



## Nikki on fire

Actor Nikki Tamboli slams reality TV show star Prince Narula over an alleged body-shaming remark

LEISURE | P2



## Revolution anniversary

Iranian president apologises over crackdown as nation marks 47th anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Markets end flat

Sensex and Nifty close on a flat note in a choppy session as gains in PSU banks and auto shares are offset by losses in IT stocks

BUSINESS | P11



## India vs Namibia

After edging past USA, defending champions India will take on Namibia in their second group A game

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12 PAGES | ₹5.00

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 312 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 12, 2026

## Birla steps in to rectify flaws in no-trust notice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: The Opposition notice for removal of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla could have been rejected due to flaws in drafting, but he directed officials to get it rectified so that it can be listed at the earliest, parliamentary sources said.

As many as 118 Opposition MPs had signed the notice submitted to Lok Sabha Secretary General Utpal Kumar Singh Tuesday afternoon. Later in the day, the Opposition withdrew the notice and replaced it with another one correcting the date.

The notice reportedly mentioned the events of February 2025 four times, on the basis of which it could have been rejected as per the rules, the sources said. The Speaker directed the Lok Sabha Secretariat to have the defective notice corrected and then proceed with it.

Birla ordered prompt action as per the rules, a functionary said. Sources said upon receipt of the revised notice, a speedy review will be conducted as per the rules.

Opposition parties Tuesday put in motion the process to oust Birla as Lok Sabha speaker, alleging that he had acted in a blatantly partisan manner in the House and prompting him to step aside from chairing the proceedings till the matter is settled.

Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi, chief whip K Suresh and whip Mohamed Jawed submitted the notice under Article 94C of the Constitution to Lok Sabha Secretary General Utpal Kumar Singh on behalf of several opposition parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party and the DMK.

Lok Sabha secretariat officials said Birla, upholding the highest standards of morality, has decided not to sit in the Speaker's chair until the no-confidence motion moved against him is settled.



FAITH & FERVOUR: People look on as construction of a mosque, modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid, begins at Beldanga, in Murshidabad district, West Bengal, Wednesday (Report P7) PTI PHOTO

## POLICE GEAR UP FOR ANTI-MAOIST OP IN GANDHAMARDAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Odisha Police is preparing to launch a major anti-Maoist operation in Gandhamardan hills, a top officer said.

ADG (anti-Naxal operations) Sanjeeb Panda said a blueprint has been made to arrest or neutralise some red rebels taking shelter in Gandhamardan hills covering Bolangir and Barghars districts. Additional jawans of CRPF and the state police's elite Special Operation Group (SOG) will be deployed for the operation.

Panda said Odisha Police is optimistic about meeting the March 31 deadline for declaring the state, as well as the country 'Naxal-free'. He said at least five districts -- Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Koraput and Boudh -- have so far been declared 'Naxal free' following the surrender of Maoists cadres.

The ADG said the police have already intensified intelligence gathering from both the districts. The recent decision, police sources said, is based on intelligence reports about resurgence in Maoist activity in Gandhamardan after a period of lull.

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## Trade unions' strike today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: A joint forum of central trade unions has given a nationwide strike call Thursday to protest against the 'anti-worker' policies of the government, which may partially affect services like banking, insurance and transport.

According to trade unions, 30 crore workers from various sectors are likely to participate in the agitation.

A group of trade unions announced the nationwide strike to show their resistance to anti-worker, anti-farmer and anti-national pro-corporate policies of the Central government.

Services in electricity, banking, insurance, transport, health, education, gas and water supply will be affected due to the nationwide strike call February 12, All India Trade Union Congress General Secretary Amarjeet Kaur told PTI.

She informed that all bank unions will not participate in the strike as their united front has already observed a strike January 27. However, bank workers' unions such as AIBEA, AIBOA and BEFI will participate in the protest.

Besides, Kaur said, the min-

## SKM calls on farmers to join general strike

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) has given a call to farmers to join trade union workers in making Thursday's all-India general strike a success. In a statement issued here, the SKM said the strike seeks the withdrawal of four labour codes, the Electricity Bill-2025, the Seed Bill-2025, the VB-G RAM G Act-2025, restoration of the old pension scheme, implementation of minimum wages for workers including scheme workers, among other demands. The statement said the platform of agricultural workers' unions and the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha (NSM) will also support and participate in the protest demonstrations across the country. SKM calls upon the people to resist all the new attacks launched by the BJP government on the farmers, the workers and common people, it said.

According to Kaur, labour commissioners in different districts have called for meetings with union leaders to discuss their issues, but Thursday's agitation will go on as planned by the forum.

Chairman of the All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF), Shailendra Dubey, said that around 2.7 million power employees and engineers across the country will observe a one-day strike February 12.

The strike has been called to oppose privatisation, the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025 and the proposed National Electricity Policy 2026, and for the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme for power sector employees. Dubey said that for the first time, the Samyukt

and gas pipeline sectors are also expected to see the impact of the agitation. Insurance sector workers will protest against the government's decision to allow up to 100 per cent FDI (foreign direct investment) in the sector and the implementation of new labour codes.

Besides, a large number of workers of private and state transport utilities will participate in the protest, she said.

She exuded confidence that this time, not less than 30 crore workers will participate in the strike, and around 600 districts are expected to face the impact.

In a similar strike July 9 last year, about 25 crore workers took part in the agitation, which impacted more than about 550 districts.

Besides, Kaur said, the min-

Kisan Morcha and ten central trade Unions are joining the strike in solidarity with power employees.

With the participation of power sector employees, engineers, workers, and farmers, the February 12 action is expected to become one of the largest industrial actions in independent India, Dubey said, adding that one of the major demands of the strike is to stop outsourcing, fill regular posts through direct recruitment, and regularise existing outsourced workers.

AIPEF has expressed concern that the privatisation of the power sector (distribution, generation and transmission) is against the interests of poor consumers, small and medium industries, and the common public.

Therefore, the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025 and the proposed National Electricity Policy 2026 must be withdrawn immediately, Dubey said.

Banking services would be partly impacted as three out of nine unions -- All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA), All India Bank Officers' Association (AIBOA) and Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) -- would be participating in the strike.

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The Centre is observing the 150th year of Vande Mataram.

According to the order, the official version of the National Song shall be played accompanied by mass singing on these occasions--on the unfurling of the National Flag, on cultural

occasions or ceremonial functions other than parades, and on the arrival of the President at any government or public function, among others.

"There should be an adequate public audience system so that the gathering in various enclosures can sing in unison with the choir; printed lyrics of the official version of the National

## 27% of all ganja seizures since 2020 from Odisha

39 lakh kg cannabis based drugs seized across India in 6 years, including 10.65 lakh kg from Odisha alone

kg and the state consistently maintained a lead on the annual charts, according to the government. The data also points to shifts in trafficking patterns across the country.

Rajasthan, for instance, reported a

## leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST



accuracy • reliability • trust

FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

## ARIES

You will bring out your maps and magnifying glass today as you want to explore and investigate. Also, you remain touchy. Anyone who gets in your way will face your ire. Ganesha suggests that you be sensitive to your loved ones.

## TAURUS

Emotions will flow generously as sincerity translates in your every action and expression. Be alert and cautious today, warns Ganesha. Your luck may make you like the princess in the locked tower, and the lack of white knight in the story won't make things any better, says Ganesha.

## GEMINI

You are likely to throw a small treat for your relatives. Though the rest of the day will be spent cleaning the utensils and putting the place in order, you will manage to get some time for your friends, maybe by arranging a slumber party. A day full of partying and post-party cleaning, except for the evening yoga classes.

## CANCER

Ganesha is foreseeing the conversion of your romance into marriage. But you will not have mind in the career or business and you lack enthusiasm in the same. So Ganesha advises you not to take up any new work, but finish off pending work.

## LEO

The stars bring out the best in the artist hidden inside you. It may not be a Picasso or a Rembrandt, but nonetheless, today, your work shall stand out as exceptional. Ganesha foresees an afternoon spent in making use of the excellent communication and oratorical skills that you possess. When at work, you shall bring with you a spirit full of energy and enthusiasm that spreads exuberance in spite of others' criticism.

## VIRGO

A day to don both - those trainers and that thinking cap. Exercise those muscles and that mass of grey cells, says Ganesha. Work hard and you'll get paid rich dividends for it. A romantic tryst with your loved one promises to end the day on a high note.

## LIBRA

Today, it's a straight path to success, thanks to your straightforward manner. Ganesha foresees some small things that may trouble you in a big way early on in the day. But negotiate around them, and then it's all smooth sailing from there on. On the business front, expect to roll in money from diverse sources. It's all thanks to your own abilities and efforts that you are getting this positive reception.

## SCORPIO

Your confidence level will be the vanguard of your character today, says Ganesha. On the career front, you are likely to complete things that are seemingly impossible. Your skill and determination will leave people asking for more, predicts Ganesha.

## SAGITTARIUS

Like a true Archer, targets are your aim today and focus, the buzzword. On the business front, the fast buck that you expected may not materialise. Though love may portray a rosy picture for you, today you end up having a tough time managing relationship. Be patient, advises Ganesha.

## CAPRICORN

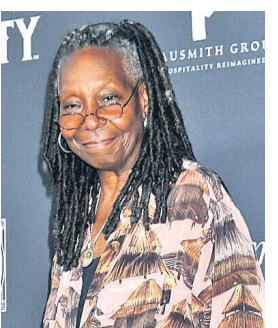
The heaps of files waiting to get disposed of may finally reach your desk. You will be prompt in dealing with pending work, and will get all the support you need from your subordinates, says Ganesha. For those engaged in business, keep your vigil, especially while dealing with your competitors. You have the potential to beat them in their own game.

## AQUARIUS

Life reveals itself to you in the simplest of things today. It will dawn upon you that you have a lot going for yourself, personally and professionally. This appreciation reflects in the small considerations that you show to your loved ones. This is perfection, asserts Ganesha.

## PISCES

You will be in pursuit of educational and intellectually stimulating activities today, says Ganesha. Novel business proposals are likely to crop up in the afternoon. Your magnetism is likely to net you a date later in the evening.



## WHOOPY AUCTIONING OFF HER 'MANY TREASURES'

Hollywood icon Whoopi Goldberg is auctioning off her own personal 'treasures' including costumes and other memorabilia. The 70-year-old is teaming up with Julien's Auctions on *Whoopi Goldberg: The Collection*, which will also feature some of her own jewellery with the sale taking place next month.

## ROBBIE GOT KICKED OUT OF MOST CLUBS

*Wuthering Heights* star Margot Robbie has recalled being kicked out of most of the clubs in Clapham during her wild years. The 35-year-old star lived with six friends in a four-bedroom London flat until 2016.



## Nora's rare milestone

**Mumbai:** Nora Fatehi has achieved a rare milestone on the international entertainment circuit by becoming the only Indian actor to have performed at both a FIFA World Cup event and a Cricket World Cup ceremony. The achievement places her among a small group of artists who have bridged two of the world's largest sporting platforms through live performances.

Her first major global sporting appearance came at the FIFA World Cup 2022, where she performed at the closing ceremony. Nora was part of the official World Cup anthem Light The Sky, delivering a live performance that combined singing and choreography in front of a worldwide audience. Notably, she also sang in Hindi as part of the anthem, bringing an Indian cultural element to a ceremony watched by millions across continents. Her presence at the event marked a significant moment for Indian representation at one of the most-watched sporting spectacles globally.

This international moment was followed by a major appearance closer home when Nora performed at the opening ceremony of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in Mumbai. Taking the stage ahead of the tournament's kickoff, she energised the stadium with a high-impact performance, once again demonstrating her comfort with large-scale live audiences and televised global events.

Beyond cere-

monies, Nora's national visibility has continued to grow across mainstream entertainment platforms.

AGENCIES

**Boston:** Actress Ameesha Patel decided to relive some of her fond memories from her college days as she visited Boston, where she went

As part of her visit, strolled some familiar places, such as

Boston Commons, Faneuil Hall, Copley Square, Newbury Street, Boston Harbour - all the places she used to visit during her student days.

The *Gadar* actress wrote on the photo-sharing app, "BOSTON—Strolling the Boston Commons, Faneuil Hall, Copley Square, Newbury Street, Boston harbour n wharf, doing part of the Freedom Trail n hopping in n out of the Prudential centre just seems so natural!! Something I did as a student for 4 years whilst studying at Tufts University! The past student in me has melted in 2 the present girl! And I can't seem to feel the Differencen!! These streets n areas make me feel like I belong here! BOSTON — willl always always have my heart (sic)," followed by a red heart emoji."

Before this, Ameesha shared another glimpse of her Boston trip, along with the caption, "BOSTON — back to my city where I studied n went to University !! Reliving my student days feels surreal."

For the unaware, Ameesha completed her schooling at Cathedral and John Connon School in Mumbai. After this, she went on to attend the Tufts University in Boston, where she initially studied bio-genetic engineering for two years before switching her major to economics.

IANS

## Ameesha relives her Boston days



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## BREVITY



## Language no barrier to tell a good story: Chandra Mani

**Bhubaneswar:** When Bihari-based producer Chandra Mani decided to step into feature filmmaking, he chose to begin his journey far from home — in Odisha. His debut production, *Bara Badhu*, an Odia film directed by Beeswaranjan, is set to release February 13, bringing with it a story rooted in rural life yet resonant with contemporary realities.

The film also promises a fresh and engaging narrative centered on themes of marriage and employment. Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Mani, who brings over a decade of experience in the advertising industry, shared that he chose to begin his cinematic journey with an Odia project after being deeply impressed by the story narrated by director Beeswaranjan, with whom he had previously collaborated on several advertisements.

"I was drawn to the story and decided to back the project when I learned it was inspired by real events from Odisha," Mani said. Explaining his decision to

support a regional film, he added, "Language no barrier to tell

a good story. A powerful narrative carries a universal theme that can resonate with audiences everywhere."

Chandra Mani also emphasised the need for originality in the Odia film industry to thrive in today's competitive landscape. "Today's audiences are smart. They can easily distinguish between original content and 'copy-paste' cinema," he noted.

The producer further revealed plans to release *Bara Badhu* in other states. He also shared that he is currently in discussions with

several talented filmmakers and actors for future collaborations.

The ensemble cast of the movie comprises Sailendra Samantaray, Sivani Sangita, Subhasis Sharma, Jayashree Sarangi, Hara Rath, Suryamayee Mohapatra, Suvendu Das and Bhaswati Basu.

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP



## BODY-SHAMING

## Nikki calls out Prince Narula

**Mumbai:** Actress Nikki Tamboli, who is currently seen in the reality show *The 50*, has strongly called out reality TV show star Prince Narula over an alleged body-shaming remark, questioning his conduct as a "so-called husband, father and public figure."

It was during an episode of *The 50*, when Prince reportedly commented on Nikki's appearance. She now has shared the clip on X, formerly called Twitter, and said that mocking someone behind their back isn't power.

She wrote on X: "So-called husband, father, public figure. If someone spoke about your daughter's body like this, would you laugh too? This isn't strategy. This isn't a game. This is body-shaming done quietly - the coward's way."

Nikki added: "Cameras don't cancel character. Influence doesn't excuse disrespect. Mocking someone behind their back isn't power. If you have something to say, say it to the face. Behind-the-back mocking isn't strength - it's fear pretending to be confidence. And influence without responsibility? That's not leadership. That's failure. That's weakness with an audience."

## SUDOKU

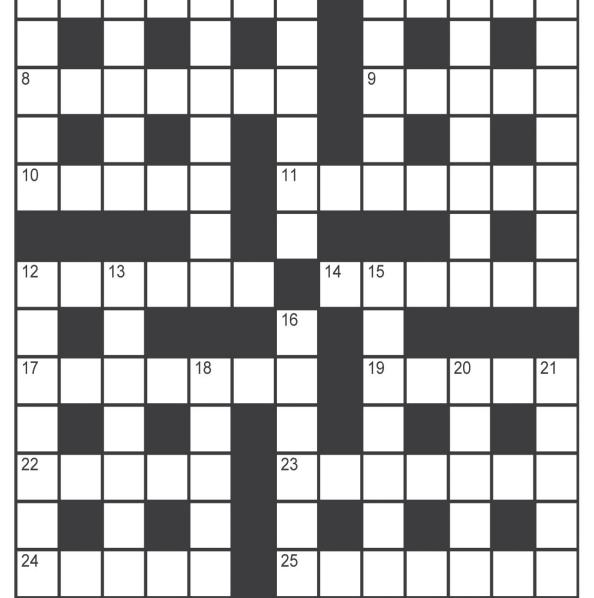
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

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## CROSSWORD

## FUN POST

## CROSSWORD



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## Across

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- 5 Exercise unit (3,2)
- 8 Chopper's spot
- 9 Cuban dance
- 10 Scrub
- 11 Salve
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- 14 Sheen
- 17 Salad ingredient
- 19 Bridges
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- 23 Simple wind instrument
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33RD FOUNDATION DAY OF ODISHA STATE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

# Parida: Govt believes in women-led devpt



Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, Health & Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Skill Development & Technical Education Minister Sampad Chandra Swain and Odisha State Commission for Women Chairperson Shovana Mohanty unveil newsletter 'Bijayini' in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

## WHITE HOUSE U-TURN ON INDIA TRADE DEAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York/Washington, Feb 11: The White House has removed pulses from a list of American products on which it said India will eliminate or reduce tariffs, in a revised fact sheet issued on the interim trade deal.

On Monday, the White House had issued a fact sheet on 'The United States and India Announce Historic Trade Deal (Interim Agreement)', days after India and the US announced in a joint statement the framework for an Interim Agreement regarding reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade.

An initial version of the fact sheet had highlighted key terms of the agreement including, that India will eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains, red sorghum, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, "certain pulses", soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products.

The fact sheet had also said that India committed to buy more American products and purchase over USD 500 billion of US energy, information and communication technology, agricultural, coal, and other products.

Medicines are being distributed to children aged 1-19 years and women of reproductive age (20-24 years). He urged the members of the commission to sustain their dedicated efforts in bringing positive social transformation.

Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Sampad Chandra Swain highlighted the government's initiatives aimed at enhancing skill development among girls. He noted that through training at the World Skill Center, girls from Odisha have demonstrated their capabilities at international platforms, bringing pride to the state. He called for collective efforts to build a healthy, safe, and empowered society.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling stated that the foundation of a healthy nation begins with a healthy state, which can be achieved by safeguarding the well-being of women. He highlighted key government initiatives such as the 'Khusi' scheme, under which free sanitary napkins are provided to adolescent girls. Referring to the state's deworming campaign, Mahaling informed that

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# Odisha-ARF pact to advance AI-driven urban governance



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: In a significant step towards building future-ready, sustainable and citizen-centric cities, the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department Wednesday inked a pact with IIT-Kanpur's AIRAWAT Research Foundation (ARF) to strengthen AI-driven urban governance in the state.

The pact was inked at Kharavela Bhawan here in the presence of H&UD department Additional Chief Secretary Usha Padhee and ARF CEO Amar Nath. Under the partnership, ARF will act as H&UD department's AI innovation partner, providing strategic and technical support for the design and adoption of AI-enabled solutions across Odisha's urban ecosystem.

On the occasion, Padhee reiterated Odisha's strong commitment to leveraging emerging technologies for improved urban planning, service delivery and evidence-based decision-making. "Odisha is committed to building cities that are not only smarter, but also more humane, responsive and inclusive. This partnership will help us harness the power of AI to improve urban services, strengthen governance

co-develop and deploy priority AI solutions to address key challenges in urban governance, strengthen data systems and digital infrastructure, and support ecosystem mobilisation through engagement with research institutions, startups and technology partners. The pact also places strong emphasis on knowledge partnership and institutional capacity building, ensuring that AI is used in a responsible, ethical and transparent manner for public benefit.

A key component of the partnership is the proposed establishment of an AI Project Management Unit (AI-PMU) within the H&UD department. The AI-PMU will serve as a dedicated institutional mechanism to coordinate AI initiatives, support implementation, develop standards and strengthen internal capacities for the effective and responsible use of AI in governance.

The collaboration aims to

## 10-yr RI for drug peddler

Bhubaneswar: A court here Wednesday awarded a 10-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a 31-year-old man after convicting him of drug peddling in the Capital City last year. "The 2nd Additional District Judge-cum-Special Judge, Bhubaneswar also slapped a fine of ₹1 lakh on the convict, Prakash Sethy," Special Public Prosecutor Rashmiranjan Brahma said, adding that failure to pay the fine would entail additional one year of RI. According to the prosecution, the Special Task Force of the Odisha Police nabbed Sethy and recovered 330 grams of brown sugar from his possession in Bankuila area under Badagada police limits of the City May 21, 2025. Soon, the contraband was sent to the State Forensic Science Laboratory which confirmed the recovered material as brown sugar (diacetylmorphine). After successful investigation, a chargesheet was submitted against Sethy under Section 21(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. During the trial, the prosecution examined nine witnesses and exhibited 32 relevant documents.

Odisha State Commission for Women Chairperson Shovana Mohanty elaborated on the commission's achievements in addressing gender-based violence and crimes against women. She stated that cases relating to domestic violence, marital disputes, dowry harassment and dowry deaths, suicides, and sexual harassment at personal and workplace levels are being addressed through a structured grievance redressal mechanism.

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## downtown

## JICA NATIONAL WORKSHOP

## Healthy forests key to climate security: Min



Three-day JICA-assisted forestry workshop underway in City, jointly hosted by OFSDP-II and JICA

tainable Wood Economies" — sets the tone for strategic discussions on modernising India's forestry sector.

In his inaugural address, Singkhunta highlighted the critical role forests play in combating climate change, preserving biodiversity and sustaining the livelihoods of tribal and forest-dependent communities. He said international cooperation has significantly strengthened Odisha's forestry initiatives, particularly in promoting participatory forest management and improving socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and other backward communities.

With OFSDP Phase-II scheduled to conclude in March 2027, the minister expressed hope for the implementation of Phase-III, stating that continued JICA support would be vital for achieving Odisha's long-term development targets under 'Samruddha Odisha 2036' and contributing to the national vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'.

The workshop brings together senior policymakers, forestry professionals and international experts to deliber-

- Minister Singkhunta underscores forests' vital role in tackling climate change, conserving biodiversity and supporting the livelihoods of tribal and forest-dependent communities
- With OFSDP Phase-II ending in March 2027, he bats for Phase-III, seeks continued JICA support to meet 'Samruddha Odisha 2036' and 'Viksit Bharat 2047' goals
- Workshop brings together senior policymakers and international experts to deliberate on climate-resilient forest management, digital integration in forest governance, and development of sustainable wood-based economies

ate on climate-resilient forest management, integration of digital technologies in forest governance, and development of sustainable wood-based economies.

Discussions over the three days will focus on leveraging data-driven monitoring systems, strengthening community participation, enhancing carbon sequestration efforts and promoting sustainable timber value chains. The meet also aims to share best practices from various JICA-supported forestry projects across states.

The inaugural session was attended by JICA India's Chief of Development Operations, Vineet S Sarin, and Senior Representative Wakamatsu Eiji, who reaffirmed Japan's commitment to supporting India's sustainable development goals.

Also present were Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Inspector General (EAP) KB Singh; Odisha's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force K Murugesan; and Additional PCCF (Projects) and Project Director, OFSDP, G Rajesh.

## City's urban green infra revamp on cards

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and NALCO Foundation inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Wednesday to revitalise and maintain the City's urban green infrastructure.

The MoU was signed by BMC's additional commissioner Kailash Chandra Das and NALCO's chief operating officer Subrata Kumar Kar in presence of BMC Mayor Sulochana Das and Commissioner Chanchal Rana.

"By combining the financial support of NALCO Foundation with the administrative oversight of BMC, this collaboration ensures Bhubaneswar's

## BMC, NALCO FOUNDATION INK PACT



green corridors remain lush and well-maintained for its residents. Both parties will conduct periodic reviews to ensure quality compliance and efficient utilisation," said Das.

This strategic partnership marks a significant step towards sustainable environ-

mental management under NALCO's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Under this agreement, NALCO Foundation—a trust settled by the Navaratna PSU National Aluminium Company Limited—has committed an initial financial grant of ₹1 crore for

the first year. The project focuses on two high-visibility zones—the median stretching from Jayadev Vihar to Kalinga Hospital Square (2,500 sqm) and the extensive landscaped areas surrounding the Jayadev Vihar Junction totaling 1,06,524 sqm.

The BMC will act as the nodal agency for implementation, coordinating with the Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC) for the technical execution of the project.

The comprehensive scope of work includes Systematic pruning, manuring, and replantation of green areas, intensive watering and pest and disease control management, continuous upkeep of associated place-making elements and overall beautification.

## ₹13 lakh fish trade fraud; accused held

POST NEW NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: Tamando police arrested a man for allegedly duping another of ₹13.30 lakh in a fish trade business fraud case, police said Wednesday.

The accused, identified as Tapan Kumar Dalai alias Tulu, was apprehended following a written complaint filed by Manas Kumar Sahu.

According to the complaint, Tapan, along with his wife Sarojini Dalai and associate Sushanta Mohapatra, approached the complainant to rent his shop at Siju-put under Tamando police limits to run a fish business. They produced Aadhaar cards and claimed to be fish traders from Manikadeipatna under Jankia police station in Khurda district. After performing a puja, they began operating from the shop but avoided signing a formal rental agreement on various pretexts.



Later, the accused allegedly lured the complainant into investing in a fish supply business catering to marriage orders, promising high returns. Between December 21, 2024, and February 1, 2025, the complainant transferred ₹13.30 lakh in cash and via UPI to bank accounts provided by the accused, including one in the name of Asif Ali Khan.

Despite repeated requests, the accused neither supplied fish nor returned profits, switched off their phones. Investigation found they were not genuine traders and linked to similar frauds. The complainant filed a police case. Tapan, identified as a history-sheeter, repaid ₹1.80 lakh promising balance payment within 15 days but defaulted. Police arrested him and produced him in court. Further probe is underway.

## Baitarani Literature Festival-2026 Feb 14

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: The state-level lecture series and the second 'Baitarani Literature Festival-2026', organised in association with the Odisha Sahitya Akademi, will be held February 14 at the Elementary Teachers Training Institute auditorium in Fakirpur, Keonjhar district.

On the occasion, the 'Baitarani Literature Award' will be presented to several eminent writers of the state in recognition of their literary contributions.



The organisers Wednesday announced the award categories for the upcoming festival. According to them, the "Baitarani Poetry Award-2026" will be conferred on noted Odia poet Nirupama Behera, while the "Baitarani Essay Award-2026" will be presented to Pravat Kumar Sahoo and the "Baitarani Galp Samman-2026" to Jageswar Panda.

The awards recognise their creative literary contributions. Organiser Trilochan Sahoo has invited poets, writers, researchers, and literature and culture enthusiasts to participate in the event. According to them, the "Baitarani Novel Award-2026" will not be conferred this year.

Officials said the meeting also explored the creation of a dedicated Space Innovation Hub to support startups and research.

The initiative plans to leverage the expertise of the Odisha Space Applications Centre (OSAC) and research labs such as the one at VSSUT, Burla, positioning Odisha as

a leader in satellite data applications and space-tech entrepreneurship.

In line with the national Bio-E3 Policy, Patra also proposed the establishment of Bio e-Cells across the state. These centres would focus on high-performance biomanufacturing, promote eco-friendly technologies, and help institutes translate lab research into commercially viable biotech products.

Beyond these flagship projects, discussions included broader strategies to promote scientific development across the state.

Expressing gratitude for the Union Minister's continued mentorship, Patra highlighted that strong state-Centre collaboration would be key to transforming Odisha into a premier scientific and industrial hub.

Singh assured full Central support, promising technical expertise and financial backing to ensure the success of these landmark initiatives.

## Man stabbed to death; 1 detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Feb 11: A 34-year-old man was stabbed to death following an altercation in Binika town of Subarnapur district late Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Shambhu Meher, a resident of Nuapada in Binika. His younger brother, Gautam, lodged a complaint at Binika police station Wednesday morning, accusing three persons — Amit Bharasagar, Tunu Ranabira and Rakesh Bhesra of Bhima Bhoi Nagar in Binika — of committing the crime.

Police registered a case (26/2016) and detained Rakesh Bhesra for questioning. A scientific team from Bolangir assisted in the investigation.

Subarnapur Superintendent of Police (SP) Narayan Nayak informed the media Wednesday.

day that a probe is underway to ascertain the involvement of others and examine various aspects of the killing.

"The body was handed over to the family following a post-mortem. Tension, however, prevailed in the town following the incident," the SP said.

According to police, the incident took place near a pond adjacent to Binika Women's College. Shambhu reportedly had an argument with the three accused over past enmity, which later escalated.

During the clash, the accused allegedly stabbed Shambhu in the abdomen, neck and back, causing severe bleeding. He collapsed at the spot.

Tunu and Amit also sustained injuries in the incident. All three were taken to the Binika community health centre in an ambu-

lance, where doctors declared Shambhu dead.

As the condition of Tunu and Amit was stated to be critical, they were shifted to Birla hospital for advanced treatment.

Sub-inspector Prabhuti Dash is investigating the case. Binika IIC Satya Narayan Pradhan said further investigation is underway.

## MARKET WATCH

CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.75 <span>▲ 0.13</span>	SENSE 84233.64 <span>▼ 40.28</span>		GOLD	₹157,911 <span>▲ 1,10</span>
EURO	108.10 <span>▲ 0.09</span>	NIFTY	25953.85 <span>▲ 18.70</span>	SILVER	₹259,50 <span>▲ 6,95</span>

## Exhibition draws crowds for hand-woven khadi products



POST NEWS NETWORK

praised the artisans for their dedication to crafting traditional wear. Many also lauded the initiative for showcasing authentic craftsmanship and providing a platform to learn more about the artisans' work.

"It is a great initiative to showcase their work. The Pata saree, Sambalpuri saree and other handwoven fabrics beautifully reflect the artisans' dedication," a visitor said.

Similarly, Mohammad Sadik, representing the Resham Khadi Sahyog Samiti Ltd (RKSS) stall from Bihar, expressed happiness over the appreciation they received. "We have opened our stall here for the first time and people love our handwoven garments. Business is running smoothly and we look forward to doing more," he said.

Visitors to the exhibition

## BLO meet reviews electoral roll revision



POST NEWS NETWORK

CEO RS Gopalan stresses inclusion of new voters, deletion of deceased and shifted names, and door-to-door verification for error-free rolls

The meeting was chaired by state Chief Electoral Officer

verification. He directed officials to conduct daily reviews at the booth level and submit progress reports to the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Additional Electoral Registration Officers (AEROS). Special attention should be given to booths with low mapping percentages to ensure complete coverage, he said.

Discussions were also held on organising local camps and involving ASHA workers and corporators to spread awareness and accelerate the mapping process.

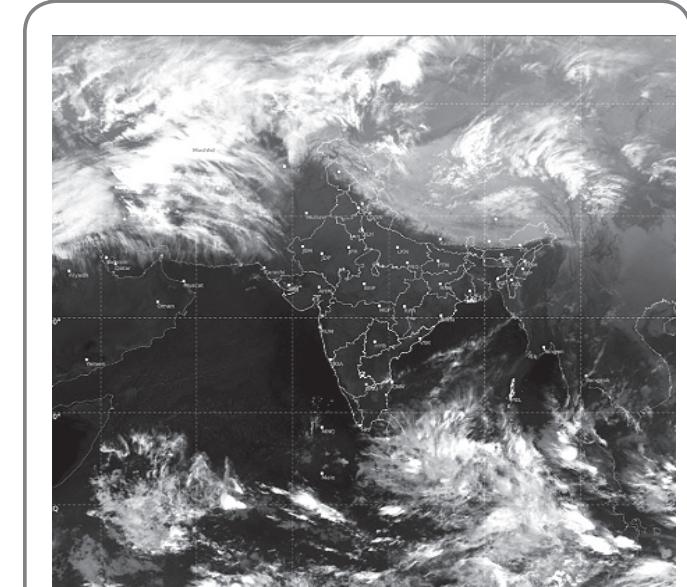
cess in their respective areas.

Officials advised that greater awareness be created among voters regarding the SIR process.

Citizens were encouraged to download the ECI Net app and use the 'Book a Call with BLO' feature to clarify doubts related to their voter details and mapping status.

BLOs were instructed to carry out their duties with utmost vigilance, transparency and impartiality. Emphasis was laid on completing all election-related tasks within the stipulated timeline to avoid any discrepancies.

The meeting was attended by Khurda additional district magistrate Pratap Chandra Beura, deputy CEO Laxmi Prasad Sahu, along with electoral registration officers and additional electoral registration officers.



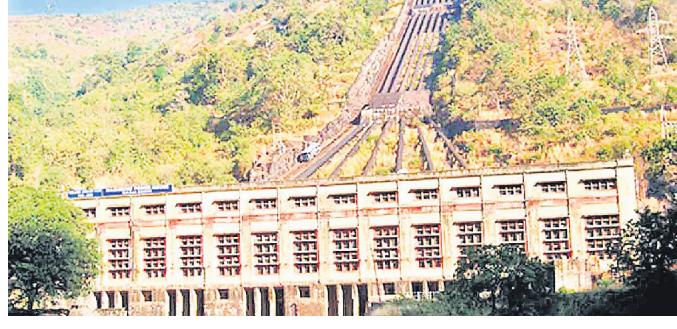
## WEATHER

Max Temp	32.3°	CTC	29.0°
Min Temp	16.4°	15.4°	
Humidity	76%	96%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



# NHRC notice to Odisha, AP over Machhkund rehab woes

POST NEWS NETWORK



tion of displaced residents from all the 14 affected panchayats.

Residents of over 200 villages under 10 displaced panchayats of Nandapur block and four in Lamtapur block expressed their happiness over the NHRC intervention. Reports said that residents from as many as 156 villages from Bilaput, Atanda, Panthlung, Kularsingh, Parajabapada, Golar, Padua, Kulabir, Balda and Badel panchayats under Nandapur block were displaced after surrendering 18,200 hectares of land for construction of Jolaput reservoir under Machhkund Hydroelectric Project.

Earlier, the Prime Minister's Office had directed the state government to review the complaint. Welcoming the move, Nandapur Budi Anchal Bishapita Parishad president Akash Khil, vice president Hanta Hant, secretary Jayaram Paria and joint secretary Nanda Pujari expressed hope that both the governments would hold discussions and resolve the long-pending issues of the displaced families.

Similarly, residents of Chikendu, Ankadeli, Badi-gada and Godihajar panchayats in Lamtapur block were displaced for establishment of the project site. The villagers alleged that they do not have access to electricity and have not been provided employment in the project. No significant development activities have been

undertaken in the 14 affected panchayats, they claimed.

The Budi Anchal Bishapita Parishad had earlier alleged that the two public sector power companies — OHPCL and APGENCO — along with the Collectors of Koraput and ASR districts, have neglected the displaced families. The issue had earlier hit the headlines and it was subsequently brought to the attention of NHRC, as well as the President and the Prime Minister.

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The incident has triggered widespread anger and discussion in the area, with residents expressing concern over the alleged betrayal of trust in a relationship traditionally regarded akin to that of a father and a daughter.

## Teacher held for sexual assault

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bonai, Feb 11:** The arrest of a government school teacher over alleged sexual misconduct with minor students has sparked outrage in Sundargarh district.

Tapas Kumar Badhai, a literature teacher at Haladikudar Government High School, was arrested following allegations that he sexually harassed and assaulted several girl students under the pretext of assisting them with Aadhaar card corrections. According to sources, concerns regarding the teacher's conduct had been circulating on the school premises for some time. The school authorities had reportedly informed the District Education Officer in writing about the matter earlier.



One of the girl students lodged a formal complaint at Lahunipada police station Wednesday, prompting the registration of a case (53/2026). Acting on the complaint, police arrested the accused and sent him for medical examination. An investigation is currently underway. Police officials said that after completion of the medical examination, the accused would be produced before the POCSO Court in Sundargarh.

The incident has triggered widespread anger and discussion in the area, with residents expressing concern over the alleged betrayal of trust in a relationship traditionally regarded akin to that of a father and a daughter.

## Ber smugglers make hay as Rlys sits tight



from where it is sent by train to cities such as Vizianagaram, Bobbili and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

Sources said the fruit is supplied to factories where it is processed into pickles and ber powder, generating significant profits for factory owners.

Passengers have also expressed concern over safety and inconvenience. They alleged that train coach entrances are often blocked by sacks of ber, causing difficulties for commuters — particularly elderly passengers, women and children — while boarding and alighting.

Several travelers and citizens have urged the authorities of Sambalpur railway division to look into the rampant smuggling of ber and take appropriate action to prevent revenue loss, apart from ensuring passengers' safety.

## PUCC stickers peeling off

**Nandapur:** Though the state Transport department has made pollution under control certificates (PUCC) mandatory for all vehicles, with penalties for violations, vehicle owners have raised concerns over the quality of the stickers being issued. The stickers, reportedly printed on ordinary paper, are getting damaged or washed away during vehicle cleaning, sources said. As per rules, vehicle owners are required to get their vehicles tested at authorised pollution checking centres and affix the issued sticker on their vehicles as proof of compliance. However, many owners have questioned the durability of the stickers provided. This has led to inconvenience for vehicle owners, who fear being penalised despite having valid PUCCs. Authorised pollution testing centres have informed vehicle owners that the stickers are prepared and supplied by the Transport department. Since the PUCC certificate remains valid for six months, vehicle owners have urged the state Transport department to issue better-quality, durable stickers that can withstand weather conditions and remain intact for the entire validity period.

## Noted folk play director 'Dama Master' no more

DWARKA PRASAD PATNAIK, OP

**Chhatrapur/Digapahandi, Feb 11:** Renowned folk play director, actor and singer Guru Damodar Badatya, fondly called 'Dama Master', died Wednesday, owing to prolonged illness. He was 85.



an indelible mark in the folk art arena," said a local.

Badatya received prestigious awards from Natyashri foundation, Odisha Chitraraya Sangha, Lok Sahitya Sansad and more for his outstanding contribution to the Odia culture, leaving behind a trail of glory.

Besides Ramayan, Guru Badatya was deeply involved in promoting Odia folk, art and culture. Apart from performing across Odisha, he was able to spread his artful presentations in states like Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, with special dedication to Odias residing there.

Sanakhemundi MLA Ramesh Chandra Jena, block chairman Simanchal Patra, sarpanch, local leaders, his followers and students paid their last respect to the departed soul before the funeral in his village.

## Youth killed in jumbo attack

**Sambalpur/Padiabahal:** A 39-year-old man was trampled to death by a wild elephant in Padiabahal Mahalingapada village under Jujumura block in Sambalpur district Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Premananda Oram. He had gone to a nearby farmland in the morning when the tusker attacked him. Informed, Forest department personnel reached the spot and sent the body for postmortem. Officials said compensation would be provided to the bereaved family as per government norms. Notably, another person was killed in a tusker attack near the foothills of Dumerchua Mundher reserve forest under Jhankarpali section of Sambalpur Sadar range. The deceased was identified as Panchanan Paik, 38, of Halipali village. In the same incident, Sukanti Pradhar, 66, of Rasilapali village under Jhankarpali panchayat, was critically injured.

**Bank of India**  
Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Mob: 7008973027

## E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

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

### (E-Auction) Sale of secured movable / immovable Assets under SARFAESI Act, 2002

### E-AUCTION NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISO TO RULE 8(6) / 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Whereas, the Authorised Officer of **Bank of India** had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WITHOUT ANY RECOUSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://baanknet.com>

**SI. No.** **BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor/Mortgagor / Total Dues**

**1. POKHARIKUT BRANCH, PH: 906629742 / 7008973027 /**

**Borrower: M/s. Mahabirany Enterprises, Partners:**

**1) Mr. Biraj Patra, 2) Mr. Baishnab Patra, All are At: Plot No.: 300, Pokhrikut, Bhubaneswar, Khorda, PIN-752054 / Guarantor / Mortgagor: Mr. Sudhansu Ranjan Ray, S/o: Mr. Damodar Ray, At: Plot No.: 191/1092, Ananta Vihar, Pokhrikut, Bhubaneswar, Khorda, PIN-752054 / Total Dues: ₹25,94,000/- + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.**

**Date & Time of E-Auction: 16.03.2026 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.** with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.

**Last Date and Time for submission of EMD and Documents in their wallet by 16.03.2026 i.e. Before E-Auction Date & Time in the Portal.**

**Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 13.03.2026 with prior appointment of the authorised officer**

**\*Successful Bidder to deposit 25% of the bid amount by next working day which includes EMD money. The balance amount to be paid on or before 15th Day of confirmation of sale.**

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:** 1) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: <https://baanknet.com>. Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch as mentioned in above list. 2) This is a statutory 30 days sale notice to the above mentioned borrower/guarantor/mortgagor under Rule 8(6) of the SARFAESI Act. 2002. 3) This is a 30 days notice to the borrower / guarantor / mortgagor of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date. 4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. 5) The Authorised Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. 6) The Authorised Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.

**STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.**

Borrowers/Mortgagors are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.

**Place: Bhubaneswar Date: 12.02.2026**

**Authorised Officer  
Bank of India**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, Feb 11: Notwithstanding the rampant daylight smuggling of ber (Indian jujube or kulu fruit) through trains, resulting in huge revenue losses to the Indian Railways, the silence and inaction of the railway authorities has baffled many.

Reports said huge quantities of the succulent fruit are allegedly being transported from several railway stations under Sambalpur division to Andhra Pradesh, without any booking.

Traders from Andhra Pradesh are dispatching thousands of quintals of ber in both express and passenger trains during daytime from Kesinga, Narla, Rupra Road, Lanjigarh and Titilagarh railway stations without proper booking.

Despite the huge scale of the operation, questions are

being raised over the apparent inaction of railway authorities, including travelling ticket examiners, Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP). Locals allege that smuggling of such large quantities of the fruit is resulting in substantial revenue losses to the Railways. With the ber harvest season currently underway, traders are purchasing the fruit from farmers in rural areas at prices ranging from ₹1,500 to ₹2,000 per quintal. The produce is then transported via middlemen to various railway stations,

from where it is sent by train to cities such as Vizianagaram, Bobbili and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

Sources said the fruit is supplied to factories where it is processed into pickles and ber powder, generating significant profits for factory owners.

Passengers have also expressed concern over safety and inconvenience. They alleged that train coach entrances are often blocked by sacks of ber, causing difficulties for commuters — particularly elderly passengers, women and children — while boarding and alighting.

Several travelers and citizens have urged the authorities of Sambalpur railway division to look into the rampant smuggling of ber and take appropriate action to prevent revenue loss, apart from ensuring passengers' safety.

## EAST COAST RAILWAY

### NOTIFICATION FOR ENGAGEMENT OF ATM FACILITATOR OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION

No. SDCM/KUR/ATM Facilitator/2026, Dt: 03.02.2026

Applications for engagement of ATM facilitators for issuing of unreserved tickets through ATMs for a period of two years.

Sl. No.	Station Name	No. of facilitators (Three shifts)	Sl. No.	Station Name	No. of facilitators (Three shifts)
1	Bhubaneswar	06	11	Dhenkanal	02
2	Puri	16	12	Angul	03
3	Brahmapur	01	13	Talcher Road	03
4	Sompeta	02	14	Talcher	01
5	Khaliikot	01	15	Paradeep	03
6	Chatrapur	02	16	Delang	03
7	Balugaon	02	17	Nayagarh Town	03
8	Khurda Road	09	18	Kendujhar	03
9	Cuttack	10	19	Daspalla	03
10	Jajpur Keonjhar Road	02	Total		75

Last date &amp; time for submission of application form : 02.03.2026 upto 1100 hrs., Opening date &amp; time of application form : 02.03.2026 at 1130 hrs.

The application form with detailed terms and conditions can be downloaded from the website [www.eastcoastrailway.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.eastcoastrailway.indianrailways.gov.in) or can be collected from the office in any working day.

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager / Khurda Road

PR-1110/Q/25-26

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

e-Tenders against single tender are invited by Divisional Electrical Engineer (G) / Chakradharpur, S.E. Railway for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

SI. No. &amp; E-Tender Notice No. &amp; Date; Name of work; Tender Value; EMD : ₹ 3,18,12,192.92, EMD : ₹ 3,09,100/-, Tender Document Cost : ₹ 11,800/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 11.02.2026

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 25.02.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer (PR-1114/Q/25-26) Khurda Road

## EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. e-T-M-KUR-Watering-316-26

NAME OF WORK : WATERING OF NOMINATED COACHING TRAINS AT KHURDA ROAD STATION FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS (730 DAYS).

Advertised Value : ₹ 3,18,12,192.92, EMD : ₹ 3,09,100/-, Tender Document Cost : ₹ 11,800/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 11.02.2026

Tender Closing Date and Time : At



We have every one of us a role to fulfill, a work to do, a place which we alone can occupy

THE MOTHER

## Takaichi on Top

**J**apanese Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae has just scored an unprecedented victory in the country's general election. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which she leads, won 316 seats in the 465-member House of Representatives (the Diet's lower house), up sharply from 198. The combined strength of two parties that had merged hastily—despite their fundamentally opposing platforms—in an effort to bring Takaichi down fell from 167 seats to just 49. The LDP, which celebrated its 70th anniversary last year, has never looked more robust.

Only moments after Takaichi became the LDP's president last October, the party's coalition partner of a quarter-century, Komeito, abruptly defected. With that, there was no guarantee that she could secure a majority in the lower house to become prime minister. Then, after she dissolved the chamber and called a general election in order to obtain a stronger mandate, Komeito, backed by disciplined religious voters, quickly merged with the largest opposition force, the liberal Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan.

Takaichi survived the first shock by forming a new coalition with a smaller party closer to her own policy line. She crushed the second challenge by setting the period for election campaigning to an unprecedentedly brief 16 days, leaving the new opposition alliance scant time to build name recognition.

The prime minister is herself something of a newcomer, having risen to the party presidency in a political culture that long assumed that a politician, and certainly a national leader, must be male. Rather than relying on the usual social circles that fostered the careers of her senior colleagues, she nurtured her ambitions on her own.

Casting herself as the lead actor, she wrote the script and directed the plot to stage an election in which a maverick heroine clears one obstacle after another, growing stronger each time, before finally reaching an apparently invincible position. Voters seemed captivated by the narrative. Even seasoned commentators failed to foresee how many first-time voters would turn out.

Takaichi now plans to overhaul the way Japan drafts its national budget. During the campaign, she repeatedly stressed that she needed political capital precisely for that purpose. For decades, the country has relied on a two-step process: a modest initial budget at the start of the fiscal year, followed by a supplementary budget six months later to cover shortfalls. Takaichi wants to abolish this practice and rely on a single budget at the start of the year. With the end of routine supplementary budgets, the fiscal stance would shift away from the austerity regime that has shaped the economy for three decades.

Japan has no time, she warned throughout the campaign. Whether the challenge is to reduce dependence on China for critical minerals, build advanced crop factories to strengthen food self-sufficiency, or update military platforms to match the technologies revealed in Ukraine to be essential to warfighting, Japan must act or risk losing the opportunity to do so in the future. A country that stops addressing its challenges, she argued, has no future. Voters appear to have embraced that ambitious vision.

Even so, this is only the beginning. Unlike the lower house, the Diet's upper house cannot be dissolved by the prime minister. Its next regular election is not due until 2028. If the LDP, now still a minority faction there, can strengthen its position as decisively as it has in the lower house, it could secure the two-thirds majorities in both chambers that are required to initiate constitutional change, a cause which Takaichi inherited from her mentor, the late Abe Shinz. To win any subsequent national referendum on constitutional reform, the government will need strong backing from both houses.

Japan's constitution has never been amended, an extraordinary exception among democracies. A clause renouncing the possession of the means of war has long functioned as a convenient fiction. Takaichi wants to correct this, and she has made explicit recognition of the constitutionality of Japan's armed forces central to the LDP's identity. But achieving that goal will require at least three more years of sustained commitment.

Whether an aging Japan can transform itself in short order under a maverick prime minister remains uncertain. Yet some economists argue that the demographic clock may not be as unforgiving as often assumed. If female and elderly labor-force participation were each to rise by ten percentage points, and if the productivity gains expected from artificial intelligence are added to the equation, Japan could offset much of its demographic drag without relying heavily on immigration. While this possibility (still debated) does not eliminate the urgency of reform, it does suggest that the country retains more room for maneuver than is commonly believed.

For now, Takaichi is wagering that voters are ready for a more assertive course. If she can convert electoral capital into sustained structural change, her victory may mark the start of a new political cycle in Japan. If not, it will be remembered as a spectacular but fleeting moment. We will soon find out which future will prevail.

*The writer, a former special adviser to Prime Minister Abe Shinz, is Chairman of Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference), a conservative lobbying organization.*

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## WISDOM CORNER

**CONFUCIUS**  
He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger

**LAO TZU**  
The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white. Neither need you do anything but be yourself

**BODHIDHARMA**  
The mind is the root from which all things grow if you can understand the mind, everything else is included

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1809:** British naturalist Charles Darwin, who developed the theory of evolution by natural selection, was born.

**1818:** Chile's independence from Spain declared. Although the decisive victory over the Spanish did not come until April at the Battle of Maipú, Chile formally declared independence from Spain on this day in 1818, the first anniversary of Chile's victory at Chacabuco.

**1912:** Puyi, the last emperor of China, abdicated at the end of the Chinese Revolution.

## FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# INDIA'S DECARBONISATION GAMBLE

**I**ndia's steel industry is poised for exponential growth, targeting 300 million tonnes of production by 2030. Yet this ambition collides with a stark reality: coal-heavy technologies drive emissions of 2.6 tons of CO per ton of crude steel, far above the global average of 1.92. With steel accounting for 12% of India's total greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonisation is no longer a choice—it is a strategic necessity. The sector is at the crossroads, and India's decarbonisation imperative is unfolding in the middle of an unimaginably shifting global trade order.

Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly expressed confidence that steel will remain the "skeleton of modern economies," powering skyscrapers, highways, shipping, and industrial corridors. His optimism underscores the sector's centrality to India's growth story. For this confidence to translate into global competitiveness, India must urgently accelerate its energy transition.

India's per capita steel consumption, currently 98kg, is projected to rise to 160kg by 2030. This expansion underpins industrial maturity, urbanisation, and economic progress. Steel contributes nearly 3% to GDP and sustains a million livelihoods. Yet growth without sustainability risks exclusion from the very markets India seeks to penetrate. In today's trade regime, carbon is currency—and India must learn to spend wisely. Recent trade developments underscore the urgency of India's steel transition:

**EU-India FTA:** The landmark agreement opens unprecedented market access, covering 99% of exports by trade value. But Europe's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will penalize high-emission steel. Indian producers must align with EU benchmarks or face tariffs that erode competitiveness. The FTA is both an opportunity and a warning: access is conditional on decarbonisation.

**US tariff negotiations:** The reduction of tariffs on Indian steel exports from 25% to 18% offers short-term relief. Yet US protectionism remains strong, and future access will hinge on India's ability to demonstrate credible low-carbon steel pathways. Without this, India risks being locked out of premium markets, even as competitors like Europe and China accelerate hydrogen-based steelmaking. These shifts mean India's steelmakers are no longer competing only on volume—they are competing on carbon intensity.

India's scrap recycling ecosystem remains underdeveloped, despite its critical role in decarbonisation. The ferrous scrap recycling market, valued at \$14.3 million in 2024, is projected to reach \$19.4 million by 2033, growing at just 3.5% annually—far below what is needed to support India's steel expansion. The sector faces structural challenges. The 18% GST on scrap transactions has disrupted local collection, particularly in northern India, where volumes are highest. Infrastructure gaps mean scrap is often manually segregated, lowering quality and efficiency. Limited domestic supply forces reliance on imports, exposing producers to global price volatility.

Globally, 85% of scrap steel is already recycled, leaving little room for growth. India cannot rely solely on scrap to meet its decarbonisation targets. Instead, it must combine recycling with hydrogen-based steelmaking and renewable-powered electric arc furnaces (EAFs).

Certain states such as Punjab & Haryana (industrial dismantling hubs), UP (large scrap markets in Kanpur & Ghaziabad),



**In a world where trade wars are fought on carbon intensity, India's steel industry must transform not just to grow—but to survive**

Maharashtra (construction & automotive scrap from Mumbai & Pune), and Tamil Nadu (industrial flows from Chennai) are emerging as leaders. Yet the sector remains largely informal.

Reforming GST, investing in advanced processing, and formalising scrap markets are essential if India is to bridge the gap between growth and sustainability. Scrap recycling is essential, but it is not a silver bullet. India must pursue a dual strategy—maximising scrap use while simultaneously investing in hydrogen-based steelmaking and carbon capture technologies; iii) accelerate renewable energy deployment to meet the 500GW target by 2030; iv) negotiate trade terms that reward decarbonisation, not penalize it; and v) structure the scrap market with tax reforms and advanced recycling infrastructure.

Hydrogen-based steelmaking could cut emissions by 97%, while renewable-powered EAFs could reduce them by 88%. Yet progress has been slow. Only a handful of large-scale green hydrogen projects have been sanctioned so far, despite the enormous scope for industrial application. High costs, limited electrolyser manufacturing capacity, and infrastructure gaps—such as inadequate pipelines and storage facilities—continue to stall momentum. Europe and China are already building hydrogen hubs, leaving India at risk of falling behind.

India's renewable energy ambitions—500GW by 2030—are critical to powering green steel. Yet challenges in land acquisition, transmission, and execution of power purchase agreements slow progress. Unless renewable deployment ac-

celerates, India's steel industry will remain shackled to coal.

India's Green Steel Taxonomy, launched last year, is a commendable start but lacks the rigour of EU frameworks. Scope 3 emissions—upstream mining and downstream use—remain excluded, underestimating true carbon footprints. Investors and regulators increasingly demand full transparency. Without mandatory targets, shorter review cycles, and financial incentives akin to EU subsidies, India risks falling behind.

The EU updates benchmarks annually, while India reviews thresholds every three years. This slower pace risks locking India into outdated standards. Moreover, voluntary adoption dilutes impact. Mandatory compliance, coupled with carbon pricing and subsidies, is essential to accelerate transformation.

To secure its place in the global low-carbon steel economy, India must: i) mandate Scope 3 emissions reporting to align with EU and US standards; ii) introduce carbon pricing and subsidies for hydrogen-based steelmaking and carbon capture technologies; iii) accelerate renewable energy deployment to meet the 500GW target by 2030; iv) negotiate trade terms that reward decarbonisation, not penalize it; and v) structure the scrap market with tax reforms and advanced recycling infrastructure.

These measures are not optional—they are survival strategies in a trade regime where carbon intensity defines competitiveness. India's steel story is no longer just about growth—it is about survival in a trade regime where carbon is currency.

The crossroads is clear. India can either cling to coal and risk exclusion, or embrace hydrogen, renewables, and global standards to lead the future of steel. The gamble is immense, but so is the opportunity. In a world where trade wars are fought on carbon intensity, India's steel industry must transform not just to grow—but to survive.

*The writer is a technocrat and a policy specialist.*

## SPECTRUM SOCIETY

# How kids are losing out to onscreen glow



Pratigyan Das

**AN AVERAGE CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE YEARS SPENDS AROUND 2.2 HOURS DAILY ONLINE, DOUBLE THE RECOMMENDED LIMIT**

**R**ecently, three minor sisters jumped from the ninth floor of their apartment building in Ghaziabad, UP, allegedly after their parents objected to their gaming addiction. The deaths of these minors have again brought attention to the risks linked to digital challenges.

The Economic Survey 2025-26 has also flagged the rapid rise of digital addiction, particularly among children in India. Various studies also claim that while 90% of children between 14 and 16 years in India have access to smartphones, with three hours or more spent daily on social media, an average child under the age of five years spends around 2.2 hours daily online, double the recommended limit.

**Why is onscreen time among children on the rise?**

**Structural changes in the family:** The decline of joint family system in India due to various socio-economic causes including urbanization and education among women, has given rise to nuclear families. In an urban nuclear family set up, with both parents usually working, child rearing has been taken over by household

help. Children are left alone for long hours. Due to lack of communication with their parents, they prefer the virtual to the real world.

**Rise of consumerism:** Materialistic gratification has taken over emotional bonding post economic liberalization in 1991 that led to a surge in consumer culture. Parents try to compensate for their absence from home by buying fancy gizmos with the notion that it can serve as a worthwhile 'pre-occupation' for their children.

**Overflow of information:** 24\*7 media channels, gaming apps, and social media are not only shaping how long children stay online but have also influenced how they think, feel and engage with the world.

**Peer pressure:** Peer pressure for today's generation has expanded digitally. A child believes his/her worth is identified through his online presence.

These factors have not only impacted on the emotional, mental, and social well-being of this generation but the latter have also fallen into the trap of social media influencers, which at times becomes dangerous.

While the Economic Survey

2025-26 has called on the government to implement age-based limits for social media usage for children and digital advertisements targeted at them, the real onus lies on parents and schools.

**Let homes be the place where our hearts are:** There are times when children go online to beat boredom or loneliness. Parents should lead by example by not only keeping a curfew on screen time for their kids but also for themselves.

Besides, they must stop passing on their mobiles to their toddlers to watch cartoon or movie songs while feeding them or working. This habit may become an addiction.

**Keep your children off smartphones:** Parents often justify smartphones as tools for safety or learning. However, studies suggest handing over smartphones to children create certain habits that become addiction in the longer run. They should be given a normal mobile if safety is a concern and for learning purposes allow them to use it under parental supervision.

**Let your child not be your content:** In this social media era, children are brazenly be-

ing used by parents as fodder for generation of content. Kids are being asked to perform, pose, and act for the virtual world and it has become a marketing trend to earn money. Recently, a mother's reel on her 3-year-old child ordering candies from an online grocery app got viral with viewers finding it adorable. What may look like harmless fun today may become dangerous tomorrow.

**Schools must create awareness on digital literacy:** It is unfortunate that students are being asked to depend on online world without digital awareness. Teachers must explain to students about harmful content floating around digital media, and flag addictive signs of children by warning their parents. In return, parents must cooperate with schools instead of taking an aggressive stand in support of their kids.

**Encourage offline activities for your child:** A growing child's energy must be used to the optimum by encouraging them to indulge in outdoor activities like sports, gardening, art and libraries.

*The writer is a journalist.*

## Credibility crisis

**Sir,** The Lok Sabha witnessed sharp turmoil after Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi displayed a book titled *Four Stars of Destiny*, written by former Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane and published by Penguin Random House, and sought a debate on its alleged references to the 2020 Galwan clash between Indian and Chinese forces. Citing the unpublished book, Gandhi accused the government of mishandling the Chinese incursions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The controversy deepened when Speaker Om Birla disallowed the discussion, stating that the book had not been officially published. If the publisher and the former Army chief are correct in distancing themselves from the book or its contents, serious doubts arise over the authenticity of the material presented in the Parliament. Citing a possibly forged or misrepresented publication to advance grave national security allegations undermines legislative credibility. More alarmingly, it reflects a dangerous slide towards unverified claims, manufactured narratives and political spectacle replacing responsible democratic scrutiny..

*N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE*

## Prosperity & preservation

**Sir,** The Turtle Trails initiative announced in the Union Budget is a double-edged sword for India's 7500 km coastline while it aims to boost coastal tourism we must ask at what cost to the Olive Ridley sea turtles? Nationally, these turtles are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act yet they face a survival rate of just 0.1%. From Odisha's Gahirmatha to the shores of Maharashtra and Karnataka the threat is universal photopollution. Artificial light disorients hatchlings leading them away from the ocean toward certain death. True conservation isn't found in neon lit promenades but in community led ecotourism. We must pivot from mass tourism to scientific tourism utilizing geo-tagging to track migrations and offer direct financial incentives to fishing communities to adopt turtle safe nets.

*Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR*

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1809:** British naturalist Charles Darwin, who developed the theory of evolution by natural selection, was born.

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CONFUCIUS

LAO TZU

BODHIDHARMA

**He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger**

**The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white. Neither need you do anything but be yourself**

**The mind is the root from which all things**



# TWO STATES

## Kerala approves Women's Policy 2026 to boost gender justice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 11:** The Kerala cabinet Wednesday approved the Women's Policy 2026 aimed at ensuring comprehensive gender justice and transforming the state into a fully women-centric society.

The cabinet meet, chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, gave a nod to the new policy which is a revised version of the women's policy 2009 in tune with contemporary needs to shape "Nava Kerala" into a women-centric state.

The policy has been formulated by giving priority to various sectors in line with various contemporary needs, including women's safety, labour rights, legal protection, tribal communities and coastal regions, it said.

In a statement, Health Minister Veena George said the draft was prepared by an 11-member Gender Council under the leadership of the Women and Child Development Department.

The core objective of the policy is to end discrimination faced by women irrespective of caste, religion or gender, and to ensure equal participation in all spheres of society, she said.

George said the policy proposes to ensure equal representation of women in governance, legislative bodies and high-level decision-making committees,

and to implement gender justice in employment, education and health sectors.

"It also aims to promote gender-friendly and democratic spaces in families, educational institutions, cultural spheres and public spaces," she said.

In the education sector, a special gender protocol will be formulated for institutions and lessons on gender equality will be included in the school curriculum in accordance with the new policy.

Measures such as strengthening self-defence and sports training for girls, establishing creches and breastfeeding centres in higher education institutions, and making campuses gender-friendly through staff training have been proposed under the policy.

The policy also envisages complete eradication of the dowry system within five years, she said adding that innovative programmes will be introduced to equip women with skills in emerging technologies.

Healthcare institutions from primary health centres to medical colleges will be made women-friendly, and special measures will be taken for elderly women in view of the state's changing demographic profile.

Special health and education packages will also be implemented in Dalit, tribal and coastal areas, George detailed.

## Cong's solo move sharpens TMC-BJP binary

Senior leaders across party lines agreed that the breakdown of the Left-Congress understanding has effectively collapsed the space for a 'third pole' in Bengal politics.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Feb 11:** The Congress' decision to go solo in the West Bengal Assembly polls has narrowed the opposition space, reinforced the state's entrenched TMC-BJP binary and shifted the focus from alliance arithmetic to vote consolidation in an increasingly two-cornered battle.

Senior leaders across party lines agreed that the breakdown of the Left-Congress understanding has effectively collapsed the space for a 'third pole' in Bengal politics.

"This election will now be fought almost entirely on the TMC-versus-BJP axis. Breaking that binary without a Left-Congress alliance will be extremely difficult, but our leadership believes the party has nothing left to lose," a senior Congress leader said, requesting anonymity.

Special health and education packages will also be implemented in Dalit, tribal and coastal areas, George detailed.

For the first time since 2006,



the Congress will contest all 294 assembly seats on its own.

Party insiders said the move reflects organisational fatigue from repeated alliances and a strategic recalibration shaped by Bengal's altered political arithmetic and national considerations.

The decision, taken at a recent meeting of the Congress' central leadership with senior West Bengal leaders, formally ends the party's electoral partnership with the Left that spanned the 2016 and 2021 As-

sembly polls and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, without yielding any meaningful revival for either side.

The fallout of the break-up between the Left and the Congress is expected to accelerate polarisation, with the BJP emerging as the principal beneficiary of consolidated anti-incumbency votes and the TMC trying to tighten its grip over the state's nearly 30 per cent minority electorate.

While Congress leaders like Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury fa-

voured continuing the Left tie-up, most of the state unit functionaries pushed for a solo run, arguing that repeated alliances had eroded the party's organisational identity.

"The party has made sacrifices in every alliance since 2001, first with the TMC, then with the Left. Our workers believe we should now fight on our own to revive the party's lost ground," state Congress president Suvankar Sarkar said.

Party insiders said the impending Kerala Assembly polls also weighed heavily on the decision, with the Congress-led UDF locked in a direct contest with the Left Democratic Front.

The party's electoral trajectory underscores the dilemma behind its solo gamble.

In 2011, riding on its alliance with the TMC, the party played a key role in ending the Left Front's 34-year rule, winning 42 seats as the Mamata Banerjee-led party swept to power with 184 seats. The partnership soon unravelled, and the Congress has struggled since.

Its 2016 alliance with the Left yielded 44 seats for the Congress - more than the CPI(M)'s 26 - but masked a deeper decline.

The grand old party polled just 12.25 per cent of the vote as the TMC returned to power

with 211 seats.

The alliance collapsed ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, forcing the Congress to contest alone. The result was sobering: two seats and a 5.67 per cent vote share, even as the BJP surged.

The BJP's rise in Bengal has been closely linked to the fragmentation and consolidation of anti-TMC votes. In 2014, the BJP polled 17 per cent and won two Lok Sabha seats.

By 2019, its vote share jumped to nearly 40 per cent, translating into 18 seats, while the TMC's seat count fell from 34 to 22 despite a higher vote share.

The development has brought cheer to the Bengal BJP camp.

Within the TMC, the Congress-CPI(M) split is seen as a double-edged sword.

The Mamata Banerjee-led party, which has been in power for 15 years in the state, will face anti-incumbency in the upcoming polls.

Minority groups say the shift is already visible. Mohammed Kamruzzaman of the All Bengal Minority Youth Federation said voters, who earlier backed the Congress-Left alliance, are now likely to move decisively towards the TMC to block the BJP.

## Kerala to conduct study on digital addiction among children

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 11:** Kerala General Education and Labour Minister V Sivankutty Wednesday said a detailed study would be conducted on digital addiction among children, describing it as one of the most widely discussed issues of the present time.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that at a time when artificial intelligence and other sectors are undergoing explosive changes globally, the state needs to examine whether the issue (digital addiction) requires serious study and, if necessary, legislative measures.

He said continuous complaints received by the Education Department and certain incidents indicate that the time to address the issue seriously has already arrived.

The matter was also discussed by the Curriculum Committee, he added.

Based on these discussions, it has been decided to constitute a five-member expert committee under the chairpersonship of General Education Secretary K Vasuki.

The members of the committee are Dr Arun B Nair of Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, N S Sreekanth, Professor of Computer Science, Kannur University; Dr Biju K of the Department of Education, Central University of Tamil Nadu and Prof Baby Shari P A of the University of Calicut.

The study will be coordinated by the SCERT and the committee has been directed to submit its report within three months, the minister said.

## Construction of Babri-style mosque begins in Bengal

*Kabir, who recently floated Janata Unnayan Party, announced that the mosque at Rejinagar in Beldanga would be completed within two years and would cost around ₹50-55 crore*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Kabir, however, announced that he would, for now, keep the scheduled 'Babri Yatra' - a 235-km rally from Nadia's Palashi to Itahar in Uttar Dinajpur district - on hold in the wake of the ongoing board exams.

Instead, the leader announced that he will hold a 22-km march Thursday from Palashi to Beldanga.

"I have been informed by Malda police that the Babri Yatra would inconvenience the examinees of Madhyamik exams. I have, hence, decided to postpone that event which was supposed to be held with a convoy of 100 cars. Instead, I will hold a march on foot from Palashi to Beldanga, the site of the under-construction mosque, with 50,000 people," he said.

Kabir laid the foundation stone for a mosque, modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid, December 6 last year. The move, timed with the anniversary of the demolition of the 16th-century structure by a right-wing mob in December 1992, triggered sharp political reactions across West Bengal. Kabir reportedly raised over ₹2.85 crore

"Humayun Kabir is building the mosque for the same reason

Mamata Banerjee is constructing temples across the state, which is to consolidate voters along communal lines. That will have no impact on the electorate because people require development," he alleged.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had said Tuesday, that the Babri Masjid would never be rebuilt till 'Qayamat' (Day of Judgment).

Kabir, meanwhile, finds himself embroiled in a fresh controversy after the state police Tuesday attached properties worth around ₹11 crore belonging to a few of his relatives in connection with a long-standing drug trafficking case.

Alleging vendetta on part of the TMC government, Kabir announced from the construction site of the mosque that he would lay siege to the office of SP Murshidabad February 14.

"This is the TMC's style of payback since I have now politically taken it. I will move court. But before that, I will gherao the Murshidabad SP's office Saturday with one lakh people. I have enough evidence to prove that my relatives are being framed," he declared.

Altogether 14 properties, including land, houses and commercial establishments in areas such as Naldahari in Murshidabad district's Lalgaon, 15 bank accounts and vehicles are being attached as part of the legal process, Superintendent of Police Dhrithiman Sarkar told reporters.

The process to attach the assets of Shariful Islam, the father-in-law of Kabir's daughter, was initiated after allegations were made that the properties were acquired through the narcotics trade over the past several years, he said.

## Kerala puts ageing at centre of policy



**The policy assumes special significance as the elderly population in the state is steadily increasing and currently constitutes 16.5 per cent of the total population--the highest proportion in the country and the fastest growing**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 11:** The Kerala Cabinet Wednesday approved a new elderly policy--likely the first by any Indian state--setting out an inclusive, equality-driven framework to safeguard the dignity and welfare of older citizens.

The policy assumes special significance as the elderly population in the state is steadily increasing and currently constitutes 16.5 per cent of the total population--the highest proportion in the country and the fastest growing.

The new policy also mandates elderly-friendly facilities in all buildings, including homes and public spaces. It further aims to strengthen existing laws for the protection of the elderly in order to prevent atrocities against them.

The policy also stresses the need to improve digital literacy among the elderly and to train them in new technological advancements to make their lives easier. It additionally proposes technology training sessions and internship programmes for the elderly.

The expertise of the elderly in their respective fields will be utilised to ensure their social and financial security, Bindu said.

The policy also promises to bring elderly care into the mainstream of administration and policy-making. It further aims to locally incorporate global role model programmes. We will also initiate studies in geriatrics and provide training in caregiving for age-related special conditions," the Minister added.

All essential services for the elderly will be provided at their doorsteps, and a social network to provide care and assistance to elderly persons living alone will be expanded across the state.

Kerala already has a widespread, well-trained and extensive pain and palliative care network, and the services of this network will also be integrated to enhance elderly care.

### MENSTRUAL HEALTH AWARENESS DRIVE

## BENGAL HONOURS 'PADWOMAN' PRITI MINJ

**For the past 10 years, Minj has been working tirelessly to break taboos, ignorance and social barriers surrounding menstruation in tea garden areas**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Minister Bulu Chik Baraiak handed over a certificate on behalf of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to Minj, a tribal, at her residence in Odlabari of Jalpaiguri district Tuesday.

For the past 10 years, Minj has been working tirelessly to break taboos, ignorance and social barriers surrounding menstruation in tea garden areas. Going door-to-door across labour lines, she has been counselling girls and women on menstrual hygiene, stressing the importance of safe practices and encouraging the use of sanitary napkins.



"Despite social and economic challenges, she remained steadfast in her mission. Her work has significantly improved awareness and hy-

giene practices among thousands of girls," a senior state government official said.

Over the years, Minj's efforts have led to thousands of adolescent girls and young women adopting sanitary napkins, contributing not only to better health outcomes but also to enhanced confidence and self-esteem. Her sustained campaign earned her the moniker 'Padwoman' in the region.

Baraiak, the Backward Class Welfare and Tribal development minister, said, "Women like Priti are the real strength of society. The movement she has built around menstrual health awareness in remote tea garden areas is exemplary and can serve as a model for other parts of the state."

Minj has previously been honoured by several voluntary organisations and social groups.

An emotional Minj thanked the chief minister for the recognition.

"I never started this work expecting awards or recognition. I only wanted my sisters to stay healthy and take care of their bodies without shame or fear. This recognition from the chief minister has increased my responsibility," she said.

News of her selfless work had reached the state administrative headquarters at 'Nabanna', prompting the special recognition, another official at the state secretariat said.

Minj has previously been honoured by several voluntary organisations and social groups.

# national

of the day quote

The current budget also appears aimed more at grabbing newspaper headlines, which once again seems to have dashed people's hopes of 'ache din' (good days)

MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

The government has the majority and the government has no problems in the passage of any issue. But we want everything to be passed after a debate

KIREN RIJU | UNION MINISTER

For decades, the Congress treated the Northeast, especially Assam, as a place for the execution of its notorious vote bank politics. There were dilapidated roads, poor rail network, no industry and no job generation during its tenure

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUDHARI | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### DMK and TVK members clash

**Chennai:** A violent clash broke out between DMK supporters and volunteers of Vijay-led TVK in the Harbour constituency of North Chennai Wednesday following a heated altercation, leaving several persons injured, police said. The clash, which occurred in the Parrys area, has led to hospitalisation on both sides and sparked allegations of voter intimidation and illegal data collection. According to police sources and eyewitness accounts, the trouble began when a group of TVK volunteers, reportedly conducting "field work," went door-to-door in the locality.

### 2 killed, 24 hurt in road accident

**Raisen (MP):** A woman and a seven-year-old girl were killed, and about 24 devotees were injured when a tractor-trolley carrying them overturned in Raisen district while they were returning after attending a religious event, a police officer said Wednesday. Six of the seriously injured individuals include three minors. The incident occurred Tuesday evening at Gadhi, about 50 kilometres from the Raisen district headquarters, when the driver of the tractor-trolley lost control of the wheel, the officer said.

### Unidentified bodies of 2 women, girl found

**Ranchi:** The bodies of two unidentified women and a girl were found in Jharkhand's Dumka and Khunti districts Wednesday, police said. In Dumka, the bodies of a woman and a girl were found near the old inspector's office within Sadar police station limits. The woman was aged around 35 years, and the girl about five years old, they said. Sadar SDPO Bijay Kumar Mahto said, "We have found the bodies of a woman and a girl. They are yet to be identified."

### ACB arrests revenue officials

**Faridabad:** The Faridabad Anti-Corruption Bureau Wednesday arrested a revenue official and his assistant for taking a ₹20,000 bribe, officials said. The accused were identified as Jitendra, a Patwari and his associate, Vinod, they said. Shatrugh Sharma, a resident of Sanjay colony, in his complaint said that he had been making rounds of the tehsil office for the past several months to get the mutation done, but Jitendra was not doing his work.



To provide rail connectivity to Chardham, Rishikesh-Karnaprayag new rail line project (125 km) has been sanctioned

ASHWINI VAISHNAV | RAILWAY MINISTER

## HELICOPTER MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING

A chopper used for training made an emergency landing on a school ground in Maharashtra's Palghar district after developing a technical problem, officials said Wednesday. Nobody was injured in the incident that occurred Tuesday afternoon, they said



Bharatiya Kisan Union members burn an effigy during a protest against the Indo-US trade deal, in Amritsar, Punjab

## INDIA-US TRADE DEAL Govt sold Bharat Mata, Rahul Gandhi tells Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: In a no-holds-barred attack, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi Wednesday alleged that the government has "sold Bharat Mata" through the India-US interim trade deal and that it was a "wholesale surrender" with India's energy security handed over to America and farmers' interests compromised.

Participating in the debate on the Union Budget, Gandhi said he does not believe that any Indian prime minister, including Narendra Modi, would agree to such a deal unless there is a "chokehold" on him.

"Why has he (Modi) sold India -- because they (the US) are choking him. They have a grip on his neck," said Gandhi, who began his address with an analogy of how in martial arts after securing a grip, the next step is a chokehold, and then the opponent taps to give up.

The Congress leader noted that Prime Minister Modi and NSA Ajit Doval had stated some time back that the era of war is over. "In fact, we are moving into the era of war. War is there in Ukraine, war was there in Gaza, war is there in the Middle East, threat of war is there in Iran, we had Operation Sindo."

He underlined the need to protect the country's people, data, food supply and energy system. Gandhi said that had an INDIA bloc government negotiated the trade agreement with the US, it would have told President Donald Trump that he should treat India as an equal.

The Lamborghini Revuelto, an Italian luxury sports car costing upwards of ₹10 crore, crashed into pedestrians and vehicles on VIP Road in the upscale Gwaltoli area around 3 pm Sunday. One of the injured, Mohd Taufeeq (18), an e-rickshaw driver, later lodged an FIR.

In view of the police stand, the court declined to accept his surrender and sought a detailed report from the Gwaltoli police station, officials added.

The driver's counsel had moved a surrender application before the concerned court, and in follow-up of the plea, officials added.

However, Taufeeq has declined to pursue legal action, the counsel of the accused claimed.



Speaking with reporters outside the new Parliament building, Gandhi claimed that the names of Union minister Hardeep Puri and businessman Anil Ambani have figured in the 'Epstein Files' released in the US

to protect our energy security."

"The third thing we would have told President Trump is 'we understand you have an agricultural voter base, you need to protect farmers, but we will also protect our farmers,'" the former Congress chief said.

"An INDIA bloc government would say that data is our biggest strength, and now let us talk. We would go there (for negotiating) as an equal. We will not be made equal to Pakistan. If President Trump decides that the Pakistan Army chief will have breakfast with him, we will have something to say about it," he said.

The LoP claimed that India's energy security was gone under the India-US interim trade deal, and the US will decide "who we buy oil from." "They will decide who we buy oil from, our PM will not decide. They will monitor, and if India buys oil (from where they don't want us to), they will punish us and take tariffs to 50 per cent," Rahul said.

### LAMBORGHINI CRASH CASE

## Driver takes blame, cops deny claim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kanpur (UP), Feb 11:** The probe into Kanpur's high-profile Lamborghini crash took a fresh turn Wednesday after an alleged designated driver of the luxury sports car claimed that he, and not tobacco baron K K Mishra's son Shivam Mishra, was behind the wheel when the vehicle rammed into pedestrians on VIP Road.

However, police maintained that evidence clearly establishes Shivam as the driver. Speaking to reporters outside a court here Wednesday, Mohan, the alleged designated driver of the luxury sports car, said he lost control of the vehicle when Shivam, who was on the adjacent seat, suffered a sudden seizure moments before the accident.

"I was driving the car when the accident happened. Suddenly,

- A man named Mohan claims he was driving the Lamborghini during the Kanpur crash, stating Shivam Mishra had a seizure
- Police maintain that evidence, including CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts, indicates Shivam Mishra was driving the Lamborghini
- K K Mishra, Shivam's father, initially claimed Mohan was driving but later said he didn't know who was driving
- The family claims Shivam Mishra suffers from epilepsy and lost consciousness before the accident



ly, he had a seizure and fell on me. I got scared and was trying to hold him with one hand. The car hit a three-wheeler, climbed the divider and stopped," he said in a statement.

He further claimed that the vehicle's automatic locking system prevented him from

stepping out immediately after the crash. "I shifted him to the driver's seat and stepped outside. The glass was later broken," Mohan said.

The driver's counsel had moved a surrender application before the concerned court, and in follow-up of the plea, officials added.

Mohan appeared before the court Wednesday to formally surrender, officials said. However, the Gwaltoli police, in their report submitted to the court, did not name him as an accused in the case.

In view of the police stand, the court declined to accept his surrender and sought a detailed report from the Gwaltoli police station, officials added.

The Lamborghini Revuelto, an Italian luxury sports car costing upwards of ₹10 crore, crashed into pedestrians and vehicles on VIP Road in the upscale Gwaltoli area around 3 pm Sunday. One of the injured, Mohd Taufeeq (18), an e-rickshaw driver, later lodged an FIR.

However, Taufeeq has declined to pursue legal action, the counsel of the accused claimed.

### Can't release Wangchuk on health grounds: Centre to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** The Centre Wednesday told the Supreme Court that climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has been examined medically 24 times since his detention and he is "fit, hale and hearty" and there is nothing alarming.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told a bench of justices Aravind Kumar and PB Varale that grounds on which Wangchuk's detention order was passed continue and it will not be possible to release him on health grounds.

"We have examined his health periodically for 24 times. He is fit, hale and hearty. He had some digestive issue, he is being treated. There is nothing to worry, nothing alarming. We can't make exceptions like this.

"The grounds on which the detention order was passed, continues. It will not be possible to release him on health grounds.



It may not be desirable also. We have given utmost consideration," Mehta told the bench.

During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj submitted that Wangchuk was a chief provocateur in the violent protests and he instigated youths by giving examples of Nepal and Arab Spring.

Nataraj stated that Wangchuk referred to the violent agitation in Nepal and said the same thing can happen in India.

Delhi Police are investigating the alleged leak of former Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane's unpublished memoir, *Four Stars of Destiny*

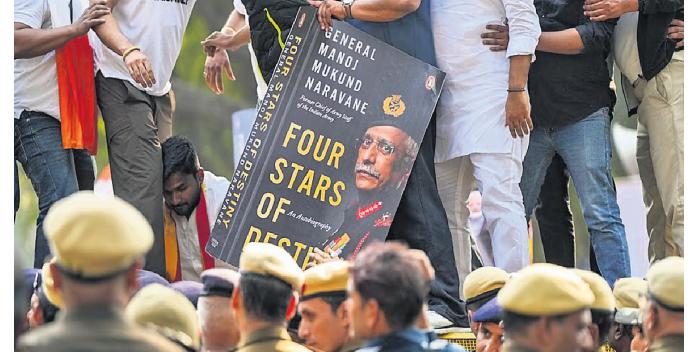
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** The Delhi Police's Special Cell has issued a notice to Penguin Random House India seeking clarifications over the circulation of the unpublished book of former Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane on social media, an official said Wednesday.

The notice was served as competing claims over the status of the book and the alleged circulation of unauthorised versions intensified, drawing the publisher, the former Army chief and senior political figures into a widening public dispute.

According to police, the

### NARAVANE MEMOIR ROW



Special Cell has formally approached the publishing house through the notice, posing multiple queries and seeking detailed responses.

"Delhi Police Special Cell has issued a notice to Penguin India. Through the notice, several questions have been asked, and responses have been sought," a senior police officer said.

The move comes in the wake

of reports that the manuscript of Naravane's memoir, titled 'Four Stars of Destiny', may have been illegally circulated in digital and other formats prior to its publication.

Police said allegations regarding the unauthorised dissemination of the manuscript had led to the registration of an FIR and added that the matter was under investigation.

### STALIN RULES OUT POWER-SHARING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Feb 11:** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin Wednesday said that the alliance between the DMK and the Congress is intact, dismissing reports of fissures between the two parties.

He also rejected the possibility of a coalition government in Tamil Nadu, shutting the door for the Congress party, some of whose senior leaders have been raising the matter.

Making it clear that there was no confusion, Stalin, who is also the DMK chief, said, "Sharing power in the government does not suit Tamil Nadu. The Congress also knows that very well."

"Some people are stirring up the issue of power-sharing just to cause a rift in the alliance. That tactic will not work," he said at the India Today Roundtable conference here.

"Rumors of confusion in the alliance are being spread deliberately. Beyond politics, I look at (Congress leader) Rahul Gandhi as a brother. He also looks at me the same way," Stalin said.

"The DMK-Congress alliance is in harmony. What others are expecting (split) will not happen," he said. The chief minister's remark assumed significance in the wake of the Congress party expressing delay over seat-sharing talks.

On Tuesday, AICC in-charge for Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, Girish Chodankar, expressed concern over the 'delay' by the DMK in constituting the seat-sharing committee. The DMK announced that a panel would be formed to commence negotiations from February 22.

There was widespread speculation over the DMK-Congress alliance following the war of words between Congress MPs Manickam Tagore, Jothimani and Madurai DMK leader G Thalapathy over "power-sharing".

## A ROAD THAT SINGS JAI HO!

### India gets 1st 'musical road' on Mumbai Coastal Road corridor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 11:** Motorists travelling on the Mumbai Coastal Road corridor will now hear the iconic Hindi film industry song "Jai Ho" when driving over specially installed grooves at a designated speed, making it India's first 'musical' or 'melody' road.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the musical road stretch Wednesday. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, former Shiv Sena MP Rahul Shewale, who conceptualised the idea, Hungary's Consul General Faren Jari, BMC's Additional Municipal Commissioner (Eastern Suburbs) Dr Avinash Dhakne, and other dignitaries were present at the event.

Fadnavis said the concept of a musical road developed along the Coastal Road is set to provide a delightful experience for motorists.

He added that the innovative concept, based on Hungarian technology, would be implemented further in the future.

"In the first phase, the concept has been implemented on a 500-metre stretch of the Coastal Road, and there are plans to expand the musical road concept further," Fadnavis said.

Shinde appealed to Mumbaiites to experience and enjoy the musical road. He said the government will consider replicating this experiment on the Samruddhi Expressway on a pilot basis.

"The musical road on the



Mumbai Coastal Road will evoke a sense of patriotism among Mumbaiites," Shinde said, reiterating that this is India's first musical road.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)



has developed the innovative stretch on the northbound carriageway from Nariman Point towards Worli on the iconic Coastal Road, which has been named after Dharmaveer Swarajyarakshak Chhatrapati

Sambhaji Maharaj. This is the fifth such road in the world and the first of its kind in India, the BMC stated.

According to civic officials, the musical strips have been installed around 500 metres ahead on the first lane adjoining the divider after vehicles exit the Worli-bound underground tunnel. When vehicles travel over the grooves at 70 to 80 kmph, the friction-generated sound waves produce the melody of 'Jai Ho' from the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, which can be clearly heard inside the vehicle.

The chartbuster song was composed by AR Rahman, with lyrics written by the renowned poet Gulzar. The song won the Academy Award for Best Original Song and a Grammy Award.

# national

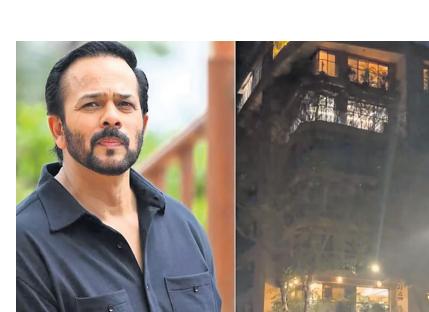


A consensus will be evolved to further chalk out a pro-industry action plan for the overall industrial development in the state after marathon discussions with international industrial giants

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

## FIRING AT ROHIT SHETTY'S HOME MEANT TO CREATE TERROR: COPS

The accused involved in the firing at film-maker Rohit Shetty's residence here wanted to create terror in the city, police told a court Wednesday while invoking the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) in the case

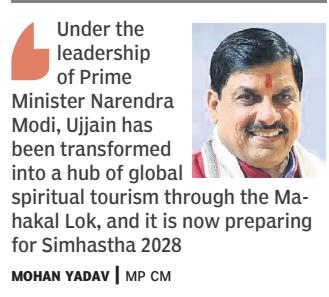


of the day quote



Technology is a powerful instrument of empowerment and inclusion, capable of bridging the gap between hope and opportunity. AI will play a central role in advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat at 2047. Earlier phases of educational technology focused on expanding access to learning content but the next phase must prioritise improving learning outcomes

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION MINISTER



Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ujjain has been transformed into a hub of global spiritual tourism through the Mahakal Lok, and it is now preparing for Simhastha 2028

MOHAN YADAV | MP CM



More than 10 lakh beneficiaries are expected to benefit from the initiative. In the first phase, 10,18,390 women and trans women will receive the assistance

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM



The middle class is being sandwiched between the rich class and the poor class. The middle class is caught between rising costs and rising taxes. For the middle class, this Budget had one message. Carry on as you were. In Parliament, I pointed out that there was no revision in income tax slabs and no increase in standard deduction, despite stagnant salaries and inflation at 6.8%. I urged the Finance Minister to correct this in this Budget itself by raising the standard deduction from RS 75,000 to RS 1.5 lakh for the salaried class. Meanwhile, household costs keep climbing. Education 8%, Healthcare 9%, rent 7%, food 6%, transport 5%. For the first time in years, personal income tax collections are higher than corporate tax. Individuals paid around RS 11 lakh crore, corporates about RS 9.8 lakh crore. Either give tax relief, or give investment savings & incentives so the middle class can save more and build wealth.

@raghav\_chadha

### Businessman shot dead

Dehradun: A 42-year-old businessman was shot dead allegedly by two scooter-borne assailants in broad daylight here Wednesday, police said, adding that the wife of the deceased has alleged her mother-in-law's role in the incident. Preliminary investigations revealed that the deceased, Arjun Sharma, owner of Amardeep Gas Agency, had a family dispute with his mother, Bina Sharma, had sought protection from the Uttarakhand High Court, citing a threat to her life from the deceased. Dehradun City Superintendent of Police Pramod Kumar said that the incident occurred at around 10.30 am outside a temple in the Tibetan Market, when Arjun Sharma, a resident of Indira Nagar in the Vasant Vilas area, was about to get into his car to go home after coming out of the stadium after playing tennis as usual. Kumar said that two assailants on a scooter opened fire on Sharma. He was taken to Doon Hospital, where he was declared dead.

## Cong MPs abused Birla in his chamber: Rijiju

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Feb 11: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju Wednesday claimed that 20 to 25 Congress MPs had abused Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in his chamber and they were not stopped by senior leaders K C Venugopal and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who were present there.

The parliamentary affairs minister said that Birla was very hurt. The Lok Sabha speaker is a very lenient, else he could have taken strong action, he said. "Some members went to his chamber and abused (Birla). When 20-25 Congress MPs went to the speaker's chamber, I also went there. I just can't utter the kind of abuses they have hurled at the speaker," Rijiju told reporters in the Parliament House complex. He claimed that Venugopal, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other senior Congress leaders were present in the chamber when the incident happened. "They were encouraging (the Congress MPs). Had our MPs misbehaved with anyone, our leader would stop them. But their leaders were egging on the MPs to quarrel," he alleged.

Rijiju claimed the Congress MPs did not obey even the Speaker's rulings. "Then Rahul Gandhi said he does not need anyone's permission to speak (in Lok Sabha). He will speak as he pleases, irrespective of rules. This is on record," the minister told reporters.

"Gandhi should understand that he is an honourable mem-

sion from the chair. Unless the chair gives permission, no member can speak. Even the prime minister speaks with the permission of the chair," he pointed out.

About Rahul Gandhi's insistence on speaking on the unpublished memoir of General M M Naravane (retired) in the Lok Sabha, Rijiju said conversations between the prime minister and the defence minister, the army chief and the defence minister or between the army chief and his junior officers can't be discussed in public.

"If everything is to be discussed in public, how can you maintain the security for the nation?" he wondered. "The entire country can see how an MP is trying to use a very sensitive matter related to the country's security as an instrument to drive political mileage."

"Gandhi should understand that he is an honourable mem-

ber of Parliament. He owes a certain responsibility to the people of this country. You have the obligation to maintain the decorum of the House and also think about the interest of the nation," he said.

The minister said it was difficult to make Rahul Gandhi understand the issues. The Lok Sabha has been witnessing disruptions since February 2, after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was disallowed by the chair from quoting from an article based on excerpts of former Army chief M M Naravane's unpublished memoir, which has references to the India-China conflict of 2020.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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KIREN RIJUJI | UNION MINISTER

## Mumbai gets BJP mayor after 44 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 11: Ritu Tawde was Wednesday elected as the 78th mayor of Mumbai, becoming the second BJP corporator to occupy the prestigious post in 44 years, while Shiv Sena's Sanjay Ghadi was elected as deputy mayor.

Tawde (53) and Ghadi (57) were elected unopposed at a special meeting of the general body of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corpora-

tion (BMC) following the January 15 civic elections. The Shiv Sena (UBT) and other Opposition parties did not field a candidate.

The city had its first BJP mayor in 1982-83 when Prabhakar Pai held the post. Tawde's election Wednesday marked the end of the Thackeray family's dominance in Mumbai's politics. Though largely ceremonial, the mayor's post carries enormous political and symbolic significance in Mumbai's identity-driven politics.

Municipal commissioner Bhushan Gagrani, who had been acting as state-appointed administrator of the country's richest civic body since the term of the earlier general body expired in March 2022, chaired the meeting.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar and other leaders of the BJP and Shinde-led Shiv Sena were present at the BMC headquarters.

## Oppn MPs protest in Parliament complex

New Delhi: Soon after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's reply to the discussion on the Budget in the Lok Sabha, some Opposition MPs Wednesday protested in the Parliament complex against the government, accusing it of "selling out the country". After the Lok Sabha was adjourned until 11 am Thursday, some Congress MPs as well as those from other Opposition parties raised slogans near the Makar Dwar of Parliament. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was also present. Samajwadi Party MP Dimple Yadav alleged that the entire BJP government has bowed down to America and that farmers are going to suffer losses. Congress MP K Suresh alleged that Kerala received nothing in the Budget and that the demand for AIIMS was also ignored.



Elephants graze at a tea garden, on the outskirts of Guwahati, Assam

PTI PHOTO

## Rafale, Su-30, Tejas to be part of 'Vayu Shakti' at Pokharan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Feb 11: The Indian Air Force will demonstrate its full spectrum of combat and firepower capabilities during Exercise 'Vayu Shakti' at the Pokharan range close to the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan February 27, which will also highlight the success of Operation Sindoor and the IAF's ability to "rapidly punish the enemy" and dominate the operational environment.

More than 120 air assets, comprising 77 fighter jets, which include Rafale, Su-30MKI, MiG-29, LCA Tejas, Jaguar, Mirage-2000; Apache, Chinook and LCH Prachand, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), among helicopters, and eight transport aircraft will be part of the exercise, with C-295 making its debut in the drill, according to IAF officials.

"C-295 will be part of this exercise for the first time, and it will showcase its night operation capabilities. Also, among 277 weapons overall, surface-to-air guided weapons such as Akash, SpyDer,

will be showcased. There will be integrated and joint operation with the Indian Army too, with their M-777 (howitzer), L-70 and troops of Special Forces taking part in the exercise, which will run for about 2 hours and 35 minutes," Wg Cdr Ajit B Wasane said.

At a curtain-raiser press conference here, he made a PowerPoint presentation on it and said, 'Vayu Shakti', which will take place at Pokharan Air to Ground range in a "near-realistic warfare scenario", will also highlight the successful role of the IAF during Operation Sindoor. India launched Operation Sindoor May 7 last year to destroy terror infrastructure at nine places in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir in retaliation to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

## CBSE to implement on screen marking for Class XII board exams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will implement on-screen marking (OSM) for evaluation of Class XII answer books from this year, according to officials.

However, evaluation of class 10 answer books will continue in physical mode as before, they said.

In its continuous effort to enhance efficiency and transparency, the board has decided to introduce On-Screen Marking (OSM) for the evaluation of class 12 answer books beginning with the 2026 examinations. Evaluation of Class X answer books will continue in physical mode as before in 2026," said CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj.

The official explained the move will improve coordination and reduce manual intervention, besides eliminating totalling errors.

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, EARTH DAM DIVISION, CHITRAKONDA DISTRICT : MALKANGIRI

E-mail ID : executiveengineering@cdkd@gmail.com

'e' Procurement Notice No. SE-EDD-CKD-03/2025-26

1. Type of Works : River Bank Flood Protection Work, 2. Total No. of Works : One (01) No., 3. Estimated Cost : Rs.98.63 Lakh, 4. Period of Completion : Six (6) Calendar Months, 5. Class of Contractor : 'B' Class

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability and submission of Bids-online	Opening of Tender
1 Superintending Engineer, Earth Dam Division, Chitrakonda	2 SE-EDD-CKD-03/2025-26	3 16.02.2026 10.00 A.M. upto 5.00 P.M.	4 05.03.2026 At 10.30 A.M. on wards at O/o S.E., Earth Dam Division, Chitrakonda

Date of opening of the Tender / Bid : 05.03.2026 at 10.30 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Earth Dam Division, Chitrakonda, Malkangiri (O)

No.32001/173/2526

OIPR-32001/32019/1/25-26/0001

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA ST & SC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR, ITDA, KAPTIPADA, UDALA e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. ITDAKPD-05/2025-26 No.21/ITDA, Dt.02/02/26			
No.19001/29/2526: The Project Administrator, ITDA, Kaptipada on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bids in online mode for Construction of the Work detailed below.			
1. Nature of the Work : Const. of Hostel Building 2. Total No. of Work : 01 (One) 3. Class of Contractor : 'B' & 'A' Class 4. Period of Completion : Fourteen Calendar Months 5. Cost of the Project : 2,68,32,061/- 6. Availability of Bid : 10.00 AM of 13.02.2026 to 5.00 P.M. of 01.03.26			
7. Date of Opening of the Tender : 11.00 AM on 02.03.26 The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. The details will be available in the website <a href="http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a> from 10.00 AM of 13.02.2026 to 5.00 PM of 01.03.26.			
Sd/- Project Administrator ITDA, Kaptipada, Uda			

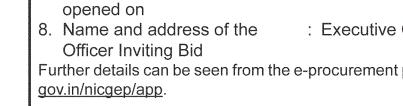
OIPR-19001/19010/1/25-26/0001

OFFICE OF THE ROURKELA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION Udit Nagar, Rourkela, Dist.-Sundargarh (Odisha) Pin-769012 Website : <a href="http://www.rmc.nic.in">www.rmc.nic.in</a> Emailed : <a href="mailto:rourkela.municipality@gmail.com">rourkela.municipality@gmail.com</a> No.1807 Date: 07.02.2026			
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL "SELECTION OF AGENCY FOR UNDERTAKING THE ANIMAL BIRTH CONTROL (ABC) PROGRAMME OF DOGS UNDER JURISDICTION OF ROURKELA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION" Detail technical specifications, along with terms & conditions etc. may be seen from the Website of Rourkela Municipal Corporation i.e. <a href="http://www.rmc.nic.in">www.rmc.nic.in</a> . Date of issue of tender documents from dtd. 07.02.2026.			

The last date for receipt of sealed tender is till 5 P.M. through Speed Post/ Regd. Post/Courier/ or by hand in the office address of the undersigned.

Sd/- Commissioner Rourkela Municipal Corporation

OIPR-13001/13131/1/25-26/0036



No.8001/58/2526

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. FE-CC-DFO(T) KJR-05/2025-26

No.50 dated. 10.02.2026

e-mail ID : dfo\_keonjhar@odisha.gov.in

1. No. of the work : 16

## international



This malicious or irresponsible use of drones affects the protection of critical infrastructure, also our external borders, ports, transport hubs and public spaces

HENNA VIRKKUNEN |  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## WORLD'S BUSIEST AIRPORT

Dubai International Airport maintained its crown as the world's busiest airport last year as officials said Wednesday that a record 95.2 million passengers transited through its terminals, part of the emirate's continued economic boom



## Russia, facing labour crunch, pivots to India for workers

REUTERS

**Moscow, Feb 11:** A group of weary-looking Indian men carrying sports bags queued at passport control at a busy Moscow airport one recent evening after flying over 2,700 miles - and via Uzbekistan - to get work.

"I have a contract for one year. In the rubbish disposal business. The money is good," said Ajit, one of the men, speaking in English.

Faced with what the authorities say is an immediate shortage of at least 2.3 million workers, a shortfall exacerbated by the strain of Russia's war in Ukraine and one that Russia's

traditional source of foreign labour - Central Asians - is not able to fill, Moscow is turning to a new supplier: India.

## INDIAN INFUX HELPS RUSSIA MAKE UP LABOUR SHORTFALL

In 2021, a year before Russia sent its troops into Ukraine, some 5,000 work permits were approved for Indian nationals. Last year, almost 72,000 permits were okayed for Indians - nearly a third of the total annual quota for migrant workers on visas.

"Currently, expatriate employees from India are the most popular," said Alexei Filipenkov, director of a company that brings in Indian workers.

He said workers from ex-Soviet Central Asia, who do not need



Russia needs at least 2.3 million workers

Migrant labour crucial to its war economy

Russia using fewer workers from Central Asia

Thousands of Indian workers being flown in instead

visas, had stopped coming in sufficient numbers. Official figures

show they still made up the majority of some 2.3 million legal

foreign workers not requiring a visa last year, however.

But a weaker rouble, tougher migration laws, and increasingly sharp anti-immigrant rhetoric from Russian politicians have eroded their numbers and encouraged Moscow to boost visa quotas for workers from elsewhere.

The choice of India for unskilled labour reflects strong defence and economic ties between Moscow and New Delhi.

India has been buying discounted Russian oil that Moscow - due to Western sanctions - cannot easily sell elsewhere, although that may now be in question.

President Vladimir Putin

and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a deal in December to make it easier for Indians to work in Russia. Denis Manturov, Russia's first deputy prime minister, said at the time that Russia could accept an "unlimited number" of Indian workers.

At least 800,000 people were needed in manufacturing, and another 1.5 million in the service and construction sectors, he said. US pressure on India to halt its purchases of Russian oil - something President Donald Trump has linked to a trade deal between the United States and India announced this month - could yet dampen Moscow's appetite for Indian workers.

## B'desh gears up for crucial general polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, Feb 11:** Bangladesh will hold its crucial parliamentary elections Thursday, 18 months after an interim government took charge following the collapse of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year-old regime in massive nationwide protests.

The Election Commission has made elaborate security arrangements, deploying nearly one million security personnel - the largest ever in the country's electoral history. The 13th Parliamentary elections are being held simultaneously along with a referendum on a complex 84-point reform package.

The contest is mainly between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its once ally Jamaat-e-Islami, in the absence of Hasina's now disbanded Awami League. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' interim government last year disbanded the Awami League and barred it from contesting the polls.

The voting will begin simultaneously in 299 parliamentary constituencies across the country from 7:30 am and will continue until 4:30 pm. Voting in one constituency has been cancelled due to the death of a candidate.

A total of 1,755 candidates from 50 political parties and 273 independents are contesting in the election. The BNP has fielded the highest number of 291 candidates. There are 83 female candidates.

"All of you should exercise your respective voting rights consciously..." Chief Adviser Yunus said in a message Wednesday. Yunus, who has promised to quickly transfer power to the elected government, urged the political parties, candidates and other concerned parties to maintain restraint, tolerance and democratic behaviour on the polling day.

"The countrymen, through this national election, will elect people's representatives, who are competent, responsible and respectful of the people's aspirations," he said.

Mentioning that a free, fair, impartial and acceptable election is the foundation of a democratic state, he said the present interim government is fully committed to achieving this goal ultimately.

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of the  
day quote

India's quick-commerce ecosystem is moving from scale-first growth to efficiency and intelligence-led expansion

ANUPAMA BHIMRAJA | VP (MARKETING), FOUNDIT



India is rapidly emerging as one of the most important and dynamic automation markets in Asia Pacific

POI TOONG TANG | VP (SALES), ASIA PACIFIC, TERADYNE ROBOTICS



In a country where connectivity is powering opportunity at every level, trust has become our most valuable digital asset

RISHIT JHUNJHUNWALA | CEO, TRUECALLER

**Q3 RESULTS****Patanjali Foods profit surges 60%**

**New Delhi:** Patanjali Foods Ltd, which is mainly into edible oils, Wednesday reported a 60 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 593.44 crore for December quarter FY26 on higher income. Its net profit stood at Rs 370.88 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to Rs 10,541.12 crore in the quarter from Rs 9,020.38 crore a year ago, according to a regulatory filing. Demand for edible oil has remained strong over the past few quarters even as other consumer goods have faced a slowdown, as it is a staple for cooking in the world's most populous country. "Driven by disciplined execution of our business strategies over recent quarters, the Company achieved its strongest financial performance to date across multiple metrics, even amid a dynamic operating environment," CEO Sanjeev Asthana said.

**M&M PAT surges**

**New Delhi:** Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd Wednesday reported a 38.54 jump in consolidated profit after tax at Rs 5,021.47 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2025, propelled mainly by strong performance of the auto and farm sector. The company had posted a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 3,624.48 crore a year ago, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd (M&M) said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated revenue from operations in the third quarter stood at Rs 51,579.95 crore as compared to Rs 41,464.98 crore in the year-ago period, it added. This is the first time M&M has crossed Rs 50,000 crore revenue on a consolidated basis. Total expenses in the quarter under review were higher at Rs 41,464.98 crore as compared to Rs 37,096.65 crore in the same period a year ago, the company said.

**LG Electronics drops**

**Mumbai:** LG Electronics India reported a near 62% drop in third-quarter profit Wednesday, hit by weaker performance in its home appliances and air solutions business amid soft demand for cooling appliances in Asia's third-largest economy. The Indian unit of South Korea's LG Electronics posted a standalone profit of Rs 896.7 million (\$9.89 million) for the quarter ended December 31, down from Rs 2.33 billion a year earlier. India remains one of LG Electronics' key overseas markets, contributing 4.3% to its 2024 global revenue and an outsized share of profits, supported by strong margins, broad segment reach and an extensive distribution network, JP Morgan analysts said.



**Tax payers' confidence are equally important. Changes that affect cashflow or certain matters must be accompanied by safeguards. The honest tax payers must feel protected, not anxious**

HD DEVE GOWDA | FORMER PRIME MINISTER

**INDIA-US TRADE DEAL****\$500bn import push raises deficit risk****RAISING US IMPORTS IMPLIES POLICY PUSH ON CORPORATE SOURCING**

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** India's stated intention to buy \$500 billion of US goods over five years under a trade deal is drawing scepticism, with economists warning it could distort commercial procurement and sharply reshape New Delhi's trade balance.

US President Donald Trump last week said he will slash tariffs on Indian goods to 18% from 50%, sparking relief in India. But he asked New Delhi to more than double its annual imports of US goods in return.

Bilateral trade was \$132 billion in 2024-25, with a roughly \$41 billion surplus in India's favour.

Trade experts and economists questioned whether \$100 billion a year in imports was feasible without an explicit policy push that steers companies towards American suppliers.

"The math doesn't add up," said Madhavi Arora, an econo-



mist at Emkay Global, calling the target more "aspirational than realistic".

A joint statement issued by the two nations said India intends to buy \$500 billion of US goods - language that stops short of a binding commitment.

But Trump has shown little patience with countries that

fall short, including a late-January move to raise tariffs on some South Korean goods back to 25% from 15% after saying Seoul failed to legislate an earlier deal.

India aims to step up procurement of oil, gas, coking coal and aircraft from the US, both nations said in the

**LTMINDTREE REBRANDS AS LTM LIMITED**

IT services firm LTMindtree Wednesday said that it has rebranded itself as 'LTM Limited', marking a significant shift in its corporate identity years after the high-profile merger of L&T Infotech and Mindtree. The company, a part of the Larsen & Toubro Group, said the new brand reflects its evolution into a global technology powerhouse and its readiness for the next phase of growth in the digital era



**Silver climbs ₹4K to ₹2.68 lakh/kg; gold at ₹1.61L/10g**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Silver prices climbed Rs 4,000 to Rs 2.68 lakh per kilogram in the national capital Wednesday, while gold edged up to Rs 1.61 lakh per 10 grams tracking strong global trends.

investors appear wary of the \$500 billion headline.

"The markets seem to be treating the \$500 billion purchase intention with a degree of scepticism," said Dhiraj Nimbalkar, an economist at ANZ.

**Bilateral trade was \$132bn in 2024-25, with a roughly \$41bn surplus in India's favour**

joint statement.

Arora cautioned such targets can imply a government nudge to private airline and corporate sourcing decisions, which may be inefficient.

While India has cited large Boeing orders as part of the plan, some analysts say firms could still favour Airbus if commercial terms are better.

Indian markets steadied after staging an initial relief rally, but economists said

"If it is a \$100 billion every year, it will completely upset India's trade balance," said independent trade expert Biswajit Dhar. He added that the current deal mainly preserves access to India's key market rather than boosting exports.

In the global markets, spot silver gained \$4.71, or nearly 6 per cent, to \$85.51 per ounce, while gold was trading 1.06 per cent higher at \$1,611.72 per ounce.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also witnessed buying by traders, with prices rising \$600, or 0.4 per cent, to \$1,611.70 per gram (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at \$1,607.70 per 10 grams in the previous session.

"Gold and silver advanced on Wednesday supported by growing expectations of a more aggressive rate cut by the Federal Reserve," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

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**Shares flat after three-day rally****Benchmarks had risen nearly 1.2% in the last three sessions****BSE SENSEX**

FEBRUARY 11, 2026



clined, while 1,913 advanced and 154 remained unchanged on the BSE.

BSE MidCap Select Index rose 0.18 per cent, while Small-Cap Select Index ended on a flat note. Among sectoral indices, Focussed IT declined the most by 1.74 per cent, Information Technology by 1.73 per cent, Services by 0.16 per cent, Private Banks Index by 0.13 per cent, FMCG and Industrials by 0.04 per cent each.

On the other hand, Healthcare, Auto, PSU Bank, Oil & Gas, Realty, Utilities, Consumer Discretionary, Telecommunication, Metal and Consumer Durables were among the gainers.

Brent Crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 1.44 per cent to \$69.78 per barrel. On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 208.17 points to close at 84,273.92, while the 50-share NSE Nifty rose 67.85 points to finish at 25,935.15.

18 point gain to finish at 25,953. All sectoral indices closed positive except IT and private banks, with Healthcare, Auto, PSU Banks, and Pharma posting the strongest gains.

"Nandish Shah - Deputy Vice President, HDFC Securities, said.

In the latest MSCI rejig, India's weight in the MSCI Standard Index remained unchanged at 14.1 per cent, while the number of Indian companies in the index increased to 165 from 164.

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On Wednesday, foreign institutional investors purchased equities worth Rs 943.81 crore, according to exchange data.

**AVIATION CORNER****Grounded Jet Airways to sell 3 aircraft frames, 6 engines**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**New Delhi:** Grounded Jet Airways has executed an agreement for the sale of three aircraft frames and six engines to a Malta-based entity for \$46 million. Jet Airways flew for 25 years before stopping operations in April 2019 due to debt woes and is currently undergoing a liquidation process. In a filing to the BSE Wednesday, the airline said it has executed the sale and purchase agreement and related documents for three aircraft frames and six engines. The total value of the deal with Malta-based Ace Aviation is \$46 million, which translates to over Rs 417 crore at current exchange rates. All three frames are of wide-body Boeing 777 planes. The once storied Jet Airways shuttered operations in April 2019, following financial headwinds and subsequently, lenders referred the ailing airline for resolution under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Under the insolvency resolution process, the winning bidder was unable to implement the resolution plan due to multiple issues, and after long-drawn legal proceedings, the Supreme Court, in November 2024, ordered the liquidation of the carrier.

**Akasa Air co-founder Iyer resigns**

**New Delhi:** Akasa Air's Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer Praveen Iyer has resigned, marking the second high-level exit in four months at the over three-year-old airline. After a five-year journey, Iyer has decided to move on to begin the next chapter of his life. He will partner closely with the leadership team to ensure a smooth and structured transition through April 30, 2026, the airline said in a statement. Iyer is the second Co-Founder after Neelu Khatri to leave the airline, which started flying from August 7, 2022. Khatri stepped down in October 2025. Iyer is also part of the airline's Executive Committee. Now, Akasa Air has four Co-Founders -- Aditya Ghosh, Anand Srinivasan, Belson Coutinho and Bhavin Joshi. Vinay Dube is the Founder and CEO of the airline. Srinivasan, who is currently the Chief Information Officer, will take over as the Chief Commercial Officer. The airline has initiated the search for a Chief Information Officer. With Srinivasan moving into the new role, the airline's IT function will report to Chief Financial Officer Ankur Goel.

REUTERS

ate GDP growth and inflation forecasts.

Inflation, while currently benign at 1.3% year-on-year in December and seen averaging around 2.1% in the fiscal year through March, is projected to accelerate in the next financial year.

**NEAR CONSENSUS CALL**

The intersection of a nearly exhausted rate-cut cycle, robust domestic growth, and rising inflation expectations is prompting analysts to recommend "steepener" trades.

These positions capitalize on the widening gap between the short and longer portions of the curve. They are further supported by expectations that the RBI will continue to provide liquidity support, which act to anchor short-term swaps.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs, Nomura and Citi are all recommending positioning for a steeper curve.

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Goldman Sachs, which first advocated the trade in December, reiterated its call after last week's RBI policy decision.

"While the curve has already steepened meaningfully, we still see scope for further steepening in the OIS curve," it said in a note.

Citi said conditions are now ripe for a "re-steepening" of the non-deliverable overnight index swap (NDOIS) curve. "We believe factors like lack of a dovish bias in the (RBI) policy statement, upward revisions in inflation, better external outlook due to trade deals.. and hawkish Asian central banks will all likely result in re-steepening of the NDOIS curve," Citi added.

**Swaps shut the door on RBI's rate cuts****GROWTH-INFLATION OUTLOOK LIFTS LONGER TENORS**

REUTERS

ate GDP growth and inflation forecasts.

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POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Bank of India and East Coast Railway, Bhubaneswar, for opening government salary savings and pension accounts for permanent employees of the East Coast Railway.

The salary account offers several benefits, including free personal accidental (death) insurance cover of Rs 200 lakh, and a child higher education (graduation) benefit up to Rs 10 lakh.

The event was attended by Sanjay Kumar (IRPS), Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO), Anjan Ray (IRPS), Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) and Suresh Ku Behera (DPO), Deputy Chief Personnel Officer (DPO) from East Coast Railway. From Bank of India, Vikash Krishna, General Manager, FGMO Bhubaneswar, Bijoy Ku Mallick, Zonal Manager (ZM), Bhubaneswar Zone, and Ashok Ku Jena, Assistant General Manager (AGM), FGMO Bhubaneswar were present.



## T20 WORLD CUP

# India to take on minnows Namibia

Abhishek's health causes worry for hosts ahead of lopsided clash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 11: Abhishek Sharma's stomach infection poses a bigger threat to India than their World Cup opponents Namibia.

After a stuttering batting performance on a tacky Wankhede track in the opener against the USA, the Indian batting line-up would like to go all guns blazing on a Feroz Shah Kotla track that could be called a belter for quality teams.

At the receiving end would be Namibia, who are not expected to cause much trouble to the dominant defending champions in their second group A game of the T20 showpiece here Thursday.

When it comes to quality, the defending champions are light years ahead of the African team which hardly looked up to scratch against fellow Associate nation the Netherlands at this very ground.

To be fair to India, the match against Namibia is more of an extended warm up tie where they would like to bat first and let the line-up get a good hit in the middle.

The gulf in quality is such that Namibia's bowling line-up could be sent on a leather-hunt every day of the week by any of the middle level Indian state teams plying their trade in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

For India, Abhishek's stomach infection and viral fever are concerning. He was discharged Wednesday after two days of hospitalisation but it won't be advisable to put him on the park without allowing him to



sufficiently recuperate before the big game against Pakistan Sunday.

In that high-voltage showdown, Abhishek's presence would be an intimidating factor for the opposition.

The Namibia match could be a God-sent opportunity for an out-of-form Sanju Samson to get into run-scoring mode after a string of failures that saw him lose his place to Ishan Kishan, who is going through a purple patch.

"Sanju is feeling well again, understanding where he fits into the scheme of things now as an injury replacement," assistant coach Ryan Ten Doeschate said at pre-match press conference. "He's a solid guy, he's good around the group, he's training well and that's what we expect from everyone in the team."

For Namibia to stop a batting line-up like India will be an arduous task. Even more challenging for their batters will be to face Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy and Hardik Pandya in tandem.

## ABSOLUTE CINEMA: PROTEAS SURVIVE DOUBLE SUPER OVER DRAMA VS AFGHAN



South Africa defeated Afghanistan after two Super Overs in a thrilling Group D match of the T20 World Cup here Wednesday. Sent to bat, South Africa rode on a 114-run partnership between Quinton de Kock (59) and Ryan Rickleton (61) to post a competitive 187 for 6. In reply, opener Rahamanullah Gurbaz smashed a 42-ball 84 to lay the foundation, but Afghanistan were bowled out for exactly 187 in 19.4 overs, forcing the match into its first Super Over. Afghanistan scored 17 for no loss with Azmatullah Omarzai striking two fours and a six off Lungi Ngidi. South Africa matched the total, with Tristan Stubbs hitting a six off the final ball to take the contest into a second Super Over. Batting first in the second Super Over, South Africa scored 23, powered by David Miller's 16. Rahamanullah Gurbaz clobbered three sixes but Afghanistan fell short of the target, scoring 19-2 to hand South Africa a dramatic victory.

## SHORT TAKES

### Golfers start strong

Riyadh: Indian golfers Diksha Dagar and Avani Prashanth were off to a good start, carding 3-under 69s in the opening round of the PIF Saudi Ladies International here. They were tied 21st and five shots behind Korea's Hye-Jin Choi (64) as some players were yet to finish the round. Lying second was Japan's Chizzy Iwai (65). Three other Indians are playing in the 120-player field at the tournament which carried a huge prize purse of USD 5 million. Aditi Ashok picked a birdie on her closing hole -- the ninth to be 1-under 71 for the day and was T-70, while Pranavi Urs carded 1-over 73 and was T-86 and Hitaashee Bakshi was even par with five more holes to play. Diksha, the top Indian on the LET Order of Merit in 2025, birdied the third, 12th and the 18th for a clean card. Avani birdied the opening hole and even though she gave back that shot on the fourth she picked up momentum again with birdies on the fifth and eighth. She turned in 2-under. On the back, birdies on the 12th and the 15th brought her near the Top-10, but a closing bogey on the 18th pulled her back and she finished at 3-under 69.

### Neeraj gets extension

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) has approved an extension of javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra's training in South Africa till April, while green-lighting customised international exposure and coaching for athletes taekwondo and karate ahead of this year's Asian Games. In its 16th meeting here Wednesday, the MOC also sanctioned financial assistance for rising squash star Anahat Singh's strength and conditioning coach, and foreign exposure camps for para-athletes Varun Bhati and Sandeep Chaudhary. Chopra, a two-time Olympic medal-winner, began his pre-season training in his preferred South African base of Potchefstroom in January and the ministry had initially given the go-ahead for a 32-day camp. He will now be training in Pretoria before starting his competitive season with the Doha Diamond League in May. Overall, proposals to the tune of Rs 1.70 crore from various athletes were approved in Wednesday's meeting.

## PREMIER LEAGUE

# West Ham end United's streak, Chelsea blow two goal cushion



a fifth-straight league win. But Chelsea was stunned by two goals in the space of six minutes from in-form Leeds and had to settle for a point.

### Tottenham is on the slide

Thomas Frank was fired by Tottenham Wednesday after only eight months in charge and with his team just five points above the relegation zone in the Premier League.

Despite leading Spurs to the round of 16 in the Champions League, Frank has overseen a desperate domestic campaign. A 2-1 loss to Newcastle Tuesday was greeted by boos from the home fans and left Spurs still without a league win in 2026. Spurs' last league win was December 28 and defeat at home to Newcastle extended a ruinous run to one win in 11 in England's top flight. Spurs dropped to 16th in the standings Tuesday and two places above the relegation zone.

Joao Pedro and Cole Palmer from the penalty spot seemed to put Rosenior on course for

# Late goals spoil campaign opener

Hosts India go down 1-3 to in-form Belgium in Rourkela

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Feb 11: India let in two goals in the final quarter to suffer a 1-3 defeat to Belgium in their Rourkela leg of the FIH Men's Pro League 2025-26 match here Wednesday.

Nelson Onana (23rd minute), Thomas Crols (53rd) and Arno Van Dessel (57th) scored for Belgium while Shilanand Lakra (29th) was the goal-scorer for India. The two sides were locked 1-1 at the half time as well as at the end of the third quarter, before Belgium pumped in two goals in the final 15 minutes.

It was an extremely competitive first quarter with both sides hardly making any mistakes at the back.

Belgium earned an early penalty corner in the 4th minute. However, Alexander Hendrickx's drag-flick was stopped heroically by India's first rusher Vivek Sagar Prasad.

Four minutes later, India too got their first penalty corner but the home side couldn't capitalise on the occasion.

While Belgium were having more possession, India did well to hold their ground and launch quick counter-attacks in search of goal-scoring opportunities.

The game opened up in the second quarter. Belgium were



awarded a penalty corner in the 21st minute but Indian goalkeeper Pawan made a brilliant acrobatic save to deny Alexander Hendrickx a goal.

In the 23rd minute, Belgium found the opening goal as they did well to make an interception to win possession in a dangerous position.

Thomas Crols passed the ball to Onana who found the net with a simple finish.

India stepped up their attack and made some crucial circle entries in the following minutes. In the 29th minute, the hosts made another attack and won a penalty corner. Am-

## FIH MEN'S PRO LEAGUE

it Rohidas's hit was initially stopped by the first rusher, but Shilanand Lakra did well to quickly pounce on the ball and slot it into the net to score the equaliser.

Belgium continued to dictate possession in the third quarter. However, India were resilient with their defending and maintained their composure at the back.

In the 53rd minute, India broke into another strong counter-attack as Nilakanta Sharma played a brilliant pass to Karthi Selvam but the forward couldn't take a shot on

goal in time and was stopped by the Belgian backline.

Seconds later on the other end of the field, Belgium launched an attack from the left flank as Lucas Balthazar played the perfect pass into the circle from the baseline to Thomas Crols, who struck the ball into the bottom right corner to take the lead for the visitors.

In the 57th minute, it was Thomas Crols again in the spotlight as he set up the ball for Arno Van Dessel who did well to sneak the ball into the net and seal the victory for Belgium.

## ASIAN SHOOTING C'SHIP

# Anish wins bronze in 25m rapid-fire pistol

India continues to dominate medal tally with 41 gold, 19 silver and 15 bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 11: Bangladesh's sports advisor Asif Nazrul, who had insisted that the country's refusal to play its T20 World Cup matches in India was driven by his government's security concerns, now says that the decision was taken by the Cricket Board and the players to "protect national dignity".

Bangladesh were replaced by Scotland after the ICC declined the country's request of shifting its share of games to Sri Lanka. However, the world body has decided against penalising the nation for its stance.

Nazrul took centre-stage during the failed negotiations with the ICC prior to the team's ouster and had insisted that it was the Bangladesh government's prerogative to not send the team out of security worries.

"There is no question of regret (not playing the World Cup). This decision was taken by the BCB and the players as they made sacrifices for the safety of the country's cricket, the safety of the people and to protect national dignity," Asif was quoted as saying by 'Cricbuzz' Tuesday.

Last month, Nazrul, after talks with the Bangladesh Cricket Board and the players, had taken a hard-line position.

"I think we did not get justice from ICC. Whether we will play in the World Cup or not is entirely a government decision," he had asserted January 22.

In the aftermath of their ouster, Pakistan had announced a boycott of the game against India to show solidarity with Bangladesh.

Japanese Dai Yoshioka, a two-time Olympian and a world cup gold medallist and Ha Minh Thanh, a double Asian Games medallist also went through along with Ha's teammate Vu Tien Nam.

In the final consisting of eight series of five rapid-fire shots, Yoshioka, Anish and Chiryukin



were fastest off the blocks as Vu and Kazakh Artemiy Kabakov became the first two to be eliminated after the third series.

As long-time team-mate Adarsh bowed out after the fourth series with 11 hits to his name, Anish found himself in joint lead with Yoshioka and Nikita after the sixth series with 21 hits. However, he got two hits in the seventh as the Japanese struck five and Chiryukin four, settling for bronze, the same result he had achieved three years ago at the Changwon Asian Championships.

Yoshioka went on to close with another perfect five to upgrade his Changwon performance by one, finishing on a world and Asian record score of 31. Chiryukin won silver with 28 hits, while Anish ended on 23 hits.

Earlier in the first event of the day, Islam Satpayev, the

talented Kazakh rifle shooter who won a bronze at the Paris Olympics in the mixed team event, shone bright on the day winning a couple of gold in the non-Olympic 50m rifle prone men's competitions.

He won the individual event with a score of 622.5 and the team gold in alliance with teammates Nikita Shakhtorin (622.5, individual silver) and Konstantin Malinovsky (615.0).

India won a bronze through Babu Singh Panwar (621.3) in the individual men's event and a silver in the team event when Babu combined with Samarvir Singh (618.2) and Sartaj Singh Tiwana (614.4).

In the junior men's rifle prone, India's Karmakar won gold with a tally of 621.7 over 60 shots. The Kazakhs took silver and bronze through Oleg Noskov (620.6) and Tamerlan Kabulov (617.3).

## MILANO CORTINA WINTER OLYMPICS

### Quad God Malinin flips reality, skates into history



American figure skater Ilia Malinin delivered his best performance of the Milano Cortina Games Tuesday, landing two quadruple jumps and even throwing in a backflip in an electrifying men's short programme to take the lead.

Malinin posted 108.16 points, more than five clear of Japan's Yuma Kagiyama (103.07), with France's Adam Siau Him Fa third on 102.55. Malinin, the heavy favourite for the men's title, did not showcase his full

repertoire in his two outings during the team event but still did enough to help the United States grab gold Sunday. He looked far closer to his peak Tuesday, feeding off a loud contingent of American fans as he flaunted the technical arsenal that has helped draw new attention to the sport. "I want to call it Olympic pressure," he told reporters. "Going out there the first time, hitting that Olympic ice and feeling the atmosphere. I didn't expect it to be so much, and it took me a little while to understand what really happened, but now that I understand it, I took a different approach today," he said. "Really take things nice and calm, nice and slow, just relaxed, and really just pushed the autopilot button and let it cruise." Many present at the Milano Ice Skating Arena were buzzing in anticipation that Malinin would unleash a quadruple Axel - a four-and-a-half-rotation jump that only he has landed in competition - as it was published on his list of planned elements. But he told reporters that he never intended to attempt the jump Tuesday, saying he forgot to change the list ahead of time.

### Norwegian biathlete confesses to cheating on girlfriend on live TV

A post-race interview with the bronze medal winner in the men's Olympic biathlon competition on Tuesday took an unexpected turn when he revealed in a live broadcast that he had been unfaithful to his girlfriend. Sturla Holm Laegreid, one of Norway's top biathletes, finished third in the 20-kilometer individual race, but was full of remorse when he spoke to Norwegian broadcaster NRK at the Milano Cortina Games. "Six months ago I met the love of my life. The world's most beautiful, sweetest person. And three months ago I made the biggest mistake of my life and cheated on her," Laegreid said, fighting back tears. He said he told his partner a week ago about what had happened. "I'm sure many people now see me in a different light, but I only have eyes for her," he said. "I'm not quite sure what I'm trying to say by saying this now, but sport has taken a back seat in recent days. I wish I could share this with her."

