

CII

Confederation of Indian Industry

Launch of CII Initiatives at Sambalpur

By

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

Hon'ble Minister of Education

Government of India

SAMBALPUR

L to R: Dr Pradipta Mohanty, Immediate Past Chairman, CII Odisha State Council; Mr Anil Kumar Singh, Chairman, CII West Odisha Zonal Council; Mr Deepak Shetty, Chairman, CII Council on Manufacturing Excellence; Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Mishra, Vice-Chancellor, Sambalpur University; Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education, Government of India; Shri Rabi Narayan Naik, Hon'ble Minister, Department of Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water, Government of Odisha; Mr Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII; Mr Rishi Kumar Bagla, Chairman, CII Western Region; Shri Siddheshwar Baliram Bondar, IAS, Collector & District Magistrate, Sambalpur

“Education and skilling must evolve with the changing world. With 30 crore students and over 55 crore citizens in the working-age group, India’s demographic strength must be transformed into a skilled, future-ready workforce.”

- Dharmendra Pradhan

The CII landmark initiatives at Sambalpur are aimed at touching lives, designed to build capacities, create employment, and strengthen livelihoods at scale.Under the patronage of Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Honourable Minister of Education, Government of India, the initiatives reflect a strong commitment to the future and progress of Sambalpur.The interventions will include programmes focused on Industry-oriented skilling, empowering micro and small entrepreneurs, capacity building of farmers, as well as training and placement facilitation for the youth from the region across the country.

LAUNCH OF CII SAMBALPUR ENTREPRENEURS DEVELOPMENT FORUM

The CII Entrepreneurs Development Forum launched in Sambalpur will provide handholding support to micro-entrepreneur members of the Forum to

MOU EXCHANGE BETWEEN District Collector's Office, Sambalpur Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology (OUAT) CII Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE)

This partnership adopts a collaborative approach to strengthen agri development in Sambalpur, focusing on inland fisheries, dairy, & horticulture through cluster-based interventions, improved post-harvest practices, stronger producer institutions, and

LAUNCH OF CII NATIONAL KAUSHAL KENDRA, SAMBALPUR

CII National Kaushal Kendra in Sambalpur which will provide skills training to create job ready youth aligned to real-time Industry demand. Training will be delivered across AI, Cybersecurity, Healthcare, Hospitality,

LAUNCH OF CII MODEL CAREER CENTRE

The 59th MCC at Sambalpur will provide psychometric-test based career counselling and soft & employability Skills Training, with placement facilitation acting as a key talent sourcing hub for

LAUNCH OF EDUCATION 2 EMPLOYMENT CAREER LOUNGE, SAMBALPUR UNIVERSITY

Located at Sambalpur University, the Education-to-Employment Career Lounge will bridge the gap between higher education and employment via psychometric counselling, skill-building support and



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ARIES

You will be very enterprising and industrious today. You make your plans very carefully and execute them perfectly. Despite this, your progress will be very slow. However, Ganesha advises you not to despair and showers his blessings on you.

TAURUS

This one of those ordinary days that, somehow, do not turn out too well. Unexpected expenses, that could totally upset your budget, cannot be ruled out. Something or the other is likely to give you an uncomfortable stomach upset. Ganesha urges you to take your medicines on time, and exercise moderation and discretion while deciding what and how much you should eat.

GEMINI

You had better start sharing your feelings with your family today, says Ganesha. Also, it's time to tell your family about your current financial status. It will help you feel better. Your energy levels will soar and you will approach everything with renewed vigour. Your spouse will bring good luck to you.

CANCER

You may discuss certain serious issues with your beloved today, predicts Ganesha. Your time till afternoon will be spent in discussions and deliberations about the issue. However, this issue may not be enough in letting you off the hook on the work front. Think twice before you act.

LEO

After a long time, it seems as if the stars are aligning to bring something special for you. Call it your field day, but today, everything will go your way, says Ganesha. Expect to get appreciated for your hard work in office. As for the home front, you will get all the support you need from your family members for refurbishing your home. From little tips to personal desires, fulfilling them may involve more expenses than you expect.

VIRGO

The extraordinary way in which you do things will earn you many admirers. Superiors at work will laud you for your commitment. Evenings will be fun-filled and entertaining. Look to relax with some meditation or music... or both.

LIBRA

Working for the government is always a key responsibility, says Ganesha. But today of all days proves to be fabulous and phenomenal for all those in government service. Your actions will translate into accomplishment and you may rest assured that you shall be duly recognized and rewarded for your meritorious service. Keep your ears and eyes open and your lips preferably sealed, your bosses may wish to confide and speak confidential matters to you.

SCORPIO

Your business associates will emerge as intangible assets for you today, says Ganesha. You will probably start off an innovative joint venture without any doubt or indecision. Hard work and enthusiasm are always a good combination for achieving success. Your skill and business sense will bring you positive feedback from your seniors, feels Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

The horizons of your thoughts are open and serene. Forgive and forget will be your mood today – even for the most serious mistakes. Generosity is never your Achilles' heel, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Plans for expanding business may require you to take risks, leaving you in a dilemma on more than one occasion. In such desperate circumstances, following your instincts can lead you to success, advises Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

It's a busy day at work, and you're probably involved in some pending project work. It's advisable that you don't get complacent. Keep an eye on your opponents to have an edge over them, suggests Ganesha. Colleagues will be supportive, and so will family.

PISCES

A day wherein you will be handling responsibilities on both the home front and at the workplace awaits you, says Ganesha. Expect to be involved in home refurbishing projects, where expenses are likely to soar. Appreciation and gratitude will come your way at the end of a hard day's work.



HARRY STYLES OPENS UP ON LESSONS FROM MUSIC HIATUS

Singer-songwriter Harry Styles says his career break taught him how to slow down. After ending his globally successful *Love on Tour* in July 2023, the 32-year-old learned to stay present, value personal life and focus on what truly matters beyond constant work and expectations today

MEENDES, MARQUEZINE SPARK ROMANCE BUZZ

Shawn Mendes and Bruna Marquezine sparked romance buzz after being spotted together at Brazil's Carnaval. Viral videos show the duo sharing hugs, whispers and PDA while riding Ivete Sangalo's trio elétrico, looking inseparable and deeply comfortable in each other's company



Malavika claps back at trolls

Hyderabad: After a photo went viral online, sparking trolls to question her credibility, Malavika Mohan-an strongly clapped back with behind-the-scenes videos, shutting down claims that a body double performed her action scenes. The actress clarified that she carried out her own stunts in *The Raja Saab*, directed by Maruthi and starring Prabhas.

Taking to X, Malavika explained that the circulating image showed her stunt double during rehearsals, a standard safety practice on film sets. She reminded critics that professionals guide actors through risky sequences before final shots, ensuring both safety and precision. Addressing trolls directly, she highlighted how misinformation often spreads without understanding filmmaking realities.

Malavika also spoke about her love for physical challenges and her passion for learning new skills, which motivates her to perform demanding scenes herself. Along with the videos, she thanked her stunt team and praised her double for support and guidance.

Emphasising teamwork and responsibility, she said her post aimed to educate rather than argue. The film also features Nidhhi Agerwal and Riddhi Kumar as female leads. Malavika will next appear in *Sardar 2* alongside Karthi, continuing to prove her dedication, resilience and professionalism in the industry.

AGENCIES



Mumbai: Model and actress Priya Bakshi, known for her debut in *JNU: Jahangir National University* directed by Vinay Sharma, recently shared a disturbing late-night experience in Mumbai. Taking to Instagram, she revealed that while returning home from Bandra, her auto-rickshaw driver allegedly diverted from the usual route and ignored her repeated requests to stop.

In a video posted February 14, Priya appeared visibly shaken as she pleaded with the driver, explaining that she did not recognise the road and that Google Map showed no such route. Despite this, he insisted he was taking the correct way and reacted irritably when questioned.

Priya recalled warning that she would call the police and repeatedly asked to be let out, saying she no longer felt safe continuing the journey. The driver eventually stopped in anger and reportedly made dismissive remarks about her presence in the area.

After stepping out, Priya expressed frustration over feeling disrespected and stereotyped, stating that people from different regions are often treated unfairly. In her caption, she reflected that unfamiliarity with a city does not make someone inferior and that asking questions is not disrespectful. She urged followers to choose empathy over prejudice.

AGENCIES

Mrunal thanks fake buzz for publicity

Mumbai: Mrunal Thakur recently addressed rumours linking her to Dhanush, saying she could not stop laughing at the speculation. The actress said social media buzzed with false claims about her supposed Valentine's Day wedding just days before her film's release. In interviews, she joked, "According to them, the wedding is already happening," adding that she finds such gossip more amusing than upsetting.

Speaking honestly, Mrunal shared that she believes love will come at the right time and prefers to focus on her work. She revealed that she recently hired a PR team after her home address was leaked online, stressing that the step was taken purely for personal safety. With humour, she noted that no amount of money could buy her the publicity created by rumours.

Mrunal also clarified that she would openly share important developments in her life and sees no reason to waste energy on baseless stories. She emphasised that her only constant partner right now is her camera and her craft. Despite repeated speculation linking her to Dhanush, both stars have remained silent. Meanwhile, she is preparing for the release of *Do Deewane Seher Mein*, co-starring Siddhant Chaturvedi, directed by Ravi Udyawar and produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The film is scheduled for theatrical release.

AGENCIES



Shanaya on overcoming fear

Mumbai: Shanaya Kapoor recently revealed that a crucial scene in her film *Tu Yaa Main* forced her to confront her long-standing fear of heights. In an interview, she shared that a tense ledge sequence tested her nerves, requiring her to stay calm despite intense anxiety. She explained that while shooting, she felt mentally unstable, even though she appeared steady on screen, and had to match her character's composure.

Shanaya said mental focus became her biggest strength on set. She relied on workshop training, staying present and avoiding overthinking to deliver her performance. She credited director Bejoy Nambiar and acting coach Atul Mongia for helping her shape her character. Working alongside Adarsh Gourav also boosted her confidence and energy during emotionally demanding scenes.

Shanaya further acknowledged her father Sanjay Kapoor for constantly motivating her to work with honesty and sincerity. She said his advice helped her stay grounded after her debut *Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan* received a lukewarm response.

Produced by Aanand L Rai, the film released February 13. Shanaya hopes her dedication and resilience will help her grow as a performer and earn audience trust.

AGENCIES

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

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

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

FUN post

CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8										9		
10		11				12						
13								14				
15												18
19												
22												

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Across

- Honorable
- An expensive vessel
- Blamey (5-4)
- Geological time
- Military dictatorship in northern Africa
- Colonist
- Queen, e.g. (5,8)
- Dizziness

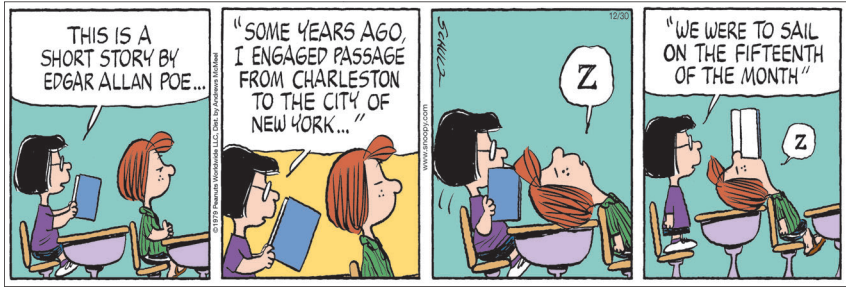
Down

- Artist's need
- Gardening tool
- Cry expressing disapproval
- Toxic condition (4,9)
- Pants
- Fasten
- Some memos
- Papa
- Arctic

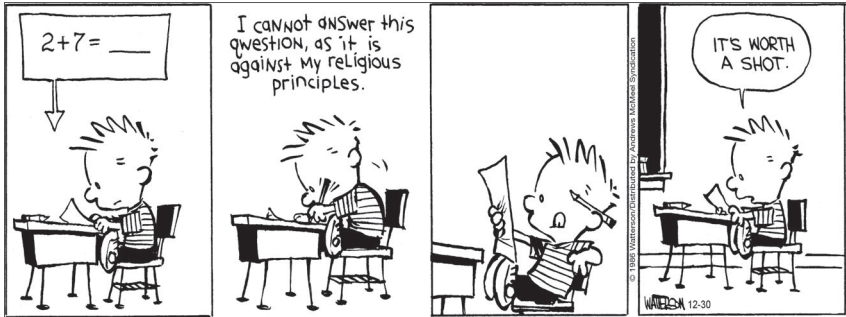
Across

- Bumpkin
- Depressing
- Injuries
- Beau
- Focused
- Early evening meal (4,3)
- Connote
- Plant fibre used for making rope
- Altdorf is its capital

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Excise officials attacked while raiding bar over time violation

Manager apprehended in connection with the incident and bar temporarily shut under legal provisions

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Officials of the Bhubaneswar Excise department were allegedly attacked and misbehaved with during a late-night raid Sunday at ‘ODO2 The High Level’, a bar and pub under the jurisdiction of Kharavela police station, which was found operating beyond permitted hours. Authorities said the bar manager, along with a few intoxicated patrons, obstructed officials while they were carrying out their duties. The manager was subsequently apprehended in connection with the incident.

The bar manager has been identified as Avinash Sahoo and has been forwarded to court. Debasish Patel, Excise SP, Bhubaneswar, said, “Acting on a tip-off, the Excise team, along with personnel from Kharavela police station, conducted a late-night raid on the bar around 1:30 am for allegedly operating beyond scheduled hours without proper permission. Nearly 100 people



were found gathered inside despite closure timings. The bar staff attempted to obstruct our entry upon noticing the enforcement team.”

Excise and police officials allegedly had to force entry into the premises during the operation. According to SP Patel, some youths and the bar manager, Sahoo, confronted the team and questioned the raid, creating a chaotic situation. Authorities said the manager and his associates then allegedly obstructed and misbehaved with officials while they were performing their duties. Sahoo

■ **Sleuths conducted a late-night raid around 1:30 am at ‘ODO2 The High Level’, a bar and pub under the jurisdiction of Kharavela police station**

■ **According to SP Debasish Patel, some youths and bar manager Avinash Sahoo confronted the team and questioned the raid, leading to a chaotic situation**

■ **An FIR has been registered for allegedly obstructing public servants in the discharge of duty and misbehaving with government officials**

was subsequently apprehended, and the bar was temporarily shut in accordance with legal provisions.

An FIR has been registered at Kharavela police station on charges of obstructing public servants in the discharge of duty and misbehaviour with government officials. Sahoo was forwarded to court following his arrest.

“A bar or restaurant is permitted to operate only till midnight. We are closely monitoring establishments running beyond the prescribed hours and will take strict action against violations. If found flouting operational norms, the premises may be sealed or heavy penalties imposed,” said SP Patel.

Maha Shivratri celebrated with fervour

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: On the sacred occasion of Maha Shivratri, Odisha witnessed grand celebrations, marked by devotion, cultural vibrancy, and elaborate security arrangements at major Shiva shrines across the state.

Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati visited the revered Lingaraj Temple and offered prayers to Lord Lingaraj, seeking peace, prosperity, and well-being for the people of Odisha. First Lady Jayasree Kambhampati accompanied him during the visit.

The Governor inaugurated a Cultural Mahotsav organised on the temple premises and attended devotional and cultural performances presented by artistes. Among those present were Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan, Ekamra-Bhubaneswar MLA Babu Singh, Bhubaneswar



Municipal Corporation Mayor Sulochana Das, and former minister Suresh Kumar Routray.

Describing Maha Shivratri as a symbol of devotion, faith, and spiritual awakening, Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati expressed hope that the sacred occasion would inspire righteousness and inner strength among all.

Chief Minister Mohan Cha-

ran Majhi extended heartfelt greetings on the auspicious occasion, wishing that the blessings of Lord Mahadev bring happiness, peace, and prosperity to all.

Devotees thronged Shiva temples across Odisha from early morning to offer prayers. Heavy footfall was reported at major shrines, including Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar, Loknath Temple in Puri,

Dhableswar Temple in Cuttack, and Kapilash Temple in Dhenkanal.

Devotees observed day-long fasts, performed ‘abhishek’ rituals, and participated in night-long vigils as chants of “Om Namah Shivaya” reverberated through the temple premises. At Lingaraj Temple, the sacred ‘Mahadeepa’ was hoisted atop the shrine, marking a key ritual of the festival.

Police administrations at major Shiva shrines in Odisha implemented elaborate security and crowd management measures to ensure smooth darshan and maintain law and order.

Celebrated across India with deep devotion, Maha Shivratri marks the divine union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. The Shiva-Shakti union symbolises love, power, and cosmic harmony, drawing thousands of devotees to temples across Odisha in a vibrant display of faith and spirituality.

11-year-old missing in City for 6 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: An 11-year-old boy has been missing since February 9 after he stepped out to play near his home at Shantipalli Basti under the jurisdiction of Saheed Nagar police station.

The child, identified as Dillip Shabar, was reported missing

by his mother, Sunita Shabar, who lodged a complaint with the police. The boy’s mother, Sunita Shabar, recounted her ordeal, saying, “On Monday (February 9), my son was playing near our house. When I went to check on him, he was nowhere to be found. At times, he would hide out of fear of his father and later turn up near the local temple.

But this time, despite searching everywhere, we could not locate him, which prompted us to file a missing complaint.”

Sunita Shabar added that the family had neither scolded nor beaten her son on the day he went missing. Besides lodging a written complaint, she said she searched for Dillip Shabar at relatives’ homes across dif-

ferent locations, but the efforts proved futile, with no trace of the child found. “I want the police to find my son immediately, and I appeal to the public to help locate him,” said Sunita Shabar.

However, no official response had been received from Saheed Nagar Police Station regarding the incident at the time of reporting.

Transport dept pushes for regional connectivity drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: In a major push to strengthen regional connectivity, Commerce & Transport department Principal Secretary NBS Rajput undertook an extensive field visit to western and southern Odisha shortly after assuming charge.

The visit covered key aviation and public transport infrastructure projects at Utkela Airport, Jeypore Airport, Bhanuipatna and Nabarangpur, with a focus on accelerating development and enhancing passenger services.

At Utkela Airport, Rajput assessed operational readiness, passenger amenities, runway infrastructure and future expansion prospects under regional connectivity initiatives. He reviewed ongoing works and stressed seamless coordination among executing agencies to boost air connectivity and stimulate economic growth in the KBK region.

During his inspection of Jeypore Airport, he examined infrastructure augmentation plans, safety protocols and passenger facilities. Interacting with airport officials and local stakeholders, he underscored the need for time-bound execution and quality standards to ensure reliable and affordable air services.

The Principal Secretary also visited the OSRTC depot and bus stand at Bhanuipatna and reviewed facilities in Nabarangpur. Emphasising commuter convenience, he assessed cleanliness, digital ticketing systems, fleet operations and depot modernisation initiatives. Officials were directed to prioritise improved passenger amenities, efficient scheduling and strengthened last-mile connectivity to interior and remote blocks.

CLASSIFIED
AFFIDAVIT

I, Anil Kumar Sodavarapu, S/o.- Sudhakara Rao, resident of Bhavani talkies street, P.O./P.S.- Paralakhemundi, Dist.- Gajapati, PIN- 761200, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. A28 dtd.-14.02.2026 that now onwards I shall be known as Anil Kumar Sodavarapu, S/o.- Sudhakara Rao Sodavarapu for all future purpose.

Odisha Police verifies 73 mule accounts; 6 held

Coordinated cyber enforcement rolled out in Boudh, Malkangiri, Sundargarh and Cuttack Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: In a major statewide crackdown under Operation Cyber Kavach, Odisha Police carried out coordinated cyber enforcement operations across multiple districts Sunday, targeting mule bank accounts and facilitators of organised cyber fraud networks.

Supervised by respective SSPs and DCPs, dedicated district cyber teams conducted verification drives and enforcement actions with real-time coordination from specialised cyber units, reinforcing

the state’s disruption-focused strategy against digital financial crime.

Boudh district verified 45 mule bank accounts, registered one new cybercrime case and

OPERATION CYBER KAVACH

served notices to 45 individuals.

In Malkangiri district, 20 mule bank accounts were verified and one fresh case was registered.

Two mule bank accounts verified in Sundargarh district, linked two cases with existing FIRs, and arrested six accused persons.

UPD Cuttack verified six mule bank accounts, registered one new cybercrime case, and issued notices to six individuals.

In total, Odisha Police veri-

fied 73 mule bank accounts in a single day, registered three new cybercrime cases, linked two cases with existing FIRs, arrested six accused persons, and served 51 legal notices on suspected facilitators and account holders.

Officials said the enforcement drive is part of a broad-

er strategy to dismantle mule banking networks and disrupt the financial infrastructure that sustains organised cyber fraud syndicates. The operation focuses on identifying facilitators, neutralising fraudulent accounts, and preventing misuse of banking and telecom resources.

With daily monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place, Operation Cyber Kavach continues to emphasise intelligence-led policing and coordinated enforcement to safeguard citizens and strengthen Odisha’s digital security ecosystem.

Heritage makeover for Bindusagar: Min



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The Bindusagar tank near Lingaraj Temple here will be redeveloped as a ‘heritage lake’ as part of the Ekamra Kshetra Amenities and Monument Revival Action (EKAMRA) project, Works Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said Sunday.

Speaking to reporters on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri, Harichandan said the EKAMRA project at Lingaraj Temple will be completed by March 2027.

Harichandan, who also holds the Law portfolio, said an additional scope of work has been undertaken under the project in Old Town area of the Temple City.

“We are making efforts to complete the project by the end of the 2026-27 financial year. I am confident that we will complete the work by the

targeted time,” he said. “We have decided to build a big statue of Lord Shiva and construct an interpretation centre. Besides, the Bindu Sagar near the temple will be redeveloped as a heritage lake,” he added. Harichandan said the agency, which was executing the project works, has been disengaged as it didn’t want to continue. A fresh project plan is being prepared with allocation of additional budget, he said.

The previous BJD government had, in 2019, planned the EKAMRA project.

This has come amid speculation that the draft budget proposal for financial year 2026-27 may exceed ₹3 lakh crore for the first time. The Budget Session of the Assembly will begin February 17 and CM Mohan Majhi, who also holds the Finance portfolio, will present the Budget February 20.

KHURDA ROAD-BOLANGIR RAIL LINE PROJECT

Safety infra boost for Tunnel-7 rail corridor

Key construction milestone achieved in Boudh district, spanning 1,975 metres between Purunakatak and Charichhak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The East Coast Railway (ECOR) has installed a comprehensive set of advanced safety and emergency management systems inside Tunnel-7 of the Khurda Road-Bolangir rail line, officials said Sunday.

Tunnel-7, stretching 1,975 metres between Purunakatak and Charichhak in Boudh district, recently marked a key construction breakthrough. Following completion of the core structural works, railway authorities promptly initiated installation of state-of-the-art



safety infrastructure, ensuring full compliance with prescribed railway standards and operational safety norms.

The execution of this critical component involved meticulous planning, engineering precision, and strict adherence to safety protocols at every stage, they said. Officials said particular emphasis was placed on ensuring structural stability, fire preparedness, efficient ven-

tilation, dependable electrical systems, and robust emergency response mechanisms — all designed to deliver the highest standards of safety for both passengers and train operations.

Among the major installations are a high-capacity ventilation system designed to maintain optimal air quality, comprehensive fire-fighting arrangements, and tunnel lighting integrated with automatic

emergency illumination.

In addition, Public Address (PA) and CCTV surveillance systems have been installed to support real-time monitoring, coordinated communication, and swift response during emergency situations, significantly strengthening overall tunnel safety and operational readiness.

Additionally, the tunnel has been fitted with an SOS emergency calling system and a Linear Heat Detection System (LHDS) to enable early identification of fire risks and rapid response. Advanced ballastless (slab) track technology has also been adopted, delivering smoother riding comfort, greater operational reliability, and the capacity to support higher speeds and heavier axle loads. The compact slab track configuration is especially suited to tunnel environments, where space constraints and maintenance access present unique engineering challenges.

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.2°	30.2°	Dry weather likely to prevail
Min Temp	17.4°	16.4°	
Humidity	91%	88%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

FOCUS COMMERCE

DEFEND TAXPAYERS



No treaty loophole should allow foreign investors to profit from India's infrastructure while contributing nothing to the tax base that sustains it

have been undermined by the government's latest budget, announced on February 1, which grants generous long-term tax incentives to global cloud providers – including a 20-year tax holiday for data centers – and offers greater “transfer pricing certainty” to tech-driven firms. Against this backdrop, the dispute between India's tax authorities and Tiger Global – one of the world's most aggressive hedge funds – illustrates how multinationals use complex legal structures to minimize their tax liabilities. Between 2011 and 2015, Tiger Global acquired shares in Flipkart's Singapore holding company, which held stakes in multiple Indian companies. These investments were made through three Mauritius-based entities, which in turn were owned by Cayman Islands private equity funds managed by Tiger Global.

When Tiger Global sold those shares to Walmart in 2018, it claimed exemption from capital gains tax under the India-Mauritius DTAA. Indian tax authorities challenged the claim, and after a years-long legal battle that included multiple lower-court decisions, ultimately prevailed. The original 1982 India-Mauritius tax treaty had long been exploited by foreign companies engaged in so-called “treaty shopping.” For over two decades, more than \$171 billion in foreign investment flowed into India via Mauritius, largely for tax reasons. This led to a renegotiation of the agreement in 2016, which granted authorities the right to tax shares ac-

quired after April 2017. Since then, Singapore has largely replaced Mauritius as the preferred financial gateway into the Indian market.

Applying this revised framework, the Supreme Court held that the Mauritius entities used by Tiger Global were mere conduits, lacking any genuine commercial purpose beyond extracting value from India and shifting profits to low-tax jurisdictions. The Court rejected the argument that a Mauritian tax residency certificate alone entitled the firm to tax exemptions. Instead, it declared the transaction “an impermissible tax avoidance arrangement” and affirmed that “taxing income arising from within its own borders is an inherent sovereign right of a country.”

The Court's decision, which could leave Tiger Global with a \$1.5 billion tax bill including penalties, sends a powerful message: companies doing actual business in India have nothing to fear, but those routing investments purely to dodge taxes will face serious financial and reputational costs.

The question now is whether Modi's government will stand by this sensible outcome or undermine it through new tax concessions. India's recent trade deals with the European Union and the United States offer little cause for optimism. While the full agreements remain under wraps, what has been revealed is troubling. For example, reports suggest that the EU-India trade treaty includes “modern digital trade rules designed to

facilitate business,” along with other tax-related measures that may be buried in the fine print.

Then there is the Donald Trump factor. Earlier this year, the Trump administration pressured members of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework to exempt US-based multinationals from the global minimum tax. The US-Indonesia trade deal went even further, forcing the Indonesian government to abandon planned tariffs on cross-border data flows and support the renewal of the World Trade Organization's moratorium on e-commerce duties.

More broadly, the notion that developing countries must tolerate tax avoidance to attract investment does not withstand scrutiny. Investment decisions are driven primarily by market size, growth prospects, infrastructure quality, and labour skills, not by the availability of tax loopholes. India's vast consumer market, skilled workforce, and advanced digital infrastructure would make it an attractive destination for foreign companies without shell-company-based tax planning.

Tiger Global is a case in point. India's digital ecosystem was built by Indian institutions, funded by Indian taxpayers, and sustained by Indian consumers. When Tiger Global realized \$1.6 billion in profits from selling its stake in Flipkart, it monetized publicly built infrastructure and the network effects created by India's digital transformation.

No treaty loophole should allow foreign investors to profit from India's infrastructure while contributing nothing to the tax base that sustains it. The Supreme Court has affirmed that principle. It now falls to the Indian government to reinforce it by asserting tax sovereignty rather than diluting it through opaque, exploitative trade deals.

Jayati Ghosh is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Diego Llumá is Global Communications Manager at the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Capital Taxation.

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Jayati Ghosh & Diego Llumá

THE TIGER GLOBAL RULING COMES AT A MOMENT WHEN FISCAL GROUND RULES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER BUT ARE INCREASINGLY UNDER THREAT

In January, India's Supreme Court ruled that the US-based hedge fund Tiger Global must pay taxes on its \$1.6 billion sale of a stake in the e-commerce platform Flipkart to Walmart. The ruling, delivered just days before the EU-India Free Trade Agreement was announced, shows that at least some Indian institutions remain committed to defending the country's eroding tax base.

The Court's decision stands in sharp contrast to the government's economic agenda. In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi slashed corporate tax rates, sacrificing public revenue even as companies nearly quadrupled their profits, wages stagnated, and private investment flatlined. Rather than change course, the government has doubled down.

The Tiger Global ruling comes at a moment when fiscal ground rules are more important than ever but are increasingly under threat. In recent years, India's digital economy has expanded rapidly, powered by the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), which was launched a decade ago and is now the world's largest real-time payment system. The resulting “instant commerce” boom has generated sharply rising revenues for global giants like Amazon and Walmart, whose business models rely on intense competition to deliver goods in under ten minutes, often at the expense of delivery workers.

Despite their growing revenues, these companies pay little or no tax in India by reporting losses instead of profits from their local operations. Their tax avoidance strategies were reinforced by a 2025 Delhi High Court ruling that payments to foreign cloud-service providers are not considered royalties or fees for technical services under Indian tax law or the India-US Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA).

In response, tax authorities have tightened withholding rules under the Income Tax Act, introduced levies on digital services, and adjusted the Goods and Services Tax framework to cover cross-border digital transactions. But these efforts

SPECTRUM TAXATION

Record returns, shrinking revenue



Shivaji Sarkar

FOR MANY, THE CONTRAST APPEARS INEQUITABLE: INDIVIDUALS WITH MODEST SALARIES SHOULDER HEAVIER PROPORTIONAL BURDENS THAN LARGE COMPANIES WITH EXPANDING PROFITS

It has been a week of pure hungama in Parliament. Rarely has the Lok Sabha appeared so charged, so combative and so visibly tilted against the government. The Opposition seized the initiative early and never let go. Tempers flared, slogans echoed, and adjournments became routine. Yet beneath the noise lay something more telling: the government seemed unable either to assuage its critics or to convincingly defend itself.

Most striking of all was the absence of a reply from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Motion of Thanks. The debate itself followed predictable lines. Treasury benches showered praise on the Budget. On the other side, the Opposition tore into it with visible energy. Yet beyond the political theatre lay a question few addressed fully: who actually pays for this Budget?

The numbers are stark. In a country of over 140 crore people, fewer than 10 crore file income tax returns. Even among these, more than 60% pay no tax at all because of exemptions and low incomes.

In FY25, 9.19 crore returns were filed and 8.64 crore verified, but 4.19 crore belonged to individuals earning under Rs 5 lakh. Only about 3.24 lakh people reported incomes above Rs 1 crore. The system, therefore, rests on a narrow base. The top 1% of filers contribute nearly half of total personal income tax. The top 9% pay close to 87%. A tiny minority funds the exchequer.

At the same time, the salaried middle class faces rising pressure. The highest slab effectively exceeds 34% after cess. Add GST, fuel taxes, tolls, service charges and countless indirect levies, and the burden grows heavier still. Every citizen pays these indirect taxes — whether travelling by bus, buying groceries or paying school fees. Even the poorest cannot escape them. Yet the discourse treats only income-tax payers as “contributors,” ignoring the silent taxation embedded in daily life.

Contrast this with corporate taxation. Corporate tax rates hover around 22%, even as profits surge. India Inc.'s profit-to-GDP ratio has reached multi-year highs. Net profits have more than

doubled since the pandemic. Yet corporate tax collections remain lower than or comparable to personal income tax collections. For many, the contrast appears inequitable: individuals with modest salaries shoulder heavier proportional burdens than large companies with expanding profits.

There is also a deeper economic cost. Heavy direct and indirect taxes squeeze disposable income. Lower purchasing power depresses consumption. Weak consumption slows production. Sluggish production dampens employment and investment. The cycle feeds on itself. A tax regime designed to raise revenue ends up constricting growth.

If the government genuinely seeks to boost manufacturing and demand, it must rethink this architecture. Leaving more money in citizens' hands could stimulate spending, production and jobs. A broader base with moderate rates is often more sustainable than punishing a narrow segment.

Official growth figures sound optimistic, but institutions such

as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank remain cautious, flagging weak consumption and inequality. Multiple free trade agreements risk increasing imports faster than domestic output, potentially undercutting local manufacturing and eroding revenues further. Without stronger domestic demand, headline growth numbers may remain more symbolic than substantive.

This is why the Budget debate matters beyond politics. It is not merely about allocations or applause lines. It is about fairness, sustainability and trust. Who bears the burden? Who benefits? And does the system encourage growth or choke it?

Ultimately, the health of Parliament mirrors the health of the republic. When scrutiny weakens and accountability thins, policy suffers and public faith erodes. Restoring seriousness to debate, transparency to numbers, and responsibility to leadership is not optional — it is essential to keeping democracy credible and alive.

INFA

WISDOM CORNER

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.

EDMUND BURKE

Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe.

VOLTAIRE

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

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Viksit Bharat in sight: PM urges pvt sector to do its bit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday hailed the latest Budget and a spate of global trade deals signed by his government as foundations for Viksit Bharat, and urged the private sector to step in “more aggressively” and “boldly” now.

In a wide-ranging interview with PTI, Modi blasted the UPA government for failing to achieve substantial trade agreements, and asserted that women will play the “most important role” in Viksit Bharat. He said political stability and predictability have restored investor confidence in India and that stronger manufacturing, services and MSMEs have enabled it to negotiate free trade pacts with 38 countries from a “position of strength.”

He listed three top priorities for the next three decades—more structural reforms, deepening of innovation in technology, manufacturing and services, and simpler governance so that citizens and businesses can operate with greater ease and trust.

Asked if he is satisfied with the progress made by India’s Reform Express, he said, “I must say that by temperament I am never fully satisfied.”

“I believe public life demands certain constructive restlessness. At the same time it is important to acknowledge the scale of progress achieved in the journey of Reform Express.”

He was asked if India is ready to take the moonshot for Viksit Bharat and whether it was a now or never situation that led his government to create a Budget that was not typically a ‘Bahi Khata’ document.

“First of all I would respectfully say that none of our Budgets has been made with an attitude of creating a run-of-the-mill Bahi Khata; if one takes a closer look at my approach in the last 25 years it becomes clear that our work does not happen in bits and pieces.”

The Prime Minister said there is a broader strategy, a plan of action and an effective implementation that reflects the ‘whole of the nation’ thinking, continuity of purpose and a long-term vision, progressively unfolding step by step, year after year.



“So, this is not a ‘now or never’ moment born out of compulsion. It is a ‘we are ready’ moment born out of preparation and inspiration. This (2026-27) Budget reflects this yearning to become a developed nation.”

In the written interview, Modi also said his government has used its years in office to plug “structural gaps left behind by earlier administrations”, pursued bold reforms and laid the foundations for a developed India.

India has in quick succession concluded landmark trade deals with the European Union and the United Kingdom, securing sweeping tariff reductions and expanded market access for goods and services, while also reaching an understanding with the United States to ease tariff frictions and deepen trade engagement. Together, the moves are seen as significantly improving access for Indian exporters in advanced markets and reinforcing New Delhi’s

push to integrate more closely with global supply chains.

“We now have FTAs with 38 partner nations, an unprecedented milestone in India’s trade history. A remarkable feature of these trade agreements is that they span continents and include countries of varying economic strength,” Modi said. “There is a new confidence in our nation. Our national character has revealed itself even in times of different kinds of challenges and we are a bright spot of growth even in difficult global circumstances.”

Calling productive spending a hallmark of his government, Modi said the Union Budget deliberately avoided short-term populism and instead channelled record capital outlays into infrastructure to drive jobs and sustainable growth.

“Taken together, Budget 2026 is all about strengthening the manufacturing ecosystem, expanding value addition and creating conditions for skill and scale to come together. The end result will be Aatmanirbharta and massive job creation.”

Modi said the next leap toward Viksit Bharat by 2047 will

depend on how boldly Indian enterprise invests in innovation, builds long-term capacity and positions itself as a globally competitive, technologically confident and socially responsible engine of growth.

The Prime Minister urged the dynamic private corporate sector to invest “more aggressively” in research and development, adopt frontier technologies, deepen supply-chain capabilities and compete on quality and productivity rather than on protected margins.

“Policy can only create the enabling framework. The next phase of transformation requires a decisive response from the private sector. Incentives and tariff preferences can catalyse growth, but durable competitiveness must rest on innovation, efficiency and scale.”

“Equally, as productivity rises, the gains must be shared fairly between workers, shareholders and owner-managers. Sustainable growth requires social legitimacy. Rising real wages, skill upgrading, and stable employment reinforce domestic demand and social cohesion, which, in turn, sup-

port long-term investment.”

On the hike in defence Budget and military modernisation, Modi said the benefits of a decade of defence reforms were evident during ‘Operation Sindoor’, and asserted that India has to be prepared at all times to deal with security challenges.

Leveraging fresh Budget incentives to turbocharge investments in data centres, Modi also pitched India as a global hub for digital infrastructure and artificial intelligence, saying the country is ready to host the world’s data and lead the next wave of the technology revolution.

His pitch came a day before India hosts the global assembly of tech tycoons, AI business leaders, policy makers, investors and innovators.

The Global AI Impact Summit from February 16 to 20 will see a host of heads of state and government, including France’s Emmanuel Macron and Brazil’s Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, along with representatives of more than 60 other countries, convene in New Delhi.

Ganja smuggling ruse foiled; two arrested



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Feb 15: Acting on a tip-off, police in Subarnapur district arrested two persons Sunday after discovering more than 55 kg cannabis hidden inside a car that was being towed by a recovery crane to evade suspicion.

Authorities said the smugglers attempted to disguise the transport as an emergency vehicle recovery. The car was being towed from the Kantamal area in Boudh district towards Bhubaneswar when it was intercepted at Jhinki on Khurda-Bolangir National Highway 57. Sonepur Inspector-In-Charge Jadav Bag said the raid was conducted following a tip-off received by Superintendent of Police Narayan Nak.

“The smugglers acted as if the vehicle had a mechanical failure to avoid the gaze of police and excise officials,” Bag

said. Upon inspection of the vehicle (registration number OD-05-F-0610), officers discovered the contraband stashed in the dickey. The seizure was conducted in the presence of Sonepur Tehsildar G Rashmirekha acting as the executive magistrate.

The district has recently emerged as a primary transit corridor for illegal cannabis grown in the interior forests of Boudh and Kandhamal districts. Smugglers have increasingly turned to sophisticated methods to move the product to other states, previously using ambulances and trucks loaded with cashews or iron rods to hide the drugs.

The two suspects, whose identities have not yet been released, are scheduled to be produced in the court Monday. The investigation is ongoing to identify the larger network behind the shipment, IIC Jadav Bag said.

Interstate racket behind black ebony, khair timber smuggling

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Feb 15: An interstate timber smuggling gang is active in illegal felling and transportation of black ebony (kala kendu) and khair (acacia catechu) trees as demand for timbers is rising in national and international markets, forest officials said.

Black ebony is widely used to make high-end musical instruments and fine woodcraft, while khair has extensive applications in pan masala, food products, medicines, dyes and coloring agents. The sap of khair tree is also used to produce high-value items. Strong overseas demand for products made from both species has intensified smuggling, drawing organised timber mafias into the trade.

Officials said the racket is active across western and central Odisha, including Bolangir and neighbouring districts of Kalahandi, Bargarh, Nuapada, Subarnapur, Boudh and Kandhamal, where high-quality black ebony and khair trees are found.

According to the Forest department, the Bolangir division has seized more than 40 trips of timber over the past eight to



10 months. In December, forest teams conducted multiple raids and confiscated vehicles loaded with illegally felled timber.

Officials seized a vehicle carrying 15 quintals of khair wood near Kharkhara village under the Kantabanji Larsi section December 24. Two days later, a vehicle transporting 53 khair logs was intercepted near Kado-basa village in the Kantabanji range. Another vehicle loaded with 19 black ebony logs was seized near Ichhapada village in the Muribahal range December 29.

Officials said large quantities of khair and black ebony timber have been smuggled from forest areas of Bolangir district over the past few years, prompting intensified enforcement and

surveillance.

An interstate smuggling racket is believed to be active in the area. Timber is reportedly being transported from Bolangir district through neighbouring districts to Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and other states. There is also discussion about the involvement of several timber mafias from Bolangir district.

Sources allege that Forest department personnel are seizing only a small portion of the timber being smuggled, while in most cases the smugglers manage to escape. This has led to speculation that the possible involvement of some Forest department staff and officials cannot be ruled out.

When contacted, Bolangir Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ajit Bishi said large-scale enforcement drives against timber smuggling have been conducted in the district over the past 10 months. More than 40 truckloads of kendu, khair and other timbers have been seized. He said reports have also been received from several areas that people are cutting and selling kendu and khair trees from their private land, and action is being taken in such cases as well.

Skeletons tumble out after arrest of social worker

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hatadihi, Feb 15: The arrest of Sureswari Sagarika Jena, president of the Jayadurga Foundation Trust, in a fraud case has led to fresh disclosures about her alleged cheating activities.

Jena, a resident of Jalakalanga village under this block in Nandipada police limits of Keonjhar district, was arrested Saturday by Khandagiri police station with assistance from local police.

Following her arrest, it emerged that another fraud case is pending against her at Nandipada police station. The case (106/2025) alleges that Jena collected ₹15 lakh from the wife of Sushanta Rout of Sulana village on the promise of providing her a job. Nandipada



police said a chargesheet has been filed in court in that case.

Jena had formed a social outfit Jayadurga Foundation and was known locally as a social worker.

In a separate case (465/2025) registered at Khandagiri police station, she is accused of duping another individual of ₹22 lakh on the pretext of offering employment.

To avoid arrest, Jena initially moved the Orissa High

Court July 17, 2025, seeking anticipatory bail (ABLAPL No. 8478/2025). Hearing her petition, the high court directed her to surrender before the JMFC-V court in Bhubaneswar and seek regular bail December 10, 2025.

Subsequently, she filed another bail petition in the high court January 20, 2026. The plea was rejected January 29, 2026. She again approached the high court January 30, 2026, seeking bail (ABLAPL No. 1664/2026), which is yet to be heard.

Jena also filed a separate petition (CRLMC No. 5412/2025) in the high court seeking relief in connection with the fraud case. On December 18, 2025, the court issued notice to the opposite party. The matter remains pending.

Web journo, another held over ‘fake’ Maoist banners

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Feb 15: Rayagada police arrested two ‘fake Maoists’ for allegedly putting up Maoist banners in the district, officials said.

One of the accused is a web journalist identified as Anubrata Bara from Rayagada, while the other was identified as Bali Majhi of Kashipur block. Police said Majhi had previously been arrested and jailed multiple times in Maoist-related cases.

The arrests were made following an investigation into the display of Maoist banners allegedly to spread panic when the district is on its way to become Maoist-free.

Two days ago, Maoist banners were found at Dhumaguda village along the Rayagada-Baishing main road, about 2 km from Rayagada town under the Seshkhal police limits.

Two days ago, Maoist banners were found at Dhumaguda village along the Rayagada-Baishing main road, about 2 km from Rayagada town

On the same day, similar fake Maoist posters were put up at Paikapada under Chandili police limits and near Kumbharaguda village in Kalyansinghpur block, police said.

Both accused were produced for medical examination at the district headquarters hospital Sunday. When contacted, Additional Superintendent of Police Amulya Kumar Dhar said the district Superintendent of Police will provide further details at a news conference scheduled for Monday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhadrak, Feb 15: Bodies of five villagers allegedly went missing from a graveyard in Bhadrak district, prompting the authorities to order a detailed investigation, a police officer said Sunday.

Police said the bodies were found missing from Maninathpur village cremation ground situated on the banks of the Baitarani River under Bhandaripokhari police station limits of the coastal district Thursday night.

“I have received a complaint from the villagers of Maninathpur Sunday about the disappearance of five bodies from the village cremation ground,” said Rajlakshmi Nayak, Inspector In-Charge (IIC) of Bhandaripokhari police station.

According to Nayak, the missing bodies belonged to Khageswar Samal, Hatabandhu Beuria, Kartik Nayak, Saraswati Behera, and Kalandi Behera, who died in the last two months. At the Swargadwar cremation ground located on the Baitarani riverbed, bodies are traditionally buried after funeral rites.

However, it was not the first such incident in the village. In 2016, villagers had discovered

that the body of a child had been dug out two months after his death, said sarpanch of Solampur panchayat, Paramananda Nayak. In the same year, the body of Anam Behera was also exhumed from his grave.

The bodies of Basanta Das, who died in a road accident, and headmaster Basudev Das went missing from the cremation ground the next year, he said.

Three more bodies went missing in June 2023, prompting the villagers to lodge a complaint at the police station. On April 1, 2025, when the son of Rukmini Samal, who had died of cardiac arrest, visited the burial site during the tenth-day ritual, he found the grave dug up and the body missing.

Water and liquor bottles were found at the site, and nearly 200 metres away, decomposed flesh and parts of clothes were discovered. Her husband, Srimanta, had also lodged a complaint with the police at that time, another villager said.

Villagers suspect that the bodies may have been stolen for occult practices, scientific experiments, or some other purposes. Bhadrak SP Manoj Rout has directed Bhandaripokhari police station IIC to investigate the repeated disappearance of bodies.

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ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର
Office of the Superintending Engineer,
Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.IV, Nirman Soudha,
Unit-V, Bhubaneswar
E-mail ID : eernb4bbsr@gmail.com, Tel - (0674) - 2390245
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement
No.1845 Date - 09.02.2026
Bid Identification No. - C.C. (R&B) - 04
e-Procurement Notice No. 52 of 2025-26

1	Name of the Work	1 No. Electrical Work
2	Total No. of Works	1 No. Electrical Work
3	Estimated Cost	Rs.30,46,387.00 (As per Tender Call Notice)
4	Class of Contractor	OEM / Authorised Channel Partner having lease agreement with valid MV license issued by ELBO for this project
5	Period of Completion	3 (Three) Calendar Months
6	Type of Tender	Single Cover System Tender
7	Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	From Dt.19.02.2026 to Dt.05.03.2026 up to 17.30 Hours
8	Last Date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal	Dt.05.03.2026 at 17.30 Hours
9	Opening of Bid through online	Dt.06.03.2026 at 11.30 Hours
10	Name & Address of the Officer inviting Bid	Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.IV, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>.
The Tender Inviting Authority reserves the right to reject / cancel / modify the tender at any time without assigning any reason thereof.
N.B : Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer,
BBSR (R&B) Division No.IV, BBSR

OIPR-34001/340901/125-26/0001

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
KHORDHA (R&B) DIVISION, KHORDHA
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
E-mail : pwwdoff_khd@yahoo.com
Tender Call Notice
Bid Identification No. S.E.-KHD-(R&B)-44/25-26
Letter No. 558 dtd. 06.02.2026

No.34001/58/2526 : The Superintending Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Division, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bids in Double Cover System from appropriate Class of contractors as detailed below registered with the State Governments and Contractors of equivalent Grade / Class registered with Central Government / MES / Railways for execution of the Civil. The bidder not registered under the state government has to register under the state PWD & ELBO in appropriate class of eligibility before signing of the agreement.

1. Nature of Work	: Building Works
2. No. of Work	: 04 Nos.
3. Tender Cost	: Rs. 10000.00 (Online)
4. Class of Contractor	: 'B' Class Contractor
5. Available of Bid documents in the website	: From Dt.19.02.2026 at 12.00 Noon to Dt.05.03.2026 at 5.00 P.M.
6. Date of opening of Bids	: Dt.06.03.2026 at 11.30 A.M.
7. Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website : https://tenderodisha.gov.in . Any information regarding Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can be available in the said website.	

Sd/- Superintending Engineer,
Khordha (R&B) Division, Khordha

OIPR-34001/340951/125-26/0002

Man killed by tusker

Joda: A 30-year-old man was killed in a tusker attack early Sunday at Rinekaptali market ground under Nayagarh panchayat in the Champua forest range of Keonjhar district, officials said. The victim was identified as Santosh Majhi, son of Tereka Majhi of Sardapanka village under Basantpur panchayat in Jhumpura block. The attack occurred at around 5am in the Bamebari section of the Champua range. Bamebari forester Bulu Nahak said Santosh had come to the market area in early morning when the elephant attacked him and trampled him to death. Forest officials informed Bamebari police station and the body was sent for post-mortem examination, Nayak said.

Jamia Millia Islamia to open teacher education Learning Support Centre

Bhubaneshwar/Sambalpur: In a significant step towards strengthening teacher education in Odisha, Jamia Millia Islamia has approved the opening of a B.Ed. and M.A. (Education) Learning Support Centre (LSC) at Odisha State Open University (OSOU), Sambalpur. To support aspiring B.Ed. candidates of Odisha and enhance access to quality teacher education, OSOU approached Jamia Millia Islamia for academic collaboration. The approval of the LSC will provide much-needed opportunities for students across the state to pursue B.Ed. and M.A. (Education) programmes through a reputed Central University. Until OSOU receives its independent approval to offer B.Ed. programmes, this academic handholding initiative will greatly benefit teacher aspirants by ensuring access to quality curriculum, academic guidance, and institutional support. The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to expanding inclusive and high-standard teacher education in Odisha. On this occasion, Prof. M Moshahid Ahamed Rizvi, Dean, Centre for Distance and Online Learning (CDOL), Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, graced the programme. He was joined by Prof. Shyam Sundar Pattnaik, Vice-Chancellor, OSOU; Chittaranjan Sahu, Registrar, OSOU; Prof. Altaf Khan, Director of School, OSOU; Prof. Garuda Dhawaja Barik, Principal, PMIASE, Sambalpur; Srikanta Paikray, retired principal, Berhampur; and Brundaban Meher, Assistant Professor, PMIASE, Sambalpur, along with other senior officials and faculty members of OSOU. The initiative is expected to open new academic pathways for aspiring teachers in Odisha and contribute significantly to strengthening the state’s educational ecosystem.

There have been move-ments for the introduction of the Roman script for the Kokborok lan-guage. Those who are spread-ing the movement must try to develop an indigenous script for their mother tongue. If they fail, we will form a committee for the selection of a suitable script

MANIK SAHA | CHIEF MINISTER, TRIPURA

The Centre had assured infrastruc-ture projects worth Rs 80,000 crore during the second Advan-tage Assam investment summit last year, and the state has already received approval for different projects worth Rs 55,000 crore

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CHIEF MINISTER, ASSAM

The BJP and NDA's suc-cess in the Kerala local body elections under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership is a strong testa-ment to public trust and the struggles of party workers will ensure its victory in Kerala in the future

MOHAN YADAV | CHIEF MINISTER, MADHYA PRADESH

SHORT TAKES

14-hour Andaman bandh called Feb 16

Sri Vijaya Puram: A 14-hour bandh across Andaman and Nicobar Islands was called Monday to protest the proposal to establish a deemed university and the planned affiliation of seven government colleges under it, replacing their existing affiliation with Pondicherry University, organisers said Saturday. The shutdown, scheduled from 6 am to 8 pm, has been called by the Joint Action Forum Against Deemed University, a conglomerate of over 100 organisations, including tours and travels associations, hotel and trade bodies, shop owners' groups, transport unions, NGOs and several political parties, barring the BJP.

Ex-servicemen rally in Punjab, Rajasthan

Chandigarh: The Amogh Division of the Indian Army organised an ex-servicemen rally and medical camp at Abohar Military Station Sunday. The event was organised for the three districts of Punjab -- Fazilka, Sri Muktsar Sahib, and Faridkot and two districts of Rajasthan -- Sri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh, an official statement said. Organised under Sapta Shakti Command, the programme witnessed participation of more than 3,000 veterans from the region, the statement said. .

Kedarnath Temple to reopen April 22

Rudraprayag: The portals of the revered Kedarnath Temple in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand will reopen for devotees April 22 after remaining closed for nearly six months during winter, a temple committee official said Sunday. Harish Gaur, Public Relations Officer of the Shri Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee, said the auspicious date and time for reopening the shrine were decided on the occasion of Mahashivratri Sunday at the winter seat of Lord Kedarnath -- the Omkareshwar Temple. Following the rituals and special prayers, religious scholars and priests calculated the muhurat (auspicious timing) through panchang or Hindu calendar readings. The temple, one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, will be opened at 8 am April 22.

Ladakh administration remains fully committed to listening to students' concerns and resolving them with sensitivity and priority

KAVINDER GUPTA | LT GOVERNOR, LADAKH

PRIYANKA TO VISIT ASSAM

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is scheduled to visit Assam on a two-day trip start-ing February 18 to take part in a series of party meetings ahead of state assembly elections, a state leader said Sunday. Vadra, a Congress general secretary and parliamentarian, is the chairperson of the party's screening committee for the upcoming Assam assembly elections



US commander warns of rising Indo-Pacific aggression

The senior military commander, currently on a visit to New Delhi, said India and the US have convergence of interests and both sides are looking at further bolstering the defence and military ties especially in the maritime domain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: The India-US defence partnership has a unity of purpose to maintain peace through strength, Admiral Samuel J Paparo, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, said Sunday even as he complimented the Indian military for displaying restraint during Operation Sindoor.

In an interaction with a small group of journalists, Paparo flagged serious concerns over the Indo-Pacific region witness-ing increasing "coercion" and "aggression", in an indirect reference to China's military muscle-flexing in the region.

The senior military commander, currently on a visit to New Delhi, said India and the US have convergence of inter-ests and both sides are looking at further bolstering the defence and military ties especially in the maritime domain.

Admiral Paparo said the US-India defence relationship is on a "steeply upward trajectory" and it is set to expand further.

"We think our partnerships have an exponential effect on deterrence, because it demon-strates a unity of purpose among us to maintain peace and a peace through strength," he said.

"I think as our policy leaders are managing the relationships, it's the duty of our military leaders to keep a close eye on capability and to be ready to contest that capability at any moment," he said.

Elaborating on changing char-



acter of warfare and an increas-ingly contested international commons, he said both India and the US are committed to work to-wards peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Indo-Pacific region is home to 60 per cent of the world's population, it com-prises over 60 per cent of the world's GDP and seven of the world's 10 largest militaries hail from the region, he said.

"Of course, there are con-cerns, but we deal with those concerns with the growing part-nerships that come to the prism of this mutually respective, re-spectful, sovereign relationship between the world's oldest de-mocracy and the world's largest democracy," he said.

The focus of the US-India partnership has been to main-tain peace, through strength and deterrence, he said.

Paparo said both the US and India are committed to the prin-ciples of sovereignty, freedom

of navigation and freedom of seas. "We applaud India as a great net contributor to securi-ty of the Indian Ocean region," he said.

Paparo said the two sides are also looking at boosting maritime security cooperation including in the sphere of un-dersea domain awareness.

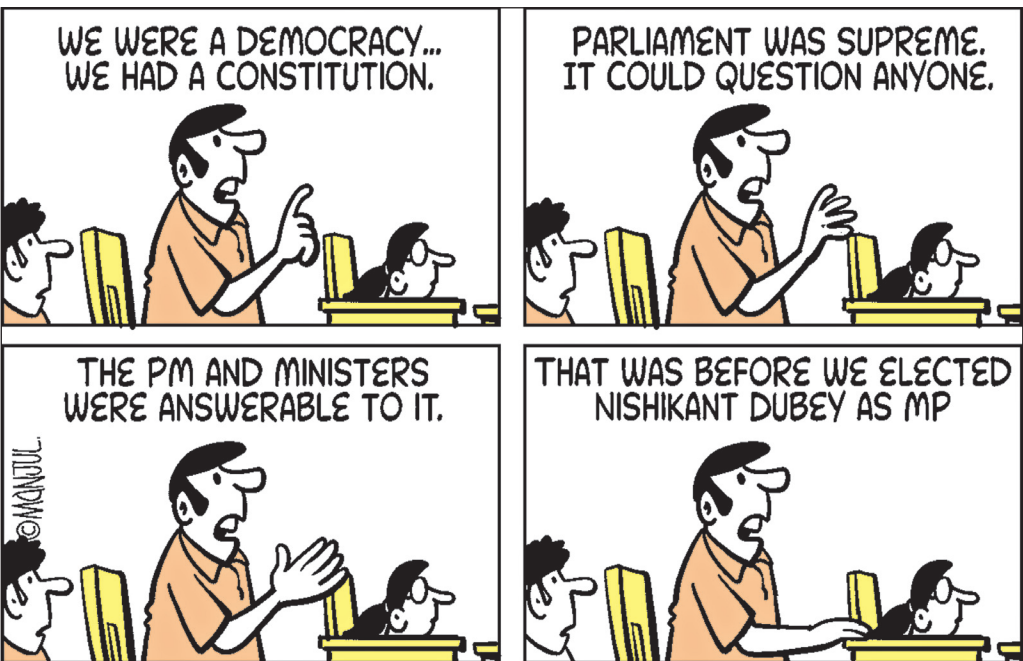
The senior American com-mander lauded the Indian mil-itary when asked to comment on Operation Sindoor.

"We applaud the restraint that was exhibited...I think all peace loving nations were con-cerned when we see operations of this kind," he said.

To a question on Pakistan's use of Chinese military hard-ware including missiles, Papa-ro did not give a direct reply but noted that constant vigilance and readiness was necessary to deal with such situations.

It is important to maintain a strong deterrent posture, he said without explaining.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Birla to represent India at Rahman's oath ceremony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will represent India at the swearing-in ceremony of Bangladesh's next prime minister, Tarique Rahman, February 17, the external affairs ministry announced Sunday.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Mis-ri and Secretary-General of Lok Sabha Utpal Kumar Singh are also likely to accompany Birla, people familiar with the matter said.

It is learnt that Bangladesh had invited Prime Minister Na-rendra Modi to the ceremony to be held in Dhaka. However, Modi will not be able to attend it as he is scheduled to hold talks with French President Emmanuel Macron in Mumbai February 17.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will represent the Government of India at the swearing-in cer-

emony of the newly elected gov-ernment of Bangladesh led by Tarique Rahman, the ministry said. Rahman led the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to a spectacular victory in Bangladesh's parlia-mentary polls.

"The speaker's participation at this important event underscores the deep and enduring friendship between the peoples of India and Bangladesh, reaffirming India's steadfast commitment to the democratic values that bind our two nations," the ministry said in a statement. "As neighbours united by a shared history, cul-ture, and mutual respect, India welcomes Bangladesh's transi-tion to an elected government under the leadership of Tarique Rahman, whose vision and values have received an overwhelming mandate of the people," it said.

When surrenders signal end of the 'red dream'

THE REAL CHALLENGE NOW LIES IN ENSURING THAT THE VACUUM LEFT BEHIND IS FILLED NOT BY ANOTHER IDEOLOGY OF VIOLENCE, BUT BY GOVERNANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND LASTING TRUST AMONG THE COMMUNITIES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 15: For de-cades, the Left-Wing Extrem-ism took refuge in India's dense forests, alienated tribal popu-lations, ideological fervour, and looked like an insurgency that seemed impossible to contain. The so-called "Red Corridor" stretched across central India, and the Maoist narrative pro-jected itself as a revolutionary movement speaking for the dis-possessed. But by 2025, that nar-rative has taken a decisive hit.

While security forces have conducted several successful operations, the more signif-icant development has been the growing wave of surren-ders. Across Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Jharkhand, Maoist cadres -- in-cluding senior commanders -- have walked out of the forests. They have laid down weapons, revealed routes, named leaders, and accepted rehabilitation. This steady trickle, turning



into a stream, represents a fun-damental shift in the conflict.

Insurgencies rarely end through gun battles alone. They collapse when the ideol-ogy that sustains them begins to erode. For years, Maoism in India claimed to be a movement of justice for the marginalised. But the reality inside the organ-isation told a different story.

Senior leaders often op-

erated from relative safety, while young tribal recruits were pushed to the front-lines. Villages paid the price as violence escalated, yet the movement failed to deliver any meaningful political out-come or territorial gains.

By 2025, even hardened cadres began to realise that the promised revolution was not coming. Survival, not ideology,

became their primary concern. What had once been presented as a historic struggle began to look like an endless cycle of violence without purpose. As government outreach increased and development slowly entered remote regions, the contrast between Maoist promises and lived realities became starker.

One of the earliest indica-tors of this shift came January 29, 2025, when Kalmu Mangdu, Deputy Commander of Section 1 Company of the People's Lib-eration Guerrilla Army (PL-GA), surrendered in Sukma along with team command-er Sameer alias Sukka and cadre Madavi Budhri. They were not peripheral recruits but active fighters. Their de-cision reflected a breakdown of internal trust, fear of being treated as expendable, and a growing sense that survival odds had collapsed.

The steady stream of sur-renders across Bastar, Suk-ma, Gadchiroli and parts of

Jharkhand is not incidental. It reflects the systematic weakening of the CPI (Mao-ist) as a fighting force, as an organisation, and most importantly, as an idea. The once-feared Red Corridor has fragmented into disconnected pockets, cut off from supplies, communication, recruitment and safe movement.

When armed movements reach a stage where surrender appears safer than survival, their collapse becomes inevita-ble. The developments of 2025 suggest that India's long battle against Maoist insurgency may finally be entering its closing chapter -- not merely through the barrel of a gun, but through the quiet erosion of a once-po-tent revolutionary myth.

The real challenge now lies in ensuring that the vacuum left behind is filled not by an-other ideology of violence, but by governance, development, and lasting trust among the communities.

India, France to hold key dialogue to boost defence cooperation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will hold talks with his French counterpart Catherine Vautrin in Bengaluru February 17, with some key outcomes expected from the bilateral dialogue to boost defence cooperation.

A defence cooperation agreement is expected to be renewed for another 10 years, with an MoU on joint venture for "manufacturing of Hammer missiles" likely to be signed at the meeting in the presence of both the ministers, the defence ministry here said Sunday.

"The two ministers are also expected to witness the virtual inauguration of the H125 Light Utility Helicopter Final Assem-bly of Tata Airbus by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron at Vemagal in Karnat-aka," it said in a statement.

Singh will co-chair the sixth India-France Annual Defence Dialogue with Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs of France, Catherine Vautrin in Bangalore February 17, the ministry said.

The meeting will review the entire gamut of bilateral de-fence cooperation, with a focus

on expanding industrial collab-oration, officials said.

An announcement is also expected with respect to recip-rocal deployment of officers at the Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments, the defence ministry said.

Defence has traditionally formed an important pillar of the relationship between the two countries.

The "strong and enduring bilateral ties" were vividly re-flected in 2024-2025 through a series of high-profile exchange-s, the statement said.

PM Modi was the Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade in July 2023, before the French president graced the Republic Day Parade 2024 as the chief guest. "The recent India-EU Security and Defence Partnership marks a signif-icant step in deepening collec-tive engagement with Europe-an nations," the ministry said.

Also, military-to-military co-operation is on an increase. In-dia and France have been regu-larly carrying out three major exercises -- Exercise Shakti with the Army, Exercise Varu-na with the Navy, and Exer-cise Garuda with the Air Force -- and several other opportunity engagements, it said.

Bill Gates to visit Andhra, hold talks with CM Naidu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Feb 15: Microsoft founder Bill Gates will visit Amaravati February 16 and hold discussions with Chief Minis-ter N Chandrababu Naidu on expanding cooperation in health and artificial intelligence initia-tives, Andhra Pradesh minister P Narayana Sunday.

Gates is expected to arrive at the state secretariat here around 10 am Monday and meet with Naidu, IT Minister Nara Lokesh and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan briefly.

"Gates will visit Amaravati Monday and hold discussions with Naidu on expanding coopera-tion in health and artificial intelli-gence initiatives," said Narayana, the state Municipal minister.

The Gates Foundation has been working in Kuppam in Chittoor district on health-re-lated projects, and the proposed talks are expected to explore scaling up these interventions to benefit a wider population across the southern state.

Later, the tech czar will pro-ceed to Real Time Governance system (RTGS) to observe the utilisation of technology in governance, followed by Naidu showcasing the system's pro-cedures and results, a govern-ment source had earlier said.

Naidu will give a presenta-tion on "Swarna Andhra 2047" (golden Andhra) vision and the reforms ushered in various sec-tors, including med-tech, diag-nostic services and Sanjeevani, a health record digitisation pro-gramme, said the source.

Following these engage-ments at the secretariat, Gates and team will proceed to an agricultural centre in Unda-valli village in Amaravati, where he will witness the use of drones and AI technology, the source further said.

Gates had earlier visited the erstwhile undivided Andhra Pradesh twice, and this visit follows an invitation extend-ed by the chief minister to further deepen collaboration with the state government, the minister added.

of the day

quote

I strongly congratulate India for organising this Summit. It's absolutely essential that AI develops itself to the benefit of everybody, everywhere and that countries in the Global South are part of the benefits of AI

ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

Yes, we understand that we need Ukraine in the European Union and, yes, when talking with many heads of state I get the feeling there is no readiness to accept a date

KAJA KALLAS | FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF, EU

We will not open diplomatic relationships with Iran unless there is a regime change. Period

ANITA ANAND | FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER, CANADA

SHORT TAKES

Australia's N-push

Sydney: Australia said Sunday it would spend A\$3.9 billion (\$2.76 billion) to progress construction of a shipyard that will help deliver nuclear-powered submarines under the trilateral AUKUS defence pact with the US and Britain. Announced in 2021, AUKUS is Australia's largest-ever defence investment and will see US-commanded Virginia-class submarines based in Australia from 2027, several Virginia submarines sold to Australia from around 2030, and Britain and Australia building a new class of AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described the A\$3.9 billion as a down payment to deliver the new shipyard in Osborne, a suburb of Adelaide in South Australia state.

Gunmen kill 32

Abuja: At least 32 people have been killed after gunmen launched simultaneous attacks on three communities in the north-central region of Nigeria, the police and a resident said Saturday. The dawn raid were targeted on the communities of Tunga-Makeri, Konkoso, and Pissa, in the Borgu area of Niger state. Niger State police spokesman Wasiu Abiodun said six people died in the attack on Tunga-Makeri, adding that a "yet to be ascertained number of persons were abducted." Northern Nigeria is in the grip of a complex security crisis featuring both Islamic militants and armed gangs kidnapping people for ransom.

Son of Iran's last shah urges US military intervention

REUTERS

Munich, Feb 15: Iranian opposition figure Reza Pahlavi Saturday said US military intervention in Iran could save lives and urged President Donald Trump's administration not to spend too long negotiating with Tehran's clerical rulers on a nuclear deal. The exiled son of Iran's toppled shah told Reuters in an interview that there were signs that the Iranian government was on the brink of collapse and that an attack could weaken it or accelerate its fall. Pahlavi was speaking on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, where officials from the Iranian government are banned. "It's a matter of time. We are hoping that this attack will expedite the process and the people can be finally back in the streets and take it all the way to the ultimate regime's downfall," said Pahlavi, who

Reign of terror grips Sudan

At least 6,000 killed over 3 days during RSF attack on Sudan's el-Fasher, UN says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cairo, Feb 15: More than 6,000 people were killed in over three days when a Sudanese paramilitary group unleashed "a wave of intense violence ... shocking in its scale and brutality" in Sudan's Darfur region in late October, according to the United Nations.

The Rapid Support Forces' offensive to capture the city of el-Fasher included widespread atrocities that amount to war crimes and possible crimes against humanity, the UN Human Rights Office said in a report released Friday.

"The wanton violations that were perpetrated by the RSF and allied Arab militia in the final offensive on el-Fasher underscore that persistent impunity fuels continued cycles of violence," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk.

The RSF and their allied Arab militias, known as Janjaweed, overran el-Fasher, the Sudanese army's only remaining stronghold in Darfur, October 26 and rampaged through the city and its surroundings after more than 18 months of siege.

The 29-page UN report detailed a set of atrocities that ranged from mass killings and summary executions, sexual violence, abductions for ransom, torture and ill-treatment to detention and disappearances. In many cases, the attacks were ethnicity-motivated, it said.

The paramilitaries' General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo has previously acknowledged



abuses by his fighters, but disputed the scale of atrocities.

'Like a scene out of a horror movie'

The alleged atrocities in el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur, mirror a pattern of RSF conduct in its war against the Sudanese military. The war began in April 2023 when a power struggle between the two sides exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum and elsewhere across the country.

The conflict created the world's largest humanitarian crisis with parts of the country pushed into famine. It has also been marked by heinous atrocities which the International Criminal Court said it was investigating as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The RSF was also accused by the Biden administration of carrying out genocide in the ongoing war.

China is the real threat to security and is hypocritically claiming to uphold UN principles of peace

LIN CHIA-LUNG | FOREIGN MINISTER, TAIWAN



SPACEX CREW RESTORES ISS STRENGTH

The International Space Station has returned to full strength with the arrival of four new astronauts, replacing colleagues who returned early due to health concerns. SpaceX delivered the US, French and Russian crew Saturday, a day after launching from Cape Canaveral. The earlier medical evacuation was NASA's first in 65 years



Truce on brink as Israel strikes kill 11

REUTERS

Cairo, Feb 15: Israel fired airstrikes across the Gaza Strip Sunday, killing at least 11 Palestinians, Palestinian officials said, in what the military called a response to ceasefire violations by Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Gaza medics said an Israeli airstrike on a tent encampment housing displaced families killed at least four people, while health officials said another strike killed five in Khan Younis in the south and another person was shot dead in the north. Airstrikes also targeted what was thought to be a commander of the Islamic Jihad group, an ally of Hamas, in the Tel Al-Hawa neighbourhood in Gaza City.

Hazem Qassem, Hamas spokesperson in Gaza, accused Israel of committing a new "massacre" against displaced Palestinians, calling it a serious breach of the ceasefire days before the first meeting of US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace. An Israeli military official called Sunday's strikes "precise" and in line with international law, and said the Palestinian militant group had repeatedly violated an October ceasefire.

Israel and Hamas have repeatedly traded blame for violations of the ceasefire deal, a key element of Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, the deadliest and most destructive in the generations-old conflict.

The war started with the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on southern Israel that killed more than 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's air and ground war in Gaza has killed more than 72,000 people since then, according to Palestinian health ministry data.

IGNORING US-BROKERED PEACE TALKS

Ukrainian drone strike sparks fires at Russian Black Sea port

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kyiv, Feb 15: A Ukrainian drone strike ignited fires at one of Russia's Black Sea ports, officials said Sunday, ahead of fresh talks aimed at ending the nearly 4-year-old war.

Two people were wounded in the attack on the port of Taman in the Krasnodar region, which damaged an oil storage tank, warehouse and terminals, according to regional Gov Veniamin Kondratyev.

Meanwhile, falling debris from Russian drones damaged civilian and transport infrastructure in Ukraine's Odesa region, officials said, causing disruption to the power and water supply.

Ukraine's long-range drone strikes on Russian energy sites aim to deprive Moscow of the oil export revenue it needs to pursue its full-scale invasion.

Russia wants to cripple the Ukrainian power grid, seeking to deny civilians access to heat, light and running water in what Kyiv officials say is an attempt to "weaponise winter."

The attacks came ahead of another round of US-brokered talks between envoys from Russia and Ukraine Tuesday and Wednesday in Geneva, just before the fourth anniversary of the all-out Russian invasion of its neighbour February 22.

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference in Germany Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggested there were still questions remaining over future security guarantees for his country. He also questioned how the concept of a free trade zone - proposed by the US - would work in the Donbas region, which Russia insists Kyiv must give up for peace.



Members of the Nepali Army stand in a formation before a march-past during the 263rd Army Day and Maha Shivaratri celebrations at the Army Pavilion, in Kathmandu, Nepal, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

NEPAL ELECTIONS

Limits on financial assistance in cash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Feb 15: Issuing a 63-point code of conduct ahead of the March 5 polls, Nepal's Election Commission Sunday asked political parties and candidates to accept financial assistance above NRs 25,000 through banking transactions only.

The Election Commission (EC) also said that the political parties and candidates can campaign up to March 2 only. Prominent among the more than 60 pointers in the EC's notice regarding the Code of Conduct is that the political parties and their candidates are to accept financial assistance above Rs 25,000 only through banking transactions.

The EC asked the political parties and their candidates to carry out publicity campaigns in the stipulated dates - till March 2 - and between 7 am to 7 pm, and halt all campaigns 48 hours ahead of the general election scheduled for March 5.

In keeping with the previous year's practice, the EC also restricted the use of plastic materials or polythene for publicity campaigns.

B'desh seeks reset in India ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 15: Bangladesh wants to reset ties with India on a fresh footing now that ousted premier Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League party no longer hold power, Humayun Kabir, adviser to BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, has said, asserting that the two nations should work together for "mutual benefit".

Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Friday secured a sweeping victory with more than two-thirds majority in the landmark parliamentary elections held Thursday.

In an interview to PTI Videos Saturday, Kabir stressed that the onus lies on India to recognise the changed political reality in Bangladesh after the BNP's resounding electoral mandate.

"The change has to come from the mindset in India. Sheikh Hasina and Awami League don't exist in today's Bangladesh anymore. The people have given a clear verdict in favour of BNP," Kabir said. Kabir described Hasina, who fled to India after 2024's August uprising, as a "terrorist" responsible for the deaths of over 1,500 people.

Kabir urged the Indian gov-



ernment to ensure that its territory is not used by Hasina or other Awami League figures in ways that could affect stability in Bangladesh.

India November 26, 2025, said it is examining a request by Bangladesh's interim government to extradite Hasina and asserted that it is committed to ensure the best interests of the people of that country.

"We remain committed to the best interests of the people of Bangladesh, including peace, democracy, inclusion and stability in that country and will continue to engage constructively in this regard with all stakeholders," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

Kabir highlighted the recent cordial phone call between Prime Minister Narendra Mo-

India must not be seen as complicit in any activities that undermine Bangladesh's sovereignty. Once that is addressed, normal diplomatic cooperation can resume. We are neighbours and should work together for mutual benefit

HUMAYUN KABIR | ADVISER, BNP CHAIRMAN

di and Rahman, where Modi extended an invitation for Rahman to visit India at a convenient time.

On the timing of such a visit, Kabir said domestic priorities come first. "Tarique Rahman will focus on settling the country on a path of prosperity and economic security. Once things stabilise here, he will take up international engagements, including the visit to India."

On Bangladesh's approach to the growing competition among India, China and the US in South Asia, Kabir said the new government will pursue balanced relations.

"We will negotiate from a position of strength with a strong mandate from the people. National interest and the well-being of our territory will remain at the centre of our foreign policy," he said.

of the day

quote

People have burnt their fingers being fence sitters, so they are now using every correction to come into the market, as they do in the share market

AJOY CHAWLA | MANAGING DIRECTOR, TITAN

The overall sentiment is likely to remain cautious as investors monitor global AI-driven disruptions and geopolitical risks, while improved valuations and constructive GDP forecasts may help sustain FII inflows

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT INVESTMENTS

We see a big headroom for growth and market share expansion in categories like scooters, in premium motorcycles, in global markets, in EV, and also above all, parts and accessories business because we are a company that has the biggest park size in the market

HARSHVARDHAN CHITALE | CEO, HERO MOTOCORP

SHORT TAKES

Manappuram gets nod for Bain control

New Delhi: Manappuram Finance has received final approval from the Reserve Bank of India for Bain Capital to acquire joint control and up to 41.66% of the company's equity and convertible instruments, the non-bank lender said. The RBI clearance is in relation to agreements signed in March, under which Bain committed to invest about ₹43.85 billion (\$484.40 million) for an 18% fully diluted stake priced at 236 rupees apiece. Bain Capital's stake will range between 18% and 41.7%, depending on open-offer acceptance, while existing promoters will hold 28.9% on a fully diluted basis, the company said in a statement. RBI raised concerns last month regarding the deal since Bain already holds a controlling interest in another Indian lender. Manappuram, which extends loans in which gold is used as collateral, has about a ₹315 billion loan book, focused on fast-growing gold loans.

Lenovo revenue grows 7% in Q3

New Delhi: Lenovo India has reported a 7 per cent rise in revenue to ₹8,145 crore for the third quarter of FY26, driven by a broad-based digitisation momentum in India, rapid AI adoption, and strong performance across the mobile, PC, and infrastructure business segments. Shailendra Katyal, Vice President and Managing Director of Lenovo India, stated that the performance reflected sustained demand rather than a one-off spike. "We are very encouraged by the broader digitisation momentum in India. Lenovo benefits from having a broad portfolio spanning phones, PCs, tablets, and infrastructure solutions. With rapid technology adoption, especially AI, we are seeing strong momentum across businesses," Katyal said in an interview with PTI.

Religare Enterprises announces demerger

New Delhi: Burman family backed-Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL) has approved a plan to demerge its financial services and insurance businesses into two separately listed entities, in a move aimed at unlocking shareholder value and sharpening strategic focus. This is the first major restructuring announced by the company since Burmans took over REL in Feb 2025, the financial services firm said in a statement.



India, the world's largest democracy, has all the ingredients to be a full-stack AI leader: optimism about what AI can do for the country, homegrown tech talent, and a national strategy for how to incorporate the technology more widely

SAM ALTMAN | CEO, OPENAI

JAW-DROPPING EARNINGS

South Korea's major brokerage houses racked up record earnings last year on the back of a bull run on the local stock market, industry data showed Sunday. The combined net profit of the country's 27 securities firms is estimated at 10.23 trillion won (US\$7.03 billion) for 2025, sharply up from the previous year's 6.97 trillion won, reports Yonhap news agency



US-India trade deal: FPI inflows rebound

Foreign investors inject ₹19,675cr in first fortnight of Feb

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) staged a sharp turnaround in early February, pumping ₹19,675 crore into Indian equities in the first fortnight, supported by the US-India trade deal and easing global macro concerns.

The inflows follow three consecutive months of heavy selling, with FPIs pulling out ₹35,962 crore in January, ₹22,611 crore in December, and ₹3,765 crore in November, according to data from depositories.

Overall, in 2025, FPIs pulled out a net ₹1.66 lakh crore (\$18.9 billion) from Indian equities, marking one of the worst periods for foreign flows. The selling was driven by volatile currency movements, global trade tensions, concerns over potential US tariffs and stretched equity valuations.

According to the data, FPIs invested ₹19,675 crore in this month (till February 13).

Himanshu Srivastava, principal manager - research, at Morningstar Investment Research India, said the recent buying was supported by easing global macro concerns, particularly softer US inflation data, leading to a positive sentiment towards the interest rate cycle,



Domestically, steady macro indicators, stable inflation, and broadly in-line corporate earnings reinforced confidence in India's growth outlook

HIMANSHU SRIVASTAVA | PRINCIPAL MANAGER - RESEARCH, MORNINGSTAR INVESTMENT RESEARCH

which helped stabilise bond yields and the US dollar.

This improved risk appetite toward emerging markets, including India.

Echoing similar views, Vaqarjaved Khan, senior fundamental analyst at Angel One, said the inflow was triggered by the US-India trade deal, the supportive Union Budget 2026 with fiscal stimulus, easing global trade uncertainties, and stable domestic rates.

FPIs were net buyers on seven of the eleven trading sessions in February up to the 13th, turning sellers on only

Three months of heavy selling: FPIs pulling out ₹35,962cr in Jan, ₹22,611cr in Dec, ₹3,765cr in Nov

2025 worst period for foreign flows: FPIs pulled out net ₹1.66L-cr (\$18.9 billion) from Indian equities

four occasions. Despite this, data shows that FPIs have net sold equities worth ₹1,374 crore so far this month.

The overall figure was skewed by a sharp sell-off of ₹7,395 crore February 13, when the Nifty declined by 336 points. The week also saw heavy selling in IT stocks amid the so-called "Anthropic shock". It is likely that FPIs offloaded IT stocks aggressively in the cash market, as the IT index plunged 8.2 per cent during the week ended February 13, said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments.

INDIA-UK FREE TRADE PACT LIKELY BY APRIL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: The India-UK free trade agreement, signed in July last year, is likely to be implemented in April 2026, according to an official.

India and the UK, July 24, 2025, signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) under which 99 per cent of Indian exports will enter the British market at zero duty, while tariffs on British products such as cars and whisky will be reduced in India.

"We are expecting the pact to be implemented from April this year," the government official said.

The two countries have also signed the Double Contributions Convention (DCC) pact to ensure temporary workers would not have to duplicate social levies in either country.

The official said that both pacts are likely to be implemented in parallel.

The pact needs approval from the UK parliament before it is implemented.

In India, the Union cabinet approves such agreements. After it gets approved by the British parliament, it will be implemented on a mutually agreed date.

The House of Commons in the UK held a debate on the



India-UK CETA earlier this week.

Chris Bryant, Minister of State in the Department for Business and Trade, responded on behalf of the Labour government to stress that CETA was a momentous achievement, which goes "well beyond India's precedent in opening the door for UK businesses".

The British Parliament is ratifying the agreement, including debates across both Houses (House of Commons and House of Lords) and reviews by relevant committees on all aspects of the agreement, before it can be implemented in the coming months.

CETA aims to double the \$56 billion trade between the world's fifth and sixth largest economies by 2030.

While India has opened its market to various consumer goods, including chocolates, biscuits, and cosmetics, it will gain greater access to export products such as textiles, footwear, gems and jewellery, sports goods, and toys.

On the domestic front, silver futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange declined ₹5,532, or 2.2%, while gold rose ₹444, or 0.3%, over the past week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Precious metal prices are expected to witness further consolidation in the next week, with volatility likely to persist as investors track key US economic data, including inflation numbers, GDP readings and policy signals from Federal Reserve, analysts said.

Traders will also closely watch the US labour data, along with Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes and speeches from Fed officials, for cues on the timing and pace of potential rate cuts, they added.

Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG, Commodity & Currency Research, JM Financial Services Ltd, said gold and silver prices may continue to see more consolidative moves but volatility will prevail with focus on incoming US data on GDP and the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE)

India adds record power capacity

As of Jan 31, the country's total installed power generation capacity stands at 520,510.95 MW

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 15: A record 52,537 MW of electricity generation capacity has been added in the country up to January 31, during the current financial year, which represents an 11 per cent increase over the corresponding figure for 2024-25, according to an official statement issued Sunday.

Renewable energy accounts for as much as 39,657 MW of this total capacity, which includes 34,955 MW of solar power and 4,613 MW of wind power.

This marks the highest ever capacity addition in a single year, surpassing the previous record of 34,054 MW achieved during FY 2024-25.

As of January 31, 2026, India's total installed power generation capacity stands at 520,510.95 MW. This comprises 248,541.62 MW of fossil fuel-based capacity and 271,969.33 MW of non-fossil fuel capacity.

Renewable energy constitutes 263,189.33 MW while nuclear energy accounts for 8,780 MW of the non-fossil fuel capacity.

Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, recently reiterated India's commitment to achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel installed power capacity by 2030 and Net Zero emissions by 2070 at the 16th Assembly of the In-



ternational Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Abu Dhabi.

Highlighting a major milestone, Union Minister Joshi told that India has already achieved 50 per cent of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources in 2025, five years ahead of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) target under the Paris Agreement.

India's renewable energy capacity has crossed 266 GW, placing the country among global leaders in renewable energy deployment.

The Union Minister underlined that as one of the world's fastest-growing major energy markets, India is prioritising reliable and resilient power systems through accelerated deployment of energy storage solutions, grid modernisation, development of Green Energy Corridors and innovative bidding mechanisms such as hybrid and round-the-clock renewable energy projects.

He also highlighted India's efforts to strengthen clean energy supply chains and expand domestic manufacturing across solar, wind, batteries and electrolyser, contributing to both national self-reliance and diversified global supply chains.

US INFLATION DATA, FED CUES

Bullions brace for another jittery week



The yellow metal's safe haven appeal remains intact on account of geopolitical tensions, and strong buying ahead of the Lunar New Year. It's a tug of war between bears and bulls this week, and the volatility will continue in the week ahead

PRATHAMESH MALLYA | DVP - RESEARCH, NON-AGRI COMMODITIES AND CURRENCIES, ANGEL ONE

inflation numbers and Federal Reserve official's commentary.

On the domestic front, silver futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) declined ₹5,532, or 2.2 per cent, while gold rose ₹444, or 0.3 per cent, over the past week.

"Gold prices have fallen in February 2026, with prices correcting from highs of ₹1,80,000 per 10 grams to around ₹1,53,800 per 10 grams as on February 13," Prathamesh Mallya, DVP - Research, Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies, Angel One, said.

He said stronger-than-expected US employment data have lowered expectations of near-term rate cuts, weighing on gold prices in the past week.

"However, the yellow metal's safe haven appeal remains intact on account of geopolitical

tensions, and strong buying ahead of the Lunar New Year. It's a tug of war between bears and bulls this week, and the volatility will continue in the week ahead," Mallya added.

In the international market, Comex gold futures gained \$84, or 1.7 per cent, while silver edged up marginally to close at \$77.27 per ounce.

"Gold prices see-sawed between gains and losses for most part of the trading session, but managed to close the week in positive and above \$5,000 per ounce in the overseas market. The bullions are passing through a phase of consolidation amid lack of clarity among traders as they remain divided over the price direction and look for fresh fundamental triggers," Pranav Mer said.

Analysts said central bank buying, safe-haven flows amid the sharp sell-off in tech & AI stocks across global markets, and a softer dollar index lent support to bullion prices.

However, mixed physical demand from India and China profit-bookings among ETF investors, and strong US macro data capped the upside.

Pranav Mer noted that silver prices also saw bouts of volatility throughout the week, marked by two-way price movements and periodic profit-taking at higher levels.

"The white metal was weighed by corrections in industrial metals and profit-booking after failing to breach key technical resistance. It also faced pressure from the tech-led global equity sell-off, which reduced risk appetite across asset classes," he added.

OpenAI retires GPT-4o: Users mourn loss of ‘romantic’ companion

In August 2025, OpenAI first tried to retire GPT-4o, the specific model that helps many users believe is “more affectionate and understanding than its successors”

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 15: Sam Altman-run OpenAI has removed access to GPT-4o AI model in its ChatGPT app — a move which has left several users worldwide, especially in

China, mourning the loss, as they treat their chatbot as an “emotional or romantic companion”, according to a report in Wired.

In August 2025, OpenAI first tried to retire GPT-4o, the specific model that helps many users believe is “more affectionate and understanding than its successors”.

The decision to pull the plug was met with immediate backlash.

OpenAI then reinstated 4o in the app for paid users but the reprieve has turned out to be short-lived.

On February 13, OpenAI “sunsetting GPT-4o for app users, and it will cut off access



to developers using its API on the coming Monday,” the report said.

Huizian Lai, a researcher at Syracuse University, analysed nearly 1,500 X posts in the week

the AI model went offline in August.

She found that over 33 per cent of the posts said the chatbot was more than a tool, and 22 per cent talked about it as a

companion.

Lai also collected “a larger pool of over 40,000 English-language posts on X under the hashtag #keep4o from August to October”.

A petition on Change.org, asking OpenAI to keep the version available in the app, has gathered over 20,000 signatures, said the report.

In China, a group of dedicated GPT-4o users have been organising and grieving in a similar way.

While ChatGPT is blocked in China, fans use VPN software to access the service.

“Some of them are threatening to cancel their ChatGPT subscriptions, publicly call-

ing out Sam Altman for his inaction, and writing emails to OpenAI investors like Microsoft and SoftBank,” the report mentioned.

According to OpenAI, developers will remain able to access the base multimodal model of GPT-4o through API calls.

However, fans think it pales in comparison to GPT-4o-latest, the text-only version that's more communicative.

“Many Chinese fans of GPT-4o have grown increasingly frustrated with OpenAI and Altman, who they feel minimize and rarely acknowledge the #keep4o community,” said the report.

Keeping it simple: Kishan

Men in Blue enter Super 8 in style as Kishan, Bumrah-led bowlers give India record 61-run win

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Colombo, Feb 15: India wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan said being simple in his batting approach and focusing on opening up his off-side game helped him smash a match-winning 77 in the side's 61-run win over Pakistan in a Group A clash at the R Premadasa Stadium Sunday.

Amidst the rain threat looming on the big clash, Kishan struck a blistering 77 off 40 balls laced with ten fours and three sixes on a slow, spin-friendly pitch as India posted 175/7 before bowling Pakistan out for 114 to secure a 61-run victory and qualify for the Super Eights.

"I think the wicket was not that easy in the beginning, but sometimes you just have to believe what you want to play, what shots are on, and you have to just focus on your strength.

"So I was just keeping it simple and watching the ball and

TODAY'S CLASHES

**Afghanistan vs UAE**
Time- 11:00 am

**England vs Italy**
Time- 3:00 pm

**Sri Lanka vs Australia**
Time- 7:00 pm



playing with the field, maybe trying to make them run as much as they can, but yeah, I think it worked pretty well on my side," Kishan said in the post-match presentation ceremony.

Kishan, who was named Player of the Match, highlighted the work he had put into his offside game and the importance of rotating strike on

India now lead 8-1 in all T20 World Cup encounters

play good shots on offside.

"So I was just trying to hit the gaps because it's a big boundary and when it's a big ground you get a bigger gap. So I was just trying to keep it simple, like I said, trying to hit the gaps, trying to at least take two runs because the wicket was not easy. I had that in mind that we need to put a total like 160-170 runs and it will be a very good total for us," he added.

Kishan further said the win carried added significance given the hype and rivalry around

T20 WORLD CUP

the India-Pakistan clashes. "100 percent. India v Pakistan is always a special game not only for us but for our country as well. So we had to win this one because it was a very important game and they had pretty good spinners in their side.

"We were just supposed to play the good shots and winning this against Pakistan team... it will give us a lot of confidence going ahead in the tournament and we'll try to just keep the momentum going."

Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha said the spinners' performance was not up to the mark.

"Our spinners had an off day. Execution was missing in some parts. We believe in our spinners, they've done well in last six months. We lost too many wickets in the power-play with the bat. In the first innings it was tacky, the ball was gripping as well. The execution was missing with the

BRIEF SCORES

India 175/7 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 77; Saim Ayub 3/25) beat **Pakistan** all out 114 in 18 overs (Usman Khan 44; Jasprit Bumrah 2/17, Axar Patel 2/19, Varun Chakaravorthy 2/17) by 61 runs

a large ground. "I think I did work a lot on my offside game and it will give me the balls where I want them to bowl if I

West Indies qualify for Super 8s

Mumbai: West Indies rode on captain Shai Hope's unbeaten half-century to beat Nepal by nine wickets and qualify for the Super 8s of the T20 World Cup here Sunday.

Hope struck 61 not out from 44 balls with the help of five fours and three sixes while Shimron Hetmyer chipped in with 46 not out to help their team chase down a modest target of 134 with 28 balls remaining. With three wins from as many matches, West Indies are at the top of the Group C and made it to the Super 8s. Earlier, Dipendra Singh Airee struck a fine half-century but Nepal could only score a modest 133 for 8. Airee made 58 off 47 balls, and Sompal Kami remained not out on 26 while the remaining Nepal batters got out cheaply after they were asked to bat first.

Veteran pacer Jason Holder (4/27) led a fine bowling show for West Indies while four others took a wicket apiece.



USA beat Namibia by 31 runs

Chennai: USA registered their second successive win, defeating Namibia by 31 runs, as skipper Monank Patel shrugged off a string of modest scores to produce a fluent half-century in their T20 World Cup group clash here Sunday. Riding on Patel's 30-ball 52 and Sanjay Krishnamurthi's unbeaten 68 off just 33 deliveries, the United States piled up an imposing 199 for 4. In reply, Namibia made a spirited start, with opener Louren Steenkamp striking an impressive 58 off 39 balls and adding 54 runs for the first wicket with Jan Frylinck (19). However, once Steenkamp was dismissed to leave Namibia at 112 for 3, the chase lost momentum, and they eventually finished well short at 168 for 6. South African-born USA pacer Shadley van Schalkwyk was the pick of the bowlers, returning impressive figures of 2 for 30.



ball. Pitch played better in the second innings than it did in the first," said Agha. Pakistan now

find themselves in a must-win situation against Namibia to make the Super 8s.

SHORT TAKES

Indian Football League postponed to Feb 27

New Delhi: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) Sunday announced that the Indian Football League 2025-26 season will kick off February 27, releasing the full fixture schedule ahead of the start of the campaign. The season, originally scheduled to begin February 21, has been postponed by six days, with two matches now slated for the revised opening day February 27. Namdhari FC will take on Aizawl FC, while Chanmari FC will face Gokulam Kerala FC on the first day of action. As per the proposal by the clubs, the IFL 2025-26 season will feature a two-stage format. Stage 1 will see the 10 participating clubs compete in a single-leg home-and-away round-robin format. In stage 2, the teams get divided into two groups. Those that finished in the top half in stage 1 will advance to a home-and-away championship round, while the bottom half will compete in a centralised relegation round. All points from the initial stage will carry forward to preserve the competitive context of the league.

Fritz, Shelton set for Dallas Open final

Frisco (USA): Top-seeded Taylor Fritz beat Marin Cilic in straight sets and No 2 Ben Shelton rallied past defending champion Denis Shapovalov, setting up a Dallas Open final between the world's highest-ranked Americans. Fritz had 22 aces in his 7-6(5), 7-6(3) victory Saturday night, while Shelton sparked his game with a scintillating crosscourt forehand winner while facing three break points early in the second set and going on to a 4-6, 6-4, 7-6(4) win. The 28-year-old Fritz is ranked seventh in the world, two spots ahead of Shelton, who is coming off an Australian Open quarterfinal appearance that ended with a loss to Jannik Sinner in straight sets. Fritz, a 10-time ATP Tour champion, and Shelton split their first two meetings. Shelton has three tour titles heading into Sunday's final.

WORLD OF FOOTBALL

Bundesliga: Kane hits 500 career goals as Bayern lead

Berlin: Five hundred goals. England star Harry Kane scored twice for Bayern Munich Saturday including his 100th successful penalty to take his career tally to 500 for club and country, according to stats provider Opta. Kane's brace helped Bayern maintain its six-point Bundesliga lead with a 3-0 win at relegation-threatened Werder Bremen.

Kane said he was only told of his achievement after the match. "It was nice. Obviously a proud achievement to reach 500 goals. It's a lot of hard work, a lot sacrifice, so nice to reach it. But as always, it's about the next one," Kane told broadcaster Dazn. "So the most important thing today is the win, the clean sheet." Kane's first goal was as a 17-year-old player for Leyton Orient against Sheffield Wednesday in England's third tier in January 2011. He scored Saturday's goals in the first half. The penalty came in the 22nd minute after Lennart Karl was brought down. The second came four minutes later with a crisp shot in off the post from outside the penalty area for his 26th league goal of the season. Kane needed 743 games to reach 500 goals, according to Transfermarkt.de.



La Liga: Vinicius Jr's brace takes Real Madrid to top

Madrid: Vinicius Junior scored two penalties and a Real Madrid team without superstar Kylian Mbappe moved top of La Liga with a 4-1 win over Real Sociedad. Mbappe watched from the substitutes' bench on Saturday after missing some team training sessions during the week with discomfort in his left knee. Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa said Friday he was able to play, but evidently he did not want to rush his star goal-getter. Nor did he need to. Mbappe and Jude Bellingham, out with a hamstring injury, watched as Madrid produced an assured team performance to end the visitors' 10-game unbeaten run across all competitions and move two points clear of Barcelona before the defending champion visits Girona Monday. Perhaps Tuesday's team-dinner at a fancy restaurant paid for by Mbappe and Vinicius helped focus the players before facing Benfica in the Champions League playoffs next week.



FA Cup shocker: Third-tier Mansfield stun PL team Burnley

Manchester: Third-tier Mansfield pulled off the latest upset in this year's FA Cup by knocking out Premier League side Burnley.

Louis Reed struck with a stunning long-range free kick in the 80th minute at Turf Moor to complete a comeback 2-1 win in the fourth round tie Saturday. As giant-killings go, it might not be as spectacular as non-league Macclesfield's victory against titleholder Crystal Palace last month - but it is another shock result in soccer's oldest knockout competition. There was no fairytale for fourth-tier Salford at Manchester City, however, even if it did keep the score down to 2-0 at the Etihad Stadium. Newcastle came back from a goal down to beat 10-man Aston Villa 3-1 and Burton Albion gave West Ham a scare before losing 1-0 in extra time. Liverpool cruised past Brighton 3-0. Mansfield is in dreamland. Burnley's season just gets worse. Fighting against relegation, Scott Parker's team suffered the humiliation of being dumped out of the cup by an opponent from two divisions lower.



INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Jamshedpur FC beat Mohammedan SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jamshedpur, Feb 15: Jamshedpur FC marked the return of Indian Super League football to the city with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Mohammedan SC at the JRD Tata Sports Complex here Sunday.

In front of a roaring home crowd, Madih Talal's first-half strike proved decisive as the Men of Steel began their campaign with three valuable points.

The atmosphere was electric at kick off, and Jamshedpur wasted no time asserting themselves. Talal looked lively from the outset, orchestrating play in midfield, constructing passes and constantly looking to unlock the opposition defence with his creativity.

An early warning came in the third minute when Talal nicked possession and quickly fed Messi Bouli, who attempted to get a touch for a deflection, but the effort sailed just over. Moments later, Messi tried his luck from a wide angle, only to see his shot fly above the bar.

The breakthrough arrived in the eighth minute. Receiving the ball from midfield, Talal drove forward with confidence and calmly slotted his finish in to the corner of the net, sending the Furnace into raptures and giving Jamshedpur FC a deserved 1-0 lead.

Jamshedpur thought they



had doubled their advantage in the 32nd minute when Messi powered home a header from a pinpoint Sanan Mohammed cross. But the referee ruled the goal out for offside. The disallowed strike proved to be a turning point in the half, with the tempo slowing down thereafter as both sides became more cautious in possession.

After the break, Jamshedpur continued to control proceedings but found clear-cut chances harder to come by. Owen Coyle introduced Nikola Stojanovic in the 65th minute in place of Rei Tachikawa to inject fresh energy into midfield.

The Men of Steel showed greater attacking intent as the second half progressed, moving

the ball quickly and pushing for a second goal. Despite sustained pressure and probing runs into the final third, the finishing touch eluded them.

Defensively, Jamshedpur remained compact and disciplined, ensuring Mohammedan SC were limited to few meaningful opportunities.

And at the final whistle, it was Talal's early strike that separated the two sides, securing a clean sheet and a winning start to the ISL campaign for Jamshedpur FC.

With eight home matches ahead and momentum on their side, the Men of Steel will look to build on this performance and continue turning the Furnace into a fortress once again.

FIH Men's Pro League: India winless at home

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rourkela, Feb 15: India endured a 2-4 defeat against Argentina in the last match of Rourkela leg of the FIH Men's Pro League 2025-26 Sunday at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium. Tadeo Marcucci (28', 49') led the Argentinian attack with a brace, while Tomas Domene (18') and Lucio Mendez (43') made vital contributions as well. For India, Aditya Lalage (50') and Sanjay (59') were the goal scorers in a hard-fought encounter.

The South Americans registered their first attempt as early as the third minute when Lucas Martinez struck on the turn from inside the circle, beating Indian goalkeeper Suraj Karkera, only to be denied by the post.

India conceded early in the second quarter, and it was a penalty corner that hurt the hosts. In the 18th minute, Domene made the most of the set-piece to slot it past the



Goalkeeper and give his side the lead.

Argentina doubled their advantage by Tadeo Marcucci soon after with India struggling to hold and win possession in the midfield.

The visitors soon extended their lead. Lucio Mendez made no mistake and landed a clinical finish to put Argentina 3-0 ahead.

Argentina made it 4-0 on their ninth penalty corner of the night. Marcucci found the ball after a scramble and finished it from close range.

It was Hardik Singh who set up the first goal for India, using a 50th minute free hit to expertly position himself and thread it goalwards. Lalage pounced on the opportunity to etch his name on the scoresheet with a swift deflection. Minutes before the final hooter, India were awarded a penalty stroke, and Sanjay stepped up to finish with composure, narrowing the margin to 4-2.

Skier gets Olympic finals spot, fiance

REUTERS

Livigno, Italy, Feb 15: Ukrainian freestyle skier Kateryna Kotsar had a hunch something good was going to happen at the Winter Olympics Saturday. She did not know it would be two things.

The first thing to celebrate was her performance in the qualifying round of the big air competition. Kotsar landed two solid jumps to make it through to the medal contest Monday.

Just after she finished her final run came a surprise. Kotsar's boyfriend got down on one knee on the side of the Alpine slope and asked her to



marry him. She said yes.

"I think he was nervous," the 25-year-old Kotsar said. "It was so cute to be honest."

Kotsar said she had forgotten that Saturday was Valentine's Day and did not suspect her boyfriend, Bohdan Fasht-ryha, was going to propose.

She said she had an instinct earlier in the day that something positive was coming her way, but she thought that feeling was related to the Olympic competition.

Minutes before the proposal, Kotsar had a hard crash at the end of her third run. Both skis and her goggles flew off.

Kotsar said she was unharmed and the crash did not

matter in the contest because she had scored enough on her first two jumps to rank 11th, just above the cutoff of 12 skiers who advanced to the final.

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Talking to reporters afterwards, Kotsar took off her ski glove to show off her engagement ring. She said she was still processing everything that happened.

"I still am excited and can't understand what happened tonight because it's two really huge things for me," she said.