



PeeCee’s determination

Actor Priyanka Chopra admits leaving Hindi cinema for Hollywood was difficult, but determination and legacy-driven ambition kept her going

LEISURE | P2



Nuclear talks

Iran’s foreign minister meets with the UN nuclear watchdog chief Monday, ahead of talks between Washington and Tehran

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Trade deficit widens

India’s exports rise marginally by 0.61% to \$36.56 billion in January, while trade deficit widens to a three-month high of \$34.68 billion

BUSINESS | P11



Lanka in Super 8s

Sri Lanka beat Australia by 8 wickets to secure their place in the Super Eight

SPORTS | P12

SC warns against pre-marital intimacy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Supreme Court Monday said a boy and a girl before marriage are “total strangers” and they should be cautious while indulging in pre-marital physical relationships.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan, which was hearing the bail plea of a man accused of rape on a false promise of marriage, questioned the woman why she travelled all the way to Dubai where they indulged in physical relationship.

“It’s consensual. We may be old-fashioned but a boy and girl before marriage are total strangers. They should be circumspect in indulging in physical relationships before marriage,” the bench observed.

“Whatever may be the thick and thin of their relationship, we fail to understand how they can be

indulging in physical relationship before marriage. Maybe we are old-fashioned but you must be very careful, nobody should believe anybody before marriage,” Justice Nagarathna said.

Counsel for the woman said they met on a matrimonial website in 2022 and he allegedly established physical relations with her on a false promise of marriage on multiple occasions in Delhi and later in Dubai.

Justice Nagarathna questioned the woman about what was the need for her to travel to Dubai and observed that it appears to be a case of consensual relationship.

“She should not have gone before marriage if she was so strict about it. We will send them to mediation. These are not cases which are to be tried and convicted when there is consensual relationship,” she said.



PM inaugurates AI Impact Expo

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday inaugurated the India AI Impact Expo here featuring over 600 high-potential startups and 13 country pavilions showcasing international collaboration in the AI ecosystem. He al so interacted with startups participating in the expo. The prime minister visited various stalls and spoke with the companies participating in the expo. He was seen asking questions from company representatives to better understand what they are showcasing. The PM spent several minutes at various stalls while interacting with the representatives.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



After your release, come and join our party immediately. Cooling off period is only for writing books

Unemployment rate rises to 5%

Despite the government’s repeated claims of creating millions of new jobs, India’s jobless rate has fluctuated in recent years. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), an independent think tank that produces economic and business databases for decision making and research, unemployment remains a concern, particularly among urban youth and graduates. In fact, in January 2026, the national unemployment rate edged up to 5.0 % from 4.8 % in December 2025, driven by rising joblessness in both rural (4.2 % vs. 3.9 %) and urban areas (7.0 % vs. 6.7 %), according to National Statistics Office which confirm CMIE’s observations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The rate of unemployment in the country among persons aged 15 years and above rose to 5 per cent in January this year from 4.8 per cent in December 2025, according



AIRBORNE: Lucia Georgalli of New Zealand in action during Womens Snowboard Slopestyle Qualification at Winter Olympics 2026 in Italy

REUTERS

7 BURNT ALIVE IN CHEMICAL FACTORY FIRE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Feb 16: Seven people were burnt alive in an illegal firecracker-manufacturing factory in the Bhiwadi town of Rajasthan’s Khairthal-Tijara district Monday, officials said.

“Seven persons have died in the incident. It was a garment factory but firecrackers were being manufactured inside it illegally,” Sumitra Pareek, Additional District Magistrate, said. She said that two people were trapped in the factory.

The incident occurred in the Khushkhhera-Karoli industrial area in Bhiwadi. “The premises was leased out in the name of a garment factory but as per the preliminary report, firecrackers were being manufactured illegally,” she said.

She said that the police came to know about the incident during a routine patrol, following which a rescue operation was launched immediately.

Raseswari Panigrahi passes away at 79



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Former Odisha MLA and popular doctor Raseswari Panigrahi, 79, died Monday at her residence in Sambalpur district, her doctor said.

Panigrahi was undergoing treatment due to neurological complications. “As Panigrahi did not want to be hospitalised she was under treatment in her home,” the doctor said.

Panigrahi was elected to the state Assembly once from Sambalpur constituency in 2014 from BJD ticket. However, she resigned from the BJD in 2024 and decided to stay away from politics.

Panigrahi, a popular Gynaecologist of western Odisha, is known for her dedication and service to humanity. CM Mohan Charan Majhi, in an X post, said he was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Panigrahi while conveying condolences to the bereaved family.

Ratna Bhandar inventory to begin soon, says Majhi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The long-awaited inventory and valuation of gold ornaments and precious stones stored in the Ratna Bhandar of the Jagannath Temple will commence shortly, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced after chairing a high-level meeting at Lok Seva Bhawan Monday.

The CM held detailed discussions on the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to be adopted for the procedure.

Srimandir Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee made a detailed presen-

tation before the CM, informing that all preliminary procedures have been completed. Restoration and conservation work of both the inner and outer Ratna Bhandar chambers has already been concluded by the Archaeological Survey of India. The conservation work was completed over a span of 95 days, involving 333 hours of structural and preservation measures.

Notably, the last inventory of the Ratna Bhandar was carried out in 1978. During the upcoming exercise, the valuables will be cross-verified with the 1978 records and a final updated list will

be prepared. The entire process will also include detailed photography and the preparation of a comprehensive digital catalogue of ornaments and precious items.

The meeting also reviewed preparations for this year’s Rath Yatra. Considering the large requirement of phassi and sandalwood for the construction of the chariots, the CM directed officials to submit proposals for plantation of these species under forest development schemes. Senior ministers and top administrative officials were present at the meeting.

India among top six cropland emitters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: India is among six countries that together account for 61 per cent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions from croplands, a new study has estimated.

The study, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, breaks down agricultural emissions by crop and source, and creates the most precise map yet of hotspots, with pathways towards reducing hotspots, researchers said.

“This is an absolute global synthesis of all the information you need, by country, by production system, for calculating greenhouse gas emissions – it’s been a significant undertaking,”



senior author Mario Herrero, professor of global development at Cornell University’s college of agriculture and life sciences, said.

Regions producing a lot of food are often high emitters, with cultivation of rice alone contributing 43 per

cent of cropland emissions, the study found.

Four crops – rice, maize, oil palm and wheat – accounted for nearly three-quarters of cropland emissions, it said.

“It’s all about rice. That’s where the biggest sources

and the biggest opportunities are,” Herrero said.

“Some of the more nutritious foods, fruits and vegetables, have way lower footprints. I was surprised by the importance of peatland (vegetable matter) areas, too, which was much larger than expected,” the senior author said.

Source of the emissions was found to differ depending on the crop – drained peatlands for palm oil production (35 per cent), flooded rice paddies (35 per cent) and synthetic fertilisers used in high-production areas (23 per cent).

“The six highest-emitting countries, China, Indonesia, India, USA, Thailand and Brazil, collectively accounted for 61 per cent of global

cropland emissions,” the authors wrote.

“Countries with high crop production levels, such as China, India, USA and Brazil, also emitted substantial (greenhouse gases) from synthetic fertiliser use,” they said.

The team also estimated that croplands emitted the greenhouse gas equivalent of 2.5 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide in 2020, with East Asia and Pacific contributing about half of the total, followed by South Asia, Europe and Central Asia, which collectively contributed 30 per cent.

Emission mitigating strategies need to be tailored depending on the crop and emissions source, the researchers said.

Best of Luck

ALL CBSE Examinees

OrissaPOST

Illustration of various school subjects and science experiments.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You love meeting people, says Ganesha, and you are going to have a wonderful time interacting with the most brilliant people today. You remain a perfectionist as ever, and may spend a fortune to buy that 'perfect' gift to please your sweetheart!

TAURUS
Communication may be poignant with your loved ones today, says Ganesha. Your unpretentious character will seek to safeguard the feelings of others from being hurt. You will learn that total agreement is sometimes twice as seductive in love's intimacies, feels Ganesha.

GEMINI
You need to guard against hurting the sentiments of anyone today. You need to pay greater attention to the problems of your elders and solve their issues. Post noon you may find yourself busy in religious or intellectual pursuits, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Can too much of love be a bad thing? Well, you will find it today, warns Ganesha. Today you may find your relationship in throes of chaos. There may be an outburst of emotions by both of you. And, if you both share the same sun sign then the situation may get out of control due to such overflow of emotions.

LEO
You will not compromise with your principles today, and will feel satisfied with yourself as a result. However, do not lose your conciliatory approach. You need to be practical and businesslike about your professional affairs, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha says you will raise the bar today. You will set higher goals for yourself, and will want to crack the existing barriers. You will be deeply concerned in the afternoon about your finances. Petty matters will lower your spirits. However, Ganesha advises you to climb the next rung in the ladder by spending the evening in spiritual pursuits.

LIBRA
Ganesha foresees that today you will chart out your future course of action, so that any steps you take from thereon leads only to success. Sudden and unexpected profits are also on the cards as on the professional front, increased reputation and rewards knock on your door.

SCORPIO
The chemistry between you and your partner would be electrifying, Ganesha foresees a day full of romantic indulgences. Things at home front would be pretty relaxing. You are on a money saving mission today and your bargaining skills would definitely yield benefits.

SAGITTARIUS
The fountain of creativity will be gushing within you today. You may strive to take on new challenges later in the day. Workplace may offer economic gains later in the evening. But do not neglect your health, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
You know your cards well, now it all depends upon how you play them to your advantage and boost your business, feels Ganesha. You have an efficient team working for you, but you will need to examine their talents without any biases. If they perform well in absolute terms, you can expect the productivity you require from them, today.

AQUARIUS
If you are associated with law and legal matters, today is a favourable day for you. You will aim for the stars, because you know that even if you can't reach there, you will not end up being in the mud. Later on the day, you will receive some favourable news, feels Ganesha.

PISCES
You need to control the vortex of emotions swirling through you. Your savage mood swings could have a bearing on vital decisions you need to take today. You need to guard against being emotional, be more calculative in your dealings, and think lesser about chasing after money, says Ganesha.



RIHANNA SUFFERS WARDROBE MISHAP

Singer-songwriter Rihanna recently suffered a Wardrobe Malfunction while she was supporting her partner A\$AP Rocky's latest fashion endeavors. However, the singer didn't let a little wardrobe slip stop her from supporting, reports *People* magazine

MAYA HAWKE MARRIES CHRISTIAN LEE HUTSON

Hollywood actress Maya Hawke, who is known for *Stranger Things*, has tied the knot with Christian Lee Hutson. The actress, 27, and the singer, 35, got married in the presence of Maya's famous parents, dad, Ethan Hawke, and mom, Uma Thurman



Fatima's non-negotiables in relationships

Mumbai: Actor Fatima Sana Shaikh recently spoke about her non-negotiables in relationships, revealing that emotional honesty, constant communication and genuine involvement are central to her idea of love. She admitted that she feels deeply and expects her partner to share thoughts, emotions and experiences with complete transparency. For Fatima, meaningful connection is impossible without open dialogue and mutual emotional availability.

One of her strongest priorities is emotional presence. She believes that partners must be willing to engage sincerely, listen attentively, and participate in each other's inner worlds. At the same time, she has learned that intensity needs balance. While vulnerability matters to her, she now values patience and respects her partner's pace, making emotional space another essential element in her relationships.

Physical affection is al-

so a major non-negotiable. Fatima described herself as highly expressive through touch and closeness, saying that proximity helps her feel secure and reassured. Small gestures, shared spaces and everyday intimacy form the foundation of her emotional comfort.

On the professional front, she was last seen in *Gustaakh Ishq*, directed by Vibhu Puri, alongside Vijay Varma and Naseeruddin Shah, and produced by Manish Malhotra. She believes trust, consistency, and emotional safety ultimately define her long-term romantic commitments always.

AGENCIES



PeeCee eyes legacy

NEW DELHI: Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas says leaving Hindi cinema to make a career in Hollywood was not easy but she was determined to tough it out as she always wanted to have a legacy.

Recalling how she once waited for 15 hours for one shot only for that to be postponed in Hollywood, the actor said, it was something that she, as one of the top actors, did not experience in India.

"I was dealing with a lot when it comes to my work back in India, and I was trying to survive, and I think my goal was, I want to have a legacy. And that's the only way I could wake up every morning and go through the small role that I have to do, and a triple banger trailer, which is 3 actors in one trailer. And wait for like 15 hours and not be shot that day. Those are things I hadn't experienced in my career back home. And I was okay to do it every morning because I was like, 'I'm going for long term, I'm going for that legacy,'" she said during India Conference 2026 at Harvard University in the United States.

The actor, who headlines new Hollywood thriller *The Bluff*, said her work in India was turbulent when she came to Hollywood, but her goals were clear.

PTI

'Disrespect should always be called out'

Chennai: Reacting to a distasteful comment made about her by state Bharatiya Janata Party President Nainar Nagendran, actress Trisha Monday issued a communique through her lawyer to clarify her political stand, even as she said that "Disrespect should and always will be called out."

Trisha took to her Instagram page to post the communique issued by her lawyer on her behalf and wrote, "Disrespect should and always will be called out."

The lawyer Nithyaesh Natraj, in the communique, made it clear that Trisha "never expected that such distasteful and inappropriate remark would be made by a person holding a high stat-



ure in the State's political space." Trisha, he said, had made it clear that she was not affiliated to any political party nor did she intend to be in the future. "As my client had continuously maintained in the past, she has always taken a neutral stand when it comes to politics," the lawyer pointed out.

The lawyer further explained that Trisha had expressed her wish to be defined only by her craft and not by any alleged political alignment.

"Further and most importantly, it is common saying that personal lives should never be made the subject of public commentary or discourse, and it is expected that persons holding high positions maintain responsibility and equanimity in public discourse," the lawyer added.

IAN5



Shweta backs women-led, queer narratives

Mumbai: Shweta Tripathi has stepped into production with a focus on women-led and queer narratives as she feels it's right, like home and part of a larger purpose for her as an artist.

Shweta recently announced her first queer film as a producer, *Mujhe Jaan Na Kaho Meri Jaan*, starring Tilottama Shome, which is expected to go on floors this year. She has also produced the queer play *Cock*, which toured cities and received strong audience response.

"For me, it's very personal," she said. Shweta added: "If we want to see a certain kind of change, we have to start by being part of it. Stories about women and queer lives have always existed,

but they haven't always been given the space or respect they deserve. If I have the privilege to choose and create now, then I have to be mindful about how I use it." Shweta wants these stories to feel human, flawed and familiar. The same philosophy applies to the queer narratives she supports. They do not need to be loud or sensational to be impactful.

"Sometimes these stories are tender and everyday," she explained.

The actress said: "They don't always announce themselves, but they stay with you. That's the kind of work I want to be associated with."

IAN5



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

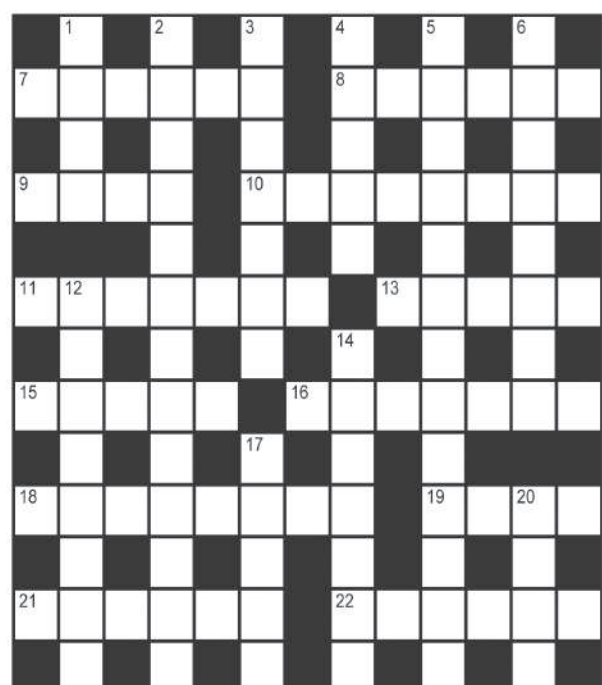


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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- Across**

 - 7 Like some stories
 - 8 Almost
 - 9 Eat like a bird
 - 10 Bounce a check
 - 11 Alfresco (4-3)
 - 13 Intoxicating
 - 15 ___ reef
 - 16 Missives
 - 18 Data processor
- Down**

 - 1 Patella's place
 - 2 Granny Smith and Winesap (7,6)
 - 3 Absurd
 - 19 Skin disorder
 - 21 Dresser
 - 22 A really good look
- 4 Before circle or ear
 - 5 Side-wheeling vessel (6,7)
 - 6 Poisonous flowering shrub
 - 12 Introduction to a play
 - 14 Bewhiskered
 - 17 Play a guitar
 - 20 It may be proper

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CBSE: First board exam must for Class X students

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has said that it is mandatory for Class X students to appear in the first board exam, and those who do not attempt at least three subjects in the first edition will be placed in the 'essential repeat' category, officials said.

CBSE is starting with two board exams for Class X from 2026. The clarification by the board comes after it received a few requests stating that Class X students who are not able to appear in the first board exam should be allowed to appear in the second board exam.

"It is mandatory for all the students to appear in the first board examination. All passed and eligible students will be allowed to improve their performance in any of the three subjects out of Science, Mathematics, Social Science and languages," CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said.

"If a student has not appeared in three or more subjects in the first examination, then he or she will not be allowed to appear in the second examination. Such students will be placed in the 'essential repeat' category

and can take the examination only in the main examinations in the month of February next year," he added.

Students with compartment in the first exam will be allowed to appear in the second exam under the 'compartment' category, Bhardwaj said.

"Additional subject will not be permitted after passing Class X, students will not be allowed in stand-alone subjects. Because of any reason if a student is not able to appear in three or more subjects in main examination, he or she cannot be permitted to appear in second board exams as per policy. Any request received by CBSE about this will not be responded to," Bhardwaj said.

Board exams for Class X and XII will begin Tuesday, with over 46 lakh students set to appear from India and abroad.

Under the new National Education Policy (NEP), several recommendations have been made with regard to board exams, including conducting them twice a year.

NEP 2020 said that the existing system of board and entrance exams shall be reformed to eliminate the need for undertaking coaching classes.

CLASS X & XII EXAMS BEGIN TODAY



TIGHT VIGIL: Security personnel deployed on the Assembly premises in Bhubaneswar, Monday, ahead of the Budget Session beginning Tuesday (REPORT PA)

OP PHOTO

OI Chiki powerful symbol of Santhali identity: President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Describing the OI Chiki script as a "powerful symbol" of Santhali identity, President Droupadi Murmu Monday said efforts should be made to preserve and promote this century-old script.

Addressing a gathering to commemorate the centenary of OI Chiki script, Murmu also expressed happiness that the script is growing in the digital medium.

In 1925, Pandit Raghunath Murmu created OI Chiki script. Since then, it has become a powerful symbol of the Santhal identity.



President Droupadi Murmu during the inauguration of the centenary celebrations of the OI Chiki script

It was included in the Constitution's Eighth Schedule in 2003. In her address, Murmu described India as a "garden of multiple languages", stressing the importance of using one's mother tongue in communication.

She also said efforts should be made to preserve and promote OI Chiki script.

Earlier, a military band welcomed Murmu at the venue – the Bhim Hall of the Dr Ambedkar International Centre. It first played the national song 'Vande Mataram', followed by the national anthem 'Jana Gana Mana.

A group of folk artists sang songs in Santhali, followed by a performance by a troupe of Santhali dancers on a theme that celebrated nature and the cultural diversity of India.

A short film on the genesis and evolution of the OI Chiki script was also screened on the occasion. A special postage stamp and a commemorative Rs 100 coin, along with a souvenir on OI Chiki script, were also released at the event.

OI Chiki is the official script of the Santhali language, one of India's prominent tribal languages spoken widely across Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, and Bihar.

SC notice to Centre on data protection law

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: In a significant development, the Supreme Court Monday agreed to examine a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of several provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023.

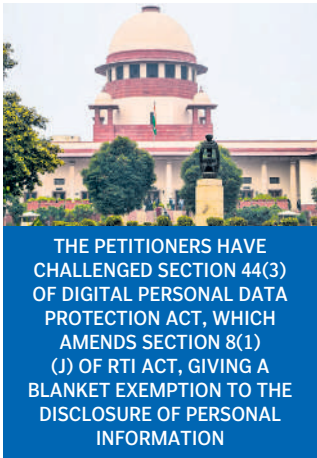
The top court, however, refused to grant an interim stay on the impugned provisions, saying "by an interim order, it will not thwart a regime introduced by Parliament unless we hear the case".

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi issued a notice to the Centre on the pleas challenging certain provisions of the DPDP Act and the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules 2025 over their amendment of the provisions of the Right to Information Act.

The bench also referred three petitions, filed by Venkatesh Nayak on behalf of digital news platform 'The Reporters Collective', journalist Nitin Sethi and National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), to a larger bench.

The pleas raised concerns over the "fiduciary" clauses, which allow the Union government to requisition data from any data fiduciary at its discretion.

The bench said the matter pertained to "complex and sensitive



issues", and it involved balancing two competing sets of fundamental rights, the Right to Information and the Right to Privacy.

"This is about balancing competing interests. We have to iron out the creases and lay down what constitutes personal information," the CJ said.

Advocate Prashant Bhusan, also appearing for one of the petitioners, pointed to the landmark Subhash Agarwal judgement, asserting that the apex court had already established a framework for balancing RTI and privacy. However, the bench noted that the new legislative framework required a fresh, deeper examination.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, also appearing for one of the petitioners, sought to make additional submissions,

but the court proceeded to issue notice to ensure a comprehensive response from the Centre.

The top court has scheduled the matter for a hearing in March. Senior advocate Vrinda Grover, appearing in the matter, contended that the legislation has taken an excessive approach.

"Instead of using a chisel, it has used a hammer and has thus rendered a body blow," she submitted, arguing that the amendments effectively undermine transparency safeguards.

The petitioners have essentially challenged Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act, which amends Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, giving a blanket exemption to the disclosure of personal information.

Before the amendment, personal information could have been disclosed if there was an overriding public interest.

One of the pleas said that the new provision undermines citizens' right to information and transparency in public administration. It said that journalists and transparency activists frequently rely on access to personal information in limited, public-interest contexts to expose wrongdoing, corruption, or conflicts of interest.

By eliminating the public interest override, the amendment provision allegedly tilts the balance decisively in favour of privacy at the cost of accountability.

Man dies in mishap, 2 days before wedding

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Feb 16: A 24-year-old man, who was set to tie the nuptial knot Wednesday, was killed in a road mishap in this district late Sunday night, according to police.

The deceased was identified as Siddhanta Ganta, a resident of Baising village under Seshkhal police limits of Rayagada block.

According to police and family members, Siddhanta had gone to Rayagada town Sunday for some work. However, his motorcycle hit a culvert near his village around 10pm when he was returning home, killing him on the spot.

Throughout the night, his family members left no stone unturned in searching for Siddhanta, but to no avail.

It was Monday morning when some villagers spotted Siddhanta's lifeless body lying in a farmland, and informed his family members and sarpanch of Baising gram panchayat.

On being informed, Seshkhal police reached the spot, seized the body and the motorcycle and began an investigation.

JEE-Main 2026: Odisha boy among 12 with perfect 100

PTI & AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Twelve candidates, including one from Odisha, have bagged the perfect 100 score in JEE-Main 2026, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced Monday.

More than 13.04 lakh candidates had appeared for the first edition of the crucial engineering entrance exam.

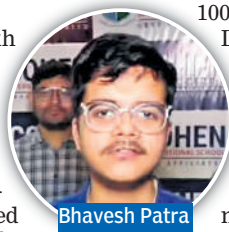
Among the candidates who have secured an NTA score of 100, three are from Rajasthan, two from Andhra Pradesh and one each is from Delhi, Bihar, Odisha, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Telangana, the agency said, adding that all the 12 candidates are male.

"Kabeer Chhillar, Chiranjib Kar and Arnav Gautam from Rajasthan, Narendrababu Gari Mahith and Pasala Mohith from Andhra Pradesh, Shreyas

Mishra from Delhi, Shubham Kumar from Bihar, Bhavesh Patra from Odisha, Anay Jain from Haryana, Madhav Viradiya from Maharashtra, Purohit Nimay from Gujarat and Vivan Sharad Mahiswari from Telangana secured an NTA score of 100," according to the Livemint.

According to officials, the NTA score is not the same as the percentage of marks obtained but normalised scores.

"NTA scores are normalised scores across multi-shift papers and are based on the relative performance of all those who appeared for the examination in one shift. The marks obtained are transformed into a scale ranging from 100 to 0 for each shift of examinees. The NTA score is not the same as the percentage of marks obtained," a senior official explained.



Bhavesh Patra

Rourkela: AI cameras help save 4 jumbos

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 16: Artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled cameras helped avert a possible tragedy and saved the lives of four elephants near Rourkela, a Forest official said.

The incident occurred in the Mahipani forest between Bhulalata and Jareikela railway stations under Chakradharpur railway division of South Eastern Railway. Rourkela DFO

Jashobant Sethi said AI-based 360-degree cameras detected elephant movement near Mahipani railway tracks under Bisra block at 1:33am Sunday.

Upon reviewing the footage, officials confirmed that four elephants were moving close to the tracks. The railway control room was immediately alerted, and train speeds were reduced in the affected section. Railway authorities delayed a goods train by about

30 minutes after receiving the alert, it was learnt.

Forest staffers from Bisra range later drove the elephants away from the tracks, preventing any mishap, Sethi said.

The AI surveillance system is part of an initiative by the Forest department to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks. The system issues red, yellow and green alerts to control room upon detecting elephant movement.

RAPPER KANYE WEST CONFIRMS FIRST INDIA SHOW

AGENCIES

California, Feb 16: Rapper Ye, formerly Kanye West, will bring his live show to India for the first time March 29, 2026, headlining a stadium date at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.

Tickets will be available from Wednesday. The event is organised by White Fox, Wizcraft & Plush Entertainment.

"IT'S TIME. YE LIVE. 29 MARCH | JAWAHARLAL NEHRU STADIUM, NEW DELHI. TICKETS DROP 18.02 - 4PM @districtupdates. THIS IS NOT

A SHOW. THIS IS A STATEMENT." read the caption.

The rap star's debut India concert is part of his 2026 world tour and will be presented by White Fox, Plush Entertainment, and Wizcraft International.

The announcement ends years of speculation around a possible India concert. While Ye has visited the country previously—including a reported 2009 stay at an ashram and a 2012 visit linked to his fashion ventures—he has never performed here. His debut will take place at the 60,000-capacity JNS Stadium, which has become a key stop for



international tours since its redevelopment ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

In October last year, Travis Scott headlined the venue, delivering one of the capital's

largest hip-hop concerts to date. Ye's booking continues that momentum, reinforcing New Delhi's position on the global stadium touring circuit.

Organisers say the show will mirror the format of Ye's recent headline runs, with large-format visuals, expansive staging and a setlist expected to span his catalogue, from early 2000s releases to later-era material.

The India date follows early 2026 shows in Mexico City and precedes Ye's one-off European stop at Vitesse Arnhem's GelreDome stadium in the Netherlands June 6 with an-

other performance scheduled later in Italy.

The "Heartless" singer's recent touring history has been closely watched. His 2016 Saint Pablo Tour was cut short and canceled amid erratic performances and a subsequent hospitalisation, and a scheduled 2025 concert in South Korea was canceled amid widespread controversy over his actions and statements. A series of antisemitic remarks beginning in 2022 also led to the termination of his lucrative Yeezy partnership with Adidas and the loss of other business relationships.

BUDGET SESSION

House to get noisy with farmers' 'distress', Mahanadi water dispute

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The Assembly is likely to witness noisy scenes in the Budget session that will commence from Tuesday, as the Opposition BJD and Congress will raise a host of issues, such as alleged mismanagement of paddy procurement and Mahanadi water dispute, in the House.

Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik, while addressing BJD legislators Monday, alleged that the current 'double-engine' government remained "busy with slogans and photo-opportunities, while our farmers are spending nights under the open sky at mandis, guarding their produce".

"If the farmers' voice is not heard in the state-run mandis, it must roar in the Assembly," he said.

The BJD, at its legislature party meeting, decided to raise issues, like alleged mismanagement of paddy procurement, Mahanadi water dispute with Chhattisgarh, "deteriorating" law and order and the government's "inability" to utilise Budget allocations, in the session. Patnaik informed BJD lawmakers that the reports received



from district units were clear that the anger of farmers was at a "boiling point".

The former chief minister came down heavily on the BJP government, claiming that the "Budget expenditure till December was roughly 47 per cent".

"This government has failed on all fronts, except false publicity. We should fight aggressively in the Budget session of the Assembly to safeguard the interests of our farmers, women, students and Odia Asmita," Patnaik said in the meeting.

Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam said the party will raise "farmers' plights, Mahanadi and Polavaram issues and highlight atrocities on scheduled castes,

scheduled tribes, OBCs and minorities".

OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das said the Congress, as a responsible opposition party, is committed to presenting the problems of the people and ensuring the accountability of the government.

The ruling BJP, at its legislature party meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, prepared for a healthy discussion in the House.

"We are ready to discuss all the issues that will be raised by the opposition party. We will present all the aspects of the 19-month BJP government before the people," said Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling.

Louis Braille School excels at Wipro Earthian awards

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Students from Odisha have added a fresh feather to the state's cap with an impressive performance in environmental sustainability and water conservation.

At the prestigious Wipro Earthian national competition, held at Azim Premji University, Bangalore, Louis Braille School for the Blind secured a place among the top 20 winning schools, bringing pride to the state. Four talented students from the institution represented the award-winning team.



At the recently concluded annual awards ceremony, Louis Braille School was honoured for presenting an exceptional project focused on sustainability and water conservation. The initiative stood out for its practical impact and thoughtful execution, and was successfully implemented with technical support and guidance from Vision Empower. Out of nearly 2,200 participating schools from across the country, Louis Braille School created history by emerging as the only institution for the visually impaired to receive this prestigious recognition, marking a significant milestone in inclusive excellence.

CLASSIFIED LOST

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Mahakalapada, I, Swarnalata Behera, aged about 56 years, W/o.- Rabindra Behera, Vill.-Gadaromita, P.O.- Gatanai, P.S.- Marshaghai, Dist.- Kendrapada declare that I have lost my original land RSD No. 1756 executed on Dated- 23.06.1997 at Mouza- Gadaramita, SRO, Marshaghai while I was going from home to Tahashil Marshaghai on 02.01.2026. The affidavit will produce before concerned authorities for necessary information & favourable action.

Ganjam dist achieves 88 pc paddy procurement target

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Berhampur, Feb16: Ganjam district has achieved nearly 88 per cent of its paddy procurement target for the current season, officials informed Monday.

Against a total target of 54,46,201 quintals, the district has so far procured 47,98,588 quintals of paddy. Besides, more than ₹1,055 crore has been transferred directly into the bank accounts of 1,21,816 farmers through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system.

Officials said the procurement process has moved at a faster pace this year compared to previous seasons. The timely credit of payments has brought relief and satisfaction among farmers, while the large-scale inflow of funds has strengthened the rural economy across the district.

The achievement comes amid systematic planning, continuous monitoring, and coordinated efforts by district, sub-divisional and block-level administrations. Under the supervision of Collector V Keerthi Vasan, officials have conducted regular field visits to mandis and addressed procurement-related grievances on priority. Issues



highlighted in the media were also promptly resolved to ensure smooth operations.

The district administration maintained close coordination with PACS and allied agencies to streamline mandi management and simplify farmer registration procedures. The Collector expressed confidence that the remaining target would be achieved shortly and reiterated the administration's commitment to ensuring that every eligible farmer benefits from the procurement drive.

Block-wise data indicated that Digapahandi has recorded the highest procurement at 95.06 per cent of its target, followed closely by Patrapur at 94.93 per cent. Dharakote (92.81%), Buguda (92.00%), and Sheragada (91.99%) also reported strong performances. Several other blocks, including Kukudakhandi, Bellaguntha, Surada, Chikiti and Sanakhemundi, have crossed the 90 per cent mark.

ECoR announces Holi special trains this season

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: To ensure smooth and hassle-free travel during the upcoming Holi and Dol Yatra festivities, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) has announced multiple Holi Special trains to manage the expected surge in passenger traffic and strengthen connectivity across key routes.

Every year, the festive season sees a sharp rise in travel as people return home to celebrate with family. Keeping this in view, the railway zone has planned special services linking Bhubaneswar, Visakhapatnam and Sambalpur with major destinations including Yesvantpur, Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal Bengaluru, Tirupati, Charlapalli, Shalimar, Dhanbad, Erode, Puri, Patna, Seal-

dah and Malatipatpur.

As per the schedule, the Bhubaneswar-Yesvantpur and Yesvantpur-Bhubaneswar Specials will operate weekly between February 28 and March 30. Bhubaneswar-Dhanbad and Dhanbad-Bhubaneswar Specials will run daily from early March to the end of the month. Similarly, Sambalpur-Erode and Erode-Sambalpur Specials will operate on designated days in March. Several special services have also been arranged between Visakhapatnam and Shalimar, Tirupati, Charlapalli and SMVB Bengaluru on different days of the week throughout March 2026.

In addition, some other special trains will run between Puri and Patna, Sealdah and Malatipatpur, and Patna and



KIIT honours global leaders on 22nd foundation day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb. 16: The Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) Deemed to be University celebrated its 22nd Foundation Day with a special commemorative lecture and the presentation of the KIIT Lifetime Achievement Award to four distinguished global leaders.

The awardees this year were John Oppenheimer, Founder and Chairman of Columbia Hospitality (USA); Kirinde Assaji Nayaka Thero, Chief Incumbent of Gangaramaya Temple, Colombo; KN Shanth Kumar, Director of The Printers (Mysore) Pvt Ltd and Director on the Board of Press Trust of India; and Gyetrul Jigme Rinpoche, Master of Tibetan Buddhism and Spiritual Director of Ripa International Center, Switzerland.

In his address, John Oppenheimer expressed deep admira-



tion for the institution. Calling the campus "beyond imagination," he said his visit left him profoundly moved. Encouraging students, he remarked, "Don't underestimate the contributions you are making to society. You have the opportunity to serve your communities, your country and the world in a significant way."

Kumar described KIIT as "more than a story of institutions; it is a story of vision." Drawing from over four decades in journalism, he em-

phasised that while the media landscape has evolved rapidly, the core principles of truth, credibility, verification and ethical storytelling remain unchanged. "Virtue belongs to those who combine technology with integrity," he said, adding that journalism in a democracy must keep public debate informed and free from manipulation. He encouraged students to practice responsible citizen journalism and to "stay curious, value credibility and build resilience."

Rinpoche reflected on humility and compassion as the essence of true success. "Many reach success, but very few remain humble. To me, that is true success," he said. Speaking on practical compassion, he emphasized that it does not require complex philosophical or academic learning, but simply the ability to feel for others. Recalling his grandmother's words, he added, "By giving, you never become poor. Those who do not give remain perpetually poor. Poverty is in the mind."

KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta reflected on KIIT's journey, which began with quiet determination and a bold dream. He credited the institution's achievements to the collective efforts of its staff and students across KIIT, KISS and KIMS, stating, "Whatever we have achieved belongs to them. This is their success."

Woman brown sugar supplier held in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Police arrested a woman drug supplier near Nature Park under Bharatpur police jurisdiction in connection with a brown sugar peddling case and recovered cash amounting to ₹7,100 from her possession.

The woman has been identified as Sumitra Nayak alias Rami (41), a resident of the City.

According to police, acting on reliable information, a special team of Bharatpur police conducted a raid on the night of February 13/14 at a secluded spot behind Nature Park in GA Colony under Bharatpur police limits. During the raid, two accused Kartik Das and Laxmi Das were apprehended for allegedly selling brown sugar.

The police seized 12.92 grams of brown sugar, some cash, and a motorcycle from their possession.

During interrogation, the two accused reportedly confessed that they had been regularly procuring brown sugar from a woman named Sumitra Nayak of the Bharatpur area.

Based on further intelligence inputs, police conducted raid and apprehended Sumitra.

During questioning, she admitted to supplying brown sugar to Kartik and Laxmi.

After completing all the legal formalities Sumitra was booked under relevant sections of NDPC Act and forwarded to the court along with two arrested accused.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Feb 16: The mobile unit of the Khurda Excise department seized 20.4 kg of illegal cough syrup packed in 120 bottles at Palla village under Khurda model police station limits here Monday. Three persons, including a woman, were arrested in this connection, officials said.

The arrested persons were identified as Monalisa Sahoo (29), Trinath Sahoo (40), and Bijay Sahoo — members of the same family and residents of the village. However, another accused, Ranjit Kumar Sahoo, remains absconding.

According to the Excise team, officials received a tip-off about the smuggling of illegal cough syrup in the district. Acting on the input, the mobile unit conducted a raid in the village and seized 120 bottles of codeine phosphate and triprolidine hydrochloride-based cough syrup branded ESkuF.

During the raid, police

EXCISE MOBILE UNIT RAIDED PALLA VILLAGE AND SEIZED 120 BOTTLES OF CODEINE PHOSPHATE AND TRIPROLIDINE HYDROCHLORIDE-BASED SYRUP BRANDED ES KUF

THREE PERSONS WERE ARRESTED DURING THE OPERATION, OFFICIALS SAID

A MOTORCYCLE AND ₹1,000 IN CASH WERE ALSO RECOVERED FROM THE ACCUSED

arrested three persons and seized a motorcycle along with ₹1,000 in cash from their possession.

"The raid was part of the Excise department's special drive. The accused belong to the same family, and we have launched a manhunt to nab the absconding individual. The accused have been forwarded to court. Further investigation is underway to ascertain the involvement of others in the illegal cough syrup trade," said Khurda Excise SP Sumati Tripathy.

Padma Shri Prafulla Kar's statue unveiled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Feb 16: The statue of eminent musician Prafulla Kar was unveiled on his birth anniversary Monday at Rabindra Mandap under the auspices of the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department.

Minister for Odia Language, Literature and Culture, Suryabanshi Suraj, unveiled the statue and paid floral tributes to the legendary music maestro.

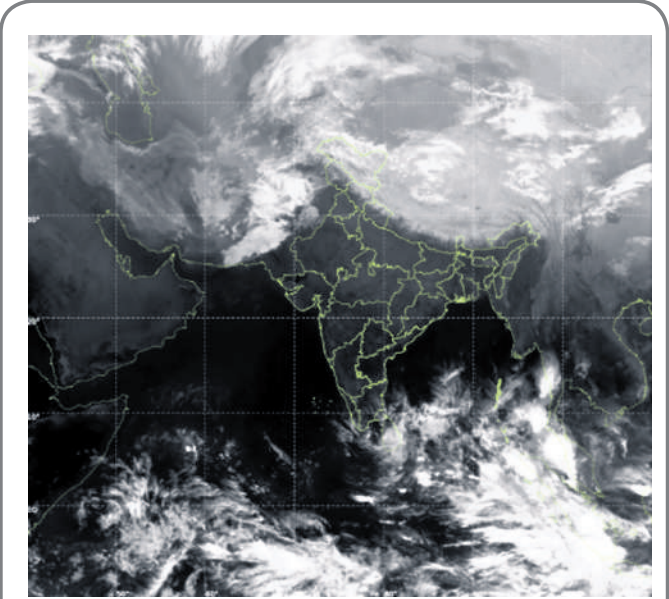
Addressing the gathering, the minister said, "The music of legendary composer Prafulla Kar remains eternally cherished among listeners across Odisha. Through his exceptional music direction, he carved a distinct place for himself and significantly enriched the Odia music industry. The timeless talent and melodious life journey of Padma Shri Pra-



fulla Kar serve as an inspiration to the younger generation. His musical compositions will undoubtedly continue to motivate young musicians."

The event was attended by Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya, Secretary of the department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture; Deb Prasad Dash, Special Secretary; Deputy Director Debayani Bhuyan; and members of Prafulla Kar's family among others.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.72 ▲ 0.02	SENSEX	83277.15 ▲ 650.39	GOLD	₹154,728 ▼ ₹116
EURO	107.75 ▲ 0.13	NIFTY	25682.75 ▲ 211.65	SILVER	₹238,300 ▼ ₹606




WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.6°	30.6°	Dry weather likely to prevail
Min Temp	22.0°	19.0°	
Humidity	85%	95%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



What is God after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden.

SRI AUROBINDO



Raw Deal

India's recent trade agreement with the United States is being celebrated by the government at the Centre as a significant milestone in its economic diplomacy. Beyond the headlines, a closer scrutiny makes the deal appear rather dicey right from the very outset. Four days after US President Donald Trump announced the deal on social media on 2 February, a joint statement was issued by both governments on 6 February at 5 AM Indian Standard Time. It is clearly known that in diplomacy, timing is messaging. This particular statement was pushed out at a time when Indians were asleep, making it look obvious New Delhi was a party that simply signed on but had no role in shaping the deal. Perhaps this explains why India agreed to reduce its tariffs on American industrial and agricultural goods to ZERO per cent while Indian exporters still face 18 per cent US tariffs. The publicity claiming US tariffs came down from 50% to 18% is completely misleading. 25% tariff was slapped on India for purchasing oil from Russia. That was removed once the assurance was given by India that no more petroleum would be purchased from Russia. Any claim of 'strategic autonomy' is therefore meaningless.

In financial year 2024-25, bilateral trade between India and the US was worth over \$131 billion, with Indian exports at around \$86.5 billion and imports about \$45.3 billion. That left India with a trade surplus of roughly \$40-41 billion, up from \$35.3 billion the previous year. At first glance, this surplus might seem comforting, but there's a deeper imbalance in the trade structure. For, our exports are heavily focused on sectors like pharmaceuticals, telecom equipment, precious stones, gold jewellery, and textiles. Even with growth, these industries work on slim profit margins in highly competitive global markets. On the flip side, imports from the US are heavily tilted towards fuels, machinery, electrical equipment, and aircraft parts. India doesn't have strong domestic capabilities in these sectors.

In the interim trade framework agreed by both countries, India has indicated its intent to import \$500 billion worth of American goods in five years. In other words, it would imply importing US\$ 100 billion only American goods annually. Critics point out that achieving this target would mean India becoming the largest buyer of US goods, taking in imports far beyond what current economic conditions allow. Economists have cautioned that this could diminish India's carefully nurtured trade surplus with America.

For Indian farmers and small manufacturers, the stakes are particularly high. Agriculture contributes about 17 per cent of India's GDP while employing over 40% of the labour force, supporting millions of rural households. Yet, the deal's push for greater imports risks overwhelming local markets with subsidized US agricultural products, which could hurt domestic prices and farmer incomes. Farmers' organisations that took part in a nationwide protest on 12 February continue to strongly criticise the trade agreement, warning of serious consequences for Indian agriculture. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), one of the country's largest farmer unions, has termed the deal a "total surrender" to US interests. A major concern is the proposed import of farm products at zero or low tariffs, along with two animal feeds from the US, distillers dried grains (DDGS) and red sorghum, which farmers claim may contain genetically modified (GM) components which could, over time, creep into human body. Farmers are apprehensive that these imports could undercut Indian produce such as apples, cotton and soybean, while also opening the door for GM material to enter the domestic market through cattle feed. SKM has questioned why such animal feeds are being imported at all, arguing that farmers have never demanded them. It has also flagged concerns over the possible presence of non-vegetarian components in the feeds. DDGS imported from the US is largely derived from GM corn and GM soy. Also, with American apples and dry fruits expected to enter India duty-free or at reduced tariffs, farmers in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir are already bracing for a potential fall in prices of domestic produce.

Lower to zero tariffs on industrial goods could hurt Indian MSMEs, the backbone of the country's job market, in sectors such as machinery, auto components, electrical goods and chemicals. Once Indian markets are flooded by cheaper yet better branded American goods, many MSMEs, especially those operating on thin margins, will find it difficult to survive.

Coming to the textile sector, a vital source of employment for millions, Indian exporters face an 18 per cent tariff in the US market, while competitors like Bangladesh and others enjoy a zero per cent tariff, giving them an immediate price edge. Bangladesh's preferential access to the US market, a result of Dhaka's successful negotiations with Washington, threatens to shift orders away from Indian producers.

Even more concerning is the opacity clouding the trade agreement. A deal with such significant ramifications for job creation, rural incomes, and India's industrial future deserves thorough parliamentary debate and independent economic impact assessments, which are missing.

In its eagerness to secure a headline-grabbing trade agreement with Washington after being punished with 50 per cent tariffs on India's exports to the US for about six months, the government seems to have panicked and overlooked the country's long-term economic interests and neglected safeguards for vulnerable sectors such as agriculture and MSMEs.

Given the prevailing economic conditions in the country – rising cost of living, a falling rupee, widening inequality, massive unemployment, stagnant wages and rural distress – a trade deal negotiated from a position of strength, not concession, would have benefited Indians. Sadly the nation has been failed once again.

WISDOM CORNER

Love many things, for therein lies the true strength, and whosoever loves much performs much, and can accomplish much, and what is done in love is done well.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Things are as they are. Looking out into it the universe at night, we make no comparisons between right and wrong stars, nor between well and badly arranged constellations.

ALAN WATTS

Acceptance looks like a passive state, but in reality it brings something entirely new into this world. That peace, a subtle energy vibration, is consciousness.

ECKHART TOLLE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1863: A precursor of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is founded. The "Committee for Relief to the Wounded" was created by a group of citizens in Geneva, Switzerland.

1864: During the American Civil War, the Confederate Hunley became the first submarine to sink an enemy ship when it successfully attacked the USS Housatonic in the waters off Charleston, South Carolina.

FOCUS 16TH FINANCE COMMISSION

PROTECT FEDERALISM



The most striking innovation of FC-16 is on the horizontal side: it introduces 'contribution to national GDP' as a criterion with 10% weight

India's fiscal federalism runs on a deceptively simple bargain: the Union collects most broad-based taxes, while the States carry the frontline responsibility for essential public services—schools, hospitals, policing, local roads, water supply, and much else. The tax revenues and spending duties do not match. Indeed, States have two-third expenditure obligations, but have control over only one-third of revenues. Hence the Constitution created a neutral referee—the Finance Commission (FC)—to periodically recommend how the “divisible pool” of Central taxes should be shared between the Union and States (vertical devolution) and among States (horizontal devolution).

The Commission is reconstituted every five years, so that the division formula can adapt to changing realities rather than be frozen forever. The core job of the Commission follows from Article 280 and the implementation of recommendations from Article 281. In practice, FC awards become the financial “operating system” of Indian federalism. They affect the monthly cash that States receive, their budget space for welfare and capital spending, and even their ability to borrow. With the Sixteenth Finance Commission (FC-16) report now accepted by the Union government and placed before Parliament, the new formula will shape Centre-State fiscal relations for 2026-31. The key question is not just “who gets how much,” but what incentives the system creates—especially in a federation where prosperity and political power are unevenly distributed.

FC-16 has retained the States' share at 41% of the divisible pool, like the previous FCs. There was a demand from 22 States to increase the States' share to 50%. Partly this was due to their grievance concerning the trend of the Union's rising reliance on cesses and surcharges, which typically sit outside the divisible pool and therefore are not shared. As per the FC-16 report, since the total size of the divisible pool will

nearly double from ₹55 trillion to ₹90 trillion during FC-16 period, States will have considerably more resources. But if Union continues to expand non-shareable levies, the “41%” can feel smaller in effect than in headline.

The most striking innovation of FC-16 is on the horizontal side: it introduces “contribution to national GDP” as a criterion with 10% weight. It does this by reducing weights elsewhere—cutting per capita income distance and demographic performance by 2.5 percentage points each, trimming area by 5 percentage points, and removing the (small) tax effort weight used by FC-15. It is as if the Commission now seeks a balance between its central role of “gap filling” of short-fall in resources, with a new reward for efficiency signal. A reward for States that contribute more to the national output.

Why is this a big deal? Because it shifts the moral language of transfers. For decades, the dominant logic was: help States provide comparable basic services, despite differences in income and capacity, and offset structural disadvantages. Economists call this “equalisation.” The new GDP-contribution criterion says, in effect: performance and contribution also matter. This is not really contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, but the change in emphasis is path-breaking. Constitutionally, the Commission is to recommend a fair distribution of shareable taxes so that

different levels of government can discharge responsibilities assigned in the Constitution. The FC has always used a mix of criteria—some anchored in equity (income distance, population, area, forest) and some trying to recognise efficiency.

So adding “contribution to GDP” is not automatically unconstitutional. The deeper question is normative: what should be the dominant objective of tax devolution? Introducing GDP contribution can conflict with the revenue-disability logic. Besides States are not on a level playing field. A rich State often has better infrastructure and institutions that make it easier to respond to “performance incentives,” while a poorer State may not be able to do so quickly even if it wants to. The divergence may worsen. Some so-called backward States are incentivised to keep their forest cover, and slowing the pace of urbanisation, thereby causing slower GDP growth. So, rewarding “contribution” can harden advantages, unless compensated by investment in capacity and human capital in lagging States.

The FC-16 report emphasises that equalisation remains the “centre of gravity,” with per-capita income distance still dominant. But incentives matter because they influence political narratives and administrative choices. There are three possible behavioural effects. Firstly, high-performing States will feel less penalised. This may reduce

The writer is a noted economist.

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SPECTRUM INNOVATION

Penicillin & American wartime power

When we think about wartime innovation, we usually imagine dramatic breakthroughs: Alan Turing's cracking of the Nazi Enigma code, the invention of radar, the Manhattan Project's development of the atomic bomb. But a less visible biological innovation – the mass production of penicillin – was just as transformative. Although Alexander Fleming identified penicillin's antibacterial properties in 1928, it remained fragile, unstable, and almost impossible to produce in meaningful quantities for more than a decade. It was only during WWII that penicillin was turned into a treatment that could be produced, distributed, and widely used.

The stakes could not have been higher. Estimates from military records indicate that during WWI, roughly 12-15% of soldiers wounded in battle died from bacterial infections. For some injuries – most notoriously femur fractures – mortality rates reached 80%, almost entirely due to post-wound complications. By the final years of WWII, once the Allies began mass-producing penicillin, medical outcomes changed dramatically. Military records show infection recovery rates

of around 95%, far surpassing the efficacy of earlier antiseptics and sulfa drugs. Mortality from comparable wound infections fell to roughly 3-4%, and penicillin is estimated to have prevented tens of thousands of amputations that previously would have been necessary to stop the spread of gangrene. Mass production of penicillin was as consequential to the Allied war effort as any breakthrough in cryptography or nuclear physics. Despite its formidable scientific capacity, Germany failed to do so. Research efforts began late, remained confined to a handful of university labs, and stalled at the experimental stage, as Nazi scientists lacked access to high-yield strains, advanced fermentation methods, and the institutional coordination necessary for large-scale production.

The Allied experience was markedly different. From 1941 onward, the US mobilized its scientific and industrial infrastructure through Vannevar Bush's Office of Scientific Research and Development, funding parallel research projects across universities, public laboratories, and private firms while absorbing the financial and scientific risks. By adapting deep-tank ferment-

tation techniques – originally developed for food processing and industrial chemistry – 21 American companies were able to produce millions of penicillin doses in time for D-Day.

Three features of American innovation system proved decisive. First, penicillin manufacturing could be scaled only because of sustained investment in civilian technologies developed long before the war, such as fermentation, and in microbiology and industrial engineering. Germany, despite its strength in synthetic chemistry, lacked the diversified industrial ecosystem needed to manufacture antibiotics at scale. Second, the US innovation environment was shaped by a government willing to take risks. Through the Office of Scientific Research and Development, it financed a wide range of exploratory efforts, fully expecting many to fail. In doing so, it allowed the most promising approaches to emerge and scale. Germany's more centralized research system, by contrast, emphasized immediate military payoff and discouraged open-ended experimentation. Third, the US built an innovation system that, though dispersed, was highly integrated,

linking public investment, academic discovery, and industrial execution. This division of labour gave the Allies a technological advantage that Nazi Germany, constrained by institutional rigidity, could not replicate.

Penicillin, initially justified as a defense investment, ultimately had as great an impact on the war as any weapon, and it transformed civilian medicine and global health. In this sense, America's most powerful wartime asset was not a particular technology but the system that made such breakthroughs possible.

That system did not emerge by accident. It was the product of deliberate policy decisions that aligned academic research, industrial capacity, and institutional development – a nexus that Donald Trump's administration is jeopardizing by axing funding for basic research and targeted investment, especially for health (NIH) and science (NSF). Today's policymakers need to recall the lesson of penicillin's wartime development: true security depends as much on fostering innovation as on weaponry.

The writer is Professor of Economics at London Business School. @PROJECT SYNDICATE

Reckless drivers

Sir, “Speed thrills, but kills” is one of the common plaques seen on highways to discourage drivers from over-speeding. Young, inexperienced and more, often than not, immature and “licence less” boys and girls run amok on roads. In India, the legal age for driving light motor vehicles (LMV) vehicles with gear is 18 years. A spate of major accidents in cities is attributed to rash and negligent driving by underage drivers. Addiction to reckless driving, unhindered access to vehicles, poor parental guidance and supervision are attributed to the surge in minors taking to wheels. Parents and the police cannot play the blame game to suit their own ends. Both need to pull up their socks and take stock of the situation before it spirals out of control and leads to make Indian roads even more unsafe.

Sports nationalism

Sir, The comprehensive win by Team India against Pakistan at Colombo, reinforces their dominance over the arch-rival in T20 world cups, extending their head-to-head record to 8-1. With a combination of explosive batting and incisive bowling, the Indian team proved too strong for Pakistan on a high-stakes stage, making a statement of intent for the remainder of the tournament. India has consistently outperformed Pakistan in recent years, with the game's experts calling the rivalry lopsided and suggesting that past wins by Pakistan were rare exceptions. Meanwhile, India's authoritative win at Colombo reignites an important question: is this cricket rivalry overhyped, propped up by slogans like “war minus the shooting” – a phrase George Orwell coined in 1945 to criticize excessive nationalism in sports? As for the continuation of the “no handshake” policy by Indian players against their Pakistan counterparts, it only reflects how political and emotional tensions have begun to overshadow the true spirit of the game.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

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



OrissaPOST

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Despite Cong flak, Aiyar sticks to claim of Vijayan’s return

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 16: Unfazed by Congress leadership’s criticism, Mani Shankar Aiyar reiterated his claim that the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF will retain power in Kerala, drawing a sharp rebuke from senior leader Ramesh Chennithala, who dismissed Aiyar’s remarks as “unwarranted”.
“As a Congressman, I want the UDF to win. As a Gandhian, I am obliged to tell the truth, irrespective of what I wish. I am not a voter in Kerala, but I think he is going to get another term,” Aiyar, a senior Congress leader, told PTI Videos, referring to Chief Minister Vijayan. Attacking Aiyar, Chennithala said, “AICC has clarified that he is no longer in the Congress. He can say anything.”

His comments on the Kerala government were unwarranted, the Congress Working Committee member said.

Aiyar’s remarks come a day after he drew sharp flak from the Congress leadership for predicting Vijayan’s return as Chief Minister. Kerala is set to go to the polls in the next couple of months.

Although the former Union Minister said his remarks were blown out of proportion by the media, Aiyar reiterated his view that the LDF government would return to power as it was doing outstanding work.

“I made the speech after hearing Mary Joseph, who is the Principal Secretary of the Planning Board. She listed the achievements. I made the speech after hearing VK Ramachandran (Planning Com-



As a Congressman, I want the UDF to win. As a Gandhian, I am obliged to tell the truth, irrespective of what I wish. I am not a voter in Kerala, but I think he is going to get another term

MANI SHANKAR AIYAR | FORMER MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ OF INDIA

mission Deputy Chairman), who reinforced everything that Mary Joseph said,” he said.

Referring to his interaction with Local Self Government Minister MB Rajesh, Aiyar said he was told that Kerala was the only state in the country to have eliminated extreme poverty, achieved through the Panchayati Raj system.

He also said Rajesh spoke about plans to address climate change, which poses a threat to Kerala.

“The fact of the matter is that they have been an outstanding government and the people of Kerala are so intelligent. I cannot see them voting for anyone but the LDF,” he said.

Aiyar said that except for the last Assembly election, govern-

ments had changed in every poll in the state.

“If they lose two elections in a row, I won’t be surprised,” he said. He also said that apart from himself, the only Congress leader he respects is Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan.

“He (Satheesan) and I are the only secular socialists in the Congress party. I am not speaking of the higher level but at the ordinary level. We don’t compromise on secularism and socialism,” he said.

Asked about UDF leaders claiming that the front would return to power with over 100 seats in the Assembly, Aiyar said he is not from Kerala and not a voter in the state.

“Why are you asking me about Ramesh Chennithala’s estimation of himself? He has twice lost elections. I don’t think he has the right,” he said.

He also said it was not for Chennithala to expel him from the party.

“It is for Mallikarjun Kharge to throw me out of the party. The Congress President has not sent me a letter of expulsion,” he said.

KOCHI TO HOST KAPPA CULTR FROM FEB 20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Feb 16: Kerala’s biggest electronic music festival, Kappa CULTR 2026, a convergence of sound, style, culture, and creativity, will begin here February 20.

Kerala witnesses record of over 2.58cr tourist arrivals in 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode (Kerala), Feb 16: Tourism Minister PA Mohammed Riyas Monday said that 2025 witnessed the highest number of tourist arrivals in Kerala’s history.

Speaking to reporters, he said that 2,58,80,365 tourists from outside the state visited Kerala last year, the highest since the state’s formation.

He said that compared to 2024, an additional 28,95,002 tourists visited Kerala in 2025. The number of domestic tourist arrivals increased by 12.64 per cent, and this was 36.03 per cent higher compared to the pre-Covid period, he said.

Riyas said Idukki district topped the state in domestic tourist arrivals, recording 46,79,800 visitors, followed by Ernakulam with 44,29,899, Thiruvananthapuram with 43,75,846, and Thrissur with 31,24,696.

Major contributing states include Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, he said. He said that earlier, tourist arrivals in North Kerala, from Thrissur to Kasaragod district, accounted for just six per cent of the state’s total, but this share has risen significantly in recent years. The minister said that in 2025, Kerala received 8,21,999 foreign tourists, registering an 11.3 per cent increase over the previous year.

He noted that ongoing war-like situations in various parts of the world have affected international travel.

The highest number of foreign tourists came from the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Maldives.

Bringing together 27 global and homegrown artists from around the world, the three-day festival promises an immersive, multi-sensory experience that extends far beyond music till February 22. Designed as a cultural playground, Kappa

CULTR 2026 blends high-energy performances with interactive art, experimental fashion, gaming arenas, and a global culinary showcase, it said.

The event will transform blank spaces into living canvases through collaborations with

House of Glow, Chuvar Picture, and Pachhakuth, it said.

Culinary exploration takes centre stage with renowned food content creator Alex Jo Scaria curating a vibrant food village featuring over 30 stalls and a diverse spread of world cuisines.

J&K LG orders reopening of 14 tourist spots



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 16: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday ordered the reopening of 14 tourist spots in the Union territory, including Asia’s largest tulip garden in Srinagar and the serene alpine meadow of Yousmarg, which were closed in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack last April.

The L&G administration shut down nearly 50 tourist spots in J&K after the terror attack at the Baisaran meadow in Pahalgam April 22 last year, which claimed 26 lives, mostly tourists.

“After a thorough security review and discussions, I have ordered the reopening of more tourist spots in the Kashmir and Jammu divisions, which were temporarily closed as a precautionary measure,” the L&G’s office said on X.

Eleven tourist spots in the Kashmir Division “Yousmarg, Doodhpathri, Dandipora Park in Kokernag, Peer Ki Gali, Dubjan and Padpawan in Shopian, Astanpora, Thajwas Glacier, Hung Park in Ganderbal, Wullar and Watlab in Baramulla, and the tulip garden in Srinagar” are to be reopened

immediately, Sinha said.

Three tourist spots in the Jammu Division “Devi Pindi in Reasi, Mahu Mangat in Ramban and Mughal Maidan in Kishtwar” are also to be reopened with immediate effect, the LG said.

“Three sites in the Kashmir Division “Gurez, Athwatoo and Bangus” and one site in the Jammu Division “Ramkund in Ramban” will be reopened once the snow is cleared,” Sinha added.

With this, a total of 42 sites have been reopened for tourist activity in J&K.

The LG ordered the reopening of 12 tourist spots September 26 last year. Before that, June 17, the administration announced the reopening of 16 tourist destinations, eight each in the Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

Asia’s largest tulip garden, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden in Srinagar, blooms each spring against the backdrop of the Zabarwan hills.

Overlooking the Dal Lake, it showcases millions of tulips in vibrant colours, attracting visitors from across the world.

Yousmarg in Badgam district is a serene alpine meadow ringed by dense pine forests and rolling hills, known for its quiet charm and expansive grasslands ideal for leisurely walks and picnics.

Nearby Doodhpathri, meaning ‘Valley of Milk’, enchants visitors with lush green pastures, crystal-clear streams and a pristine landscape that comes alive during the summer.

Speaking in the Assembly recently, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah raised concerns over the closure of tourist spots in J&K, especially at a time when the UT is promoting tourism.

He also vowed to take up the issue with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The Pahalgam attack prompted an exodus of tourists from the Valley. However, after an improvement in the security situation, reopening of some sites, inauguration of the Vande Bharat train from Katra to Srinagar and successful completion of the Amarnath Yatra, a section of tourists has slowly started returning to the Valley.

Khelo India Winter Games raise hopes of tourism revival in Gulmarg

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Feb 16: The Khelo India Winter Games, starting from February 23 and to be held at Kashmir’s Gulmarg, will witness participation from more than 700 athletes and officials, officials said.

“There has been good snowfall this winter, which is a boost for skiing and sledging activities. Khelo India Winter Games is being held here, and it will help us earn our livelihood,” said Mohammad Rafeeq Chechi, a ski assistant.

The first leg of the Khelo India Winter Games for ice events was held in Ladakh’s Leh, from January 20 to 26 this year, while the second leg of the games, for snow events, will be held at Gulmarg from February 23 to 26.

“Gulmarg Tayyar hai, Aapka intezaar hai (Gulmarg is ready, We are waiting for you),” Chechi said in a video released by the Department of Youth Services and Sports.

Gulmarg will feature four medal disciplines, namely Ski Mountaineering, Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing (Cross-Country),

and Snowboarding, with around 400 athletes expected to compete, and Alpine Skiing drawing the highest participation, they said.

Aijaz Ahmad Wani, a tourist guide from the nearby Tangmarg area, said a large section of youngsters in and around Gulmarg earn their living from tourism-related activities.

“The more the tourists, the better our income. The tourist arrivals had dropped significantly after the Pahalgam terror attack last year.

However, the tourists have started coming again, and we hope the winter games will kickstart a good year for tourism in Kashmir,” Wani said.

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Man-



sukh Mandaviya announced the dates for the Gulmarg leg of the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 last week.

“The Gulmarg leg is coming at

the back of the Winter Olympics, and this is the perfect time to host the Khelo India Winter Games,” Mandaviya had said.

The event will be the sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, and all six have been held in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

After a successful first phase in Leh, a similar excitement would be witnessed in Jammu & Kashmir, he added.

GOVT. OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER

RURAL WORKS DIVISION, PATNAGARH

E-Mail : eerw_ptng@yahoo.in, Phone No. : 06658-222121

No.25001/178/2526

e-Procurement Notice

IFB IDENTIFICATION NO.EEPTNG-Online-21/2025-26

1	Name of work	Repair & renovation of Building works			
2	Total No. of work	03 (Three) No works			
3	Time for completion	03 (Three) Calendar months			
4	Approximate estimated Cost	16.03 to 38.14 lakhs			
5	Mode of Submission of tender	Tender should be submitted online in www.tender.orissa.gov.in			
6	Other details are as follow				
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last date and time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender
		From	To		
Executive Engineer, R.W.Divn., Patnagarh	EEPTNG-Online - 21/2025-26	19.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M	11.03.2026 upto 5.00 P.M	10.03.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	12.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

• Further details can be seen from the website www.tender.orissa.gov.in

• Any Corrigendum/Amendment will be displayed in the above e tender website only

ONPR-25001/25154/1/25-26/0002

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

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank <small>भारत बैंक का सदस्य</small>		Asset Recovery Management Branch Bells House, 21, Camac Street, 5th Floor Kolkata - 700 016		
Ref. No. : ARMB/FORM B/SUNIL/2025		Date : 09.02.2026		
FORM - B [See Rule 7(1)]				
DEMAND NOTICE				
[Under Rule 7(1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Application to Adjudicating Authority for Insolvency Resolution Process of Personal Guarantors to Corporate Debtors) Rules, 2019]				
To :				
1. Sri Shyam Sundar Mall, S/o. Late Bajrang Lal Mall, Loudon Manor, 3rd Floor, 8/2, Loudon Street, Kolkata - 700 017. Also at : 4, Motilal Basak Lane, Kankurgachi, Kolkata - 700 054.				
2. Sri Sunil Kumar Mall, S/o. Shyam Sundar Mall, Loudon Manor, 3rd Floor, 8/2, Loudon Street, Kolkata - 700 017. Also at : 4, Motilal Basak Lane, Kankurgachi, Kolkata - 700 054.				
3. Sri Mukesh Kumar Agarwal, S/o. Hanram Agarwal, AA-7, Civil Township, Rourkela, Dist. - Sundergarh, Orissa - 769004.				
4. Sri Hanuman Prasad Agarwal, S/o. Dulichand Agarwal, Q-5 Civil Township, Rourkela., Dist.- Sundergarh, Orissa, Pin- 769 004. Also at : AA-7, Civil Township, Rourkela, Dist. - Sundergarh, Orissa, Pin - 769 004.				
5. Sri Bharat Kumar Agarwal, S/o. Shiv Kumar Agarwal, AA-7 Civil Township, Rourkela, Dist. - Sundergarh, Orissa, Pin- 769 004.				
From :				
Canara Bank, a body corporate constituted under the Banking Companies (Acquisition & Transfer of Under takings) Act, 1970, having its Head Office at 112, J. C. Road, Bangalore, Pin - 560 002, and among other places, having its Branch / Office at 5th Floor, Canara Bank Circle Office, 21 Camac Street, Bell's House, Kolkata.				
Subject : Demand notice in respect of unpaid debt in default due from M/s. Sunil Ispat and Power Ltd. and the Corporate Debtor under the code.				
Sir,				
1. This letter is a demand notice of unpaid debt in default due from M/s. Sunil Ispat and Power Ltd.				
2. Please find particulars of the unpaid debt in default below :				
PARTICULARS OF DEBT				
1.	Total Outstanding Debt (including any interest or penalties)	Rs. 204,84,97,307.97 (Rupees Two Hundred Four Crores Eighty Four Lakhs Ninety Seven Thousand Three Hundred Seven and Paise Ninety Seven only) as on 09.02.2026.		
2.	Amount of Debt in default	Rs. 204,84,97,307.97 (Rupees Two Hundred Four Crores Eighty Four Lakhs Ninety Seven Thousand Three Hundred Seven and Paise Ninety Seven only) as on 09.02.2026.		
3.	Date when the Debt was due	04.12.2009		
4.	Date when the default occurred	04.03.2010		
5.	Nature of the Debt	TL, SOD, LC (Later both were merged to a single account)		
6.	Secured debt including particulars of security held, the date of its creation, its estimated value as per the creditor (as applicable), and details of securities.	Sl. No.	Account No. / Facility	
		1.	95911570000129	
		OCC	Rs. 204,84,97,307.97	
*Personal Guarantees were executed on different dates 28.04.2004, 23.11.2007, 29.04.2008, and 06.05.2009.				
Details of Prime Securities : Inventories , work in progress, spares, tools, unbilled revenues, receivables and all other current assets and non current receivables.				
Primary : Hypothecation of charge, inventory, receivables and all other current assets of the company both the present and future on pari passu basis with other W.C. bankers. In the present context, it may be considered as NIL.				
Collateral :				
Sl. No.	DESCRIPTION		Value	
1.	For Term Loan			
a.	Pledge of 100% shares of the Company on pari passu basis with other lenders.		N I L	
b.	Extension of 2nd charge on all fixed assets of the Company on pari passu basis.		N I L	
2.	For Working Capital			
	Extension of 1st charge on all fixed assets of the company on pari passu basis with other W.C. member banks under the consortium.		N I L	
Guarantee :				
Name		Address		
Mr. Sunil Kumar Mall		S/o. Shyam Sundar Mall, 4, Motilal Basak Lane, Kankurgachi, Kolkata - 700 054. And Loudon Manor, 3rd Floor, 8/2, Loudon Street, Kolkata - 700 017		
Mr. Shyam Sundar Mall		S/o. Bajrang Lal Mall, 4, Motilal Basak Lane, Kankurgachi, Kolkata - 700 054. And Loudon Manor, 3rd Floor, 8/2, Loudon Street, Kolkata - 700 017.		
Sri Mukesh Kumar Agarwal		AA-7, Civil Township, Rourkela, District - Sundergarh, Orissa, Pin - 769 004.		
Sri Hanuman Prasad Agarwal		AA-7, Civil Township, Rourkela, District - Sundergarh, Orissa, Pin - 769 004.		
Sri Bhagat Kumar Agarwal		AA-7, Civil Township, Rourkela, District - Sundergarh, Orissa, Pin - 769 004.		
7.	Unsecured Debt (as applicable)			
8.	Details of retention of title arrangements (if any) in respect of goods to which the debt refers (attach a copy)			
9.	Particulars of an order of a court, tribunal or arbitral panel adjudicating on the default, if any (attach a copy of the order)			
10.	Record of default with the information utility, if any (attach a copy)			
11.	Details of succession certificate, or probate of a WILL, or letter of administration, or court decree (as may be applicable), under the Indian Succession Act, 1925 (10 of 1925) (attach a copy)			
12.	Provision of law, contract or other document under which debt has become due (attach a copy)			
13.	Statement of bank account where deposits are made or credits received normally by the creditor in respect of the debt of the corporate debtor, from the date on which the debt was incurred			
14.	List of documents attached to this notice in order to prove the existence of debt and the amount in default			
1. Copy of Guarantee Agreement.				
2. Sanction memorandum.				
Statement of Accounts attached herewith.				
1. Copy of Guarantee Agreement.				
2. Sanction memorandum.				
ANNEXURE - I				
PART - A				
Break-up of the facilities provided and availed by the Corporate Debtor from the Bank and dues recoverable from the Debtor / Guarantor				
Sl. No.	Account Facility	Account No.	Limit	Outstanding as on 09.02.2026
1.	OCC	95911570000129	TL : Rs. 6.75 Cr.	Rs. 204,84,97,307.97
			SODH : Rs. 2.00 Cr.	
			LC : Rs. 0.40 Cr.	Rs. 204,84,97,307.97
		Total	Rs. 9.15 Cr.	
ANNEXURE - II				
PART - B				
Particulars of the Security/ies Provided by the Guarantor				
Sl. No.	Details of the Security	Date of Creation of Security	Approximate Value (Rs.)	
1.	NIL	NIL	NIL	
3. If you believe that the debt has been repaid before the receipt of this notice, please demonstrate such repayment by sending to us, within fourteen days of receipt of this notice, the following :				
(a) An attested copy of the record of electronic transfer of the unpaid amount from the bank account of the guarantor; or				
(b) Evidence of encashment of cheque for the unpaid amount issued by the guarantor; or				
(c) An attested copy of any record that Indian has received the payment.				
4. The undersigned request you to unconditionally pay the unpaid debt in default in full within fourteen days from the receipt of this letter failing which insolvency resolution process, under the Code, shall be initiated against you.				
Note : It is hereby clarified that the demand notice dated 21.07.2025 stands withdrawn/ recalled, and the present notice shall supercede the earlier notice and remain in full force and effect.				
Yours Sincerely,				
Sd/- Chief Manager Canara Bank, ARM Branch, Kolkata				



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The issue gained fresh attention after the Supreme Court Monday reopened the case, announcing that a nine-judge bench would begin final hearings on a batch of petitions on discrimination against women in religions and places of worship, including the Sabarimala temple.

Under tremendous pressure from prominent Hindu caste organisations and the Opposition Congress and BJP, the Left government said the Sabarimala women's entry issue involved several constitutional complications and that an appropriate stand would be taken after discussions.

The Opposition urged the Pinarayi Vijayan-led dispensation to take a stand on the issue.

Ahmedabad/Vadodara, Feb 16: As many as 34 schools in Ahmedabad and Vadodara in Gujarat received bomb threat emails Monday, following which the campuses were evacuated, police said.

The mails turned out to be hoaxes as nothing suspicious was found in any of the 34 schools -- 17 each in Ahmedabad and Vadodara -- that received bomb threat emails from persons claiming to be supporters of Khalistan, officials said. Search operations involving bomb detection and disposal squads (BDDS) were undertaken soon after the police were informed about it.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas has issued a statutory direction for coordinated and time-bound implementation of state action plans to prevent and eliminate wheat stubble burning in the 2026 harvesting season, officials said Monday.

The direction has been issued to the governments of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, with complementary efforts expected from the governments of Delhi and Rajasthan.

The directives laid out by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) include mapping each farm in all the villages for the proposed model of wheat stubble management, tagging specific nodal officers to a group of farmers and covering all farmers in the district.

It also directs the governments to ensure optimum util-

Rajeev said the state government, in its earlier affidavit, had suggested constituting a commission of scholars having deep knowledge of Hindu beliefs and having record in social reformation to study the

government to make its stand clear on the matter, with the grand old party calling on it to file a revised affidavit in the top court on the matter.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Monday said it has imposed a ₹184-crore FEMA penalty against news portal NewsClick and its founder and editor-in-chief, Prabir Purkayastha, who came under the scanner of the probe agencies on allegations of peddling "pro-China propaganda" through its stories.

PPK NEWSCLICK Studio Private Limited, the company that owns NewsClick, has been penalised for an amount of ₹120 crore while Purkayastha has been imposed with the same order for ₹64 crore under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the federal agency said in a statement.

The order has been issued by the Adjudicating Authority of FEMA (a special director rank officer of the ED) after completing the adjudication process (end of investigation) against the two entities related to "violations" of foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign inward remittances.

"The Adjudicating Authority observed that the contraventions were substantial, deliberate, and systemic in nature, involving large-scale foreign exchange transactions and breach of statutory declarations furnished to regulatory authorities," it said.

There was no immediate response from NewsClick on the development.

The agency said the penalty was imposed after the ED carried out a detailed examination of records, evidence and submissions made by the noticees (PPK NEWSCLICK Studio and Purkayastha).

The ED has a separate money laundering case registered against the portal and had first raided the premises of News-Click located in the Saidulajab



Koppal (Karnataka), Feb 16: A court in Karnataka Monday sentenced three people to death for sexually assaulting an Israeli tourist and murdering a youth in this district last year.

The Gangavathi Civil Court sentenced the convicts - Mallesh alias Handi Malla, Sharanabasava and Chaitanya Sai - to death. The court had February 7 found them guilty and reserved the order for February 16.

On Monday, the court pronounced the quantum of punishment. According to the prosecution, the heinous crime took place near Sana-pur March 6, 2025.

The Israeli-origin woman was subjected to inhuman sexual assault. The incident had made international headlines and cast a shadow over the district's tourism. Public Prosecutor Nagalakshmi told reporters that the homestay owner had taken tourists Pankaj from Maharashtra, and Bibhas from Odisha, Daniel from the US and an Israeli woman for stargazing.

at Sanapur near Tungabhadra canal under Gangavathi rural police station limits at about 10.30 pm. Just then the three accused reached there on a motorcycle and picked up a fight over a financial dispute, she added.

With an intention to rape these women, the convicts pushed the three men into the canal. To ensure that they do not come out, they threw stones on them. Later, they gang raped the home-stay owner and the Israeli national, the Public Prosecutor said. "Bibhas Kumar died due to drowning in the canal. Pankaj did not know how to swim but Daniel saved him," Nagalakshmi said.

She added that after raping the women, the accused decamped with their mobile phones, cash and a camera.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Supreme Court Monday refused to entertain petitions seeking action against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma over a viral video purportedly showing him taking aim and firing with a rifle at members of a particular community.

Expressing strong disapproval of the trend of parties directly approaching the top court, a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul Mehta asked the petitioners to approach the Gauhati High Court with their grievances.

The top court also asked the chief justice of the Gauhati High Court to expedite the hearing in the matter.

“Why haven’t you gone to the Gauhati High Court? Don’t undermine its authority. We will ask parties to use restraint and remain within the boundaries of constitutional morality, but this is becoming a trend just before the polls.”

As the hearing commenced, CJI Kant observed, "Wherever the elections come, this court becomes a political battleground." Political parties should fight elections based on "mutual respect and self-restraint", he said. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the petitioners, submitted that Sarma is a habitual and repeat offender, as he urged the court to entertain the matter.

Singhvi said the case should be entertained under Article 32, as the high court may not be an appropriate remedy since the petitioners are seeking an SIT investigation against the Assam chief minister.

The senior lawyer argued that Sarma made objectionable statements not only in Assam, but in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh as well, and hence it was a pan-Indian case.

The agency has recorded the statements of more than 25 people in the money laundering case, including that of Purkayastha. The Delhi Police has also investigated these entities.

The BJP, in 2023, had quoted a New York Times news article to allege that the portal and its promoter were "pushing pro-China agenda" through its stories.

The news article had stated the portal was part of a global network that received funding from American billionaire Neville Roy Singham, who allegedly works closely with the Chinese government media machine.

The ED said its probe found that FDI of ₹59 crore was received (by the company) during the 2018-19 fiscal by "misrepresenting" the nature of business activity in statutory filings, thereby bypassing prescribed sectoral conditions and entry route requirements under FEMA.

It was also detected that foreign inward remittances of ₹82.63 crore, purportedly received between 2018-19 to 2023-24 financial years, for export of services, were found to be in "contravention" of FEMA provisions due to "misclassification" of exports and "failure" to comply with mandatory reporting requirements, including submission of SOFTEX (used for software or information technology exports) forms.

isation and timely availability of crop residue management (CRM) machines to the farmers -- mainly during the peak harvesting season -- through a mobile app, mandate rent-free availability of CRM machines for small and marginal farmers through the CHCs, among other measures.

adjoining areas and therefore requires structured seasonal preparedness. Satellite-based monitoring during the wheat harvesting season (April-May 2025), recording such fire incidents across the region, highlighted the need for targeted wheat-season interventions alongside existing paddy-season measures,” a senior official said.

“The Commission had provided a broad framework to the states concerned for control

and elimination of crop residue burning and directed them to draw up detailed state-specific action plans based on the major contours of the framework," the official added.

As per the standard protocol developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), the numbers of fire events recorded during the wheat-harvesting season (April 1 to May 31,

2025) in Punjab, Haryana, and NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh were 10,207, 1,832, and 259 respectively.

States have been asked to establish a robust and continuous supply chain of wheat straw in various forms for ex-situ (after its removal from the farm) applications, including its use as fodder. A district-level supply chain management plan will be formulated for each district, considering demand and supply throughout the year, according to the official.

“States have been asked to form a dedicated Parali Protection Force(PPF) at the district or block level comprising of police officers, officers of the agriculture department, administrative officers, nodal and cluster officers and officials from other stakeholder departments, to closely monitor, oversee and guard against any incidence of open wheat stubble burning,” the official added.

of the day

Quote

This summit is an important moment in determining how we can work together with our international partners to unlock the full benefits and potential of AI, while baking in robust and fair safety standards that protect us all

DAVID LAMMY | DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, UK

The security and stability of the UAE is an "integral part" of Pakistan's own security

MARSHAL ASIM MUNIR | CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCES FIELD, PAKISTAN

After the end of UNIFIL's mission, Germany will stay by the side of your country to boost state authority

FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER | PRESIDENT, GERMANY

SHORT TAKES

Fireworks store explosion kills 8

Beijing: An explosion and fire at a fireworks shop in eastern China has killed eight people and left two others with minor burns ahead of the Lunar New Year, authorities said. The Sunday afternoon blast in a village in Jiangsu province was caused by a resident setting off fireworks improperly near the store, the Donghai county government said in a statement. It did not provide further details on what happened. Setting off firecrackers at midnight on the Lunar New Year is a tradition in China, but many places have banned fireworks in recent years, at least in part because of air pollution.

25 Indian fishermen apprehended by SL

Colombo: The Sri Lanka Navy Monday apprehended 25 Indian fishermen for allegedly poaching in the island nation's territorial waters. The fishermen were apprehended and their two trawlers were seized in Sri Lankan waters off Kankesanthurai, Jaffna, the Navy said in a statement. The fishermen will be handed over to the Fisheries Inspector of Myliddy, Jaffna, for further legal proceedings. The fishermen issue is a contentious one in the ties between India and Sri Lanka, with the Sri Lankan Navy personnel sometimes even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats for illegally entering Sri Lanka's territorial waters.

Improvement in Khan's eyesight

Islamabad: A team of doctors Monday reported an improvement in the eyesight of jailed former Pakistan premier Imran Khan, as well as the condition of his eye, after examining him. The examination was done by two doctors Sunday, following the Supreme Court's order to allow a detailed medical check-up of the 73-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician's eyes.

Cyclone Gezani leaves 59 dead

Antananarivo: At least 59 people died when Cyclone Gezani struck Madagascar last week, the disaster management office said Monday, as it assesses the impact of the second tropical storm to hit the Indian Ocean island nation this year. The cyclone displaced 16,428, while 15 people remain missing, 804 were injured and 423,986 were classified as affected by the disaster, the National Bureau for Risk and Disaster Management (BNGRC) said.

N-talks: Iran Foreign Min meets IAEA chief

REUTERS

Dubai/Budapest, Feb 16: Iran's foreign minister met with the UN nuclear watchdog chief Monday, ahead of talks between Washington and Tehran aimed at resolving a nuclear dispute, with few clear signs of compromise from either side and the threat of US military action looming.

Washington, which joined Israel in a wave of air strikes on Iran in June, has ordered a second aircraft carrier group to the Middle East in the latest standoff with Tehran, in addition to other US warships and aircraft that have already been deployed.

Adding to the tension, Iran began a military drill Monday in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital international waterway and oil export route from Gulf Arab states, who have been appealing for diplomacy to end the dispute.

The US and Iran renewed negotiations earlier this month hoping to tackle their decades-long dispute over Tehran's nuclear program, which Washington, other Western states and Israel all believe is aimed at building nuclear arms. Tehran denies this.

Oil prices were little changed Monday, with investors weighing the market implications of upcoming US-Iran talks aimed at de-escalating frictions against a backdrop of expected OPEC+ supply increases

SCOPE OF TALKS EXPANDS TO MISSILE STOCKPILE

However, Washington has sought to expand the scope of talks to non-nuclear issues such as Iran's missile stockpile. Tehran says it is only willing



Iran conducts drill in Strait of Hormuz in case of a military threat

Iran seeks sanctions relief in exchange for nuclear curbs

US deploys warships, prepares for possible military campaign

IAEA demands Iran account for missing enriched uranium

to discuss curbs on its nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief and won't accept zero uranium enrichment. It says its missile capabilities are off the table.

Speaking during a visit to Hungary Monday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said reaching a deal with Tehran would be hard.

"I think that there's an opportunity here to diplomatically reach an agreement that addresses the things we're concerned about. We'll be very open and welcoming to that. But I don't want to overstate it either. It's going to be hard. It's been very difficult for anyone to do real deals with Iran, because we're dealing with radical Shia clerics who are making theolog-

NK opens new housing district for families of Ukraine war dead

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Feb 16: North Korea said Monday it completed a new housing district in Pyongyang for families of North Korean soldiers killed while fighting alongside Russian forces in Ukraine, the latest effort by leader Kim Jong Un to honor the war dead.

State media photos showed Kim Jong Un walking through the new street - called Saepyo Street - and visiting the homes of some of the families with his increasingly prominent daughter, believed to be named Kim Ju Ae, as he pledged to repay the "young martyrs" who "sacrificed all to their motherland."

In recent months, North Korea has intensified propaganda glorifying troops deployed to fight in Russia's war against Ukraine, such as establishing a memorial wall and building a museum. Analysts see it as an effort to bolster internal unity and curb

potential public discontent.

Kim in recent months has sent thousands of troops and large quantities of military equipment, including artillery and missiles, to fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine, as the leaders align in the face of their separate confrontations with Washington.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers last week it estimates that about 6,000 North Korean troops were killed or wounded during their deployment in the war, but did not provide a breakdown of fatalities. The agency said last year it believed roughly 600 had died.

The spy agency believes North Korean forces are benefiting from the war by gaining modern combat experience and Russian technical support that could improve the performance of their weapons systems, according to lawmakers who attended last week's closed-door briefing.

CURBS ON AI CHATBOTS

REUTERS

London, Feb 16: Britain could bring in an Australian-style ban on social media for children under 16 as early as this year and close a loophole that left some AI chatbots outside safety rules, as part of government efforts to respond more quickly to digital risks.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government last month launched a consultation on a social media ban for children under 16 and is now working to change legislation so it could bring in any changes within months of the consultation concluding.

Spain, Greece and Slovenia have also said they are working on bans after Australia became the first country in the world to block access to under 16s.

Scrutiny has since intensified further after Elon Musk's flagship AI chatbot Grok was found to be generating nonconsensual sexualised images.

GLOBAL PRESSURE GROWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Britain's 2023 Online Safety Act is one of the world's strictest safety regimes, but it does not cover one-to-one interactions with AI chatbots unless they share information with other users, a loophole technology minister Liz Kendall said would soon be closed.

Britain cannot allow regulatory gaps to persist after the act took nearly eight years to pass and come into force, she said.

"I am concerned about these AI chatbots... as is the prime minister, about the impact that's having on children and young people," Kendall told

I will accept a proposal made by the nation's largest remaining rebel group to allow an independent commission to investigate the group's alleged links to the drug trade

GUSTAVO PETRO | PRESIDENT, COLOMBIA

CARNEY TO VISIT INDIA

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will visit New Delhi in early March to work with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the framework for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement, Canadian official Victor Fedeli said Monday



Hindus among four elected to B'desh Parl

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 16: Four candidates from minority communities, including two Hindus, won in the recent general elections in Bangladesh, with all being nominees of the BNP, which is set to form the government Tuesday.

Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and Nitai Roy Chowdhury are the two Hindu candidates who won on a Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) ticket. They won from a Dhaka seat and western Magura constituency defeating their rivals fielded by the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Roy is a member of the BNP's highest policy-making standing committee while Chowdhury is one of prominent vice presidents of the party as well as a senior advisor and strategist for its top leadership.

The third minority MP-elect is Saching Pru, a senior BNP leader and follower of Buddhist faith, representing Marma ethnic community in southeastern hill district of Bandarban, from where he was elected.

The fourth minority candidate, Dipen Dewan, belongs to the Buddhist majority Chakma ethnic minority group, who won from a constituency in southeastern Rangamati hill district. However, his religious identity is obscure with many describing him as a Hindu.

Hindus make up about eight per cent of the population in the Muslim-majority country of 170 million people.

Dewan defeated an independent Chakma candidate as his nearest rival while Pru defeated a nominee of the student-led National Citizen Party, which was formed last year by the Students Against Discrimination, which led the mass protests against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024.

Tarique Rahman to take oath as Bangladesh's new PM Tuesday

Breaking with a long-standing tradition, the swearing-in ceremony of the 60-year-old BNP chairman would be held at the South Plaza of the Parliament Complex instead of Bangabhaban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Feb 16: Tarique Rahman will take oath as the new Prime Minister of Bangladesh Tuesday after leading his party to a forceful victory in the crucial general elections.

Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has bagged 209 out of 297 seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami secured 68 seats in the 13th Parliamentary elections. Deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League was barred from contesting polls.

Breaking with a long-standing tradition, the swearing-in ceremony of the 60-year-old BNP chairman would be held at the South Plaza of the Parliament Complex instead of Bangabhaban. President Mohammed Shahabuddin will administer the oath to the new cabinet members at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Tuesday afternoon, state-run BSS news agency reported Monday.

"The Parliament Secretariat is set to hold the oath-taking ceremony of the new cabinet members at 4:00 pm tomorrow," Secretary of the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat Kaniz Maula said.

Earlier Tuesday, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin would administer the oath to all newly elected members of the parliament.

All 297 newly elected lawmakers of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad (JS) will "first take oath as the members of parliament



(MPs) and then as the members of the Constitutional Reform Council," said a press release of JS Secretariat. BNP has called a parliamentary party meeting at the Parliament Building at 11:30 am to elect the parliamentary party leader.

"As the leader of the majority party, our party chairman, Tarique Rahman, will be the Prime Minister," said Salah Uddin Ahmed, a member of the standing committee of the BNP.

The Constitutional dictates - immediately after their swearing-in, the BNP MPs will elect their leader who will be invited by the President to form the government, a Bangabhaban presidential palace official said Monday.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will represent India at the swearing-in ceremony of Rahman. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Secretary-General of Lok Sabha Utpal Kumar Singh are also likely to accompany Birla. Rahman would become the prime minister for the first time. He will replace the interim government chief Muhammad Yunus, under whose tenure Dhaka's relations with New Delhi witnessed a significant downturn.

Election campaigning formally kicks off across Nepal for March 5 polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Feb 16: Political parties in Nepal Monday officially began campaigning for the March 5 general elections.

As restrictions imposed by the Election Commission (EC) on the launch of the election campaign ended Sunday night, candidates started door-to-door visits, public meetings and rallies. The EC designated February 16 to March 2 as days for formal campaign activities, including public meetings, rallies, processions, corner meetings and the use of loudspeakers. All types of campaigning must stop from midnight March 2, 48 hours before the general election.

There are a total of 18,903,689 eligible voters for the election, including 915,119 newly registered ones, compared to the last parliamentary election in 2022.

The Lower House of Parliament has 275 lawmakers, of which 165 are elected through the first past the post (FPTP) system or direct voting while 110 are elected through proportionate voting.



Revellers attend the annual block party "Pena de Pavao de Krishna" during the Carnival festivities in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

UK eyes rapid ban on social media for under 16s



Times Radio, saying some children were forming one-to-one relationships with AI systems that were not designed with child safety in mind.

She said the government would set out its proposals before June.

Speaking to British media Monday, Kendall said tech

- Government proposal due before June, Kendall says
- Consultation to examine curbs on 'stranger pairing' in gaming
- Automatic data-preservation orders planned for child death investigations

families. The consultation would also consider powers to curb "stranger pairing" on gaming consoles and to block the sending or receiving of nude images.

The new measures will be introduced as an amendment to existing crime and child-protection legislation being considered by parliament.

While aimed at shielding children, such measures often have knock-on implications for adults' privacy and ability to

access services, and have led to tension with the US over limits on free speech and regulatory reach.

Some major pornography sites have blocked British users rather than carry out age checks, but those blocks can be circumvented by using readily available virtual private networks, which the government is considering restricting for minors.

Many parents and safety advocates back a social media ban for children, but Kendall said some child-protection groups worry it could push harmful activity into less regulated spaces or create a sharp "cliff edge" at 16. She added that the government still needed to define legally what counts as social media before any ban can take effect.

India's retail is an inspiring story -- the sector is poised to expand into a nearly Rs 200 lakh crore opportunity over the next decade

ABHEEK SINGHI | MD & SENIOR PARTNER, BCG

Real estate is where national ambition becomes real, through homes that anchor dignity, workplaces that power productivity and infrastructure that enables mobility and opportunity. In that sense, the sector is not only shaping assets, but also outcomes

PARVEEN JAIN | PRESIDENT, NAREDCO

As we are preparing for the next phase, we have created a five-year plan. The five-year plan talks about growing volumes to about 3 lakh units

ANURAG MEHROTRA | MD, JSW MG MOTOR

SHORT TAKES

Violating standards: Snapdeal fined ₹5L

New Delhi: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on e-commerce platform Snapdeal for selling toys that do not comply with mandatory Bureau of Indian Standards certification, violating the Toys (Quality Control) Order, 2020. A final order against Snapdeal (Ace Vector Limited) has been issued after taking suo-motu cognizance of the matter, CCPA Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare told PTI. The CCPA has also issued notices to other e-commerce entities including Amazon and Flipkart, along with sellers such as Stallion Trading Company and Electronics Bazar Store, she said.

Torrent Power to buy L&T coal plant

Mumbai: India's Torrent Power said Monday it will buy a coal-fired power plant operator in northern India from Larsen & Toubro for Rs 68.89 billion (\$759.48 million) including debt as it seeks to build capacity in the region. Larsen & Toubro, whose unit L&T Power Development will execute the deal, will receive Rs 36.61 billion for the sale of plant operator Nabha Power, it said in a separate statement. Nabha operates a 1,400-megawatt coal-fired plant in India's northern Punjab state and supplies all its electricity to the state power corporation under a 25-year contract.

Rooftop solar push slowed by reluctant lenders, states

REUTERS

Singapore/Mumbai/Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push to accelerate the roll-out of rooftop solar power is falling short of targets despite heavy subsidies due to loan delays and limited support from state utilities, vendors and analysts say.

The shortfalls represent the latest challenge to India's efforts to nearly double clean energy capacity to 500 gigawatts by 2030, and come as the government plans to suspend clean energy tendering targets amid a mounting backlog of awarded projects yet to be built.

Challenges to plans to increase solar uptake may mean India maintains its reliance on coal-fired power.

India's Ministry for New and Renewable Energy created its subsidy programme for residential solar panel installations in February 2024, covering up to 40% of the costs.

3-MONTH HIGH

Trade deficit widens

Higher gold, silver shipments drive imports to highest so far this fiscal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The country's exports rose marginally by 0.61 per cent to \$36.56 billion in January, while trade deficit widened to a three-month high of \$34.68 billion, government data showed Monday.

Imports rose 19.2 per cent - the highest so far this fiscal - to a three-month high of \$71.24 billion in January, driven by a sharp rise in inbound shipments of gold and silver due to higher prices.

Gold imports surged 349.22 per cent to \$12 billion during the month under review, while silver imports jumped by 127 per cent to \$2 billion.

India mainly imports the yellow metal from Switzerland, from where the inbound shipments have climbed 836.85 per cent to \$3.95 billion in January.

Oil imports, however, dipped 0.24 per cent to \$13.4 billion in January.

Cumulatively during April-January 2025-26 fiscal, the country's exports rose by 2.22 per cent to \$366.63 billion.

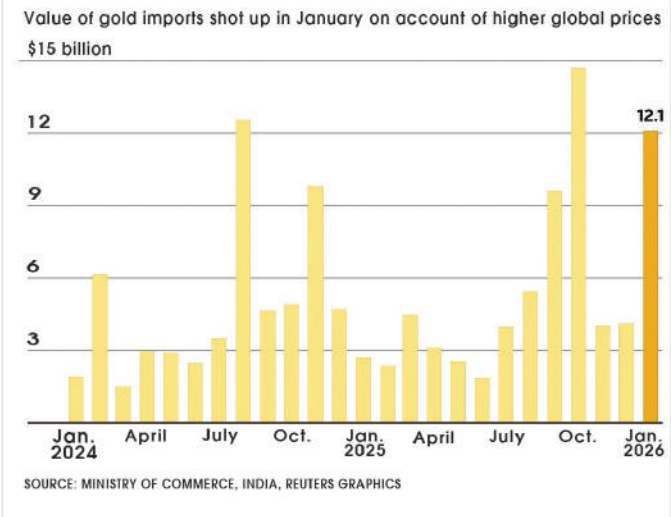
Imports grew 7.21 per cent to \$649.86 billion, leaving a trade deficit of \$283.23 billion during the nine-month period of 2025-26. The gap was \$247.38 billion in April-January 2024-25.

During April-January this fiscal, the total exports are estimated at \$720.76 billion as against \$679.02 billion recorded



Anthropic's business run-rate revenue within India has doubled over the last four months, and Claude Code may have even grown faster

DARIO AMODEI | CEO, ANTHROPIC



TRADE DEFICIT: \$34.68 billion

IMPORTS (19.2% ▲): \$71.24 billion

EXPORTS (0.61% ▲): \$36.56 billion

The country's exports remain northwards both in goods and services... We expect to be in the vicinity of \$860 billion overall exports in the current fiscal. And in services we expect to be over \$410 billion

RAJESH AGRAWAL | COMMERCE SECRETARY

The global trade has been disrupted due to tariffs imposed by the US. On India, the Trump administration has levied a steep 50 per cent tariffs from August. This is impacting the country's outbound shipments from the labour-intensive sectors, such as apparel.

The US has removed a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods from February 7. It will cut the remaining 25 per cent reciprocal

TPCODL's 'Bill Pay & Win' selects 500 consumers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, continues to drive timely bill payments and digital adoption through its 'Bill Pay & Win' initiative.

The scheme recognises customers with zero arrears who consistently pay their electricity bills on time via digital platforms, reinforcing a culture of financial discipline and convenience.

TPCODL selected 500 customers across six categories from the July–December 2025 cycle. Fifteen senior citizens from Bhubaneswar participated in the selection event held at TPCODL's MDC.

Sharing his experience, customer Rajendra Kumar Swain said, "Digital payment is simple and convenient—we scan the

QR code and pay via UPI. The rebate for opting out of physical bills is an added benefit. We now use this for both our society and individual meters."

Arvind Singh, CEO, TPCODL, said, "At TPCODL, we are committed to enhancing customer convenience and building lasting relationships. The 'Bill Pay & Win' scheme not only promotes timely bill payments and digital transactions but also recognizes and rewards our responsible customers in a transparent and engaging manner."

Meanwhile, the Mega Bill Pay & Win Scheme for January–March 2026 is already live, offering customers another opportunity to win exciting prizes and cashbacks. TPCODL has also launched a focused digital payment campaign under the theme 'No Line, Just Online', strengthening its push toward seamless, customer-friendly services.

tariffs to 18 per cent once a trade agreement is finalised between the two countries.

At the exports front, key sectors such as petroleum, engineering, electronics, iron ore, marine and coffee have recorded positive growth in January.

However, shipments of tea, rice, spices, leather and leather products, gems and jewellery, chemicals, ready-made garments of all textiles, and plastics have recorded negative growth.

MCL Hirakud Int'l Half Marathon marks participation of over 10,000 athletes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 16: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) in collaboration with Sambalpur district administration organised the MCL Hirakud International Half Marathon.

The historic event took place at the iconic Hirakud Dam in Sambalpur, Odisha, with a total prize purse of Rs 55 lakh, drawing over 10,000 enthusiastic participants from across the globe, including professional marathon runners, fitness enthusiasts, young and old.

Participants from around 20 states of the country and international athletes from Kenya, Nigeria, Bhutan, Nepal and others participated in this historic marathon.

Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education along with Suresh Pujari, Revenue Minister; Rabi Narayan Naik, Minister of Panchayati Raj, Rural Development and Drinking Water; Suryabanshi Suraj, Minister of Sports & Youth Services, Government of Odisha; MPs, MLAs flagged off the half

- Loan delays and limited state support hinder solar roll out
- State utilities fear revenue loss from rooftop solar adoption
- About 60% of rooftop solar applications not approved yet

newable energy ministry pointed to accelerating installations which have benefited over 3 million households, and said the scheme enables state-owned utilities to reduce subsidy payouts to keep residential power bills in check. "The loan rejection rate varies across states," the statement said.

Under PM Surya Ghar, consumers apply and select a vendor who handles paperwork and arranges bank financing for solar panels. After loan approval and installation, the vendor submits proof, after which the government subsidy is credited to the bank.

BANK DELAYS However, banks have been rejecting or delaying loans for

X SUFFERS GLOBAL OUTAGE

Elon Musk-run X Corp suffered a global outage, including in India, as well as several other countries like the US and the UK, Monday evening, with users unable to access their accounts properly, and posts unable to load on the platform. According to the outage detecting portal Down Detector, the number of outage reports surged to over 25,000. While 53 per cent of X app users were unable to log into their accounts, 16 per cent of website users reported issues



Buying in power, banking stocks pushes equities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 16: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply by nearly 1 per cent Monday, driven by strong buying in power, banking, and financial stocks amid a mixed trend overseas.

Besides, a largely stable rupee and global crude oil prices amid US-Iran talks supported investors' sentiment, traders said.

Snapping its three-day decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 650.39 points, or 0.79 per cent, to close at 83,277.15. The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 211.65 points, or 0.83 per cent, to settle at 25,682.75.

A total of 2,565 stocks declined, while 1,747 advanced, and 184 remain unchanged on the BSE. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms increased by Rs 3,11,982.13 crore to Rs 4,68,58,625.33 crore (\$5.17 trillion).

PowerGrid emerged as the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 4.45 per cent, followed by HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, NTPC, ITC, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Reliance Industries and State Bank of India.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki India, Bajaj Finance, Trent, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Infosys, ICICI Bank, and UltraTech Cement were the laggards. BSE Midcap Select Index rose 0.95 per cent, while Smallcap Select Index slipped 0.16 per cent.

On the other hand, Consumer Discretionary and Auto were the only laggards.

WPI inflation surges for 3rd month on trot



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Wholesale price inflation extended upward momentum for the third straight month, at 1.81 per cent in January, driven by an uptick in prices of food, non-food articles, and manufactured items on a month-on-month basis, government data showed Monday.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was 2.51 per cent in January last year, while in the previous month (December 2025), it was 0.83 per cent.

"Positive rate of inflation in January 2026 is primarily due to increase in prices of manufacture of basic metals, other manufacturing, non-food articles, food articles, and textiles, etc," the industry ministry said in a statement.

According to WPI data, inflation in food articles was 1.55 per cent in January as against deflation of 0.43 per cent in December.

In vegetables, inflation was

6.78 per cent in January as against deflation of 3.50 per cent in December.

In the case of manufactured products, WPI inflation inched up to 2.86 per cent, as against 1.82 per cent in December.

Non-food articles category inflation spiked to 7.58 per cent in January, against 2.95 per cent in December.

Negative inflation, or deflation, continued in the fuel and power sectors, at 4.01 per cent in January, as against 2.31 per cent in December.

The country's retail inflation inched up to 2.75 per cent in January, data released last week showed.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced policy interest rates by 1.25 percentage points in the current fiscal year as inflation remained low.

The RBI mainly tracks retail inflation for deciding on benchmark interest rates. Earlier this month, the RBI retained key policy interest rates at 5.25 per cent.

Silver crashes 2%; gold advances

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Silver prices declined by 2 per cent to Rs 2.5 lakh per kilogram, while gold increased by Rs 700 per 10 grams in the national capital Monday.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal depreciated by Rs 5,000, or 1.96 per cent, to Rs 2,50,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) from Rs 2,55,000 per kg Friday.

However, gold of 99.9 per cent purity advanced by Rs 700 to Rs 1,59,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close of Rs 1,58,500 per 10 grams.

"Silver began the week on a softer note, as investors booked profits after the weekend's rally. However, ongoing central bank purchases, heightened safe-haven demand amid the correction in tech and AI stocks, and a weaker dollar index have helped cushion the downside," Gaurvay Garg, Research Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

In the global market, spot silver fell nearly 1 per cent to \$76.94 per ounce, while gold slipped \$40.10, or 1 per cent, to \$5,003.01 per ounce.

AM/NS India expands value-added steel portfolio

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai/ Delhi, Feb 16: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) Monday announced the strengthening of its value-added portfolio with AM/NS Vibrance and AM/NS Optima – two world-class, premium branded steel solutions engineered to meet the increasingly design-led needs of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) across appliance and industrial manufacturing ecosystems.

With demand rising for steel that combines consistent surface quality, tight tolerances and reliable performance at scale, AM/NS India is expanding its value-added portfolio with branded offerings that reduce reliance on imports while making premium, internationally benchmarked quality available domestically.

These two branded coated offerings now form part of a value added product portfolio

that includes Optigal®, Magnelis®, Optigal® Prime, Optigal® Pinnacle, and others – each validated for consistency, efficiency, and durability across diverse applications.

Ranjan Dhar, Director and Vice President – Sales & Marketing said, "The addition of AM/NS Vibrance and AM/NS Optima is a significant step in expanding our branded steel portfolio to support OEMs productivity and value creation. These two coated steel offerings strengthen our position as a preferred solution provider with innovative, high-quality steel solutions in line with our brand promise – 'Smarter Steels, Brighter Futures'. By making world-class value-added steels available domestically, we are contributing to the 'Make in India' vision, while enabling our customers to build differentiated products with confidence and gain competitive advantage domestically and globally."

Nissanka's ton takes SL into Super 8s

The opener scripts history, becoming only the second Sri Lankan batter to score a century in the tournament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pallekele (Sri Lanka), Feb 16: Opener Pathum Nissanka Monday turned a tricky chase into a walk in the park, his bel-ligerent 52-ball 100 powering Sri Lanka to an eight-wicket win over Australia and securing their place in the Super Eights here.

Set a record target of 182 at this venue, Sri Lanka rode on Nissanka's unbeaten knock and Kusal Mendis's 38-ball 51 to complete the task in 18 overs and leave Australia's qualification hopes hanging by a thread.

Pavan Rathnayake remained not out on 28 off 15 balls.

Nissanka smashed 10 fours and five sixes during his match-winning knock.

Australia will now need to win by a massive margin against Oman in their final match and rely on both Sri Lanka and Ireland to beat Zimbabwe to have any sort of outside chance whatsoever. In fact if Zimbabwe manage to beat Ireland on Thursday, then Australia will be knocked out even before meeting Oman in their last group league game.

Earlier, Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head blazed away to explosive fifties before Sri Lanka rallied to bowl out Australia for 181.

Coming back into the playing XI after missing the team's first two matches of the tournament due to an injury, Marsh got into the act straightaway, clobbering 54 in 27 balls.

Head was equally brutal during his 29-ball 56, as the opening duo added 104 runs in

TODAY'S CLASHES	
 New Zealand vs Canada Time- 11:00 am	
 Ireland vs Zimbabwe Time- 3:00 pm	
 Scotland vs Nepal Time- 7:00 pm	

UCL PLAYOFFS

Real return to Benfica for revenge mission

Madrid: With Kylian Mbappe back in the squad, Real Madrid returns to Portugal looking for some payback against Jose Mourinho's Benfica in the Champions League. Three weeks after Mourinho's team stunned his former club in a 4-2 win that allowed Benfica to qualify and kept the Spanish giant from automatically reaching the round of 16, the two teams will meet again at the Stadium of Light in the first round of the knockout stage. Benfica got the goal it needed to qualify thanks to a last-minute header by goalkeeper Anatoly Trubin against Madrid, allowing it to grab the 24th - and final - spot for the knockout stage on goal difference. Mbappe, who already has 38 goals for Monaco this season, will be available again after he missed the Spanish league match against Real Sociedad at the weekend because of discomfort on his knee.

Nervous PSG to take on Monaco

Paris: PSG dropped out of the top eight that automatically qualified for the last-16 after a 1-1 home draw against Newcastle in the last round of the league phase, dropping it to 11th place. Paris Saint-Germain is under pressure for the first time this season and tensions have started appearing. After failing to qualify, last year's winner faces a playoff against Ligue 1 rival Monaco. PSG heads to Monaco for Tuesday's first leg on the back of a 3-1 defeat at Rennes, which allowed Lens to reclaim top spot in Ligue 1. PSG is also out of the French Cup and has lost six games overall this season. The Rennes defeat prompted PSG's Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele to question the attitude of his teammates. Without giving names, he suggested some players are putting themselves first. Dembele's comments led coach Luis Enrique to issue a stern reminder about keeping a united front. Luis Enrique's strong man-management has helped PSG become a far more unified team. He made it clear that, unlike previous seasons, there would be no pampered players.



T20 WORLD CUP

less than nine overs to set Australia up for a 200-plus total.

But the Sri Lankans did much better in the back 10, with leg-spinner Dushan Hemantha (3/37 in 4 overs) emerging as the most successful bowler for the home team. The last four wickets fell for only six runs.

In the chase, Sri Lanka copped an early blow when Kusal Perera failed to connect properly with a Marcus Stoinis ball and ended up slicing it to the deep backward point fielder.

With 89 needed from 60 balls and with nine wickets in hand, Sri Lanka fancied their chances of overhauling the target.

Earlier, the move to field first backfired on the Sri Lankans as Australia got off to a rollicking start with Marsh and Head marking their reunion with a flurry of fours and sixes.

Following their 23-run defeat to Zimbabwe, Australia began the game in earnest, collecting as many as 16 runs in the very

England seal Super Eights berth

Kolkata: Will Jacks delivered a fiery all-round performance as England overcame a spirited Italian fightback to beat them by 24 runs and seal their Super Eights berth, in their T20 World Cup Group C clash at Eden Gardens, here Monday. Opting to bat, England rode on Jacks' scintillating unbeaten 53 off just 22 balls (4x6, 3x4) to pile up 202 for 7 -- their first 200-plus total of this edition. In reply, debutants Italy put up a spirited display and threatened twice in the chase through Ben Manenti's breathtaking assault (60; 25b) and a late flourish from Grant Stewart (45; 23b). But Jacks' maiden T20 World Cup fifty and his timely breakthrough ensured the two-time champions stayed in control when it mattered a nd bowled out their European rivals for 178 in 20 overs.



Omarzai powers Afghanistan to first win of 2026 T20 WC

New Delhi: Azmatullah Omarzai produced an all-round show to power Afghanistan to their first win of the 2026 T20 World Cup through a five-wicket victory over United Arab Emirates here Monday. Omarzai first returned with figures of 4/15 to help restrict UAE to 160 for 9. He then played a match-winning cameo of 40 not out after Ibrahim Zadran scored 53 to take Afghanistan to their first win in the ongoing edition. For UAE, Sohaib Khan scored his second consecutive fifty, smashing 68 off 48 balls while Alishan Sharafu contributed 31-ball 40.



Off-colour Babar, Shaheen to be dropped: Pak team source

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Feb 16: Pakistan is set to drop senior players Babar Azam and Shaheen Shah Afridi from their next T20 World Cup match against Namibia after the duo's failure to come good in the high-stakes game against India in Colombo, a reliable source in the team management told PTI Monday.

The source said that Pakistani Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi conveyed his displeasure over the team's performance in the 61-run loss to India to team manager Naved Akram Cheema.

"The Chairman left the match early at the Premadasa stadium as it became obvious Pakistan were going to face another defeat to India," the source said.

He said Naqvi, through a senior PCB official, also conveyed to the manager that such performances in matches that matter were not understandable or acceptable.

The source said head coach Mike Hesson also spoke to the players in the dressing room



and told them that they had not played to their full potential.

"Late night the management think tank decided enough was enough and it was to bench Babar and Shaheen and try out Salman Mirza/Naseem Shah and Fakhar Zaman against Namibia on Wednesday," he said.

The source said that if the changes prove to be successful, Babar and Shaheen's World Cup would be over as the management is also keen to try out young Khawaja Nafay in the middle order.

Pakistan cannot afford any slip-up against Namibia if they want to qualify for the super eight phase of the tournament. The team defeated lower-ranked USA and the Netherlands before the heavy loss to India.

ODISHA BOY MAKES SENIOR INDIA DEBUT ON HOME SOIL

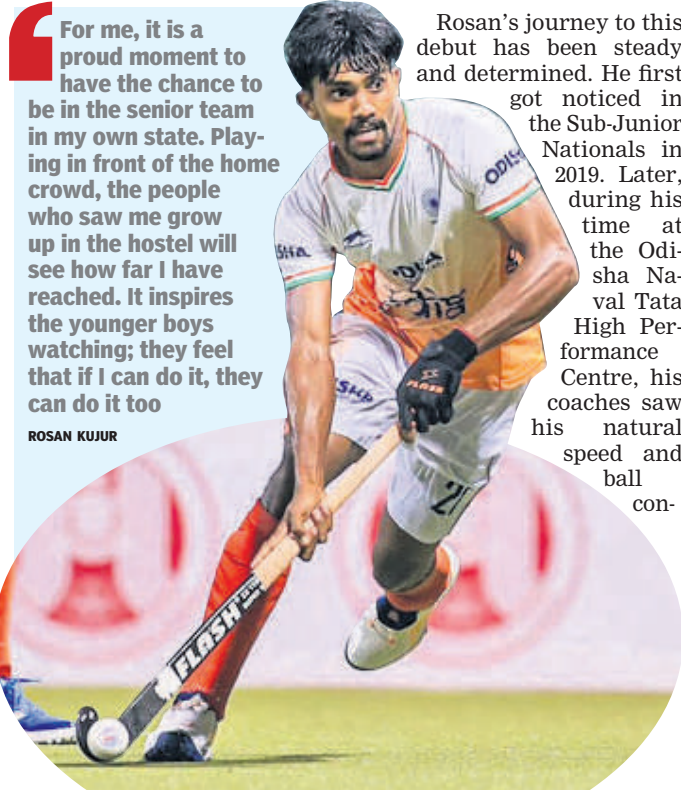
Rosan's dream turns into reality

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 16: As the Indian Men's Hockey Team took the field against Argentina in the FIH Men's Pro League 2025-26 Rourkela Leg here Sunday, local midfielder Rosan Kujur earned his milestone moment. After impressive performances in the junior ranks, the young talent made his senior India debut today on his home turf, realizing a dream he has nurtured since his days at the Panposh hostel.

For Rosan, wearing the India jersey for the first time in front of his own people is a special feeling.

"For me, it is a proud moment to have the chance to be in the Senior team in my own state," says Rosan. "Playing in front of the home crowd, the people who saw me grow up in the hostel will see how far I have reached. It inspires the younger boys watching; they feel that if I can do it, they can do it too."



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ROSAN KUJUR

Rosan's journey to this debut has been steady and determined. He first got noticed in the Sub-Junior Nationals in 2019. Later, during his time at the Odisha Naval Tata High Performance Centre, his coaches saw his natural speed and ball control.

They transitioned him from a defensive role to an attacking midfielder—a change that fast-tracked his growth through the junior ranks.

His recent experience in the Hero Hockey India League with the champion Vedanta Kalanga Lancers also played a massive role in his readiness. Playing alongside international stars taught him how to handle pressure and improved his tactical understanding.

Coming off a Bronze medal win at the Junior World Cup and a strong Hero HIL season, Rosan knows the senior level is a step up. He credits senior players like Manpreet Singh and PR Sreejesh for helping him understand the high standards required.

"I was told that performing well here is the final step. If I don't seize this, I would have to go back and climb two or three steps again. That motivation drives me to match the intensity of the experienced players and prove I belong here," Rosan added.

Curling controversy widens as Britain joins Canada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cortina D'ampezzo (Italy), Feb 16: The curling controversy at the Winter Olympics widened as increased surveillance of the matches resulted in the removal of a stone thrown by the British men's team for the same alleged violation that burned the Canadians two days in a row.

In the ninth end of Britain's round-robin game against Germany, officials said Scottish curler Bobby Lammie had touched a stone after releasing it down the ice. Such "double-touching" is against the rules. Britain won the match 9-4. Until Sunday, the allega-

tions had been limited to Canadian curlers, who represent one of the world's most fervent fan bases.

The controversy began Friday night with an allegation against the Canadian men by their Swedish opponents; a day later, a stone was removed from the Canadian women's match against Switzerland. Videos circulating on social media appeared to show both Canadian curlers double-touching the rocks but both teams denied wrongdoing.

On Saturday, World Curling directed two umpires to move between the four matches during each round, monitoring play. That policy was in place



WINTER OLYMPICS

when violations were called on Lammie and Canada's Rachel Homan.

But the federation backedpedaled on Sunday night, announcing that it would keep the two

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

East Bengal crush NorthEast United



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Feb 16: A brace of goals within six minutes in the second half by Youssef Ezzejjari and an injury-time strike by Miguel Ferreira guided East Bengal FC to a 3-0 win against NorthEast United FC in Match 6 of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 season, played at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata Monday. Oscar Bruzon started Jeakson Singh alongside Anwar Ali in the centre of the defence, with Lalchungnunga shifted to the right-back position and Jay Gupta starting on the left flank. Juan Pedro Benali gave a start to Parthib Gogoi to lead the attack for NorthEast United, with Jithin M.S. and Jairo Samperio supporting the youngster.

East Bengal were quick off the blocks and put some early pressure on the NorthEast backline, pressing them high up the pitch, which led to some misplaced passes in the midfield. The wingbacks of East Bengal pushed up high up the pitch to provide support for Bipin Singh and Nandha Kumar on either wing.

The hosts, with all their possessions and energy, could not create any genuine scoring chances to trouble Gurmeet in goal. On the other end, the Highlanders were trying to use the pace of Jithin and Parthib to break the hosts' high-line of defence, but the perfect ball was lacking from the midfield.

After the half-time break, Miguel Zabaco almost scored an own goal while trying to in-

tercept Bipin Singh's low cross. The resultant corner was half cleared, and Mohamad Rashid took a first-time shot from the edge of the box, which rattled the crossbar, and the rebound attempt by Miguel Ferreira was saved by the goalkeeper. The Red & Gold Brigade had a good spell of play towards the end of the first half, attacking with purpose, but the North-East defence contained them as the first half ended goalless.

NorthEast had the better start to the second half, with Jithin once again using his raw pace to make runs behind the East Bengal backline, but with very little output. On the other end, Miguel Ferreira forced a save out of Gurmeet after Bipin Singh rolled in a well-timed cross into the path of the Brazilian.

The Red and Gold Brigade finally broke the Highlanders' defence in the 65th minute of the game. Jeakson found Bipin after a forward run, and the winger kept his calm to swing in a cross inside the box. Ezzejjari lost his marker to get to the end of the cross and headed the ball inside the goal for his first goal in the league.

The Spaniard made his debut memorable, scoring his second within five minutes to take the game away from NorthEast United. Substitute Edmund Lalrindika controlled the ball well under pressure after receiving it from Anwar Ali. With options in the middle of the box, his lobbed pass deflected off Miguel Zabaco and fell kindly to Ezzejjari, who finished past the goalkeeper with ease.