



LEISURE | P2



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## REUTERS

India's government has dissociated itself from any plot against Pannun, saying it was against government policy.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Police said the accused is a Class XII student, and four of his friends were in the car at the time of the accident. He allegedly borrowed the vehicle from a friend and possessed a valid driving licence, they said.

**Of course, this is Parents' Worship Day for us. We are preparing to become parents**



## PNN & AGENCIES

### CM Mohan Charan Majhi addresses a gathering in Nabarangpur, Friday

Deputy Chief Minister Pravatipada Parida, who is also in-charge of tourism and women and child development department, Minister for Scheduled Tribes and Castes Development and School and Mass Education Nityanand Gond, Nabarangpur MP Balabhadra Majhi, Rajya Sabha MP Muzibul-  
Khan, MLAs and officers and others attended the event.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

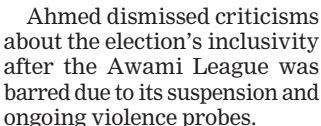
“We always press for her extradition according to the law. This is between the foreign ministries of the two countries. We also asked the government of India to please send her back to face trial in Bangladesh,”

AGENCIES

According to the prosecution, Chandan had married Banita, daughter of Kartik Singh. However, within one-and-a-half months of marriage, Banita discovered that Chandan was already married and had two children. Following the revelation, she began staying with her parents. Chandan visited his in-laws' residence, where an argument ensued. In an act of rage, he threw acid at Banita and her family. Banita succumbed at a hospital.

## AGENCIES

According to the prosecution, Chandan had married Banita, daughter of Kartik Singh. However, within one-and-a-half months of marriage, Banita discovered that Chandan was already married and had two children. Following the revelation, she began staying with her parents. Chandan visited his in-laws' residence, where an argument ensued. In an act of rage, he threw acid at Banita and her family. Banita succumbed at a hospital.

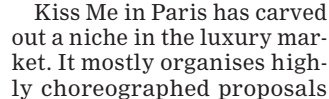


“People of the country know that this is a very inclusive election. If you like to mention the exclusion of Awami League etc, people have rejected through the mass uprising in Aug 2024,” Ahmed underlined.

## REUTERS

"She's always been mentioning how this is her dream. I would always say, 'no, no,'" Perales told Reuters moments after getting down on one knee. "She wasn't expecting it at all."

Proposal packages at Les Entrepreneuses (The matchmakers), which curated Perales' engagement, start at 590 euros (\$699.56) for a proposal on the banks of the river Seine with 'Marry Me' letters, rose petals and candles. On average, their clients splurge between 1,500 and 2,000 euros, working out extra for prime locations, champagne and more elaborate decorations.



in high-end hotels, aboard yachts on the Seine, or in French castles. Its clients will pay up to 100,000 euros

Social media and popular shows like Netflix's "Emily in Paris" and events such as the Paris 2024 Olympics, have boosted the city's global visibility as a proposal hotspot.

For Perales, it was money well spent to take the stress out of setting up his big moment. "It was so much easier "











# HC raps state over lone food testing lab

The laboratory currently caters to nearly 4.70 crore population of the state, says the HC, adding the existing infrastructure appears grossly inadequate to meet the growing demands of effective enforcement, timely analysis, and quality control

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Expressing serious concern over weak infrastructure of food safety mechanism in the state, the Orissa High Court has summoned the secretaries of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) and Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) departments to inform the court about the apparent lack of institutional response in the state.

A single bench of Justice Sanjeeb Kumar Panigrahi, in an order pronounced Thursday, expressed serious apprehension over the food safety norms.

“This court is constrained to note, with deep concern, that there exists only a single food testing laboratory in the entire state, headed by one Chief Food Analyst and assisted by a limited number of analytical chemists. The laboratory currently caters to nearly 4.70 crore population of the state.”

Such an arrangement can scarcely be considered commensurate with the statutory



obligation cast upon the authorities to ensure food safety and safeguarding public health, the court said.

“The existing infrastructure appears grossly inadequate to meet the growing demands of effective enforcement, timely analysis, and quality control,” Justice Panigrahi stated in the order.

The court said the matter calls for urgent attention. The order said, “It is imperative that the state takes expeditious steps to substantially augment the infrastructure by establishing well-equipped food testing

laboratories in every district. Such labs should be supported by sufficient and qualified technical manpower,” it added.

The court directed the H&FW and FS&CW secretaries to remain personally present before it February 24 at 2pm through virtual mode and apprise the court of the prevailing state of affairs on the food safety front.

The top officials are supposed to list the reasons for the existing infrastructure deficiencies and the apparent lack of adequate institutional response on the part of the state.

## Singer Geeta Patnaik in hosp after brain stroke



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cuttack, Feb 13:** Noted Odia playback singer Geeta Patnaik was admitted to a private hospital here Friday after she suffered a brain stroke, her family said. Her condition is stated to be very critical and she is undergoing treatment at the ICU, her husband Gopal Batra told reporters. “The doctors have not given any assurance on her recovery or survival as of now. Her blood pressure shot up and caused several clots in the brain,” Batra said. Another relative of Patnaik said she is on ventilator support and is under constant observation of neurosurgeons.

Patnaik developed uneasiness while attending a literary meeting in Bhubaneswar Thursday night and was rushed to Capital Hospital around 1 am. She was shifted to the private hospital in Cuttack around 3 am. Geeta Patnaik, a co-singer of veteran Odia singer Akshaya Mohanty, had lent her voice to many superhit old Odia songs such as ‘Phur Kina Udigala Bani’ of ‘Jajabara’ movie.

# Dy CM: Odisha leads with SOP for women-friendly farm machinery

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Odisha is the only state which has prepared a standard operating procedure (SOP) to manufacture women-friendly farm machinery, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo said here Friday.

He was speaking at the inception workshop on ‘Institutionalising the Gender Responsive Cell: Framework and Roadmap’.

The Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment department, in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and with support from the Gates Foundation, organised the workshop here.

It is worth noting that the state government had inaugurated the Gender Responsive Cell in November at Krushi Bhavan, underscoring the state’s commitment to advancing women-led development and inclusive agricultural systems.

Addressing the gathering, Singh Deo said, “When we launched the cell last year, it signalled the state’s commitment to inclusive and evidence-led agricultural reform. We are proud to share that Odisha is the only state which has developed an SOP to manufacture women-friendly farm machinery.”



The workshop marks the next step of operationalising the commitment and ensuring that research insights translate into tangible improvements in schemes and services, he said.

Women and Child Development (W&CD) department secretary Mrinalini Darwal emphasised this need for interdepartmental convergence.

“Women empowerment cannot be addressed in silos. The gender responsive cell creates space for convergence across agriculture, women and child development, and data systems, which is essential for translating women-led development into measurable outcomes,” she said. Agriculture & Farm-

ers’ Empowerment department secretary Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav described the Gender Responsive Cell as a governance reform. He said, “The GRC represents a shift toward accountable and evidence-driven agricultural governance.”

Highlighting the role of research and academia, Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology Vice Chancellor Pravat Kumar Roul said gender-responsive agricultural transformation must be grounded in rigorous evidence and continuous learning.

Institutions like the GRC can serve as vital bridges between research, policy, and practice, he said.

# Paradip Port ranks No-1 with record cargo handling

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Paradip Port has reportedly achieved a record cargo handling of 150.41 million tonne in 2024-25 fiscal, ranking as India’s No-1 major port.

With a rated capacity of 289 million tonne per annum (MTPA), industry-leading productivity, and a provisional net surplus of ₹1,860 crore, the port continues to set national benchmarks while maintaining the lowest vessel and cargo charges among major ports, the Paradip Port Authority (PPA) officials said Friday.

Earlier Friday, Chief Secretary Anu Garg visited the PPA to review its operations and long-term expansion plans.

During the interaction, the Chief Secretary outlined Odisha’s ambitious economic roadmap targeting USD 500 billion by 2036 and USD 1.5 trillion by 2047. She emphasised the need for double-digit growth driven by exports, shipbuilding, and port-led development, high-

lighting the state’s coastline as a strategic advantage. She underscored the importance of the “Paradip Port 2.0” vision, including capacity expansion beyond 500 MTPA, Western Dock deepening, and development of a dedicated green hydrogen berth.

Discussions also covered the proposed 150 MTPA Bahuda Port in Ganjam district and a 1.2 million GT capacity shipbuilding and ship repair cluster north of the Mahanadi in Kendrapara district. These projects, to be developed through a special purpose vehicle (SPV) between the state government and PPA, are expected to significantly strengthen the state’s maritime economy. Development of a cruise terminal at Puri was also discussed, with emphasis on priority implementation. Garg stressed the integrated development of Paradip alongside industrial growth in PCPIR, the Plastic Park, AMNS, and the green hydrogen hub, supported by industrial townships, housing, tourism infrastructure, and urban amenities.

# State officials visit Chennai to study affordable housing, urban habitat

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** A delegation of the Odisha government undertook a visit to Chennai to study affordable housing and urban habitat initiatives supported by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), said an official statement issued here Friday.

Led by Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department’s Additional Chief Secretary Usha Padhee, the team focused on understanding proven models of affordable housing delivery, institutional strengthening, innovative financing frameworks and sustainable urban habitat development being implemented in Tamil Nadu, it said.

During the visit, Padhee, along with officers of the Odisha Urban Housing Mission (OUHM), held detailed interactions with senior officials of the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board and the



Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority to gain insights into policy frameworks, project structuring and implementation strategies.

The delegation was briefed on the Housing and Habitat Development Project, supported by the World Bank with an outlay of approximately USD 200 million, it said.

The visit also covered the ADB-supported inclusive, resilient and sustainable housing for the urban poor, with an estimated investment of USD

150 million, aimed at developing nearly 6,000 housing units across multiple locations.

Later in the day, Padhee visited IIT Madras, where she delivered a lecture titled ‘The Intersection of Technology, Policy, and Public Service’.

Padhee said that insights gained from Tamil Nadu’s experience and academic engagement would contribute meaningfully towards shaping inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development strategies in Odisha.

## ECoR’s comprehensive safety & infra inspection

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal Friday carried out an extensive inspection of key stations, bridges, level crossings, and operational sections to assess safety standards, infrastructure condition, and overall efficiency.

Accompanied by Waltair Division Divisional Railway Manager Lalit Bohra, senior officers from the division, and principal heads of departments from the ECOR headquarters, Funkwal conducted a detailed review of track geometry, station facilities, and operational practices.

The inspection began at Curve No. 433 between Silakjori and Dilimili stations, where track alignment and safety parameters were closely examined. A yard inspection at Dilimili station followed, focusing on operational arrangements and maintenance practices.

Funkwal also visited the traction substation, engaging with frontline staff and gangmen to gather feedback on work culture, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Minor Bridge No 852 between Kumbharamanga and Jagdalpur was reviewed for structural condition and safety compliance.

At Jagdalpur, the GM evaluated passenger amenities, cleanliness, safety measures, and overall station functioning.

# Contractors threaten to halt work from February 20

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Three major contractors’ bodies in the state Friday warned of an indefinite suspension of construction activities across the state beginning February 20, if their demands are not met.

The All Orissa Contractors’ Association (AOCA), All Odisha Contractors’ Welfare Association (AOCWA), and the All Odisha Electrical Contractors’ Association (AOECA) — representing around 70,000 contractors — have formed a joint platform called the United Forum (Milita Mahamancha) to press for urgent redressal of long pending issues.

Led by Joint Forum convenor Anil Kumar Mahalik, the forum submitted an eight point

memorandum to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, setting a February 18 deadline for government action.

Key demands include withdrawal of Works department Circular No. 07764600022025173, regular annual revision of Schedule of Rates with at least a 15% increase, raising the threshold for short tender notices from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh, and imple-

mentation of a uniform Standard Bidding Document (SBD) with an arbitration clause across departments. They also sought publication of functional mines in tender documents, abolition of daily penalties during time extensions, settlement of pending price escalation bills (2012-2019), and transfer of WAMIS management to the Works department’s e Procurement Cell.

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# Jetstream tech: State enters new era of limb-saving care

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** In what is claimed to be a landmark medical breakthrough, SUM Ultimate Medicare has successfully performed Odisha’s first below-knee advanced endovascular atherectomy using the latest Jetstream technology—saving a patient’s leg from imminent amputation.

The pioneering procedure marks a major advancement in minimally invasive vascular treatment in the state and offers new hope to patients suffering from critical limb conditions, a release stated Friday.

The breakthrough procedure was carried out by Sambit Kumar Pattanayak, consultant in Interventional Radiology.

The patient was suffering from critical limb ischemia caused by severe blockages in the arteries below the knee—a life-threatening condition that



can lead to non-healing ulcers, gangrene, and eventual limb loss if left untreated.

Explaining the clinical significance, Pattanayak said that patients with critical limb ischemia often have limited treatment options, particularly when blockages occur in smaller arteries below the knee.

With advanced atherectomy technology, doctors can now safely remove plaque and clots, restore blood circulation

without open surgery, and significantly reduce the risk of amputation.

The minimally invasive procedure not only improves limb-salvage outcomes but also reduces pain, shortens hospital stays, and speeds up recovery time.

This milestone signals a new era in limb-saving treatment in Odisha, offering renewed hope to patients suffering from advanced peripheral artery dis-

ease and critical limb ischemia.

Manojranjan Nayak, Founder President of Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan Deemed to be University and SUM Ultimate Medicare, said the institution remains committed to bringing world-class healthcare innovations closer to the community. He noted that the introduction of below-knee endovascular atherectomy reflects the organisation’s dedication to advanced, patient-centric care that saves both lives and limbs.

Similarly, Swetapadma Dash, CEO of SUM Ultimate Medicare, said the milestone strengthens the hospital’s journey toward clinical excellence. By adopting the latest Jetstream technology, the hospital is expanding access to highly specialised vascular interventions and ensuring improved outcomes for patients suffering from complex arterial diseases.

## VALENTINE'S DAY Caught between romance & tradition

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Starting with candlelight dinners at premium hotels to quiet strolls by Bindu Sagar in City, Valentine’s Day here in Bhubaneswar brings festive joys and celebrates love.

Well-known hotels in City reported brisk bookings, offering themed menus and candlelight dinners. Nightlife spots hosted Valentine-themed nights, drawing young crowds eager for energetic celebrations. For others, quieter alternatives — cafe meetups, creative workshops, and visits to Toshali Mela — blended romance with culture.

Yet, amid the revelry, many question whether the day has become a commercial spectacle rather than a celebration of genuine connection. “Today’s youth often see it as a commercial trend,” said Srusti Mishra, a student. “Companies push gift items and flowers at inflated prices and people fall for the trap to make a presence on social media.” Anandita Mishra, another student, called it “counterfeit currency — it looks real, but feels hollow.”

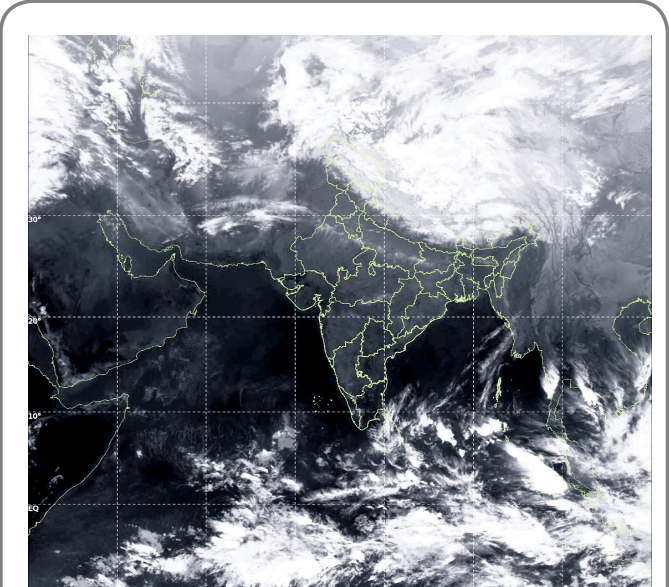
Some view the celebration as disconnected from Indian cultural ideals of devotion and responsibility. Swikriti, a post-



graduate student, described it as a western import that may not reflect deeper commitments emphasised in tradition.

Others advocate balance. Bibhuti Bhusan Mohapatra, a young political leader said, “Love cannot be confined to a single date,” noting that it deepens into trust beyond the calendar. Safety during the day remains a concern due to protests by certain groups which in the past prompted temporary public park closures. While Odisha Police to maintain regular vigil, some residents still feel uneasy. “Definitely not a safe space for couples and normal people. Peaceful protests would have been better for everyone,” Mishra said. Senior police officials clarified that no extraordinary arrangements were made, emphasising that the City remains under control.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.69 ▲ 0.06	SENSEX	82626.76 ▼ 1048.16	GOLD	₹155,300 ▲ ₹2464
EURO	107.59 ▼ 0.18	NIFTY	25471.10 ▼ 336.10	SILVER	₹244,830 ▲ ₹8395



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	32.7°	29.4°	Dry weather likely to prevail
Min Temp	16.7°	14.6°	
Humidity	68%	77%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



# Red banners surface in Rayagada district



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada/Kalyansinghpur, Feb 13:** A week after 15 Maoists, including top leaders Nikhil and Indu, surrendered before police, banners purportedly put up by the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) surfaced at three locations in Rayagada district Friday, casting doubt on claims that the area has become largely free of Maoist activity.

The banners were found at Dhumaguda bus stop under Baising panchayat on the outskirts of Rayagada town, at Paikapada under Chandili police limits, and at Kumbharaguda junction under Budaguda panchayat in Kalyansinghpur block.

Police had earlier expressed confidence that the district was moving towards being Maoist-free following last Friday's surrender of 15 cadres, including senior leaders. However, the fresh appearance of banners has indicated continued presence of the outlawed outfit in the region.

The banners, bearing the name of the CPI (Maoist), carried similar messages. They alleged that former Maoist leaders Sabyasachi Panda, Azad, Uday and Nikhil were not tribals and had recruited tribal youths into the movement, subjecting them to exploitation. The banners also claimed that CPI (Maoist) state secretary Megha Jani and Dombai Majhi were prepared to

respond to such allegations. The outfit further warned companies operating in the KBK division, including Utkal Alumina and Aditya Birla, to refrain from exploiting tribal communities.

Local residents spotted the banner at Dhumaguda bus stop early Friday morning. On receiving information, personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and a bomb disposal squad reached the spot, removed the banner and launched a search operation in the area. Additional forces were deployed as a precautionary measure.

Police from Sheshkhal station also reached the site, registered a case and began an investigation. Banners found at Paikapada and Kumbharaguda junction were seized.

Speaking at a press conference, Additional Superintendent of Police Amulya Dhar said an investigation was underway to ascertain whether the banners were genuine or planted by miscreants. He appealed to the public not to panic.

While police maintain that the Maoist organisation has weakened in the district following the recent surrenders, the fresh banners have triggered concern and unease among residents.

This comes at a time when the Central government has resolved to completely eradicate Left-wing extremism from the country by March 31.

## 2 held for exploiting migrant workers

**Berhampur:** Odisha Police has arrested two persons, including a man from Tamil Nadu, for allegedly exploiting three migrant workers from Ganjam district after trafficking them, police said Friday. The accused were identified as Khirod Tandi (28) of Palnagar in Bolangir district, currently residing at Mangalam in Tamil Nadu's Tiruppur district, and Karthi (24) of Nagaratham in Tamil Nadu. The duo was arrested from Karumathampatti in Coimbatore after the victims were rescued. They were brought to Berhampur on remand and produced before the Judicial Magistrate First Class Court in Digapahandi, Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M said. Inquiry revealed that the accused lured the migrant labourers from a railway station in Tamil Nadu with promises of higher wages, but exploited them by denying adequate food and wages and confining them in a room in Tiruppur district, the SP said. They also allegedly assaulted the workers. The victims were identified as B Budu Reddy (32), B Purna Reddy (30) and S Dhoba Reddy (31), all residents of Laxmi Narayanpur under Digapahandi block. They were rescued by a police team of Digapahandi with the help of Tamil Nadu Police from Nagapattinam February 11.

## AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME Work underway at 57 Odisha stations

**Bhubaneswar:** Redevelopment work at 57 railway stations across Odisha is progressing under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, the Union Railway Ministry informed the Parliament. Balasore MP Pratap Sarangi sought details on the redevelopment of Balasore railway station and other stations in his constituency under the scheme. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said redevelopment of Balasore station is progressing at a fast pace. He added that the design process is consultative, incorporating suggestions from MPs and public feedback. According to the minister's reply, 57 stations in Odisha, including Balasore and Jaleswar, have been identified for development under the scheme. Nationwide, more than 1,300 stations are being modernised under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme to provide improved and modern passenger amenities.

# state

# ASI arrested for blackmailing woman with intimate photos

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Feb 13:** A police assistant sub-inspector (ASI) has been arrested on charges of blackmailing a woman by threatening to circulate her intimate photographs on social media.

The accused, identified as Surendra Pradhan, 39, was posted in the excise intelligence wing in Berhampur. He is a native of Hansamurkatpur in Jharsuguda district.

According to police, Pradhan befriended the woman on Instagram about six months ago. The acquaintance reportedly developed into a relationship. He allegedly lured her with a promise of marriage and took intimate photographs with her.



Later, he threatened to make the photographs viral and demanded money from the woman. Under pressure, the woman transferred ₹40,000 to him

## He threatened to make the photographs viral and demanded money from the woman

through PhonePe February 11. Despite assurances of marriage, Pradhan allegedly cheated her, following which the victim lodged a complaint at the Cyber and Economic Offences Police Station.

Acting on the complaint, police registered a case (13/26), arrested the accused and seized two mobile phones from his possession. He was later produced before a court. Further investigation is underway.

## Man sentenced to life for sodomising, killing 4-yr-old boy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Feb 13:** A special court in Ganjam district Friday sentenced a 26-year-old man to life imprisonment for sodomising and murdering a 4-year-old boy at Dharakote in 2023.

Special POCOS Judge Pranati Pattnaik convicted Srikanta alias Sukanta Sethi, a resident of the Dharakote police station area, and awarded him life imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine of ₹20,000, with an additional year of rigorous imprisonment (RI) in default of payment.

The judge directed the Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to provide financial assistance of ₹2 lakh to the victim's parents.

According to the prosecution, the incident occurred January 24, 2023. The child was playing outside his house when the accused allegedly lured him to his rooftop with chocolates. When the boy did not return till evening, his family began searching for him.

After getting information from locals, they reached the accused's rooftop and found the child lying in a pool of blood. He was taken to Dharakote community health centre, where doctors declared him dead.

Police registered a case (24/23) and arrested Sethi the next day. The investigating officer, Mamata Kumari Samantara, later filed a chargesheet in court. During trial, 17 witnesses were examined. The accused, lodged in Berhampur Circle Jail since his arrest, was produced before the court when the judgment was pronounced, said Special Public Prosecutor Narayan Panda.

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

E-mail ID: executiveengineereddckd@gmail.com  
No.301

OFFICE ORDER

No.32001/91/2526: Due to some unavoidable circumstances the Bid Identification No. SE-EDD-CKD-03/2025-26 is hereby cancelled.

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

OIPR-32001/320191/1/25-26/0002

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, JASHIPUR

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

“e”-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

BID IDENTIFICATION No: 10 MID (JSP/2025-26)

1. Name of the Inviting Officer : Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Jashipur

2. Name of the Work : Improvement to Check Dams in different Block of Mayurbhanj District & Impt to MIP in Sukruli Block of Mayurbhanj District for the year 2025-26

3. No. of Works : 17 (Seventeen) Nos.

4. Tender Amount Varies From : Rs.4.56 lakhs to Rs.42.06 lakhs

5. Date and Time of Availability : Dt.17.02.2026 10.00 hrs to Dt.26.02.2026 17.00 hrs

6. Last Date and Time of receipt : Dt.26.02.2026 upto 17.00 hrs of Bids in the Portal

7. Last Date and Time for clarification upto : Dt.26.02.2026 upto 17.00 hrs

8. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.27.02.2026 at 11.00 hrs onwards

The last tender call notice can also be seen in the DOWR website : <http://dowr.orissa.gov.in>

Name & Address of the OIT

Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division,  
Jashipur, At/PO-Khairi /Dist.: Mayurbhanj,  
PIN-757091,  
E-Mail : eemijashipur@yahoo.com  
<http://tenderorissa.gov.in>

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place.

• Subsequent corrigendum/addendum if required shall be available in the above portal.  
• The tender inviting authority reserves the right to reject/cancel any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer  
M.I Division, Jashipur

OIPR-32001/32282/1/25-26/0001

ସମ୍ବିତ ଆଦିବାସୀ ଉନ୍ନୟନ ସଂସ୍ଥା, ଫୁଲବାଣୀ

ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜନଜାତି ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି ଉନ୍ନୟନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

OFFICE OF THE PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR, ITDA, PHULBANI

ST & SC Development Department, Government of Orissa  
Tel: (06842) 254149, E-Mail: [itdaphulbani@gmail.com](mailto:itdaphulbani@gmail.com)

No.19001/34/2526: No.273/ Date 12.02.2026

NOTICE

The Tender Call Notice published by this office vide No.182 Dated 30.01.2026 & Tender ref. No. PA ITDA PLB\_04 of 2025-26, for the work "Construction of Mission Shakti Bazar at Phulbani Kandhamal" (Tender Id: 2026\_STSCD\_125326\_2), is hereby cancelled with immediate effect, due to wrong estimation of the material cost.

A fresh tender will be invited soon after rectification of the same, which shall be notified separately.

Sd./- Project Administrator,  
ITDA, Phulbani

OIPR-19001/19069/1/25-26/0003

Government of Odisha

25001/135/2526

“e” Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No.: Online-AGL-21 of 2025-26

1. Name of the work : Building Works

2. Estimated Cost : Rs.47.92 to 94.38 lakhs

3. Period of Completion : 6 (Six) Calendar Months

4. Date & time of availability : From 17.02.2026 to 27.02.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.

5. Last date/time for receipt : 02.03.2026 upto 05.00 P.M. of bids in the portal

6. Name & address of the : Executive Engineer, Rural OIT Works Division, Angul

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

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

OIPR-25001/25096/1/25-26/0001

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

34001/59/2526

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
GANJAM (R&B) DIVISION NO. II, BERHAMPUR

Phone/Fax: 0680-2233996, e-mail: [sernb2.ganjam@gmail.com](mailto:sernb2.ganjam@gmail.com)

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) [e-Procurement]

TENDER CALL NOTICE

Bid Identification No. SC (R&B)-GM-II-31/2025-26

No.1201 Dated: 09.02.2026

1) The Superintending Engineer, Ganjam (R&B) Division No.II, Berhampur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single Cover System to be received in ONLINE MODE only for the work as detailed below:

2) Nature of Work : Building work & Road works

3) No. of Work : 04 Nos.

4) Tender Cost : Rs.6,000/- & Rs.2,000/-

5) Class of Contractor : 'D' Class, 'C' & 'B' Class

6) Availability of bid documents : From 17.02.2026 10.00 A.M. to 26.02.2026 4.00 P.M.

7) Date of opening of Bid : 27.02.2026 at 11.30 A.M.

8) The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>.

9) The bidders must submit all the original uploaded documents within 03 days from opening of the tender.

(Sd./- S. Panigrahi)  
Superintending Engineer  
Ganjam (R&B) Division No. II

OIPR-34001/34080/1/25-26/0002

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Chakradharpur Division of South Eastern Railway invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from Individuals, NGO's, Trusts, Charitable Institutions, Corporates, Government Bodies and Self-help groups for the Development of Green cover patches in Railway Station approaches for beautification of Railway area/premises. Policy guidelines on beautification of Railway area/premises shall be applicable as per Railway Board 's letter no. 2022/LML-II/15/1, dated 23.09.2022. MOU shall also govern as per this guideline. [Link: [https://indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/uploads/directorate/land\\_amen/downloads/2022/Revised-Policy-Guidelines-280922.pdf](https://indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/uploads/directorate/land_amen/downloads/2022/Revised-Policy-Guidelines-280922.pdf)]. The Applicant shall submit the general information about them in the prescribed formats enclosed along with this EOI as per format Annexure - A for different stations as detailed below. It is desirable that Applicants submit the photos, details of similar works executed by them, if any along with this EOI. SI. No. & EOI No. as per Annexure-A; Station; Closing Date; Opening date : (1) EOI No. CKP-ENGG-EOI-WEST- BEAUTIFICATION-25-26-03; Rourkela & Jharsuguda; 09.03.2026 at 15.00 hrs.; 09.03.2026 at 15.30 hrs. (2) EOI No. CKP-ENGG-EOI-EAST-BEAUTIFICATION-25-26-03; Tatanagar; 09.03.2026 at 15.00 hrs.; 09.03.2026 at 15.30 hrs.; (3) EOI No. CKP-ENGG-EOI-SOUTH-BEAUTIFICATION-25-26-03; Chaibasa; 09.03.2026 at 15.00 hrs.; 09.03.2026 at 15.30 hrs. For any query/details, parties may contact Office of the Sr. Divisional Engineer (Co-ord.)/Chakradharpur of Chakradharpur Division during working hours. The EOI in a sealed envelope along with details as per Annexure-A, which is available in link mentioned below with any other suggestions, if any to be reached within 09.03.2026 at 15.00 hrs. in the office of Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-Ord./Chakradharpur and opened on 09.03.2026 at 15.30 hrs., Engineering Department, DRM Office Complex, At/Post - Chakradharpur, Dist - West Singhbhum, Pin-833102, Jharkhand, M. No.- 9771467081, 7319936830, Email Id- [tender.ckp@gmail.com](mailto:tender.ckp@gmail.com) All the intended agencies/parties are requested to visit the site location before submission of EOI. Detail EOI notifications are uploaded in <https://ser.indianrailways.gov.in/> → Divisions → Chakradharpur → NOTIFICATIONS → Beautification of Railway Area Premises at Station Approaches along the track throughout Chakradharpur Division].

South Eastern Railway

We serve with a smile

(PR-1183)

UCO BANK

Zonal Office, UCO Bank Building,  
2nd Floor, C-2, Ashok Nagar,  
Bhubaneswar-751009, Tel: 0674-2620423

POSSESSION NOTICE  
For Immovable Property

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act., 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the UCO Bank, Bhanjanagar Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the Borrowers/Guarantor to repay t.0ne amount with interest at the contractual rate together with incidental expenses and costs 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/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the properties described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrowers/ Guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the UCO Bank, Bhanjanagar Branch for an amount plus interest, incidental expenses & charges thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

BHANJANAGAR BRANCH/ Name and Address of the Borrowers/Guarantor	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Properties
<b>Borrowers:</b> 1) Mr. Somanath Panda, 2) Mrs. Rinku Panda, Both are At: Gangapur, Bhanjanagar, Dist.: Ganjam, PIN-761123 / <b>Guarantor:</b> Mrs. Manjula Sahu, W/o: Mr. Subash Chandra Sahu, At: Balisira, PS: Aska, Dist.: Ganjam-761115	₹ 9,34,442.33 as on 30.09.2025 + interest & other charges thereon	07.11.2025 / 10.02.2026	All that part & parcel of immovable property situated over Khata No.: 942/484, Plot No.: 1754, Area: Ac. 0.019Dec., Mouza: Balisira, P.S.: Aska, Dist.: Ganjam, Property in the name of <b>Mrs. Manjula Sahu</b> , W/o: Mr. Somanath Panda, Bounded by North: Pramila Rath, South: Road, East: Upendra Rath, West: Home site of Prafulla Rath
<b>Borrowers:</b> 1) Mr. Somanath Panda, 2) Mrs. Rinku Panda, W/o: Mr. Somanath Panda, Both are At: Gangapur, Bhanjanagar, Dist.: Ganjam, PIN - 761123	₹ 19,29,623/- as on 30.09.2025 + interest & other charges thereon	07.11.2025 / 10.02.2026	All that part & parcel of immovable property situated over Khata No.: 943/394, Plot No.: 6/2013, Area: Ac. 0.021Dec., Mouza: Jilundi, P.S.: Bhanjanagar, Dist.: Ganjam, Property in the name of <b>Mrs. Rinku Panda</b> , Bounded by North: Drain, South: Road, East: Land Seller Santosh Kumar Palo, West: Home site of Rajalaxmi Choudhury
<b>Borrower:</b> Irshad Mohamed, S/o: Late Amir Mohamed, At: Bata Lane Street, Bhanjanagar, Dist.: Ganjam, PIN- 761126	₹ 17,69,018.20 as on 30.01.2024 + interest & other charges thereon	18.11.2024 / 10.02.2026	All that part & parcel of immovable property situated over Khata No.: 2359/670, Plot No.: 2034, Area: Ac. 0.039 Dec., Mouza: Bhanjanagar, P.S.: Bhanjanagar, Dist.: Ganjam, Property in the name of <b>Irshad Mohamed</b> , Bounded by North: Plot of Mahammad

Ikbal, South: Plot of M. Krishna Rao, East: NAC Road, West: NAC Road

Place : Bhubaneswar  
Date : 13.02.2026

Authorised Officer  
UCO Bank

इंडियन ऑयल

IndianOil

INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LTD.

(Refineries Division)

PARADIP REFINERY

इंडियन ऑयल

IndianOil

Notification for Engagement of 342 Apprentices in IOCL, Paradip Refinery

Advertisement No.: PDR/HR/03/Apprentices-25

Date: 12.02.2026

Paradip Refinery, one of the Refining Units of Indian Oil Corporation Limited, one of the largest commercial undertakings in India and a Fortune "Global 500" Company, as a measure of Skill Building Initiative for the Nation, invites applications from candidates for engagement as Apprentices under Apprentices Act, 1961/1973 (as amended) in various Trades/ Disciplines at its refinery located at Paradeep, Jagatsinghpur, Odisha.

Age requirement: 18 years to 24 years as on 31-01-2026. Reservation of seats will be as per Presidential Directives/Govt. Guidelines.

Detailed common advertisement along with reservation, prescribed educational qualification requirement and other eligibility criteria/parameters is available on the website [www.iocl.com](http://www.iocl.com).

HOW TO APPLY : Candidates meeting the prescribed eligibility criteria for a trade/discipline, may visit the website [www.iocl.com](http://www.iocl.com), go to 'What's New' > go to Engagement of Apprentices at Paradip Refinery - 2025 (III) > Click on "Detailed advertisement" (to refer to the Advertisement) > Click on "Click here to Register/Apply on NAPS/NATS" (to register/apply against opportunities) > Click on "Click here to submit additional information on Microsoft forms" (to fill the form). Those meeting the prescribed eligibility criteria may submit their applications through the on-line application process only which shall require completion of BOTH STEPS as indicated below:

- STEP I : Registration on NAPS/NATS portal and Application to Opportunities notified on NAPS/NATS portal
- STEP II : Filling up additional details on MS forms

Candidates must have their own valid e-mail id, mobile no. and a valid & active Apprentice Registration/Enrolment Number registered on NAPS/NATS portal.

Upon completion of the apprenticeship period, the Corporation shall have NO obligation to offer employment to such apprentices NOR can an Apprentice claim right for employment on the grounds of completion of Apprenticeship.

Important dates to remember


DATE OF OPENING OF ONLINE APPLICATION IN NAPS/NATS PORTAL AND FILLING UP MS FORMS	12-02-2026 (10.00 Hrs)
LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF ONLINE APPLICATION IN NAPS/NATS PORTAL AND FILLING UP MS FORMS	25-02-2026 (17.00 Hrs)
TENTATIVE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF LIST OF CANDIDATES CALLED FOR DOCUMENT VERIFICATION	03-03-2026
TENTATIVE DATE OF DOCUMENT VERIFICATION	09-03-2026 to 13-03-2026



“

Consider the Divine Life as the most important thing to obtain

THE MOTHER



## UPSC Draws Line

For years, the civil services examination had a convenient loophole. Crack the exam, get into the IAS or IFS, and still return for another attempt, aiming for a better rank, a preferred cadre, or simply a more strategic posting. That option is now history.


The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has tightened the rules, and the signal is unmistakable: if you are allotted the IAS or IFS, there is no second bite at the cherry. One selection, one outcome. No encore performances.

For aspirants who treated their first selection as a stepping stone rather than the destination, this is clearly unwelcome news. But from the system’s perspective, the change is long overdue. Allowing already-selected candidates to reappear clogged the pipeline, distorted ranks, and kept fresh candidates waiting. UPSC has chosen decisiveness over tactical cleverness.

The new framework draws a hard line. If a candidate is appointed to the IAS or IFS before the mains of a later exam, they are barred from that attempt altogether. Even if the appointment comes after the mains but before final results, the later performance will not count for service allocation.

The IPS and other Group A services get slightly softer treatment. A one-time exemption allows candidates to defer only the foundation course and reappear, but this is strictly conditional. Failure to join training or secure a formal exemption results in the service allocation being cancelled. Even if selected again, candidates must choose one service. After that, future attempts are barred unless they resign.

The larger message is clear. The civil services are no longer a trial-and-error exercise or an optimisation game. Selection is meant to be an endpoint, not a pit stop. Aspirants may grumble, but UPSC seems intent on restoring a basic principle.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

**Tamil Nadu’s DGP dilemma**

Tamil Nadu’s stubborn refusal to appoint a regular Director General of Police despite having a UPSC-approved panel since September 2025 isn’t just administrative sluggishness but rather strategic politicking at its finest.

According to sources, the state government is deliberately keeping G. Venkatraman as the “officiating” DGP because temporary appointments offer more control than permanent ones. With the crucial May 2026 Assembly elections looming, having a pliant police chief who serves at the government’s pleasure rather than someone with the security of a regular appointment makes perfect political sense.

The Supreme Court’s recent rebuke, calling such practices “unacceptable,” hits the nail on the head. But this isn’t just about Tamil Nadu. It’s symptomatic of a broader malaise where states routinely game the system to maintain administrative control over key positions.

The irony is rich: the same political class that lectures about institutional integrity regularly subverts those very institutions when it suits their electoral arithmetic. The three officers on the UPSC panel, Seema Aggarwal, Rajeev Kumar, and Sandeep Rai Rathore, are essentially being held hostage to political convenience.

The timing is telling. The state should have initiated the UPSC process three months before former DGP Shankar Jiwal’s retirement in August 2025. Instead, they’ve created this deliberate delay, banking on the fact that courts move slowly and elections come fast.

The Supreme Court’s new directive empowering UPSC to directly approach the court for contempt proceedings is a welcome move. But will it work? That depends on whether states fear judicial consequences more than they value electoral advantages.

Tamil Nadu faces a choice: respect constitutional propriety or continue this cynical game of musical chairs with crucial appointments. Given their track record, don’t hold your breath for the former.

**EC asserts authority over West Bengal babus**

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has flat-out rejected a state government’s plea to keep key officers at home, setting off an administrative standoff in Kolkata. In a move that’s less “polite request” and more “final order,” the EC has insisted that all 25 senior IAS and IPS officers from the West Bengal cadre, including the state’s Home Secretary Jagdish Prasad Meena, must report to New Delhi for the mandatory central observer briefing ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls.

The state government had argued that sending its top brass out of the state during a crucial pre-election period could disrupt law and order and hurt administrative continuity. Nabanna even proposed alternative names, seeking exemptions for nine officers from the EC’s list. But the poll panel wasn’t having any of it. According to sources, multiple exemption requests were considered and rejected, with attendance at the two-day briefing declared compulsory and non-negotiable.

What’s striking here isn’t just the tug-of-war, but what it reveals about the evolving centre-state dance in election management. Traditionally, states could nudge who goes where and when. Not this time. The EC’s firm stance signals a more assertive poll machinery, determined to keep its house in order.

There is, undoubtedly, a bit of theatre in this. With Bengal already a political eye of the storm, the optics of its own Home Secretary being dispatched out of state as an impartial watchdog is eyebrow-raising. Critics sense heavy-handedness; supporters see necessary rigour.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](mailto:dilipthecherian@twitter.com). Let’s multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

“A woman always has her man, but the man unconsciously leans on his roots, his heritage. He feels like an orphan without his parents

RAJ KAPOOR

“Nature’s imagination is so boundless compared to our own meager human imagination

JAMES CAMERON

“Good cinema is what we can believe, and bad cinema is what we can’t believe

ABBAS KIAROSTAMI

- THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1542: King Henry VIII of England had Catherine Howard, the fifth of Henry's six wives, beheaded on charges of adultery.

1694: Following the Glorious Revolution, William and Mary were proclaimed king and queen of England. They ruled jointly as King William III and Queen Mary II until her death in 1694.

1960: France detonated its first atomic bomb in the Sahara desert.

1997: The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished above 7,000 for the first time.

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

HIGH SEAS TREATY MATTERS



Coastal and inland regions alike are vulnerable to catastrophic climate events fueled by rising ocean temperatures, and to marine exploitation from overfishing and bottom trawling

high seas are our global commons, belonging equally to all countries.

Alongside other African countries, we have advocated for robust conservation and more just and equitable governance of humanity’s common heritage. That means expanding access to, and sharing the benefits from, ocean resources, as well as building greater capacity for all countries to implement the High Seas Treaty effectively. In this spirit, Malawi’s position aligns with the adage that came to define the negotiations: “nothing about us without us.” Decisions affecting the ocean’s future must reflect the meaningful participation of all countries, so that no one is left behind.

Ocean stewardship is not defined by proximity to the sea, but by a willingness to act in the common interest by safeguarding humanity’s shared life-support system. The new treaty is a monumental step forward in this respect, as it provides the first-ever framework to create marine protected areas outside national jurisdiction on the high seas, an area covering nearly two-thirds of the ocean.

We now have a path way to preserve ecosystems whose

protection promises to deliver outside global benefits. Safeguarding critical areas like the Saya de Malha Bank sea grass system in the Indian Ocean, the biologically rich Walvis Ridge off southern Africa, and ecologically significant areas in the Gulf of Guinea will allow marine life to recover and thrive, ultimately strengthening the ecosystems on which we all depend.

The High Seas Treaty offers further proof of what inclusive international collaboration can achieve. But it is only a starting point. We must do more to ensure a climate-resilient future by setting more ambitious yet attainable goals. For example, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, with its target to protect at least 30% of all land and ocean areas by 2030, offers an opportunity to aim higher.

To succeed, we must harness the momentum generated by the High Seas Treaty. In Malawi, we have seen firsthand how important international cooperation is for achieving conservation goals. To safeguard Lake Malawi, Africa’s third-largest lake, we protected key areas by having them recognized as UNESCO

World Heritage site, ensuring that biodiversity could be conserved though consistent monitoring and community engagement. We hope this effort will serve as a model for others. Safeguarding nature must be science-based, inclusive, and designed to protect future generations.

Regional networks will be essential to translate ocean goals into real-world policies, while also ensuring that ocean guardianship aligns with all countries’ and regions’ priorities. The Economic Community of West African States’ commendable effort to protect biodiversity within the Canary and Guinea currents’ convergence zone (in the Eastern Atlantic) is one such example. It has already shown what is possible when cross-regional collaboration is directed toward ocean stewardship.

African leaders must continue lighting the path ahead of us. African countries now represent one-quarter of the High Seas Treaty’s 145 signatories, and 18 of its 85 ratifications. We must build on this momentum at the upcoming Our Ocean Conference in Kenya, placing African leadership firmly at the center of ocean governance.

When Malawi became the first landlocked country to ratify the treaty, we helped redefine what ocean guardianship looks like. Our decision made clear that every country – no matter how far from the coast – has a stake in the issue. We are now urging all others to do the same ahead of the first Conference of the Parties to the High Seas Treaty (COP1), which will be held within the next year. This is a pivotal moment for the ocean’s future, and for our own.

The writer is President of the Republic of Malawi.

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SPECTRUM

UNION BUDGET

## Ailing health sector gets short shrift

India’s large population—about 30-35% of whom live at or near the poverty line—needs strong healthcare prioritisation. However, governments have long neglected this sector, leaving many rural and underprivileged health centers without sufficient staff or basic equipment like operational x-ray machines. A thorough examination of the recent Budget is necessary to determine if the government adequately addresses the essential needs of the population.

Prior to budget, the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA) stated the Centre’s health spending had stagnated at 0.29% of the GDP. It noted the central health outlay must rise at least 1% of the GDP for the country’s total public health spending, including that of states, to reach 2.5%. requires the health allocation to increase to about ₹350,000 crore from roughly ₹100,000 crore in 2025-26. “We’re asking for at least a doubling of the Centre’s outlay for health to something like ₹200,000 crore for 2026-27”, said Indranil Mukhopadhyay, a health



Dhurjati Mukherjee

REDUCTION IN PRICES FOR 17 CANCER DRUGS DOESN'T SUFFICIENTLY ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE GENERAL POPULATION

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgardi Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

economist and JSA co-convenor.

At same time, note that economist and social activist, John Dreze has pointed out that India’s public expenditure on health stood at just 1.3% of the GDP, lower than 1.9% of sub; Saharan Africa, 2% in West Asia and North Africa, 2.8% in East Asia, 4.1% in Latin America and 8% in the European Union.

A dedicated ₹10,000 crore five-year programme has been allotted in the budget to the bio-pharma sector to develop the country as a global manufacturing hub through Biopharma SHAKTI, which is welcome. Additionally, there’s a proposal to set up NIMHANS-II at Ranchi designed specifically for mental health and trauma care. But why just one? The government is placing particular emphasis on Ayurveda, planning to establish three All India Institutes and upgrade Ayurveda pharmacies. This initiative, it’s hoped shall benefit the public.

While the reduction in prices for 17 cancer drugs and import cuts on treatments for

rare diseases, alongside the promotion of medical tourism, may represent progress, these measures do not sufficiently address the needs of the general population, particularly those in lower-income segments who continue to face barriers to adequate healthcare and must often travel significant distances for specialized services. In a populous country such as India, there is a clear need to focus on rural and underdeveloped districts. Expectations existed that plans would be announced to establish 50 to 100 specialty hospitals within the next three to five years; however, no such initiatives were mentioned by Sitharaman. Furthermore, it is notable that the Health Mission’s allocation of ₹39,390 crore for strengthening primary healthcare, maternal and child health services, and disease control programmes appears insufficient to meet the actual demand in a nation of this size.

However, the ₹1.06 lakh crore allocation in the budget allocation, reflecting a 6% increase over the revised

estimates of the current fiscal, may sound optimistic but such increase doesn’t have any meaning when considered with inflationary conditions. Health economists have calculated that the increase is in fact a decline in the government’s share of health expenditure from a stagnant 0.28% of India GDP over the past five years to an estimated 0.27%. Is this adequate keeping in view the needs of the impoverished and marginalised sections, deprived of affordable healthcare?

It is indeed tragic that India’s low spending on public health have, over the past two decades or so, has been acknowledged by successive governments, but very little has been done by way of increasing allocation.

It was expected that the Budget would substantially increase allocation and help in setting up at least one centrally funded hospital in each district, to start with the backward ones. But nosuch measures have been announced so far. Amends do need to be made.

### Duty of advocates

Sir, The recent observations of the Supreme Court regarding an advocate’s social media posts against a complainant in a pending criminal case deserve serious reflection. The right to defend an accused is fundamental to our justice system. However, that right does not extend to publicly vilifying or intimidating a survivor outside the courtroom. Advocates are officers of the court. Their primary duty is to assist in the administration of justice, not to conduct parallel campaigns in the court of public opinion. Social media cannot become a substitute for cross-examination, nor should it be used to cast aspersions on witnesses in a manner that may prejudice proceedings. While freedom of expression is constitutionally protected, professional responsibility imposes higher standards of restraint. The Supreme Court’s remarks serve as a timely reminder that institutional integrity must prevail over momentary publicity. It may now be appropriate for Bar Councils to frame clearer digital conduct guidelines to preserve the dignity of the legal profession..

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

### Civic sense lesson

Sir, The video of an elderly woman, stopping a scooterist from using the footpath and refusing to step aside until the man takes the main road has gone viral and making rounds in various social media platforms . The elderly citizen has been applauded and praised for her civic sense and many have described it as an exemplary act of civic responsibility. The irresponsible practice of two-wheeler riders using footpaths to bypass traffic blocks and putting pedestrians life at risk is a common sight in many of our towns and cities. The video of the elderly woman teaching basic civic sense lesson to the scooterist is not just a lesson for the rider but to every one - drivers who take short cuts risking others lives and also a lesson to civic authorities including traffic personnel to be more alert and not to forget their duty to serve the public and avoid putting citizens life at risk.

M Pradyu, KANNUR



# ‘Vande Mataram’ directive sparks political row in Bengal



While the TMC has described the order as an attempt to ‘diminish’ Rabindranath Tagore and stoke symbolism for electoral gains, the Congress has dubbed it a ‘divisive ploy’, and the BJP has countered that it is merely correcting a historical wrong and restoring full honour to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s song

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Feb 13:** The Centre’s directive mandating that all six stanzas of the national song, ‘Vande Mataram’, be sung before the national anthem, ‘Jana Gana Mana’, at official functions has triggered a sharp political face-off in West Bengal ahead of the Assembly elections.

While the TMC has described the order as an attempt to “diminish” Rabindranath Tagore and stoke symbolism for electoral gains, the Congress has dubbed it a “divisive ploy”, and the BJP has countered that it is merely correcting a historical wrong and restoring full honour to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s song.

In an order dated January 28 and formally notified Wednesday, the Ministry of Home Affairs said that when the national song and the national anthem are rendered together, ‘Vande Mataram’ must precede Jana Gana Mana.

It also laid down, for the first time, detailed protocols for singing the national song, specifying that its six stanzas, with a duration of 3 minutes and 10 seconds, be performed on occasions such as the unfurl-

ing of the national flag, arrival and departure of the President and governors, presidential addresses to the nation, presentation of civilian honours and ceremonial parades.

The directive has triggered a layered political response in poll-bound Bengal, where identity politics has increasingly revolved around the twin motifs of “Bangla” and “Bangali”.

Senior TMC leader and state Education Minister Bratya Basu said the party had “no objection” to highlighting Bankim Chandra’s contribution, but alleged that the move was an attempt to “belittle” Tagore.

“By insisting that ‘Vande Mataram’ must be sung before ‘Jana Gana Mana’, they are trying to create a hierarchy. In the process, Rabindranath has been insulted,” Basu said, adding that “certain communal forces” had historically been uncomfortable with Tagore’s inclusive and secular worldview.

Another state minister, Chandrima Bhattacharya, took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recalling that he had once referred to Bankim Chandra as “Bankim-da” in Parliament.

“Is this an attempt to ap-

ply balm to that wound?” she asked.

Basu also linked the timing of the order to the impending Assembly polls, claiming the directive would be forgotten “once Mamata Banerjee becomes Chief Minister for the fourth time”.

The Congress echoed the charge, saying the step was aimed at “scoring political points” ahead of the elections, with former state Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury terming it a “strategy of division”.

For the TMC, the controversy feeds into a broader campaign narrative it has sharpened over the past three major elections—projecting itself as the custodian of Bengali pride against what it describes as an “outsider” BJP.

Allegations of insult to Bengali icons, neglect of the state, and harassment of Bengalis in other states have formed recurring motifs of the ruling party’s political messaging.

The Centre’s order places the TMC in a nuanced position: both Tagore and Bankim Chandra are towering Bengali figures, and both songs occupy constitutionally recognised space—‘Jana Gana Mana’ as the National Anthem and ‘Vande Mataram’ as the National Song.

The TMC’s response sought to frame the issue not as a contest between two Bengali icons, but as an attempt by the BJP to recalibrate symbolism for electoral dividends.

The BJP, however, rejected the criticism as politically motivated.

Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar and BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya accused the Congress and TMC of having historically “truncated” ‘Vande Mataram’ under pressure from “communal appeasement”.

Bhattacharya dismissed claims that Tagore had advised dropping portions of the song, saying the poet had only sung the first two stanzas on one occasion and had not barred the rest.

He also referred to debates within the Congress in the 1930s, claiming that Subhas Chandra Bose had expressed concern over attempts to dilute the song’s status.

Bhattacharya said the party’s position was consistent and not election-driven.



An artisan works on clay models of Lord Shiva ahead of Shivratri at a workshop, in Nadia, West Bengal, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## Goa: Stakeholders oppose Deposit Refund Scheme

Govt says it will tackle low-value waste

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, Feb 13:** Stakeholders have raised objections to the Goa government’s proposed Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS), aimed at curbing rising plastic pollution in the coastal state, stressing that it will have adverse consequences for the locals, tourists and retailers.

Officials have defended the initiative, saying it will tackle low-value waste that is difficult to collect, costly to transport and generates little revenue but is disastrous for the environment.

The stakeholders have written to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, expressing their opposition to this programme, which will likely be implemented from April 1. The DRS seeks to provide a refundable deposit for individual waste items brought back to an authorised collection point.

All Goa FMCG and Telecom Distributors Association (AGFTDA) has said that the scheme in its present form will have far-reaching adverse consequences for the people of Goa, tourists, as well as retailers, FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) distributors and



manufacturers operating in the state. AGFTDA general secretary Chetan Kapdi said they have written to CM Sawant stating that while solid waste is a genuine concern, they believe DRS will be far more damaging than the problem it seeks to address.

He said other stakeholders, including the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Goa Waste Management Association and the Goa State Industries Association, are also opposed to the scheme.

Consumers will have to pay an additional deposit on purchased commodities, which will be refunded when they

return the empty plastic container to a designated collection point, he said.

“Although described as a refundable deposit, it effectively requires consumers to pay DRS charges upfront at the point of purchase and recover their own money only if they have the time, ability and access to a collection centre,” he said. AGFTDA has said that retailers will face frequent disputes with customers over DRS charges being levied over and above the printed MRP, leading to conflict, loss of goodwill and increased stress on both parties.

A distributor will be required

to pay DRS amounts upfront to manufacturers or companies at the time of purchase, which will lead to increased capital requirements with no corresponding return, said Kapdi.

Similarly, manufacturers will have to deposit the DRS amount with the Goa government, he said. “Additional costs will also be incurred for printing, managing and affixing QR codes specific to Goa,” he said.

Dr Anthony de Sa, who heads the DRS Scheme Administrator Committee, said the programme focuses on waste that is not collected when discarded because of its low resale value.

“While a significant amount of waste is being managed, especially materials with clear monetary value, such as PET and beer bottles, low-value waste like chip and chocolate wrappers and juice cartons is largely left behind. These materials are difficult to collect, costly to transport and generate little revenue, yet they are disastrous for the environment,” he said.

He said it is important to have a comprehensive approach that ensures the collection of high-value as well as low-value waste, and internal cross-subsidies are leveraged.

“The objective is to incentivise return at source, not to deal with the material after it enters drains, beaches or public areas,” he said.

## Abhishek Banerjee meets slain migrant’s family, seeks justice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Feb 13:** Senior TMC Leader Abhishek Banerjee Friday met the family members of a migrant worker from West Bengal, who was killed in Maharashtra’s Pune district, and demanded that the police in the western state ensure justice for the deceased.

The BJP accused the ruling Trinamool Congress of spreading misinformation over the incident.

The TMC national general secretary visited the residence of Sukhen Mahato in Purulia, and said strict punishment must be ensured for all those involved in the killing, even as he warned that the party would extend legal and political support to the family if the investigation faltered.

“The Maharashtra Police should ensure that the family receives justice. If those involved get bail, the police should oppose it,” Banerjee told reporters outside the family’s residence.

Escalating the attack, he said,



“If they cannot do it, transfer the case to us; we will solve the case within 50 days.”

Banerjee said the state administration, on the directions of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, had already initiated contact with authorities in Maharashtra and the Koregaon Bhima police administration to ensure coordination and strict action.

“We came to know about this painful incident the day before yesterday. The CM expressed grief and condolence, and instructed the administration to coordinate with Maharashtra

so that strict punishment is awarded,” said the MP who is considered number two in the TMC hierarchy.

Referring to a purported video circulating online, Banerjee described the assault as “barbaric” and said the victim’s family was devastated.

The TMC leader recounted how Mahato’s brothers, who also worked in an auto-parts unit in Koregaon Bhima, lost contact with him before being informed of his death.

He said the family was assured of legal aid and that the party would pursue the matter

in courts if required. “It is not enough to arrest someone for a few days. If bail is granted, bail cancellation appeals should be filed. We will help the family fight this legal battle,” he said.

Banerjee, however, said the exact cause of death remained a matter of investigation and insisted he did not want to politicise the tragedy.

At the same time, he alleged that incidents involving Bengali migrants had occurred in several BJP-ruled states in recent months and called for vigilance.

He urged the BJP MP from Purulia, Jyotirmay Singh Mahato, to intervene and speak to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to ensure speedy justice.

“I would expect the MP to rise above party lines and act. Where is the urgency when people are being killed?” he said, adding that if all the accused were not arrested and the trial did not begin in time, the TMC would send a delegation of MLAs to Maharashtra along with the family members.

Banerjee also announced that rallies would be held across assembly segments, blocks and towns on Saturday to demand strict punishment for those responsible.

His remarks come a day after Mamata Banerjee termed the killing a “hate crime” in a post on X, saying she was “shaken, enraged and sickened” by the murder of the migrant worker, whom she described as the sole earning member of his family.

However, Pune rural police have said the victim was killed following an argument in a drunken state and that there was “no other angle” to the incident.

According to police, the incident occurred February 9 in Koregaon under the Shikrapur police station limits, and two persons have been held in connection with the case.

Responding to Banerjee’s remarks, the West Bengal unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alleged that a misinformation campaign was being carried out over deaths of migrant workers.

## No plan to close Dabolim airport for civilian flights: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, Feb 13:** Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant Friday categorically stated that the Goa International Airport at Dabolim will not be shut down.

The opposition Goa Forward Party, Congress and Aam Aadmi Party had Thursday expressed apprehension that civilian operations at the airport in South Goa

would be stopped and it would be exclusively used by the Indian Navy.

The airport is inside the Indian Navy’s INS Hansa air base, but it is being used for both civilian air traffic as well as naval operations since inception.

“Every time there is an election, the opposition scouts for some or other issue,” the chief minister said Friday, talking to

reporters at Porvorim.

On South Goa MP Viriato Fernandes’s claim that he had seen a document about the plan to close the airport, Sawant said he was indulging in a “political stunt”.

“The MP comes out of the Parliament House and makes such a statement. He is making mockery of Parliament,” the chief minister said.

The Union government recent-

ly spent ₹450 crore on constructing a fly-over at Dabolim Airport, Sawant said, adding, “This was in addition to the ₹400 crore spent on infrastructure upgradation at the airport over the last 4-5 years.”

This investment was made so that the airport can be used for civilian flights, the CM said. There was a decision by the union cabinet not to shut down the Dabolim Airport for civilians, he added.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCE  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,  
NABARANGPUR IRRIGATION DIVISION  
NABARANGPUR, DIST-NABARANGPUR (ODISHA)  
Email ID : senidivision@gmail.com

Lr no.224

Dated : 10.02.2026

E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE  
BID IDENTIFICATION NO-SE-NID-08-2025-26 (01-02)

1. Nature of the work : Bank Protection work, 2. Total Nos. of works : 02 (Two) Nos., 3. Tender cost of the works : From Rs.43.41 lakhs to Rs.31.51 lakhs (excluding GST), 4. Class of Contractor : 'C' & 'B' Class, 5. Period of completion : 01 (One) Month & 02 (Two) month, 6. Other details as follows :  
Further details can be seen from the Government website www.tendersodisha.gov.in, Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation if any required will be published in Govt. website only.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Bid pr-line	Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time & Place of opening of Tender
Superintending Engineer, Nabarangpur Irrigation Division, Nabarangpur	SE-NID-08-2025-26 (01-02)	16.02.2026 (10.00 A.M.)	25.02.2026 (up to 05.00 P.M.) 20.02.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.	26.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M. in the O/o the Superintending Engineer, Nabarangpur Irrigation Division, Nabarangpur

Sd/- Superintending Engineer  
Nabarangpur Irrigation Division, Nabarangpur

OIPR-32001/32361/11/25-26/0001



Deeply humbled to be part of the consecration and inauguration of the new administrative block of Sera Jey Jamyang Choekhorling Monastery, in the august presence of Venerable Geshe Lobsang Norbu la, chief administrator of Sera Jey Monastery, Karnataka, His Eminence Dolhe Rinpoche Tenzin Kunkhyen la, Abbot of Sera Jey Jamyang Choekhorling Monastery and other dignitaries

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

There is a chance for a few more parties to join our alliance. We cannot say which party will be where right now; that can only be confirmed after the election notification is released

EDAPPADI K PALANISWAMI | AIADMK GENERAL SECY

The AAP is trying to hide its wrongdoings by diverting public attention

NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

SHORT TAKES

NEET-aspirant ends life in Kota

**Kota:** An eighteen-year-old girl studying for the NEET-UG allegedly died by suicide after consuming a poisonous substance in her rented accommodation under Dadabari police station limits here late Thursday, an officer said. The deceased teen was identified as Juhi Patel (18), a resident of Chatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh. The arrived in Kota around two-and-a-half months ago on her own volition and had been self-studying for NEET-UG and taking offline mock tests while living in a rented room in Basant Vihar area of the city, Dadabari Station House Officer Baldevram said.

Zubeen death case hearing held

**Guwahati:** The court hearing the case of singer Zubeen Garg's death Friday examined documents submitted by two accused, Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddhartha Sharma, while the singer's wife and sister demanded that the fast-track court promised by the state government be set up at the earliest for daily hearings. The Kamrup Metropolitan District and Sessions Court admitted Mahanta's petition seeking the release of his frozen bank accounts and also heard three petitions of Sharma, including one seeking the handing over of the report of the Singapore Coroner's Court regarding Garg's death.

Ex-aide of Mukhtar Ansari shot dead

**Barabanki:** A former aide of slain gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari was allegedly shot dead by unidentified motorcycle-borne assailants on the Ayodhya highway here Friday, police said. The deceased, identified as Shoaib Kidwai alias Bobby, was a suspect in the high-profile murder of District Jail Superintendent R K Tiwari in Lucknow. That daylight killing near Raj Bhavan in February 1999 had shocked the then Kalyan Singh government.

CIC pulls up SAI

**New Delhi:** The Central Information Commission has rapped the SAI for failing to disclose information on complaints and action taken against the Roller Skating Federation of India, holding that the information cannot be said to be available with the skating federation alone.

Rahul Gandhi meets farm unions, discusses protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 13:** Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi met farm union leaders from across the country in the Parliament House complex Friday and discussed with them the need for a countrywide movement to oppose the India-US interim trade deal as well as safeguarding the livelihoods of farmers and farm labourers.

Posting a video of the meeting on X and taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gandhi said, "Narendra 'surrender' Modi has betrayed India's farmers - and they understand this."

"This is not just a trade agreement, but a direct attack on the livelihoods of our food providers. At a meeting with a delegation of farmers' unions in Parliament today, the concerns were evident. Farmers, already struggling with inflation, rising costs and uncertainty over MSPs, are now being pitted against foreign crops equipped with heavy subsidies and mechanical power, unprepared," he said in his post in Hindi.

This is not a fight based on equal terms, but one-sided pressure, Gandhi said.

"The government's hollow assurances will no longer work. The future of farmers cannot be compromised without their consent," the Congress leader asserted.

He said no matter what happens, the Congress and he stand with India's food providers for their rights, security and dignity.

During the meeting, the farm union leaders expressed

INDIA-US TRADE DEAL



■ Rahul Gandhi met with farm union leaders to discuss the potential negative impacts of the India-US trade deal on Indian farmers

■ Farm leaders expressed concerns about the trade deal's impact on the livelihoods of farmers growing corn, soyabean, cotton, fruits, and nuts

■ Gandhi and the farm leaders discussed the need for a nationwide movement to oppose the trade deal and protect farmers' interests

■ Gandhi accused the government of being anti-farmer and compromising the country's food security through the trade deal

their opposition to the India-US trade deal and conveyed their deep concern for the livelihoods of the corn, soybean, cotton, fruits and nuts growers, the Congress said.

Gandhi told the farmers that the trade deal has opened the door for agricultural imports and that many other crops would soon follow, according to the Opposition party.

The farm leaders and the former Congress chief discussed the need for a large-scale national movement to oppose the deal and safeguard the livelihoods of farmers and farm la-

bourers, it added.

The farm leaders who met Gandhi included All India Kisan Congress chief Sukhpal S Khaira, Ashok Balhara of the Bharatiya Kisan Mazdoor Union-Haryana, Baldev S Zira of the BKU-Krantikari, R NandKumar of the Progressive Farmers Front, Amarjit S Mohri of the BKU-Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, Guramneet S Mangat of the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha-India and Hameed Malik of the Jammu and Kashmir Zamidara Forum.

Khaira said a delegation of leaders from various farm unions met Gandhi in his Parliament office to discuss the "anti-farmer" Indo-US treaty. He alleged that the deal is nothing but a complete surrender before the United States.

The meeting came a day after Gandhi asserted that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre can file cases or a privilege motion against him but he will stand strongly with farmers. He also accused Modi of being "anti-farmer" and "selling" the country through the India-US interim trade deal.

Man faints, dies at TVK rally in Salem

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Salem (Tamil Nadu), Feb 13:** A 37-year-old man fainted at a TVK rally here Friday addressed by party chief Vijay and died on the way to hospital, police said.

The man, identified as Suraj, a native of Maharashtra and residing here, collapsed after complaining of chest pain, and was immediately rushed to a local hospital.

"He was declared brought dead at the medical facility," a police official said. He also claimed that Suraj had undergone angioplasty sometime ago. The police have registered a case and are investigating.

According to the police, the man had gone to see Vijay. He complained of uneasiness while waiting at the rally venue and fainted. Those near him initially attempted to revive Suraj, but later rushed him in an ambulance to a private hospital. However, the doctors who examined him said he was brought dead. Police claimed that the incident happened even before Vijay arrived for the district functionaries' meeting. Prelim-

4 of family among 6 trampled to death by wild elephants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ranchi, Feb 13:** At least six people, including four members of a family, were trampled to death by a herd of wild elephants in a village in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district Friday when the people tried to flee, a forest officer said.

The herd, which had attacked several people over the last few days, entered Gondwar village in Churchu block Thursday night and trampled six people to death early on February 13, Hazaribag East Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Vikas Kumar Ujjwal told PTI.

"Among those killed were four members of a family. One child was also seriously injured," Ujjwal said.

The child has been admitted to the Sadar Hospital in Hazaribag, he said.

The group of jumbos had been roaming in Bokaro, Ramgarh and Hazaribag districts for the past few days and had earlier caused casualties in Bokaro, Ujjwal added."We had alerted villagers through the public address system as the herd entered the block. Unfortunately, when people tried to flee from their houses, six of them were trampled to death," he said.

Poonam Devi, one of the relatives of the deceased, said that two of the children were left alone when the elephants came and trampled them. The process of providing compensation of ₹ four lakh each to the kin of the victims has been initiated, another official said. A quick response team has also been deployed to drive out the herd from the block.

The forest officials visited the affected villagers in Churchu Block and met the family members of those killed.

SC GRANTS BAIL TO VIKRAM BHATT'S WIFE

The Supreme Court Friday granted bail to filmmaker Vikram Bhatt's wife Shwetambari Bhatt in a multi-crore rupees cheating case



Women purchase heart-shaped soft toys and gift items ahead of Valentine's Day at a market in Guwahati, Assam

MP Kirti Azad questions Railway Minister on Amrit Bharat Station scheme in Bengal

**New Delhi:** MP Kirti Azad raised concerns about the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme in West Bengal. In response, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted a significant Budget increase for the state—₹14,205 crore, up from ₹4,300 crore during the UPA era. Vaishnaw explained that while funds have been allocated, delays in the execution of railway projects in West Bengal are primarily due to challenges in land acquisition. He revealed that only 57% of the required 4,662 hectares of land have been acquired, with several key projects facing a standstill due to zero land acquisition. The Railway Minister urged MP Azad to approach the Chief Minister of West Bengal, requesting support in facilitating the land acquisition process to ensure timely completion of critical railway infrastructure projects under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

DGCA slaps ₹1cr fine on Air India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai/New Delhi, Feb 13:** Aviation safety watchdog DGCA has imposed a fine of Rs 1 crore on Tata Group-owned Air India for operating an Airbus A320 neo plane without the requisite airworthiness certification on at least eight routes last year, according to sources.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), December 2 last year, said it was probing the incident of Air India operating an A320 neo plane without having a requisite airworthiness certification on at least eight routes.

The sources Friday said the regulator has slapped Rs 1 crore fine on Air India for the



violations. "Air India acknowledges the receipt of a DGCA order in relation to an incident that was voluntarily reported back in 2025. All identified gaps have since been satisfactorily addressed and shared with the authority," the airline said in a statement.

Meanwhile, aviation safety regulator DGCA has put in place stricter breath analyser test requirements for pilots, wherein those found repeatedly violating the norms could even face cancellation of their pilot license, according to a source.

Under the revised norms, which came into effect from February 9, FATA (Foreign Aircrew Temporary Authorisation) of an expatriate pilot operating in India will be cancelled and not considered again if that cockpit crew tests positive for alcohol consumption during pre-flight breath analyser examination.

Among other provisions, the license of a pilot who tests positive in a Breath Analyser (BA) test before operating a flight on three occasions will be cancelled, the source said.

Over 8K complaints against sitting judges since '16: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 13:** Over 8,600 complaints against sitting judges have been received by the office of the chief justice of India (CJI) since 2016, the Lok Sabha was informed Friday.

In a written reply, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said 8,639 complaints have been received against sitting judges between 2016 and 2025. The highest number of complaints (1,170) was received in 2024 by the office of the CJI against sitting judges.

Complaints received against judges and chief justices of the high courts are handled by the judiciary through an "in-house mechanism".

He recalled that in May 1997, the Supreme Court adopted two resolutions - "The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life", which lays down



certain judicial standards and principles to be observed and followed by SC and HC judges; and "In-house Procedure", which takes suitable remedial measure against

judges who do not follow the universally accepted values of judicial life including those in the "Restatement of Values of Judicial Life". According to the estab-

All transfers are to be made in public interest: Govt on HC judges' transfers

**New Delhi:** All transfers are to be made in public interest, the government told the Lok Sabha Friday as it explained the entire process of transferring high court judges in response to a question on instances of "interference" by the executive in such transfers. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said, "All transfers are to be made in public interest -- for promoting better administration of justice throughout the country." He was asked whether the government is aware of the "recent instances of interference by the executive in the transfer of judges of lower judiciary and high courts." On the issue of the transfer procedure followed for HC judges, the Union minister said that as per the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) for appointment and transfer of high court judges, the proposal for transfer is initiated by the chief justice of India in consultation with four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.

lished in-house procedure for the higher judiciary, the CJI is competent to receive complaints against SC judges and chief justices of the high courts.

Similarly, chief justices of high courts are competent to receive complaints against the conduct of the high court judg-

es. Complaints against members of the higher judiciary received on the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) or in any other form are forwarded to the CJI or chief justices of high courts competent to receive such complaints, he explained.







# international

## of the day quote

Often we move forward with the speed of the slowest and the enhanced cooperation avoids that. The pressure and the sense of urgency is enormous, and that can move mountains

URSULA VON DER LEYEN | EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT

We may not like the action (U.S. tariffs), but we must take the signal that we need to reform many of the things with the world trading system

NGOJI OKONJO-IWEALA | WTO CHIEF

Russians are not winning (the war) as some are thinking. This so-called Russian bear is not there. It is basically still the speed of a garden snail, what we are seeing in Ukraine - this is how the Russians are moving inside Ukraine, very slow, staggering losses

MARK RUTTE | NATO SECRETARY-GENERAL

## SHORT TAKES

### US carrier advances to Middle East

**Washington:** The United States will send the world's largest aircraft carrier to the Middle East to back up another already there, a person familiar with the plans said Friday, putting more American firepower behind President Donald Trump's efforts to coerce Iran into a deal over its nuclear program. The USS Gerald R Ford's planned deployment to the Mideast comes after Trump only days earlier suggested another round of talks with the Iranians was at hand. Those negotiations didn't materialise as one of Tehran's top security officials visited Oman and Qatar this week and exchanged messages with the US intermediaries. Already, Gulf Arab nations have warned any attack could spiral into another regional conflict in a Mideast still reeling from the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

### 2 men jailed in UK over IS-inspired plot

**London:** Two men were jailed Friday for plotting to kill hundreds in an Islamic State-inspired attack on the Jewish community in England, a plan prosecutors said could have been deadlier than December's mass shooting at Sydney's Bondi Beach. Walid Saadaoui, 38, and Amar Hussein, 52, were both convicted after a trial at Preston Crown Court, which began a week after an unrelated deadly attack on a synagogue in the nearby northwest city of Manchester. Prosecutors said the pair were Islamist extremists who wanted to use automatic firearms to kill as many Jews as they could. Judge Mark Wall sentenced Saadaoui to a minimum term of 37 years and Hussein to a minimum term of 26 years, saying: "You were very close to being ready to carry out this plan."

### French tourist found dead in Chad

**Paris/N'djamena:** The Chadian army has found the body of a French national who went missing in recent days in the country's north-east, local authorities said Friday, adding that early indications point to an accidental fall. The mayor of Amdjarass said the army leading the search informed him earlier this Friday that the tourist had been found dead, and that local medical staff confirmed the death. An official at Chad's Tourism Ministry said the man, who had appeared weak, likely died after falling from a cliff, and added that further details would be released once the body arrived in the capital N'Djamena.



Schools, the justice system, elected officials: everyone must be mobilized

EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

## NEW ASTRONAUTS LAUNCH TO ISS

A new crew rocketed toward the International Space Station (ISS) Friday to replace the astronauts who returned to Earth early in NASA's first medical evacuation. SpaceX launched the replacements as soon as possible at NASA's request, sending the US, French and Russian astronauts on an expected eight- to nine-month mission stretching until fall



# Tarique Rahman emerges as new face of Bangladesh

The 60-year-old leader's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has bagged 209 out of 297 seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami, known to be close to Pakistan, secured 68 seats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, Feb 13:** Tarique Rahman, who lived in London in self-exile for 17 years, has emerged as the new face of Bangladesh, with the party founded by his father set to return to power after a 20-year gap.

The 60-year-old leader's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has bagged 209 out of 297 seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami, known to be close to Pakistan, secured 68 seats. The Awami League party of Hasina was barred from contesting the elections, which recorded 59.44 per cent voter turnout.

The result is a major turnaround for the BNP, long targeted under the 15-year rule of

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government which collapsed following nationwide student-led protests in August 2024.

The BNP was founded by Rahman's father Ziaur Rahman, a military ruler turned politician. The party was led by his mother Khaleda Zia for nearly four decades after the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in 1981.

Five days after his return to Bangladesh amid a massive welcome in December last year, Rahman was struck by a personal tragedy as Khaleda Zia died after a prolonged illness.

Rahman became the chairman of the BNP in the absence of his mother at a time when the party was facing a state of political wilderness ahead of the polls.

The evolving scenario did not allow him to spend more private days amid personal loss, as events unfolded so quickly, he scarcely had time to reflect.

Rahman is widely seen as a



product of dynastic politics, but his family's political background earned him a sort of acumen. He is credited with manoeuvring his party in a complicated scenario to ensure its key stake in the politics ahead of the general elections.

A soft-spoken Rahman drew massive crowds as he spearheaded the campaign for his party.

Since his return, Rahman noticeably adopted an approach of avoiding inflammatory rhetoric and calling

instead for restraint and reconciliation despite the bitter relations of his family and himself in particular with the deposed Awami League regime. BNP eventually won the landslide victory, and Rahman is set to be the next prime minister.

Rahman was born November 20, 1965, in Dhaka. As a boy, he witnessed Bangladesh's liberation struggle in 1971. He was arrested along with his mother and brother, only to be released December 16, 1971, when Ban-

## UK terrorism ban on Palestine Action group unlawful: Court

REUTERS

**London, Feb 13:** Britain's ban on pro-Palestinian campaign group Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation was ruled unlawful by London's High Court Friday, though the ban will temporarily remain in place and the government said it would appeal against the decision.

Palestine Action was proscribed in July, having increasingly taken "direct action" against Israel-linked defence companies in Britain, often blocking entrances or spraying red paint.

Britain argued the group's escalating actions amounted to terrorism, citing a 2024 raid on a factory of Israel's largest defence firm Elbit Systems, in which prosecutors said activists caused around 1 million pounds (\$1.4 million) of damage and a police officer was hit with a sledgehammer.

### BAN FOLLOWED BREAK-IN AT AIR BASE

Palestine Action was banned shortly after a June break-in at the Royal Air Force's Brize Norton air base, in which activists damaged two planes, an action described by Prime Minister Keir Starmer as "disgraceful".

Lawyers representing Huda Ammori, who co-founded Palestine Action in 2020, argued at a hearing last year that the move was an authoritarian restriction on the right to protest.

Judge Victoria Sharp said Palestine Action "promotes its political cause through criminality and the encouragement of criminality". The High Court nonetheless ruled the ban was a disproportionate interference with the right to freedom of expression, though the ban was not lifted ahead of a further hearing to decide whether it should remain pending an appeal.

Interior minister Shabana Mahmood said in a statement, "I intend to fight this judgment in the Court of Appeal."

## OLD GLOBAL ORDER CRUMBLES

# MERZ CALLS FOR RESET WITH US

REUTERS

**Munich/Berlin, Feb 13:** German Chancellor Friedrich Merz Friday called for a stronger Europe to reset its ties with the United States, wanting Washington to "repair and revive trust" in a dangerous new era of great power politics as the old global order crumbles.

In a speech to open the Munich Security Conference, Merz warned the US could not go it alone but also said Europe must beef up its own defences and mentioned confidential talks with France on nuclear deterrence.

The speech underscored how European leaders are increasingly looking to carve an independent path after a year of unprecedented upheaval in transatlantic ties, while also striving to maintain their alliance with Washington.

Taking his cue from those warning that the international rules-based order was about to be destroyed, Merz said, "I fear we must put it even more bluntly: This order, however imperfect it was even at its best, no longer exists in that form."

Switching to English at the end, Merz said, "In the era of great power rivalry, even the United States will not be powerful enough to go it alone. Dear friends, being a part of NATO is not only Europe's competitive advantage. It is also the United States' competitive advantage."

"So let's repair and revive transatlantic trust together," he added.

### A YEAR AFTER VANCE BLAST, RUBIO STRIKES WARMER TONE

US Secretary of State Marco



- Speech opened Munich Security Conference
- Merz warns US cannot go it alone
- Rubio also warns of 'defining moment' in ties
- Comes in wake of moves by Trump to upend global order
- Europe seen closing ranks, seeking to become more independent

Rubio had also said transatlantic ties faced a "defining moment" in a rapidly changing world but struck a more conciliatory tone that contrasted with remarks by Vice President JD Vance in 2025.

At the same gathering of top security officials last

year, Vance had attacked European allies in a speech that marked the start of a series of confrontations with Washington's partners, who face myriad threats from Russia's war in Ukraine to massive ructions in global trade.

"I think it's at a defining moment ... the world is changing very fast right in front of us," Rubio said before departing for Munich.

"The Old World is gone, frankly, the world I grew up in, and we live in a new era in geopolitics, and it's going to require all of us to re-examine what that looks like and what our role is going to be," he said.

"(The US is) deeply tied to Europe, and our futures have always been linked and will continue to be," said Rubio, who is a potential rival to Vance for the 2028 US presidential race. "So we've just got to talk about what that future looks like."

# Iraq hopes Islamic State detainees to be repatriated soon



REUTERS

**Munich, Feb 13:** Iraq is in talks with other countries including Arab and Muslim states to repatriate Islamic State prisoners, its foreign minister said, and the US military said it had completed a mission to transfer thousands of IS detainees to Iraq from Syria.

Speaking in an interview with Reuters on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, Fuad Hussein said Baghdad would need financial aid to deal with the influx and was worried about a rise in Islamic State activity just over the border in Syria.

Islamic State seized large tracts of Syria and Iraq in 2014 before it was driven out by US-led coalition forces five years later, and many of its militants were detained, although remnants of the jihadist group still operate.

"I think around 3,000 have already been transferred into Iraqi prisons. So the process has started and we are continuing that process," Hussein said Friday.

Separately, the US Central Command said the US military had now completed its mission in Syria after transferring 5,700 adult male Islamic State detainees to Iraq. It had said in Jan-

## China hands over satellite ground station to Namibia

REUTERS

**Beijing, Feb 13:** Chinese officials Thursday handed over a satellite ground station to Namibia outside the southern African nation's capital Windhoek, Chinese state media reported, marking another step forward in China's expanding space programme overseas.

The Chinese-built ground data receiving station will "significantly enhance Namibia's ability to receive and process remote-sensing data from satellites," the state-run Xinhua news agency said Friday.

As the US has pulled back from aid to African countries, China has been building alliances and widening its space footprint on the continent, offering satellites, laboratories, and monitoring stations. Beijing says it is helping boost African space programmes because it wants no country left behind.

US says it has transferred 5,700 Islamic State prisoners to Iraq, ending mission in Syria
Transfer process continuing, Iraqi foreign minister tells Reuters
Baghdad in talks with other countries to repatriate their nationals among the prisoners
Transfers prompted by collapse of Kurdish-led regional forces which guarded IS detention centres

uary that it expected to move 7,000.

### RESURGENCE IN ISLAMIC STATE IN SYRIA

The rapid collapse of autonomy-minded Kurdish-led forces in northeast Syria since the end of Syria's civil war in late 2024 had raised fears for the security of prisons and detention camps for IS militants that they were guarding.

"We also started talking to some countries so that they can supply us with financial support, because if those thousands of terrorists stay in Iraq for a long time, I mean, security-wise, it's very dangerous, so we need support from various countries," Hussein said in the interview.

# 'Ring of fire' solar eclipse to dazzle people, penguins in Antarctica

Clear skies permitting, more people can catch a partial eclipse with small bites taken out of the sun from the tips of Chile and Argentina and bits of southeastern Africa including Madagascar, Lesotho and South Africa

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**New York, Feb 13:** The first solar eclipse of the year will grace Antarctica, and only a lucky few will get to bask - or waddle - in its glow.

Tuesday's annular solar eclipse, known as a "ring of fire," will only be visible in the southernmost continent, home to research stations and diverse wildlife.

"The penguins down there are going to have a great show," said astronomer Joe Llama who is with Lowell Observatory.

Clear skies permitting, more people can catch a partial

eclipse with small bites taken out of the sun from the tips of Chile and Argentina and bits of southeastern Africa including Madagascar, Lesotho and South Africa.

Solar eclipses happen when the sun, moon and Earth align just so. The moon casts a shadow that can partially or totally block out the sun's light from Earth.

It's "this beautiful coincidence between the size and the distance of the moon and the sun," said astrophysicist Emily Rice with the City University of New York.

During an annular, or ring-



shaped, eclipse, the moon just happens to be farther away from Earth in its orbit so it

doesn't totally cover the sun. Only a thin sliver remains visible.

"The sun essentially gets its core taken out," Llama said.

Solar eclipses happen a few times a year, but are only visible from places in the path of the moon's shadow. Two partial eclipses happened last year, and the last total solar eclipse swept across North America in 2024.

Looking directly at the sun is dangerous even when most of it is covered so make sure to grab eclipse glasses. They block out ultraviolet light from the sun and nearly all visible light. Sunglasses and binoculars aren't protective enough.

Eclipse glasses should say

they comply with ISO 12312-2 standards, though fake suppliers can also list this on their products.

There are also ways to enjoy solar eclipses indirectly. Make a pinhole projector using household materials or hold up a colander or cheese grater to the sky and look down to see images of the eclipse projected onto the ground.

There is a total solar eclipse in the cards in August for sky-gazers in Greenland, Iceland, Spain, Russia and part of Portugal. Swaths of Europe, Africa and North America will be treated to a partial eclipse.



of the day

quote

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act has brought transparency and accountability in the Indian property market. Now there is a need to further strengthen the RERA law and ensure effective implementation across all states

PARVEEN JAIN | PRESIDENT, NAREDCO

With India's container market growing steadily, driven by infrastructure expansion, port-led developments, and rising bulk commodity movement, the sector requires materials that can withstand harsh operating conditions while ensuring long-term sustainability

ABHYUDAY JINDAL | MD, JINDAL STAINLESS

In future, we will also incorporate an appeals feature so that a consumer who is not satisfied with the service provider's response can file an appeal through the app itself

ANIL KUMAR LAHOTI | CHAIRMAN, TRAI

Q3 RESULTS

ONGC profit rises

**New Delhi:** State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) reported a 1.6 per cent increase in net profit for the December quarter, aided by higher realisations from new wells and reduced statutory levies, which offset the impact of lower crude oil prices. The company reported a standalone net profit of ₹8,372 crore for October-December quarter of 2025-26 financial year, compared with ₹8,240 crore earning in the same period a year back, according to a company statement.

Ola Electric's reset

**New Delhi:** Ola Electric Friday said its consolidated revenue from operations stood at ₹470 crore, with total deliveries of 32,680 units in the third quarter ended December 31, 2025. The Bangalore-based firm said the quarter marks a structural reset for the company, as it realigned its retail footprint, cost structure, and operating model to a sustainable steady state amid slower EV penetration growth and the need to strengthen service execution. The company delivered a record consolidated gross margin of 34.3 per cent, expanding 15.7 percentage points year on year and 3.4 percentage points quarter on quarter.

Inox Wind net grows

**New Delhi:** Inox Wind Friday posted over 14 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹126.65 crore in the December quarter, supported by a growth in revenues. It had reported a profit of ₹110.98 crore in the October-December period of the preceding 2023-24 financial year, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's total income rose to ₹1,238.42 crore ₹994.73 crore during the same quarter a year ago.

Crisil profit surges

**New Delhi:** Crisil Ltd Friday reported a 7.5 per cent growth in net profit at ₹241.5 crore for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2025. The board also recommended a final dividend of ₹28 per equity share of face value of Re 1 each, taking the total dividend for the year to ₹61 per share, Crisil said. Also, it approved the re-appointment of Amish Mehta as Managing Director & CEO for a further term of 3 years with effect from October 1, 2026.



As markets scale, the quality of regulation becomes as important as the quantity of capital they attract

TUHN KANTA PANDEY | CHAIRMAN, SEBI

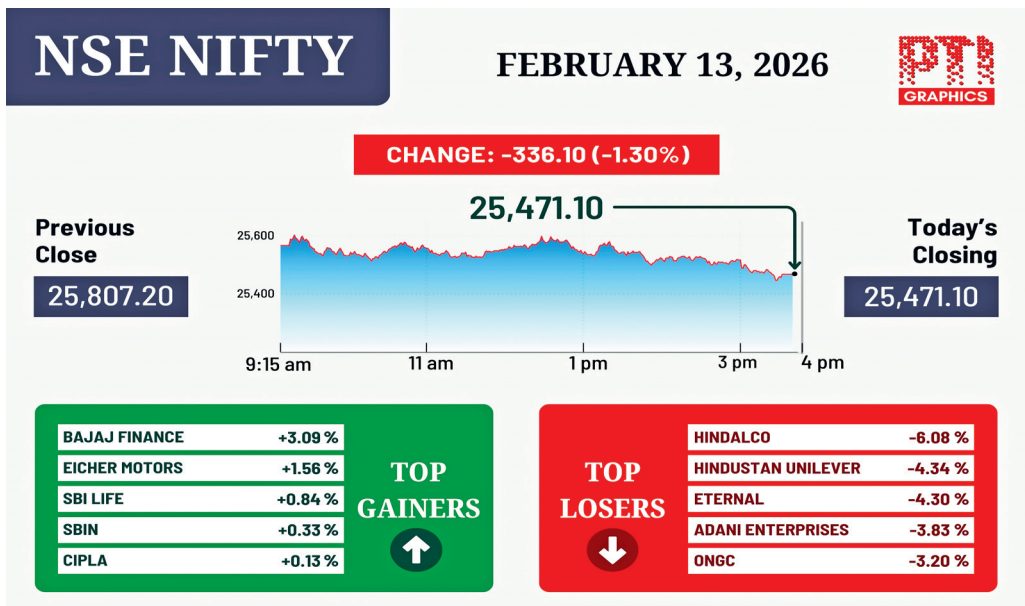
RELIANCE BAGS US LICENCE TO IMPORT VENEZUELAN OIL

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited has received a US general licence to purchase Venezuelan crude oil directly, enabling India's largest private refiner to resume imports of discounted heavy feedstock that aligns with its Jamnagar refinery configuration and optimises refining margins



AI FEAR WIPES OUT \$50BN FROM IT STOCKS

IT, the second-heaviest weighted index among 16, fell 8.2% this week, their worst showing in 10 months



AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Feb 13:** Indian IT shares logged their worst week in more than 10 months Friday, extending a rout driven by fears of disruption from artificial intelligence tools that wiped about \$50 billion off the sector's market capitalisation so far in February.

The launch of a tool by tech startup Anthropic last month triggered a global tech sell-off and intensified concerns that rapid adoption of generative AI could upend India's \$283 billion IT services industry.

Sensex, Nifty crash over 1k points on selling in metal, IT stocks

IT index has slumped 13.7% so far in 2026, surpassing 2025's 12.6% drop

Investors' wealth eroded by ₹7.02 lakh crore in a single day Friday

On a weekly basis, Sensex slumped 1.14%, while Nifty dropped 0.86%

Mcap of BSE-listed firms eroded by ₹7,02,017.71cr to ₹4,65,46,643.20cr (\$5.13tn)

For the week, the Nifty IT slid 8.2%, its steepest drop since April 2025.

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent Friday due to a broad-based selloff, especially in metal, IT and commodity stocks, tracking sluggish glob-

al markets.

A weaker-than-expected earnings season and emerging pressure on technology stocks amid concerns about AI-led disruption also dampened sentiment, traders said.

In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled

Tanishq showcases best of natural diamonds

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Tanishq, one of India's leading jewellery retail brand from the house of Tata, is hosting an invite-only exclusive exhibition of its high value natural diamonds assortment in Bhubaneswar.

The exhibition will offer the customers an immersive journey into the world of natural diamonds with exceptional craftsmanship and timeless designs. It started Friday and will continue till Feb 15 at Hotel Lyfe Jade Ballroom here.

Along with the exquisite showcase, an Immersive Diamond Awareness Session will be organised at the venue, featuring hi-tech diamond quality detector machines such as the Light Scope and Synth Detector, developed in collaboration with De Beers.

Speaking on the occasion, Arindam Pramanik, Circle Business Manager, Tanishq,



Orissa & North-East said, "At Tanishq, we were delighted to bring our latest natural diamond collections to Bhubaneswar through this exclusive exhibition. The showcase was a true celebration of craftsmanship, innovation, and timeless design. Bhubaneswar is a very important market for us, and we were thrilled to witness the overwhelming response from our valued customers. Guests

experienced an ambience of elegance and radiance, showing great interest and admiration for the pieces on display. It was heartening to see the city's deep appreciation and love for diamonds. Through this exhibition, Tanishq continues to uphold its legacy of trust, quality, and meaningful storytelling, offering consumers an exceptional selection of responsibly sourced natural diamonds."

Central Bank of India holds Agriculture Credit Outreach Programme

**Bhubaneswar:** Central Bank of India organised a mega nationwide Agriculture Credit Outreach Programme Friday. Simultaneously, its Bhubaneswar Region also organised an outreach programme at Ambica Convention, Jagatpur, Pir Bazar, Cuttack in the presence of Regional Head Pankaj Kumar, Deputy Regional Head Suresh Chandra and Chief Manager Mukund Kumar Karn along with other distinguished dignitaries. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from SHG members and local customers, where comprehensive awareness was created regarding various agricultural and women-centric financial products, including Cent Nari Shakti, aimed at catering to the credit needs of SHG women. The programme also achieved remarkable business outcomes, recording total sanctions of ₹20 crore and disbursement of ₹26 crore.



IOCL launches 'Clean & Care Challenge' campaign in Odisha



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) launched the 'Clean & Care Challenge' campaign across all its retail outlets statewide in Odisha Friday, marking a significant step in enhancing customer service standards.

The initiative ensures clean toilets, clean drinking water, and free air facilities at every IOCL retail outlet in the state. The users can give feedback by scanning the QR code placed in the ROCs.

IOCL will verify the feedback and wherever improvement is found necessary, the users will be rewarded ₹100 of Xtrareward points with which they can purchase petrol and diesel.

The campaign is launched at Bhubaneswar by Saumitra Priya Srivastava, Director (Marketing), IOCL in the presence of kamal Sheel, CGM & State Head, Odisha; Rohit Kumar, CGM (RS), Odisha; Vishal Garg, DRSH, Bhubaneswar DO, other senior officials and channel partners.

The campaign was initially tested on pilot basis at five cities in Odisha and upon successful results, it is now being extended to around 1300 IOCL petrol pumps across Odisha.

As part of the campaign, Sriavastava also flagged off a bike rally to publicise the message among public and also felicitated the Customer Attendants (CAs), recognized as the face of the company.

ROBUST DEMAND

PV despatches in fast lane

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 13:** Domestic passenger vehicle despatches from companies to dealers rose 13 per cent year-on-year to 4,49,616 units in January with demand remaining robust owing to GST rate rationalisation and subsequent dip in prices, industry body SIAM said Friday.

The overall passenger vehicle despatches stood at 3,99,386 units in January 2025. The sales growth last month was aided by utility vehicles.

The segment wholesales increased to 2,46,844 units last month as compared with 2,12,995 units in the year-ago period, a growth of 16 per cent.

Similarly, vans sales rose to 11,914 units in January as against 11,250 units in the same month last year.

Passenger car despatches, however, declined 5 per cent year-on-year to 1,20,636 units in January.

Maruti Suzuki led the segment in January with a despatch of 1,74,529 units. The auto major sold 1,73,599 units in the year-ago period.



Two-wheeler sales rose 26 per cent to 19,25,603 units last month as against 15,26,218 units in January last year, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said in a statement. Scooter despatches increased 37 per cent year-on-year to 7,50,580 units while motorcycle wholesales rose 20 per cent year-on-year to 11,26,416 units in January. Three-wheeler despatches to dealers rose 30 per cent year-on-year to 75,725 units as against 58,167 units in the year-ago period, it added.

"Passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers posted their highest-ever sales of January in 2026, with double digit growth, compared to January 2025," SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon stated.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds unveils Gemstone Jewellery Festival

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 13:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds has rolled out special offers as part of its Gemstone Jewellery Festival across all showrooms in Odisha Friday.

A celebration of exquisite craftsmanship and timeless elegance, the festival offers customers an opportunity to explore a stunning array of jewellery pieces crafted in gold and adorned with precious gemstones, uncut diamonds, and polki.

The festival was launched by Dr Tanmaini Das, psychiatrist in the presence of all the management team of Malabar Gold and Diamonds, Bhubaneswar.

During the festival, customers can avail up to 30% off on making charges for gemstone and uncut jewellery, along with up to 30% off on the stone value of polki jewellery. These offers are available across the brand's popular ERA, PRECIA and VIRAAZ collections, known for blending



tradition with contemporary design. The offers are valid until March 8 and customers can also book their preferred jewellery by paying just 30% in advance.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is the first jeweler to offer 100% HUID hallmarking, guaranteeing complete purity for all jewellery. MP Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group, stated, "Malabar Gold & Diamonds has earned the title of the most trusted jeweller by upholding reliability, transparency, and quality throughout every step of our process. To celebrate the Gemstone Festival, we have introduced these

Gold trades at discounts in India for first time in nearly a month

REUTERS

**Mumbai, Feb 13:** Gold started trading at discounts in India this week for the first time in nearly a month as volatile prices deterred buying, while demand was robust in China ahead of the Lunar New Year holiday.

Indian bullion dealers this week offered a discount of up to \$12 per ounce over official domestic gold prices – inclusive of 6% import and 3% sales levies, down from last week's premium of up to \$70.

"Jewellery demand has not recovered despite jewellers offering discounts on making charges. Retail buyers are not comfortable making purchases at current price levels," said a Hyderabad-based jeweller.

Domestic gold prices were around ₹154,000 (\$1,697.39) per 10 grams Friday after sliding as low as ₹133,687 last week.



Bullion dealers and jewellers have largely stayed away from purchases from banks, anticipating that the government will allocate around 80 metric tons of gold imports from the UAE at concessional duty this month, said a Mumbai-based bullion dealer with a private bank.

Gold and silver shipments from the UAE attract lower import duties under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the two countries.

In China, bullion traded at a discount of \$8 to premiums of up to \$10 an ounce above the global benchmark spot price this week, ahead of the nine-day Lunar New Year holiday starting February 15.

"The year of the fire horse seasonally (sees) strong demand. My sense is that the very elevated prices have dampened demand reasonably significantly, but it still remains positive on the mainland," said independent analyst Ross Norman.

The Lunar New Year in China and other Asian markets is traditionally seen as a strong period for physical gold demand.

In Hong Kong, gold traded at par to premiums of \$1.80, while in Japan, bullion was sold at discounts of \$6 to a \$1 premium. In Singapore, gold was sold at a discount of \$0.50 to premiums of up to \$3.50.

enticing offers across all our showrooms of Odisha - Saheed Nagar, Chandrasekharpur, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Rourkela, Angul, Soubhagyanagar and Berhampur. Our commitment to transparency—from gold mining to the customer's hands—has established us as a responsible jeweller."

The brand also inaugurated Vyana, a striking new collection of gemstone jewellery that celebrates the unique essence of every woman. Inspired by the belief that no two gemstones and no two women are alike, Vyana is a tribute to individuality, inner strength, and self-expression.



ASIAN SHOOTING C'SHIP

# India dominates medal standings

Shooters bag a total of 94 medals, including 51 gold, 23 silver, and 20 bronze



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 13:** India topped the medal standings in commanding fashion, securing a total of 94 medals, including 51 gold, 23 silver, and 20 bronze, as the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship, New Delhi 2026, concluded at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. The hosts added six gold, three silver, and four bronze on the final day of competitions to establish their commanding position on the continent.

On the final day, Indian shooters swept the podium in the 25m Centre Fire Pistol and 25m Pistol Junior events while also adding three medals in the 50m Rifle Prone Women Senior and Junior events. They also

added four gold medals in the team events to end the championship on a high note.

In the 25m Centre Fire Pistol, Amanpreet Singh clinched gold with a final score of 589-24x over the Precision and Rapid stage. Olympian Gurpreet Singh won silver with a score of 584-20x, and Ankur Goel won the bronze with a score of 570-11x. The trio also combined to win the team gold.

Suraj Sharma continued his fine start to the year by winning gold in the 25m Pistol Junior event with a score of 585-25x, while Mukesh Nelavalli secured another medal in the championship, this time a silver after shooting 582-21x. Deaflympics medalist Abhinav Deshwal won bronze with a score of 573-17x.

The trio also won the team gold in the event.

In the 50m Rifle Prone event, Olympian Sift Kaur Samra won silver with a score of 623.2, while 2010 World Champion, Tejaswani Sawant, won an excellent bronze, five years after she won an international medal. Yelizaveta Bezrukova of Kazakhstan won gold. Sift and Tejaswani, along with Manini Kaushik, combined to win team gold for India.

In the junior category, Dhaivalika Devi Nyamurus secured a bronze medal with a score of 614.1; Kazak shooters Tomiris Amanova and Darya Ponomarenko won gold and silver, respectively. The trio of Prachi Gaikwad, Anuska Thokur, and Devi combined to win the team gold.

T20 WORLD CUP

# Clinical Zimbabwe embarrass injury-hit Oz

*This was only the second time that the African nation defeated the traditional heavyweights in the format, having last beaten them back in the 2007 edition of the showpiece*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, Feb 13:** Zimbabwe rode on collective brilliance to pull off the first big upset of the ongoing T20 World Cup, stunning injury-ravaged former champions Australia by 23 runs here Friday.

Riding on opener Brian Bennett's unbeaten 64 and useful contributions from other top-order batters, Zimbabwe posted a challenging 169 for 2 after Australia, who were without some of their front-line bowlers, invited them to bat.

Ryan Burl (35 off 30 balls) and skipper Sikandar Raza (25 not out off 13 balls) also made useful contributions.

The lower-ranked side then bowled Australia out for 146 in 19.3 overs on a sluggish pitch to register a famous win.

In the 2007 edition of the same tournament, Zimbabwe, then led by Prosper Utseya, had beaten Australia by five wickets with one ball to spare in a low-scoring match in Cape Town.

Pacer Blessing Muzarabani returned figures of 4/17, while Brad Evans (3/23), Wellington Masakadza (1/36) and Ryan Burl (1/9) also delivered with the ball for Zimbabwe.

It was a disaster for Australia in their pursuit of 170 as they suffered a top-order collapse and were reduced to 29 for 4 in 4.3 overs with Josh Inglis (8), Travis Head (17), Cameron Green (0) and Tim David (0) dismissed cheaply.



**Very happy and above all, very proud. Feeling of a brother whose younger brothers are achieving a lot together. It's just unbelievable**

SIKANDAR RAZA | SKIPPER, ZIMBABWE

**Brief Scores:**  
**Zimbabwe:** 169 for 2 in 20 overs (Brian Bennett 64 not out, Tadiwanashe Marumani 35, Ryan Burl 35; Cameroon Greem 1/6) beat **Australia:** 146 all out in 19.3 overs (Matt Renshaw 65, Glenn Maxwell 31; Blessing Muzarabani 4/17, Brad Evans 3/23) by 23 runs

TODAY'S CLASHES

	<b>Ireland vs Oman</b> Time- 11:00 am	
	<b>England vs Scotland</b> Time- 3:00 pm	
	<b>New Zealand vs South Africa</b> Time- 7:00 pm	

UAE outclass Canada by 5 wickets

**New Delhi:** Opener Aryansh Sharma and lower-order batter Sohaib Khan struck fifies under pressure as UAE pulled off a thrilling five-wicket win over Canada in their Group D T20 World Cup clash, here Friday.



Sharma slammed six fours and three sixes in his 53-ball 74 not out, while No 6 batter Khan held his nerves in a quickfire 29-ball 51 (4x4, 4x6) to script a memorable win with two balls to spare. Earlier pacer Junaid Siddique grabbed a maiden five-wicket (5/35) as UAE pulled things back in the back end. Harsh Thaker (50 off 41 balls; 2x4, 3x6) and Navneet Dhaliwal (34 off 28; 4x4) revived their innings with a 58-run fourth-wicket to help Canada post 150/7 after opting to bat. In reply, Bin Zafar gave regular breakthroughs in the middle overs with splendid figures of 3/14 but Sharma and Khan anchored the chase.

US win big against Netherlands

**Chennai:** Saiteja Mukkamalla's attractive 79 and a four-wicket haul by former India U-19 star Harmeet Singh powered United States to a comfortable 93-run victory over the Netherlands in a group league fixture of the T20 World Cup here Friday. This is USA's first-ever T20I victory over the Netherlands. Mukkamalla's 51-ball knock formed the cornerstone of USA's competitive total of 196 for 6 while all-rounder Shubham Ranjane once again proved his prowess with an invaluable 24-ball 48 not out. Left-arm spinner Harmeet Singh (4/21) didn't bowl too many wicket-taking deliveries yet Netherlands batters were left in a tangle as they were bowled out for 103 in 15.5 overs. Harmeet's figures were the best by a USA bowler in a T20 World Cup match. In fact, two of Harmeet's wickets -- opener Max O'Dowd (13) and all-rounder Bas de Leede (23) -- were half-trackers that were deposited to the fielders.



WINTER OLYMPICS

## ISL returns after chaotic build-up

*The February 16 fixture between Odisha FC and Punjab FC has been put on hold as Odisha are yet to confirm their home venue*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Feb 13:** The long wait is finally over.

After months of uncertainty, administrative reshuffle and endless speculation, the Indian Super League is back in a leaner, shorter format and with everything to play for from day one. The new edition, delayed by nearly four months, will be held in a truncated format featuring 14 teams.

With limited time remaining in the football calendar, the All India Football Federation has opted for a single round-robin format, scrapping the second leg and the traditional playoff stage. Each team will play 13 matches across a three-month league, and the side finishing on top of the table will be crowned champion.

Defending champions and Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan Super Giant will kick off the season at home, hosting Kerala Blasters FC in the opening clash at 5pm at the Salt Lake Stadium Saturday. In the evening, newly-promoted Inter Kashi will be tested when they face Super Cup champions FC Goa in an away clash beginning 7.30pm.

There will be no second chances, no knockouts but just 91 high-stakes matches where consistency alone will decide the champion. Months of uncertainty finally eased only after the Union Sports Ministry intervened, helping the AIFF put a new arrangement in place and ensuring that the country's top-tier football competition could go ahead.

However everything is not fully settled and there are several unanswered questions as several teams are still finalising their squads, and a few are expected to begin the season without foreign players.

It has now been confirmed that all matches will be streamed on FanCode and telecast on Sony Sports Ten 2, according to an AIFF release.

COPA DEL REY

## Hosts dominate title holders 4-0 in first leg of semifinals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Madrid, Feb 13:** Atletico Madrid stunned Copa del Rey holder and La Liga leader Barcelona in the first leg of their Copa del Rey semifinal Friday.

An own goal and strikes from Antoine Griezmann, Ademola Lookman and Julian Alvarez gave Atletico a 4-0 advantage to take into the return leg at the Camp Nou March 3, reported Xinhua.

Atletico produced a blistering first-half display, with Barcelona unable to cope with the home side's aggression and pace. Diego Simeone's team repeatedly punished Barcelona's high defensive line, with Nahuel Molina and Giuliano Simeone causing constant problems down the right and Lookman posing a threat on the opposite flank.

Barcelona was without the injured Raphinha and Marcus Rashford, with Dani Olmo starting alongside Fermin Lopez in an attacking midfield role.

Griezmann forced Barcelona goalkeeper Joan Garcia into an early save in the second minute, and Atletico took the lead four minutes later in dramatic fashion when Garcia miscontrolled an Eric Garcia back pass and the ball rolled under



his foot and over the line.

Atletico doubled the advantage in the 15th minute when Molina and Giuliano Simeone again broke in down the right and Griezmann finished with an angled left-footed shot. It could have been 3-0 soon after, but Jules Kounde blocked Alvarez's effort with Garcia beaten.

The pressure continued, and Atletico made it 3-0 in the 33rd minute as Molina and Simeone combined with Alvarez, whose touch set up Lookman to finish. Barcelona coach Hansi Flick

responded by bringing on Robert Lewandowski for Marc Casado with eight minutes remaining in the first half. Lopez then drew a save from Juan Musso, but Atletico struck again on the stroke of halftime when Alvarez smashed home a fourth goal after another swift break.

Barcelona started the second half with more intent, and Lopez again tested Musso before Pau Cubarsi had the ball in the net, only for the goal to be ruled out for offside after a seven-minute VAR check.

Atletico dropped deeper after the break and looked to manage the game, while Barcelona pushed numbers forward. The visitors' task became even harder when Eric Garcia was sent off for bringing down Alex Baena, with the referee judging him to be the last defender.

Against 10 men, Alexander Sorloth missed a chance to make it 5-0, but Atletico will still be a heavy favorite to reach the final.

In Wednesday's other semifinal, Real Sociedad won the first leg 1-0 away to Athletic Bilbao.

# Lohiya crosses Cook Strait, scripts history



Norgay National Adventure Awardee, Madhya Pradesh's international para swimmer Shri @SatendraSLohiya, has created history by successfully crossing New Zealand's Cook Strait, one of the toughest sea channels in the world," said Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

"With this remarkable achievement, he becomes the first para swimmer from Asia to conquer the Cook Strait. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to him on this extraordinary feat.

"This proud moment for the nation and for Madhya Pradesh reflects his indomitable spirit and unwavering determination, which will continue to

FIH PRO LEAGUE

## Belgium power past Argentina

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Rourkela (Odisha), Feb 13:** A strong second-half performance saw Belgium men safely sail past Argentina in a thrilling encounter in the Men's FIH Hockey Pro League at the Birs Munda Stadium in Rourkela Friday. Earlier in the day, Australia's men had no trouble in overcoming Pakistan to extend their unbeaten run in Hobart, while Argentina's women were made to work hard for their victory over an ever-improving Ireland.

In Rourkela, Arthur de Sloover celebrated his 200th appearance for Belgium in an exciting 5-2 win over Argentina in a match that was pegged at 2-2 with 11 minutes remaining.

A goalless opening quarter was played mostly between the 23-yard lines as both teams adopted a cautious approach, sitting back in their press and

defending solidly. Argentina edged ahead in the 19th minute, Tomas Domene extending his lead at the top of the goalscorer's table.

Argentina went to halftime leading 1-0. The Argentinians had a penalty corner opportunity to extend their lead at the beginning of the third quarter, but goalkeeper Simon Vandembroucke produced a good save to keep the Belgians in the hunt. Belgium then stepped up to dominate the third quarter. De Sloover found the equaliser in the 36th minute.

Tobias Biekens added a field goal three minutes later. Argentina's Matias Rey then levelled the scores in the 45th minute. Alexander Hendrickx scored two devastating drag flicks in the 49th and 54th minutes. Duvekot put the result beyond any doubt in the 55th minute with a sharply taken flick under pressure.



**Historic Achievement -- Cook Strait New Zealand Victory. One of the world's most challenging sea routes, Cook Strait, New Zealand, after successfully crossing it with my team, today I feel deeply emotional and immensely proud...for the first time in Asia, a differently-abled swimmer has crossed the Cook Strait**

SATENDRA SINGH LOHIYA

inspire generations to come," he added.

Both of Lohiya's legs were disabled in infancy due to lack of proper treatment for diarrhea. He started his journey of

Open water Sea Swimming in 2017. In 2018, he crossed the English Channel along with an Indian para-swimming team with a timing of 12 hours and 26 minutes covering a distance of 34km.

In the 2022 National Paralympic swimming championships at Guwahati, he won a gold medal in 100m backstroke. He has participated in 11 National Paralympics swimming championships in which he has won 23 medals including four Gold, 12 silver and seven bronze medals.

He has also participated in three International Paralympic swimming championships in which he got one gold medal, two silver and one bronze medals.