



PC's milestone

Actor Priyanka Chopra marks another major milestone by featuring on the Variety US cover for the second time

LEISURE | P2



Russia blocks WhatsApp

US messenger app WhatsApp has been completely blocked in Russia for failing to comply with local law

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Strong inflow

Domestic investors pump ₹1.14 lakh crore into AIFs in 18 months till September 2025

BUSINESS | P11



Tribute turns sour

Ukraine's Vladyslav Heraskevych was disqualified from Winter Games over his helmet depicting athletes killed since Russia's invasion

SPORTS | P12

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RETAIL INFLATION AT 2.75% IN JANUARY

New Delhi: Retail inflation stood at 2.75 per cent in January under the new series of All India Consumer Price Index (CPI), with 2024 as base year, released Thursday. The new series released by NSO under Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation has increased number of goods from 259 to 308 and services from 40 to 50 for a better picture of price situation. The January food inflation has worked out to be 2.13 per cent, and housing at 2.05 per cent. The retail inflation, under the old series with base year 2012, was 4.26 per cent in January 2025 and 1.33 per cent in December.

P11

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



HITTING LIFE: Members of CPI, AITUC, and BKMU stage a sit-in at Raj Mahal Square in Bhubaneswar Thursday, blocking the road as part of a nationwide strike organised by various trade unions to protest the Centre's 'anti-worker policies'. The 12-hour strike disrupted normal life across Odisha (Report P3)

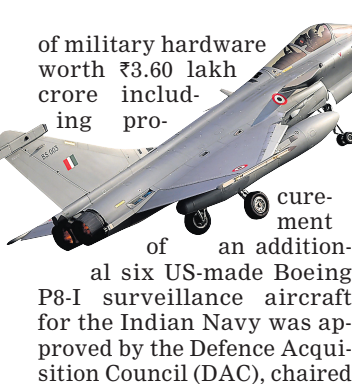
PICT: MANORANJAN MISHRA

Proposal for 114 Rafale jets okayed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: In its largest-ever defence acquisition push, India Thursday cleared a long-pending proposal to procure 114 Rafale fighter jets under a government-to-government framework with France, nearly two decades after the plan was originally rolled out to boost the Indian Air Force's combat prowess.

In total, capital acquisition



of military hardware worth ₹3.60 lakh crore including pro-

urement of an additional six US-made Boeing P8-I surveillance aircraft for the Indian Navy was approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired

by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Under the Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) project, 18 aircraft will be supplied by Dassault Aviation, the maker of Rafale, in a fly away condition and the rest will be manufactured in India, sources said.

Though the Ministry of Defence did not provide the cost of the procurement, it is expected to be in the range of ₹2.90 lakh crore to ₹3.15 lakh crore.

Land pattas with QR codes soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Revenue and Disaster Management (R&DM) Minister Suresh Pujari Thursday announced that the state government will soon introduce land pattas with QR codes, a move aimed at modernising land administration and curbing property fraud.

Addressing media, Pujari stated, "We will soon provide land pattas embedded with QR codes, allowing for instant digital verification of land records. This initiative, to be implemented in partnership with the Central government, will ensure that every new or updated land patta includes a QR code."

By simply scanning the QR code with a smartphone, citizens will be able to access complete land details from the official database, including ownership history, full transaction records, encumbrances, if any, and other relevant informa-



tion. The system will provide a comprehensive digital history of properties spanning 50 to 70 years, R&DM department sources said.

Traditionally, land ownership records in Odisha have been maintained as physical documents, making them vulnerable to damage, manipulation, and loss. The new QR-enabled pattas, embedded with secure digital features, are designed to replace paper-based verification processes and significantly enhance transparency, they added. The sources said the initiative is expected to reduce reliance on the tradi-

tional Encumbrance Certificate (EC), as land information will now be available digitally in real time. "Prospective buyers will be able to verify ownership details directly from authenticated government records before completing transactions, reducing delays and the risk of fraud," they pointed out.

Pujari said the reform is aimed at strengthening trust in land administration and ensuring accountability. He added that in case of any irregularity or attempt to manipulate records, immediate alerts will be sent to the local tehsildars and revenue inspectors, enabling swift action. Centralised and secure digital storage will make it nearly impossible to create fake deeds or alter ownership records.

As part of wider land reforms, the state government will also undertake a comprehensive statewide land survey covering both government and private land.

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ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ



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ଗରିମାମୟ ଉପସ୍ଥିତି

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ଉପ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଶ୍ରୀ ବଳଭଦ୍ର ମାଝୀ
ସାମ୍ବଦ, ନବରଙ୍ଗପୁର

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ବିଧାୟକ, ନବରଙ୍ଗପୁର

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ବିଧାୟକ, ଝରିଗାଁ

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ବିଧାୟକ, ଚାବୁଗାଁ

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ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

odisha_tourism

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OIPR-37001/37001/2/25-26/0002

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST



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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*



ARIES

You experience a sense of freedom today. And in this mood you feel like doing all the things that you will do in your childhood. It is a nice time to take your family on an outing, says Ganesha. Given your mood, you may start planning for the future of your loved ones.



TAURUS

You have a hectic day ahead, says Ganesha. You will be immersed in your work all day long and will love doing so. A lot will get done by the end of the day. Make sure you do not stretch your neck or take unnecessary risks. That will be bad for business. Stick to basics. Do not be innovative or speculative. Be prepared for new challenges that are due to come up shortly.




GEMINI

Today, you will realise that close relationships need care and concern to grow, predicts Ganesha. You will have new responsibilities and achieve huge profits in all your dealings. Pay special attention to your personal health.



CANCER

Ganesha says that this will be a unique and auspicious day for you. You will get clue and hints of this from morning itself. A religious ceremony in the house, and thereby invitation to guests is indicated. The chance of shifting to a new house is indicated. Ganesha expresses his best wishes.




LEO

Few and rare are the days when creativity takes flight. After all, even Picasso couldn't make a masterpiece every day. So make the most of this auspicious day, urges Ganesha, during which your imagination peaks and touches new heights.



VIRGO

Today you will find yourself delving deep into your inner self. You will reap a lot of monetary rewards, and will be generous in spending it on your near and dear ones. Ganesha says that you may make up for the pressures at work by entertaining yourself with material pleasures.




LIBRA

All things passionate seem to engulf you today. It is one of those moments when chance dictates every possibility of a new romantic love episode in your life. The last time a moment like this came by, Romeo met Juliet. Ganesha expects you to try hard to please your heartthrob.



SCORPIO

You may deviate a little from mundane chores and take up creative activities like cooking and gardening. Today, according to Ganesha, you wish to do smart work and not just hard work. Family joys and pleasures will replace work satisfaction.



SAGITTARIUS

A paradigm shift in your temperament and your looks is on the cards today. Your personality will get better as you don some chic attire, jewellery and a rather loud perfume today. You're a magnet today, says Ganesha, and will charm your way through a crowd of admirers who will clamour for your attention.



CAPRICORN

You are not an impulsive person and this reflects in whatever you do. Money will be on your mind almost through out the day. Generally, you are a penny pincher, but during the later half of the day you will go on a spending spree.



AQUARIUS

It is time to make addition in your possessions. Book your dream house or buy a vehicle, as today is a favourable day to do so. You, however, need to consider your financial resources before deciding anything because it will take a major chunk out of your savings, warns Ganesha. A major change is on the cards for the Archer.



PISCES

Sometimes you are so kind and charitable that you sacrifice your own well-being and happiness for the sake of others. This streak within you may emerge as you engage in a selfless deed. You will have a strong desire to do something for your family and your home.

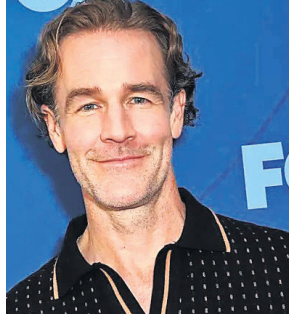


GARNER REVEALS FAVOURITE PART OF DOING 'FIGHT SCENE'

Hollywood star Jennifer Garner says her dance background helps her enjoy action scenes in *The Last Thing He Told Me*. The 53-year-old shared that she loves using her whole body in fight sequences, combining physicality, emotion, and high stakes, making every scene intense, challenging, and deeply satisfying

JAMES VAN DER BEEK PASSES AWAY AT 48

Actor James Van Der Beek, best known for his starring role in US teen drama *Dawson's Creek*, has died aged 48 after being diagnosed with bowel cancer. The star was diagnosed with the disease in the latter half of 2023 but only revealed the news in November 2024



BARA BADHU VS RAKTA GOLAPA

Two Odia releases to clash at BO today

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar: Odia cinema is ready to captivate audiences with not one, but two exciting releases. *Bara Badhu* and *Rakta Golapa* are all set to hit theatres across the state Friday, promising a perfect blend of suspense, emotion, romance, and social drama for movie lovers.

Bara Badhu brings a socially relevant yet entertaining narrative to the big screen. Directed by Beeswaranjan, the multi-starrer thoughtfully explores the intersection of marriage and employment in contemporary society.

The film promises a refreshing storyline that weaves together personal relationships, social expectations, and career aspirations. The main cast of the movie includes Sivani Sangita, Sailendra Samantaray, Suryamayee Mohapatra, Hara Rath, Subhasis Sharma, Jayshree Sarangi, and Bhaswati Basu, each character reflects different dimensions of relationships and societal pressures — particularly those surrounding marriage and livelihood.

Produced under the banner of The Useful Garbage Creations in association with Country Boyz Studios and Sharpline Film Pvt. Ltd.,



Bara Badhu is presented by Chandra Mani and will be released by Prakash Films. Chandra Mani serves as producer, with Beeswaranjan and Sushil Kumar Mishra as co-producers.

In contrast, directed by Peenakee Singh and Sisir Kumar Sahu, *Rakta Golapa* is a gripping murder mystery that delves deep into the emotional journey of a woman whose life takes a devastating turn. Produced by Aesthetic Films in association with P.S Motion Pictures, the film centres on a powerful performance by Elina Samantaray.

Elina plays a woman whose husband, a forest officer portrayed by Abhishek Giri, mysteriously goes missing. However, his disappearance is anything but ordinary. The visuals and trailer hint at dark secrets, raising chilling questions — was it a murder, a carefully laid trap, or a truth too terrifying to reveal?

Choudhury Jayaprakash Das, Samaresh Routray, Hara Rath, and Udit Guru play other key roles.. Ashrujeet Mahapatra and Shovan Das have produced the project.

Both films carry heightened expectations as Valentine's week releases.

Priyanka's unique feat

Mumbai: Priyanka Chopra Jonas has added another milestone to her global journey by featuring on the cover of *Variety US* magazine for the second time, after her first appearance in 2018. With this, she becomes the only Indian actor to achieve this distinction, reflecting her sustained relevance across international entertainment industries rather than a single career peak.

Her Hollywood journey has been marked by several breakthroughs, beginning with her lead role in *Quantico*, which made her the first South Asian actor to headline an American network drama. Her portrayal of Alex Parrish brought her widespread recognition and earned her a People's Choice Award, opening doors for greater representation in mainstream Western television.

Over the years, Priyanka has continued to strengthen her presence in global cinema. In 2025, she appeared in the action film *Heads of State*, followed by her upcoming thriller *The Bluff*, where she plays a darker, more intense character. Both projects highlight her growing range in international productions.

In India, excitement surrounds her return to regional cinema with her Telugu debut *Varanasi*, directed by S.S. Rajamouli. Beyond films, she remains active as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and global entrepreneur. She is also set to headline the 23rd India Conference at Harvard in 2026. Her latest *Variety* cover reflects a career built on consistency, influence, and cross-cultural engagement.

AGENCIES



Shanaya embraces destiny

Mumbai: Actor Shanaya Kapoor says destiny brought her to her second film, survival thriller *Tu Ya Main*, which features her in the role of a social media influencer.

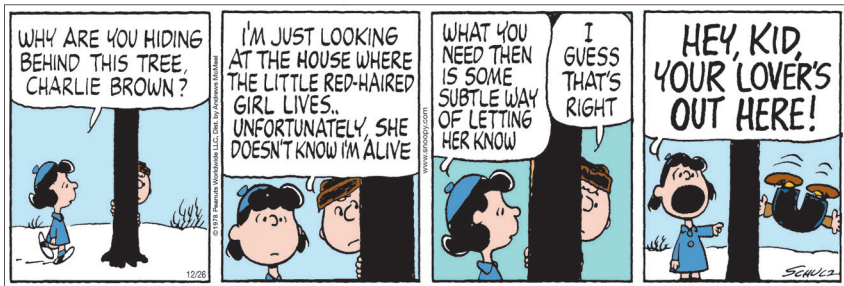
Shanaya made her acting debut opposite Vikrant Massey in *Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan*. She credited casting director Mukesh Chhabra for the role in *Tu Ya Main*.

"When I read the scenes, I found them super fun, I was like, it's destiny that allowed me to be there at the right time, right moment and Mukesh sir for thinking of me in the first place that I got the chance to audition. I'm just starting out, so I'm just like an open book, I want to explore everything. I need to figure out which direction I want to go in," she told this news agency.

Tu Yaa Main revolves around social media influencers portrayed by Shanaya and Adarsh Gourav, whose romantic getaway takes a deadly turn when they find themselves trapped in a swimming pool with a crocodile. Shanaya's debut film *Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan* did not do well at the box office but the actor said seeing herself on the big screen for the first time was a "big achievement" for her.

PTI

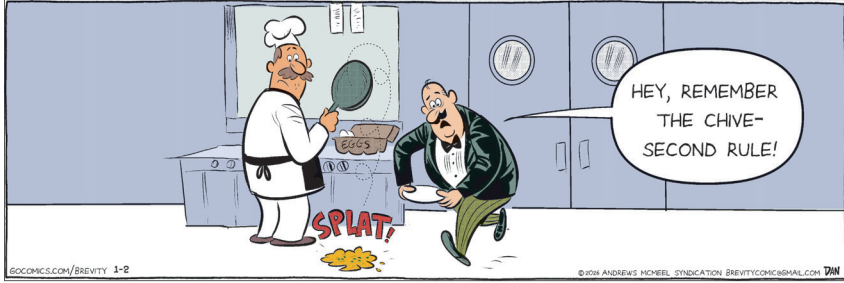
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

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Across

- Realtor's sign (3,4)
- Kingdom
- Way back when (4-3)
- Worth
- Like some health care
- Reserved
- Neutron star
- Wisenheimers (5,6)

Down

- Bad move
- Ladder parts
- Unpaid rookie
- Like some holiday locales
- Collars

7

- One with a red cape
- Bag thickness
- Mousse, maybe
- Use a ruler
- Expose
- Friends
- Egyptian boy king
- Unwavering
- Commotions (2-3)

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



LET THE SHOW BEGIN: Members of the opening committee perform during a dress rehearsal for the traditional Opera Ball in Vienna, Austria

Better to scrap RERA, it only helps defaulting builders: SC

PTI & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 12: Expressing strong disappointment over the functioning of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) in several states, the Supreme Court Thursday said it would be better to 'abolish this institution', as it is 'doing nothing' except facilitating defaulting builders.

A bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Jyomalya Bagchi said the people for whom RERA was created were 'completely depressed, disgusted and disappointed'.

The observations came from the bench, which permitted the Himachal Pradesh (HP) government to shift the office of RERA to the place of its choice.

The bench issued notice on a plea filed by the HP government and others challenging an order of the Himachal High Court in a matter pertaining to the shifting of the state RERA office from Shimla to Dharamshala.

The HC had earlier stayed a June 2025 notification concerning the shifting of RERA office till further order. Later, in its order passed December 30, 2025, the HC directed the continuance of the interim order. The top court stayed the HC's December 30 direction.

"Except facilitating the builders in default, this institution is doing nothing. Better abolish this institution, we don't mind that," the CJI said.



"...high time that all the states should revisit and re-think of even constituting this authority," the bench said.

In its petition filed in the apex court through advocate Sugandha Anand, the state said the decision to shift the HP RERA office from Shimla to Dharamshala was taken to 'decongest' Shimla city, and it was purely on administrative considerations.

Senior advocate Madhavi Divan, appearing for the state, told the bench about the matter and said, "This is about the RERA, which we seek to shift to Dharamshala."

An advocate, appearing for the respondent, said 90 per cent of the projects with which the authority deals are in Shimla, Solan, Parwanoo and Sirmaur, which are within a radius of a maximum of 40km.

He said around 92 per cent of complaints which are pending before RERA are only from these districts, and there are only 20 projects in Dharamshala.

When the bench was informed that a retired IAS officer

was appointed in RERA, the CJI said, "In every state, it has become a rehabilitation centre. These authorities are all occupied by these persons."

"The people for whom this institution was created, they are completely depressed, disgusted and disappointed. None of them are getting any effective relief. For whom this institution actually is now serving, you will find out when you meet these people," the CJI said.

The SC also observed that Shimla is 'completely over exhausted'.

While issuing notice on the plea, the bench said, "The state is permitted to shift the office of RERA to the place of its choice. However, it shall be subject to the final outcome of the writ petition pending before the high court."

The advocate general of HP told the bench that, as per a policy decision, the state is developing Palampur, Dharamshala and other cities.

The CJI asked, "What is the logic of having a retired bureaucrat? How he will be able to help in developing Palampur. You need to avail services of some architect who is environment friendly, who knows Palampur area, Dharamshala area and these entire areas. Only those persons will help."

The bench was also informed that the district judge, Shimla, hears the appeals against the orders passed by RERA.

Edge for BNP in B'desh polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 12: The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) appears to have the edge over its once ally Jamaat-e-Islami in the crucial general elections Thursday to elect a new government to replace the interim administration, which took charge after the collapse of the Awami League regime in August 2024.

Election officials and media reports said early results gave an edge to the BNP with its nominees leading in over 175 seats while Jamaat candidates leading in 30 seats. The polling with a referendum on constitutional reforms running in parallel closed at 4.30pm with an initial estimate suggesting the turnout to be 48 per cent at 2pm.

In unofficial results, Election Commission officials said BNP chairman and former premier Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman won from Dhaka-17 and Bogra-6 constituencies.

P10

12-hour strike disrupts life

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Normal life was affected in Odisha due to a 12-hour nationwide strike called by central trade unions over several demands.

The trade unions called the strike protesting the four new labour codes, 'anti-worker and pro-corporate policies' and other economic measures.

Protesters belonging to major trade unions, including CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS and UTUC, were seen picketing on all the major roads as soon as the strike commenced at 6am.

While the Congress and Left parties, along with their frontal organisations and some farmers' bodies, have extended full support to the strike, the state's main Opposition BJD workers' front -- Biju Shramik Samukhya -- extended 'moral support' to the strike.

Public transport, markets, educational institutions, and business establishments were



A groom, on his way to tie the nuptial knot in Khurda, stranded on the road due to the general strike in City, Thursday

OP PHOTO

affected as major roads, including national and state highways, were blocked.

The strike's impact was felt in all major urban areas, including Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Balasore, Berhampur and Sambalpur.

Protesters locked the 'Ama Bus' depot at Master Canteen here, halting bus operations in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

The vehicle of a groom head-

ing towards Keranga village in Khurda from Soro in Balasore was halted by protesters at Jayadev Vihar in Bhubaneswar.

"I travelled over 120 km and all protesters allowed me to move forward. However, my vehicle got caught in Bhubaneswar. I appeal to the strike supporters to allow me to move forward," the groom said, appealing to the agitators with folded hands.

RATNA BHANDAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The Orissa High Court has directed the state government to table the report of the Justice Raghubir Dash Commission on the missing key of the Srimandir Ratna Bhandar on the floor of the Assembly in the ensuing session. The HC also directed the government to complete the inventorisation of valuables in the treasury of the 12th-century shrine within three months.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Harish Tandon and Justice MS Raman issued the directive recently while



hearing a PIL concerning the inventorisation, repair, and maintenance of the Ratna Bhandar.

Amid raging public anger over the mysterious disappearance of the key to the inner Ratna Bhandar, the then BJD

government ordered a judicial inquiry into the issue in June 2018. Soon after, the Justice Raghubir Dash Commission was constituted, and its report was subsequently submitted to the state government. Though the report was to be tabled in the Assembly as per norms, the government failed to do so.

Years later, the BJD government decided to place the report before the Cabinet to be constituted after the results of the 2024 Assembly election.

In its order, the HC said, "We, therefore, direct that the report of the inquiry committee (on the missing key) be placed on the floor of the Assembly in

the ensuing session, and we expect that a decision will be taken thereupon."

The bench also reviewed the steps taken for the conservation of the Ratna Bhandar. It noted that a high-level committee was constituted after the change in political regime, and a standard operating procedure (SOP) was framed in July 2024 for opening the inner and outer chambers.

The HC further said, "We also direct the state government to complete the exercise of tallying the inventory report submitted by the newly constituted committee with the report of 1978 within three months."

In a 1st in 145 yrs, Darjeeling toy train gets woman TTE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Darjeeling, Feb 12: The UNESCO World Heritage Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) has got its first woman Traveling Ticket Examiner (TTE) in its 145-year history.

Sarita Yolmo, a veteran employee of the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), conducted the toy train from New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling for the first time in her new role February 5. "I am proud to be the first woman TTE in a Darjeeling Himalayan Railway toy train in its history," Yolmo told PTI over the phone.

DHR official Prateeksha Chhetri confirmed that Yolmo is serving as the first woman TTE in the toy train service.

Yolmo said she felt both thrilled and anxious when she was offered the opportunity to work in the UNESCO heritage railway service.

"I am from Darjeeling, but I had no prior experience working in the DHR," she said, adding that she had earlier travelled on the toy train only as a passenger.

She is currently the only woman TTE on the NJP-Darjeeling route, a journey that takes around eight hours one way and can sometimes take longer due to delays en route.

Yolmo works on the daily service between NJP and Darjeeling on a rotational basis. She conducts the morning train from NJP and returns the following day after an overnight



“Though I had no prior experience of working as a TTE in trains, I gathered courage and took responsibility for the passengers as the first woman TTE in the toy train service. I was a little anxious on my first journey, but I felt very good after completing the route and reaching Darjeeling”

SARITA YOLMO

halt in the hill town, often referred to as the 'Queen of the Hills'. TTEs for the NJP-Darjeeling route are deputed by the Chief Travelling Ticket Inspector (CTTI) office at NJP, where Yolmo is posted.

"Though I had no prior experience of working as a TTE in trains, I gathered courage and took responsibility for the passengers as the first woman TTE in the toy train service," she said. "I was a little anxious on my first journey, but I felt

very good after completing the route and reaching Darjeeling," she added.

Yolmo joined the NFR in April 1991 in the printing press department at Kurseong. After the railway press was shut down, she was posted to the commercial department at NJP, where she worked in the enquiry, station checking and announcement wings.

A resident of Siliguri, known as the gateway to the hills and the Northeast, Yolmo is the mother of a daughter who is studying while also working abroad.

Her husband is a retired DHR employee who served as an engineer at the Tindharia workshop before being posted to Siliguri.

Workplace caste bias: Karge cites Kendrapara AWC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 12: Senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge Thursday raised concerns over caste discrimination at workplaces, citing a recent incident at Nuagaon under Rajnagar block of Kendrapara where members of a particular community refused to let their children eat food cooked by a Dalit worker at an anganwadi centre (AWC).

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Kharge said, "In the 21st century, when we talk about social development, social reform, and the unity of Hindus, people of a particular community are refusing to let their children eat food cooked by a Dalit woman who is a helper cum-cook in an anganwadi centre in Odisha. That anganwadi



centre has been boycotted for the last three months."

The LoP said anganwadi centre is the foundation of children's physical and cognitive development. "But if there is such racial discrimination, it will naturally affect children's growth," he said, adding that such incidents directly affect the right to education provided under Article 21A of the Constitution.

Kharge said workplace caste discrimination is being reported from different parts of the country. "Had investigations been done timely, future incidents would have been averted," he said.

Citing instances from other states, Kharge recalled an incident in Madhya Pradesh a few years ago wherein a person had urinated on an Adivasi person.

Last year in Gujarat, he said, a government Dalit officer committed suicide due to caste discrimination.

LAC clears land for 31 pending projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: In a major boost to Odisha’s industrial development, the Land Allotment Committee (LAC) has cleared land allocation for 31 long-pending industrial projects. The meeting, chaired by IDCO Chairperson Usha Padhee, was held Thursday at IDCO Towers here.

The approvals are expected to unlock substantial investments and create significant employment opportunities across multiple sectors in the state.

Most of the cleared proposals are from the MSME sector, along with projects in apparel and textiles, food processing,



engineering and other emerging industries. The committee also gave special priority to proposals in non-industrial

and backward districts such as Koraput, Kalahandi and Rayagada, reinforcing the government’s focus on balanced and

inclusive industrial growth.

The meeting was attended by MSME department Commissioner-cum-Secretary and IDCO Managing Director D Prasanth Kumar Reddy; IPICOL Managing Director Bhupendra Singh Poonia; Director of Industries Aboli Sunil Naravane; OCAC Executive Director Kaustuva Dipta Pany; along with other senior officials and committee members.

Reaffirming its commitment to investor-friendly governance, the LAC stressed transparent procedures, time-bound decision-making and proactive facilitation to boost investor confidence and promote balanced regional economic growth across Odisha.

Police rescue kidnapped minor, nab accused

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Police have rescued a 14-year-old girl and arrested a 22-year-old man in connection with her alleged kidnapping in the state capital, officials said Thursday.

The case was registered at Lingaraj police station February 10 under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), following a written complaint filed by the minor’s mother, a resident of the Bhi-matangi area.

According to the complaint, the girl left for a private school in the Kedar Gauri area February 10 but did not return home. School authorities later confirmed that she had not attended classes that day.



◀◀ **Police traced the minor to Ghasipura in Keonjhar district, rescued her safely and apprehended the accused based on credible inputs**

◀◀ **During questioning, the accused reportedly admitted to luring the girl and taking her to multiple locations, where she was wrongfully confined**

The complainant suspected the involvement of one Tapan Das alias Silu, who had allegedly threatened earlier to abduct her daughter.

Acting on credible inputs, a police team traced the minor to Ghasipura in Keonjhar district, rescued her safely and apprehended the accused. During questioning, Tapan reportedly admitted to luring the girl and

taking her to various locations, where she was wrongfully confined.

Police seized a motorcycle and a mobile phone from his possession. Officials said he was previously booked in two cases under the POCSO and IT Acts at Airfield police station. He has been forwarded to court, and further investigation is underway.

IT training launched for PACS, LAMPCS officials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: In a major step towards modernising Odisha’s cooperative sector, Ministry of Cooperation Union Secretary Ashish Kumar Bhutani Thursday launched the state-wide IT proficiency enhancement training through OS-CIT for officials of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) and Large Area Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPCS).

The inaugural programme at Lokaseva Convention Hall saw 5,422 officials from 2,711 PACS and LAMPCS across all 314 blocks of the state participating through a hybrid model at designated Odisha Knowledge Corporation Limited (OKCL) Authorised Learning Centres (ALCs) and via online.

The training, organised by state Cooperation department, in collaboration with OKCL aims to strengthen digital skills among cooperative officials.

The curriculum covers basic digital literacy, e-governance portals, AI awareness, cyber security practices, and office productivity tools, with a focus on enhancing transparency, operational efficiency, and service quality in grassroots cooperative institutions.

Addressing the participants, Bhutani emphasised the role of PACS in agricultural credit delivery and rural financial inclusion, noting that digital capacity building would improve efficiency and accountability in cooperative operations.

OKCL MD Manoranjan Puthal provided an overview of the OS-CIT programme, underlining its goal of building confidence among cooperative officials to handle digital platforms effectively. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Registrar of Cooperative Societies Siddhartha Das and was efficiently coordinated by OKCL Senior GM Sasmita Panda.

Manipal Hospitals saves 3-yr-old from congenital spinal disorder



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar has successfully treated a rare and complex congenital spinal condition in a three-year-old boy from Jaleswar in Balasore district, giving him a new lease on life and averting the risk of permanent neurological disability.

The child was diagnosed with spinal lipomyelomeningocele, a rare closed neural tube defect that affects only 3 to 6 per 100,000 births. The condition involves a fatty mass (lipoma) extending through a defect in the spine and

attaching to the spinal cord, leading to a tethered cord. If left untreated, it can cause progressive nerve damage, limb weakness, loss of sensation, and bladder and bowel dysfunction as the child grows. Since birth, the child experienced difficulty passing urine and stools. Over time, his left leg became visibly thin and weak—clear signs of worsening neurological involvement.

Seeking advanced care, the parents approached the hospital where the child came under the care of Neurosurgeon Consultant Ritesh Bhoot. Following detailed investigations, including MRI

and X-rays to assess spinal tethering and nerve involvement, the medical team planned a highly delicate surgical intervention.

During the procedure, Bhoot and his team made a precise incision over the swelling on the child’s back. Using advanced neuromonitoring and microsurgical techniques, they meticulously separated the nerve roots from the fatty mass, excised the lipoma, and successfully released the tethered spinal cord. The child is currently recovering well and undergoing rehabilitation to improve limb strength and bladder control. Doctors remain optimistic about his neurological recovery and overall quality of life.

“Spinal lipomyelomeningocele is a rare but serious condition. Early diagnosis and timely surgical intervention are critical to prevent permanent neurological damage. Cases like these highlight the importance of specialised paediatric neurosurgical care and early medical intervention,” Bhoot said.



OAVs gear up for smooth conduct of CBSE board exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: A review-cum-preparatory meeting in order to ensure smooth conduct of the upcoming CBSE board examinations was held under the chairmanship of School and Mass Education Commissioner-cum-Secretary N Thirumala Naik. The meeting was conducted

in virtual mode with Odisha Adarsha Vidyalayas (OAVs) principals.

During the meeting, Naik reviewed the past performance of OAVs in CBSE examinations and stressed the importance of improving student outcomes in the current academic session. He directed all principals to take necessary steps to ensure better

results and maintain academic excellence across schools. In 2025-26 academic session, approximately 17,041 students from 250 OAVs will appear for CBSE Class X examinations, while 4,747 students from 214 OAVs will appear for the Class XII (Science) examinations. CBSE has designated 73 OAVs as examination centres across the state.

RSC hosts 3-day science training for teachers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The Regional Science Centre (RSC), Bhubaneswar conducted a three-day teachers’ training programme to promote experiential and activity-based science learning in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

A total of twenty-nine in-service science teachers from across Odisha, affiliated with Shiksha Vikash Samiti Odisha, took part in the programme. A regular RSC initiative, it aims to enrich classroom teaching through hands-on and innovative methods.



The programme’s core featured five activity-based Teaching Learning Material (TLM) sessions, where participants were trained to create curriculum-linked teaching aids in Physics, Chemistry

and Biology. With materials and guidance provided by the Centre, the teachers collectively developed 145 teaching kits.

The kits covered key scientific concepts such as inertia

of rest, the magnetic field of a current-carrying solenoid, a sodium atom model, ionic conduction in liquids and a kidney model. The aim was to help teachers use practical demonstration tools in classrooms to improve students’ conceptual understanding.

Beyond the TLM sessions, the programme included enrichment activities such as live science demonstrations, interactive discussions, a dynamic globe cosmic projection, a Dinosaur Theme Park tour, robotics and programming sessions, a 3D film show, and evening telescope-based sky observation.

At the conclusion of the programme, participants received the teaching kits they developed along with certificates for classroom use.

The valedictory session was attended by Kiran Choudaj, Assistant Professor of Zoology at the Regional Institute of Education, Kishore Chandra Mohanty, President of Shiksha Vikash Samiti Odisha; and Saroj Kumar Hati, Secretary of the organisation.

Kapil Jain, Curator ‘E’ and Project Coordinator of RSC urged the media to widely publicise the initiative to promote awareness of experiential science education.

CLASSIFIED LOST

I, Sangram Kumar Panda, S/o. Late Santosh Kumar Panda, R/o. At: Amastala, Larambha, P.S: Attabira, Dist: Bargarh, declare that my father Santosh Kumar Panda has the Legatee of will deed vide Regd. Document No. 31621303963, Dt. 21.10.2013. That, the said original Will Deed was completely destroyed by white ant, which was beyond recoverable. That I have issued certified copy of said Deed of will for proof of Original Will Deed, Hence this affidavit.

Mass snail emergence observed on Puri coast

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Feb 12: Early morning visitors to Puri’s intertidal beach were treated to an unusual and ecologically significant spectacle — thousands of small marine snails emerging from beneath the sandy surface during low tide. The species, identified as Bullia vittata, not only fascinated local coastal communities but also attracted the interest of marine scientists, highlighting the rich biodiversity and dynamic coastal life of the region.

Bullia vittata, a common marine gastropod inhabiting sandy and muddy shorelines, usually stays buried within intertidal sediments. Recent field observations, however, noted a remarkable large-scale emergence of the species toward the sediment surface,



especially during tidal movements, drawing attention for its unusual behaviour and ecological significance.

According to Debasish Mahapatro, a marine biologist specialising in benthic communities, the phenomenon is a natural ecological response and not an immediate cause for concern.

“Bullia vittata moves toward the sediment surface primarily

in search of food,” Mahapatro explained. “These snails are highly responsive to chemical cues from decaying organic matter, dead fish, or other biological debris brought in by tides and wave action,” he said.

He further emphasised that oxygen availability is a key factor driving this behaviour. Deeper sediment layers, particularly those rich in organic matter, often have low oxygen levels. “By migrating upward, the snails reach better-oxygenated zones, which improves their chances of survival,” he added.

Tidal dynamics also play a role in the mass emergence. Incoming tides disturb surface sediments and deposit fresh organic material, prompting the snails to surface quickly. Scientists highlight that this behaviour underscores the

ecological importance of Bullia vittata as natural scavengers, helping recycle organic matter and maintain sediment quality in coastal ecosystems.

While such migrations are typically part of the species’ natural cycle, experts caution that unusually dense or prolonged surfacing could signal environmental stress. Factors such as sewage discharge, coastal pollution, or declining water quality can alter sediment conditions.

“Monitoring these organisms can offer early warning signs of ecological imbalance along our coast,” Mahapatro said.

Marine scientists emphasise that small benthic organisms such as Bullia vittata are highly sensitive indicators of marine ecosystem health, often reflecting subtle changes in sediment and water quality.

NAT’L WORKSHOP ON JICA FORESTRY

Day 2 focuses on resilient, sustainable wood economy



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The second day at the 14th national workshop of JICA-Assisted Forestry Projects highlighted the country’s transition towards a resilient and sustainable wood-based economy. The workshop was organised by Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project, Phase-II (OFSDP-II), under Forest, Environment and Climate Change (FE&CC) department, in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The day’s sessions emphasised strengthening sustainable wood supply chains, promoting forest certification, and expanding agroforestry to meet both domestic and global demand.

Technical session showcases innovative practices from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha, including advanced plantation genetics and modern wood processing technologies like Cross Laminated Timber

Experts discussed frameworks such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and PRAMAAN, which are seen as vital for linking rural smallholders to responsible supply chains while boosting local livelihoods.

Speaking as the chief guest at the valedictory session, FE&CC Principal Secretary Bhaskar Jyoti Sharma underlined the importance of coordinated efforts between states and international partners and engaged with community members from Vana Suraksha Samiti (VSS) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs), reiterating Odisha’s commitment to livelihood support and ecological restoration.

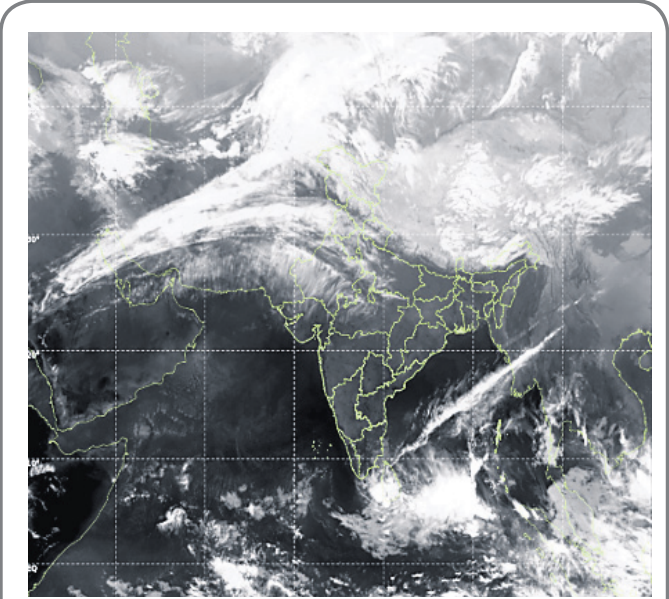
In presence of JICA India senior representative Wakamatsu Eiji, workshop outcomes were presented by JICA India development specialist Siddharth Parameswaran, who identified climate adaptation, wood transformation, and digital transfor-

mation as the cornerstones of future cooperation. Participants highlighted multi-stakeholder collaboration involving governments, research institutions, and industry partners as essential for a climate-resilient forestry sector.

Technical sessions showcased innovative practices from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha, including advanced plantation genetics and modern wood processing technologies like Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). Experts also stressed that digital public infrastructure in forestry should operate as integrated decision-support systems rather than standalone platforms to enhance long-term planning and policy outcomes.

The valedictory session was graced by PCCF and Forest Force head K Murugesan as guest of honour. The workshop reinforced India’s commitment to a sustainable and climate-resilient forestry sector through innovation, certification and international collaboration.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.63 ▼ 0.10	SENSEX	83674.92 ▼ 558.72	GOLD	₹157,899 ▼ ₹856
EURO	107.82 ▼ 0.40	NIFTY	25807.20 ▼ 146.65	SILVER	₹257,500 ▼ ₹5,518



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	32.7°	29.4°	Dry weather likely to prevail
Min Temp	16.5°	15.4°	
Humidity	74%	91%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Man, parents awarded life term in dowry death case

PNN & AGENCIES

Balasore, Feb 12: In a landmark judgment, the Additional District and Sessions Court at Soro in this district sentenced a man and his parents to life imprisonment Thursday for their involvement in a dowry death case dating back to 2012.

The court, presided over by Judge Meenakshi Dash, also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on each convict, with an additional eight months of imprisonment in case of default.

The convicted individuals have been identified as Santosh Barik and his parents, Binod Barik and Sanjumani Barik, residents of Simulia village.

According to prosecution records, Santosh married Swapna Barik of Khadgapur village in 2010. After the marriage, Santosh and his parents allegedly subjected Swapna to both physical and mental harassment, repeatedly demanding additional dowry from her family.

Tragically, Swapna later died due to poisoning under suspicious circumstances.

Following her death, her father, Gangadhar Barik, filed an FIR at Soro police station June 30, 2012, citing dowry-related harassment.

Police registered a case under Sections 304(B) and 498(A) of the Indian Penal Code, along with Section 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, leading to the arrest of the accused trio.

After careful examination of 18 witnesses and review of documentary and material evidence, the court delivered its verdict Thursday, bringing long-awaited justice to Swapna's family.

NIT-Rourkela inks MoU with Survey of India for research

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 12: The National Institute of Technology Rourkela and the Survey of India (Odisha & Chhattisgarh Geo-Spatial Directorate) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote collaboration in geospatial science, mapping technologies and advanced research in engineering and science.

The partnership combines Survey of India's expertise in national mapping and geodesy with NIT Rourkela's strengths in geo-dynamics, remote sensing, earth sciences and climate studies.

The agreement enables joint research projects, academic events and technical exchanges in alignment with the National Geospatial Policy-2022.

The MoU was signed by Prof K Umamaheshwar Rao, Director, NIT Rourkela, and Swarnima Bajpai, Director, Odisha & Chhattisgarh Geo-Spatial Directorate, Survey of India. Senior administrative officials, faculty members and officers from both institutions attended the ceremony. Prof K Umamaheshwar Rao stated, "The collaboration is of national significance as it aligns with India's growing emphasis on geospatial governance, digital mapping, climate resilience and infrastructure development."

Vedanta Aluminium's Vidyagraha aids 200 students ahead of exams



Jharsuguda: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, is supporting government school students in Jharsuguda for their upcoming board exams through comprehensive education camps. Organised under the aegis of its Vidyagraha initiative, four such camps were held at government high schools in the district. Through this initiative, Vedanta aims to help the students improve their exam preparation and career prospects through structured subject assessments and expert counselling. Held at the UG High School (Siripalli), VSS High School (Beheramai), Panchayat High School (Badmal), and Government High School (Sarbahal), the camps have benefited close to 200 students in Jharsuguda. The camps are focused on strengthening the understanding of fundamental concepts in Mathematics, Science and English, with assessments conducted in close adherence to board exam protocols. This approach has also enabled the students to familiarise themselves with exam patterns, evaluation parameters, and overall assessment process, helping build both their confidence and competence ahead of the crucial board examinations. Under the EVP (employee volunteer programme), more than 30 employee volunteers from Vedanta Jharsuguda were involved in career guidance and academic counselling sessions in the camps. Led by accomplished technical professionals from the company, these sessions provided the students with structured inputs on subject selection, academic pathways and career opportunities, helping students make informed decisions about their development. Underscoring the impact of the initiative, C Chandru, CEO, Vedanta Jharsuguda said, "At Vedanta Jharsuguda, we believe that education is the foundation of long-term community development. Through our Vidyagraha initiative, we are working to strengthen academic preparedness and provide meaningful guidance to students at a crucial stage in their lives. We remain committed to creating new and innovative avenues for students to succeed."

Hubby, aide held for killing, burying pregnant woman



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Feb 12: Police Thursday arrested a man and his associate for allegedly killing his eight-month pregnant wife and burying her body near a farmhouse on the outskirts of Bhawanipatna town in Kalahandi district.

The decomposed body of the woman was exhumed near the farmhouse in Sripur Monday afternoon. Following an investigation, police identified the deceased as Barsha Patel, 25, of Sarlanji area under Bhawanipatna Sadar police limits.

Suspicion arose after her husband, Nilambar alias Lalit Patel, went missing after the body was recovered. Police later apprehended Lalit and his associate, identified as Jashobant Goud of Chakradhar Nagar, from the local area. According to police, Lalit strangled Barsha January 26, allegedly over an extramarital affair and ongoing family disputes. He then buried her body with the help of Jashobant. Both accused were arrested Thursday and are scheduled to be produced in court Friday.

Police said Lalit's mother and aunt are also suspected to have been involved in the crime. They have been detained for questioning. Investigators recreated the crime scene with Lalit after his arrest Thursday.

Police said Lalit and Barsha were reportedly cousins in relationship, who married for love in 2023 despite opposition from their families and community. As they were not accepted socially, the couple had been living away from the family, frequently changing places. Meanwhile, Lalit allegedly developed a relationship with another woman, leading to frequent quarrels with Barsha.

Police have registered a case (48/2026) under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and said further investigation is underway.

The crime came to light Monday when a sanitation worker noticed a finger protruding out from the ground while cleaning the area and alerted the farmhouse owner, who informed police. Officers recovered the body and seized a 'Mangalsutra' and materials allegedly used in the crime.

Close shave for protesters as police bus suffers brake failure during stir



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Feb 12: Protesters staging a road blockade on National Highway 326 in Rayagada town during the nationwide strike Thursday had a close shave after a police bus suffered brake failure and rolled towards the group of protesters. However, no injuries were reported, officials said.

The incident occurred at Siriguda Chhak on NH-326, which passes through the

town, where members of a workers' organisation had been staging a demonstration since 6am.

At around 9am, a bus carrying more than 30 police personnel was travelling from Rayagada to Nabarangpur when its brakes allegedly failed near the protest site. The bus began moving rapidly towards the demonstrators.

After the driver shouted about the brake failure, protesters sitting on the road and

3 killed, 5 injured as tractor falls into river

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, Feb 12: At least three persons died and five others were injured after a tractor fell into a river in Mayurbhanj district Thursday evening, police said. The accident took place near Murgasahi village under Karanjia block of the district.

Eight people on board the tractor were returning from Jhumukakudar village when the mishap took place.



The driver lost control of the vehicle and it fell into river Deo, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Nabakrushna Nayak, said.

The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination.

The injured were taken to Karanjia government hospital, the officer added.

Defence lawyer questions police chargesheet

The lawyer alleged that police were attempting to malign the character of former MLA Bikram Panda, an accused in the case and a district president of the BJD

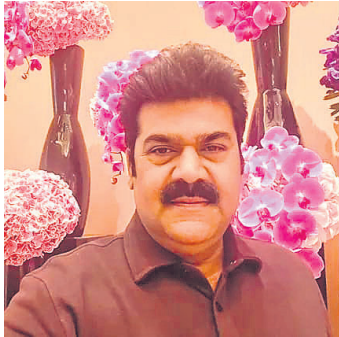
POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 12: Advocate Deepak Pattnaik, lawyer of ex-MLA Bikram Panda, has raised serious objections to the chargesheet filed by police in connection with the murder of senior lawyer and BJP leader Pitabas Panda.

Police had earlier claimed that political and business rivalry was the motive behind the murder of the BJP leader when the accused were arrested. However, Pattnaik Thursday said the chargesheet presents a different narrative regarding the circumstances of the murder and that new elements have been inserted.

He alleged that police were attempting to malign the character of former MLA Bikram

PITABAS MURDER

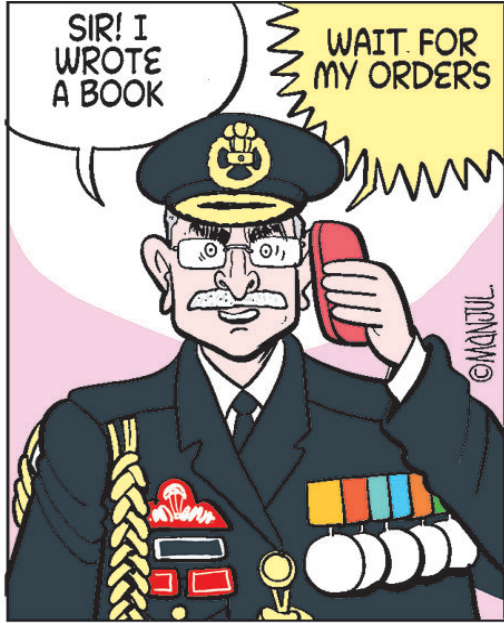


Panda, an accused in the case, who is currently the district president of the BJD.

According to the seizure list submitted by police, a pen drive containing some objectionable photographs of Bikram was recovered from Panda's house.

During the post-mortem, a key was found tied to the sacred thread worn by the deceased. Police stated that the key was used to open a secret chamber in his house, from where the pen drive was seized. Pattnaik questioned these

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Senior official held for taking bribe to release seized tractor



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 12: Vigilance officials Thursday arrested the additional tehsildar of Bellaguntha in Ganjam district for allegedly accepting ₹10,000 bribe to release a seized sand-laden tractor.

Kabiraj Sethi was caught accepting the money from the tractor's owner in exchange for releasing the seized vehicle, according to a Vigilance department release. He was arrested in connection with Vigilance Case No. 1/26. The alleged bribe money and related documents were seized.

Simultaneous searches were conducted at Sethi's office in

Bellaguntha, his residence and his ancestral home on suspicion that he possessed assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, officials said.

The case stems from an incident February 5 when Sethi allegedly seized a sand-laden tractor without making a proper record. Although the owner produced relevant documents, Sethi allegedly demanded a bribe to release the vehicle.

The tractor owner later filed a complaint with the Berhampur Vigilance unit. Acting on the complaint, officials laid a trap. As planned, the complainant visited Sethi's office Thursday. Sethi collected ₹30,000 as a penalty and allegedly accepted an additional ₹10,000 as a bribe for releasing the tractor. Vigilance officers apprehended him immediately after the transaction and seized the entire amount.

Officials said discrepancies and irregularities were found in the penalty challans issued in the case, and their authenticity is being verified. The investigation is ongoing.

Odisha records 765 dolphins in 5-year high

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Feb 12: As many as 765 dolphins were spotted along the Odisha coast and Chilika Lake in the latest census conducted by the wildlife wing of the Forest, Environment and Climate Change department, officials said Wednesday. It is the highest population of the marine mammal recorded in the last five years, they added.

The number of Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika Lake remains unchanged at 159. The count of the species in the brackish water lagoon was 159 in 2025 too, they said.

Besides the Irrawaddy dolphins, Chilika also recorded 16 humpback dolphins of the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean species. In 2025, the lake had reported 15 humpback dolphins, officials said.

In all, 765 dolphins of six species were sighted along the Odisha coast and in Chilika Lake during the population estimation exercise. These in-



cluded 208 Irrawaddy dolphins, 495 humpback dolphins, 55 bottlenose dolphins, three spinner dolphins and two finless porpoises.

Nine Irrawaddy dolphins have also been sighted in Bhitarkanika Marine Sanctuary, 12 in Puri wildlife division area, 13 in Berhampur division and 15 in Balasore wildlife division, it said.

"Odisha has recorded the highest dolphin count in five years at 765," state's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) (Wildlife) Prem Kumar Jha posted on X.

Strong conservation efforts, habitat protection and community participation drive a major milestone in marine biodiversity conservation, he said.

The annual census in 2025 estimated 710 dolphins in the state, including those in Chilika.

These included 188 Irrawaddy dolphins, 498 humpback dolphins, 16 bottlenose dolphins and eight spinner dolphins.

Dolphin has been included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and categorised as endangered on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN)

claims, alleging that the story was fabricated to defame Bikram Panda. He said police submitted only the seizure list in court but did not produce any photographic evidence or the pen drive itself.

He further said that initially police had linked the murder to alleged irregularities involving liquor, sand and land dealings. However, the chargesheet makes no mention of these aspects. Had the investigation proceeded in that direction several influential individuals might have been implicated, Pattnaik alleged.

An application has been filed seeking a copy of the evidence submitted by police in court. Further legal steps will be taken after examining the documents, Pattnaik said.

City couple kept under 'digital arrest' for 35 hrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: An elderly couple from Nayapalli area in the Capital city was allegedly kept under 'digital arrest' by cyber fraudsters for over 35 hours, police said Thursday.

The couple, however, did not suffer any financial loss as the bank account provided by the fraudsters for transferring money was found to be non-functional, they said.

'Digital arrest' is a tactic where miscreants pose as law enforcement agency officials, and threaten people of arrest by making video calls.

A complaint was lodged at Cyber Police Station here, following which an investigation began, a police officer said.

The victims were identified as Saroj Kumar Pattnaik, a retired officer of a central public sector undertaking, and his wife Nirjharani.

"The caller said a terrorist had used my Aadhaar card for fraudulent activities. He claimed that an arrest warrant had been issued against us and shared a fake arrest order on a messaging platform," she said.

The couple, in their 60s, was allegedly kept under continuous video surveillance by the fraudsters for more than 35 hours.

The accused "demanded ₹1 crore" for their release and sought details of bank accounts.

The couple said they managed to come out of the situation around 10:30pm Tuesday with the help of friends. They switched off their mobile phones and approached the cyber police.

"Cyber fraudsters usually target senior citizens and retired employees, who may have savings in their bank accounts.

Such vulnerable people need to be very careful," ACP Biswaranjan Senapati said.

Chilika houses 159 Irrawaddy dolphins
Annual census in 2025 counted 710 dolphins


Red List. Despite the population in Chilika remaining static, the lagoon continues to have the highest concentration of Irrawaddy dolphins in a single area globally, a forest officer said.

Amlan Nayak, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the Chilika Wildlife Division, said the sea mammal might have migrated to other areas, which could explain why its population remained the same as last year.

In the Berhampur division, the Irrawaddy dolphin was not sighted during last year's count. This time, their number stood at 13.

It is a good sign that the species has been sighted this time in the Ganjam coast, said Dibya Shankar Behera, Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), Khallikote.

True knowledge is not attained by thinking. It is what you are; it is what you become.



Trump’s Trade Truce

For over two decades, the United States has regarded India as a “natural partner” – a rising power whose geography, military capabilities, and democratic credentials made it indispensable to America’s strategy in the Indo-Pacific. Five successive US administrations, Republican and Democratic alike, invested heavily in strengthening that partnership, treating India not just as a market, but as a long-term strategic bet.

But the goodwill that the US built up with India over that period has been rapidly eroded since Donald Trump’s return to the presidency last year. Trump’s second presidency has brought repeated public insults and a bruising trade war, with the US using tariffs as tools of geopolitical coercion. The interim trade deal announced on 2 February may have halted the economic confrontation, but trust – the essential currency of any strategic partnership – is unlikely to be restored any time soon.

By reducing the effective US tariff burden on Indian goods from 50 per cent to 18 per cent, the newly announced deal will deliver short-term relief for India. But it comes with plenty of strings attached, including the requirement that India move toward near-zero tariffs on US industrial products and a wide range of agricultural goods. India’s decision to open its sensitive agricultural sector – the country’s largest employer – to a flood of imports from the US is already sparking a domestic backlash.

But that is not all. India has also agreed to purchase a whopping \$500 billion worth of American goods over the next five years, and to replace discounted Russian oil with US energy at market prices, which also implies additional transport costs. Meanwhile, the US offered no binding commitments to India. This lopsided bargain looks nothing like a stable, reciprocal, rules-based trade partnership, and underscores how far US trade policy has drifted from World Trade Organization norms. It is probably best understood as a tactical de-escalation, not a strategic reconciliation.

The way the deal was announced reinforces this interpretation. Typically, bilateral agreements or joint statements are announced simultaneously in both capitals to signal equal partnership. The free-trade agreement India recently concluded with the European Union, which created a trade corridor encompassing roughly 25 per cent of global GDP and one-third of world trade, was touted by both sides as the “mother of all deals.”

The US-India agreement, by contrast, was announced first by Trump, who portrayed it on his social-media platform as a favour to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose “request” for an agreement Trump had granted “out of friendship and respect.” Days later, the White House released a “joint statement” outlining the terms of the agreement at 5:00 am Indian Standard Time.

The Trump administration then added injury to insult, announcing a presidential executive order authorising reimposition of punitive tariffs if the US deems India to have violated its commitment to halt all direct and indirect imports of Russian oil. By framing Indian energy imports as a US national-security issue, the administration has turned economic engagement into a compliance test. The message to India is unmistakable: autonomy will be tolerated only within US-approved limits.

India’s leaders have framed the agreement as a win, noting that India now faces lower tariffs than China or Vietnam. But this is a low bar for a relationship that successive US administrations described as “defining.” And they are probably well aware that Trump could still pull the rug out from under them. The arrangement’s details have not yet been finalised, and Trump has a long history of changing his mind, scrapping deals, and layering on new demands.

Whatever happens next, India will not quickly forget Trump’s past betrayals. Nor will it overlook his slights, such as branding India, whose GDP growth outpaces that of all other major economies, as a “dead economy” last July.

In a sense, Trump might have done India a favour. By exposing the raw transactionalism at the core of his foreign policy, he has left no doubt that, under his leadership, the US is not a reliable strategic partner. As a result, India’s government is committed to diversifying the country’s economic relationships away from the US, as underscored by its FTAs with the EU and the United Kingdom – an effort that will likely continue, regardless of the new trade agreement with the US.

Markets are similarly unlikely to put too much faith in the US. News of the trade deal did trigger a stock-market rally in India, but the gains are likely to be short-lived.

Strategic partnerships are sustained not by tariffs and threats, but by predictability, mutual respect, and restraint – qualities that have been conspicuously absent from Trump’s presidency. The US should beware. Whatever short-term concessions Trump secures through bullying and coercion will be dwarfed by the long-term costs of destabilising a partnership that, as previous administrations recognised, is vital to American interests in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.



Brahma Chellaney


INDIA’S LEADERS HAVE FRAMED THE AGREEMENT AS A WIN, NOTING THAT INDIA NOW FACES LOWER TARIFFS THAN CHINA OR VIETNAM. BUT THIS IS A LOW BAR FOR A RELATIONSHIP THAT SUCCESSIVE US ADMINISTRATIONS DESCRIBED AS ‘DEFINING’

The writer is Professor Emeritus of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.


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WISDOM CORNER


- Sarcasm helps me overcome the harshness of the reality we live, eases the pain of scars and makes people smile.



MAHMOUD DARWISH
- Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts.



CHARLES DICKENS
- Live as if you were living a second time, and as though you had acted wrongly the first time.



VIKTOR E. FRANKL

THIS DAY IN HISTORY


- 1649:

English author John Milton published his first political tract, The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, in response to the execution of King Charles I.
- 1883:

German composer Richard Wagner, whose operas and music had a revolutionary influence on the course of Western music, died in Venice at age 69.

FOCUS POLITICS

SAFFRON POSTERBOY



Rajdeep Sardesai

EVEN THE SO-CALLED ‘SECULAR’ LOBBY HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY BROW-BEATEN INTO SUBMISSION BY THE TRIUMPHAL MARCH OF MAJORITARIAN POLITICS

er’ has been part of Assam’s complex ethnic landscape for decades now; Sarma has positioned himself as a loudspeaker of popular grievances against a demographic re-ordering in the state. With some estimates pointing to a 38 per cent Muslim population in the state, it is easy to stir fears, real and imaginary, against demographic change and cultural dilution.

Which is where the incendiary video’s messaging becomes intensely problematic. What qualifies prima facie as hate speech outside Assam is pitched as a defence of the historical/linguistic/cultural/economic rights of the indigenous population within the state. Far from it provoking outrage, the video has been justified in Assam as reflecting the state’s lived political consciousness. If the 2002 Gujarat riots were linked to Gujarati asmita (self-respect) by then CM Narendra Modi, a similar playbook is being practised in Assam as part of distinct ethnic identity politics.

Not surprisingly, the BJP central leadership has maintained a cryptic silence on the offensive video. The ‘sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas’ slogan is a brand-building exercise meant to soften global audiences; in poll-bound Assam, there is political dividend to be reaped in keeping the



Even by the morally vacuous standards of social media, a venomous video put up by the Assam BJP marks a new low. The controversial video – now deleted – showed Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma using an air rifle at ‘point blank’ range aiming at two men, one in a skull cap, the other bearded. While the video purportedly claimed to be targeting Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants and standing up for ethnic Assamese identity, the violent communal imagery could not have been more starkly spiteful. A chief minister of a state, a constitutionally elected leader, pointing his gun at Muslims, is the most egregious example of a brazen violation of constitutional responsibilities.

A crafty politician, Sarma has rather disingenuously claimed that he has no knowledge of any such video. But the deniability carries little weight. The video was put up by the Assam BJP on its official handle on X. It garnered more than a million views before it was taken down. The video wasn’t an aberration either. For months now, Sarma has led a sustained, toxic campaign against ‘Miyas,’ a crude pejorative term used against Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam. He has even called for an economic boycott of ‘Miyas,’ be it shopkeepers, vegetable vendors or auto-rickshaw drivers. Far from being apologetic about his stance, Sarma has justified his utterances as ‘necessary’ to protect Assam’s cultural-civilisational ethos.

It is apparent that an unapologetic Sarma senses electoral benefit in his constant anti-Muslim slurs. At a time when the Congress campaign has focused on allegations of big ticket corruption against the CM and his family, communal tropes are both weapons of mass distraction and of division. Anger and resentment against the ‘outsid-

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

On the eve of destruction



Tobias Bunde & Sophie Eisentraut

IN THIS NEW CLIMATE, THOSE WHO EMPLOY BULLDOZERS AND CHAINSAWS ARE INCREASINGLY TOLERATED – AND SOMETIMES CELEBRATED

The world has entered a period of wrecking-ball politics. Leaders have risen to prominence by promising sweeping demolition rather than careful reform. They seek to tear down rules and institutions at home and abroad, which they falsely claim hinder both their efforts to build stronger, more prosperous countries as well as to prevent "civilizational decline."

But these sentiments are not confined to a small group of radical actors. Today's disruptive agendas are built on widespread disillusion with democratic institutions and a pervasive loss of trust in policymakers' ability to make meaningful course corrections.


In a survey for the Munich Security Conference 2026, only a tiny share of respondents in the G7 countries say that their current government's policies will make future generations better off. In France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, absolute majorities believe the opposite: that future generations will be worse off under the current policy trajectory.

Both domestically and globally, established political structures are now often perceived as overly bureaucra-

tized and judicialized; these ossified systems, the thinking goes, cannot be adapted to meet people's needs. In this new climate, those who employ bulldozers and chainsaws are increasingly tolerated – and sometimes celebrated.

Chief among those promising to free their countries from the existing order's constraints is US President Donald Trump. His administration's "recalibration" of US foreign policy targets all three sides of the "Kantian triangle" of peace, around which the country's grand strategy revolved for more than 80 years. These include a commitment to multilateral institutions and rules; support for an open international order and economic interdependence; and investment in democracy, human rights, and cooperation among the world's liberal democracies.

As a result, leaders who have sought to dismantle the liberal international order, like Russian President Vladimir Putin, are now joined by the US, long its staunchest defender. The US-led global-governance system, which was at the heart of the postwar Pax Americana, is now being undermined and



What qualifies prima facie as hate speech outside Assam is pitched as a defence of the historical/linguistic/cultural/economic rights of the indigenous population within the state

communal pot boiling. Which is why every time PM Modi or Home Minister Amit Shah visit Assam, they don’t forget to remind audiences about the dangers posed by ‘ghuspetiyas’ or ‘illegal infiltrators’. That international borders are meant to be policed by Central forces is conveniently ignored.

Even the so-called ‘secular’ lobby has been virtually brow-beaten into submission by the triumphal march of majoritarian politics. While a few concerned citizens have filed a PIL in the Supreme Court calling for stern action against those responsible for the video, there is a marked reluctance on part of the political class in general to confront the Sarma brand of communal politics for fear that it will further alienate Hindu voters. Where once Muslim minority appeasement was the charge levelled against parties like the Congress, now it is competition for majority Hindu voters that guides political decision-making. If an Asadduddin Owaisi has filed a police complaint against Sarma in Hyderabad it is because he doesn’t need the Hindu vote to win.

Which explains why Sarma can get away with hate speech with such impunity. A long-serving Congressman’s defection to become BJP’s saffron posterboy, the transition

is a reflection of opportunistic shifts in contemporary Indian politics being disguised as personality clashes or ideological incompatibility. The Assam CM in 2015 had famously claimed that he had left the Congress because Rahul Gandhi had ‘humiliated’ him at a private meeting by preferring to feed biscuits to his puppy rather than addressing Assam’s concerns. Truth is, when Sarma’s ambitions could not be accommodated within the Congress, the BJP became a secure alternative. The fact that the BJP had previously charged Sarma with corruption was quietly forgotten: all the cases against him were dropped or slowed down once he switched sides in a classic ‘washing machine’ early prototype.

As a 57-year-old ‘strongman’ politician, Sarma is now in the front row of BJP’s Gen-Next. This is a generation that is not chained by political correctness, moral rectitude or constitutional values as to some extent the BJP’s leaders of the Atal-Advani era were. This is a generation that is driven by an obsessive urge for political power above all else. Which is why Sarma as the party’s principal North-East face, practised election manager and trouble-shooter is seen as an invaluable asset. Right-thinking citizens will be appalled by Sarma’s anti-Muslim vocabulary but for the rank and file of the BJP, his ‘in your face’ dog-whistle politics fits in with a ‘Hindu Rashtira’ dream project. The mask is well and truly off.

Post-script: When Sarma announced his decision to leave the Congress, a senior Congress leader reportedly warned his party high command: ‘He is a leader for the future, we will miss someone like him.’ A decade on, the ‘face of the future’ is part of a darkened present.

The writer is senior journalist and author.

hollowed out from within.

For some of Trump’s supporters, his disruptive politics offers an opportunity to build something better. In line with what Joseph Schumpeter famously described as “creative destruction,” they believe that meaningful change requires fundamental disruption, not incremental adjustments.

Transactional (and often self-enriching) deals are rapidly replacing principled co-operation; policymakers are increasingly serving private, not public, interests; and great-power dominance is superseding international governance by rules and norms. No wonder, then, that in all the countries surveyed for the Munich Security Index 2026, the downsides of wrecking-ball politics dominate public perceptions – even in Global South countries, many of which initially greeted a second Trump term with optimism.

For example, in all countries surveyed, except China and India, absolute majorities disagree that Trump’s policies are good for the world or their country. In China and India, pluralities disagree.

While America’s immense power means that foreign-poli-

cy recalibration will have global repercussions, the rest of the world is not powerless to resist a full-scale policy of destruction. But those opposed to a future defined by the great-power politics of the past must step up now. Containing the worst consequences demands a coalition of the willing to invest significantly in their own power resources and pool them through closer cooperation.

But resisting the Trump administration’s destructive politics is not enough. Governments must credibly demonstrate that meaningful reforms and political course corrections are possible – and much more likely than a policy of widespread destruction to satisfy growing demands for broad improvements in social and economic conditions. That will require policymakers to devise new, more sustainable priorities, hone their tools, and become bolder builders themselves.

Tobias Bunde is Director of Research and Policy at the Munich Security Conference. Sophie Eisentraut is Head of Research and Publications at the Munich Security Conference.

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Why not WQI?

Sir, While AQI has grabbed many eyeballs, thanks to Delhi’s almost unbreatable air, the quality of water that we drink also needs serious consideration. Just as the air quality is displayed on AQI display boards for all to see, local bodies (municipalities) must be mandated to make public the quality of water, indicating how safe it is for consumption. WQI (Water Quality Index) boards may be set up at prominent places of a town or city to indicate water purity in areas that come under a particular municipality. This by itself will place more responsibility on the authorities concerned in ensuring that only potable water is being supplied to citizens who, after all, pay water tax. No part of our country should see another Bhagirathpura like situation in the future. However, going by the nonchalant attitude of the authorities concerned in Bhagirathpura locality, it is a foregone conclusion that the idea of WQI will never ever materialize because WQI entails more responsibility and accountability from our local bodies.

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)

Safer internet for all

Sir, AI is transforming how we work, learn, and connect, but it also brings new risks. AI-driven harms such as deepfakes, online harassment, stalking, and sexual threats disproportionately target women and children, limiting their full participation in the digital world. These risks extend beyond immediate harm—they affect mental health, privacy, education, and economic opportunities. Without inclusive design, transparency, and safeguards, AI can deepen inequalities, reinforce biases, and widen the digital divide, leaving vulnerable communities even further behind. It is crucial to promote AI built with equality-by-design and safety-by-design principles, centering the voices of victims, women, and marginalised groups. Platforms must be accountable, algorithms audited for bias, and reporting mechanisms strengthened. Women’s leadership in technology, policymaking, and governance should be expanded to guide ethical AI use. Safe AI also means embedding privacy protections, consent-based data practices, and clear redressal mechanisms from design to deployment, ensuring a truly safer and inclusive internet for everyone.


Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

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etters

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



B-15, Rasulgarih Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



Assam Rifles in ‘Atmanirbhar’ mode

Assam Rifles is planning to induct dog breeds available in India into its squad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jorhat (Assam), Feb 12: Giving a fillip to the central government’s call for indigenisation, Assam Rifles is planning to induct dog breeds available in India into its squad for carrying out a range of operations, a senior official said Thursday.

As part of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’, the oldest paramilitary force has already inducted the Tangkhul Hui breed in its dog squad as a pilot project and is looking to introduce the Kombai breed from April, Assam Rifles Dog Training Centre (ARDTC) Officer Commanding Lt Col Alok Palei told PTI in an interview here.

“The Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) has always advocated for Atmanirbhar Bharat in every field. He also wanted to have more of the Indian dog breeds in the dog squads of all forces. Since then, we have been working on identifying an indigenous breed for our purposes,” he added.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs also issued a directive in this regard last year, follow-



ing which the Assam Rifles started looking for more local breeds for induction in the force, Palei said.

“Currently we have four breeds – Labrador, German Shepherd, Belgian Malinois and Tangkhul Hui. Out of them, we inducted six dogs of Tangkhul Hui in 2022 as a pilot project. They are highly disease resistant and all of them are in narcotics detection,” he added.

The Tangkhul Hui is found Ukhrul district of Manipur, and it is a domestic breed, used mainly for hunting purposes, the official said.

Talking about the Kombai

breed, Palei said it is found in Tamil Nadu, and this type of dog is being inducted in all the central armed police forces after the call for an indigenous breed.

“We are in the process of identifying the parent stock. The first three years will be for breeding. There are different stages, starting from identifying the breed to final induction. As the first step, we will induct two males and eight females of Kombai in April,” he added.

Mizoram plans major urban projects on lands vacated by Assam Rifles



The iconic Loch House in the Tuikual area will be renovated to enhance its historical value while maintaining its original architectural aesthetic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, Feb 12: The Mizoram government is planning major urban projects on lands recently vacated by the Assam Rifles to transform the landscape of the state capital Aizawl, according to an official statement.

An advisory committee, comprising representatives from various organisations tasked with overseeing the land utilisation, finalised a comprehensive redevelopment plan during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Lalduhma Wednesday.

A key decision involves the construction of a new, state-of-the-art Vanapa Hall on vacated land near the Assam Rifles Ground, also known as Lammual, the statement said.

This facility will serve as a modern successor to the ageing Vanapa Hall.

The committee resolved that a convention centre previously proposed for the site will now be designated as the new Vanapa Hall to serve as a larger and more modern facility taking advantage of the prime space made available by the military relocation.

The government will soon determine a new use for the existing Vanapa Hall near the Assembly House in the Treasury Square area, which has long served as an audi-

torium for public events and celebrations.

The meeting also approved the relocation of the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) and official residence from McDonald Hill in Zarkawt area to Assam Rifles land near the Mizoram New Capital Complex (MINECO), the state secretariat in Khatla.

Officials said this strategic move is designed to resolve logistical hurdles caused by the distance between the current office and the secretariat, thereby reducing travel time, operational costs, and bureaucratic delays.

The site, situated opposite the main entrance of MINECO, was cleared for handover following a February 2 meeting between the chief minister and Assam Rifles Director General Lt. Gen. Vikas Lakhera, they said.

The iconic Loch House in the Tuikual area will be renovated to enhance its historical value while maintaining its original architectural aesthetic.

Additionally, the Hari Mandir at Canteen Kual in the Zodin area will be moved to a new site between Loch House and the CHAN office.

The Assam Rifles have requested to shift two war memorials from Canteen Kual and Treasury Square to their base in Khatla.

Officials said that the state government has committed to preserving over 52 per cent of the vacated land as green cover.

Infrastructure work is expected to begin shortly, with funds already sanctioned for the widening and improvement of main roads within the vacated sectors, they said.

The Public Works Department (PWD) will oversee these projects, officials added.

Palei said that the Tangkhul Hui and Kombai breeds are likely to be inducted fully into the Assam Rifles’ dog squad by March 2027 together.

“This centre is the only facility of the Assam Rifles. The Kombai dogs will also be trained in this centre,” he said.

The Assam Rifles has 344 authorised strength for dogs, but it currently has 253 dogs. These are posted in different battalions across the Northeast and Jammu & Kashmir, the Lt Col said.

He said that the Assam Rifles presently has over 1,200 dog trained handlers, while 9-10 people are required for care and maintenance of each dog.

The Assam Rifles Dog Training Centre in Jorhat district has 104 dogs and 174 handlers, which are in different stages of training, Palei said.

When asked about any big operation that was successful with a significant role of its dog squad, he said, without sharing details, that a huge cache of narcotics substances transported from Myanmar was seized in September 2025 in a Northeastern state due to its canine unit.

On the training aspect, Palei said the centre is conducting three courses for its personnel and two courses for the dogs.

The three courses for personnel are basic dog handler course (23 weeks), dog first aid course (four weeks) and refresher course (two weeks). For dogs, there is a basic obedience course (12 weeks) and a refresher course (two weeks).

The officer said that there are three specialised courses also – tracking, explosive detection and narcotic detection. Each course is of 36 weeks’ duration.

“At present, we have the 42nd batch of our basic dog handling course. After this, the best of the handlers are selected for a master trainer course at the CRPF Dog Breeding & Training School in Bangalore, and it is 24 weeks long. Also, we send our people to the Remount Veterinary Corps Centre (RVC) in Meerut for a six-month course,” he added.

Palei said after passing out from these two centres, the personnel are deployed at ARDTC as instructors.

Over 20 int’l runners to take part in Aizawl half-marathon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, Feb 12: Over 20 professional runners from various foreign countries will take part in an international half-marathon to be held in Aizawl February 14, Mizoram Sports Minister Lalnginglova Hmar said Wednesday.

The second edition of the mega event will be organised by the state’s sports department in partnership with Innovations India. Hmar said that the current edition will feature an elite field as over 20 athletes from distance-running powerhouses, including Kenya, Ethiopia, Bahrain, England and France, have confirmed their participation.

The state government is currently coordinating with Central

authorities to secure Protected Area Permits (PAP) for these athletes upon their arrival in India to enter Mizoram, he said.

Following a successful inaugural run in April last year that drew 1,500 participants from different parts of the country, the 2026 marathon is scaling up significantly. The state government has integrated the marathon into the 2026 Tourism Even Calendar, leveraging the race to showcase the state’s cultural heritage and natural landscapes, according to Hmar.

With the recent expansion of the railway line up to Sairang near Aizawl, the Minister expected a record-breaking attendance from both domestic and international visitors.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION REGARDING SPEED TRIAL

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated along the completed section mentioned below under South Eastern Railway that a speed trial run by an electric engine at a speed of 130 km/h will be conducted in the specified section from **16.02.2026 to 20.02.2026. (1) Section:** Newly constructed 3rd line between Soro-Ranital (from Electric Mast No. 264/13 to Mast No. 285/11). **(2) Date of speed trial :** 16.02.2026 to 20.02.2026. All users of the Railway line and members of the public are hereby advised to maintain a safe distance from the newly constructed 3rd line during the period of the speed trial run.

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Garden Reach, Kolkata

South Eastern Railway (PR-1176)
We serve with a smile

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Sudarshan Khara @ Suraj @ Raju, S/o Bhagwan Khara, R/o Village Khamra, Tehsil Badel, PS Padua, District Koraput, Odisha, Presently Address: Room No. 2, Khanjra Khanjra Guda Road, Hanuman Nagar, Simli Guda, Koraput, Odisha** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 600/2024, U/s 20/25/29 NDPS Act, P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Sudarshan Khara @ Suraj @ Raju** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Sudarshan Khara @ Suraj @ Raju** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Sudarshan Khara @ Suraj @ Raju** accused of **FIR No. 600/2024, U/s 20/25/29 NDPS Act, P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **27.03.2026**.

By Order - **Harvinder Singh Johal**
Special Judge (NDPS), North

DP/1796/ON/2026 Room No. 207, Rohini Courts, Delhi

भारत संचार निगम लिमिटेड
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)
BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED
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संख्या: BSNLCO-11/12(11)/1/2025-RECTT-CO-Part(1) दिनांक: 03.02.2026

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, WATCO DIVISION, KEONJHAR-758001
Ph. No.06766-254096, e-Mail : gmwatcojkr@gmail.com

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Invitation for Bids (IFB) No. WATCOKJR-04/2025-26 dt.09.02.2026

- Name of the Work : Construction of 250000 Ltr capacity UGR at Zone-10A near DHH Keonjhar
- Estimated Cost : Rs.15.63 Lakh
- Period of completion : 180 Days
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : 10 hours of dt.13.02.2026 to 17 hours of dt.26.02.2026
- Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal : Dt.26.02.2026 at 17 hours
- Date & time of opening of bids : Dt.27.02.2026 at 11.30 hours
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : The General Manager, WATCO Division, Keonjhar, 758001, Odisha, Ph. 06766-254096 e-Mail : gmwatcojkr@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the **website www.tendersorissa.gov.in**
Sd/- General Manager
OIPR-13001/13215/1/25-26/0001 WATCO DIVISION, Keonjhar

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, MEGA LIFT BHUBANESWAR

Plot no. A/8/2, Bhoingar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, PIN-751022, E-Mail : cmilprw.od@gmail.com

Government of Odisha “e” Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.12ML/2025-26

No.32001/84/2526 : The Chief Engineer, Megalift on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online tender through “E” procurement for the work as detailed in the Annexure to this bid notice.

ANNEXURE TO BID NOTICE

Name of the work	Appointment of Proof Engineering Consultant (PEC) for implementation of Mega Lift projects in Cluster No XXXII
Cost of Tender Paper	Rs. 10,000/-
EMD/Bid Security	Rs.1,00,000/-
Mode of payment of tender paper Cost & EMD	Online
Period of Completion	36 (Thirty-Six) Calendar months
Availability of Bid document for sale and receipt through on-line	From dt.12.02.2026, 10.00 A.M. to dt.26.02.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.
Last date / time of receipt of bid in the portal	26.02.2026 (5.00 P.M.)
Date of Pre-bid Conference	18.02.2026, 11.00 A.M.
Date of opening of Techno-Commercial bid through online	On dt.27.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M. in the Office of the Chief Engineer, Megalift
Class of Contractor	The bidder should be registered under the Companies Act, 1956
Digital Signature Certificate of Bidder	The Bidder must possess compatible digital signature certificate (DSC)
The detail tender call notice can also be seen in the DOWR website	https://dowr.odisha.gov.in
Name & Address of the OIT	Chief Engineer, Megalift Plot No A-8/2, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751022 Ph. No-0674-2567252 Email ID : cmilprw.od@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>
Sd/- Chief Engineer, Megalift
OIPR-32001/132504/1/25-26/0001 Bhubaneswar

EAST COAST RAILWAY

(1) Notice No. : e-Tender-Elect-G-75-25
DESCRIPTION OF WORK : MISCELLANEOUS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR ALL TYPES OF ELECTRICAL GENERAL WORKS SUCH AS SUB-STATIONS, CABLING INSTALLATIONS, FEEDER BOXES, JUNCTION BOXES, PUMPING INSTALLATIONS, C/L'S PANELS AT STATIONS, LEVEL CROSSING GATES, IBS, HIGH MASTS, LIFTS, ESCALATORS, VARIOUS TYPES OF LIGHTS, FANS, EARTHING INSTALLATIONS, HT< FEEDER PANELS WITH ASSOCIATED INSTALLATIONS UNDER JURISDICTION OF S.E.R.W. Division, KHURDA ROAD DIVISION FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.

Approx. Cost of Work : ₹ 7,00,09,817.37, **EMD :** ₹ 5,00,100/-

(2) Notice No. : e-Tender-Elect-G-76-25
DESCRIPTION OF WORK : MISCELLANEOUS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR ALL TYPES OF ELECTRICAL GENERAL WORKS SUCH AS SUB-STATIONS, CABLING INSTALLATIONS, FEEDER BOXES, JUNCTION BOXES, PUMPING INSTALLATIONS, C/L'S PANELS AT STATIONS, LEVEL CROSSING GATES, IBS, HIGH MASTS, LIFTS, ESCALATORS, VARIOUS TYPES OF LIGHTS, FANS, EARTHING INSTALLATIONS, HT< FEEDER PANELS WITH ASSOCIATED INSTALLATIONS UNDER JURISDICTION OF S.E.R.W. Division, KHURDA ROAD DIVISION FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.

Approx. Cost of Work : ₹ 5,04,56,668.18, **EMD :** ₹ 4,02,300/-

(3) Notice No. : e-Tender-Elect-G-77-25
DESCRIPTION OF WORK : PROVISION OF 07 NOS. AIR CONDITIONERS IN FIELD UNITS OF COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT.

Approx. Cost of Work : ₹ 5,07,660.09, **EMD :** ₹ 10,200/-

Completion Period : 36 Months (for SI. No. 1 & 2) & 03 Months (for SI. No. 3).

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 hrs. of 02.03.2026 (for all the Tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website ten (10) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for the tender. The tenderers / bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/ PR-1117/Q/25-26
Khurda Road

GOVERNMENT OF ORISSA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KARANJIA (MAYURBHANJ)
E-mail ID : serwkaranjia@yahoo.com
Order No.619 / WE // Date : 09.02.2026

“E” Procurement Notice for Construction of building works for year 2025-26.
Bid Identification No. - RWDKNJ - 18/2025-26 (Building)

1. Name of the work : Construction and repair/renovation of buildings (Res & Non-Res) for the year 2025-26 under Rural Works Division, Karanjia in the District of Mayurbhanj (Details as per Annexure). 2. Estimated Cost: Rs.16.81 to 42.78 Lakhs (Approximately). 3. Class of Contractor : 'B' and 'C' Class (of Odisha P.W.D.). 4. Period of Completion : As per Annexure. 5. Tender Paper Cost : Rs. 6,000/-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding	Last date & time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in Olo S.E.R.W. Division, Karanjia
1	2	3	4	5
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Karanjia	RWDKNJ-18/25-26 Building	Dt.17.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M. upto 5.00 P.M.	Dt.23.02.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	Dt.21.02.2026 upto 1.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR-25001/25086/1/25-26/0016

Sd/- Executive Engineer
R.W. Division, Karanjia

STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, ODISHA
(Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Govt. of Odisha)
Paribesh Bhawan, A/118, Nilakantha Nagar, Unit-VIII, Bhubaneswar-751012
Tel:0674-2562368/2561909, EPABX:2653800
E-mail:paribesh1@ospcbboard.org, Website: www.ospcbboard.org
No.1909/ IND-I-SWM-MISC-138/2025-26 Date 11.02.2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

No.8001/68/2526: With a significant move towards environmental conservation and maintaining temple sanctity, also to implement ban order of use of single use plastics under Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 and amendments thereof, it is hereby instructed to prohibit the use of single use plastics within the temple premises for taking puja offerings, giving food materials in single use cutleries. This notification aims to reduce pollution due to plastic waste littering and to promote eco-friendly practices among devotees and vendors. Therefore, it is requested to adopt the following steps.

For Devotees and Vendors-

- Instead of single use plastics, devotee shall use bamboo baskets, patra danas, reusable plastic baskets for taking puja offerings to the temple.
- Vendors within and outside temple premises are instructed to provide the puja offerings only in above mentioned allowed items.

For Temple administrator-

- To make available bamboo baskets, patra danas, reusable plastic baskets for puja offerings.
- To provide separate colour coded bins for collection of Dry Waste and Wet waste
- To hand over waste to authorized waste collectors of local bodies.
- To Instruct peripheral and captive Hotels/restaurants/local vendors not to use single use plastic/ thermocol cutleries (like cups and plates, plastic straws, knives, forks, spoon) and plastic carry bags of less than 120 micron for prasad/ food serving
- To use cutleries made up of compostable plastics, biodegradable materials (leaf plate, wooden spoons, paper straws, paper plate, metal plate etc)
- To ensure the disposal (bisarjan) of puja offerings in the barricaded area of the pond to facilitate removal of these materials
- To create awareness among public to dispose the puja left-overs in appropriate bins and barricaded area of pond

Let us pledge to keep temple surroundings clean and single use plastic free.

Sd/-
MEMBER SECRETARY

OSPCB-MSW-MISC-0014-2025/5/2026 OIPR-8001/8012/1/25-26/0013

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED
CORPORATE OFFICE : “CHOLA CREST”, C54 & 55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, India
Regional Office : 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No. 394, Bomikhal, Near Santoshi Maa Temple Cuttack Road, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Pin - 751010

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(1)

Branch Office : 3rd Floor, Sreemaa Construction Building, Naya Chowk, Madhupatna, Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 753 010

Whereas:

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited**, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 hereinafter called the Act in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rules 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice on the date mentioned the account calling upon the respective Borrowers, to repay the outstanding amount with Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers in particular and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken **Physical Possession** of the Property mortgaged with the Company described herein below on the date mentioned against the account in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Rules made there under.

The Borrowers in particular and the Public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with property mentioned herein below and any such dealings will be subjected to the charge of **M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited** for an amount mentioned against the account along with Interest and other charges.

Under Section 13(8) of the Securitisation Act, the borrowers can redeem the Secured Asset by payment of the entire outstanding including all costs, charges and expenses before notification of Sale.

Loan Account No. HE01XBE0000059709) 1 (a). Puspalata Patra , W/o. Basanta Kumar Patra, Representative by Legal Heir of Basanta Kumar Patra , S/o. Maheswar Patra) (Applicant), Khusaliganj, Ganipur, Remuna Near Hanuman Temple, District - Baleswar, Odisha, Pin - 756019. 1 (b). Naba Jyoti Patra , S/o. Basant Kumar Patra (Legal Heir of Basanta Kumar Patra , S/o. Maheswar Patra), Represented Through Mother Guardian Puspalata Patra , W/o. Basanta Kumar Patra, Khusaliganj, Ganipur, Remuna Near Hanuman Temple, District - Baleswar, Odisha, Pin - 756019. 2. M/s. Maa Agency (Co-Applicant) , Plot No. 539, Khata No. 115, Moulana Goda, Block Road, Champua, Kendujhar, Odisha, Pin - 758041. 3. Puspalata Patra , W/o. Basanta Kumar Patra (Co-Applicant), Khusaliganj, Ganipur, Remuna Near Hanuman Temple, District - Baleswar, Odisha, Pin - 756019.	Description of the Immoveable Property : All that part and parcel of the Property Bearing Plot No. 302, Khata No. 588/2091, Area Acre 0.070 Decimals, Status - Homestead, Mauja - Ganipur, Tehsil - Remuna, P. S. Remuna, P. S. No. 100, District - Baleswar, Orissa, Pin - 756019. Bounded as : North - Plot No. 301, South - Road, East - Plot No. 297, West - Plot No. 303.	Date of Demand Notice : 04.02.2025 Outstanding Amount : Rs. 69,59,743.00 (Rupees Sixty Nine Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Three Only) as on 04.02.2025 and interest thereon. Date of Physical Possession : 11.02.2026
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Date : 13.02.2026
Place : Baleswar (Odisha)

Authorised Officer,
Cholamanaalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

of the day


quote

Earlier, we used to think that we as veterinarians have a limited role to play. But we need to change the way we think and imagine a bigger picture and a bigger role for ourselves



MOHAN BHAGWAT | RSS CHIEF

I would like to tell Rahul Gandhi that nobody is a greater 'jhotha' (liar) and 'luchcha' (rowdy) than you in the country. You want to spread confusion among farmers of the country. You want to start a civil war in the country. You speak lies in the Lok Sabha, which is a temple of truth



GIRIRAJ SINGH | UNION MINISTER


It is unfortunate and shocking that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has deliberately misinformed the Parliament on the agreements reached at the ninth WTO Ministerial meeting in Bali in December 2013



ANAND SHARMA | CONGRESS LEADER

XPOST

OF THE DAY



If AI threat is real, Indian IT could be a ticking time bomb. 50 lakh people work in IT. If even 50% lose jobs - 25 lakh unemployed.

What happens next?

- EMIs default
- NPAs explode
- Credit dries up
- Economy slows

Then the dominoes fall: Real estate, Auto, Markets, Manufacturing. This isn't just an IT problem. It's a systemic risk India can't afford to ignore. Think this is exaggerated? Or are we sleepwalking into it?

@pushpendrakum

SHORT TAKES

Bihar begins 'river census'

Patna: The Bihar government has initiated a statewide 'river census' to identify dead and nearly dead rivers, and prepare a plan for their rejuvenation, a state minister said Thursday. The announcement was made during Water Resources Minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary's budget speech for the department in the Assembly. The Assembly also passed the department's ₹7,127.35-crore budget for the 2026-27 fiscal by voice vote. Choudhary said many rivers in the state require urgent restoration, and the department is committed to preserving and reviving them.

Brazilian Prez to visit India from Feb 18-22

New Delhi: Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will undertake a five-day visit to India beginning February 18 to hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and participate in the AI Impact summit. The state visit of President Lula will provide an opportunity for both sides to chart a forward-looking agenda for further strengthening bilateral strategic partnership and further deepen cooperation across bilateral, regional and global platforms, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Demonstrations in Churachandpur

Churachandpur/Imphal: Hundreds of people Wednesday staged a demonstration in Manipur's Churachandpur district, accusing MLA LM Khaute of betraying the Kuki Zo community by joining the new government led by Y Khemchand Singh.



No other state has had the courage or capability to hold a conversion conclave to prove the transformation of MoUs into real-world investments

M K STALIN | TN CM

OVER 2,800 POSTS VACANT IN IAS, IPS AND IFOS: GOVT

More than 2,800 posts are lying vacant in the three All India Services - IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service (IFoS) - with the IAS alone facing a shortage of 1,300 officers, the government informed Parliament Thursday



Will not allow anyone to touch Aravalli: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Supreme Court Thursday said it will not allow "anyone to touch the Aravallis", refusing to permit the Haryana government to submit a detailed plan on jungle safari till a definition of "Aravalli range" is clarified by experts.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymaya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said that the issue of jungle safari will be dealt with when it considers the main matter on the Aravalli range.

Counsel for Haryana said that they have revised the detailed project report (DPR) of the safari project from 10,000 acres to over 3,300 acres. He said all they want is to be allowed to furnish the DPR to the central empowered committee (CEC) for their examination.

The bench said, "We are not experts. The experts will decide the definition of Aravalli. Till the definition of the Aravalli range is finalised, we will not allow anyone to touch the Aravallis."

CJI Kant said that the Aravalli is not only of Haryana or Rajasthan but it is a range which traverses many states. "We will deal with this issue of safari with the main matter," he told the counsel for the Haryana government, who said that the main matter is altogether different and the issue of safari is different.

"Sometimes, the CEC is also very selective in giving its permission. If we permit this, they will give a very rosy picture that these are the trees, wildlife and forests," the bench observed.

CJI Kant said that once the expert committee's opinion comes, it will deal with the safari project.

In October last year, the top court stalled the proposed mega 'Aravali Zoo Safari project', touted to be the world's biggest zoo-safari by the Haryana government.



■ A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymaya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said that the issue of jungle safari will be dealt with when it considers the main matter on the Aravalli range

■ Counsel for Haryana said that they have revised the detailed project report (DPR) of the safari project from 10,000 acres to over 3,300 acres

■ He said all they want is to be allowed to furnish the DPR to the central empowered committee (CEC) for their examination

The Zoo Safari project aims to set up big cat zones and house hundreds of species of birds, reptiles and butterflies in an area of 10,000 acres in the eco-fragile Aravalli range in Gurgaon and Nuh districts.

The top court was dealing with a petition jointly filed by five retired Indian Forest Service officers (IFS) and NGO 'People for Aravallis' alleging the project would spell doom for the already damaged Aravalli range. On December 29, amid the outcry over the new definition of Aravallis, the top court kept in abeyance its directions of November 20 last year which accepted a uniform definition of these hills and ranges, saying there is a need to resolve "critical ambiguities" including whether the 100-metre elevation and the 500-metre gap between hills criteria will strip significant portion of the range of environment protection.

Proposing to constitute a high-powered expert panel, the top court had said it seemed prima facie that the earlier report of a committee and the verdict had "omitted to expressly clarify certain critical issues" and

there is a "dire need to further probe" to prevent any regulatory gaps that might undermine the ecological integrity of the Aravalli region.

It also directed that as set out in the order dated May 9, 2024, until further orders, no permission shall be granted for mining in the "Aravalli Hills and Ranges", as defined in the August 25, 2010, FSI report, without its prior permission.

The top court had said this public dissent and criticism appear to stem from perceived ambiguity and lack of clarity in certain terms and directives issued by the court.

The top court had November 20 last year accepted a uniform definition of the Aravalli hills and ranges and banned the grant of fresh mining leases inside its areas spanning Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat until experts' reports are out.

It had accepted the recommendations of a committee of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on the definition of the Aravalli hills and ranges to protect the world's oldest mountain system.



An artist paints an idol of 'Lord Shiva' ahead of the 'Mahashivratri' festival, at the 'Jabreshwar Mahadev Temple', in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PPT PHOTO

Ghooskhor Pandat: SC raps Neeraj Pandey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Observing that a section of society cannot be denigrated in the name of freedom of expression, the Supreme Court Thursday rapped filmmaker Neeraj Pandey over the title of his movie 'Ghooskhor Pandat'.

The top court was hearing a plea seeking a stay on the release of the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer film on OTT platform Netflix. A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan issued notices to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Central Board of Film Certification and Pandey on a plea against the movie. "Why should you denigrate a section of society by using such a title. Freedom of expression is one thing, but that doesn't give license to denigrate anybody. This is against morality and public order. We will not allow you to release the film unless you tell us the changed title...We thought filmmakers, journalists, etc are responsible people," the bench said.

The top court directed Pandey to file an affidavit that the film 'Ghooskhor Pandat' doesn't denigrate any section of society.

Nurse recovers from Nipah, dies of cardiac arrest in WB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

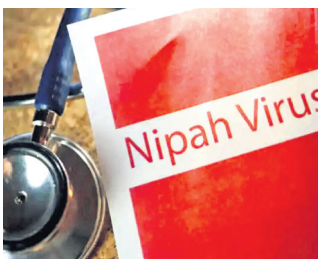
Kolkata/New Delhi, Feb 12: A nurse who had recovered from Nipah virus infection died of cardiac arrest at a private hospital in West Bengal's Barasat Thursday, a state health department official said.

The woman had been in a prolonged coma, which severely affected her immunity, and later developed a lung infection. She had been taken off ventilator support at the end of January.

"She died of cardiac arrest this afternoon. Though she had recovered from Nipah infection, she was suffering from multiple complications," the official said.

Two confirmed cases of Nipah Virus disease have been reported from West Bengal since December, according to reports from the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). The other one, a male nurse, has been cured of the disease.

The deceased, who was a resident of Katwa in Purba Bardhaman district, also contracted a hospital-acquired infection



during treatment.

"She was trying to regain consciousness, move her limbs, and speak before her condition suddenly deteriorated. She died at around 4:20 PM," he said.

The nurse had first fallen ill in early January after returning home December 31 for the New Year holidays and was initially admitted to Burdwan Medical College and Hospital before being shifted to the private hospital in Barasat.

The Union Health Ministry said, "Out of the two Nipah positive cases reported from West Bengal January 11, 2026, one of the nurses who was critically ill and was under intensive medical care passed away today due to cardiac arrest in the hospital where she was under treatment."

Woman killed by speeding car driven by drunk cop in Ambala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ambala, Feb 12: A 24-year-old woman was killed after a car, allegedly being driven at high speed by a 'drunk' Haryana Police head constable rammed into an e-rickshaw here, throwing the victim onto the road before running her over, officials said Thursday.

The cop, identified as Amit Kumar, has been arrested, they said, adding that the offending vehicle has been impounded.

The incident took place Wednesday evening near the Kali Paltan Bridge. The deceased was identified as Nikita Bajaj, an Ambala res-

ident, who was working at a company in Gurugram. She had arrived in Ambala from Delhi along with her brother, Harsh Bajaj, Wednesday.

Around 8.30 pm, the siblings boarded an e-rickshaw from the Cantonment area to Ambala city to attend a family function.

Near Ambala city, a car -- allegedly being driven at a high speed with Head Constable Amit Kumar at the wheel -- rammed into the rickshaw from behind. The impact caused the vehicle to go out of control, throwing Nikita onto the road, before the offending vehicle ran her over, killing her on the spot.

In a first, IAF to train UK's Royal Air Force pilots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: For the first time, the Indian Air Force is set to train pilots of the UK's Royal Air Force under a new initiative.

The decision was taken at the 19th UK-India Air Staff Talks held Thursday in New Delhi. "Under the latest agreement, the Indian Air Force will deploy three Qualified Flight Instructors (QFI) to Royal Air Force (RAF) Valley in the UK -- the training base for British fast jet pilots," a British read-out said. "This marks the first time that Indian QFIs will impart fast jet training to British pilots at RAF Valley. The deployment will be initially for a period of two years," it said.



The development closely follows the first-time deployment in January this year of an Indian Air Force officer as an instructor to the Royal Air Force College Cranwell -- the air academy that trains the next generation of RAF officers.

The development closely follows the first-time deployment in January this year of an Indian Air Force officer as an instructor to the Royal Air Force College Cranwell -- the air academy that trains the next generation of RAF officers.

The new initiative marked all three British military academies now hosting Indian officers as instructors from respective services, the readout noted.

"The signing of this Letter of Agreement is a significant step in strengthening the longstand-

Mumbaikars will be forced to ride horses in future: HC

A bench of Justices Ravindra Ghuge and Abhay Mantri wondered what would become of the city of Mumbai in the next two decades if squatting and illegal encroachments continued unchecked, and slammed the local civic body, saying it appears powerless and seems to lack courage to remove them

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 12: The Bombay High Court Thursday expressed concerns over increasing encroachments on public roads in the metropolis, terming the situation "grim", and

remarked that in the future residents would be forced to ride bicycles and horses.

A bench of Justices Ravindra Ghuge and Abhay Mantri wondered what would become of the city of Mumbai in the next two decades if squatting and illegal encroachments continued unchecked, and slammed the local civic body, saying it appears powerless and seems to lack courage to remove them.

"If a stop is not put to this (illegal structures), in the future people would be forced to use

only two wheelers, bicycles or horses on roads which would be taken over by encroachers," the court observed.

The court made the remarks while hearing a plea filed by a school in suburban Powai raising concerns over alleged inaction on the part of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) against encroachments in the institute's vicinity. The bench questioned civic authorities as to how unauthorised structures could be erected on public roads while directing the deputy municipal commissioner concerned to remain present in the court Friday.

"It seems the BMC does not have the will, desire, courage or means to remove such encroachments.



The BMC is surrendering Mumbai to encroachers," the court said questioning if the civic body was so powerless so as to not act against encroachments. The bench was aghast to note the BMC had been sup-

plying drinking water and had also parked a temporary toilet facility van at the spot in Powai where encroachers had taken over the road.

"Isn't the BMC promoting encroachments like this? This

Bombay high court expressed serious concerns about the increasing encroachments on public roads in Mumbai, calling the situation 'grim'

The court criticised the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) for its apparent lack of action and courage in removing illegal encroachments

The high court warned that unchecked encroachments could force Mumbai residents to rely on bicycles and horses for transportation in the future

is a grim situation. If you stop giving them water and toilet facilities they will move. But you have been giving to them (facilities) on a platter," the HC observed. The court stated that the BMC has to see the sit-

uation of roads across the financial capital. "Everywhere, roads are left with only one or two lanes and then there is traffic jams. Cars cannot move -- a person walks faster than such cars stuck in jams," it remarked. The court noted that people have limited time on this planet and each person's endeavour must be to keep the environment and the city in such a good condition that the next generation reaps its benefits. "Our next generation should not say we have been callous with our city," it said.

BMC advocate Dhruvi Kapadia assured to the court to submit an affidavit giving a timeline by which the encroachments specified in the petition would be removed.

international

of the day quote

It depends not only on Ukraine, but also on America, which must exert pressure – excuse me for saying so, but there is no other way – it must exert pressure on Russia

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

Today we are the most democratic country in the region, an achievement of both our society and our institutions and this standard must be preserved and advanced

ALBIN KURTI | PRIME MINISTER, KOSOVO

I say to all those protesters outside, go protest in front of the Iranian embassy or whichever embassy they have

ISAAC HERZOG | PRESIDENT, ISRAEL

SHORT TAKES

Canada police identify shooting suspect

Ottawa: The suspect in a deadly school shooting in western Canada was an 18-year-old woman with mental health issues who killed her mother and stepbrother before attacking her former school, police said Wednesday, but investigators did not offer a motive for one of the worst mass slaughters in Canadian history. The killer, whom police identified as Jesse Van Rootselaar, died by suicide after the shooting Tuesday in Tumbler Ridge, a remote community of 2,400 people in the Pacific province of British Columbia. Police revised the death toll down to nine, including Van Rootselaar, from the initially reported 10.

Russian air attack knocks out power

Kyiv: Russia pounded Ukraine with drones and ballistic missiles overnight Thursday, further battering its energy system and leaving tens of thousands in the capital Kyiv and the cities of Dnipro and Odesa without heat, power and water, officials said. Russia has intensified its winter campaign of strikes on Ukraine's power grid, plunging major cities into long periods of cold and darkness in freezing temperatures. In Kyiv alone, around 3,500 apartment buildings were without heating Thursday after the latest attack knocked out supplies to nearly 2,600 high-rises, on top of the 1,100 already affected by previous strikes, said Mayor Vitali Klitschko. More than 100,000 families were without electricity, according to private energy firm DTEK, which said one of its thermal power plants had been targeted but did not disclose the location.

Khan complains about 'denial' of health services

Islamabad: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan is reportedly facing a loss of vision in his right eye and has complained about denial of health services in jail while showing satisfaction with the security and food being provided, it has emerged. Advocate Salman Safdar, who was appointed amicus curiae to visit Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, formally submitted to the Supreme Court Wednesday a report regarding incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Khan's living conditions amid concern from his party over his treatment. According to the report submitted to the court, Khan said that he has been complaining of decreased vision for the last three months "although his vision was completely fine until October".

First vote since ex-PM Hasina's ouster

Early counts show close race in Bangladesh election after strong turnout

REUTERS

Dhaka, Feb 12: The Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami were locked in a tight race Thursday, early counting showed, after tens of millions of Bangladeshis voted in a pivotal national election - the first since the 2024 Gen Z-driven uprising that toppled long-time premier Sheikh Hasina.

Analysts say a clear outcome is crucial for stability in the nation of 175 million, after months of deadly anti-Hasina protests disrupted everyday life and hit major industries, including the garment sector, the world's second-largest exporter.

It was the first national election to follow the recent under-30, Gen Z-led uprisings scattered around the world, with Nepal set to hold a vote next month.

Counting began at 4:30 pm at most booths, immediately after polls closed with clear trends

expected around midnight and results likely to be clear by Friday morning, Election Commission officials said.

CONTEST BETWEEN FORMER ALLIES

The race pits two coalitions led by former allies, BNP and Jamaat, with opinion polls giving the BNP a slight edge.

BNP was leading in 10 seats and Jamaat in seven of the nearly 20 seats for which early trends were available, local TV news stations said. Bangladesh's parliament, the Jatiya Sangsad, has 300 seats, with 151 required for a simple majority.

Turnout appeared on track to exceed the 42% recorded in the last election in 2024. Local media reported that more than 60% of registered voters were expected to have cast ballots.

Both prime ministerial candidates - the BNP's Tarique Rahman and Jamaat chief Shafiqur Rahman said they were confident of winning. The two men are not related.

"I am confident of winning the election. There is enthusiasm among the people about the vote," Tarique Rahman told reporters, while Jamaat's Shafiqur Rahman called the election a "turning point" for Bangladesh and said the people

BANGLADESH ELECTION



were eager for change.

HASINA CALLS VOTE A FARCE

Hasina's Awami League is banned, and she remains in self-imposed exile in long-term ally India, opening the window for China to expand its influence in Bangladesh as Dhaka's ties with New Delhi fray.

Elections under Hasina were frequently marred by boycotts and intimidation, critics say.

In a statement sent to journalists on WhatsApp, Hasina denounced the election as a "carefully planned farce", held without her party and without real voter participation. She

said Awami League supporters had rejected the process.

"We demand the cancellation of this voterless, illegal, and unconstitutional election ... the removal of the suspension imposed on the activities of the Awami League; and the restoration of the people's voting rights through the arrangement of a free, fair, and inclusive election under a neutral caretaker government," she said.

Alongside the election, a referendum was held on a set of constitutional reforms, including establishing a neutral inter-

- First elections since 2024 protests ousted then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
- The protests triggered months of unrest and hundreds were killed
- Polls give edge to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party
- The Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami is also showing strength
- There was also a national referendum on reforms to state institutions
- Hasina's political party banned from the election
- Results expected to be clear by Friday

im government for election periods, restructuring parliament into a bicameral legislature, increasing women's representation, strengthening judicial independence and a two-term limit for the prime minister.

More than 2,000 candidates - including many independents - were on the ballot, and at least 50 parties contested, a national record. Voting in one constituency was postponed after a candidate died.

LONG LINES OF VOTERS, HEAVY SECURITY

There were no reports of major violence. Around 958,000 personnel from the police army and paramilitary forces were deployed throughout the country, the Election Commission said. Police and army personnel were stationed outside most polling booths.

"I am feeling excited because we are voting in a free manner after 17 years," Mohammed Jobair Hossain, 39, said as he waited in line. "Our votes will matter and have meaning."

Many voters echoed that sentiment, telling Reuters that the atmosphere felt freer and more festive than previous elections.

Kamal Chowdhury, 31, who works as a driver for a company in Dhaka and travelled to his hometown in the eastern district of Brahmanbaria to cast his vote, said: "It feels festive here."

Outside a polling booth in Dhaka where BNP chief Tarique Rahman and head of the interim government Muhammad Yunus voted, policemen were on horses with saddle blankets proclaiming: "Police are here, vote without fear."

NK's Kim positioning daughter as successor: Seoul spy agency



REUTERS

■ Daughter Kim Ju Ae seen as de facto second-highest leader

■ NIS briefing suggests Ju Ae provides input on policy matters

■ Monitoring whether she given official title at party meeting

■ North Korean leader directs development of submarine with ballistic missile capability

spections of weapons projects amid speculation by analysts that she is being groomed as the country's fourth-generation leader.

The NIS believes the role she has taken on during public events indicates she has started to provide policy input and that she is being treated as the de facto second-highest leader, Lee and another lawmaker Park Sun-won said.

North Korea has announced the Workers' Party will convene the inauguration meeting of the ninth Congress in late February, an event that analysts believe will unveil major policy goals for coming years on the economy, external affairs and defence.

Leader Kim Jong Un is directing the development of a large submarine that is likely capable of carrying up to 10 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and which, considering the vessel's displacement of 8,700 tons, may be designed to be powered by a nuclear reactor, Park and Lee said.

It remains unclear, however, whether it will be nuclear powered or operationally functional as designed, the lawmakers said, citing the spy agency's analysis.

Russia fully blocks WhatsApp

REUTERS

Moscow, Feb 12: US messenger app WhatsApp, owned by Meta Platforms has been completely blocked in Russia for failing to comply with local law, the Kremlin said Thursday, suggesting Russians turn to a state-backed "national messenger" instead.

"Due to Meta's unwillingness to comply with Russian law, such a decision was indeed taken and implemented," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, proposing that Russians switch to MAX, Russia's state-owned messenger.

"MAX is an accessible alternative, a developing messenger, a national messenger, and it is available on the market for citizens as an alternative," said Peskov.

Critics say MAX is a surveillance tool. Russian authorities deny this.

The move against WhatsApp, Russia's most popular messenger, is the culmination of six months of pressure on the US company.

It reflects a wider push by the Russian authorities at a time of war to create and control a "sovereign" communications infrastructure in which foreign-owned tech companies submit to local laws or disappear.

Meta had already been designated as an extremist organisation inside Russia, and WhatsApp complained about what it said was an attempt to fully block its service.

"Trying to isolate over 100 million users from private and secure communication is a backwards step and can



- Moscow had warned WhatsApp over violations
- WhatsApp says it will try to keep users connected
- Russia promotes state-backed app MAX
- Mixed reaction from Russians in Moscow

MAX is an accessible alternative, a developing messenger, a national messenger, and it is available on the market for citizens as an alternative

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

only lead to less safety for people in Russia," it said in a statement.

Some domain names associated with WhatsApp disappeared from Russia's national register of domain names, meaning devices inside Russia stopped receiving its IP addresses from the app and could be accessed only by using a virtual private network (VPN).

MIXED REACTION IN MOSCOW

Activists in Moscow briefly hung a bike lock on the doors

of Roskomnadzor and put up a poster reading: "Give us an unregulated internet - Russia without Roskomnadzor."

There was a mixed reaction in the snowy Russian capital, with some people unfazed and others angry.

"Frankly I see this as negative because it's in part a violation of our constitutional rights because it's limiting freedom of choice," said a woman who gave her name as Anna.

Another, Elena, said she saw no problem as there were other messengers. A woman who gave her name as Alyona said she would try to use WhatsApp with a VPN for as long as possible before switching to MAX.

Russian authorities, who also block or restrict social media platforms such as Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, have been heavily pushing MAX.

Seattle reaches \$29mn settlement with family of Indian grad student

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Feb 12: The family of an Indian student, killed in January 2023 when she was struck by a police vehicle in Seattle, has reached a \$29 million settlement with the city, according to a media report.

Jaahnvi Kandula, 23, was struck by a police vehicle driven by Seattle Police Officer Kevin Dave as she was crossing a street January 23, 2023.

Dave was driving at 74 mph (more than 119 kmh) on the way to a report of a drug overdose call. Kandula was thrown 100 feet when she was struck by the speeding police patrol vehicle.

PubliCola web portal reported that the Seattle City Attorney's Office reached a settlement last week with Kandula's family.

"Jaahnvi Kandula's death was heartbreaking, and the city hopes this financial settlement brings some sense of closure to the Kandula family," city attorney Erika Evans said in the report.

"We also recognise that her loss has left unimaginable pain. Jaahnvi Kandula's life mattered. It mattered to her family, to her friends, and to our community," she added.

In September 2024, the family brought a lawsuit against the City of Seattle and Dave for \$110 million, as well as an additional \$11,000.

The settlement totals about \$29 million, and the \$11,000 amount, the report said.

Bad Bunny's show offers cultural lifeline to besieged Hispanic community

REUTERS

Aurora, Colorado, Feb 12: Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny's Super Bowl halftime show, which celebrated Latino culture in Spanish, offered an uplifting moment of cultural pride for many Hispanic residents in Aurora, Colorado, where daily life has been reshaped by fears of immigration raids and deportations.

The diverse Denver suburb has been in the crosshairs of US President Donald Trump. On the campaign trail and since returning to office, Trump has claimed the city has been taken over by Venezuelan gang members, an assertion local citizens and leaders dispute.

Immigration raids have increased in the city of 403,000

people, where Latinos comprise more than 31% of the population. Many Latinos living there, regardless of their immigration status, say they feel besieged, stigmatized and attacked.

In what feels like a dark time, a dozen Latino residents of Aurora said in interviews that Bad Bunny's performance - which Trump labeled "an affront to the Greatness of America" - felt less like simple entertainment and more like a cultural lifeline of recognition, a brief moment of visibility and pride.

"The fear factor within the Hispanic community is definitely there - people with papers, people without papers. Many people are scared to come out of their houses, the morale of the community is super low," said William Her-



rera, a manager at Panaderia el Paisa, a popular bakery that is a neighborhood hub.

"That's why Bad Bunny's show was so beautiful. For

him to represent Hispanics on the biggest stage in America at a time when all the racists are trying to push us down, for him to deliver the message that love

is stronger than hate, it filled me with pride," said Herrera. "He gave courage to the entire community."

HIGHLIGHTING JOY

Residents say fear in the Hispanic community is keeping people indoors. Some streets feel emptier, big birthday parties are less common and crowded backyard asada barbecues are now rare.

Across the US, worries about immigration raids dominate daily conversations and force Hispanics to be cautious about where they go, speaking Spanish and being visible in their own neighborhoods.

At Mary Zuloaga's beauty salon in Aurora, a TV tuned to

Spanish-language network Univision was showing clips of Bad Bunny's show Tuesday as she reflected on its significance.

Born in Colombia, Zuloaga, who has been in the US since the early 1980s, said the Latino community had lived through similar moments of anxiety, notably under former President Ronald Reagan, and she

saw how those fears negatively shaped collective behavior and identity.

She said the climate under Trump is worse than the 1980s, and she fears her language or appearance could trigger her arrest and detention despite being an American citizen.



T20 WORLD CUP

Men in Blue outplay Namibia

Ishan, Pandya, Chakravarthy lead India to record 93-run win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Sanju Samson disappointed again, Ishan Kishan dazzled and his mentor Hardik Pandya entertained but India's 93-run victory over Namibia here Thursday wasn't exactly the Box Office hit one expected ahead of a tense T20 World Cup face-off against Pakistan.

The victory felt less like an assurance and more like the calm before the cricketing tempest with Pakistan lying in wait. The margin of victory, India's highest in a T20 World Cup, won't depict the entire picture as little-known Namibian captain Gerhard Erasmus came out as a surprise package by taking 4 for 20 in India's final total of 209 for 9, despite Kishan's smashing 24-ball-61 and Pandya's 52 off 28 balls.

In reply, the Namibian batting unit did struggle against the kind of attack that they hardly get to play, as the innings ended on 116 in 18.2 overs.

Varun Chakravarthy (3/7 in 2 overs) and Pandya (2/21 in 4 overs) shared the bulk of the spoils and India now need just one more win in their next two games to qualify for the Super Eights. Why India's batting show, despite a 200-plus score, would be considered below par is because of the Namibian skipper. Erasmus' eerie side-arm action created considerable discomfort for the Indian batters, including Kishan, Pandya and Tilak Varma, as he also bowled from behind the crease at times.

The 24 deliveries that Erasmus bowled was certainly an eye opener for the Indian bat-



ters as to what they can expect from the Pakistani freak Usman Tariq, who would pose even more probing questions on a tackier Premadasa track in Colombo. When Namibia batted, they used the long handle to good effect but one always knew that it was just a matter of time before Chakravarthy and Axar Patel (2/20) come and demolish them in unison.

Earlier, Samson's three-sixes innings was akin to a short-lived Instagram reel but Kishan's batting was a gripping web series, full of drama, action and anticipation.

Kishan muscled five sixes and half a dozen boundaries for a 20-ball-50 that set the foundation for a marauding Hardik Pandya (52 off 28 balls) to take

MOSCA BROTHERS LEAD ITALY TO HISTORIC WIN AGAINST NEPAL



Mumbai: Brothers Justin and Anthony Mosca produced a polished performance to script an upset of sorts as debutants Italy thrashed Nepal by 10 wickets to notch their maiden T20 World Cup win here Thursday. Justin struck an unbeaten 60 off 44 balls, while Anthony contributed 62 not out from 32 deliveries, the duo stitching together a match-winning -run partnership as Italy overhauled the opponents' score of 123 in just 12.4 overs. Earlier, Italy's spinners delivered a disciplined performance, maintaining tight lines and lengths to

dismiss Nepal for 123 in 19.3 overs. Their bowlers, especially spinners Ben Manenti (2/9) and Crishan Kalugamage (3/18), applied the brakes effectively, playing a key role in strangling the opposition.

the team to a total that looked beyond the reach of this Namib-

ian batting line-up. However, Erasmus gave a

fantastic account of himself and would certainly keep Pakistan's lethal weapon Tariq interested come Sunday. During the back-10, India's MVP Pandya took charge as his four sixes and four boundaries kept the momentum going, with Shivam Dube (23 off 16 balls) giving him good support in a 81 run stand off just 6.3 overs.

Brief scores:

India: 209/9 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 61, Hardik Pandya 52; Gerhard Erasmus 4/20) beat **Namibia:** 116 all out in 18.2 overs (Louren Steenkamp 29; Varun Chakravarthy 3/7) by 93 runs

SL trounce Oman by 105 runs

Pallekele: Sri Lanka outclassed Oman by 105 runs to register their second successive victory in the T20 World Cup here Thursday. In a Group B match, Oman were limited to 120 for nine, chasing an imposing 226. Mohammad Nadeem (53 not out) and Wasim Ali (27) fought for Oman, but the target was way beyond their reach. For Sri Lanka, Dushmantha Chameera and Maheesh Theekshana took two wickets each. Earlier, skipper Dasun Shanaka, Pavan Ratnayake and Kusal Mendis powered their way to fifties as Sri Lanka posted a mammoth 225 for five. Mendis (61 off 45 balls), Shanaka (50 off 20 balls) and Ratnayake (60 off 28 balls) toyed with Oman's bowling.



ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Aishwary leads clean sweep in 50m rifle 3P



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: World championship silver medallist Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar beat teammate Niraj Kumar to clinch gold with a world record, as India swept the podium in the 50m rifle 3-positions event on the penultimate day of the Asian Championship here Thursday.

Aishwary, who signed off 2025 on a high by clinching Asian Championship gold in Kazakhstan along with silver medals at the World Championships and the World Cup Finals, carried that momentum into the new year.

He fired a world record score of 362 to edge Niraj by a margin of just 0.2 points.

The 25-year-old sealed his triumph with a superb 10.7 on his final shot, finishing with a tally of 362.

Niraj settled for silver with 361.8, while Akhil Sheoran claimed bronze with a score of 343.5 at the Karni Singh Shooting Range.

It was a bittersweet moment for Niraj, who came agonisingly close to gold but had to settle for silver, even as he celebrated his first individual international medal.

The contest went down to the 35th and final shot, underscor-

ing just how tight the battle for the top spot had been.

Niraj fired first to hit a 10.3 giving Aishwary a target of 10.6 to win the gold.

Olympian Aishwary held his nerve and hit a superb 10.7 to leap over Niraj and secure the gold.

Earlier, Niraj had topped the qualification round with a score of 593, while Aishwary finished second with 588 and Sheoran placed third with an identical score of 588.

The trio of Niraj, Aishwary and Sheoran totalled 1769 to clinch the team gold, followed by Japan (1754) and Kazakhstan (1748) respectively.

In the junior men's final, Adريان Karmakar secured his second gold medal of the championship with a comfortable victory, shooting a score of 353.2, which was 4.7 more than silver medallist Dmitriy Kim of Kazakhstan.

India's Manvendra Singh Shekhawat won bronze with a final score of 338.6.

The third Indian in the final, Hemant Burman finished in fifth place going down in a shoot-off.

The championship will conclude Saturday with the medals in women's 50m rifle prone and men's 25m centre-fire pistol to be decided.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Man City, Villa close gap on leaders Arsenal



REUTERS

Manchester, Feb 12: Manchester City halved Arsenal's lead at the top of the Premier League to three points with a 3-0 win over visitors Fulham, while Aston Villa stayed in the frame with a late 1-0 victory at home to Brighton & Hove Albion Wednesday.

Sunderland's season-long unbeaten home record was ended as Liverpool won 1-0 to boost their top-four hopes.

Nottingham Forest squandered a chance to move away from the bottom three as they drew 0-0 with bottom side Wolverhampton Wanderers, while second-bottom Burnley produced a remarkable 3-2 comeback win at Crystal Palace to boost their survival hopes.

City have little margin for error in their pursuit of leaders Arsenal, who are at Brentford on Thursday, but came up with a clinical display to dispose of Fulham.

Three goals in a 15-minute spell in the first half secured the points for Pep Guardiola's second-placed side who moved to 53 points from 26 games and kept the pressure on Arsenal.

Phil Foden then found Erling Haaland who dispatched a shot for his 22nd league goal of the campaign to confirm City's 17th successive Premier League win against Fulham, the longest run

by one team over another in the competition.

BRIGHTON OWN GOAL HANDS VILLA WIN

Villa's slender title chances appeared to be ebbing away as they laboured at home to Brighton.

But they secured the points when the visitors' Jack Hinshelwood put through his own goal after 86 minutes. Brighton midfielder James Milner, 40, came off the bench for his 653rd top-flight appearance, equalling Gareth Barry's record.

Captain Virgil van Dijk was on target for Liverpool as they became the first team to leave Sunderland's Stadium of Light with three points this season.

Liverpool are in sixth place with 42 points, two behind Chelsea who drew 2-2 at home to Leeds United Tuesday.

FOREST FIRE BLANKS IN WOLVES STALEMATE
Forest had a remarkable 35 goal attempts against Wolves at the City Ground but none of them found the back of the net as Sean Dyche's side dropped two important points.

The draw left them in 17th place, only three points above third-from-bottom West Ham United. "It is very frustrating to dominate a game like that, with so many chances and there were plenty of good chances but it's finding that killer moment," Dyche said.

HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Feb 12: Inconsistencies continued to plague India as they slumped to a 0-8 defeat against Argentina, with Tomas Domene netting four goals in the Rourkela leg of the FIH Men's Pro League here Thursday.

Domene (15', 20', 26', 60') led the charge with his multiple strikes, while Tomas Ruiz (14'), Lucio Mendez (22'), Ignacio Ibarra (25') and Nicolas Della Torre (30') also found the net as the visitors completely overpowered a lacklustre Indian side at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium.

India started on the front foot, attempting to make early inroads, but after a brief spell of dominance, they squandered a golden opportunity to take the lead towards the closing stages of the first quarter when they were awarded a penalty stroke.

Harmanpreet Singh was denied from the spot by the Ar-



gentine goalkeeper.

Argentina scored almost instantly with Ruiz (14') powering his tomahawk into the back of the net to give his side the lead. The visitors quickly doubled their advantage as Domene (15') managed to guide his effort past Suraj Karkera to give his side a 2-0 lead in the opening quarter.

Searching for a way back into the contest, India began the second quarter with greater urgency as Shilanand Lakra and Harmanpreet Singh earned a couple of penalty corners. However, they were unable to convert, with a goal continuing to elude them.

With momentum on their

WINTER OLYMPICS MILANO CORTINA

War dead helmet: Ukrainian Heraskevych kicked out

The helmet honoured the late athletes and coaches who died in the Russia-Ukraine war

REUTERS

Cortina D'Ampezzo, Feb 12: Ukraine's Vladyslav Heraskevych was disqualified from the skeleton competition at the Winter Games Thursday over his "helmet of remembrance" depicting athletes killed since Russia's invasion despite a personal appeal from the IOC president.

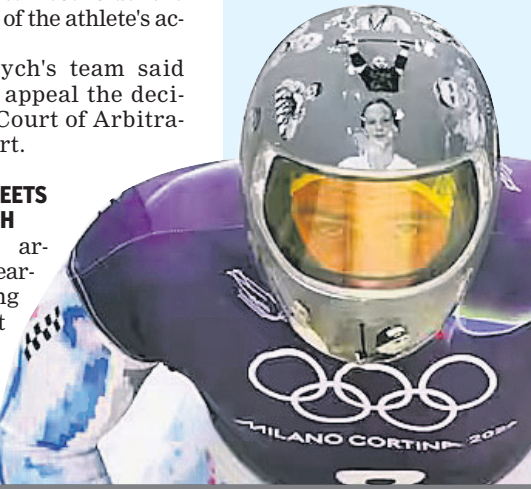
The 27-year-old, who had been training in Italy with the helmet showing two dozen dead compatriots, was barred and initially told he would be stripped of his accreditation minutes before competition was due to start at the sliding

COVENTRY MEETS HERASKEVYCH

Coventry arrived in the early morning near the start gate and met Heraskevych before the decision.

I am disqualified from the race. I will not get my Olympic moment. They (Ukrainian athletes) were killed, but their voice is so loud that the IOC is afraid of them

VLADYSLAV HERASKEVYCH



She choked up with tears when telling reporters she was unable to broker a solution.

"I thought it was really important to come here and talk to him face-to-face," she said after the meeting that lasted about 10 minutes. "No one, especially me, is disagreeing with the messaging, it's a powerful message, it's a message of remembrance, of memory."

The IOC had suggested compromises including wearing a black armband or showing the helmet before and after racing.

"Sadly we've not been able to find that solution. I really wanted to see him race. It's been an emotional morning," Coventry said.

"It's literally

about the rules and the regulations and that in this case ... we have to be able to keep a safe environment for everyone and, sadly, that just means no messaging is allowed."

UKRAINE PLANS PROTEST

Ukraine's Olympic Committee said it was planning some sort of protest but would not boycott the Games.

"We will correct this mistake through legal channels. Vladyslav, you acted with dignity. This story will definitely continue. We stand with you," Ukraine Youth and Sports Minister Matvii Bidnyi wrote on X. Ukrainian team members were seen in tears and hugging each other after the decision.

Heraskevych's father and coach Mikhailo Geraskevych sat on a dirty snowbank, his face buried in his hands.