized Officer, Bank of Baroda**

national

The Modi government's repeated attempts to silence the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament are deeply troubling and strike at the heart of India's democracy

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

VACANCIES IN MHA DECLINED

Vacancies in the Ministry of Home Affairs declined over the past five years, from 1,389 in 2021 to 757 in 2025, the Rajya Sabha was informed Wednesday

गृह मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
HOME AFFAIRS
सत्यमेव जयते

Quote of the day

Congress works only for Muslim vote-bank politics, not for the general public. The people of Telangana and Telugu-speaking people mean nothing to them

NITIN NABIN | BJP PRESIDENT

Some of them took to X midway through the Budget presentation in Parliament claiming that Haryana got nothing

NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

The asset was outsourced to strengthen the revenue base of the Bhaderwah Development Authority to utilise the same for meeting day-to-day requirements of the authority like maintenance of parks and gardens, resorts, tourist huts, guest houses, etc

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

SHORT TAKES

BJP protests near Congress office

New Delhi: BJP leaders and workers Wednesday staged a protest near the Congress office on Akbar Road here against Rahul Gandhi for calling Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu a "traitor" in the Parliament House Complex. The protesters gathered at Mansingh Road near the opposition party's office, raising slogans such as "Sikh Sardar Hai, Rahul Gandhi Gaddar Hai", and demanding an apology from the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

PM Modi to visit Malaysia Feb 7-8

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a two-day visit to Malaysia beginning Saturday to shore up bilateral ties in areas of trade, investment, energy, and maritime security. It would be Prime Minister Modi's third visit to Malaysia, and the first after the elevation of the India-Malaysia bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in August 2024.

Turkish plane lands after engine fire alert

Kolkata: A Passengers of a Turkish Airlines plane, which made an emergency landing at Kolkata Airport Wednesday afternoon after the pilot declared a fire in the right engine, will fly off in a replacement aircraft at 6 am tomorrow, an official said. The flight was on way to Istanbul from Kathmandu, the Civil Aviation Ministry said a statement. A Kolkata airport official said passengers will be taken en route to their destination in another aircraft Thursday morning.

Man arrested for raping tribal girl

Bokaro: A tribal girl was allegedly raped in Jharkhand's Bokaro district, police said Wednesday. The incident occurred Tuesday within Petarwar police station limits when the girl was alone at home and her parents had gone to work. A person, identified as Jitendra Yadav, has been arrested in this connection, an official said. "The accused hails from Bihar's Rohtas district and works as a driver in a road construction company. He used to come to fill water from the victim's well. The girl's parents are daily wage labourers and had gone for work," Shailendra Kumar Singh, Circle Inspector (CI) of Petarwar said.

Mamata argues SIR case in person in SC

Alleging that the state was not getting justice anywhere, Banerjee said she wrote six letters to the Election Commission on the SIR issue but got no response

The CJI asked the poll panel to instruct booth-level officers and electoral roll officers to be more sensitive while issuing notices on grounds of minor discrepancies such as mismatched spelling of names, etc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Mamata Banerjee became the first serving chief minister to argue in the Supreme Court Wednesday as she sought an intervention in the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) of electoral rolls, alleging that West Bengal was being "targeted" and its people were being "bulldozed".

The court took note of Banerjee's petition and said genuine persons must remain on electoral rolls.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi issued notices and sought replies to the petition by February 9 from the Election Commission and the chief electoral officer of West Bengal. The CJI asked the poll panel to instruct booth-level officers and electoral roll officers to be more sensitive while issuing notices on grounds of minor discrepancies such as mismatched spelling of names, etc. The Chief Minister referred to the poll panel as "WhatsApp Commission" in an apparent reference to directions being allegedly passed by the Election Commission to electoral officials through the instant messaging app.

Banerjee, dressed in her signature white sari paired with a black scarf to resist the Capital's winter, reached the Supreme Court premises flanked by her lawyers, including Trinamool Congress leader and senior advocate Kalyan Banerjee, around 10 am. Several lawyers and litigants jostled to enter the CJI's courtroom to catch a glimpse of the CM making her arguments. At the outset, Banerjee sought permission to argue for five minutes. The CJI responded by saying the court would give her not five but 15 minutes to make her submission.

"The problem is our lawyers always fought our case from the beginning but when everything is finished, we are not getting justice... We are not getting justice anywhere. I am a bonded labourer, sir... I am from a common family and I am not fighting for my party," Banerjee said.

"West Bengal is being targeted," Banerjee alleged, questioning why the same yardstick was not applied to Assam. "They are targeting West Bengal to bulldoze its people," said the chief minister, who was permitted by the bench to supplement the submissions of her lawyer and senior advocate Shyam Divan.

Alleging that the state was not getting justice anywhere, Banerjee said she wrote six letters to the Election Commission on the SIR issue but got no response. At the end of the hearing, she conveyed her gratitude to the bench for the opportunity to argue in person and urged it to "save democracy".

Banerjee has challenged the SIR of electoral rolls in the state and sought a direction to the poll panel to "accept Aadhaar cards as proof of identity especially in cases of 'logical discrepancy' without insisting on any other documents".

Logical discrepancies cited while reconciling the rolls with the 2002 voter list include mismatches in a parent's name or the age gap between a voter and their parent being less than 15 or more than 50 years.

Divan referred to a large number of unmapped voters and said there was hardly any time left for remedial measures as the process was set to conclude February 14. He said the poll panel had to upload the reasons for putting names in the "logical discrepancy" list.

Divan contended 1.36 crore people had been issued notices after their credentials were found to have logical discrepancies. Taking the issue further, the CM said in some cases people who were alive had been declared dead by the poll panel.

14-year-old ends life, family blames mobile addiction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Feb 4: A 14-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide in the city with his family members suspecting that his addiction to a mobile game was responsible for his death.

Ansh Sahu, a Class IX student, was found hanging at his house in Shriram Colony under Piplani police station area Monday afternoon. The only child of his parents, he studied at a reputed school in the city. His parents teach at a private school, Deputy Commissioner of Police Vivek Singh told PTI Videos.

He was allegedly addicted to the mobile game 'Free Fire', Singh said, adding that on the day of the incident, Ansh's mother had reprimanded him for mobile gaming. Earlier, Rs 28,000 had been deducted from his grandfather's bank account due to the same game, the DCP said.

Police were examining the boy's mobile phone, and the reason behind the suicide would become clear only after the investigation is over, he said.

The police would issue an advisory regarding the game, Singh added.

Piplani police station house officer (SHO) Chandrika Yadav told PTI that one-and-a-half months ago, the parents had even taken away the phone from him.

Om Sahu, the boy's maternal uncle, told PTI Videos that Ansh had become addicted to mobile games in recent months, and it had started affecting his studies too.

The family had counselled him several times, but even after ₹28,000 were deducted from his grandfather's account, his addiction continued, Sahu said.

Ansh's parents had gone out to attend a funeral feast on Monday and found him hanging on their return. He was rushed to a private hospital where doctors declared him dead, Sahu said.

INDIA-US TRADE DEAL

Cong slams Goyal's remarks in Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Terming Union minister Piyush Goyal's remarks on the India-US trade deal in Parliament "non-statement", the Congress Wednesday said his high-sounding claims go completely contrary to what the US side has put out, and claimed that the real damage to Indian farmers will become evident once the details of the agreement are out.

The government Wednesday assured Parliament that the country's core sensitivities in food and agriculture have been fully safeguarded in the India-US trade deal, and the pact will enhance export competitiveness in the American market.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal made a statement on the trade deal first in the Lok Sabha and later in the Rajya Sabha amid disruptions by Opposition MPs, who sought clarifications (on the deal) but were not allowed by the Chair. Congress general secretary in charge communications, Jairam Ramesh, said the statement on the India-US trade deal read out by Goyal in both Houses of Parliament was "actually a non-statement".

"It provides no details since the details are still being negotiated. Piyush Goyal's high-sounding claims go completely contrary to what the US president, the US secretary of agriculture, and the US trade representative have put out in their names on social media," the Congress leader said.

"It is 100 per cent clear that Monday's announcement of the deal at the urging of the prime minister was for grabbing headlines "nothing more, nothing else. It was urgent and momentary damage control on his part. However, when the details of the deal are finally out, the real damage to Indian farmers will become most painfully evident," Ramesh said.

Attacking the government on the India-US trade deal in the morning, the Congress said that spin doctors are at work, but any details on it (the deal) have still not been shared, although it is clear that "India has made concessions on liberalising imports of agricultural items". US President Donald Trump Monday said that India and the US have agreed to a trade deal. On his part, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was delighted that "made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18 per cent". Ramesh said, "Thirty-six hours have passed since President Trump said the India-US trade deal was being announced and coming into effect immediately at Mr Modi's request." "Spin doctors are at work, but we still don't have any details on the deal - although it is clear that India has made concessions on liberalising imports of agricultural items. There is not even a joint statement," Ramesh said on X before Goyal's statement in Parliament.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal made a statement on the trade deal first in the Lok Sabha and later in the Rajya Sabha amid disruptions by Opposition MPs, who sought clarifications (on the deal) but were not allowed by the Chair

Maha council panel summons Kunal Kamra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 4: Maharashtra legislative council's privileges committee has summoned stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sushma Andhare for a hearing over their alleged insulting remarks against Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Kamra and Andhare were initially asked to appear before the panel at 2 pm February 5. However, after both of them expressed their inability to attend, the hearing has now been rescheduled to February 17, the committee chairperson and BJP MLC Prasad Lad told PTI Wednesday. He said the notice was issued 15 days ago.

"Kamra today communicated his inability to appear before the committee February 5. So he has now been asked to depose February 17," Lad said. The committee also rescheduled the hearing of Sena (UBT) leader Andhare.

Andhare, who said she was busy with campaigning for the upcoming Zilla Parishad elections, has also been asked to appear February 17, he said. Lad said NCP (SP) worker Suryakant More was asked to appear before the committee Wednesday (February 4) over his alleged derogatory remarks against Legislative Council chairman Ram Shinde. However, More cited the massive traffic congestion on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and was given February 16 as the next date, according to him.

People from Tripura put their clothers for drying in the sun after taking a holy dip at Sangam during the ongoing Magh Mela, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Sharad Pawar holds 2 meetings with late Ajit Pawar's sons

Pune: Two separate meetings were held between NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and the sons of late Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar -- Parth and Jay-- in Baramati Wednesday. While one of the two meetings was attended by only close family members, the other included trustees of Vidya Pratishthan, which was chaired by its founder president, Sharad Pawar. There was no immediate official word on the agenda of the meeting with family members. The discussions might have centred on the possible merger of the two NCP factions and the upcoming Zila Parishad elections, sources said. Separately, the prima facie objective of the Pratishthan meeting was to familiarise both the brothers with the functioning of the Baramati-based educational institution founded by the Pawar family, a trustee said. Late NCP chief Ajit Pawar was a trustee of the Pratishthan. This meeting pertained to Vidya Pratishthan and various projects. As Sharad Pawar saheb was in Baramati, he had asked to convene the meeting, the trustee said.

Manipur gets new CM a year after Biren Singh stepped down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, Feb 4: BJP MLA Yumnam Khemchand Singh Wednesday became the 13th Chief Minister of Manipur, nearly a year after the resignation of BJP leader N Biren Singh following months of ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities in the state, leading to the imposition of President's Rule.

The 62-year-old leader was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at a ceremony held at the Lok Bhavan, hours after the President's rule was revoked in the violence-hit Manipur.

BJP MLA Nemcha Kipgen, who belongs to the Kuki community, and Naga People's Front legislator L Dikho took oath as the deputy chief ministers of Manipur.

The formation of the new government comes at a time when the strife-torn state is trying to move forward towards normalcy.

Congratulating Khemchand Singh and his two deputies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "I am confident they will work diligently towards furthering development and prosperity for my sisters and brothers of Manipur."

Manipur has been witnessing ethnic violence since May 3, 2023, after a tribal solidarity march was taken out in the hill districts, in protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

- Nemcha Kipgen and L Dikho were sworn in as the Deputy Chief Ministers of Manipur
- The swearing-in ceremony occurred after the revocation of President's rule in Manipur
- Manipur has been experiencing ethnic violence since May 2023, leading to significant loss of life and displacement

Since then, at least 260 people, including members of both the Kuki and Meitei communities as well as security personnel, have been killed in the violence, while thousands become homeless.

Talking to reporters at the Lok Bhavan soon after taking oath, Khemchand Singh said Manipur comprises 36 communities and that the state was taken care of for long by them.

"Our hope now is for all to help in bringing a peaceful atmosphere. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have placed great faith in me, and I want to take that faith forward," the two-time BJP legislator said.

Khemchand Singh is a long-time RSS functionary and an organisation-focused leader who has held key constitutional and ministerial positions in the state. Apart from politics, he has had a long association with Taekwondo. A black belt holder, he is a former vice-president of the Taekwondo Federation of India and has been involved in the promotion of the sport in the Northeast.

Deputy CM L Dikho told reporters that inclusiveness is the new mantra of the government.

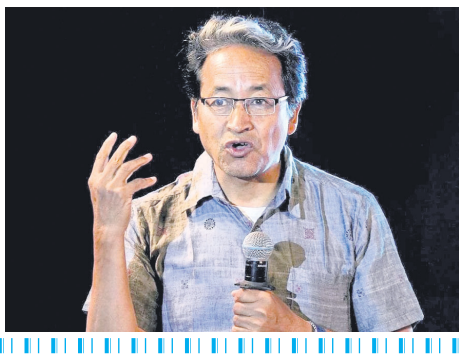
national

During our public dialogue programme in Shehr-e-Khaas (old Srinagar city), several persons approached us about their relatives being in prison outside Jammu and Kashmir for five to six years and the trial is yet to begin

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

SC ASKS CENTRE TO REVIEW WANGCHUK'S DETENTION

The Supreme Court Wednesday asked the Centre if there was any possibility for the government to relook at the detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk considering his health condition



Quote of the day

Moving toward direct procurement from manufacturers is not merely a cost-cutting measure, but a strategic move to eliminate middleman-related delays and ensure a more transparent supply chain. By bypassing intermediaries, the state aims to secure a consistent inventory of life-saving drugs for which necessary provisions will be made

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL PRADESH CM

We cannot accept a model of development that comes at the cost of the environment and darkens the future of coming generations

ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM

A total of 27,860 ad-hoc employees currently serving in various government departments across the state will be regularised soon

PREM SINGH TAMANG | SIKKIM CM

X POST OF THE DAY

Our markets are now a hostage to the US.
Why? Our markets move NOT because the Indian government is doing something RIGHT. It moves MORE because the US decides to screw us less.
The highlight of our economy this year was US cutting tariffs on India.
Yes, that's how dependent we are on the US.
- 0 AI
- 0 Tech innovation
- 0 plans
All we did in the last few years: was extort more taxes. Ban notes, ban FnO, ban this and that. And show middle finger to anyone who said we were not innovating.

@Akshat_World

SHORT TAKES

Cong MLA Lakhma walks out of jail

Raipur: A day after the Supreme Court granted him interim bail in two cases linked to an alleged liquor scam, veteran Congress MLA and former Chhattisgarh excise minister Kawasi Lakhma was released from the Raipur Central Jail Wednesday. Lakhma was first arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) January 15, 2025, in connection with a money laundering probe related to the alleged multi-crore scam and was in jail under judicial custody since then.

4 prisoners escape from Sadiya jail

Dibrugarh (Assam): At least four prisoners escaped from Sadiya District Jail in Assam's Tinsukia district Wednesday, officials said. According to a senior official, a massive manhunt has been launched after the inmates staged a daring escape in the early hours. "The prisoners executed their plan during the pre-dawn hours by scaling the prison's high perimeter walls," he added.

Nashik BJP chief takes U-turn on resignation

Nashik: A day after resigning as Nashik city BJP president, apparently over internal differences regarding the mayoral candidate, Sunil Kedar, withdrew his decision Wednesday. Kedar announced resignation after the party picked Himgauri Aher-Adke and Machhindra Sanap for the posts of mayor and deputy mayor, respectively.

Women Oppn MPs gherao treasury benches

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: The Lok Sabha Wednesday witnessed dramatic scenes as women Opposition MPs charged towards the Prime Minister's seat holding banners ahead of his scheduled speech, leading to adjournment of proceedings for the day.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not present in the House and BJP member P P Chaudhary was making his remarks on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address when the Opposition members trooped into the Well of the House.

Government floor managers had indicated that the prime minister would reply to the discussion on the Motion of Thanks at 5:00 PM. When the House met at 5:00 PM after three adjournments, BJP member Sandhya Rai who was in the chair, called Chaudhary to make his remarks on the Motion.

Soon, the women members of the Opposition trooped into the Well and made their way to the Treasury benches protesting against the trade deal with the US and former Army chief M M Naravane's 'unpublished' book.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WAS NOT PRESENT IN THE HOUSE AND BJP MEMBER P P CHAUDHARY WAS MAKING HIS REMARKS ON THE MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS WHEN THE OPPOSITION MEMBERS TROOPED INTO THE WELL OF THE HOUSE

THE WOMEN MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION TROOPED INTO THE WELL AND MADE THEIR WAY TO THE TREASURY BENCHES PROTESTING AGAINST THE TRADE DEAL WITH THE US AND FORMER ARMY CHIEF M M NARAVANE'S 'UNPUBLISHED' BOOK

As opposition members approached the prime minister's seat, the presiding officer adjourned the proceedings for the day.

The prime minister is now expected to speak Thursday in Rajya Sabha where the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address has taken place without any disruption.

It was not immediately clear when the prime minister would speak in Lok Sabha as Opposition protests are expected to continue. A discussion on the Union Budget has been listed in the Lok Sabha agenda for Thursday.

The face-off between the government and the Opposition in Lok Sabha had intensified Tuesday following the suspension of one CPI(M) and seven Congress members for unruly behaviour for the remainder of the Budget Session.

Some Dalit members of the ruling alliance also met Speaker Om Birla to complain that they were insulted by the Opposition benches while chairing the House proceedings.

Drama ensued outside the House also when Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, while protesting alongside his suspended party colleagues, taunted Union minister and former Congress MP Ravneet Singh Bittu with a "traitor friend" jibe.

Bittu retorted calling Gandhi 'desh ka dushman', while BJP later paraded its Sikh leaders to charge the Congress leader of insulting the community.

The Lok Sabha has witnessed stormy protests by the opposition members since Monday when Rahul Gandhi insisted on referring to the unpublished book of Naravane, a move strongly opposed by senior ministers Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah among others.

On Wednesday when the House re-assembled at 2 PM after two adjournments at 11 AM and 12 noon, BJP member Nishikant Dubey raked up a fresh controversy by referring to books such as "Edwina and Nehru" and "Mitrokhin Archive" among others and made certain remarks targeting former prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

Opposition members were demanding suspension of Dubey from the House for his remarks. Separately, Dubey held a press conference to further buttress his charges against the Gandhi family and Congress party.

3 JeM terrorists killed in Kishtwar, Udhampur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 4: Three Pakistani terrorists affiliated with the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were killed in two separate encounters in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar and Udhampur districts, marking a major success for security forces who had been hunting them for the past three weeks, officials said.

While one terrorist was killed in a gunfight in the snowbound Chatroo belt of Kishtwar on Wednesday evening, two others -- both self-styled JeM commanders "were neutralised this morning after they were trapped inside a natural cave in Udhampur district, the officials said.

A LARGE QUANTITY OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION, INCLUDING AN M4 CARBINE, AN AK ASSAULT RIFLE AND THREE GRENADES, WERE RECOVERED FROM THE SLAIN TERRORISTS WHO WERE ACTIVE IN THE AREA FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS

The success of security forces came ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's three-day visit to the Union Territory beginning Thursday.

"In the continuing search and elimination of terrorists in the Kishtwar region, where the hunt has already led to several contacts in the dense forests and challenging terrain, a contact was re-established with the terrorists on the run in the ongoing joint operation (Trashi-I) by the troops of Counter-Insurgency Force Delta, White Knight Corps, J&K Police and CRPF at around 5.45 pm today in the general area of Dichhar, Kishtwar.

"One terrorist has been successfully neutralised. Operation is in progress," Army's White Knight Corps said in a post on X.

The officials said the latest encounter started when a joint search party was carrying out searches in Sanjinala-Dichhar in Chingam forest.

In Udhampur, two Pakistani terrorists, identified as Rubani alias Abu Mavia and his close associate Zubair, were gunned down in a 20-hour-long operation after they were trapped in a cave Tuesday evening. Several powerful blasts were heard when the forces stormed the cave Wednesday.

While body of one of the terrorists was found lying on the mouth of the cave, another was found lying deep inside it.

The terrorists were located by joint troops of the Army, police and CRPF amid intensified search operations in the higher reaches of Ramnagar-Basantgarh area around 4 pm Tuesday, leading to a fierce gunfight, the officials said.

The Army named the over 20-hour-long operation as "Kiya" and said though it is over, the area still remains under surveillance.

A large quantity of arms and ammunition, including an M4 carbine, an AK assault rifle and three grenades, were recovered from the slain terrorists who were active in the area for the last several years, the officials said.

This was the second encounter in Udhampur since December 15 when a policeman was killed in an encounter at Soan village. However, the terrorists had managed to escape taking advantage of thick foliage and darkness.

Karnataka Assembly passes resolution against VB-G RAM G

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 4: The Karnataka Assembly Wednesday passed a resolution urging the Centre to immediately repeal VB-G RAM G and reinstate MGNREGA amid walkout by the Opposition BJP and its ally JD(S).

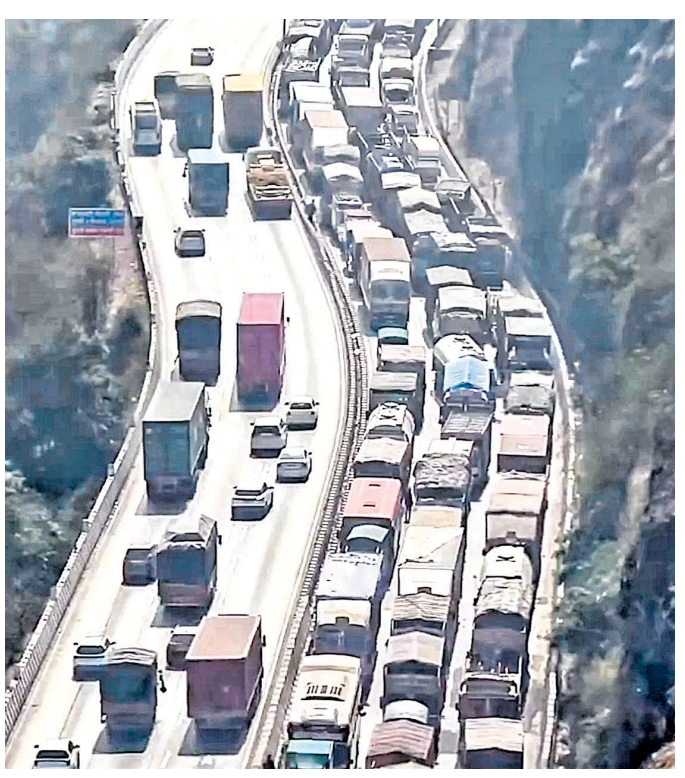
The resolution was moved by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Tuesday, which was accepted by the House today.

The resolution said the VB-G RAM G Act, "unilaterally" enacted by the Centre, is "detrimental to the basic ideals of federalism and the right to livelihood of the rural people."

Opposition Leader R Ashoka said the BJP opposes the resolution moved by the ruling Congress and supports the Viksit Bharat " Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajivika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G). He also reiterated his party's demand that Excise Minister R B Timmapur should resign as there was a large scale corruption to the tune of Rs 6,000 crore in the Excise Department.

As he walked out, Ashoka tore the resolution copy and threw it in the Assembly.

The BJP leader Tuesday alleged that the scam money was used for funding Congress in the poll-bound states. The BJP staged an overnight agitation inside the Karnataka Assembly, which continued throughout Wednesday. The party raised slogans in the Assembly disrupting the proceedings demanding Timmapur's resignation. The ruling Congress rejected the Opposition's demand, saying that there was no evidence against Timmapur.



Vehicles in a traffic jam on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway after a gas tanker overturned in the Khandala Ghat section, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded and causing massive congestion on both carriageways, in Raigad PTI PHOTO

SC raises concerns over HCs delaying decision in bail pleas

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Wednesday sought reports from all high courts on the pendency of bail matters, saying it was disappointing that pleas for personal liberty were not being expeditiously heard. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi directed the registrar generals of high courts to provide details of all bail pleas, including regular and anticipatory applications, filed after January 1 this year. The bench said the dates of filing, next hearing and decision, if any, have to be provided. It also sought details of pending bail pleas filed before January 2025. It observed, "We are extremely disappointed to see how the prayers pertaining to the liberty of individuals are not being entertained. Dockets may be heavy, and there may be matters requiring consideration, but there can be nothing more important than the prayer for bail." Underlining the delay in disposal of bail pleas across high courts, the bench said that in the Patna High Court, bail matters were not urgently listed, and petitioners approached the apex court seeking listing of bail pleas before the high court. "This court is under the bounden duty to issue certain mandatory guidelines," the bench said.

SNIPPETS

Denied entry, man strips outside B'lore club, booked

BANGALORE: A man has been booked for allegedly creating a public nuisance after a video surfaced on social media showing him naked on a busy city road, police said Wednesday. The incident took place February 2 outside the premises of a private club on Lavelle Road here, they said. According to police, the man arrived at the club and argued with security personnel, claiming his father was a member and demanding entry. When he was denied access, he allegedly stripped naked and created a scene outside the premises, a senior police officer said. In a video widely circulated online, the man can be seen obstructing a red car by clinging to its bonnet. He later falls onto the street as the driver manoeuvres the vehicle to move ahead. Police officials said it is yet to be verified whether the man was under the influence of alcohol or had any mental health issues.

Oppn to take joint call on impeachment motion against CEC, says Congress

NEW DELHI: The entire Opposition will take a collective call on moving an impeachment motion against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, Congress leader K C Venugopal said Wednesday, a day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called for such a move. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also extended support to Banerjee in her fight against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal. Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, however, refused to comment on the matter. Talking to mediapersons in the Parliament House complex, Venugopal said they are "positively" looking at the suggestion. Asked about Banerjee's call to move an impeachment motion against CEC Kumar, Venugopal, the Congress general secretary in charge of communications, said, "The Trinamool Congress has already contacted the Congress... I think the entire Opposition will take a call on the matter, which is one of the most relevant issues raised by the Trinamool. We are positively looking at it." Akhilesh Yadav, whose Samajwadi Party is the second largest party in the Lok Sabha with 37 MPs, came out in support of the Trinamool supremo, and said, "Mamata Banerjee has donned a black coat against the black deeds of the BJP."

EC to hold conference of state poll panels to build synergy

NEW DELHI: Seeking to build synergy between the functioning of the Election Commission of India and state election commissions related to their respective processes, the poll authority will organise a national conference here. Besides state election commissioners, their legal experts will also attend the meeting February 24, the EC said Wednesday. The 'National SEC Conference' is being held after a gap of 27 years. The last such conference was held in 1999. The SECs are created by the states to hold panchayat and municipal elections. They are separate and independent of the EC. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar will chair the conference along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. State election commissioners will participate along with their legal and technical experts.

Ghaziabad sisters' deaths highlight online gaming addiction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: The death of three minor sisters, who were allegedly obsessed with a Korean task-based online game, has put a spotlight on the severe effects of online gaming addiction and the increasing craze for Korean popular culture among youth.

A mix of elements, including limited social interaction, blurring of lines between reel and real and addictive online gaming, could lead adolescents to take extreme steps, mental health experts said.

According to forensic psychologist Deepti Puranik, any addiction can be looked at in terms of the brain responding to a reward system.

According to the police, the sisters took the extreme step after their parents objected to their excessive use of mobile phones.

The Mumbai-based psychologist added that adolescents associate themselves with their gamer identities and taking that away can lead to drastic results.

Chetan Kumar, father of the three sisters, told PTI Videos that they had been playing the game for close to three years and had not attended school for almost the same duration after failing academically, "which made them feel embarrassed and increasingly withdrawn."

Vandana Prakash, clinical psychologist and senior consultant at Max Superspeciality Hospital, Vaishali, said that apart from consuming time and resources, online gaming addiction can keep individuals away from meaningful activities like school, office and outdoor games.

THREE MINOR SISTERS, WITH THE YOUNGEST BEING 12 AND THE OTHER TWO 14 AND 16, DIED IN THE EARLY HOURS OF WEDNESDAY AFTER JUMPING OFF THE BALCONY OF THEIR NINTH-FLOOR FLAT IN GHAZIABAD

THE POLICE SUGGESTED THAT THE SISTERS WERE "INFLUENCED" BY KOREAN CONTENT AND WERE HIGHLY "ADDICTED" TO MOBILE PHONES AND AN ONLINE KOREAN TASK-BASED INTERACTIVE GAME

"It also keeps the person away from social interaction, making him/her isolated and lonely. Lack of productive life and away from real world often has effect on the person's mental health, making them suicidal," Prakash said.

The latest incident shares eerie similarities with the 2017 Blue Whale challenge. The deadly 50-day challenge, which was believed to have originated in Russia, claimed over 130 lives across Russia and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The game reportedly consisted of a series of tasks assigned to players by administrators over a 50-day period. Starting innocuously, administrators would gradually introduce challenges involving self-harm before the final challenge requiring the player to commit suicide.

Unaware of the nature of the "Korean Love Game", Kumar said he later learned that the game involved instructions which the children followed.

Clinical psychologist Shweta Sharma said that children start out in such games with a "curiosity to prove something under peer pressure."

Another angle that emerged out of initial police reports was the sisters' obsession with Korean popular culture.

Kumar also said that the girls would often say they wanted to go to Korea. According to Sharma, the fascination for Korean pop culture in young children arises out of the emotional unavailability of parents.

Sharma's argument found an echo in an incident from 2024, when three school girls from a village in Maharashtra decided to travel to Korea to meet their favourite Korean band BTS.

international

There was a record $1.57 billion in outstanding dues for the U.N.'s regular budget

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

DIRECT BUS SERVICE LAUNCHED BETWEEN NEPAL, INDIA

A direct bus service connecting Nepal's Beni Municipality with India's capital New Delhi was launched Wednesday to facilitate pilgrims travelling to the famous Hindu and Buddhist shrine of Muktinath in the Himalayan nation, officials said. Beni is the gateway of Muktinath, an ancient Vishnu temple located in the Mustang district of Gandaki province

Quote of the day

I am as angry as anyone about what Mandelson has been up to. The disclosures that have been made this week of him passing sensitive information at the height of the response to the 2008 financial crash is utterly shocking and appalling

KEIR STARMER | PRIME MINISTER, UK

Only Iranians have the right to dispose of them, including deciding whether to export them outside the territory of Iran and, in case of a positive decision, where to export them to or not

MARIA ZAKHAROVA | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN, RUSSIA

As a result of these discussions and through the personal intervention of Prime Minister Modi... the sacred Devnimori relics of Lord Buddha were brought to Sri Lanka

ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE | PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA

SHORT TAKES

Israeli strikes kill 23 in Gaza

Gaza/Cairo/Jerusalem: Israeli tank shelling and airstrikes killed 23 Palestinians including seven children in Gaza Wednesday, health officials said, the latest violence to undermine a truce in the enclave. Among the dead was a medic who rushed to help victims of a strike in the southern city of Khan Younis and was then killed by a second attack on the same location, health officials said. Other strikes hit Gaza City in the north, where health officials said a 5-month-old boy was killed. The attacks come three days after Israel reopened Gaza's main border crossing with Egypt, a major step in the US-backed truce.

Stepson of crown prince cries in court

Oslo: The son of Norway's crown princess denied Wednesday that videos on his phone showed acts of rape, as he broke down during his first day of testimony in his trial for rape and domestic violence, a case that has shaken the embattled royal family. Marius Borg Hoiby, 29, who joined the royal family when his mother Mette-Marit married Crown Prince Haakon in 2001, said his upbringing in the public eye since he was a toddler had led him to crave drink and sex. He could face years in prison if found guilty of the most serious of the 38 charges against him. The first day of his trial, he pleaded not guilty to the most serious charges of rape and domestic violence but acknowledged partial guilt - a plea allowed under Norwegian law - for aggravated assault and reckless behaviour Tuesday. He also admitted lesser charges, including driving too fast.

Trump to draw down 700 immigration agents

Fort Snelling, Minnesota: The Trump administration is immediately withdrawing some 700 federal immigration enforcement agents from Minnesota, although about 2,000 agents will remain on the ground, White House border czar Tom Homan announced Wednesday. In an unprecedented surge, US President Donald Trump has deployed thousands of armed immigration enforcement agents in and around Minneapolis this year to detain and deport migrants, resulting in angry and sometimes violent confrontations with residents and street protests across the nation.

US plans minerals bloc to counter China: Vance

President Donald Trump announced Project Vault, a plan for stockpile of rare elements to be funded with a $10 billion loan from the US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Critical minerals are needed for everything from jet engines to smartphones

China dominates the market for those ingredients crucial to high-tech products

Washington, Feb 4: The Trump administration wants to create a critical minerals trading bloc with its allies that will use tariffs to maintain price floors and defend against China's tactic of flooding the market to undermine any potential competitors.

Vice President JD Vance said Wednesday that the trade war over the past year exposed how dependent most countries are on the critical minerals that China has a stranglehold on.

"We want members to form a trading bloc among allies and partners, one that guarantees American access to American industrial might while also expanding production across the entire zone," Vance said at a meeting of foreign ministers at the State Department.

"What is before all of us is an opportunity at self-reliance that we never have to rely on anybody else except for each other, for the critical minerals necessary to sustain our industries and to sustain growth."

Critical minerals are needed for everything from jet engines to smartphones. China dominates the market for those ingredients crucial to high-tech products.

"I think a lot of us have learned the hard way in some ways over the last year, how much our economies depend on these critical minerals," Vance said at the opening of a meeting that Secretary of State Marco Rubio is hosting with officials from several dozen European, Asian and African nations.

Two days ago, President Donald Trump announced Project Vault, a plan for stockpile of rare elements to be funded with a $10 billion loan from the US. Export-Import Bank and nearly $1.67 billion in private capital.

Trump's Republican administration is making such bold moves after China, which controls 70 per cent of the world's rare earths mining and 90 per cent of the processing, choked off the flow of the elements in response to Trump's tariff war. The two global powers are in a one-year truce after Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in October and agreed to pull back on high tariffs and stepped-up rare earth restrictions. But China's limits remain tighter than they were before Trump took office.

Xi spoke with Trump Wednesday, according to Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington. Details were not immediately available.

Vance said some countries have signed on the trading bloc, which is designed to ensure stable prices and will provide members access to financing and the critical minerals. He hoped others would agree after the meeting.

Administration officials said this plan will help the West move beyond complaining about the problem of access to critical minerals to actually solving it. "Everyone here has a role to play, and that's why we're so grateful for you coming and being a part of this gathering that I hope will lead to not just more gatherings, but action," Rubio said.

India free to buy oil from any supplier: Kremlin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Moscow, Feb 4: India is free to buy oil from any country, and there is nothing new about its decision to diversify its crude suppliers, the Kremlin said Wednesday.

"We, along with all other international energy experts, are well aware that Russia is not the only supplier of oil and petroleum products to India. India has always purchased these products from other countries. Therefore, we see nothing new here," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said while responding to a question.

He was asked about US President Donald Trump's claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had agreed to stop buying Russian oil and switch to purchasing crude from the United States and, potentially, from Venezuela. A day earlier, Peskov said that Russia has not received any statements from India regarding the cessation of Russian oil purchases.

Private Kommersant FM business radio noted that, unlike President Trump, PM Modi did not mention any agreement on stopping Russian oil imports. Igor Yushkov, a leading expert at the National Energy Security Fund, said that Indian refiners cannot fully stop the import of Russian crude.

"The American shale oil they export is light grades, similar to gas condensate. Russia, on the other hand, supplies relatively heavy, sulfur-rich Urals. This means India will need to blend US crude with other grades, which incurs additional costs, meaning a simple substitution won't be possible," he said.

"Russia typically exports 1.5 million to 2 million barrels per day to the country. America won't be able to cover that volume. So, one gets the sense that Trump is simply trying to show that he won these trade negotiations and the deal was concluded entirely in line with US demands," he said.

We, along with all other international energy experts, are well aware that Russia is not the only supplier of oil and petroleum products to India. India has always purchased these products from other countries. Therefore, we see nothing new here

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

Last time, when Russia switched to the Indian market from European and American markets in 2022, it cut production by 1 million barrels per day. This led to prices rising to $120 per barrel, and the US set an all-time high for gasoline and diesel prices, Yushkov recalled. Trump last year imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India, among the highest in the world, including 25 per cent levies for its purchases of Russian energy.

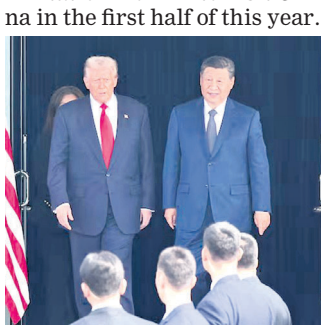
India buys about 88 per cent of its crude oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel, from overseas.

Xi, Trump talk by phone, hours after Xi spoke to Putin

REUTERS

Beijing, Feb 4: Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke with US President Donald Trump by phone Wednesday, state broadcaster CCTV said, ahead of an expected visit by Trump to China in April and hours after Xi had a virtual meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Kremlin said it was informed in advance about the conversation between Xi and Trump. It said earlier Wednesday that Putin had accepted an invitation from Xi to visit China in the first half of this year.



"Yes, we were aware of this in advance," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Interfax news agency, responding to a question on whether the Chinese president had informed Putin about plans to hold a conversation with Trump Wednesday.

Xi and Trump last spoke by phone in late November, after which Trump touted "extremely strong" relations with China.

Following months of trade tensions triggered by Trump's tariffs last year, relations between Washington and Beijing stabilised after a meeting between the leaders in October in South Korea, where a fragile trade truce was struck.

Supporters of Venezuela's government, wearing costumes depicting ousted Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, attend a rally to demand the release of Maduro and Flores

REUTERS

US, Iran to seek de-escalation in nuclear talks

REUTERS

Dubai, Feb 4: The US and Iran are due to hold talks in Oman Friday after Tehran requested a change of venue to limit negotiations to its nuclear programme, a regional official said, with a build-up of US forces in the Middle East raising fears of a confrontation.

Iran wanted the meeting to take place in Oman as a continuation of previous rounds of talks held in the Gulf Arab country on its nuclear programme, asking for a change of location from Turkey to avoid any expansion of the discussions to issues such as Tehran's ballistic missiles, the regional official said.

Iran has said it will not make concessions on its formidable ballistic missile programme -- one of the biggest in the Middle East -- calling that a red line in negotiations.

Tehran, which says it replenished its stockpile of ballistic missiles since coming under attack from Israel last year, has warned that it will unleash its missiles to defend the Islamic Republic if its security is under threat.

The regional official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Iran had since the beginning stressed that it would only discuss its nuclear programme, while Washington wanted other issues on the agenda.to mutual threats of air strikes and stirred fears of a wider war.

Andrew leaves Windsor home after latest Epstein revelations

REUTERS

London, Feb 4: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, the younger brother of King Charles, has moved out of his mansion on the royal estate in Windsor, a royal source confirmed Wednesday, following new damaging revelations about his links to the sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

His exit from Royal Lodge, his home for decades, marks a new low for the former prince, following years of scrutiny over his connections to Epstein, a scandal that has cast a shadow over Britain's royal family.

Mountbatten-Windsor, 65, had hoped to stay at the 30-room Georgian mansion for longer, the Sun newspaper said, but he moved under the cover of darkness Monday and was driven to a cottage in Sandringham, the king's estate in Norfolk, in eastern England.

Former prince will now live on king's Norfolk estate

Sun newspaper says 'humiliating' move took place at night

Royal had been seen horse riding in recent days

Police review new claim against Mountbatten-Windsor

POLICE INVESTIGATE LATEST EPSTEIN FILES

Amid the fallout from the release of the latest trove of millions of files related to Epstein, British police Tuesday also launched an investigation into Peter Mandelson, Britain's former ambassador to the US, over alleged misconduct in public office, following allegations that he leaked market-sensitive information to Epstein.

The files included emails suggesting that Mountbatten-Windsor had maintained regular contact with Epstein for more than two years after he was found guilty of child sex crimes.

He had previously denied maintaining ties with the financier after Epstein's 2008 conviction, apart from a 2010 visit to New York to end their relationship.

Britiish Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Saturday that the former prince should testify before a US congressional committee, following the new revelations.

Greenland shatters temperature record, redrawing economic shift

REUTERS

Nuuk, Feb 4: Greenland, the Arctic island coveted by US President Donald Trump, experienced its warmest January on record this year, as a rate of warming four times faster than the global average redraws the outlook for sectors from fishing to mining.

Trump has said the US must own Greenland, an autonomous part of the Kingdom of Denmark, for security reasons although he has backed away from threats to take the island by force.

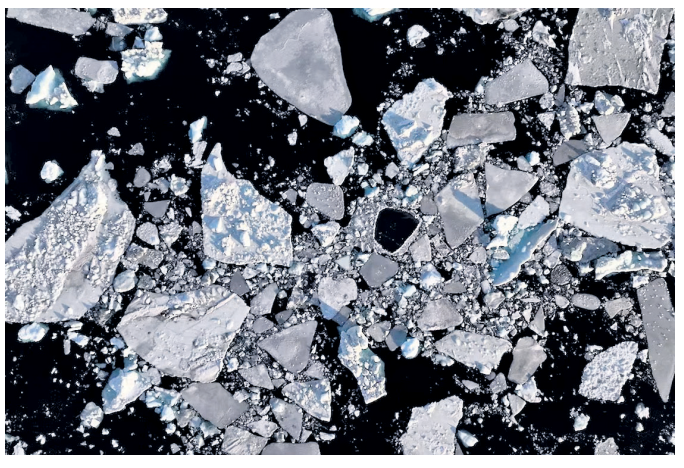
Preliminary temperature readings from the Danish Meteorological Institute in the Greenlandic capital Nuuk averaged +0.2 degrees Celsius (32.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in January, the highest on record and well above the historical average of -7.7 degrees between 1991 and 2020.

"Climate change is already clearly visible on Greenland," said Jacob Hoyer, head of the National Centre for Climate Research at the Danish Meteorological Institute.

"From the records we can see that it is warming four times faster than the mean temperature hike in the world."

The warm weather means sea ice extends less far south along the coast each winter and is thinner even where it does exist, making it difficult to use for transport, according to Hoyer.

It can also affect the mainstay of Greenland's economy - fishing. Catches of mainly shrimp, halibut and cod are the biggest export and accounted for 23% of gross domestic product in 2023, according to Statistics Greenland, while the industry provides 15% of all jobs.



"The waters around Greenland are also warming up, and that can change the ecosystem and the fishery business. It will most likely have an impact," said Hoyer, adding it was too early to tell exactly how.

While Trump has chiefly highlighted security concerns, Greenland also holds strategic mineral resources that could play a part in the power struggle for the island. A Danish survey published in 2023 showed 25 of the 34 minerals deemed "critical raw materials" by the European Commission were found there.

Warming seas threaten fishing, pillar of Greenland's economy

Trump wants US to control Greenland for security reasons

Climate shifts could ease costs for mining minerals

Red tape surrounding mining concessions, harsh conditions and opposition from indigenous groups have historically made mining expensive. The flip side of the warming climate could be that such ventures become more profitable as extraction and shipping become less costly, Hoyer said.

Still, businesses in many established sectors face uncertainty in the here and now. Casper Moller, owner of a company providing tours for tourists, says the lack of snow and ice makes these difficult by snowmobile or skis.

"So, what we are doing at this moment is just crossing our fingers that we will reach more snow quite soon," he said.

business

So far in the current fiscal, we have received over 50 lakh procurement orders on the GeM portal, valuing ₹4 lakh crore. The procurements are expected to cross last year's level

MIHIR KUMAR | CEO, GEM

'BHARAT TAXI' SET TO HIT ROADS

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah will launch 'Bharat Taxi', India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform, Thursday after a successful two-month pilot operation, an official statement said. The service aims to expand across all states and cities within two years

Quote of the day

We will be issuing the new income tax forms and rules within February... they will be opened for stakeholder consultation too before the new Income Tax Act of 2025 gets implemented from April 1, 2026

RAVI AGRAWAL | CHAIRMAN, CBDT

In the era for India, our focus is to explain people what it means to be the 'Era of India'. When you think about the growth of India... It's not a quarter, it's not a day or week, it's not a year, it's a long horizon. And you can say maybe this is the era for India and over the next 20-25 years

LARRY FINK | CEO, BLACKROCK

For the solar sector, the rationalisation of tariffs to 18 per cent is a significant positive, improving price competitiveness and creating clearer, more predictable market access to the US

ROHIT CHANDRA | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, OMC POWER

RESULTS CORNER

Ikea loss widens

New Delhi: Ikea India, part of Swedish furniture and home furnishing retailer, has reported a widening of its total loss to ₹1,325.2 crore in FY25, and its revenue from operations was also down 3.33 per cent to ₹1,749.50 crore, according to a regulatory filing from the company. Its total income, which includes other income, was down 3.9 per cent to ₹1,780.10 crore for the financial year ended March 31, 2025.

Tata Power inches up

New Delhi: Tata Power Wednesday posted a marginal rise in consolidated net profit to ₹1,194 crore in the December quarter owing to lower revenues. It had posted a consolidated profit of ₹1,188 crore during the quarter, according to a regulatory filing. The company's total income trimmed to ₹14,269.08 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal year from ₹15,793.43 crore in the year-ago period, registering a fall of around 10 per cent.

Bajaj Finserv flat

New Delhi: Bajaj Finserv Wednesday reported almost flat growth in consolidated net profit at ₹2,229 crore in the third quarter ended December 2025. The diversified financial services group earned a consolidated net profit of ₹2,231 crore in the year-ago period. The company's total income increased to ₹39,708 crore in the third quarter of the ongoing fiscal from ₹32,042 crore in the year-ago period, Bajaj Finserv said.

Cognizant net surges

New Delhi: US-based IT major Cognizant, which has a substantial number of employees in India, Wednesday reported about 18.7 per cent increase in net income to $648 million in the December quarter. Cognizant, which follows a January-December financial year, had posted a net income of $546 million in the year-ago period. The company's Q4 2025 revenue came in line with estimates at $5,333 million, increasing 4.9 per cent year-on-year from $5,082 million in Q4, 2024.

Emcure Pharma rises

New Delhi: Emcure Pharmaceuticals Wednesday posted a 48 per cent year-on-year increase in its consolidated profit after tax at ₹231 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2025, led by robust sales growth in business verticals.

UNFAIR BIZ PRACTICES

IndiGo in soup

In early December, IndiGo faced massive operational disruptions, and subsequently, the DGCA curtailed the airline's winter schedule by 10% until Feb 10

Flight fiasco impacted over 9L passengers

New Delhi: More than 10.4 lakh passengers were affected by flight cancellations in December, with over 93 per cent of the total passengers getting impacted by IndiGo cancellations. Latest data shared by aviation regulator DGCA also showed that scheduled domestic airlines shelled out over ₹24.27 crore towards compensation and facilities for flight cancellations that affected more than 10.46 lakh passengers in December. Out of them, flight cancellations by IndiGo impacted 9.82 lakh passengers in December and the airline spent ₹22.74 crore towards facilitation. The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines was 6.92 per cent in December, and that of IndiGo was 9.65 per cent.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: The Competition Commission Wednesday ordered a detailed probe against IndiGo for unfair business practices, nearly two months after the country's largest airline cancelled thousands of flights due to operational issues, causing hardships to passengers.

After taking into consideration data related to airlines and those provided by the aviation regulator DGCA, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has prima facie concluded that IndiGo has abused its dominant position.

In a 16-page order, CCI said that by cancelling thousands of flights, which constituted a significant portion of the scheduled capacity, IndiGo effectively withheld its services from the market, creating an artificial scarcity, limiting consumer access to air travel during peak demand.

"Such conduct by a dominant enterprise may be viewed as restricting the provision of services under Section 4 (2) (b)(i) of the Act," the regulator said.

Section 4 of the Competition Act pertains to abuse of dominant position.

For assessing the complaint filed by a passenger who was impacted by the cancellation of flights in early December, the watchdog considered the 'market for domestic air passenger transport services in India' as the relevant one.

Noting that prima facie the airline's conduct seems to be causing an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India, CCI ordered a detailed investigation by its Director General (DG).

"IndiGo consistently accounts for approximately 60â "61 per cent of total domestic ASKM (Available Seat Kilometres), which reflects not only passenger volumes but effective control over market capacity and supply-side conditions.

"The domestic passenger aviation market exhibits very high and increasing concentration, exhibiting that leading firms possess the ability to operate independently of competitive forces, as the presence of effective rivals is materially constrained," the regulator said.

On the basis of substantial and sustained market share, wide network reach with exclusive operations on a significant number of city-pair routes, comparatively larger fleet and strong financial performance, the watchdog said it was of prima facie view that IndiGo enjoys a position of dominance in the relevant market delineated supra.

CCI also rejected the objections raised by IndiGo that the regulator does not have the jurisdiction to look into the case and cited a Supreme Court ruling. "Even if Trai also returns a finding that a particular activity was anti-competitive, its powers would be limited to the action that can be taken under the TRAI Act alone. It is only CCI, which is empowered to deal with the same anti-competitive act from the lens of the Competition Act. If such activities offend the provisions of the Competition Act as well, the consequences under that Act would also follow..." CCI cited a part of the ruling in its order.

Further, CCI, in the order, mentioned the responses given by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

In early December, IndiGo faced massive operational disruptions, and subsequently, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) curtailed the airline's winter schedule by 10 per cent until February 10.

Between December 3 and 5, 2,507 flights were cancelled, and 1,852 flights were delayed, impacting over 3 lakh passengers at airports across the country, the regulator said in a statement on January 20.

IndiGo, which has been cornering over 63 per cent of the domestic air traffic market share for many months, saw its share slip to 59.6 per cent in December.

Services growth at 2-month high

Service providers in India noted faster growth in new business intake and output

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: India's services sector growth rose to a two-month high of 58.5 in January, on faster expansion in new business intake and output, prompting service providers to hire additional staff, a monthly survey said Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose to a two-month high of 58.5 in January, from December's recent low of 58.0, mainly driven by demand buoyancy, new business gains and tech investment.

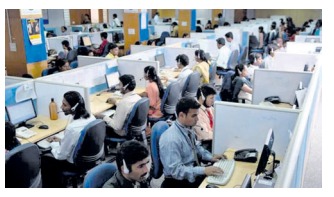
In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "India's services PMI rose to 58.5 in January, up from 58.0 in December, signalling sustained momentum in the sector. Robust output growth was driven by a steady influx of new orders, including increased international demand from South and Southeast Asia," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Service providers in India noted faster growth in new business intake and output. They were also more upbeat towards the outlook and hired additional staff, the survey noted.

According to the survey, new orders rose at the quickest pace in two months. The main source of new business gains was the domestic market, but international orders nevertheless rose solidly.

Survey participants remarked on new business gains from clients in Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Service providers in India were more upbeat towards the outlook.



Business confidence climbed to a three-month high, supported by efficiency gains, effective marketing, and the acquisition of new clients. While input and output prices are rising, they remain fairly mild by historical standards

PRANJUL BHANDARI | CHIEF INDIA ECONOMIST, HSBC

On the price front, there were quicker albeit still moderate increases in input costs and selling charges, the survey said.

Cost pressures were by far most intense in the Consumer Services category, while the strongest increase in output charges was noted in the Finance & Insurance sector.

Meanwhile, during January, India's private sector witnessed quicker increases in new orders and output, which in turn supported job creation and strengthened business confidence.

The HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index rose from last December's 11-month low of 57.8 to 58.4 in January.

Composite PMI indices are weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices. Weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors according to official GDP data.

"The composite PMI also strengthened in January, reflecting solid demand growth across both manufacturing and services," Bhandari said.

On the job front, after stagnating in December, private sector employment increased at the start of 2026. Slight rates of job creation were noted at manufacturing firms and their services counterparts, the survey said.

Silver soars to hit near ₹3L/kg; gold jumps to ₹1.65L/10g

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Precious metals extended their sharp rally for the second straight day in the national capital Wednesday, with silver prices surging to ₹2.98 lakh per kg and gold climbing to ₹1.65 lakh per 10 grams.

Firm global trends, a weak US dollar, which revived investor interest in precious metals after last week's steep sell-off, contributed to the surge, traders said.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, silver soared by ₹14,300, or 5.03 per cent, to ₹2,98,300 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal closed at ₹2,84,000 per kg in the previous session.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also advanced sharply, gaining ₹7,400, or 4.69 per cent, to ₹1,65,100 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes), compared with Tuesday's close of ₹1,57,700 per 10 grams.

"Gold and silver extended their rebound on Wednesday, with gold prices rising over 3 per cent and touching around ₹1.6 lakh per 10 gms, while silver jumped as much as 6 per cent intra-day after a period of sharp volatility and correction," Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

In the international market, spot silver gained $4.28, or 5.03 per cent, to $89.35 per ounce, while gold rose by $100.03, or 2.02 per cent, to $5,047.07 per ounce.

Gold and silver advanced Wednesday, driven by renewed safe-haven buying amid escalating geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran, Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

"This confrontation undermines the optimism over the US-Iran nuclear talks later this week and has raised concerns about the potential for further conflict between Washington and Tehran, which could increase the risk premium on gold and heighten demand for safe-haven assets," Gandhi said.

Russian oil imports down amid trade talks with US

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 4: India's Russian oil imports slipped in January, continuing a downturn that began in December, as refiners sought more alternative barrels under Western sanctions pressure and ongoing US–India trade talks, Reuters sources said and data showed.

Analysts and traders have said Moscow faces a steep decline in oil and gas revenue, which accounts for nearly a quarter of the Russian government's budget revenue, if Washington succeeds in persuading India to stop importing Russia's oil.

On Monday, US President Donald Trump announced a trade deal with India to cut tariffs to 18% from 50% in exchange for New Delhi halting Russian oil purchases and lowering trade barriers.

- Russia could face further sharp drop in oil, gas revenue
- US and India announced trade deal
- JP Morgan expects India to import 0.8–1.0 million barrels per day of Russian oil
- Russia says no reason to believe India reconsidered oil trade

Indian refiners have been redrawing crude import strategies in recent months to shift away from top supplier Russia and boost imports from the Middle East.

India imported 1.215 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian crude in January, of which the Nayara refinery accounted for 0.41 million bpd, with IOC and BPCL taking 0.58 million bpd and 0.19 million bpd, respectively, while Reliance imported no Russian crude last month, according to provisional data from analytics firm Kpler.

India's Russian oil imports in January were down by some 12% on a daily basis from December, Reuters calculations showed. Those oil imports in December dropped about 22% from November to 1.38 million barrels per day.

"Our base case is that India will largely exit from sanctioned counterparties, but will maintain Russian imports at around 0.8–1.0 million bpd, accounting for 17–21% of total crude imports," JP Morgan said in a note.

Russia's foreign ministry said Wednesday it had no reason to believe that India had reconsidered its approach to Russian oil imports following a trade deal that New Delhi struck with the US.

MPC panel meet starts; RBI guv to announce rate decision Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 4: RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra-headed six-member rate-setting panel Wednesday started deliberations on the next set of bi-monthly interest rates in the backdrop of growth-focused Union Budget and announcement of India-US trade deal, which lifted market sentiments.

The decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced by Malhotra Friday morning.

Experts are of the view that the RBI has already reduced the key short-term lending rate (repo) by 125 basis points since last February, and may go for status quo on rates, as there are no pressing concerns on either growth or inflation fronts.

However, some are of the opinion that the central bank may go for one more rate cut to further reduce borrowing costs.

US-INDIA TRADE DEAL

Markets get tariff relief but not a buy yet

REUTERS

Mumbai/Singapore/London, Feb 4: The US-India trade deal has blown away clouds over the unloved Indian rupee and is probably enough to pause relentless foreign selling in stocks, but investors say earnings growth must rebound and fundamentals improve for sustained buying.

The long-awaited deal sparked a surge in the stock market and the rupee's best rally in seven years Tuesday, as it signalled improving diplomatic and trade relations with the US.

That, however, was just one of the factors hanging over the currency and stock markets which have underperformed regional and global peers by a wide margin since the beginning of last year and seen foreign allocations dwindle to a two-decade low.

Although near record peaks, Indian equities are vulnerable to disruption from artificial intelligence and, without any companies in the sector, have been left behind in the rush to AI.

Details of the trade deal also remain sparse, even if they do allow companies to at least start planning capital spending.

"I'm not convinced tariffs have an immediate impact, but it certainly feeds into sentiment - that's probably the best way to think of it," said Michael Bourke, head of global emerging markets for equities at M&G Investments.

"Just because tariffs have gone down, do you suddenly see earnings surge? (I'm) not yet convinced that's a line I would draw," he said.

The deal is meaningful for markets, but primarily for sentiment and valuation rather than near-term earnings uplift, said Naomi Waistell, fund manager in the emerging equities team at Carmignac, which manages $48.5 billion in assets.

"The deal does not resolve some of the recent issues surrounding Indian equities: still-elevated valuations ... relatively lower forward earnings growth versus EM peers and a lack of globally scalable AI-beneficiary businesses."

Foreign investors have pulled roughly $23 billion out of Indian stocks since the start of 2025, although they poured in $580 million Tuesday.

Tariffs on Indian goods had created a balance-of-payments risk for India, contributing to INR depreciation. The trade deal breaks this loop ... encouraging foreign investors to evaluate Indian equities more objectively

PEEYUSH MITTAL | PORTFOLIO MANAGER, MATTHEWS ASIA

Foreigners dip their toes but remain wary of tepid earnings

Lack of clear AI bets restrain Indian equities vs peers

Traders expect pressure on frail rupee to ease after trade deal

Heavy sell-off pushes indices

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed slightly higher Wednesday as gains in major stocks like ICICI Bank, Reliance Industries, and Eternal were partly negated by a sharp correction in IT shares due to weak global cues. Investors turned cautious as profit booking emerged on select counters after the recent relief rally amid renewed optimism about the India-US trade deal, traders said. After swinging between gains and losses throughout the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 78.56 points or 0.09 per cent higher at 83,817.69. During the day, it touched a high of 83,947.53 and a low of 83,119.95, gyrating about 827.58 points.

Vikas Jain, head of India fixed income, currencies and commodities trading at Bank of America in Mumbai, said there should be some revival in the near-term for foreign investor flows.

"The underweight investors will come to immediate neutral position. Going overweight will depend on growth revival and the kind of policies that are announced by the government."

RUPEE RELIEF

Analysts and traders say that the deal should also offer respite to India's battered currency. The rupee has been the worst performing Asian currency in the past 12 months, requiring the central bank to consistently come to its defence as it slid from near 88 per dollar when the tariffs were imposed to a record low of almost 92 in January. Heightened appetite among firms to hedge against the rupee weakness and the central bank's inclination to bolster FX reserves are among the factors traders say could stand in the way of an extended rally in the currency. India's benchmark index has risen a respectable 10% in the past 12 months but pales in comparison to South Korea's Kospi's 118% surge and Taiwan stocks' 42% gain in the same period.

Blue Colts enter finals

AARON'S CLASSY HUNDRED CARRIES INDIA TO SEVEN WICKET WIN OVER AFGHANISTAN

U19 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Harare, Feb 4: Aaron George's silken hundred seamlessly merged with the explosive fifties from IPL stars Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre, guiding India to the ICC U19 World Cup final with a seven-wicket win over Afghanistan here Wednesday.

India now face England in the summit clash here Friday. It will be India's 10th final in the U19 showpiece, a testimony to BCCI's structured junior cricket programme that unearths serious talent.

India seemed to have a tough task ahead once Afghanistan piled 310 for four, built around hundreds by Faisal Shinozada (110) and Uzairullah Niazal (101).

But India cantered past the target in 41.1 overs and it was also their highest-ever chase in the U19 World Cup. Aaron (115, 104b) led the chase with a hundred of impeccable pace and precision placements of his shots.

He received ample backing from Suryavanshi (68, 33b) and Mhatre (62, 59b) as India kept their run-rate above seven all the while. As is his vaunt, Sooryavanshi gave a flying start to India's innings with a flurry of boundaries, mainly off off-spinner Wahidullah Zadran.

There was a slice of fortune too when Niazal dropped the left-hander on 22 at point off Abdul Aziz.

But around that lapse, Sooryavanshi batted quite aggressively, even pulling off a stunning helicopter shot six off pacer Nooristani Omarzai.

There were repeated attempts to play pull shot in his innings, which eventually became his undoing - an aimless hoick off Omarzai ended in the hands of Osman Sadat inside the circle. The opening wicket alliance stopped at 93, but Aaron then combined with Mhatre to add another 114 runs in just over 17 overs to take India past 200 in the 27th over.

Mhatre, who has been struggling for his rhythm in this tournament, made a fifty at the right moment, displaying his full selection of shots.

Once again, Aaron played the anchor's role to perfection as Mhatre took all the risks to keep his side much ahead of the asking rate. Mhatre's dismissal did not deter Aaron, and he batted on as composedly as has been doing in this innings.

Apart from his unflappability and situational awareness, the aesthetics of Aaron's batting was also impressive.

Not one shot was hit in anger, as the right-hander, who migrated from Kottayam, Kerala, to Hyderabad, batted with seldom seen elan at this age of range-hitting.

His cover drives off Zadran and Roohullah Arab were a sight for sore eyes, and even his lofted shots which fetched him sixes were bereft of stress.

His just flowed into the shot with a high elbow and still head, and the maximum over long-on off Omarzai can hold a pride of place in a cricket museum.

Aaron went past his hundred in 95 balls with an exquisite tuck past mid-wicket for a four.

Aaron and Vihan Malhotra added 96 runs for the third wicket alliance as India sauntered to a win. However, Aaron could not stay long enough to see his side touching the tape.

Earlier, Shinozada and Niazai led the way with magnificent hundreds as Afghanistan posted a challenging total.

Faisal top-scored with 110 off 93 balls, while Niazai sparkled with an unbeaten 101-run knock off 86 deliveries as the Indian bowlers struggled to pick wickets at regular intervals.

Opting to bat, Afghanistan were off to a solid start with the opening duo of Sadat and Khalid Ahmadzai adding 53 runs before pacer Deepesh Devendran effected the first breakthrough in the 13th over.

It was a length ball and as Ahmadzai shaped up to drive, he got a slight inside-edge that went through to wicketkeeper Abhigyan Kundu.

BRIEF SCORES

Afghanistan 310 (Faisal Shinozada 110, Uzairullah Niazai 101 not out; Kanishk Chouhan 2-55, Deepesh Devendran 2-64) lost to **India** 311/3 in 41.1 overs (Aaron George 115, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 68; Nooristani Omarzai 2-64, Wahidullah Zadran 1-67) by seven wickets

ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Shooter Esha helps India win two gold

World champion Samrat Rana settled for bronze on the opening day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Olympian Esha Singh carried her excellent form from last year into the new season, clinching the women's individual 10m air pistol gold and helping the home team to another top-podium finish, even as world champion Samrat Rana settled for bronze on the opening day of the Asian Championship (pistol/rifle) here Wednesday.

Esha, 21, came from behind to score 239.8 in the final, fending off challenges from two Chinese Taipei shooters -- Cheng Yen-Ching (235.4, silver) and Yu Ai-Wen (217.7, bronze) -- as well as compatriot Suruchi Singh, to claim her second individual senior Asian Championship gold.

The shooter, who had earlier secured the season-ending ISSF World Cup gold in Ningbo, China last year, had won her first continental title in Jakarta in 2024 at the age of 19.

Suruchi, 19, who led the final after the first 10-shot stage, slipped dramatically in the elimination round to finish fourth, while Manu Bhaker, a double bronze medallist at the Paris Olympics and the third Indian to reach the eight-shooter final, ended up in seventh place.

In a competition that didn't rise to great levels, with all the shooters' scores swaying between the highs of upper 10s and the lows of 8s, it was Esha who kept her cool with three scores of 10.4 and above to take a big leap for gold, while the two Chinese Taipei shooters fell back sharply, with some of their scores in the 9s and 8s.

In the qualification round, Suruchi finished second with a score of 576, while Manu and Esha both ended on 575. Manu edged ahead of Esha for qualification based on a higher 'inner 10' count, with all three advancing to the final.

The trio of Suruchi (576), Manu (575), and Esha (575) went on to win the team gold with a combined total of 1,726, comfortably ahead of Vietnam (1,713) and Chinese Taipei (1,711), who claimed the silver and bronze respectively.

Samrat, who was the standout performer at last year's World Championships in Cairo -- where the Karnal shooter showed nerves of steel to win gold -- raised hopes of another top-podium finish in the season opener.

He seemed set to carry his form into the new season after shooting 581 in the qualification round, which placed him second going into the final.

COPA DEL REY

Yamal scores as Barca reach semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madrid, Feb 4: Lamine Yamal and Ronald Araujo scored in each half as Barcelona beat second-division Albacete 2-1 Tuesday to reach the semifinals of the Copa del Rey.

Albacete had shocked Real Madrid in the round of 16, eliminating the Spanish powerhouse in what was the debut of new coach Alvaro Arbeloa.

It was Barcelona's 16th win in its last 17 matches across all tournaments, with its only setback a loss at Real Sociedad in the Spanish league last month.

Barcelona has reached the Copa's last-four in four straight seasons. It won last year's edition in a final against Madrid.

Yamal gave the visitors the lead with a left-footed shot from inside the area in the 39th minute after an assist by midfielder Frenkie de Jong. It was his fifth goal in his last six club matches.

Araujo added to the lead with a header in the 56th after a corner by Marcus Rashford. Barcelona coach Hansi Flick did not include Raphinha, Gavi and Pedri in his squad.

Albacete had a goal chalked off for offside in the 84th but finally got on the board three minutes later through Javi Moreno.

Two other matches in the last eight - which is being played in single elimination games - will be Wednesday: Valencia hosts Athletic Bilbao and Sociedad will visit Alaves. Real Betis hosts Atletico Madrid Thursday.

SAFF U19 C'SHIP

YOUNG TIGRESSES BOOK FINAL DATE WITH B'DESH

India thrash Bhutan 8-0 in its last round-robin fixture

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pokhara (Nepal), Feb 4: The Indian Under-17 women's team crushed Bhutan 8-0 in its last round-robin fixture of the SAFF Under-19 Women's Championship to set up a summit showdown with Bangladesh at the Pokhara Rangasala Stadium Wednesday.

Pearl Fernandes (16', 39', 41') scored a first-half hat-trick, while Pritika Barman (25', 90') got one goal in each half for India. Alisha Lyngdoh (6'), Abhista Basnett (10'), and Divyani Linda (17') netted one apiece.

In the other semifinal, Bangladesh defeated hosts Nepal 4-0, in the second match of the day.

India finished second on the table with six points from three matches, three behind leaders Bangladesh. The hosts ended third with three points, while Bhutan were at bottom of the heap with none.

The top two teams, India and Bangladesh, will now cross swords in the final Saturday.

The Indian U17 team is participating in the higher age-group SAFF championship as part of its preparations for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026.

From the very outset, Bhutan were no match for the Pamela Conti-coached Young Tigresses.

Alisha Lyngdoh put them ahead in the sixth minute with a well-placed half-volley from outside the box, which was just out of Bhutan goalkeeper Sonam Choden's reach.

The lead was doubled by Abhista just a few minutes later, when Pritika, who was set free on the right, cut one back for the former to tap in.

Just beyond the quarter-hour mark, Thandamoni Baskey released Pearl through a slick through-pass that put the latter behind a Bhutan defence that was trying to hold a high line.

ODISHA CUP 2025

Utkal Rising Stars win trophy in UAE

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Cup Sports Association of UAE recently conducted the 12th Edition Grand Finale of the Odisha Cup 2025 at The Seven District Club, Ajman, UAE, bringing together the Prabasi Odia community in a vibrant celebration of cricket, culture, and unity. The final match was played between Kalinga Warriors and Utkal Rising Stars in front of a lively crowd of families and supporters from across the UAE. After winning the toss, Utkal Rising Stars chose to bat first but were restricted to 127 all out in 20 overs due to a disciplined bowling attack by Kalinga Warriors. In reply, Kalinga Warriors put up a spirited fight but fell short, managing 102 runs for 9 wickets. Rajendra Pallai was named Player of the Match for his outstanding bowling performance, claiming 4 wickets for just 16 runs in 4 overs. Utkal Rising Stars won the match by 25 runs. Odisha Cup Advisor Priyadarshi Panigrahi highlighted the event as the largest in-person gathering of Prabasi Odias in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region. This year's tournament saw a record participation of 18 teams from all Emirates.

Shuttlers register contrasting wins to seal quarterfinal spots

BADMINTON ASIA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Qingdao (China), Feb 4: Indian men overcame a strong challenge from Singapore, while the women dominated Myanmar in their opening group stage matches to secure quarterfinal berths in the Badminton Asia Team Championships here Wednesday.

The men's Group C clash between India and Singapore went down to the wire, with former world number 1 Kidambi Srikanth coming up with a clinical performance in the third men's singles against Jia Wei Joel Koh.

Srikanth won 21-15, 21-16 to ensure that the Indian men's team began their campaign with a win and assured themselves of a last eight spot, as Singapore had lost their first group game against Japan 1-4.

India's match did not get off to the desired start, as Lakshya Sen went down 21-16, 19-21, 21-16 against former world champion Loh Kean Yew.

But Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty restored parity with a 21-10, 21-8 win over Eng Keat Wesley Koh and Junsuke Kubo 21-10, 21-8 and Ayush Shetty then defeated Jia Heng Jason Teh 21-17, 21-15 to give India the lead.

The second doubles combination of Pruthvi Roy and K Sai Pratheek almost sealed the match for India as they easily won the opening game against Nge Joo Jie and Donovan Willand Wee before going down 21-8, 21-23, 20-22.

This meant that Srikanth had to find a way to beat Koh, and the experienced campaigner did that in style.

In the women's match, defending champions India did not break any sweat against Myanmar with world junior championship silver medallist Tanvi Sharma opening the account with a 21-13, 21-16 win over Thet Htar Thuzar and then the team sweeping all remaining two singles and both the doubles matches.

They will now face Thailand in the second group game Thursday to decide the group winner.

NATIONALS C'SHIPS

Chanu smashes three NRs, wins gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Modinagar, Feb 4: Olympic silver medallist Mirabai Chanu delivered a statement performance, bettering three of her own national records while clinching the women's 48kg title at the National Weightlifting Championships here Wednesday.

The multiple-time World Championships medallist registered a combined lift of 205kg (89kg in snatch + 116kg in clean and jerk), setting new national marks in snatch, clean and jerk and total effort.

"I am delighted. This performance has boosted my confidence. Earlier, I was competing in 49kg, to be able to achieve this result in 48kg is great. I hope in the next competition I cross the 90kg mark. Today also I tried but since I had not had proper training I was not able to do it. But once the training is in full flow I'm sure I'll lift 90kg," Chanu told PTI after her gold-winning performance.

As is often the case at domestic competitions, Chanu was never under threat of missing out on gold, needing only two successful lifts each in the snatch and clean and jerk to seal the title.

However, there was a noticeable shift in strategy with India chief coach Vijay Sharma pushing her instead of adopting a conservative approach.

The 31-year-old opened with a higher-than-usual starting weight of 86kg in the snatch and 116kg in the clean and jerk.

She responded confidently,

clearing 86kg with ease before producing a flawless lift of 89kg. The effort improved upon her previous personal best snatch record of 88kg, set at the 2020 Nationals in the 49kg category.

Over the past few years, the diminutive Manipuri lifter has repeatedly chased the elusive 90kg barrier, often coming agonisingly close. On Wednesday too, she made an attempt at 91kg in her final lift but failed to maintain balance.

In the clean and jerk as well, Chanu completed lifts of 112kg and 116kg before being pushed to attempt 120kg in her final effort, which she could not execute.

Notably, Chanu had set a world record with a lift of 119kg in clean and jerk at the 2021 Asian Championships.

While she has consistently remained among India's most decorated weightlifters, she had not bettered her personal best in snatch and clean and jerk since 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Wednesday's performance, therefore, signals renewed progress and sharpness as Chanu gears up for a packed season that includes the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and the World Championships.

WPL FINALE

RCB eye second crown, DC aim to break jinx

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vadodara, Feb 4: Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper Smriti Mandhana will have the opportunity to lead her side to parity with Mumbai Indians in terms of success in the Women's Premier League, while Delhi Capitals will look to break their final jinx when tournament's two most entertaining sides take on each other in the summit clash here Thursday.

Former champions RCB have enjoyed a dream run this season, repeatedly showing the ability to step up and bounce back when the chips are down. That resilience helped them create history by beginning their campaign with five consecutive wins, becoming

the first WPL team to do so. The Capitals, under new skipper Jemimah Rodrigues, are eager for a maiden title after finishing runners-up in all three previous editions of the WPL.

With both their batting and bowling heavily influenced by South African players, the Capitals have benefited from a tight-knit core that has played together for several years, fostering strong camaraderie and resilience in high-pressure situations.

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