



Voice of freedom

Actor Elnaaz sheds light on Iran's political and social realities, highlighting restrictions on personal freedom

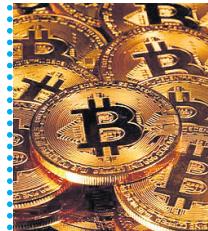
LEISURE | P2



Nuclear treaty ends

As treaty expires, Russia says it's still ready to talk to the US on nuclear limits

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Bitcoin slides

The price of bitcoin continues its months-long slide Thursday, falling another 11 per cent to \$67,000, its lowest level in 15 months

BUSINESS | P11



Shooters shine

Reigning world champion Samrat Rana and WC Final winner Suruchi Singh join forces to clinch silver in 10m air pistol mixed team event

SPORTS | P12

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 306 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY | FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Spelling change for 24 places in Odisha

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: The state government has proposed to change the English spellings of 24 places, including some districts, to align them more closely with their pronunciation in Odia language, a notification issued by the Revenue and Disaster Management (R&DM) department said.

In the notice, which was available to media Thursday, the department invited objections and suggestions from the public on the proposed changes.

"All stakeholders likely to be affected by the proposed changes are hereby invited to submit their objections or suggestions, if any, in writing, along with supporting documents, to the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this public notice," it said.

It also mentioned that late submissions of objections will not be entertained. "In case no objection is received within the prescribed time, it shall be presumed that there is no objection

PRESSENT	PROPOSED
Khurda	Khoradha
Balasore	Baleswar
Keonjhar	Kendujhar
Khondmal	Kandhamal
Deogarh	Debagarh
Angul	Anugol
Nayagarh	Nayagada
Kendrapara	Kendrapada

from the public, and the government may proceed further in the matter as per law," the notification added.

Deogarh district's spelling has been proposed to be changed to Debagarh, Khurda to Khoradha, Balasore to Baleswar, Kendrapara to Kendrapada, Keonjhar to Kendujhar and Nayagarh to Nayagada. Among others, the department also proposed to change the spelling of Reamal to Riamal, Jatni to Jatani and Aul to Ali.

In 2011, the English spelling of the state's name was changed from Orissa to Odisha and spelling of language from Oriya to Odia in line with the Odia script.

21 IAS officers transferred

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: The state government Thursday made a reshuffle in its bureaucracy by transferring 21 IAS officers.

Development Commissioner DK Singh has been given additional charge of the Steel and Mines department, while Surendra Kumar has been appointed as Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of the General Administration & Public and Grievance (GA&PG) department with additional charge of the Parliamentary Affairs department.

Bishnupada Sethi, who was appointed Officer on Special Duty (OSD) at the GA&PG department after CBI summoned him in a bribery case, has been appointed as Chairman of the Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC). He will also hold the additional charge of Chief Administrator of the KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) region.

Arabinda Kumar Padhee has been appointed as ACS of the Revenue and Disaster Management department. He will continue to serve as Chief Administrator of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) in Puri, according to a notification.

Chithra Arumugam has been given additional charge as the Director General of Gopabandhu Academy of Administration, Bhubaneswar, and Usha Padhee made the Chairperson of Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation.

Among other IAS officers who were transferred was NBS Rajput, who has been appointed as the Principal Secretary of the Commerce and Transport department, and he will remain the CMD of OSRTC.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: Lok Sabha (LS) Speaker Om Birla Thursday said he had "concrete information" that many Congress members might move towards Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's seat and carry out some "unexpected act" as a result of which he had requested him not to come to the House to reply to the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address.

As the LS reassembled at 3pm after three adjournments, Birla said if this incident had taken place, then this would have left India's democratic traditions in shreds'.

In an unprecedented development, the LS passed the Motion of Thanks Thursday without the PM's customary reply that was scheduled a day earlier in the face of relentless sloganizing by Opposition members.

After decrying the Opposition's conduct, Birla adjourned the proceedings for the day with a warning that the LS would not function if members brought banners and posters to the House.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra told reporters in Parliament House complex it was an "absolute lie" that there was any plan to hurt Modi. She



TIME TO CELEBRATE: Royal Challengers Bengaluru's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026 final T20 cricket match against Delhi Capitals at Baroda Cricket Association Stadium in Gujarat's Vadodara, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

Fear over 'unexpected act' by Cong MPs

Requested PM not to come to LS: Birla



also alleged that the PM was 'hiding behind' the Speaker.

She alleged that the government is making the Speaker "say all this" because Wednesday the PM did not have the "guts" to come to the House.

The LS Wednesday witnessed dramatic scenes as women MPs from the Opposition marched towards the Treasury benches holding banners ahead of the PM's scheduled reply at 5pm.

The LS has witnessed disruptions since Monday afternoon, when the Speaker disallowed Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, citing rules, from referring to an unpublished book by former Army Chief MM Naravane.

Members of the ruling alliance had participated in the debate, while Opposition members had refused to join and insisted that the Congress leader be allowed to speak first.

Lashing out at Opposition

members, Birla said the conduct of some of them in his office Wednesday was not appropriate and in fact was "like a black spot". "With sadness I have to inform you that some members displayed such behaviour in the House Wednesday that had never been witnessed in its history," he said.

"Never in history have political differences been dragged to the House. The conduct of the Opposition members in the office of the Speaker was not appropriate and in fact it was like a black spot," he added.

"When the Leader of the House was to reply (to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address), I had concrete information that many members of the Congress could carry out some unexpected act by reaching the spot where the PM sits," he said.

"If this incident had taken place, this would have left the democratic traditions of the country in shreds. To avoid this, I requested the PM not to come to the House and as the Speaker it was my responsibility to uphold the dignity of the House," Birla said.

He thanked Modi for acceding to his request and avoiding unpleasant scenes in LS by not coming to the House Wednesday.

CM inaugurates 57 sub-registrar offices

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: In a significant step towards improving public service delivery, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi inaugurated 57 new sub-registrar offices (SROs) across 56 tehsils in 17 districts Thursday.

With this expansion, all 317 tehsils in the state now have functional SROs, including an additional office in Cuttack tehsil.

Speaking at the event, Majhi hailed the development as a major milestone, emphasising that it will streamline land and property registration processes, enhance transparency, and eliminate the need for intermediaries.

"With proper coordination between tehsils and registration offices, mutation patta can now be processed efficiently, directly benefiting citizens," he stated. In a move to further simplify public access to government services, Majhi also integrated 11 key revenue services into the state's WhatsApp chatbot system.

Citizens can now apply for mutation cases, changes in agricultural land type, residence certificates, caste certificates, income certificates, tribal certificates, OBC certificates, EWS certificates, legal heir



certificates, and guardianship certificates via WhatsApp at 9437292000, eliminating the need to visit tehsil offices physically.

The CM expressed gratitude to Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh

Pujari and the department for systematising revenue administration and highlighted the government's commitment to future reforms aimed at protecting sharecroppers' rights.

"Many sharecroppers are deprived of government benefits due to the lack of legal rights. By safeguarding the interests of landowners and sharecroppers, the government aims to introduce new laws ensuring legal protection," Majhi added.

Pujari underlined the broader impact of these reforms, stating that opening SROs in all tehsils will reduce public inconvenience, cut down travel expenses, and ensure prompt and efficient registration of land and property documents.

Nayagarh constable shoots himself dead

PNN & AGENCIES

Nayagarh/Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: A constable of Odisha Police working in Nayagarh district killed himself with his service pistol allegedly after his family opposed his decision to marry the woman of his choice, officials said Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Sunil Sethi, a 2023-batch constable posted in the district and a resident of Beruabari under Odagaon police limits.

His body was recovered from the terrace of the barracks at Nayagarh Reserve Police campus Thursday morning, police said.

"The deceased Armed Police Reserve constable was in a relationship with a woman who is his close relative, and they wanted to get married. The proposal was opposed by his family, due to which he was under mental pressure," Nayagarh SP S Sushree said.

"He shot himself with his service pistol on the terrace of the police barracks," Sushree said.

World's 1st AI tool tracks icebergs from birth to death

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Paris (France), Feb 5: British scientists said Thursday that a world-first AI tool to catalogue and track icebergs as they break apart into smaller chunks could fill a 'major blind spot' in predicting climate change.

Icebergs release enormous volumes of freshwater when they melt on the open water, affecting global climate patterns and altering ocean currents and ecosystems. But scientists have long struggled to keep track of these floating behemoths once they break into thousands of smaller chunks, their fate and impact on the climate largely lost to the seas. To fill in the gap,

the British Antarctic Survey has developed an AI system, touted as world's first, that automatically identifies and names individual icebergs at birth and tracks their sometimes decades-long journey to a watery grave.

Using satellite images, the tool captures the distinct shape of icebergs as they break off or calve from glaciers and ice sheets on land. As they disintegrate over time, the machine performs a giant puzzle problem, linking the smaller 'child' fragments back to the 'parent' and creating detailed family trees never before possible at this scale.

It represents a huge improvement on existing methods, where scientists pore over sat-



elite images to visually identify and track only the largest icebergs one by one.

The AI system, which was tested using satellite observations over Greenland, provides

What's exciting is that this finally gives us the observations we've been missing. We've gone from tracking a few famous icebergs to building full family trees. For the first time, we can see where each fragment came from, where it goes and why that matters for the climate

BEN EVANS | MACHINE LEARNING EXPERT AT BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY

ing into the ocean was especially crucial with ice loss expected to increase in a warming world, it added. "What's exciting is that this finally gives us the ob-

servations we've been missing," Ben Evans, a machine learning expert at the British Antarctic Survey, said in a statement.

"We've gone from tracking a few famous icebergs to building full family trees. For the first time, we can see where each fragment came from, where it goes and why that matters for the climate."

This use of AI could also be adapted to aid safe passage for navigators through treacherous polar regions littered by icebergs. Iceberg calving is a natural process. But scientists say the rate at which they were being lost from Antarctica is increasing, probably because of human-induced climate change.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

PARIS (France), Feb 5: British scientists said Thursday that a world-first AI tool to catalogue and track icebergs as they break apart into smaller chunks could fill a 'major blind spot' in predicting climate change.

Icebergs release enormous

volumes of freshwater when

they melt on the open water,

affecting global climate patterns

and altering ocean currents and

ecosystems. But scientists have

long struggled to keep track of

these floating behemoths once

they break into thousands of

smaller chunks, their fate and

impact on the climate largely

lost to the seas. To fill in the gap,

the British Antarctic Survey has

developed an AI system, touted

as world's first, that automatically

identifies and names individual

icebergs at birth and tracks

their sometimes decades-long

journey to a watery grave.

Using satellite images, the tool

captures the distinct shape of

icebergs as they break off or

calve from glaciers and ice

sheets on land. As they disintegrate

over time, the machine performs

a giant puzzle problem, linking

downtown

Check ageing infra under AMRUT: Centre to states

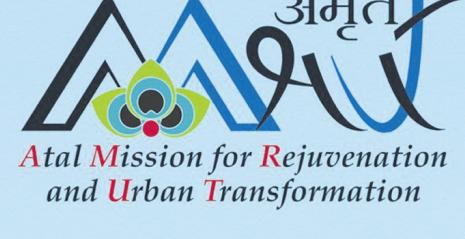
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has issued an advisory to all the states to carry out comprehensive assessments of vulnerable areas and ageing infrastructure under its Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme to prevent contamination of drinking water in urban areas, the Lok Sabha was informed Thursday. The advisory issued last month came days after several deaths in Indore due to contaminated drinking water.

MoHUA has issued an advisory in January 2026 to all the states to carry out comprehensive assessments of vulnerable areas and ageing infrastructure and to identify the crossing of sewer lines in close proximity to water supply lines and to conduct digital mapping of the existing water and sewer network using geo-spatial database created under AMRUT/AMRUT 2.0 in order to prevent health hazards," Minister of State (MoS) for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu said in a written reply to a question.

He said that water and sanitation are state subjects, and repair of outdated pipelines and drainage/sewage system are the responsibility of the state governments and concerned urban local bodies.

However, the government of India supplements the efforts of the states through schematic interventions and



CONTAMINATION WOES

MoHUA has issued an advisory in January 2026 to all the states to carry out comprehensive assessments of vulnerable areas and ageing infrastructure and to identify the crossing of sewer lines in close proximity to water supply lines

The states were also asked to conduct digital mapping of the existing water and sewer network using geo-spatial database created under AMRUT/AMRUT 2.0 in order to prevent health hazards

advisories. It provides financial and technical support to the states through various missions/ schemes such as AMRUT/AMRUT 2.0, he said.

According to him, drinking water contamination in urban areas is a multi-factor issue and is generally attributable to distribution system vulnerabilities and interface issues

with sewerage and sanitation infrastructure.

The minister also said that drinking water supplied in urban areas is required to conform to BIS IS 10500 standards, adding that however, deterioration in quality may occur due to infrastructure-related operational, environmental and maintenance factors across transmission, storage and distribution systems.

The ministry has also issued an advisory "Strengthening Water Quality Monitoring in Cities through Community Participation" under AMRUT 2.0 in November, 2024 to all the states to formulate a water quality monitoring strategy at the state or city level.

It was also to strengthen the institutional capacity for city-wide monitoring of drinking water quality in urban areas along with digital display boards for water quality parameters for public information and awareness, the minister said.

objections are received within the prescribed timeframe, it would be presumed that there is no public opposition, and the government may proceed further in accordance with the law.

Reacting to the move, Mohanty said the BJP came to power in Odisha by promising a "double-engine government" and "double development," but has failed to fulfil those promises over the past 19 months. He alleged that the government has been unable to provide good governance and has instead presided over a sharp decline in law and order and women's safety.

He further stated that farmers across the state are protesting due to injustice in paddy procurement, while promises of employment for the youth have remained unfulfilled. Mohanty claimed that irregularities in recruitment examinations have become rampant, with 20 such exams reportedly cancelled at the last moment during the last 19 months. Highlighting the government's alleged administrative inefficiency, Mohanty said only 40 percent of the allocated budget has been spent so far, resulting in a complete halt to development activities across the state.

BJD calls out idea to change spellings of certain places

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: With the objective of strengthening sanitation management across all wards and lanes of the city ahead of Swachh Survekshan, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Thursday organized a review meeting along with a skill development training programme at its headquarters.

The programme was held under the chairmanship of Additional Commissioner Kailas Chandra Das and was attended by Sanitation Deputy Commissioner N. Ganesh Babu, Assistant Commissioner Smritirikha Swain, sanitation inspectors, Swachh supervisors, officials of various agencies engaged by BMC, and representatives of several voluntary organizations.

The notice listed the places proposed for renaming and invited objections or suggestions from stakeholders likely to be affected by the changes. Submissions, along with supporting documents, must be made in writing within 15 days from the date of publication. It further clarified that objections received after the stipulated period would not be entertained.

The notice added that if no

objections are received within the prescribed timeframe, it would be presumed that there is no public opposition, and the government may proceed further in accordance with the law.

Reacting to the move, Mohanty said the BJP came to power in Odisha by promising a "double-engine government" and "double development," but has failed to fulfil those promises over the past 19 months. He alleged that the government has been unable to provide good governance and has instead presided over a sharp decline in law and order and women's safety.

He further stated that farmers across the state are protesting due to injustice in paddy procurement, while promises of employment for the youth have remained unfulfilled. Mohanty claimed that irregularities in recruitment examinations have become rampant, with 20 such exams reportedly cancelled at the last moment during the last 19 months. Highlighting the government's alleged administrative inefficiency, Mohanty said only 40 percent of the allocated budget has been spent so far, resulting in a complete halt to development activities across the state.

During the meeting, the Additional Commissioner reviewed ward-wise sanitation performance by interacting individually with officials and supervisors. He enquired about the frequency of manual and mechanical cleaning operations being carried out daily at different locations and sought suggestions to further enhance cleanliness across the city.

Officials and sanitation workers informed that increased efficiency of waste-collection trolleys has also made roadside garbage lifting easier.

Das emphasized that cleanliness should not be limited to roads and lanes alone, but must also extend to MCCs and MRFs. He appreciated the awareness drives and mass cleaning campaigns being conducted with the involvement of various agencies, schools, colleges, residential associations, and self-help groups. He directed that each agency must conduct mass cleanliness drives at least four days a month.

The field assessments for Swachh Survekshan 2025-26 are expected to begin from mid-February to March 2026.

of the psychiatry department at Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital here, termed it as 'suicide contagion'. He also informed that early age access to phones play a key factor in these kind of incidents.

"It is a case of suicide contagion, a process where suicidal contents triggers suicidal thoughts in the victim. In the minors' case, they belonged to same family and carried same vulnerability. Besides, they were in adolescent age, which is considered as the most vulnerable stage of a person," said Pattojoshi.

Pattojoshi also said that it's high time the parents should think twice before handing phones to their children.

Amrit Pattojoshi, a distinguished psychiatrist and head

of the psychiatry department at Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital here, termed it as 'suicide contagion'. He also informed that early age access to phones play a key factor in these kind of incidents.

"It is a case of suicide contagion, a process where suicidal contents triggers suicidal thoughts in the victim. In the minors' case, they belonged to same family and carried same vulnerability. Besides, they were in adolescent age, which is considered as the most vulnerable stage of a person," said Pattojoshi.

Pattojoshi also said that it's high time the parents should think twice before handing phones to their children.

Experts warn against early smartphone access to children

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: The tragic death of three minor sisters who allegedly jumped off their ninth-floor apartment in Ghaziabad Wednesday over a reported addiction of Korean drama and K-pop, has sparked concerns how mobile phone and gaming addiction can lead to tragic consequences even among the teenagers.

In this context, City's psychiatrists have shed light on the root cause of the tragic incident, blaming early access to smart phones and social media contents in an early age have impacted the minds of children.

Amrit Pattojoshi, a distinguished psychiatrist and head

of the psychiatry department at Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital here, termed it as 'suicide contagion'. He also informed that early age access to phones play a key factor in these kind of incidents.

"It is a case of suicide contagion, a process where suicidal contents triggers suicidal thoughts in the victim. In the minors' case, they belonged to same family and carried same vulnerability. Besides, they were in adolescent age, which is considered as the most vulnerable stage of a person," said Pattojoshi.

Pattojoshi also said that it's high time the parents should think twice before handing phones to their children.



"Parents shouldn't take this case lightly; most of the children are addicted to phones now and it cannot be addressed immediately. To prevent any

tragedies, parents should regulate the screen time of their kids from an early age. Social media and excessive phone exposure have deeply affected

our children. Children below 14 years should not be exposed to social media or they must use it under proper supervision of their parents. The government should also step in to address this issue," said Pattojoshi.

However students, particularly teenagers, claim that smart phones have become an important part of their studies now. "I always use phone to study as everything is available here and we get instant solutions," said Sai Swarupa Senapati, a class X student.

"Even we are getting all the notifications of school and tuition through phones, so it becomes easier for us to study," said another student.

Jyoti Prakash CK Acharya, a

renowned consultant neuropsychiatrist said, parents should approach such situation with sensitivity and should not provide personal smart phones till the child gets matured enough.

"When young lives are lost, it's never because of a single show or screen, but silent distress that goes unheard. For many children, dramas and games become refuge, identity and escape from loneliness or pressure. The real tragedy is not addiction, but absence of emotional connection. Parents must replace surveillance with sensitivity—listening without judgment, guiding screen use wisely, delaying personal devices and nurturing real bonds beyond screens," said Acharya.

MUSIC CONCERT

Members of Hindustani Sangeet Sabha stage classical music performance at Gita Govinda Sadan in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



Will present people's Budget: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday said his government will present 2026-27 annual Budget February 20 based on the opinions of the people from diverse fields.

Majhi said this after chairing the Pre-Budget Consultation Meeting attended by more than 50 experts including Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, two former finance ministers Prafulla Ghadai and Niranjan Pujari, and three former finance secretaries Ardhendu Sadangi, AK Tripathi and RN Sanapati.

"The upcoming 2026-27 State Budget will be shaped by public input to truly reflect the aspirations of the people. It



will be prepared based on the public opinions and keeping in mind the interests of the people of Odisha. We will present a people's budget for 2026-27," Majhi, who is also in-charge of Finance department, said after the meeting.

Chief Secretary Anu Garg said the government has received more than 2,000 suggestions for the 2026-27 Budget through a web portal, e-mail,

SMS and WhatsApp.

"Of over 50 invitees to the Budget consultation meeting, 19 experts have placed their suggestions which are under consideration of the government," she said.

The CM has directed the Finance department to record all the well-considered suggestions received from this meeting and consider them to get place in the Budget.

"In a people's government, people's opinions will be given importance and plans will be prepared according to the needs of the people," he said.

Noting that the voice of people is voice of God, Majhi said the Budget preparation process of the government has been shifted from bureaucratic confines to the direct en-

gagement with people.

The valuable opinions are being sought from the public and are being included in the budget after careful study and analysis, he said.

Apart from former ministers and experts, the representatives from civil society and representatives from various sectors also attended the pre-budget consultation programme here.

The Chief Minister said that the recently launched Mukhyamantri Kanya Bibaha Yojana idea was received by the government from public opinion. Similarly, Shri Jagannath Darshan Yojana and Cuttack-Bhubaneswar-Paradeep-Puri Economic Corridor project proposals also came from the public consultations, he said.

SAI Angan Confluence kicks off in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: SAI Angan Thursday began its three-day annual event, SAI Angan Confluence 2025-26, held from February 5 to 7, with students from Playgroup to KG-1 who presented an opening performance themed Udaan @100: India Rising.



and the world.

Linking the theme Udaan to India's centenary journey, she said it symbolises children's aspirations and the shared responsibility to guide them with integrity, respect and purpose.

The opening day was marked by vibrant and

well-coordinated performances by the young learners, creating a memorable visual experience and setting a positive tone for the days ahead. The theme Udaan @100: India Rising was thoughtfully reflected through the performances, depicting India's journey of freedom and continuous national progress.

SAI Angan Confluence will feature a series of performances and activities over the next two days, bringing together students, parents, and educators to celebrate creativity, discipline, and a strong sense of communal harmony.

CM hails bravery of Armed Forces in Operation Sindoor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: In a major crackdown on illegal narcotic contraband, Bhubaneswar Excise department's mobile team, Thursday, through a special drive, arrested two persons including a woman while peddling brown sugar weighing 106 grams worth Rs 10,80,000 near Sai temple in Chakeisianai area here.

The accused have been identified as Ujjala Das, 50, and Somnath Behera, 22, both residents of Chakeisianai area.

According to the Excise officials, they received a tipoff regarding sales of brown sugar in Chakeisianai area. Accordingly, the mobile team took positions on the way through which the smugglers were to pass.

When the accused duo was passing the road on a scooter, the mobile team apprehended them and conducted a search.

The police recovered 106 gm brown sugar from their possession following which the cops arrested them on the spot.

"The female is a habitual offender. Even her family members are regular offenders as well. She was actively supplying brown sugar in the area.

Commanding the courage and professionalism of Indian Armed Forces in the success of 'Operation Sindoor', the Chief Minister said, "I salute the bravery and valour displayed by our forces during 'Operation Sindoor'. This operation stands as a testament to your discipline, unwavering commitment, and selfless service to the nation."

Addressing the officers, the CM said for Odisha, the meaning of "nation" is synonymous with national service. He emphasised that this commitment deeply resonates with the values, discipline, and emotional spirit of every military officer.

Majhi also highlighted the state's rich legacy of ancient bravery and heroism. He outlined how the state has emerged with a new identity across India through rapid progress in

industry, infrastructure, education, sports, and disaster management.

The visiting officers from different countries expressed their appreciation for Odisha's fast-paced development and lauded the state's achievements across multiple sectors during their interaction with the Chief Minister.

Prominent among those present were Air Marshal Manish Kumar Gupta, Major General CP Sangra, Chief Minister's Advisor Prakash Mishra, Chief Secretary Anu Garg, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Samsawati Mishra, and other senior defence officials.

When young lives are lost, it's never because of a single show or screen, but silent distress that goes unheard. For many children, dramas and games become refuge, identity and escape from loneliness or pressure. The real tragedy is not addiction, but absence of emotional connection. Parents must replace surveillance with sensitivity—listening without judgment, guiding screen use wisely, delaying personal devices and nurturing real bonds beyond screens," said Acharya.

However students, particularly teenagers, claim that smart phones have become an important part of their studies now. "I always use phone to study as everything is available here and we get instant solutions," said Sai Swarupa Senapati, a class X student.

"Even we are getting all the notifications of school and tuition through phones, so it becomes easier for us to study," said another student.

Jyoti Prakash CK Acharya, a

downtown

37 NCC cadets felicitated for Republic Day Parade

AGENCIES

Koraput / Bhubaneswar: To boost livelihood and income of tribal farmers, the department of Agriculture, Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput, held the first phase of a two-day farmers' awareness programme on mustard cultivation under the Scheduled Tribe Component (TSP), with around 100 farmers from Rajanaguda and 130 from Ruseiput participating. The programme was recently held at Rajanaguda and Ruseiput villages in Semiliguda block of the district, with technical support from ICAR-Indian Institute of Rapeseed-Mustard Research (ICAR-IIRRMR), Bhubaneswar, Rajasthan. The initiative aimed to strengthen farmer-scientist linkages, promote scientific mustard cultivation, and boost production and income of tribal farmers in Koraput. CUO vice-chancellor (I/c) NC Panda conveyed his best wishes for the programme's success. The programme received strong support from ICAR-IIRRMR director VV Singh and Principal Scientist Ashok Sharma, who expressed their willingness to collaborate with CUO to enhance the welfare and livelihoods of tribal farmers in the district.**CUTTACK, Feb 5:** Group Headquarters, NCC Cuttack organised a felicitation ceremony recently to honour 37 NCC cadets for their commendable and disciplined participation in the Republic Day Camp (RDC) 2026, held at New Delhi from December 29, 2025 to January 28, 2026.

The cadets, representing various NCC units under Group Headquarters Cuttack, successfully underwent a two-month-long rigorous schedule involving ceremonial parades, cultural activities, national integration programmes, drill, and interactions with dignitaries. Their participation culminated in the grand Republic Day Parade, showcasing the highest standards of discipline, turnout and esprit de corps associated

with the National Cadet Corps.

During the ceremony, Col Satyabrata Swain lauded the cadets for their dedication, resilience and exemplary conduct, stating that selection for RDC is a matter of great pride and a testament to a cadet's all-round excellence. The cadets were felicitated for bringing laurels to their units and to the state through their active and disciplined participation at the national level.

The event also served as a source of inspiration for junior cadets, motivating them to strive for excellence and aspire for participation in prestigious national-level camps. The programme concluded with a reaffirmation of NCC's core values of unity and discipline, and its commitment to nation-building through youth development.

Aspirants protest in Capital

Protest highlights mounting frustration among candidates after a job-selling racket surfaced and a CBI probe led to the cancellation of the earlier examination process

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: A large group of aspirants, under the banner of Students Against Corruption, staged a protest at Mahatma Gandhi Marg here Thursday, demanding clarity and a transparent process for the Police SI examination.

The protesters said the future of hundreds of Odisha Police Sub-Inspector aspirants remains uncertain, as the state government has yet to announce a clear roadmap for the long-pending recruitment exam. More than a year after the notification, candidates are still awaiting an official exam

POLICE SI EXAM DELAY

schedule, they added.

The protest underscored growing frustration among candidates after the exposure of a job-selling racket and a subsequent CBI probe that led to the cancellation of the earlier examination process.

According to the protesters, government indecision over the examining authority has worsened the situation. With the Odisha Police Recruit-

ment Board inactive and the new Odisha Uniformed Staff Selection Commission yet to be fully operational, candidates say they remain caught in administrative limbo.

Protest leaders said the prolonged delay has severely affected aspirants who spent years preparing for the exam, accused the government of apathy, and warned that continued inaction could spark statewide

protests.

The organisation urged the government to promptly name the examination authority and conduct the Police SI exam in a fair, time-bound manner, warning that aspirants may gherao the State Assembly during the upcoming session if delays continue. Notably, the controversy centers on an alleged question paper leak in the Police SI exam, which is under CBI investigation. Termed one of the state's biggest recruitment scams, the probe has been shifted from the Crime Branch to the CBI.

Meanwhile, uncertainty surrounding the recruitment examination has sparked growing unrest among aspirants across the state as continued delay in announcing a fresh examination date has fueled dissatisfaction among thousands of meritorious candidates.

Aspirants alleged that the government appears to have "forgotten" about the SI recruitment process altogether and demanded the immediate declaration of an examination date.

Prez turns emotional during visit to native village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rairangpur, Feb 5:** President Droupadi Murmu turned emotional Thursday as she garlanded the statue of her late husband Shyam Charan Murmu at her native village in Mayurbhanj district.

The president visited her native village, Pahadpur, and went to the SLS Memorial built in memory of her late husband and her two sons, Laxman and Sipun.

Murmu has endured a series of personal tragedies, losing her son Laxman in 2009, her husband in 2014, and her son Sipun in 2012. She also lost her

Min flags off chariot

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta Thursday flagged off a promotional chariot from Ekamra Haat here as part of the 20th Grand Toshali Swadeshi Mela

celebrations.

The promotional chariot will tour major cities, including Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Puri, Sambalpur and Berhampur, to spread awareness about the fair. The 20th Grand Toshali Swadeshi Mela will be held at Janata Maidan here from February 14 to 26, themed 'Swadeshi and Self-Reliance', showcasing indigenous products and local craftsmanship.

A total of 840 stalls will be set up during the fair, featuring a wide range of handloom, textile and handicraft products from across the state as well as other parts of the country.

Several eminent personalities including Prabhakar Maharana & Ileana Citaristi, attended the programme.

I, Bimal Kumar Agarwal, S/o. Budh Deo Agarwal of New Industrial Estate, Jagatpur, Cuttack. It is Noticed to public that following land documents lost in respect of land situated at Mouza-Toral, Jagatpur lost/ misplaced somewhere. Despite of my best efforts I am unable to trace out/ find out same. I request public found below noted documents if any to inform to Bimal Kumar Agarwal Jagatpur, Cuttack, Mobile No. 7681043066. This is produced before competent Authority List of Lost Documents mentioned below as:-

1. Original Sale deed

Vide Registration No.

771, dated- 06.06.1997

purchaser Anusuya Devi Agarwal & Bimal Kumar Agarwal, 2.

Original ROR Vide

Khata No. 620/173,

Plot No. 2299/2381 In the Name of Anusuya Devi Agarwal & Bimal Kumar Agarwal,

3. Original CDA permission MAP

and letter No. 10162,

dated- 11.05.2001, 4.

Original Sale Deed

No. 6271, dated-

14.11.1980 Purchaser

Satyanarayan Agarwal,

5. Original ROR Vide

Khata No. 542, Plot

No. 2299/2381 in the Name of Satyanarayan Agarwal.

PMCA alumnus Rao bags National Thesis honour

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 5: Abhishek Rao, an alumnus of Piloo Mody College of Architecture (PMCA), Cuttack, has brought laurels to Odisha by securing the third prize in the National Best Thesis Award 2025 announced by the Institute of Town Planners, India (ITPI).

The award is a prestigious national honour recognising outstanding postgraduate planning research across India. Rao, currently pursuing M.Plan (Urban & Regional Planning) at IIT Shibpur's Department of Architecture & Planning, was selected for his academic excellence and innovative research approach.

He completed his Bachelor of Architecture from PMCA in 2021. During his time at the institute, he earned multiple academic and design accolades, reflecting his consistent dedication and academic excellence.

His award-winning thesis, titled "Planning Strategies for Temporal City in Context of Mega Festival: Kolkata's Durga Puja", focuses on urban planning challenges arising during large-scale festivals. The re-



search proposes strategic planning solutions to effectively manage massive temporary population influxes, enhance urban mobility, ensure public safety, and promote sustainability during mega events like Kolkata's iconic Durga Puja.

The management, faculty, and students of PMCA have congratulated Rao on his remarkable achievement, stating that his success exemplifies the institution's commitment to academic excellence and socially responsive professional education.

His achievement serves as an inspiration to aspiring architects and planners across Odisha and reinforces PMCA's growing reputation at the national level.

Min Gond assures support for SAHAYA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: SAHAYA, under the Odisha branch of the Indian Red Cross Society, held its managing committee meeting Thursday at Capital Hospital here, chaired by Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Minister Nityananda Gond.

Key issues related to the organisation's functioning and its future development was discussed during the meeting. It is pertinent here to mention that SAHAYA operates a special school for children with intellectual disabilities, a vocational training centre, and a therapeutic unit. The minister



appreciated SAHAYA's sustained efforts in promoting the development and well-being of children with intellectual disabilities and assured continued government support for further strengthening services in this sector.

CM Majhi makes 'Godaan' tax-free

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday announced that Hindi feature film 'Godaan' will be tax-free in the state and a cow research centre will be set up to promote research and awareness related to indigenous cattle and traditional practices.

Majhi made the announcement after watching the premiere of 'Godaan' at his official residence.

"The film Godaan will be tax-free across the state and a cow research centre will be set up in the state soon," the CM told reporters after watching the movie.

Majhi turned emotional while watching the film and advised to give priority to cultural sentiments in the society. "Films like Godaan are relevant in today's times, watch it whenever you can," he said. The film is scheduled to be released February 6. The film's director and sponsor Vinod Kumar Chaudhary, MLAs and other distinguished guests watched it at the CM's official residence.

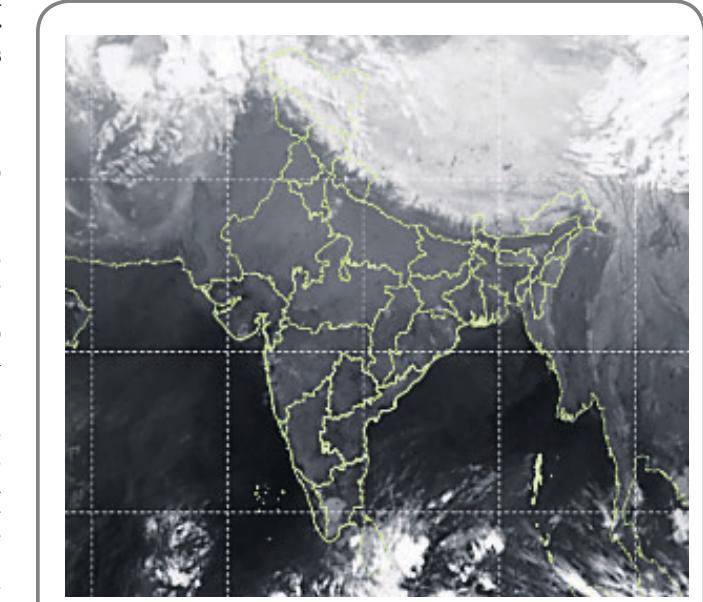


films like 'Godaan' play an important role in creating social awareness and strengthening cultural understanding.

He urged the youth to watch the film and advised to give priority to cultural sentiments in the society. "Films like Godaan are relevant in today's times, watch it whenever you can," he said. The film is scheduled to be released February 6. The film's director and sponsor Vinod Kumar Chaudhary, MLAs and other distinguished guests watched it at the CM's official residence.

11-day Adivasi Mela 2026 concludes**Bhubaneswar:** The state-level Adivasi Mela 2026 concluded at the Adivasi Mela Ground, Unit-I here, after an eventful run of 11 days. The mela witnessed a massive public turnout of over 10 lakh visitors and generated business worth more than 4.22 crore. Addressing the valedictory ceremony as the chief guest, the STCS Development, Minority & Backward Classes Welfare Development Minister Nityananda Gond highlighted the success of the mela and reiterated the state government's commitment to tribal development in collaboration with the Central government. The minister stated that the Adivasi Mela has effectively reflected the Prime Minister's "Vocal for Local" vision by promoting tribal products, traditional huts (Kudias), and indigenous craftsmanship. He emphasised that true development is not limited to economic growth alone but also includes the preservation of culture, identity, and human values. Minister Gond lauded the quality of tribal products and reiterated that protecting and promoting tribal languages, culture, and traditions remains a key priority of the government.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	
DOLLAR	90.41 ▲ 0.16	SENSEX	83313.93 ▲ 503.76
EURO	106.78 ▲ 0.38	NIFTY	25642.80 ▲ 133.20



WEATHER	
BBSR	31.7°
Min Temp	15.5°
Humidity	65%
Rainfall	Nil

**Prep meet ahead of Odia Pakhya observance**

POST NEWS NETWORK



ties during the Odia Pakhya, including observance of Odisha Day, Khadi Chhuan Day, Traditional Attire Day, Folk Art Day, Traditional Food Day, Cleanliness Day, blood donation drives, Odia nameplate campaigns, heritage mass runs, youth writers' conferences and discussion sessions on eminent Odia personalities.

The government also plans to design a dedicated logo for Odia Pakhya and launch a website. An Odia Pakhya quiz competition will be conducted, with digital certificates to be issued to all participants. Efforts will be made to involve non-resident Odias in the celebrations, while special focus will be given to the participation of youth and

students from schools, colleges and universities. Programmes highlighting Odia language, literature and culture will also be organised in the remote and border areas of the state.

Addressing the meeting, the Culture Minister said the objective of Odia Pakhya is to reconnect people with Odia traditions, heritage and to promote Odia language, literature and culture at a broader level. He added that coordinated efforts with various departments would ensure smooth implementation of programmes from the block level to the state level.

Department's Secretary Bijaya Ketai Upadhyaya, special secretary Deba Prasad Dash, Odisha Sahitya Akademi secretary Chandra Shekhar Hota and other senior officials were present in the meeting.

KORAPUT DECLARED 'NAXAL-FREE'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Feb 5: Odisha Police Thursday declared Koraput district "Naxal-free" following the surrender of an area committee member (ACM) of the banned CPI (Maoist), marking a significant breakthrough in efforts to curb Left Wing Extremism in the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border region.

The surrendered cadre was identified as Mamata Podiami (26), also known as Mamata and Soni, a native of Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh. She was carrying a bounty of ₹5.5 lakh, police said. The surrender took place before the district police in the presence of senior officials, including the DIG of Police, South-Western Range, DIG BSF, SP Koraput, a BSF commandant and the SDPO of Jeypore.

During the formal surrender, Mamata handed over a 7.62 mm SLR rifle, one magazine and 10 rounds of live ammunition. Police said she renounced violence, severed all links with extremist activities and expressed faith in the Constitution and the democratic system.



Area Committee Member Mamata Podiami surrenders

DIG (South-Western Range) Kanwar Vishal Singh said Mamata would receive ₹5.5 lakh as surrender assistance and an additional ₹1.65 lakh for surrendering her weapon, along with benefits under the state's surrender and rehabilitation policy. "After her surrender, Koraput is now a Maoist-free district," he said, appealing to remaining cadres to return to the mainstream.

Authorities attributed her surrender to sustained appeals by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and senior police leadership, intensified pressure from security forces, growing

volved in several Maoist-related cases. She is an accused in Katakalyan police station Case No. 28/2023, registered under various sections of the IPC, Arms Act, Explosives Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Investigations into her role in Maoist operations across the border areas are continuing.

According to police, Mamata was an active member of the Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) military platoon and was in-

disillusionment with Maoist ideology and the state's newly announced surrender-cum-rehabilitation policy.

Under the policy, Mamata will also be eligible for housing under the Antyodaya Gruha Yojana, skill development training with a monthly stipend, health coverage, subsidised ration and other benefits. An interim relief of ₹50,000 has already been provided, police said.

Director General of Police YB Khurania appealed to remaining Maoist cadres to shun violence and join the mainstream, assuring full support, protection and rehabilitation to rebuild their lives with dignity. Koraput, which witnessed several Maoist incidents in the past, including a major attack in 2009 when rebels laid siege to Damanjodi town, has seen marked improvement in law and order in recent years. With this development, the district has become the fourth under the south-western police range, after Malkangiri, Nuapada and Nabarangpur, to be declared Maoist-free.

3 coaches of Chennai Central Exp derail in Jajpur; none hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, Feb 5: Three coaches of the Chennai Central Express derailed near Jajhpura railway station in Jajpur district Thursday, an official said.

There were no reports of any injury or fatality in the incident that took place at 8.51am, he said. One AC and two general coaches of the train from Chennai to West Bengal's New Jalpaiguri jumped off the tracks, the railway official said.

"A minor derailment involving Train No. 22611 Chennai-New Jalpaiguri Express occurred at 0851 hrs today morning while the train was passing through Jajpur Yard (JKPR)," the East Coast Railway (ECoR) said in a release.

The train was moving at a very slow speed at the time of the incident. There has been no loss of life or injury to passengers. Passenger train operations remain unaffected, it said.

The cause of the derailment is yet to be ascertained.



On receipt of information, Accident Relief Train (ART) from Bhubaneswar and Khurda Road and Accident Relief Medical Equipment (ARME) from Khurda Road were promptly dispatched at 0853 hrs, the ECoR release said.

East Coast Railway CPOR, Deepak Rout, said the train has left for its destination, and three new coaches will be attached at Balasore.

Merchant navy official from Bhadrak 'missing' from vessel near Mauritius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar/Bhadrak, Feb 5: A merchant navy official from Bhadrak district has allegedly gone missing while on duty aboard a vessel near Mauritius February 3, prompting his family to seek urgent intervention from the Centre and the state government, officials said.

The missing seafarer has been identified as Sarthak Mahapatra, a native of Kespur in Bhadrak district.

Mahapatra has been working with a private shipping company since July 2025.

According to his mother, Rashmita Mohapatra, the vessel had sailed from China to West Africa and was returning to China via Singapore.

When the ship was near Singapore February 2, he spoke to me, other family members, and his friends, she said.

"We are devastated at his disappearance and request the Central and state governments to intervene urgently. We have sent emails appealing to the Odisha government to rescue my son and bring him back home safely," she said.

She also sought help from the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister, the Director General of Shipping and the Ministry of External Affairs through posts on X. "As a mother, I request a transparent investigation, access to CCTV footage, details of his personal belongings and continuous official updates," she wrote.

Sources in the state government said they have taken up the issue with the authorities concerned in New Delhi and requested them to inquire into the incident.

Wildfire prevention: Awareness cycle rally flagged off in Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Feb 5: With the aim of turning forest fire prevention and environmental protection into a mass movement, a large scale awareness cycle rally was flagged off Thursday in front of the Jagannath temple at Purangarh in Angul town.

The initiative is being organised by Sathi Paribar in collaboration with **Dhatri** and **Orissa POST**.

The five-day rally, scheduled to conclude at Saria Srikhetra February 9, will cover nearly 280km. During the journey, awareness messages will be disseminated among residents of 120 villages. Special emphasis is being laid on sensitising youth and students about ways to prevent forest fires and protect nature and the environment.

An atmosphere of enthusiasm marked the launch, with environmental activists, students and local residents participating in large numbers. Children joining the rally on their bicycles added to its appeal. Local residents welcomed the initiative and

expressed support for environmental conservation efforts.

Susanta and Subrat said the initiative aims to educate people about the severe impact of recurring summer forest fires

The programme was attended by Siddharth Pradhan, pres-



ident; members Pintu Behera, Rajesh Ranjan Sahu, Subhendu Sahu, Dillip Sahu, Soumyaranjan Thamb, Gurudev Sahu, Bijay Kumar Jena and Papun Sahu; youth social workers Subrat Kumar Sahu, Binod Majhi, Dibyaranjan Sahu and Suman Sahu of Aryabhatta Educational Institution; Sipun Sahu, Sunil Dalabehera and Subrat Pradhan of Second Youth Light Association; and district-level members of the **Dhatri** and **Orissa POST** in Angul.

Indian Bank
ZONAL OFFICE : SAMBALPUR
1st Floor, Shyam Arcade, Khetrapur, Sambalpur-768003
APPENDIX-IV [Rule-8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Notice is hereby given under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement (Security) Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of Security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer issued a Demand Notice calling upon the following borrower(s) / guarantor(s) / mortgagor(s) to repay the outstanding amount & interest thereon 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 borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors and the public in general that the Authorised Officer has taken POSSESSION of the property of below mentioned account in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said rules. The borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Indian Bank** for an amount mentioned herein below. The borrower's attention is invited to the 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 the Borrower / Partner / Guarantor / Mortgagor(s)	Amount outstanding as on the date of Demand Notice	Date of Demand/ Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Properties
PADAMPUR BRANCH/ Borrower : M/s. Mohinee Motors, At : Plot No. 717, MS Khata No.: 246/1229, Near PHD Office, Padampur, Basna Road, Dist :Bargarh, Pin : 768036 / Partners : (1) Sri Pradeep Pattaik, S/o : Rohita Pattaik & (2) Sri Pramod Kumar Mishra, S/o : Rajanikant Mishra both are At : Ward No.:4, Hanuman Para, PO: Rajbarasambar, Padampur, Dist :Bargarh, Pin : 768036 / Mortgagor / Guarantor : Smt. Mohini Pattaik, W/o: Rohita Pattaik, At : Ward No.: 4 Hanuman Para, PO: Rajbarasambar, Padampur, Dist : Bargarh, Pin : 768036 Date: 05.02.2026, Place: Sambalpur	₹33,97,212/- as on 11.11.2025 + interest, costs & expenses thereon	12.11.2025 / 02.02.2026	All that piece and parcel of Residential Land and Building recorded in the name of Smt. Mohini Pattaik, W/o : Mr. Rohita Pattaik under Plot No.: 1863, Area : Ac. 0.04 dec. and under Plot No.: 1865, Area : Ac. 0.03 dec., Total Area : Ac. 0.07 dec., both the Plot Under Khata No.: 1309/2770 at Mouza : Padampur, PS No. 17, PS/Tahasil : Padampur, Dist : Bargarh, Bounded by : North : Nabaghabara Bariba, South : Rahasa Gouda and Dash Gouda, East : Road, West : Road

Sd/- Authorized Officer, Indian Bank

HDFC Bank Limited
Branch: Kharvela Nagar, Plot No. 98, 3rd Floor, Keshari Talkies Office Complex, Kharvela Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751001
CINL65920MH1994PLC080618, Website: www.hdfcbank.com
DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **HDFC Bank Limited** (earlier HDFC Limited having amalgamated with HDFC Bank Limited by virtue of a Scheme of Amalgamation approved by Hon'ble NCLT-Mumbai vide order dated 17th March 2023) (**HDFC**) under 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 Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) listed hereunder, to pay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice/s, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice/s, as per details given below. The undersigned have, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known respective addresses of the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s). Copies of the said Notices are available with the undersigned, and the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s), may, if they so desire, collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.

In connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) to pay to **HDFC**, within 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below in their respective names, together with further interest @ 18% p.a. as detailed in the said Demand Notices from the respective dates mentioned below in column (c) till the date of payment and / or realisation, read with the loan agreement and other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to **HDFC** by the said Borrower (s) respectively.

Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured asset/s.

Name & Address of Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s)	Total Outstanding Dues as on date and Loan No.	Date of Demand Notice	Description of Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property (ies)
Borrower: Mr. Nityananda Sahoo	Rs.9,84,372/- (Nine Lakh Eighty-Four Thousand Three Hundred Seventy-Two Only) against L/A: 604787540 as on 30-Sep-2025*	10-Nov-2025	A Flat of Admeasuring In Aggregate Sbuwa Area: 438.33 Sqft. Approx Situated at Flat No.: 5085, 5th Floor, Including One Car Parking space in the apartment named "Seven Hills Sands" Located over Plot No.: 351, Khata No.: 36, Mouza: Sipasurabali, PS: Puri Sadar No.: 78, Tahasil: Puri Sadar, SRO: Puri, Dist.: Puri, Odisha bounded by East: Garden, West: Corridor, North: Lift Area, South: Flat No.: 5087

Sd/- Authorized Officer, HDFC Bank Limited

HDFC Bank Limited
Branch: Kharvela Nagar, Plot No. 98, 3rd Floor, Keshari Talkies Office Complex, Kharvela Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751001
CINL65920MH1994PLC080618, Website: www.hdfcbank.com
DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **HDFC Bank Limited** (earlier HDFC Limited having amalgamated with HDFC Bank Limited by virtue of a Scheme of Amalgamation approved by Hon'ble NCLT-Mumbai vide order dated 17th March 2023) (**HDFC**) under 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 Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) listed hereunder, to pay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice/s, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice/s, as per details given below. The undersigned have, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known respective addresses of the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s). Copies of the said Notices are available with the undersigned, and the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s), may, if they so desire, collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.

In connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) to pay to **HDFC**, within 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below in their respective names, together with further interest @ 18% p.a. as applicable, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc incurred till the date of payment and / or realisation:

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to **HDFC Bank** as aforesaid, then **HDFC Bank** shall proceed against the above Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property(ies) under Section 13 (4) of the said Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risk of the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) as to the costs and consequences.

The said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) are prohibited under the said Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property(ies), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of **HDFC**. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the Act or Rules made thereunder shall be liable for imprisonment and / or penalty as provided under the Act.

Regd. Office: **HDFC Bank House**, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai- 400026

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 05.02.2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer, For HDFC Bank Limited

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

Deputy Chief Engineer/Line South Eastern Railway, Kolkata-700043 for and on behalf of the President of India, invites Open E-Tender for the following work: Tender No. SER-HQ-TR-W-PAUT-CKP-1-26; Name of the Work: Carrying out USFD testing of Flash Butt (FB) welds on all types of rails using contractor's RDSO approved Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing (PAUT) weld tester over Chakradharpur divisions of South Eastern Railway; Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹ 9,28,34,942.40; Earnest Money: ₹ 6,14,200.00; Date and time of Closing of Tender: 27/02/2026 at 15:00 hrs.; Website particulars: Complete details for e-tendering and online participation for the above work are on website www.ireps.gov.in. (PR-1100)

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: ST-OT-TELE-SPL- WORKS-541, Dated 30.01.2026

Name of Work: MAINTENANCE OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR GEARS OF EXCHANGE, DRM BUILDING, TMC BUILDING, DRH, OUTDOOR OFFICES, VIDEO CONFERENCE AND CCTV UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (SSE) TELE/EXCHANGE KHURDA ROAD (KUR) FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.

Tender Value: ₹ 1,81,90,853.04, EMD: ₹ 2,41,000.00.

Bidding Start Date: 09.02.202



Be fearless and resolute,
all obstacles will melt away
before you.

THE MOTHER

Killer Misinformation

Three people, including two children, died of measles in the United States in 2025. Their deaths were preventable. There were 2,267 confirmed measles cases in the US last year – more than seven times the 285 cases in 2024, and the highest number in more than 30 years. All these cases were preventable, too. So, why weren't they? For two decades, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who was confirmed as the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services last February, has promoted baseless theories linking vaccines with autism. He has claimed that vaccines have "poisoned an entire generation of American children," and his statements are likely to have contributed to declining vaccination rates in the US. This has led to a sharp increase in the incidence of measles.

Since taking office, Kennedy has fired experienced scientists from a key vaccine advisory committee and replaced them with skeptics. He has also withdrawn funding for developing mRNA vaccines—the method of developing new vaccines that enabled the rapid production of highly effective vaccines against COVID-19, probably saving several million lives. Kennedy suggested taking vitamin A as an alternative to measles vaccination, after which some Texas parents gave their children such high doses that the children showed symptoms of toxicity.

The turn away from the usual standards of science in public health is not only an American problem. In Slovakia, Prime Minister Robert Fico appointed Peter Kotlár, an orthopedic surgeon and anti-vaccine activist, to investigate the country's pandemic response. Kotlár's October 2024 report described COVID-19 as "an act of bioterrorism" designed to "test the naivete of the global population to follow orders subliminally." The report also claimed, without evidence, that mRNA vaccines alter human DNA, and recommended that they be banned.

In a free society, individuals may express their unfounded opinions about vaccines, knowledgeable scientists can rebut them, and public-health officials should examine the evidence and act accordingly. In rare cases, views opposed to a scientific consensus will turn out to be true and become a new orthodoxy.

Public-health officials occupy roles of special responsibility because they shape policies affecting millions. Vaccines are among the most extensively tested medical interventions in history. Yet vaccine skeptics like Kennedy demand ever-more studies, while accepting far lower evidentiary standards for their own claims— anecdotes, cherry-picked data, and conspiracy theories about pharmaceutical companies.

When vaccination coverage drops below critical thresholds, "herd immunity"—the protection vulnerable populations receive from high vaccination rates in the general population—is lost, and preventable diseases return. We know this from historical precedent and from contemporary examples like Romania and now Canada, where measles had been considered eliminated.

Under communism in Romania, childhood vaccination was compulsory, and measles was effectively eliminated. While the fall of the Ceaușescu dictatorship brought welcome freedoms, and EU membership improved living standards, one consequence was that some vaccines became voluntary. By 2023, the measles vaccination rate in Romania had fallen to 62%, down from 95% when the vaccine was introduced, and in 2024, the country had more than 30,000 measles cases, including 23 deaths.

Some officials say they are simply respecting individual liberty. But liberty for competent adults to make their own choices does not extend to decisions that harm others. Refusing childhood vaccination does exactly that. Children attending kindergarten or elementary school should be vaccinated, not only because it will protect them, and they are too young to make their own choices, but also because refusing vaccination increases the risk to others who are too young for vaccination, as well as to immune-compromised individuals who cannot be vaccinated and to the broader community when herd immunity breaks down.

Kennedy presents himself as fighting pharmaceutical company power, pointing to genuine scandals like Purdue Pharma's promotion of OxyContin. But well-documented cases of corporate malfeasance do not justify rejecting an entire category of medical intervention supported by scientific evidence for safety and efficacy that comes from independent researchers, public-health agencies worldwide, and decades of population-level data. The suggestion that this global scientific consensus is some vast conspiracy is wildly implausible.

When government officials act on unfounded beliefs about vaccine risks, people die, as the unvaccinated Texas children who contracted measles did. Those who wield power over health policy bear responsibility for these outcomes. Epistemic recklessness—persisting in beliefs contradicted by overwhelming evidence when many lives depend on getting it right—is a basic ethical failure.

Of course, scientific understanding is never perfect or final. Genuine questions about vaccine safety merit serious investigation—which is why vaccine-safety monitoring systems exist, and why rare adverse events are carefully studied. But there is a wide gap between good-faith inquiry and ideological resistance to overwhelming evidence.

Disregard for scientific evidence by opponents of vaccination is now producing exactly the harms experts predicted: disease outbreaks, preventable deaths, and the unraveling of progress in public health that took decades to achieve. This must stop now, before the consequences become truly catastrophic.

Governments should appoint officials with relevant scientific expertise who respect evidence. Public-health agencies should operate according to scientific consensus, not political ideology. And when officials demonstrate sustained commitment to views contradicted by evidence, they should be removed from positions where they can translate those views into policies with deadly consequences.

The writer is Professor in Medical Ethics at the Centre for Biomedical Ethics, National University of Singapore.

© PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Leo Tolstoy
The two most powerful warriors are patience and time.

LEO TOLSTOY

Jiddu Krishnamurti
Freedom from the desire for an answer is essential to the understanding of a problem.

VOLTAIRE

Voltaire
God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well.

power post

FOCUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DRIVERS OF GROWTH



Instead of concentrating solely on the modernization of the sixty-mile coastal belt (Cuttack-Puri-Bhubaneswar region), the Government of Odisha should prioritize harnessing the entrepreneurial potential of its villages



Sanjib Kumar Karmee

YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO SEE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A VIABLE AND RESPECTABLE CAREER CHOICE, NOT A LAST RESORT

Peter Singer

When vaccination coverage drops below critical thresholds, "herd immunity"—the protection vulnerable populations receive from high vaccination rates in the general population—is lost, and preventable diseases return

Bhagirathi Jena

INDIA'S BUDDHIST DIPLOMACY RELIES NOT ON EXPORTING A PRODUCT BUT ON PROMOTING SHARED SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS



Bhagirathi Jena

Entrepreneurship is a vital driver of economic and social growth.

Innovation-driven entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in generating employment across both urban and rural regions. Entrepreneurial ventures, services, and products simplify everyday life and serve as powerful instruments for livelihood generation.

Rural Odisha stands at a decisive moment in its development journey.

Long viewed primarily through the lens of agriculture, migration, and welfare dependence, Odisha's villages are now quietly nurturing a new force of change: entrepreneurship. From women-led self-help groups processing forest produce to young graduates launching agricultural startups, rural entrepreneurship is reshaping aspirations across the state. The challenge before policymakers, financial institutions, and society at large is to recognize this transformation and enable it.

Another promising area is agri-entrepreneurship. Young rural entrepreneurs are experimenting with organic farming, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, fishery-based enterprises, pearl farming, and custom hiring centres for farm machinery. Startups offering soil testing, mobile-based advisory services and farm-to-market linkages are slowly entering rural Odisha. Such innovations are attracting educated youth back to agriculture, countering the narrative that farming is an unviable occupation.

Odisha's rich natural resources also present immense opportunities for rural enterprises. Non-timber forest produce such as forestry seeds, Sal tree resin (Dhoop-Jhuna), mahua flowers, tamarind, and me-

dicinal plants form the backbone of livelihoods for tribal communities. With appropriate training, processing facilities, and fair market access, these resources can support sustainable enterprises while preserving ecological balance. Similarly, rural tourism, handicrafts, and indigenous food products can tap into growing urban demands.

Despite this potential, rural entrepreneurship in Odisha faces several challenges. Access to affordable credit remains a major constraint.

While schemes like Mudra loans exist, many rural entrepreneurs struggle with bureaucratic hurdles, documentation, collateral requirements, and financial literacy.

Also, infrastructure gaps, unreliable electricity, limited internet literacy, and lack of storage and processing facilities raise costs and reduce competitiveness.

Skill development and mentorship are equally critical. Entrepreneurship requires more than technical know-how; it demands business planning, branding, quality control,

and digital marketing skills. Many rural entrepreneurs operate informally, without exposure to modern business practices. Training programmes, when available, are often short-term and disconnected from market realities. Sustained hand holding, local incubation centres, and partnerships with universities, research institutions, and industries are urgently needed.

Government initiatives have laid an important foundation, but they must evolve from a scheme-driven approach to an ecosystem-driven one. Instead

of viewing rural entrepreneurs merely as beneficiaries, policies should treat them as partners in development.

Decentralised procurement, preferential market access for rural enterprises, and cluster-based development can boost their viability. Panchayati Raj institutions can play a compelling model of inclusive and balanced growth. However, the road ahead will require sustained investment and strong collaboration among stakeholders.

The private sector and civil

society also have a role to play. Corporate social responsibility funds can support rural incubation, technology transfer, and market linkage projects. NGOs with grassroots presence can bridge the trust gap, especially in tribal and remote areas. Financial institutions must innovate with flexible credit products tailored to rural realities, recognizing cash flow cycles rather than rigid repayment schedules.

Ultimately, the success of rural entrepreneurship in Odisha will depend on a shift in mindset. Rural areas should not be seen as spaces of deficit, but as hubs of innovation rooted in sustainability and community. Young people should be encouraged to see entrepreneurship as a viable and respectable career choice, not a last resort.

Education systems must nurture problem-solving, creativity, and local relevance rather than preparing students only for earning degrees and urban employment. When local enterprises thrive, they create jobs, reduce migration, strengthen food and energy security, and foster social cohesion.

Instead of concentrating solely on the modernization of the sixty-mile coastal belt (Cuttack-Puri-Bhubaneswar region), the Government of Odisha should prioritize harnessing the entrepreneurial potential of its villages. This can be achieved by blending local knowledge with modern skills, and aligning state support with community initiative.

Promoting entrepreneurship-led development in rural Odisha can provide a compelling model of inclusive and balanced growth. However, the road ahead will require sustained investment and strong collaboration among stakeholders.

The writer is a scientist.

SPECTRUM HERITAGE

The forgotten home of a Buddha

In a world increasingly fractured by conflict, environmental crises, and the alienating pace of technological change, the search for a unifying ethos has never been more urgent. It is within this context that India's initiative to convene the 2nd Global Buddhist Summit in New Delhi emerges not merely as a cultural event, but as a profound act of civilization statecraft. This gathering of Supreme Patriarchs, scholars, and dignitaries from across the globe underscores a pivotal moment: India is consciously reclaiming and reactivating its timeless legacy as the birthplace of Buddha Dhamma to address contemporary global challenges and reshape its diplomatic and cultural frontiers.

The summit's theme, "Collective Wisdom, United Voice, and Mutual Coexistence," cuts to the heart of the Buddhist philosophy that once radiated from this land to illuminate Asia.

The ancient ideal of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or the philosophy of universal kinship, which found profound expression in Emperor Ashoka's renunciation of war

after the conquest of Kalinga and his subsequent dispatch of emissaries of peace across continents, is not a relic but a living blueprint. Ashoka's edicts, carved into rocks and pillars from Kandahar to Odisha, preached not the dogma of a sect but the essential moral law of Dhamma, emphasizing compassion, truth, and respect for all life—a message of startling relevance in today's polarized world.

A significant dimension of this reclamation is the compelling scholarly work tracing the roots of Guru Padmasambhava, the revered "Second Buddha," to the ancient land of Uddiyana, identified with present-day Odisha. For too long, this luminary, who carried Vajrayana Buddhism to Tibet and the Himalayas and is deified across the region, has been a forgotten son in his own homeland.

The recent discovery of inscribed plates and sophisticated mandala-based architecture at Ratnagiri provides tangible proof of the doctrinal sophistication that emanated from this region, the very soil from which a figure like Padmasambhava emerged.

Herein lies the subtle genius of India's soft-power diplomacy. India's Buddhist diplomacy relies not on exporting a product but on promoting shared spiritual and cultural associations. With 97% of the world's Buddhist population in Asia, this shared heritage forms a natural, mutually respected platform for deeper engagement. The development of the Buddhist tourism circuit, from Bodh Gaya to the newly emphasized sites in Odisha; the revival of Nalanda as a centre of pan-Asian learning; and gestures like the recent return of sacred Buddha relics—all are threads in a tapestry of reconnection.

This strategy is amplified by the power of pilgrimage. Consider the simple, profound act of a Thai monk meditating under the restored Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya, or a Sri Lankan devotee circumambulating the Dhamek Stupa at Sarnath where the Buddha first turned the wheel of law. These are not tourist visits; they are acts of profound personal and national heritage, weaving emotional bonds that no trade agreement alone can forge. India's role as the steward of these most

sacred sites confers upon it a unique responsibility and an unparalleled diplomatic asset.

This approach dovetails seamlessly with India's "Act East" and "Neighbourhood First" policies, building bridges with ASEAN and South Asian nations on a foundation far stronger than transient political alignment. The architectural echoes of the Sanchi stupa in the grand Borobudur in Indonesia, or the textual parallels between Pali Tipitaka and scripts found in Myanmar and Thailand, are not coincidental but are testaments to a once-integrated cultural sphere.

By reviving this consciousness, India is not inventing new links but reminding its partners of ancient, unbreakable ones.

The global podium in New Delhi marks a full circle—a civilizational rediscovery that promises to guide not only India's future but also offers a beacon of peace, dialogue, and mutual coexistence for all humanity.

The writer is a Senior Officer at the Parliament of India.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Cancer hurts twice

Sir, On World Cancer Awareness Day, Care Health Insurance highlighted the rising financial burden of cancer treatment in India, driven by prolonged and multi-stage care that places immense strain on patients and their families. The harsh reality is that insurance coverage for individuals with a history of cancer remains largely unavailable, leaving many without financial protection when they need it most. With treatment costs soaring, the impact goes far beyond the patient—it shatters the morale and stability of entire families. This is where both the Central and state governments must step in, offering meaningful and accessible support, which is currently sorely lacking. Mere awareness of the disease is not enough, especially when many patients are left wondering why they were affected in the first place, with little guidance or assistance thereafter.

AP Thiruvadai, CHENNAI

East-South connectivity

Sir, The Centre has proposed a seven-lane high-speed rail corridor, which aims to launch bullet trains to act as "growth connectors." A high-speed rail corridor between East and South India is the need of the hour. The Howrah-Chennai high-speed rail corridor would be an option that can improve long-distance passenger mobility; reduce congestion on highways and airports and provide a fast green alternative to air travel. Besides, this high-speed link will boost regional trade, pilgrimage tourism; connect major industrial centres etc. in West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, which will significantly impact economic growth.

Nabin Panigrahi, RAYAGADA

Mamata's move

Sir, Kudos to Mamata Banerjee for bringing the cases of harassment during the SIR exercise to the notice of the Supreme Court expecting the latter to take cognizance of the matter. The top court is also apprised of the fact as to how Bengal is targeted and how the names of voters are being deleted on flimsy ground. The ball is now in the apex court and it has the legal responsibility to find out whether any machination is going on to delete names of voters arbitrarily.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

MAHA SEES RISE IN ROAD MISHAPS FOR 6TH STRAIGHT YEAR

The state recorded 36,450 road accidents in 2025, sustaining the upward trend despite intensified enforcement, while the number of seriously injured persons rose by 8 per cent during the year, marking the sixth consecutive annual increase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 5: Maharashtra has recorded a rise in the number of road accidents as well as serious injuries in them for the sixth consecutive year, though the silver lining is that fatalities have registered a marginal decline, officials said Thursday citing figures from the transport department's provisional accident data of 2025.

The state recorded 36,450 road accidents in 2025, sustaining the upward trend despite intensified enforcement, while the number of seriously injured persons rose by 8 per cent during the year, marking the sixth consecutive annual increase, as per the report.

As per official data, the state recorded 24,971 accidents in 2020, which rose to 29,477 in 2021, to 33,383 in 2022, to 35,243 in 2023, and 36,110 in 2024.

After witnessing a dip in accidents in 2020, when the first wave of the COVID pandemic hit the world, from 32,925 the previous year, numbers have steadily increased every year thereafter, the report stated.

Incidentally, Maharashtra, which has a vehicular population of over 4.5 crore, witnessed one of its worst traffic congestions on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway over the past two days after a tanker carrying flammable gas overturned in



the Khandala Ghat section.

However, Maharashtra managed to bring down fatalities slightly for the first time since 2021. In 2025, Maharashtra recorded 15,549 deaths in 14,440 fatal accidents, compared to 15,715 deaths in 14,565 fatal crashes in 2024.

Road fatalities, however, have shown an overall rising trend since 2020, when 11,569 people lost their lives in accidents, the report showed.

The death toll increased to 13,528 in 2021, 15,224 in 2022, 15,366 in 2023, and 15,715 in 2024, as per provisional data.

In a release issued on January 22, Maharashtra's Additional Transport Commissioner Bharat Kalaskar claimed a dip of 166 fatalities (1.05 per cent) in road accidents in 2025 was the positive effect of continuous measures being implemented by the transport department.

The release also claimed the state government has set a target of reducing the number of road accidents by 50 per cent by 2030.

Various efforts are being undertaken, including the formation of road safety cells at the state and district levels, among others, to achieve this goal, the release had added.

Maharashtra, however, failed to bring down the number of serious injuries in road accidents in 2025, as per the provisional data.

The state recorded 23,756 serious injuries in 2025, up from 22,051 in 2024.

Data showed Maharashtra reported 13,971 serious injuries in 2020, which rose to 16,073 in 2021, 19,540 in 2022, 21,446 in 2023, and 22,051 in 2024.

Sanjay Sasane, principal of Institute of Driving Training and Research Society (IDTRS), Pune said lack of driver training is one of the reasons for the rising road accidents in the state, besides various other reasons.

PUNE LAND 'SCAM'

Kharge panel still to submit report, says Bawankule

The sale of 40 acres of land in Pune's upscale Mundhwa area for ₹300 crore to Amadea Enterprises LLP, in which Parth Pawar is a majority partner, had come under scrutiny after it emerged that the plot belongs to the government and could not be sold



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 5: Maharashtra Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule Thursday said the Vikas Kharge-led committee probing the alleged Pune land scam has not yet submitted its report, ruling out a clean chit to anyone at this stage.

He was responding to questions tied to media reports claiming relief to the late deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's son Parth Pawar in the matter. Parth Pawar's mother Sunetra Pawar is now a deputy CM in the state.

The probe focuses on aspects such as valuation, documentation and the role of officials involved in the registration process. The panel was constituted in early November amid political controversy and was initially asked to submit its report by December 6 last year.

The deadline was later extended twice after the committee sought more time to examine records and responses from multiple departments.

While earlier indications suggested the panel could submit its report by February 6, Bawankule said Thursday that an additional extension would now be granted.

The committee also includes the Pune divisional commissioner, the commissioner of land registration and director of land records,

state government. Therefore, there is no scope for giving a clean chit to Parth Pawar or anyone else. I urge people not to speculate on such a serious issue and confuse the public," he said.

The five-member committee, headed by Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) Vikas Kharge, is examining alleged procedural lapses in the registration of the purchase deed related to the Mundhwa land.

The probe focuses on aspects such as valuation, documentation and the role of officials involved in the registration process. The panel was constituted in early November amid political controversy and was initially asked to submit its report by December 6 last year.

The deadline was later extended twice after the committee sought more time to examine records and responses from multiple departments.

While earlier indications suggested the panel could submit its report by February 6, Bawankule said Thursday that an additional extension would now be granted.

The committee also includes the Pune divisional commissioner, the commissioner of land registration and director of land records,

the inspector general of registration and controller of stamps, and the Pune district collector.

Meanwhile, Pune-based RTI activist Vijay Kumbhar criticised the repeated extensions, alleging that the probe was being delayed and could eventually turn into a formality.

In a post on X, Kumbhar claimed that those responsible for preventing alleged irregularities were themselves part of the committee, making a fair outcome unlikely. He also raised questions over alleged unpaid stamp duty, arguing that public revenue could not be protected by "clean chits" or shell entities.

Social activist Anjali Damania has also questioned the delay in the inquiry.

In a post on X earlier this month, she had said that if government functioning was treated as "business as usual" following Ajit Pawar's death in a plane crash, the investigation into the Mundhwa land deal should not be stalled. She demanded that the committee's report be made public without delay.

The state government, however, has maintained that appropriate action will be taken after the report is formally submitted.

Asked about the name for the mayor's post in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Bawankule said two to three shortlisted names have been sent to the state BJP chief Ravindra Chavan. "The decision will be taken in a core committee meeting today," he said.

A decision on whether to give the deputy mayor's post to the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena will also be taken, said the senior BJP leader.

To a question about the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) deciding to enter the mayoral contest in Mumbai, Bawankule said the move will ensure there is no confusion among its corporators as to whom to vote.

No cause for panic over missing person cases, says Delhi Police



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: Days after

releasing data showing that over 800 people went missing in the national capital during the first half of January, the Delhi Police Thursday sought to allay public concern, stating there is "no cause for panic or fear" as the figures actually reflect a decline compared to the same period in previous years.

According to official Delhi Police data accessed by PTI, a total of 807 people went missing between January 1 and 15,

with an average of 54 people going missing every day.

Of these, 509 were women and girls, and 298 were men. Among the total reported missing, 191 were minors and 616 were adults.

According to official Delhi Police data accessed by PTI, a total of 807 people went missing between January 1 and 15, with an average of 54 people going missing every day.

Of these, 509 were women and girls, and 298 were men. Among the total reported missing, 191 were minors and 616 were adults.

platforms and the Emergency Response Support System (112).

"Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are strictly followed in all missing persons cases. Immediate efforts are initiated to trace the missing individual, with cases involving children being accorded the highest priority," the statement read.

To ensure focused action, dedicated missing persons squads have been deployed in all districts of the city. In addition, the Crime Branch's Anti Human Trafficking Unit is actively engaged in handling cases related to missing persons, especially children, to ensure swift investigation and recovery, it added.

The police further clarified that no organised gang or criminal network has been found involved in cases of missing or abducted children in Delhi so far.

Appealing to the public to remain vigilant but calm, the police urged people not to pay heed to rumours or unverified information being spread through social media and other platforms. Officials warned that those found spreading panic or misinformation would face action under relevant legal provisions.

The Delhi Police also advised citizens to promptly report any missing person and share accurate information with the authorities to aid investigations.

From playful pup to valiant warrior: The journey of ITBP dog



Remo's story is a glimpse into the lives of hundreds of 'combat dogs' in the army who are taught to defy death through play

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: He was just three months old when he was first introduced to humans in uniform. He knew nothing of borders or the smell of gunpowder, but today, "Remo" (name changed), is a valiant warrior of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), for whom detecting explosives is merely a "game".

Remo's story is a glimpse into the lives of hundreds of 'combat dogs' in the army who are taught to defy death through play.

Remo's handler, an ITBP jawan, told PTI that Remo's first deployment was in the Naxal-affected area of Chhattisgarh. An area, where IEDs planted underground by Naxalites pose the biggest threat to the soldiers.

According to the jawan, "Remo cleared the path for the security forces many times with his sense of smell."

It took a full nine months to train him into a skilled explosive detection dog.

Recalling his training process,

the jawan said, "Remo was just three months old when he was brought to the training centre, and I was given the responsibility of training him. He was very playful and mischievous. Sometimes, when he didn't listen, I would get angry, but you have to teach them with love and rewards (favourite food, toys). We sometimes spent 24 hours together during training and then the day came when he became my most loyal companion."

The soldier explained that the coordination between the dog and the handler is crucial. If the handler is changed, it takes time for the dog to adjust to the new person, which affects its performance.

After basic training, the dog undergoes a behaviour and aptitude test. Based on this, it is decided which dog will be trained for explosive detection, narcotics detection, tracking criminals or guard duty. A dog is given only one type of specialised training.

According to the jawan, in the initial stage, the dogs are taught basic commands, which include sitting, standing, walking and following the handler's instructions. During this time,

rewards for identifying the correct scent. Gradually, the scent of gunpowder and other explosives is included in this exercise, after which the dog becomes proficient in identifying explosives.

During training, the dogs are also physically prepared. They are trained to walk on different surfaces, maintain balance, and overcome obstacles so that they can work in difficult and risky situations.

The most difficult part of Remo's training was teaching him 'silent indication'.

The soldier explained, "If the dog starts barking after seeing an explosive, the sound waves could detonate some sensitive bombs. Therefore, dogs are taught to sit down quietly as soon as they detect the scent."

They are taught to sit at a predetermined distance from the bomb. Their sitting down signals to the handler that there might be a bomb there."

The soldier said, "A dog is the most loyal creature in the world. Once its owner gives an order, it will complete its task no matter what. That is why dogs are successful in almost 99 per cent of cases."

He said, "The dog doesn't know that it is identifying gunpowder or explosive material. For him, it's just a game. On receiving the command, he searches for the same scent he has been trained to detect."

MCD launches major clean-up drive ahead of India-AI summit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has rolled out an extensive plan to spruce up the city and ensure smooth civic arrangements as the India AI Impact Summit 2026 is set to bring global leaders and industry heads to the national capital later this month.

The summit, scheduled from February 16 to 20 at Bharat Mandapam, is expected to host Heads of State, ministers, senior policymakers, global CEOs and academicians. Officials say the event, billed as the first global AI summit in the Global South, will draw significant international focus on Delhi.

Officials said that Wednesday, the nodal officer directed all zonal deputy commissioners to ensure high standards of cleanliness, infrastructure upkeep and beautification across areas linked to the summit. These include venues, hotels, major roads, markets, monuments, transit corridors and public spaces likely to be seen by international delegates.

Officials further said that the summit, being organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), will also see a citywide branding exercise.

"Old G20 stickers on dustbins and other civic assets will be replaced with AI Impact Summit branding, while authorised material will be displayed on

digital screens in markets and other identified locations," an official said.

Giving details about the clean-up drive, officials said that they have been instructed to clear major routes of encroachments, illegal vendors, stray cattle and unauthorised advertisements.

"Impounding of stray cattle, dogs and monkeys from the key

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

email id: seridrkl@gmail.com

'e' Procurement Notice

e-Procurement Notice No.SERID-RKL-11/2025-26 (ONLINE) Dt.31.01.2026
No.32001/20/2526: The Superintending Engineer, Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bid in double cover system to be received in online mode from the eligible contractors registered with the State Government, contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class Registered with Central Government/ MES/ Railways/ CPWD work as detailed below:

1. Name of Work	: Improvement to Service Road in between RD 6503M To RD 7700M of Pitamahal Irrigation Project for the year 2025-26
2. Total Number of works	: 01 (One) No.
3. Bid Identification No.	: SERID-RKL-11/2025-26 (ONLINE)
4. Estimated Cost	: Rs 26.80 Lakh
5. Class of Contractor	: 'C' & 'B' Class Contractors
6. Cost of Tender Paper	: Rs 6,000.00
7. Earnest Money Deposit	: Rs 27,000.00
8. Period of Completion	: 45 days
9. Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	: From dt.06.02.2026 at 10.00 A.M. to dt.16.02.2026 upto 05.30 P.M.
10. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Dt. 16.02.2026 upto 05.30 P.M.
11. Date and time of Opening of Technical Bid	: dt.17.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
12. Last date & time of seeking of clarification	: Dt. 12.02.2026 at 05.30 P.M.</td

national

of the day **quote**

After publication of the final voter list (February 14), the MCC can be enforced at any moment. Under the MCC, the government cannot increase financial benefits or expand the number of beneficiaries



SUNANDU ADHIKARI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

When the PM speaks of Viksit Bharat @2047, he repeatedly acknowledges the deprivation the region suffered and the need to bridge that gap. The change seen across the Northeast today reflects that commitment



PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

We have done a lot, but we wish to do more. We have set a target of doubling the per capita income of Bihar in the next five years. To achieve this target, we intend to boost industrial growth. Schemes like Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana would also do their bit in giving rise to entrepreneurship



NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

SHORT TAKES**CIC orders disclosure of garnet sand export data**

New Delhi: The Central Information Commission (CIC) has ordered disclosure of garnet sand export quantities by several private firms, holding that "larger public interest warrants the disclosure" particularly as mining of the mineral has been banned since 2013. The order came on an RTI appeal seeking year-wise details of garnet sand and abrasive exports from 2018-19 to March 31, 2024 by firms operating in and around the Visakhapatnam Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

Security forces on alert for Amit Shah's J&K visit

Srinagar: Security forces in Kashmir are on alert for Union Home Minister Amit Shah's three-day visit beginning Thursday, officials said. Police and paramilitary CRPF personnel carried out area dominance exercises and surprise checks around the commercial hub of Lal Chowk and adjoining areas, they said. Security personnel have been deployed in higher numbers and random vehicle checks and frisking operations have also been intensified. Shah is scheduled to visit Jammu and Kashmir Thursday for a three-day visit.

5 Tejas jets ready for delivery to IAF: HAL

New Delhi: State-run aerospace behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) on Thursday said five Tejas light combat aircraft are fully ready for delivery to the Indian Air Force. In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a ₹48,000 crore deal with HAL for the procurement of 83 Tejas Mk-1A jets for the IAF.

ED raids in Kerala investment 'fraud case'

Thiruvananthapuram: The Enforcement Directorate Thursday conducted searches in Kerala against the promoters and key functionaries of the Nedumpuram Credit Syndicate Group as part of an alleged investment fraud linked money laundering probe, officials said. The federal probe agency has booked a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) taking cognisance of a clutch of FIRs filed by the state police on charges of fraud with depositors by collecting funds on the promise of high returns.

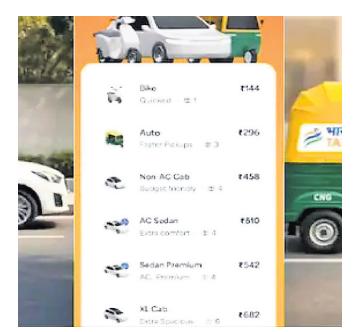


It is an absolute lie. There is no question of anybody raising hands on the prime minister, trying to hurt him or any such thing. There is no question. So it is absolutely wrong for anybody to say that there was any such plan, there was no such plan

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

AMIT SHAH LAUNCHES BHARAT TAXI PLATFORM IN DELHI-NCR, GUJARAT

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah Thursday launched Bharat Taxi, the country's first co-operative-run ride-hailing platform, which will start services in Delhi-NCR and Gujarat initially and pan-India in the next three years. Bharat Taxi platform, which has been established by India's top eight co-operative organisations including dairy major Amul, will enhance drivers' income significantly, besides giving them ownership, the minister highlighted



'Cong will never be able to dig my grave'

Replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address,

Modi regretted the disruption caused by the Opposition party in the Lok Sabha and said it was not just an insult to a poor tribal woman President of India but also the top Constitutional position she occupied, and the Constitution of India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



the disruption caused by the Opposition party in the Lok Sabha and said it was not just an insult to a poor tribal woman President of India but also the top Constitutional position she occupied, and the Constitution of India.

He also deplored Rahul Gandhi's "traitor" comment on Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, and termed it an insult to the entire Sikh community.

Modi accused the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC party of protecting "ghuspaithiyas" (infiltrators) in West Bengal, who were taking away jobs and rights of youth and land of tribals.

Replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, Modi regretted

Taking on the Congress, the Prime Minister said those who talk of 'Mohabbat ki dukaan' are raising slogans like 'Modi teri kabr khudegi', which highlights their frustration of electoral defeats.

"They will never be able to dig my grave," Modi said.

He also said they abuse him daily because they are unable to digest how a poor man like him has occupied the post and is surviving.

He said the Congress's first family feels that the prime minister's post is their family fiefdom.

Modi said the Opposition will never succeed in digging his

grave as he enjoys the blessings of crores of mothers and sisters and the poor of the country, for whom he is working selflessly.

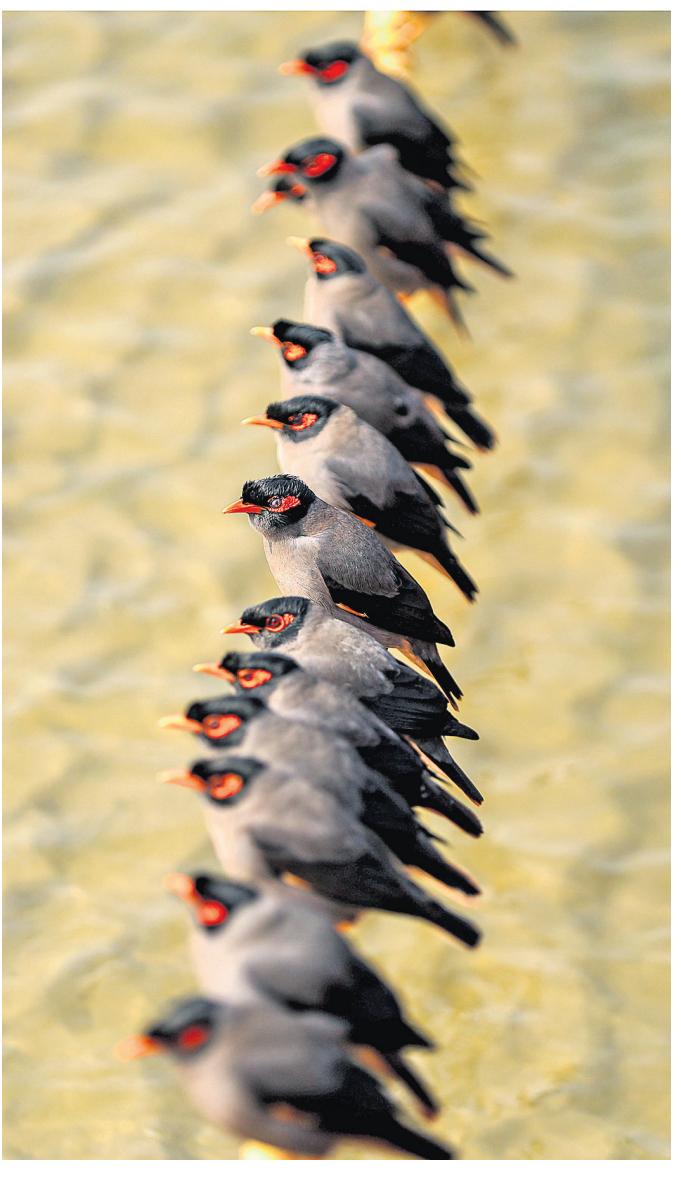
The Prime Minister said Congress treated Indian citizens as "problems while we treat them as our strength and solution to challenges".

The Prime Minister listed out the achievements of his government in the last 11 years, while asserting that high growth and low inflation reflect the strength in the country's economy, which was set to emerge as the third largest in the world.

Modi also spoke about the recent trade deals with the European Union and the US and said the world is feeling more confident about stability after these developments.

He said India is now on 'Reform Express' and will achieve the goal of a developed nation by 2047. In his nearly 100-minute speech, Modi countered the Opposition parties' criticism about his government's track record of implementing schemes and talking about 'Viksit Bharat'.

He also said that India has now become a strong voice of the global south.



A flock of mynas sits in a line on the banks of the River Ganga on a sunny day, in Prayagraj

PTI PHOTO

Kuki-Zo group declares social boycott of 3 MLAs for being part of Manipur govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



the participation of certain Kuki-Zo MLAs in the formation of the Manipur government, which constitutes a gross violation of the Lungthu Resolution dated 13 January 2026".

According to the resolution, the Kuki-Zo community members will take part in government formation only if there is a written assurance from the central and state authorities that there will be a separate administration in the form of a Union Territory with a legislature.

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

There are 10 Kuki-Zo legislators in the Assembly, and seven of them are from the BJP.

Hmar tribe MLA N Sanate was part of a BJP-led NDA team that met Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla in Imphal to stake claim for government formation in the state. Another Kuki Zo MLA, L M Khaute, was also part of the Union.

It said that by joining the government, these Kuki MLAs have effectively aligned themselves with Meiteis, betraying their own people.

The organisation urged the Kuki-Zo people not to cooperate or associate with them in any social, customary, or public matters.

This boycott shall remain in force until they realign themselves with the collective position of the Kuki-Zo people, it said.

The KZC said any commun-

nity MLA who chooses to disregard its collective decision shall be doing so in their individual capacity and that the organisation will not be held accountable for consequences arising out of the "unilateral decisions".

Responding to the development, the Joint Forum of Seven (JFT), a tribal organisation based in Churachandpur district, called for a "total shutdown" in Kuki Zo-dominated areas from 6 am to 6 pm on Friday.

It urged all community members to join the protests across villages in a democratic way, reiterating the demand for a separate Kuki administration.

Some Kuki militant groups have also issued a strong warning to the MLAs for participating in government formation.

On Wednesday night, agitators burnt tyres and placed bamboo sticks on the road near Leimakhong in Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district to protest against Nemcha Kipgen's swearing in as a deputy CM.

After completing the bail formalities in the court, Potty was released from the Thiruvananthapuram Special Sub Jail by around 6.30 pm.

He is the first accused in both cases and is the fourth person arrested in connection with the incident to be released from custody.

SABARIMALA GOLD LOSS Prime accused Potty gets statutory bail, released from prison

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kollam (Kerala), Feb 5: A local court here Thursday granted statutory bail to Unnikrishnan Potty, the prime accused in the Sabarimala gold loss cases, following which he was released from prison.

Potty secured the relief in the second case related to the incident.

Kollam Vigilance Court Judge Mohit C S granted bail to Potty in the case pertaining to the loss of gold from the door frames of the Sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum). The bail was granted as the police Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case failed to file a charge sheet within 90 days of Potty's arrest, making him eligible for statutory bail.

He had earlier been granted statutory bail in the case related to the loss of gold from the Dwarapalaka (guardian deity) idol plates.

The court imposed conditions, including execution of a bond with two solvent sureties for ₹2 lakh each, a direction not to enter Pathanamthitta district, a direction to refrain from influencing witnesses or tampering with evidence, and an obligation to appear before the investigation officer whenever summoned.

After completing the bail formalities in the court, Potty was released from the Thiruvananthapuram Special Sub Jail by around 6.30 pm.

He is the first accused in both cases and is the fourth person arrested in connection with the incident to be released from custody.

UPSC civil services prelims May 24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has made face authentication mandatory for all aspirants at examination centres and introduced strict eligibility restrictions for candidates already appointed to certain services.

These changes were announced in an official notification for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026, released Thursday.

The commission announced 933 vacancies for this year's recruitment cycle, which include 33 posts reserved for persons with benchmark disability.

The preliminary examination of the competitive examination will be held May 24, it said.

These changes were announced in an official notification for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026, released Thursday.

The commission announced 933 vacancies for this year's recruitment cycle, which include 33 posts reserved for persons with benchmark disability.

The preliminary examination of the competitive examination will be held May 24, it said.

These changes were announced in an official notification for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026, released Thursday.

The commission announced 933 vacancies for this year's recruitment cycle, which include 33 posts reserved for persons with benchmark disability.

The preliminary examination of the competitive examination will be held May 24, it said.

These changes were announced in an official notification for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026, released Thursday.

The commission announced 933 vacancies for this year's recruitment cycle, which include 33 posts reserved for persons with benchmark disability.

The preliminary examination of the competitive examination will be held May 24, it said.

These changes were announced in an official notification for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026, released Thursday.

The commission announced 933 vacancies for this year's recruitment cycle, which include 33 posts reserved for persons with benchmark disability.

The preliminary examination of the competitive examination will be held May 24, it said.

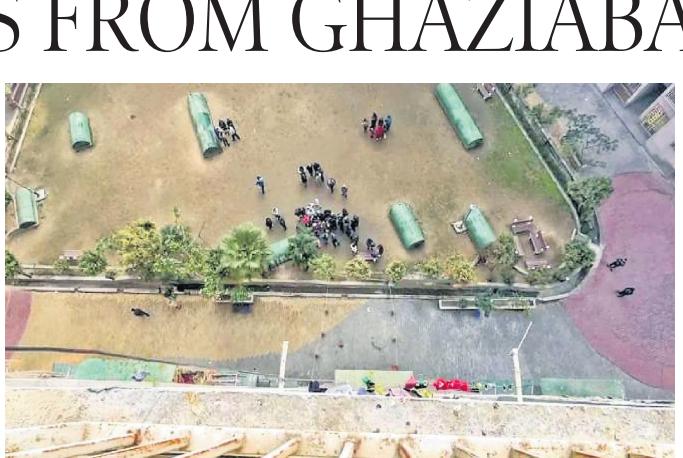
These changes were announced in an official notification for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2026, released Thursday.

The commission announced 933 vacancies for this year's recruitment cycle, which include 33 posts reserved for persons with benchmark disability.

The preliminary examination of the competitive examination will be held May 24, it said.

CHILLING DETAILS FROM GHAZIABAD SISTERS' DIARY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



ninth floor, their father Chetan Kumar claimed they had been playing a Korean game for close to three years and had not attended school since then.

After the postmortem, their bodies were cremated at Delhi's Nigam Bodh Ghat on the bank of the Yamuna river Wednesday evening.

The last rituals were performed by their father Chetan, Additional Commissioner of Police, Shalimar Garden, Atul Kumar Singh told PTI.

"It is not known why the girls were cremated on the night of Wednesday. It may be due to their personal reasons," the ACP said, adding that the autopsy report confirmed that the girls died due to head injuries.

According to the police, the diary contains repeated references to the girls' love for Korean and what they described as attempts by the family to make

them give it up. "We love Korean. Love, love, love," the diary states, calling itself a "true life story" and urging readers to believe what is written in it.

The note alleges that their parents were opposed to their interests and future choices, including marriage. "You tried

to make us give up Korean. Korean was our life. You expected our marriage to an Indian, that can never happen," the diary says.

It also mentions physical punishment and ends with an apology addressed to their father. "Death is better for us than your beatings. That is why

incurring heavy losses in the stock market.

He allegedly lost more than ₹2 crore and, at one point, sold a mobile phone to pay the electricity bill, the person said, adding that the financial crunch had led to frequent clashes at home.

DCP Patil said the police are also looking into the family's financial situation as part of the probe.

While admitting that they were at present treating it as a suicide case, DCP Nimish Patil told PTI, "Our investigation primarily will focus on verifying if the girls were actually using a task-based app as claimed by their father and if that led to their committing suicide."

The DCP said that as of now, the cops have no evidence to prove that the girls were indeed using any Korean task-based app.

international



I am sorry, sorry for what was done to you, sorry that so many people with power failed you. Sorry for having believed Mandelson's lies and appointed him

KEIR STARMER | PRIME MINISTER, UK

INDIAN TEACHER WINS \$1MN GLOBAL TEACHER PRIZE

An Indian teacher and activist known for creating hundreds of learning centres and painting educational murals across the walls of slums won the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize Thursday. Rouble Nagi accepted the award at the World Government's Summit in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, an annual event that draws leaders from across the globe



of the day quote



These cuts and reductions untie perpetrators' hands everywhere, leaving them to do whatever they please. With crises mounting, we cannot afford a human rights system in crisis



These cuts and reductions untie perpetrators' hands everywhere, leaving them to do whatever they please. With crises mounting, we cannot afford a human rights system in crisis



I do believe that AI today is an absolutely crucial issue in international relations and one of the biggest challenges of our times. So it is very important that countries come together and discuss it, also with civil society, in all kinds of circumstances

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

Iran seizes two foreign oil tankers

Dubai: Iran seized two foreign oil tankers in the Persian Gulf Thursday, state television reported, claiming the vessels had been smuggling fuel.

The report did not provide a nationality of the tankers or say what flag they were flying under. Gen. Heidar Honarani Mojarrad, a regional commander with the Revolutionary Guard's navy, said the tankers had been carrying about 1 million litres of fuel (about 6,300 barrels), including diesel and were seized near Farsi island and transferred to Bushehr. Fifteen crew members on board the two tankers are "in custody of judicial bodies," he said, without providing their nationalities. Iran occasionally seizes oil-carrying vessels over similar charges in the region.

Morocco evacuates 1,43,000 in northwest

Rabat: Moroccan authorities have evacuated more than 143,000 people in the flood-prone northwestern plains, the interior ministry said Thursday, amid rising threats of inundation from heavy rain, swollen rivers and the release of more water from full dams.

Slovenia: Slovenia is preparing draft legislation to ban social media access for children under 15, Deputy Prime Minister Matej Arcon told a news conference Thursday. Slovenia, with a population of around 2 million, is following Spain and Greece, which earlier this week proposed bans on social media use by teenagers in a sign of hardening attitudes in Europe towards the technology that some say is designed to be addictive.

Nigeria deploys troops

Abuja: Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu has deployed an army battalion to Kainji district in the central Kwara state after suspected jihadist fighters killed 170 people in an overnight attack, his office said Thursday. Tuesday's assault on Woro village was the deadliest this year in the state bordering Niger, a hotspot where Islamic State West Africa Province and other armed groups have stepped up village attacks and mass kidnappings. The violence highlights fears that jihadist factions from the north are pushing south along the Niger-Kwara axis toward the Kainji forest, which security analysts warn could become their next stronghold.

Russia opens to N-talks with US as treaty expires

REUTERS

Moscow, Feb 5: Russia said Thursday it regretted the expiry of its last remaining nuclear arms treaty with the United States but was still ready to talk, raising the possibility of a last-minute deal to preserve limits on deployment of the world's deadliest weapons.

Axios reported that negotiations had been taking place over the past 24 hours in Abu Dhabi and the two countries were closing in on a deal to keep observing key terms of the New START treaty, which limits each side's numbers of missiles, launchers and strategic nuclear warheads.

US President Donald Trump has not formally responded to a proposal from Russian President Vladimir Putin to stick to those central provisions for one more year, even though there is no legal option to extend the full treaty.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia was still ready to engage in dialogue with the US if Washington responded constructively to Putin's proposal.

"Listen, if there are any constructive replies, of course we will conduct a dialogue," Peskov told reporters.

LAST IN A SERIES OF TREATIES

New START was the last in a series of nuclear agreements between Moscow and Washington dating back more than half a century to the Cold War.

Besides setting numerical limits on weapons, they included inspection regimes that experts say served to build a level of trust and confidence between the nuclear adversaries, helping make the world safer.

If nothing replaces the treaty, security analysts see a more dangerous environment with a higher risk of miscalculation. Forced to rely on worst-case assumptions about the other's



New START was last Russia-US nuclear arms control treaty

Russia proposed an extension of warhead limits

Donald Trump says he wants a better treaty including China

UN chief urges a swift return to negotiations

intentions, the US and Russia would see an incentive to increase their arsenals, especially as China plays catch-up with its own rapid nuclear build-up.

Trump has said he wants to replace New START with a better deal, bringing in China but Beijing has declined negotiations with Moscow and Washington. It has a fraction of their warhead numbers - an estimated 600, compared to around 4,000 each for Russia and the US.

Repeating that position Thursday, China said the expiration of the treaty was regrettable, and urged the US to resume dialogue with Russia on "strategic stability".

Peskov said Russia would take a responsible approach.

The White House said this week that Trump would decide the way forward on nuclear arms control, which he would "clar-

ify on his own timeline".

UN CHIEF SAYS NUCLEAR RISK IS HIGHEST IN DECADES

Strategic nuclear weapons are the long-range systems that each side would use to strike the other's capital, military and industrial centres in the event of a nuclear war.

They differ from so-called tactical nuclear weapons that have a lower yield and are designed for limited strikes or battlefield use.

If left unconstrained by any agreement, Russia and the US could each, within a couple of years, deploy hundreds more warheads beyond the New START limit of 1,550, experts say.

"Transparency and predictability are among the more intangible benefits of arms control and underpin deterrence and strategic stability," said Karim Haggag, director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the dissolution of decades of achievement in arms control "could not come at a worse time - the risk of a nuclear weapon being used is the highest in decades."

He urged the sides to resume negotiations without delay to agree a successor framework restoring verifiable limits.

Malaysia bans e-waste imports, vows to end illegal dumping

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kuala Lumpur, Feb 5: Malaysia has announced an immediate and full ban on the importation of electronic waste, as the government vowed the country would not be a "dumping ground" for the world's waste.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission said in a statement late Wednesday that all electronic waste, commonly known as e-waste, would be reclassified under the "absolute prohibition" category effective immediately. This removes the discretionary power previously given to the Department of Environment to grant exemptions for importation of certain e-waste.

Environmental advocates have long urged stronger action. E-waste - discarded electronic products such as computers, phones and appliances - can contain toxic substances and heavy metals including lead, mercury and cadmium that pollute soil and water resources if improperly processed or dumped.

"E-waste is no longer permitted," MACC chief Azam Bakri said in the statement, vowing "firm and integrated enforcement action" to prevent illegal imports. Malaysia has previously grappled with large volumes of imported e-waste, much of it suspected to be illegal and hazardous to human health and the environment. Authorities have seized hundreds of containers of suspected e-waste at ports in recent years and issued notices for return to exporters.

The ban comes as authorities widen a corruption inquiry tied to e-waste management. Last week, the MACC detained and remanded the director-general of the environment department and his deputy over alleged abuse of power and corruption involving e-waste oversight. The probe has also seen authorities freeze bank accounts and seize cash linked to the case.

B'desh-India ties hit setback under Yunus-led regime, official admits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 5: Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain Thursday admitted that ties with India witnessed a "setback" during the interim regime led by Muhammad Yunus, but hoped that the relations could be restored under an elected government following the general elections scheduled for next week.

"The relations faced some setbacks during the interim government, but they (ties) remained important," he told reporters at a media briefing a week ahead of the elections, the first since the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina-led government in a mass protest in August 2024.

Hossain, a former career diplomat who served as the deputy high commissioner in India as well, expressed optimism that the next elected government would be able to make the relationship smoother, finding some ways.

The Yunus-led interim government was installed after the ouster of Hasina's Awami League regime in a student-led violent protest - dubbed as the July Uprising - August 5, 2024. Since then, the 78-year-old leader has been living in India.

A special Bangladeshi tribunal last year sentenced Hasina to death, accusing her of committing crimes against humanity through her efforts to brutally tame the protests, while Dhaka repeatedly demanded her extradition to face justice.

Asked if India continued to refuse to return her, would the next government be able to rebuild ties with New Delhi, Hossain said, "Don't be pessimists".

Bangladesh-India relations are said to have witnessed

their lowest ebb in the past 18 months when Dhaka's ties with Pakistan saw a remarkable development through political, trade and defence engagements.

Hossain's comments came hours after youth and sports adviser Asif Nazrul thanked Islamabad for its decision to boycott the T20 World Cup match against India February 15 to protest Bangladesh's removal from the tournament.

"Thank you, Pakistan," Nazrul said on a Facebook post sharing Sharif's remarks and expressing his gratitude.

Hossain acknowledged that bilateral progress stalled in several areas but called the situation "not a major crisis" and rather a "period without forward movement".

He said, "differing perceptions of national interests" between India and Bangladesh contributed to the slowdown as each side pursued its own priorities, which did not always synchronise.

Hossain, however, said the interim government advanced key negotiations, including trade talks with the United States and other partners, to ease the workload of the next elected government.

Ukraine, Russia agree on prisoner swap

REUTERS

Kyiv, Feb 5: Ukraine and Russia concluded a second round of US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi Thursday aimed at ending Europe's biggest conflict since World War Two, with the two sides conducting a major prisoner swap and agreeing to resume negotiations soon.

US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said that the delegations from the US, Ukraine, and Russia had agreed to an exchange of 314 prisoners of war, which took place Thursday at the Ukrainian border.

"While significant work remains, steps like this demonstrate that sustained diplomatic engagement is delivering tangible results and advancing efforts to end the war in Ukraine," Witkoff said in a post on X, describing the peace talks as "detailed and productive".

The statement alleged that "Indian-sponsored terrorist elements were seeking to disrupt peace and development" in the region.

"During this phase, security forces undertook operations against identified terrorist



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said the sides had agreed another meeting in the very near future.

"The conversation is ongoing. It's certainly not easy, but Ukraine has been and will be as constructive as possible," Zelenskiy said at a joint news

conference in Kyiv Thursday with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

Zelenskiy said the talks covered all the main points of difference between the two sides and the Ukrainian team would deliver their report to him in person because of the

sensitivity of the issues.

Zelenskiy said he was keen for the talks to lead to the end of the four-year war but he repeated his insistence that Ukraine must receive robust security guarantees, including from Washington, to ensure Russia will not attack again.

Famine spreads to more towns in Sudan's Darfur region

The UN estimates that over 40,000 people have been killed in the war in Sudan, but aid agencies consider that the true number could be many times higher

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, Feb 5: Famine is spreading in war-torn Sudan's western Darfur region and has now engulfed two more towns there, a global hunger monitoring group said Thursday.

The announcement came after the group said last year that people in Darfur's major city of el-Fasher, overrun by the paramilitary forces after an 18-month siege, were enduring famine.

Since April 2023, war has gripped much of Sudan after a power struggle erupted between the East African country's military and the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support

Forces. The conflict has triggered what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The report on the spread of famine by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, came as an attack Thursday by the RSF on a military hospital in southern Sudan killed 22 people, including the hospital's medical director and another three members of the medical staff.

A HARROWING REPORT

The IPC report said famine has now been detected in the towns of Umm Baru and Kerrioi in Darfur. In November, the group said el-Fasher - a major

city in the region - was enduring famine and also the city of Kadugli in South Kordofan. At

the time, it also said 20 other areas across Sudan were at risk of famine. In Umm Baru, near-



ly 53 per cent of children aged between 6 months and nearly 5 years suffered from acute malnutrition, while 32 per cent of children in Kerno face the same ordeal.

"These alarming rates suggest an increased risk of excess mortality and raise concern that nearby areas may be experiencing similar catastrophic conditions," the report said.

The fall of el-Fasher in October 2025 to the RSF set off an exodus of people to nearby towns, straining the resources of neighbouring communities and driving up food insecurity rates, the report said.

The IPC has confirmed fam-

ine only a few times, most recently in 2025 in northern Gaza during the Israel-Hamas war. It also confirmed famine in Somalia in 2011, and in South Sudan in 2017 and 2020. With this report, the total number of famine-stricken areas in Sudan rises to nine. In 2024, famine had struck five other areas in North Darfur and also Sudan's Nuba Mountains region.

The UN estimates that over 40,000 people have been killed in the war in Sudan, but aid agencies consider that the true number could be many times higher. Over 14 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

business

of the day quote

The government borrowing programme also includes Rs 5.5 lakh crore for repayment. So, the net borrowing would be Rs 11.73 lakh crore. It is in the same range as has been the case earlier

ANURADHA THAKUR |
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY

The India-US trade deal provides much-needed macro predictability at a time when technology, talent, and trust are central to global competitiveness

RAJESH NAMBIAR | PRESIDENT, NASSCOM

The Indian market in 2026 reflects a clear shift towards intent and capability-led growth. Organisations are hiring with a sharper focus, prioritising specialised skills, leadership depth, and long-term value creation

NILAY KHANDELWAL | SENIOR MD, MICHAEL PAGE INDIA AND SINGAPORE

Q3 RESULTS**TMPVL posts net loss**

New Delhi: Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Thursday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 3,483 crore for the third quarter ended December 2025, impacted significantly by the cyber incident at its British arm Jaguar Land Rover. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,485 crore in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd (TMPVL) said in a regulatory filing.

JSW Cement net rises

New Delhi: JSW Cement Ltd has reported a profit of Rs 130.62 crore for the December quarter of FY26, helped by improvement in EBITDA and gains in sales volume. The company had reported a loss of Rs 80.22 crore for the October-December quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from JSW Cement, part of the \$23 billion JSW group, on late Wednesday evening.

IOC profit zooms 4X

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) Thursday reported a more than four-fold surge in its third-quarter net profit, as gains in refining and marketing margins offset weakness in the petrochemicals segment. Its standalone net profit of Rs 12,125.86 crore in October-December - the third quarter of April 2025 to March 2026 fiscal year - compared with Rs 2,873.53 crore earnings in the same period a year back.

LIC profit rises 17%

New Delhi: State-owned life insurer LIC Thursday reported a 17 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 12,958 crore in the third quarter ended December 2025. The country's biggest insurer, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), earned a net profit of Rs 11,056 crore in the year-ago period. During the quarter, the net premium income of the insurer rose to Rs 1,25,613 crore from Rs 1,06,891 crore in the same period a year ago, LIC said.

Bharti Airtel plunges

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel Thursday said its consolidated net profit plunged by about 55 per cent to Rs 6,630.5 crore in the third quarter ended December 2025. The company's consolidated profit, attributed to the owners of the parent, was Rs 14,781.2 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing. India's second-largest telecom company clocked a quarterly revenue from operations of Rs 53,982 crore, 19.6 per cent higher than Rs 45,129.3 crore it posted in the year-ago period.



Restrictive trading is something a market person like me does not like, but what we call throwing sand into the wheels is a well known and well appreciated way of doing it

ARVIND VIRMANI | MEMBER, NITI AAYOG

GLOBAL SELLOFF, STRONG DOLLAR

Silver sinks 10% to ₹2.68L/kg

GOLD & SILVER

10g = ₹1,60,600*



1kg = ₹2,68,000*



Spot gold prices for 24-carat in Delhi for per 10 grams

Source: All India Sarafra Association

*Provisional

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

New Delhi, Feb 5: Precious metal prices tumbled sharply in the national capital Thursday, with silver slumping 10 per cent to Rs 2.68 lakh per kg, and gold falling to Rs 1.6 lakh per 10 grams triggered by a global sell-off and a firm US dollar.

According to the All India Sarafra Association, silver nose-dived by Rs 30,300, or 10.16 per cent, to Rs 2,68,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes), compared with Wednesday's closing level of Rs 2,98,300 per kg.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also depreciated by Rs 4,500, or nearly 3 per cent, to Rs 1,60,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes).

It had settled at Rs 1,65,100 per 10 grams in the previous session. "Gold and silver moved lower on Thursday, snapping a two-day rally, as precious metals faced renewed selling pressure.

Meanwhile, bullion prices also witnessed a steep fall with silver and gold diving up to 13 per cent in the international markets. Spot silver tanked \$11.94, or 13.54 per cent, to \$76.26 per ounce, while gold declined by \$137.32, or 2.77 per cent, to \$4,826.99 per ounce.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback's performance against a basket of six major currencies, was up 0.25 per cent at 97.86, weighing heavily on commodities denominated in the US currency.

"Spot gold tumbled on Thursday as the US dollar strengthened and caution prevails ahead of the US-Iran talks in Oman tomorrow," Praveen Singh, Head of commodities, Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said.

Manav Modi, Analyst, Commodities at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said silver prices languished once again after recovering from last week's fall.

"As China sold aggressively, global markets reacted," Modi said.

Govt expands definition of startup; turnover limit doubled to ₹200 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: The government has expanded the criteria for recognising entities as startups by doubling the turnover threshold to Rs 200 crore, according to a notification.

A new recognition of 'Deep Tech Startup' has also been introduced for entities working on cutting-edge and breakthrough technologies, the notification of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) said.

The age and turnover limit criteria for such Deep Tech Startups have also been significantly expanded.

According to the notification, the age limit has been extended from 10 years to 20 years from the date of incorporation or registration, and the turnover limit has been enhanced to Rs 300 crore.

"This step addresses the unique requirements of deep tech entities operating in areas with long gestation periods, high R&D intensity, and capital-intensive development cycles," the DPIIT said.

Further to support innovation-driven growth at the grassroots in agriculture, allied sectors, rural industries, and community-based enterprises, the government has extended startup recognition eligibility to cooperative enterprises.

Accordingly, certain categories of cooperatives are now eligible for recognition as startups, subject to conditions.

It includes multi-state cooperative societies registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002, and cooperative societies registered under State and Union Territory Cooperative Acts, it added.

"Keeping in view the evolving startup ecosystem and the need to support startups with targeted benefits at various stages of their business lifecycle, the turnover limit for recognition as a startup has been increased from Rs 100 crore to Rs 200 crore," it added.

INDIA, GCC LAUNCH FTA NEGOTIATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



It is most appropriate that we now enter into a much stronger and robust trading arrangement which will enable a greater free flow of goods, services, bring predictability and stability to policy, help encourage a greater degree of investments

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

New Delhi, Feb 5: India and the six-nation bloc of Middle Eastern nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), inked terms of reference Thursday for formally launching negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA).

The terms of reference (ToR) outline the scope and modalities of a proposed trade pact. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal presided over the signing ceremony of the ToRs with GCC.

GCC is a union of six countries in the Gulf region - Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

Goyal said that the agreement will help boost bilateral trade and investments between the two. "The two trading partners have been trading amongst each other for over 5,000 years," he told reporters.

He added that about 10 million Indians are living and working in the GCC region.

INDIA EXPORTS FIRST FUEL TO EUROPE SINCE BAN ON RUSSIAN CRUDE

Reliance Industries has partially offloaded a jet fuel cargo in Italy, India's first export to the region since a European Union ban on products derived from Russian oil took effect on January 21, data from ship trackers and trade sources showed

**CRISIS OF FAITH**

Bitcoin's months-long slide continues

GLOBAL CRYPTO MARKET HAS LOST NEARLY \$1.9TN IN VALUE SINCE HITTING A PEAK OF \$4.379TN IN EARLY OCT, WITH SOME \$800BN WIPE OUT IN THE LAST MONTH ALONE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Feb 5: The price of bitcoin continued its months-long slide Thursday, falling another 11 per cent to \$67,000, its lowest level in 15 months.

The original cryptocurrency, pitched as "digital gold," has lost 46 per cent of its value since October 6, when it hit a record high of \$126,210.50, according to crypto trading platform Coinbase. As of 10:30 am EST Thursday, its price had dipped to \$67,245.

After the election of President Donald Trump in November of 2024, Bitcoin prices chugged higher for the better part of a year, in part due to investors' expectations of a more crypto-friendly administration in Washington.

Companies that enable investors to buy and sell cryptocurrencies, as well as the



The original cryptocurrency, pitched as "digital gold," hits fresh 15-month low of \$67,000

It has lost 46% of its value since October 6, when it hit a record high of \$126,210.50

ing company Riot Platforms dropped 10 per cent.

Strategy, the biggest of the so-called crypto treasury companies that raises money just to buy bitcoin, tumbled 13 per cent. The company, formerly called MicroStrategy, reports on its website holdings of 713,502 bitcoin.

With the average purchase prices for those above \$76,000, it means the company is under water on the investment. Thursday morning its bitcoin holdings were worth about \$47.8 billion, less than the \$54.3 billion Strategy says they cost.

American Bitcoin, in which Trump's sons Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr. hold a stake, fell 6.6 per cent and is now down more than 80 per cent since October 7.

Other Trump-related crypto ventures have declined as well. The market value for the World Liberty Financial token, or \$WLFI, has fallen to about \$3.25 billion from above \$6 billion in mid-September, according to coinmarketcap.com. And the price of a meme coin named for President Donald Trump, \$TRUMP, is \$3.93, a fraction of the \$45 asking price just before his inauguration in January.

Benchmarks snap 3-day rally

SENSEX TUMBLES 504 POINTS AHEAD OF RBI POLICY DECISION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 5: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty halted their three-day rally to close with deep cuts Thursday, in line with bearish global markets, as participants turned cautious ahead of the RBI policy announcement amid geopolitical uncertainties.

Intense selling in metal, IT and capital goods stocks also dampened market sentiment, traders said.

In a bearish session, the 30-share BSE Sensex further dropped 503.76 points, or 0.60 per cent, to settle at 83,313.93. During the day, it tacked 666.07 points, or 0.79 per cent,



Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra Friday.

From the Sensex constituents, Eternal, Bharti Airtel, Bharat Electronics, ITC, Infosys, Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank and Asian Paints were among the major laggards.

In contrast, Trent, Tata Steel, State Bank of India and Bajaj Finance were the gainers.

Among sectoral indices, capital goods dropped 1.07 per cent, metal (1.05 per cent), consumer durables (0.88 per cent), BSE Focus IT (0.78 per cent), IT (0.76 per cent) and telecommunication (0.72 per cent).

BSE PSU Bank and oil & gas were the gainers.

₹ rises 13 paise to close at 90.34

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 5: The rupee appreciated 13 paise to close at 90.34 against the US dollar Thursday, on trade deal optimism and overnight decline in commodity prices, even as the upside remained capped as investors look for more clarity on the India-US trade deal.

Forex traders said significant corporate dollar demand and a weak trend in domestic equities restricted the upside for the local unit.

Notwithstanding the trade deal optimism, forex traders said market participants are now shifting focus from celebration to verification as no official documents have been released, and neither side has formally published the final terms. Moreover, investors are awaiting cues from Friday's RBI interest rate announcement.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.52 and touched an early high of 90.06 and a low of 90.53 against the greenback. The domestic unit finally settled at 90.34, higher by 13 paise from its previous close.

According to Choudhary USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 90 to 90.50.

RUPEE ₹ VS DOLLAR \$

SC rescues homebuyers of Supertech

Top court upholds NCLAT order asking NBCC to take over stalled projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Feb 5: Coming to the rescue of thousands of hassled homebuyers waiting for the delivery of their dream homes for more than a decade, the Supreme Court Thursday upheld an NCLAT order asking the State-owned NBCC to complete debt-ridden realty firm Supertech Limited's 16 housing projects expeditiously.

The court also restrained all the tribunals and high courts from passing any order that may lead to the st

HIGH-VOLTAGE WPL FINAL

RCB claim second crown



Mandhana, Voll power Royal Challengers Bengaluru as Delhi Capitals suffer another heartbreak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vadodara, Feb 5: Displaying absolute dominance, a Smriti Mandhana-inspired Royal Challengers Bengaluru lifted their second Women's Premier League trophy with a six-wicket victory over Delhi Capitals, who failed to seize the moment

on the biggest stage despite playing in their fourth final here Thursday.

RCB captain Mandhana looked in imperious touch on way to a magnificent 87 off 41 balls, while Georgia Voll smashed 79 in 54 deliveries during a 165-run partnership for the second wicket with her skipper, which paved the way for a memorable title triumph.

This was after skipper Jemimah Rodrigues rose to the occasion with a scintillating half-century and Chinelle Henry blazed away to a 15-ball 35 to lift Delhi Capitals to an imposing 203 for four.

Laura Wolvaardt (44 not out off 25 balls) and Lizelle Lee (37 off 30 balls) also made quick

runs after DC were put in. Rodriguezes slammed 57 off 37 balls.

In reply, RCB completed the record chase with two balls remaining while joining Mumbai Indians as the most successful teams in the WPL.

In the stiff chase, RCB lost the big wicket of Grace Harris (9) early but skipper Smriti Mandhana and Georgia Voll kept them in the contest by scoring quickly and keeping pace with the required run rate.

Both Mandhana and Georgia drove anything that was pitched up with ease, pulled and cut the short balls with authority as RCB reached 100 exactly at the halfway mark, requiring 104 runs in 60 balls.

Meanwhile Mandhana, hav-

ing just hit two sixes, raced to her fifty in 23 balls with a sublime boundary against Sneh Rana. Voll was also at her best at the other end, dispatching everything that was in her arc with utter disdain.

The equation came down to 54 of 36 balls after Mandhana smashed Shree Charani for two boundaries to take RCB to 150 in 14 overs.

The two continued to dominate until Voll gave her wicket away to Minnu Mani, raising DC hopes. However, RCB held their nerves to emerge winners.

Earlier, the Royal Challengers were on the money in the first three overs with Lauren Bell and Sayali Satghare conceding just nine runs as

Shafali Verma and Lee did not get enough width to free their arms.

However, the fourth over bowled by Satghare saw the Capitals release the pressure with Lee clobbering the medium pacer's half-volley and half-tracker two successive sixes -- one over long-off and another over mid-wicket.

In the end though, RCB had the last laugh, once again, in a rematch of the 2024 final.

BRIEF SCORES
Delhi Capitals 203/4 in 20 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 44, Jemimah Rodrigues 57) lost to **RCB** 204/4 in 19.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 87, Georgia Voll 79) by six-wickets

ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Shooters' gold haul reaches double digits



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vietnam (582, 2nd) and Chinese Taipei (575, 4th), besides Saidkulova and Kamalov, followed them into the final.

The race to medals brought the best out of the Uzbeks and they were the only team in the final, where both shooters individually registered an average of over 10.0 per shot over 24 shots, upstaging the home favourites in a nervy finish. Chinese Taipei won bronze.

Southpaw Rashmika Sahgal and Vanshika Chaudhary, in the 10m air pistol women junior, and Priyanshi Purva and Chaheer Kohla, in the corresponding youth category also delivered back-to-back 1-2 finishes.

Their combined efforts saw India finish the second competition day with a rich haul of 10 gold, five silver and one bronze medal, far ahead of Uzbekistan, who are second on the table with 236.7. Indonesian Asyifa Riha-datul won bronze in the event.

Two more golds for the hosts came through the team competitions where the trio of Rashmika, Vanshika and Agam Grewal won the junior women's air pistol team gold with a combined tally of 1714, a good 43 points ahead of the silver winning Kazakhstan team.

SHORT TAKES

Man City enter final

Manchester: Omar Marmoush scored twice as Manchester City set up a League Cup final date with Arsenal after a comprehensive 3-1 second-leg victory over visiting Newcastle United secured a 5-1 aggregate win in their semi-final Wednesday. Trailing 2-0 from the first leg, the last thing Newcastle needed was to concede early at the Etihad Stadium, but Marmoush's shot deflected off defender Dan Burn and into the net inside six minutes. City won four League Cup titles in a row between 2018 and 2021 and have eight in all, only Liverpool (10) have won it more. Arsenal have not lifted the trophy in 33 years and have two previous wins.

Mustafizur joins PSL

Lahore: Lahore Qalandars Thursday announced the direct signing of Mustafizur Rahman for Pakistan Super League Season 11 following the release of the Bangladesh pacer by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders. Rahman was removed from the KKR roster on BCCI instructions, triggering a controversial sequence of events that led to the withdrawal of Bangladesh national team from the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup and selective pullout of Pakistan from the marquee fixture against India. Rahman, originally picked by the Qalandars in 2016 and 2018, is now set to don the Qalandars' colours once more. The signing was agreed at PKR 6.44 crore (roughly Rs 2 crore in INR). "Once a Qalandar, always a Qalandar. Mustafizur is not just a player; he's a brother, a key part of our family who never left," said Sameen Rana, Owner, Lahore Qalandars.

U19 WORLD CUP

India keyed up for final against Eng

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Harare, Feb 5: In pursuit of a record-extending sixth title, the Indian Under-19 cricket team would bank on its swash-buckling batting line-up when it takes on a gritty England in what promises to be an evenly-matched summit clash of the ICC Under-19 World Cup here Friday.

India's successful chase of a massive total to humble Afghanistan in the semifinal where skipper Ayush Mhatre and opener Aaron George finally produced innings of substance, augurs well for the five-time champions, aiming to regain the trophy they last lifted in 2022. They now face another unbeaten team in England.

India will be aware that England have reached this far after knocking out defending champions Australia and will be high on confidence.

India's record in the finals of the global age-group tournament has been brilliant. This marks their 10th appearance in the summit clash. Having beaten England in their only previous final meeting -- in the 2022 West Indies edition -- history is also on their side.

BADMINTON ASIA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Shuttlers enter QFs despite losses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Qingdao (China), Feb 5: India's men's and women's teams advanced to the quarterfinals despite suffering narrow 2-3 defeats to Japan and Thailand respectively in their final group ties at the Badminton Asia Team Championships here Thursday.

The defending champion women will face hosts China, while the men will take on South Korea in the last-eight stage.

The Indian women, who had opened with a 5-0 sweep of Myanmar, began strongly but lost momentum after taking a 2-0 lead against Thailand.

World No 42 Tanvi, a member of India's historic gold medal-winning team at the 2024 edition, stunned world No 16 Busanan Ongbamrungphan 21-14, 17-21, 21-18 in a gripping

contest lasting one hour and three minutes.

The doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly then battled past world No 65 Tidaporn Kleebeesun and Nat-tamon Laisuan 21-14, 20-22, 21-11 to hand India a 2-0 lead at the Qingdao Conson Gymnasium.

However, Rakshitha Ramraj failed to get past 19-year-old Pichamont Opatnuphat -- the 2023 World Junior champion and 2026 Indonesia Masters runner-up -- going down 19-21, 17-21 as Thailand pulled one back to trail 1-2.

In the second doubles, Tani-sha Crasto and Shruti Mishra fought gallantly but went down 21-19, 14-21, 15-21 to Hathaithip Mijad and Napaporn Tung-kasatan, ranked 57th in the world, allowing Thailand to level the tie and force a deciding fifth match.

The Indian squad features a strong blend of experienced players and young talent across all departments as the team looks to make a strong start to its Pro League campaign on home soil.

Rosan Kujur earns maiden call-up

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 5: Hockey India Saturday announced a 24-member Indian team for the FIH Men's Pro League 2025-26 for the Rourkela leg of the tournament, scheduled to take place from February 10 to 15 at the Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, Odisha.

Among the notable inclusions is 21-year-old Rosan Kujur from Odisha, who has earned his maiden call-up to the senior national squad. Kujur was a member of the Indian Junior Team that secured the bronze medal at the FIH Junior World Cup 2025 in Chennai.

He also enjoyed a breakthrough domestic season, playing a key role for Vedanta Kalinga Lancers, who went on to lift the Hero Hockey India League 2025-26 title.

The Rourkela leg will feature hosts India, alongside international heavyweights Argentina and Belgium, promising high-intensity encounters against some of the world's top hockey nations.

The Indian squad features a strong blend of experienced players and young talent across all departments as the team looks to make a strong start to its Pro League campaign on home soil.

FIH PRO LEAGUE



It's an exciting mix of youth and experience. We have young talents like Rosan, Manmeet and Amandeep coming through, while the presence of senior players, including those from the India A setup, adds valuable experience

CRAIG FULTON | CHIEF COACH, INDIA

The goalkeeping duties will be handled by Suraj Karkera and Pawan, while the defensive unit includes Amit Rohidas, Captain Harmanpreet Singh, Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sumit, and Nilam Sanjeep Kess, providing solidity and leadership at the back.

Also, the defenders' list includes Amandeep Lakra, comes

into the squad on the back of an impressive outing in the recently concluded Men's Hero Hockey India League 2025-26, where he was adjudged the Hero Player of the Tournament, underlining his growing influence at the senior level.

SQUAD FOR ROURKELA LEG

Goalkeepers: Suraj Karkera, Pawan**Defenders:** Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, Nilam Sanjeep Kess, Amandeep Lakra**Midfielders:** Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Rosan Kujur**Forwards:** Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Shilanand Lakra, Selvam Karthi, Mandeep Singh, Araiheet Singh Hundal, Aditya Arjun Lalage

Lahore: Lahore Qalandars

Thursday announced the direct signing of Mustafizur Rahman for Pakistan Super League Season 11 following the release of the Bangladesh pacer by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders. Rahman was removed from the KKR roster on BCCI instructions, triggering a controversial sequence of events that led to the withdrawal of

Bangladesh national team from the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup and selective pullout of Pakistan from the marquee fixture against India.

Rahman, originally picked by the Qalandars in 2016 and 2018, is now set to don the Qalandars' colours once more. The signing was agreed at PKR 6.44 crore (roughly Rs 2 crore in INR). "Once a Qalandar, always a Qalandar. Mustafizur is not just a player; he's a brother, a key part of our family who never left," said Sameen Rana, Owner, Lahore Qalandars.

India to host Billie Jean King Cup



New Delhi: All India Tennis Association (AITA) Thursday said the country has been given the hosting rights of the World Cup of Women Tennis 2026 Billie Jean King Cup. "India has been given the privilege of hosting the World Cup of Women Tennis 2026 Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge Asia/Oceania Group I Event in April this year," AITA's secretary general Anil Dharup said in a statement. The event will be held at the newly renovated courts of Delhi Lawn Tennis Association (DLTA) Complex from April 7-11. The tournament will be conducted in a round-robin format, with the top two teams earning promotion to the play-offs. Along with hosts India, teams from Indonesia, the South Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, and Thailand will compete for the two coveted promotion spots, the top AITA office bearer said.

T20 WORLD CUP

Pak PM defends India boycott move

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Feb 5: Calling Pakistan's boycott of their T20 World Cup match against India an "appropriate decision, the country's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that it was a "considered stance" to support Bangladesh.

Pakistan's cricket team has been told by the government to skip the February 15 game in Colombo after Bangladesh were replaced by Scotland for refusing to play its games in India on account of "security concerns".

"We have taken a very clear stand on the T20 World Cup that we won't play the match against India because there should be no politics on the sports field," Sharif stated after a government meeting here.

"We have taken a very considered stance, and we should

completely stand by Bangladesh, and I think this is a very appropriate decision. We are with Bangladesh," he added.

In response, Bangladesh sports advisor Asif Nazrul posted "Thank you, Pakistan" on his official Facebook page, while quoting Sharif's statement.

A livid ICC has warned the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) of serious consequences if it fails to show up for the high-profile match, which is a money magnet at the big event for sponsors, broadcasters and advertisers.

The world body has hoped that the PCB will "consider the significant and long-term implications for cricket in its own country as this is likely to impact the global cricket ecosystem, which is itself a member and beneficiary of."

Pakistan has reached Colom-

**Our flight is booked, we are going: SKY**

India skipper Suryakumar Yadav Thursday said his team will travel to Colombo for its ICC T20 World Cup match against Pakistan even though the neighbouring country has announced a boycott of the game. The Indian skipper did, however, acknowledge that the situation is not easy for those involved in the issue. "I feel it is not an easy job. It is not my call. I am sure they (the ICC) might be working out something as well but it has come from the other government or the nation, how can they (the ICC) help as well?" Suryakumar said during the pre-tournament captains' press conference here at the BCCI headquarters. India are scheduled to face the arch-rivals February 15 but Pakistan's cricket team has been told by its government to skip the game after Bangladesh were replaced by Scotland for refusing to play in India on account of "security concerns".

India game not in our control: Pak skipper

Maintaining his cricket board's stance, Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha Thursday stressed that the decision to boycott the T20 World Cup match against India was taken by their government and was "not in our control". "It's the government's and the PCB's decision and we respect that. Whatever they are going to say, we will do that," Agha said during the captain's conference.

their security concerns should have been addressed. The ICC's security assessment of Indian

venues had placed the threat perception for Bangladesh in the low to moderate category.