



Confederation of Indian Industry

Launch of CII Initiatives at Sambalpur

By

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

Hon'ble Minister of Education
Government of India

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 Bhushan 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



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,

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 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

GLIMPSES OF LAUNCH



leisure

**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

MENDES, 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

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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 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 was 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.



Malavika claps back at trolls

Hyderabad: After a photo went viral online, sparking trolls to question her credibility, Malavika Mohanan 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* along side Karthi, continuing to prove her dedication, resilience and professionalism in the industry.

AGENCIES

Model and actress Priya Bakhshi, 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.

Priya's disturbing experience

AGENCIES



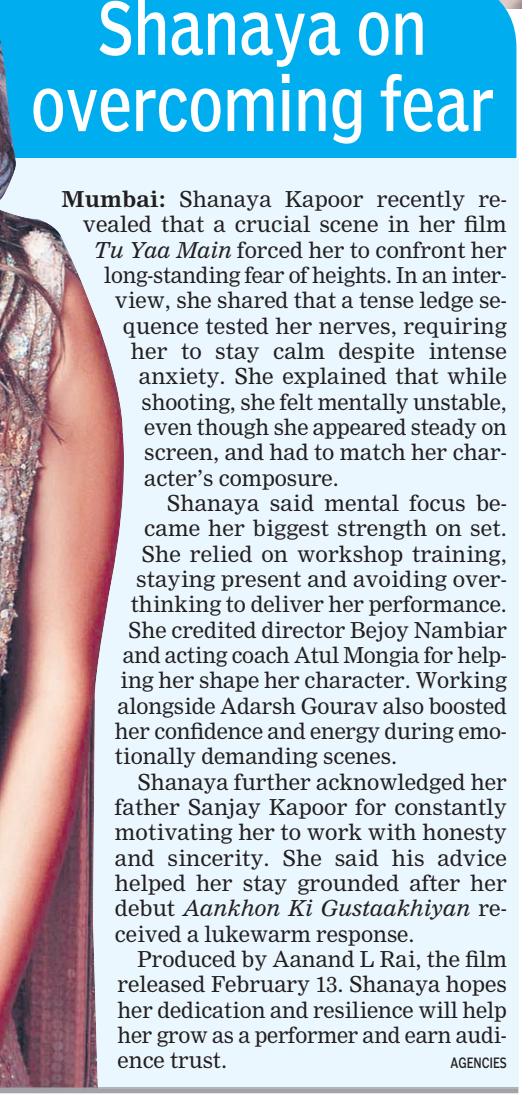
Mrunal thanks fake buzz for publicity

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 Yaad 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 over-thinking 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 Gustakhiyan* received a lukewarm response.

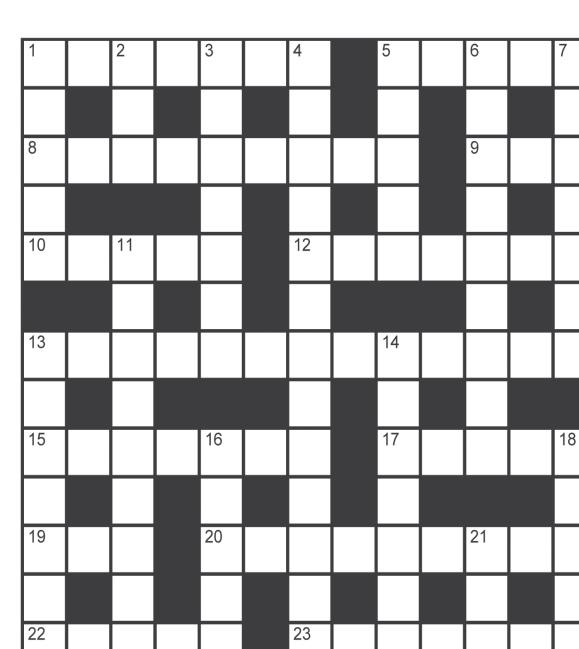
Produced by Anand L Rai, the film released February 13. Shanaya hopes her dedication and resilience will help her grow as a performer and earn audience trust.

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						
6			2					
3	2	7						

FUN POST**CROSSWORD**

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Across

- 1 Honorable
- 2 An expensive vessel
- 3 Blarney (5-4)
- 4 Geological time
- 5 Military dictatorship in northern Africa
- 6 Depressing
- 7 Injuries
- 8 Beau
- 9 Focused
- 10 Early evening meal (4,3)
- 11 Artist's need
- 12 Gardening tool
- 13 Cry expressing disapproval
- 14 Toxic condition (4,9)
- 15 Dizziness
- 16 Connote
- 17 Plant fibre used for making rope
- 18 Altdorf is its capital

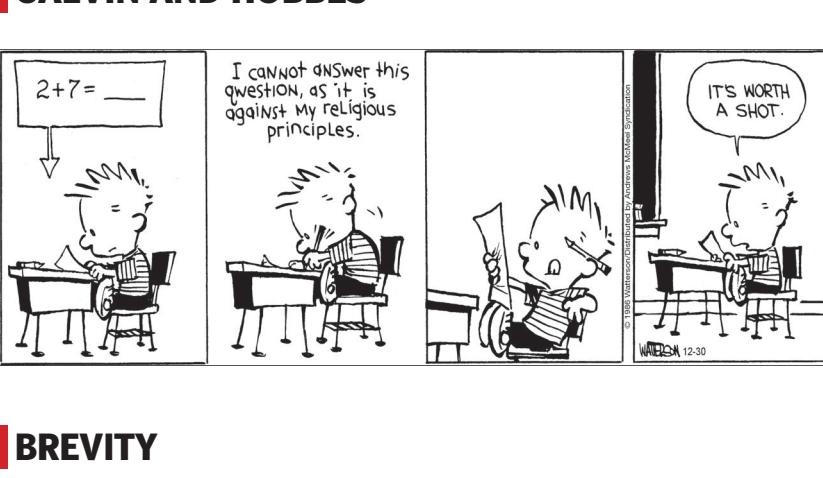
Down

- 1 Some memos
- 2 Papa
- 3 Arctic
- 4 Military dictatorship in northern Africa
- 5 Bumpkin
- 6 Depressing
- 7 Injuries
- 8 Beau
- 9 Focused
- 10 Early evening meal (4,3)
- 11 Artist's need
- 12 Gardening tool
- 13 Cry expressing disapproval
- 14 Toxic condition (4,9)
- 15 Dizziness
- 16 Connote
- 17 Plant fibre used for making rope
- 18 Altdorf is its capital

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU**PEANUTS****CALVIN AND HOBBES****BREVITY**



Malavika's stance

After a viral photo invites trolling, actor Malavika Mohanan claps back at critics questioning her credibility

LEISURE



6K killed in Darfur

Over 6,000 people were killed in three days when a Sudanese group unleashed a wave of violence in Darfur region

INTERNATIONAL | P8



FPIs return

Foreign Portfolio Investors stage a sharp turnaround in early February, pumping ₹19,675 crore into Indian equities

BUSINESS | P9



Indian Super League

Jamshedpur FC mark the return of ISL to the city with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Mohammedan SC

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY | FEBRUARY 16, 2026

P1

Missing student from Karnataka found dead in US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

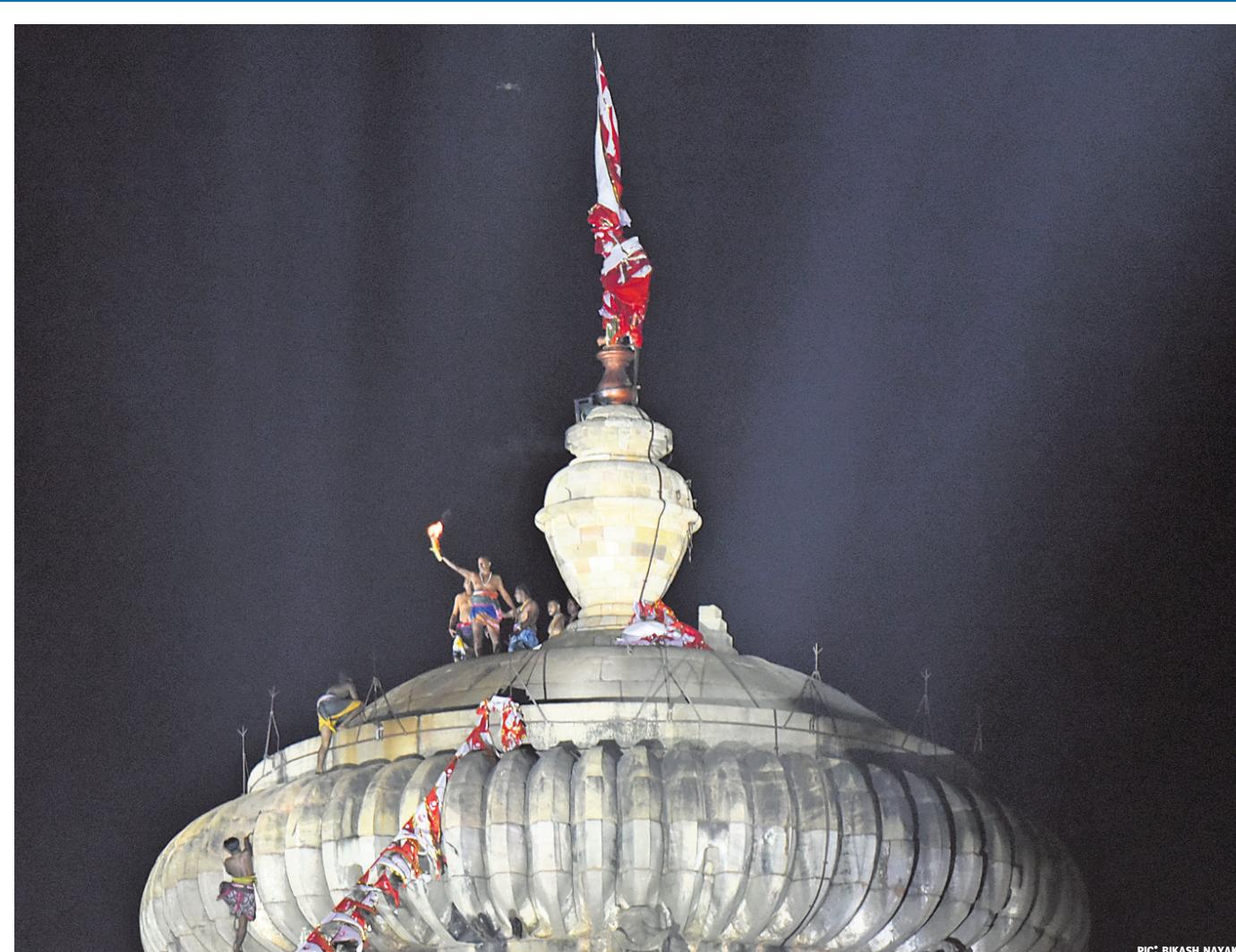
New York, Feb 15: A 22-year-old Indian postgraduate student, who went missing in the US less than a week ago, has been found dead, the Indian mission here has said.

Saketh Sreenivasaiah, a student at the University of California, Berkeley, hailing from Karnataka, had been missing since Monday.

In an X post Saturday (local time), the Indian Consulate in San Francisco confirmed the recovery of his body.

"The Consulate deeply regrets to inform that local police have confirmed the recovery of the body of the missing Indian student, Saketh Sreenivasaiah," it said.

Extending condolences to his loved ones, the Consulate said it "stands ready to provide all necessary assistance to the family, including coordination with local authorities and arrangements for the repatriation of mortal remains to India at the earliest."



OF FAITH: Thousands of devotees witnessed the lifting of 'Mahadeepa' atop Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, Sunday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

₹330 crore for Ekamra Kshetra development

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: On the auspicious occasion of 'Maha Shivratri', Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday announced a ₹330 crore comprehensive development plan for Ekamra Kshetra, marking a major push to strengthen the spiritual and heritage landscape of the Temple City.



After offering prayers at the historic Lingaraj Temple here, the Chief Minister said the state government is committed to the holistic development and beautification of Ekamra Kshetra, one of Odisha's most revered spiritual centres.

Addressing devotees and dignitaries at a cultural programme organised on the temple premises, Majhi described 'Maha Shivratri' as a symbol of the victory of light over darkness and urged people to seek the blessings of Lord Shiva for peace and prosperity.

Detailing the development roadmap, the Chief Minister said works worth ₹180 crore will be taken up in the first phase for infrastructure upgradation and beautification of

Ekamra Kshetra. In the second phase, ₹150 crore will be invested for the development of the surroundings of Bindusagar Tank, including the establishment of an interpretation centre to promote heritage awareness. Altogether, ₹330 crore will be invested in the project.

He further stated that the government has prioritised the development of major spiritual tourism hubs across the state, including Jagannath Temple in Puri and the Konark Sun Temple, alongside Ekamra Kshetra.

Majhi also thanked the temple servitors for ensuring the smooth conduct of all rituals on 'Maha Shivratri' and extended his greetings to devotees across the state, wishing them peace, prosperity and spiritual fulfilment.

Rijiju: Vote on motion to remove Birla March 9

All eyes are now on the second phase of the Budget Session, during which the Lok Sabha is scheduled to debate the no-confidence motion moved against Speaker Om Birla. Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju described the session — set to run from March 9 to April 2 — as "interesting," noting that several key pieces of legislation, including a critical Bill, are slated to be introduced in Parliament. He also pointed out that the session coincides with Assembly elections in four major states — West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, and Kerala — as well as in the UT of Puducherry, adding a significant political dimension to the proceedings. Rijiju further cautioned that continued disruptions and protests by the Opposition could ultimately prove counterproductive for them



will be taken up March 9, when the House reassembles after the recess, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said here Sunday.

Rijiju stated that the second part of the Budget Session, scheduled from March 9 to April 2, will be "interesting" as several "important" legislations and a "critical" bill will be presented in Parliament for debate and passage.

He warned that if Opposition parties continue their protests as they did during the first part of the session, it would ultimately be detrimental to them. "On March 9 in the Lok Sabha, we will have the debate

on the no-confidence motion moved against the Speaker. It is the rule to take it up on the first day. There will be a vote following the debate," he told PTI in an interview.

The Budget Session began with the President's address to the joint sitting of Parliament January 28 and went on recess February 12. The Union Budget for 2026 was presented February 1, and the session will resume March 9, concluding April 2.

Rijiju, who is on a visit to his Lok Sabha constituency, Arunachal West, mentioned that during the second part of the session, the government plans to identify specific ministries for discussions. "In Lok Sabha, we will discuss the demands for grants in five ministries and in Rajya Sabha, we will discuss the working of five other ministries. In Rajya Sabha, it will not be on demands for grants but discussions on the ministries," he said.

The minister further informed that the government will select five ministries for discussions in the Rajya Sabha and then five ministries for the Lok Sabha.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tawang, Feb 15: The debate and subsequent vote on the no-confidence motion moved by the Opposition against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla

Bodies go missing from graveyard

Bhadrak: Bodies of five villagers allegedly went missing from a graveyard in Bhadrak's Bhandaripokhari, prompting the authorities to order a detailed investigation. The bodies were found missing from Maninathpur cremation ground, police said. P5

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What better tribute than playing cricket with Pakistan?

Obama claims aliens are real



alien and unverified UFO sightings. However, the US government didn't officially acknowledge the base's existence until 2013. It's said to be a testing ground for advanced military aircraft, according to a report by 'NDTV'.

Some theories about the covert operations at the site claim it houses, studies and attempts to reverse-engineer crashed alien spacecraft, including debris allegedly recovered from Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. Obama's comments come amid growing interest in unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAPs), the government's term for UFOs.

In 2021, the Pentagon made public three unclassified Navy videos depicting unusual objects streaking across the sky as US personnel responded with astonishment. One of the UAPs appeared to rotate while flying against the wind. Notably, this was not the first occasion on which the former US President has spoken about aliens and UFOs.

"They're real, but I haven't seen them. They're not being kept in Area 51, there's no underground facility, unless there's this enormous conspiracy and they hid it from the president of the United States," said Obama.

Area 51 has long been associated with

Cold store blaze destroys properties worth ₹15cr

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuchinda, Feb 15: Properties, including agricultural produce, worth ₹15 crore was destroyed after a major fire broke out at a private cold storage at Nuniamunda near Bamra in Sambalpur district Sunday morning, officials said.

Authorities suspect a short circuit may have triggered the fire.

Firefighters from various fire sta-



tions, assisted by a robotic firefighting unit from Jharsuguda, battled the blaze for more than 10 hours.

According to officials, the 500-tonne-capacity facility on Bamra-Gadposh road, owned by Anubhav Lath, is the largest cold store in Kuchinda sub-division.

Large quantities of produce belonging to farmers from Kuchinda sub-division including dry red chilies, mango kernel, mahua flowers and vegetables were reduced to ashes. Lath estimated the loss to be over ₹15 crore.



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16th February 2026

Foundation Day Lecture By:



Mr. John Falk Oppenheimer
Founder & Chairman, Columbia Hospitality
United States



Most Revered Dr. Kirinde Assaji Nayaka Thero
Chief Incumbent, Gangaramaya Temple, and Chief Monk, Western Province, Siam Chapter; Chancellor, Sri Jinarathana Bhikkhu Education Council, Sri Lanka; Founder, Haritha Media Network, Sri Lanka



Most Revered Gyetrel Jigme Rinpoche
Master of Tibetan Buddhism and Spiritual Director of the Ripa International Center Switzerland



Ms. Deanna Watson Oppenheimer
Global Business Leader & Founder, CameoWorks LLC
United States



Mr. K. N. Shanth Kumar
Director, The Printers (Mysore) Pvt. Ltd.; Former Chairman of the Press Trust of India (PTI)

• 40 intellectuals from Bhutan will also be present

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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



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.

The child, identified as Dillip Shabar, was reported missing

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

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

In total, Odisha Police veri-

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.

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-

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 Ch-

aran 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, and

Dhabaleswar 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 Saheedh 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.

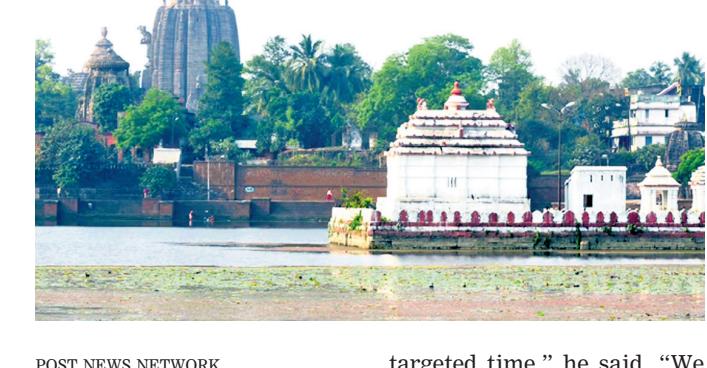
But this time, despite searching everywhere, we could not locate him, which prompted us to file a missing complaint."

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 Saheedh Nagar Police Station regarding the incident at the time of reporting.

Heritage makeover for Bindusagar: Min



POST NEWS NETWORK

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" 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.

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.

Nalco inks pact with NLCIL for energy collaboration



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: National Aluminium Company Limited (Nalco), a Navratna CPSL under the Ministry of Mines, Government of India, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with NLC India Limited (NLCIL) to deepen collaboration on a proposed

1,080 MW thermal captive power project and joint renewable energy initiatives.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Jagdish Arora, Director (Projects & Technical) of National Aluminium Company Limited (Nalco), and Prasanna Kumar Motupalli, CMD of NLC India Limited (NLCIL), along with

other directors of NLCIL at Mahabaliupuram, Tamil Nadu. The agreement is aimed at leveraging technical expertise and operational synergies to support long-term energy security, efficiency, and sustainable growth.

The partnership is intended

to support the captive and long-term power requirements of National Aluminium Company Limited with a clear focus on sustainable energy solutions.

It establishes a structured framework to explore long-term power tie-ups and coal supply arrangements, while paving the way for future joint project development between the two companies.

CUO Koraput hosts nat'l meet on tribal literature

Bhubaneswar: The Department of English Language and Literature at Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput organised a two-day national conference, "Voices from the Hills: Tribal Literature, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), and Cultural Memory - A Multidisciplinary Perspective," February 13-14. The event brought together scholars, writers, translators, and researchers from across the country to discuss the richness of tribal heritage and the importance of preserving indigenous cultural memory in a rapidly changing world. The inaugural session was attended by eminent anthropologist and former Vice-Chancellor of Maharaja Siriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, Kishore Kumar Basa.

The partnership is intended to support the captive and long-term power requirements of National Aluminium Company Limited with a clear focus on sustainable energy solutions.

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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 Purunakata and Charichhak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The East Coast Railway (ECR) 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 Purunakata 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

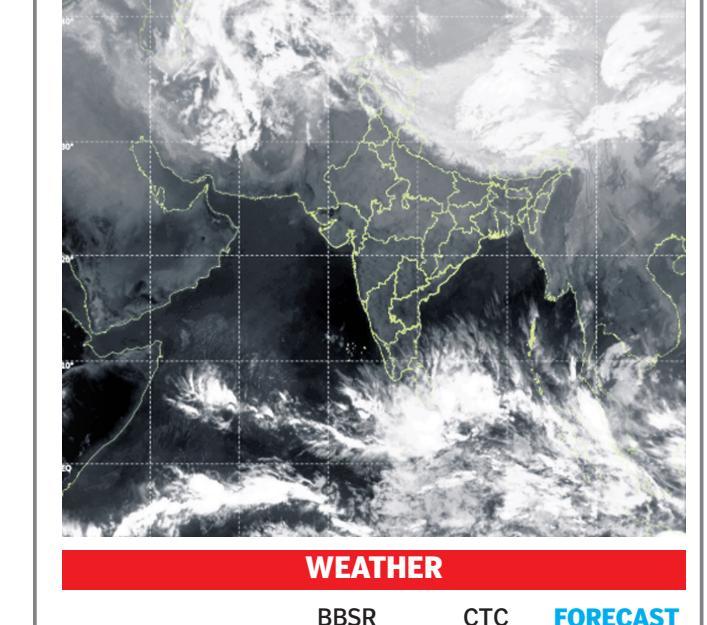
safety infrastructure, ensuring full compliance with prescribed railway standards and operational safety norms.

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.



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	



US, IRAN TO HOLD N-TALKS THIS WEEK

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva, Feb 15: Iran and United States will hold a second round of talks over Tehran's nuclear programme next week, the Swiss Foreign Ministry has said.

Oman, which welcomed the first round of indirect talks February 6, will host the talks in Geneva, the Swiss ministry said Saturday, without specifying which days.

After the first discussions, US President Donald Trump warned Tehran that failure to reach an agreement with his administration would be "very traumatic".

Similar talks last year broke down in June as Israel launched what became a 12-day war on Iran that included the US bombing Iranian nuclear sites.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to use force to compel Iran to agree to constrain its nuclear programme. Iran has said it would respond with an attack of its own. Trump also has threatened Iran over its deadly crackdown on recent nationwide protests there.

Gulf Arab nations have warned any attack could spiral into another regional conflict.

Trump said Friday the USS Gerald R Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, was being sent from the Caribbean to the Mideast to join other

Energy, mining & aircraft deals on table: Tehran



Iran is pursuing a nuclear agreement with US that delivers economic benefits for both sides, an Iranian diplomat was reported as saying Sunday, days before a second round of talks between Tehran and Washington. "For the sake of an agreement's durability, it is essential that the US also benefits in areas with high and quick economic returns," Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Hamid Ghanbari said, according to the semi-official Fars news agency. Iran has threatened retaliation against any US attack but the official struck a conciliatory note Sunday. "Common interests in the oil and gas fields, joint fields, mining investments, and even aircraft purchases are included in the negotiations," Ghanbari said, arguing that the 2015 nuclear pact with world powers had not secured US economic interests. **REUTERS**

er military assets the US has built up in the region. He also said a change in power in Iran "would be the best thing that could happen".

The indirect talks February 6 were between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff. The top military commander in the Middle East was also present for the first time.

The Trump administration has maintained that Iran can have no uranium enrichment under any deal. Tehran says it won't agree to that.

Iran has insisted its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. However, its officials increasingly threaten to pursue a nuclear weapon. Before the June war, Iran had been enriching uranium up to 60 per cent purity, a short, technical step away from

weapons-grade levels.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has said his nation is "ready for any kind of verification". However, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, has been unable for months to inspect and verify Iran's nuclear stockpile.

Trump has suggested in recent weeks that his top priority is for Iran to scale back its nuclear programme. Iran has said it wants talks to focus solely on the nuclear programme.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who met Trump in Washington this week, has pressed for any deal to include steps to neutralise Iran's ballistic missile programme and end its funding for proxy groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

Boy collapses during morning walk, succumbs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaliikote, Feb 15: A Class 10 student of Sri Aurobindo Puranika Siksha Kendra died after reportedly collapsing during a morning walk Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Mihir Pradhan, a hostel inmate of the school who was scheduled to appear for his HSC examinations in the coming days.

According to sources, students staying in the hostel routinely go for morning walks on holidays. As Sunday was a hol-

iday, 84 students had gone for the walk. While returning, Mihir suddenly collapsed. A teacher accompanying the group tried to resuscitate him, but he did not respond.

He was immediately rushed in an auto-rickshaw to the Khaliikote Community Health Center, where doctors pronounced him dead.

On being informed, Khalikote IIC Ramesh Kumar Pradhan, Bhejiput police outpost officer-in-charge (OIC) Debabish Mishra, local MLA Purna Chandra Sethi and tehsildar D Maleswar Patra reached the hospital and pacified the aggrieved family members.



India thump Pak, sail into Super Eight



India's players celebrate after winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 cricket match between India and Pakistan at R Premadasa Stadium in Sri Lanka's Colombo, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

REUTERS

Colombo, Feb 15: Defending champions India thumped Pakistan by 61 runs in Group A match of the Twenty20 World Cup to secure their place in the Super Eight stage of the tournament Sunday.

Ishan Kishan's breakneck 77 powered India to 175-7 at the R Premadasa Stadium where Pakistan's spin-heavy attack managed to apply the brakes to an extent after the opener's exit.

The tournament co-hosts returned to bundle out Pakistan for 114 in 18 overs to register their third win in a row.

The match went ahead after Pakistan earlier reversed their decision to boycott the game in solidarity with Bangladesh,

who refused to tour India over safety concerns and were replaced by Scotland.

Salman and his India counterpart Suryakumar Yadav did not shake hands at the toss, though.

India were reinforced by the return of Abhishek Sharma, who missed the first two matches with a stomach infection, but the opener could not make it count.

Pakistan captain Salman sprang a surprise by opening the attack himself and the move paid off as the spinner trapped Abhishek lbw to remove the reigning number one batter in T20 Internationals.

Pakistan used three spinners in the powerplay to try and stem boundary flow and

India's score of 52-1 after six overs suggested the ploy worked to an extent.

Kishan could not be contained though and the diminutive southpaw tore into the Pakistan attack with his take-no-prisoners batting.

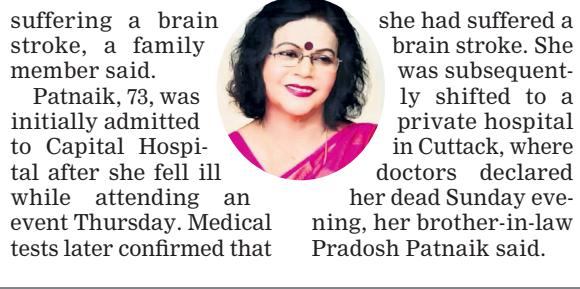
The opener took only 27 balls to race to his second successive fifty of the tournament.

Saim Ayub ended Kishan's 40-ball blitz but India were 92-2 at the halfway stage of their chase.

MORE: BACK PAGE

Veteran Odia singer Geeta Patnaik dies at 73

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



suffering a brain stroke, a family member said.

Patnaik, 73, was initially admitted to Capital Hospital after she fell ill while attending an event Thursday. Medical tests later confirmed that

Geeta had a career spanning several decades and was known for her collaborations with legendary Odia singer Akshaya Mohanty. She lent her voice to numerous popular Odia songs, including 'Phur Kina Udigala Bani' from the film 'Jajabar'.

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Let us keep flaming in our heart the fire of progress.

THE MOTHER

Tarique the Easterner

The people of Bangladesh have spoken decisively that they still believe in democracy and would not be swayed by polarisation politics or chaotic movements for supposedly righting wrongs by an earlier regime. Nearly 60 per cent of the country's population took part in the election. The sole blemish in this democratic process was the denial of electoral participation to the Awami League that had ruled the country for 15 years at a stretch. For this, of course, the party itself and its leadership may have to blame for allegedly trying to be autocratic and indulging in unbridled corruption. This seems to have infuriated the people to such an extent that they forced then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee the country with what came to be known as the 'Monsoon Revolution' of 2024.

The people's mandate is clear with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and allies bagging 212 seats against the tally of 77 seats secured by the rival 11-party alliance, led by the Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami. The National Citizen Party (NCP), led by youth activists instrumental in toppling Hasina and part of a Jamaat-led alliance, came a distant third winning merely six seats of the 30 seats that it contested. Shortly before the overthrow of Hasina, the fundamentalist forces with the help of the youth groups protesting against Hasina's government ruled the roost. Those protests pushed the country to chaos and mindless violence on the minority population. At one stage during the interregnum under a caretaker government it was feared whether the country would be controlled by pro-Pakistani fundamentalist forces. Such a prospect appeared to be likely as the Jamaat-e-Islami closed ranks with the BNP in the regime change.

Significantly, a referendum on constitutional reforms was also held along with the election and the election commission said about 48 million voters chose "Yes," while about 23 million said "No." The changes include two-term limits for prime ministers and stronger judicial independence and women's representation, while providing for neutral interim governments during election periods and setting up a second house of the 300-seat parliament. These are changes that even a country like India should ponder on introducing in its Parliamentary process.

A difficult task lies ahead for the new BNP government, which has promised a new era of democracy and zero tolerance towards corruption. It has to rebuild institutions, create opportunities for young people and keep constantly proving that this government is accountable to its citizens.

Despite the BNP securing a two-thirds majority the resurgence of the Jamaat-e-Islami and its Islamist alliance – parties that were banned under Hasina – could present major challenges for the BNP and Bangladesh's secularism in the future. The Jamaat and its allies that follow even more hardline Islamist politics believe in the introduction of Sharia law. The number of seats that the alliance has won is the highest in its history and it forms a formidable opposition. The Jamaat's leadership is already accused of regressive policies and controversial views on women's rights in the home and at workplace. Human rights groups have also raised an alarm over a recent surge in moral policing of women, with incidents such as girls being prevented from playing football and enforcement of modest dress and headscarves. The alliance hoped to get more seats and be in the driver's seat for running the government. That calculation has gone awry and the leadership is unable to conceal its frustration.

It has pointed out that though the election was fair and peaceful, there were manipulations during the counting of votes in many seats. It has announced to play a constructive role as an Opposition, but warned that it would not accept quietly if the people's aspirations are not fulfilled by the new government. This is a veiled threat to the BNP which has made it clear that it will not kowtow before Pakistan, China or India and will let the nation's interests influence its foreign policy.

This could be music to India's ears as the forces that had toppled Hasina launched a tirade against India accusing it of interfering with Bangladesh's internal politics and economy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not waste time in congratulating the BNP chief Tarique Rahman asserting that India will continue to stand in support of a democratic, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh.

One of the biggest geopolitical challenges facing the new government of Bangladesh will be rebuilding relations with India. Under Hasina, India was Bangladesh's closest ally but ties severely frayed after her government fell and have become outwardly hostile in recent months.

This was considered a major failure of India's intelligence fraternity that could not guide the government on how to set right the faux pas committed by the foreign policy makers in Delhi. Rahman, on the other hand, has made the right noises about certain "issues" with India and said he would only want "a relationship of mutual respect, mutual understanding."

Rahman is burdened with the task of building bridges with India and at the same time he insists that India should not allow Hasina to use it as a safe haven along with hundreds of her party members many of whom are wanted by the law. He has made a smart move by telling the media that the successful resolution of the matter depends on mostly India.

India too needs to wake up, refashion its geopolitical strategy and use the new opportunity to win back the confidence of the people of Bangladesh so that Pakistan and China cannot get the upper hand. It must never be individuals or specific political parties of any 'near abroad' countries that should solely control India's foreign policies. Indian foreign policy must be robust, transparent and trust worthy enough with neighboring countries. Bangladesh must occupy a special place in Indian policy.

In spite of rising Islamist thoughts, Bangladeshis have kept the Mullahs at bay. India must recognize this characteristic of the Eastern Bengali Moslem, seize the opportunity and reach out to the common people of Bangladesh at very many levels if it desires a safe border in the North East.

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.

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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

HERE NOW
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Disruptive opportunity

Sir, The launch of Cloud CoWork by Anthropic signals more than the arrival of another digital tool, it marks a structural shift in how work itself is organised. By weaving AI directly into collaboration, it challenges the outsourcing framework that underpinned India's emergence as a global IT powerhouse. Tasks once sustained by large teams like documentation, workflow coordination, coding support are increasingly being automated. For mid-sized IT firms in particular, this is less a technological upgrade and more a moment of strategic anxiety. The traditional narrative of scale-driven, human-intensive efficiency is now being tested at its foundations. Yet retreat is not an option. Industry institutions such as NASSCOM must help secure India's relevance within this evolving AI-led ecosystem. Public policy has an equally critical role: accelerating large-scale reskilling in AI governance, ethics, and human-machine collaboration to ensure Indian professionals remain central to global tech value chains. If approached with foresight, this disruption could become a turning point. India has repeatedly adapted to technological inflection points, transforming challenges into competitive advantages. The current stress test presents a similar opportunity to move beyond routine outsourcing towards high-value, AI-enabled strategic consulting.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Message of oneness

Sir, The declaration of the community caste free by a gram panchayat in Saundala village in Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra has come as a breath of fresh air in a caste-ridden society. As per the resolution passed no one in the gram panchayat will follow any caste or indulge in any form of caste practices in future. By declaring the village caste free, it has written a new chapter in history. This move aims to eliminate caste based discrimination and promote socio-cultural equality. The most note worthy aspect of the initiative is the replacement of "caste" with "human" in all documents. The village community's courageous action lays bare the meaninglessness and hollowness of caste system. In addition, it sends the message of universal brotherhood. Other communities must take cue from the people of Saundala and spread the message of human virtues.

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

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

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.

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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 Mauritian 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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SPECTRUM TAXATION

Record returns, shrinking revenue



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

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VOLTAIRE

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 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 Aatmanirbharata and massive job creation."

Modi said the next leap toward Viksit Bharat by 2047 will

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.

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."

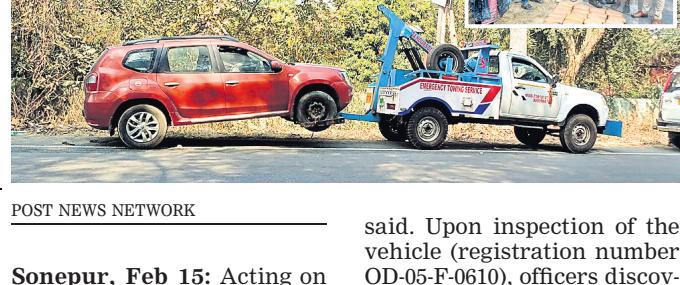
On the hike in defence Budget and military modernisation, Modi said the benefits of a decade of defence reforms were evident during 'Operation Sindo', and asserted that India has to be prepared at all times to deal with security challenges.

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 Kattamal 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 Nayak.

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

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.

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

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.

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 Kadosha 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.

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national

of the day **QUOTE**

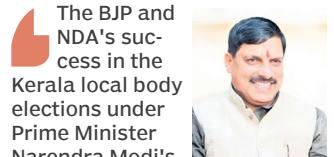
There have been movements for the introduction of the Roman script for the Kokborok language. Those who are spreading the movement must try to develop an indigenous script for their mother tongue. If they fail, we will form a committee for the selection of a suitable script

MANIK SAHA | CHIEF MINISTER, TRIPURA



The Centre had assured infrastructure projects worth Rs 80,000 crore during the second Advantage 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 success in the Kerala local body elections under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership is a strong testament 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 Saptashakti 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 starting 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 Sindo.

In an interaction with a small group of journalists, Paparo flagged serious concerns over the Indo-Pacific region witnessing 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 interests 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 demonstrates 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 increasingly contested international commons, he said both India and the US are committed to work towards peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Indo-Pacific region is home to 60 per cent of the world's population, it comprises 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 concerns, but we deal with those concerns with the growing partnerships that come to the prism of this mutually respective, respectful, sovereign relationship between the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy," he said.

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

Paparo said both the US and India are committed to the principles of sovereignty, freedom

of navigation and freedom of seas. "We applaud India as a great net contributor to security 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 undersea domain awareness.

The senior American commander lauded the Indian military when asked to comment on Operation Sindo.

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

To a question on Pakistan's use of Chinese military hardware including missiles, Paparo 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.

Former min Siddiqui, over 15,000 join SP ahead of 2027 UP polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 15: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday said the relationship between the "Bahujan Samaj" and his organisation was growing stronger, as over 15,000 people from different parties, including former minister Naseemuddin Siddiqui, joined the political outfit at a function here.

Addressing what he described as a "PDA" (Prem Prasar Samaroh) -- referring also to his party's plank of Pichda, Dalit, and Alpsankhyak or PDA -- Yadav said the programme ahead of Holi would strengthen brotherhood and cooperation among people.

"Peace and progress rest on the foundation of PDA. Social unity is the biggest achievement of positive and progressive politics, and that is why we have named it PDA," he said, adding that this year a 'PDA Holi Milan' was being organised before the traditional Holi gatherings.

Among those who joined the Samajwadi party (SP) were former ministers Naseemuddin Siddiqui and Anees Ahmad Khan alias Phool Babu, and former MLA Rajkumar Pal of Apna Dal (Soneylal).

Siddiqui, once considered a senior Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader and a close aide of Mayawati, had served four terms as a minister in her government before being expelled from the BSP in 2017 for allegge anti-party activities.

In 2018, Siddiqui had joined the Congress and merged his fledgling Rashtriya Bahujan Morcha with the party. However, he quit the Congress in January 2026.

Until his expulsion in May 2017 from the BSP, Siddiqui, along with his son Afzal, was widely regarded as the party's prominent Muslim face.

India, France to hold key dialogue to boost defence cooperation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

on expanding industrial collaboration, officials said.

An announcement is also expected with respect to reciprocal 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 reflected in 2024-2025 through a series of high-profile exchanges, 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 significant step in deepening collective engagement with European nations," the ministry said.

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 Bengaluru February 17, the ministry said.

The meeting will review the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation, with a focus

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 Misri 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 Narendra 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 government of Bangladesh led by Tarique Rahman, the ministry said. Rahman led the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to a spectacular victory in Bangladesh's parliamentary polls.

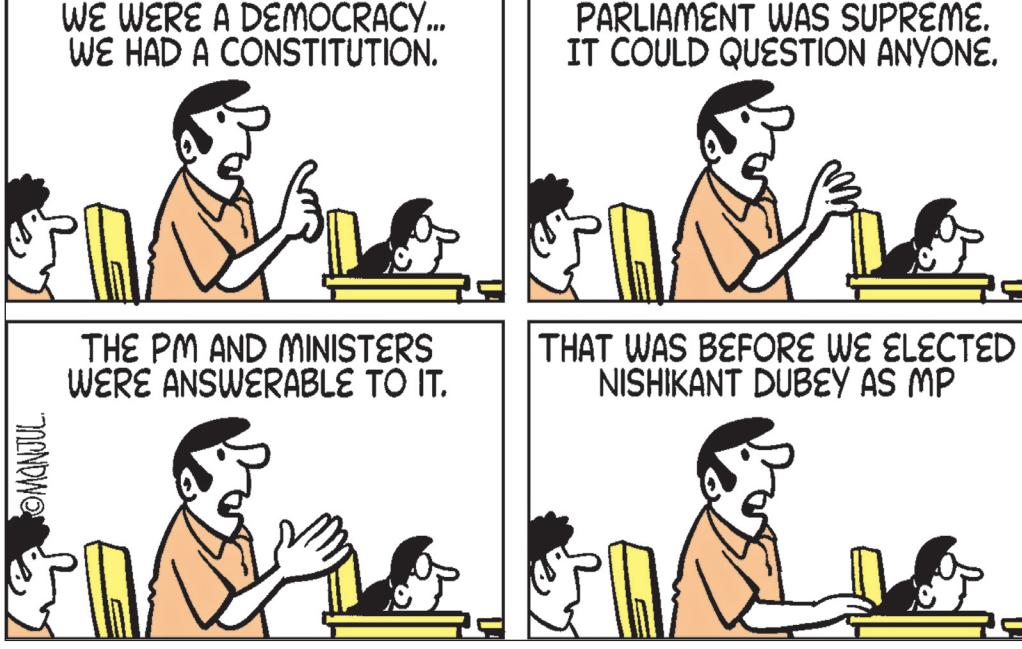
"The speaker's participation at this important event underscores the deep and enduring friendship between the peoples of India and Bangladesh, reaffirming India's steadfast commitment to the democratic values that bind our two nations," the ministry said in a statement. "As neighbours united by a shared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

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POLITICKLE by MANJUL



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 Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on expanding cooperation in health and artificial intelligence initiatives, 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 cooperation in health and artificial intelligence initiatives," said Narayana, the state Municipal minister.

The Gates Foundation has been working in Kuppam in Chittoor district on health-related 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 proceed to Real Time Governance system (RTGS) to observe the utilisation of technology in governance, followed by Naidu showcasing the system's procedures and results, a government source had earlier said.

Naidu will give a presentation on "Swarna Andhra 2047" (golden Andhra) vision and the reforms ushered in various sectors, including med-tech, diagnostic services and Sanjeevani, a health record digitisation programme, said the source.

Following these engagements at the secretariat, Gates and team will proceed to an agricultural centre in Undavalli 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 extended by the chief minister to further deepen collaboration with the state government, the minister added.

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



into a stream, represents a fundamental shift in the conflict.

Insurgents rarely end through gun battles alone. They collapse when the ideology 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 organisation told a different story.

Senior leaders often op-

erated from relative safety, while young tribal recruits were pushed to the frontlines. Villages paid the price as violence escalated, yet the movement failed to deliver any meaningful political outcome 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 indicators of this shift came January 29, 2025, when Kalmu Mangdu, Deputy Commander of Section 1 Company of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), surrendered in Sukma along with team commander Sameer alias Sukka and cadre Madavi Budhri. They were not peripheral recruits but active fighters. Their decision 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 surrenders across Bastar, Sukma, Gadchiroli and parts of

Jharkhand is not incidental. It reflects the systematic weakening of the CPI (Maoist) 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 inevitable. 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-potent revolutionary myth.

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.

national

of the day quote



I appeal to the people to ensure that when the SIR is conducted, all genuine names are included. The BJP wants to snatch citizenship through the SIR. It is attempting to do so by conducting the revision through the Election Commission of India (ECI)

ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM PRESIDENT

Today, both hosts and guests require proper venues that do not inconvenience anyone. Not everyone can afford expensive hotels or marriage halls. Kalyan Mandapams provide facilities similar to hotels at minimal user charges

YOGI ADITYANATH | CM, UTTAR PRADESH

The AIADMK-led alliance (NDA) has scattered into various parties and is now in a state where they are struggling to come together. It has not yet even taken shape as a formal alliance

THOL THIRUMavalavan | VCK LEADER

X POST OF THE DAY

Corruption can never be completely eliminated from India. For me, what matters is the

SCALE of corruption. Earlier, it used to be around 10-20%, and the rest of the taxpayer's money was used properly to build quality infrastructure that would last for decades.

The scale of corruption under the BJP is insane. Either they don't do any work, or they try to complete projects with just 20-30% of the allocated funds, and the rest of the money goes into their pockets and PR.

They don't build roads inside cities. They only build roads where they can impose toll taxes and even those are of the worst quality with massive corruption. They dig up streets, build them, then come back after a few months, dig them up again, rebuild them, and repeat the same process three or four times. In the end, they leave the streets damaged.

India has never been this corrupt.

@mohitlaws

SHORT TAKES

Avalanche hits J&K's Doda

Bhaderwah/Jammu: An avalanche blocked the Bhaderwah-Patankot interstate road in Doda district of the Union Territory Sunday, leaving dozens of vehicles stranded, a police officer said. Bhaderwah Superintendent of Police Bhaderwah Vinod Sharma said the avalanche struck between Thanthara and Gulanda, around 18 kms from Bhaderwah town, around 5 pm. No casualties were reported. Gulanda is a famous winter destination in the Jammu region, and over 250 vehicles carrying tourists had crossed the area when the avalanche occurred, he said.

ATS conducts raids over terror activities

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has launched a massive search operation at multiple locations in Yavatmal and Ahilyanagar districts, and detained several suspects for inquiry following a tip-off about terror-linked activities, officials said Sunday. The ATS combed more than 20 locations in the two districts in the raids launched around midnight and has rounded up over a dozen suspects, they said.



The results of the municipal polls are an acid test for my administration. I am working hard, and I had earlier said that the people would certainly give us 80 per cent of the seats

A REVANTH REDDY | CM, TELANGANA

PM TO VISIT AJMER FEB 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Ajmer February 28 to inaugurate and lay foundation stones for development projects worth ₹23,500 crore in Rajasthan, an official statement said Sunday. During the programme, appointment letters will also be distributed to 21,000 youths under a state-level employment drive, it said



Witnessing betrayal of farmers: Rahul

The Lop accused the government of cheating cotton farmers and textile exporters in the country over the India-US interim trade deal Saturday, noting that the agreement could cause significant harm to both sectors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Upping the ante against the government over the India-US interim trade deal, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday posed a string of questions to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and alleged that "we are witnessing a betrayal" of Indian farmers.

Gandhi, who has been attacking the government and accusing it of a sell-out through the deal, said this issue concerns the future and asked whether India is allowing another country to gain a long-term hold over India's agriculture industry.

"In the name of a US trade deal, we are witnessing a betrayal of Indian farmers," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said in his post in Hindi on X.

Posing questions to the prime minister, Gandhi asked what it means to import Dried Distillers' Grains (DDG). "Does it mean that Indian cattle will be fed distillers' grains made from GM American corn? Won't this effectively make our milk products dependent on the US agricultural industry?" he questioned.

Gandhi further inquired that if India allows the import of GM soy oil, what would its implications be on soy farmers in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and across the country? "How will they withstand



When you say 'additional products', what does that include? Does this indicate pressure to open pulses and other crops to US imports over time?

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

another price shock?" he asked.

"When you say 'additional products', what does that include? Does this indicate pressure to open pulses and other crops to US imports over time?" he questioned.

He also asked, "What does it mean to remove 'non-trade barriers'? Will India be pressured in the future to loosen its stance on GM crops, weaken procurement, or reduce MSPs and bonuses?"

Gandhi expressed concern that once the door is opened, it may be difficult to keep it from opening wider each year. "Will it be prevented, or will more

crops gradually be put on the table each time?" Gandhi said, adding that farmers must receive this clarity.

"This isn't just about today. It's about the future too -- are we allowing another country to gain a long-term hold on India's agriculture industry?" he stressed.

Gandhi accused the government of cheating cotton farmers and textile exporters in the country over the India-US interim trade deal Saturday, noting that the agreement could cause significant harm to both sectors.

He had also claimed that the trade deal, which now favours Bangladesh through zero per cent tariffs, will either finish the textile sector, the cotton farming or both, adding that the nation is aware of this.

In a post on X, Gandhi criticised the government for failing to protect the interests of cotton farmers and textile exporters. He argued that a visionary government would have negotiated a deal that safeguarded both sectors and ensured their prosperity.

"18 per cent Tariff vs 0 per cent - Let me explain how the prime minister and his cabinet are spreading confusion on this issue. And how they are cheating India's cotton farmers and textile exporters through the India-US trade deal," he had said in his post.

PTI PHOTO

SHIVAJI-TIPU REMARKS

BJP, Cong workers pelt stones; 9 hurt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Pune, Feb 15: BJP workers confronted Congress activists in Pune while protesting against Congress leader Harshwardhan Sapkal's remarks 'equating' Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with Tipu Sultan, with the Opposition party alleging stone pelting during the agitation Sunday.

Joint Commissioner of Police Ranjan Kumar Sharma told reporters that three Congress workers, two BJP workers, two police personnel, and two journalists sustained minor injuries in the melee, adding that the process of registering cases against both sides was underway.

"A protest was held near the Congress Bhavan, which saw sloganising from workers of BJP and Congress. Workers of both parties climbed onto walls and there was stone pelting from both sides. Cases are being registered against workers of both sides," Sharma informed.

Pune city Congress chief

Arvind Shinde said the party has submitted a written complaint to the police against BJP functionaries. A case should be registered against Mayor Manjusha Nagpure, BJP City president Dheeraj Ghate, Dushyant Mohol and other workers, Shinde added.

There was a heavy police deployment in the area as BJP workers protested outside the Congress Bhavan, condemning Sapkal's comments that have triggered a row in the state.

A controversy erupted Saturday over a portrait of Tipu Sultan in the office of Malegaon Municipal Corporation deputy mayor Shan-e-Hind Nihal Ahmed, which was opposed by Shiv Sena corporators and Hindu outfits.

While pointing to the valour of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the way he presented the idea of 'Swarajya', Sapkal gave the example of Tipu Sultan's call for battle against the British and claimed this was an ideal articulated on the same lines.

DELHI BUSINESSMAN MURDER

5 held, robbery angle emerges; Bishnoi gang claim under probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Five men have been arrested for the murder of a 35-year-old businessman in Outer North Delhi, with police saying the killing stemmed from a robbery conspiracy, even as a social media post claiming responsibility in the name of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi's gang remains under investigation.

Vaibhav Gandhi, a plastic granules manufacturer, was shot dead February 9 outside his factory in Sector 4 of the DSIIDC Industrial Area in Bawana. Police said the assailants approached his car, fired at him and fled with bags containing his laptop, phone and documents.

Gandhi was taken to Maharishi Valmiki Hospital, where he was declared dead. Around ₹1 crore in cash was later found inside his vehicle. According to police, the accused had conspired to rob Gandhi after one



of them, who earlier visited his office for financial dealings, tipped off the gang about the availability of cash.

The conspirators conducted reconnaissance of the area multiple times before executing the attack, officers said.

The alleged mastermind, Sanjay alias Tau (54), along with the informer Ravinder alias Ravi (42), was arrested from Sultanpur during the probe. Two other accused, Sandeep alias Pujari (28) and Harish Kumar alias Sonu (45), were arrested later.

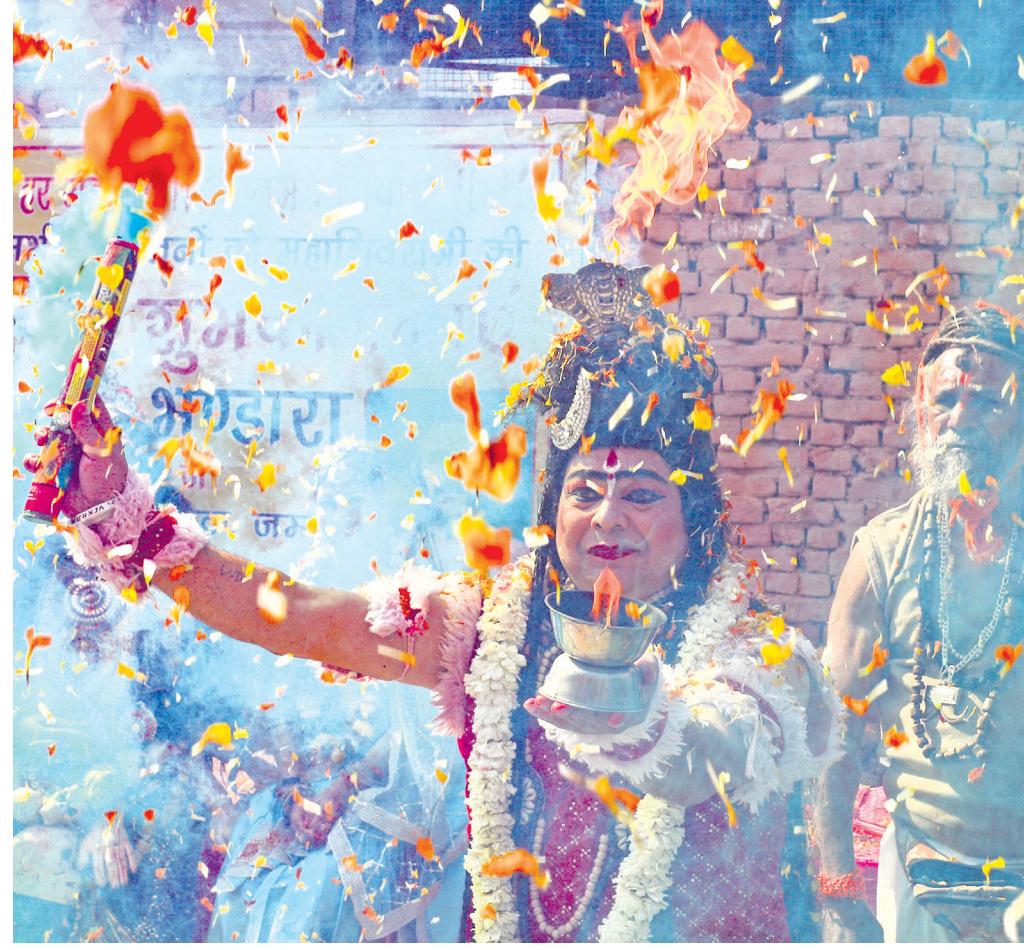
Police said the fifth accused, Arun alias Pagal (37), a bus

conductor, was arrested on Friday around 11.30 pm after he allegedly fired at a police team while attempting to flee on a stolen motorcycle without a number plate.

He sustained a bullet injury to his leg during the exchange of fire and was overpowered. A .32 bore pistol and cartridges were recovered from him, they added.

Investigators said the attack was initially planned as a robbery, as the victim was shot at close range during the assault. CCTV footage, technical surveillance and local intelligence helped identify and track down the suspects, police said.

A day after the murder, a social media post surfaced from an account named 'Randeep Malik Anil Pandit', claiming the killing was carried out on behalf of multiple gangs, including Bishnoi, Jitender Gogi and Kala Rana, and alleging that Gandhi had been interfering in their operations.



A man dressed as Lord Shiva performs during Maha Shivratri celebrations, holding a ceremonial lamp as flower petals are showered amid smoke and flames, in Jammu, Sunday

1954 LS SPEAKER REMOVAL DEBATE

Not bound by whip: Nehru's message to Cong MPs

It was a fiery debate during which the Opposition, though weak in numbers, tore into Nehru and accused the Speaker of being partisan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's message to Congress MPs during the debate in 1954 on the Opposition's resolution to remove then Speaker GV Mavalankar was that they are not bound by any whip or direction, as he urged all legislators to consider the matter "regardless of party affiliations".

He had urged Lok Sabha MPs to look at the issue not through the lens of the party but as a matter concerning the dignity of the House.

With the spotlight on the Opposition's notice to move a resolution for the removal of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, the three occasions when such situations had arisen in the

past are also in focus.

The first such situation surfaced December 18, 1954, when the Opposition moved a resolution for the removal of then Speaker Mavalankar. It was admitted after over 50 members stood up in support, and a debate took place over it.

Nehru had also urged the chair to give more time to the Opposition in the debate.

It was a fiery debate during which the Opposition, though weak in numbers, tore into Nehru and accused the speaker of being partisan.

Intervening in the debate, Nehru said, "I would like to address the House, if I may, in my capacity and the high privilege of being the Leader of this House and not as a leader of the majority party. So far as this

majority party is concerned, I would like to tell them that not one of them is bound by any whip or any direction: let them vote as they like. It is not a party matter. It is a matter for

because this matter affects the hon. speaker, of course, but it affects the high dignity of this House as Parliament, it affects the first citizen of this country, that is, the speaker of this House," he said.

It is a serious matter when the honour of Parliament is concerned, Nehru said.

Nehru then went on to strongly defend the speaker and hit out at the Opposition for questioning his bona fides.

The Congress had a brute majority with over 360 members, and the resolution was negated by a voice vote. In 1966, a resolution against Speaker Sardar Hukam Singh failed to move forward after it could not secure the mandatory support of 50 members required for initiation.

The Opposition moved a res-



this House, for each individual, to consider, regardless of party affiliations."

"Therefore, let us try to think of it not as a party issue but as members of this House,

olution for the removal of then Speaker Balram Jakhar April 15, 1987. Intervening in the debate, Rajiv Gandhi quoted Nehru's remarks twice from the 1954 resolution debate and slammed the Opposition for questioning the bona fides of the speaker. The resolution was defeated by a voice vote.

In December 2024, the Opposition submitted a notice in the Rajya Sabha seeking the removal of then Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar as chairman of the upper house, alleging partisan conduct.

However, it was rejected at the preliminary stage on procedural grounds.

A notice to bring the resolution for the removal of Birla was submitted by Opposition members last Tuesday.

international



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. Air-strikes 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.

The UN Human Rights Office also said it documented 10 detention facilities used by the paramilitaries in el-Fasher, including the Children's Hospital which was turned into a detention center.

The report, however, warned that the actual scale of the death toll of the week-long offensive in el-Fasher was "undoubtedly significantly higher."

The toll does not include at least 460 people who were killed by the RSF October 28 when they stormed the Saudi Maternity hospital, according to the World Health Organization.

The pattern of the RSF offensive on el-Fasher was a mirror of other attacks by the paramilitaries and their allies on the Zamzam camp for displaced people, 15 kilometres south of the city, and on West Darfur's city of Geneina and the nearby town of Ardamata in 2023, the UN Human Rights Office said.

Turk, who visited Sudan last month, said survivors of sexual violence recounted testimonies that showed how the practice "was systematically used as a weapon of war."

The paramilitaries also abducted many people while attempting to flee the city, before releasing them after paying ransom. Thousands have been held in at least 10 detention centers - including the city's Children Hospital which was turned into a detention facility - run by the RSF in el-Fasher, the report said.

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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.

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.

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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.

In one case, RSF fighters opened fire from heavy weapons on a crowd of 1,000 people sheltering in the Rashid dormitory in el-Fasher university October 26, killing around 500 people, the report said. One witness was quoted as saying that he saw bodies thrown into the air, "like a scene out of a horror movie," according to the report.

In another case, around 600

The UN Human Rights Office said it documented the killing of at least 4,400 people inside el-Fasher between October 25 and October 27, while more than 1,600 others were killed as they were trying to flee the RSF rampage. The report said it drew its toll from interviews with 140 victims and witnesses which were "are consistent with independent analysis of contemporaneous satellite imagery and video footage."

Sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, was apparently widespread during el-Fasher offensive, with RSF fighters and their allied militias targeting women and girls from the African Zaghawa non-Arab tribes over allegations of having links or supporting the military, the report said.

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people, including 50 children, were executed October 26 while taking shelter in the university facilities, the report said.

The report, however, warned that the actual scale of the death toll of the week-long offensive in el-Fasher was "undoubtedly significantly higher."

The toll does not include at least 460 people who were killed by the RSF October 28 when they stormed the Saudi Maternity hospital, according to the World Health Organization.

Woman, girls sexually assaulted

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Woman, girls sexually assaulted

Turk said there were "reasonable grounds" that RSF and their allied Arab militias committed war crimes, and that their acts also amount to crimes against humanity.

He called for holding those responsible - including commanders - accountable, warning that "persistent impunity fuels continued cycles of violence."

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, Konkosu, 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.

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.

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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

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Mcap of 6 of top-10 valued firms erodes by ₹3 lakh crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: The combined market valuation of six of the top 10 valued firms eroded by more than ₹3 lakh crore last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest laggards amid a bearish trend in equities.

The BSE benchmark declined by 953.64 points, or 1.14 per cent, over the past week.

TCS, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), and Bharti Airtel faced erosion from their valuation, while State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and ICICI Bank were the gainers.

The market valuation of TCS tumbled ₹90,198.92 crore to ₹9,74,043.43 crore, while Infosys' valuation eroded by ₹70,780.23 crore to ₹5,55,287.72 crore.

The market valuation of HDFC Bank declined by ₹54,627.71 crore to ₹13,93,621.92 crore, and that of Reliance Industries plunged by ₹41,883 crore to ₹19,21,475.79 crore.

Life Insurance Corporation of India's market capitalisation (mcap) dropped by ₹23,971.74 crore to ₹5,46,226.80 crore, and that of Bharti Airtel declined by ₹19,244.61 crore to ₹11,43,044.03 crore.

However, the valuation of State Bank of India (SBI) jumped ₹1,22,213.38 crore to ₹11,06,566.44 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, and Life Insurance Corporation of India.

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 Indian Parliament.

International 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 electrolyzers, contributing to both national self-reliance and diversified global supply chains.

US-India trade deal: FPI inflows rebound

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



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

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

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

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.

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-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 of fiscal 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

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

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"

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 "unsetted GPT-4o for app users, and it will cut off access

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

Huiqian 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 mini-

mise and rarely acknowledge the #keep4o community," said the report.

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

PRAHMESH 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%, while gold rose ₹444, or 0.3 per cent, over the past week.

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)

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.

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-booking 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-taking 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.

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



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

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 Chakaravarthy 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

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 powerplay with the bat. In the first innings it was tacky, the ball was gripping as well. The execution was missing with the

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 Chamari 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 state 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 playing 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 Transfertmarkt.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 Mohammedi 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 Mohammedi 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 into 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 Mohammedi 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 Birsia 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



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

VALENTINE'S DAY



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 Fashtryha, 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.