

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Your day is packed full. There are negotiations, commitments, plans and decisions to wade through. You may feel low on energy and swamped due to lack of information and inputs from others. But clarity will return gradually as matters conclude, says Ganesha.

TAURUS
Ganesha sees you in a very romantic mood today. Your thoughts, tender and dreamy, will keep drifting towards someone special; someone of the opposite sex. Come evening and you will, in all likelihood, be sitting closely together, arm in arm, with your spouse or your sweetheart.

GEMINI
Your entire attention will be concentrated on the work-front today. You will be on the lookout for new projects and contracts to spur on your earnings. Opportunities for changing your job will come knocking on your door. You will be afforded the full co-operation of your colleagues today.

CANCER
Control your anger, counsels Ganesha. Or else, it will sadden your near ones. Writers may display creative output of high order. The day augurs well for artists, too. This is the time to take up new challenges, says Ganesha.

LEO
You will not be in the mood to take up significant tasks today. You will want to throw your responsibilities to the wind and pursue leisurely activities. However you will still need to tackle some pressing issues. It is easier to swim with the tide, than against, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You will be bubbling with ideas today. You may face a dilemma between your obligations and present duties, which could prove to be very perplexing. New contacts turn out to be very useful. Ganesha says blood is thicker than water, and family and friends will cement their relationship with you.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will learn a lot from your past experiences for a shining future. You will be slightly possessive about some costly item that you own. There will be small concerns during the day about different matters, which will give you mental stress. On the whole the day will pass by nicely.

SCORPIO
No matter how rich and successful you become, it is very important to stay grounded. Never let your success go to your head, advises Ganesha. Rudeness and overconfidence may take away everything from you and may leave you empty handed. So be kind and spread kindness.

SAGITTARIUS
Life is bubbling within you and you shall be in a hyper-elevated state of bliss today. Your high-spirits and energy will inspire you to perform at your best. Moreover, your inner voice will be loud and bellowing. Make the most of this superb day, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Mounting pressure of work and responsibilities during the day may drain your energy, but not your enthusiasm, feels Ganesha. The second half of the day will be tiring, as you will be fighting a tough battle with your competitors. You'll come out triumphant from the fight as you perform smartly and get your acts right.

AQUARIUS
You need not always put up a brave face, feels Ganesha. You can ventilate your emotions and speak your heart out in front of your loved ones. It will make the pain bearable and you'll probably get a way out of your problems. You will feel better by the evening, and a sweet smile will brighten up your face.

PISCES
You need to nurture your personal relationships carefully today, and give them the attention they are due. You need to control the outbursts of your temper and stop arguing with your partner or spouse over insignificant matters. Personal life will be smooth sailing as long as neither of you attempt to dominate over the other, says Ganesha.

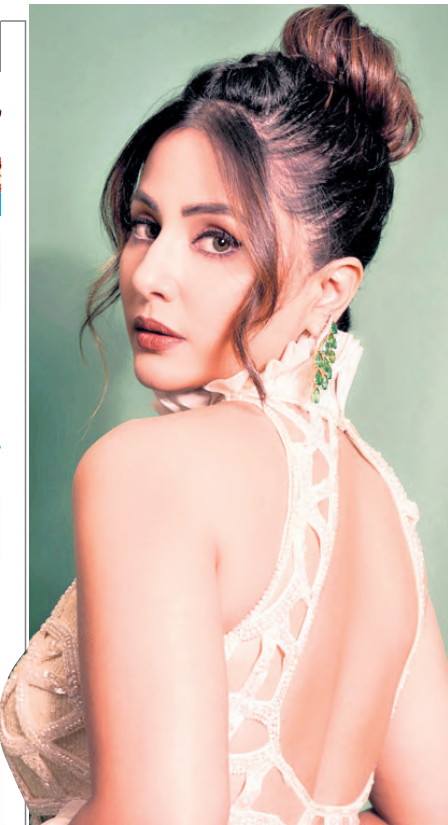


RAPPER BAD BUNNY FINDS HIS FIRST FILM AS LEAD STAR

Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny is set to headline the historical drama *Porto Rico*, marking his first leading role in a feature film. Bad Bunny, who recently headlined the Super Bowl Halftime Show in a performance celebrating Puerto Rican culture, earlier featured in Brad Pitt-starrer *Bullet Train* and Darren Aronofsky's *Caught Stealing*

ZENDAYA FEELS LOVE AND LOSS GO HAND IN HAND

Hollywood actress Zendaya is getting philosophical about life, love and loss. The actress has shared that she has learned that "so much of life is loss". The 29-year-old actress, who is engaged to fellow movie star Tom Holland, has learned that "love and loss go hand in hand"



HINA ON DUTY & DEVOTION

Mumbai: Actress Hina Khan shared a heartfelt note as she geared up for Sehri, saying that dedication towards work and faith can beautifully go hand in hand.

The actress took to Instagram stories to reflect on wrapping up a long and hectic work day, while still making time for personal commitments at home.

She revealed that despite her packed schedule, she managed to remove her acrylic nails herself, calling it a small but meaningful win.

She shared a picture of her nails and captioned it: "Sehri in 2 hours. And the hard work finally paid off. Who said work and faith can't go hand in hand. Had a long work day but I still managed to remove acrylics at home. Woh kehte haina, Jahan chaah hal, wahan raah bal...Alhamdullilah #Ramadan Mubarak."

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, communal prayer, reflection and community.

Hina Khan is noted for her versatility across genres from family dramas and reality shows to psychological thrillers. One of the highest-paid television actresses in India, she is widely recognised for portraying Akshara Maheshwari Singhania in *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*.

AGENCIES

PRIYANKA'S DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

Mumbai: Actor Priyanka Chopra recently opened up about how her definition of success has evolved, placing greater emphasis on balancing career and family. While she continues to build her presence in the international entertainment industry, Chopra made it clear that professional milestones alone no longer define achievement for her.

Reflecting on her journey, she shared that there was a time when ambition and legacy were at the forefront of her goals. However, after starting a family, her priorities gradually shifted. Today, she views success through a more personal lens, one that includes being present for her loved ones while continuing to pursue meaningful work.

The *Barfi* actress acknowledged that working across industries often demands constant travel and long schedules, but she now makes conscious choices about the projects she takes on. She described stepping away from work at times not as a setback, but as a privilege, the ability to pause, reset, and prioritise family without guilt.

Rather than chasing the idea of having "arrived," Priyanka emphasised creating a life that feels balanced and fulfilling. For her, true legacy lies not just in films or accolades, but in the ability to nurture both a thriving career and a grounded personal life.

AGENCIES



Styling tips by Tamannaah

Mumbai: For Tamannaah Bhatia, jewellery is far more than an accessory, it is a powerful form of self-expression and an extension of her personality. Whether she is attending a red carpet event, stepping out casually, or preparing for a film role, her jewellery plays a defining role in shaping her overall look.

"I've always felt that the right kind of jewellery can add so much glamour to any outfit," she shares. "Whether it's casual wear, a festive celebration, or a red carpet appearance, jewellery changes how an outfit is perceived. For me, it has always been an integral part of styling."

Her connection to fine jewellery is also deeply personal. Coming from a family where her father has been in the jewellery business, the craft has long been part of her life. Today, she designs many of her own pieces and enjoys wearing creations that reflect her evolving style. The actor, known for films like *Jailer* and *Aranmanai 4*, says jewellery helps her effortlessly embody different moods; from minimalistic to maximalistic.

Even on relaxed days in track pants, she believes the right jewels elevate her look. For Tamannaah, every piece tells a story, one that mirrors her mood, identity, and sense of glamour.

AGENCIES

Big B's cryptic post

Mumbai: Megastar Amitabh Bachchan left fans intrigued after posting a cryptic message on X that simply read, "T 5661(i) - CHUUUUUUUPPPP (shut up)!!!!" The single-word post, written with emphasis, quickly sparked widespread speculation and debate online, as followers tried to decode its meaning.

With no context provided, social media was flooded with reactions ranging from concern to amusement. Some fans wondered if everything was alright, while others playfully asked him to explain the "code" behind the message. A section of admirers even praised the post, calling it a reflection of his trademark authority and screen presence. Many noted that only Bachchan could generate such massive engagement with just one word.

Interestingly, several users turned to X's AI chatbot Grok for clarity. The chatbot suggested that the emphatic "CHUUUUUUUPPPP" translates to a forceful "shut up" in Hindi and may indicate frustration, possibly linked to ongoing rumours regarding his son Abhishek's personal life, rumours Bachchan has previously dismissed as "speculated untruths" on his blog. However, no official explanation has been given.

The post comes shortly after Bachchan concluded *Kaun Banega Crorepati Season 17*, where he delivered a memorable performance, including singing continuously for over 32 minutes.

AGENCIES



SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

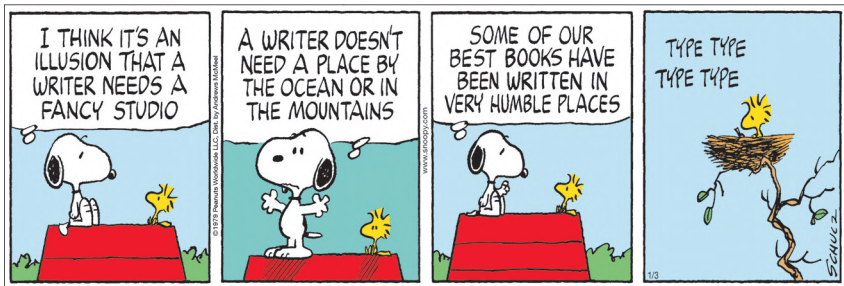
CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

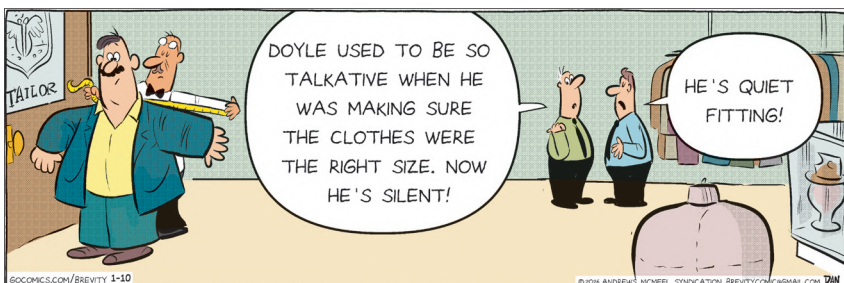
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6
7			8		
9			10		
11		12			13
			14		
15	16			17	
18					
19					
20					21
22				23	

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Across

- 7 Consecrate
- 8 Exactly right (4,2)
- 9 Before lore, dance or art
- 10 Natural covering
- 11 Walk or tramp about
- 13 Itty-bitty

- 15 Gemstone
- 17 Watch part
- 20 Amphitheatre
- 21 Story
- 22 Appraised
- 23 Opulence

Down

- 1 Protective cover
- 2 War machine

- 3 Let loose
- 4 Employment
- 5 Large Scottish lake (4,4)
- 6 Evil spirit
- 12 Plot
- 14 Collapse
- 16 Worldwide
- 18 Temptlike
- 21 Hack

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



ANNUAL TEST: Students come out of an exam hall at Unit 3 Capital High School in Bhubaneswar, as the Class X examinations begin, Thursday

Unnao: Bee attack leaves umpire dead

AGENCIES

Unnao/Kanpur (UP), Feb 19: A 65-year-old umpire died while several players were injured after a swarm of bees attacked them during a cricket match in Unnao district, police said Thursday.

A top office-bearer of the Kanpur Cricket Association (KCA), which organised the game, confirmed the incident that took place at Sapru Maidan in the Shuklaganj area Wednesday evening.

According to police officials, Manik Gupta from Kanpur was officiating as the umpire of the cricket match when a swarm of bees suddenly attacked the players and officials present on the ground, triggering panic. Players and spectators ran



MANIK GUPTA

for cover to save themselves.

Eyewitnesses said Gupta sustained serious injuries in the attack and fell unconscious. He was initially taken to a private hospital in Shuklaganj and later referred to Lala Lajpat Rai Hospital in Kanpur as his condition deteriorated. Doctors at this hospital declared him dead.

Another umpire and around 15 to 20 players also suffered bee stings, police said. KCA president SN Singh officially confirmed the incident.

SC slams freebie culture

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Supreme Court Thursday slammed the culture of freebies and subsidies ahead of elections and said it was ‘high time’ to revisit such policies, as they hamper the country’s economic development.

Observing that the ultimate financial burden of such populist measures falls squarely on the shoulders of taxpayers, a bench headed by CJI Surya Kant asked, “But this money which the State says it will pay now. Who will pay for it? This is taxpayers’ money.”

The observations were made during the hearing of a petition filed by the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited which proposed to give free electricity to all irrespective of consumers’ paying capacity.

“It is understandable when some people cannot afford, you have to provide. There are children who cannot afford education, so the state must provide. It is the state’s duty. There are children who are bright but cannot afford to go to medical colleges. The state must help them. But the persons who can enjoy, have all means available and are affluent and therefore any kind of freebie first comes to their pocket. Is it not high time for the states to revisit these policy frameworks,” the CJI asked.

The bench, also comprising justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, warned that the indiscriminate distribution of largesse is hampering the nation’s economic development and straining state exchequers already reeling under mas-



State governments should generate employment, make roads and hospitals so that poor are saved... but in the name of welfare schemes we are giving cash, free ration, free kerosene, free cycles to all

SURYA KANT | CJI

sive revenue deficits.

“It is high time that all political stalwarts, leaders, parties, and all social engineers, they need to revisit it everything. We will be hampering the development of the nation if we keep on having this largesse distribution. There has to be a balance. But how long will this continue,” the CJI asked.

The state-owned firm has challenged Rule 23 of the Electricity (Amendment) Rules, 2024, which imposes strict financial discipline on power distribution companies.

The impugned rule requires that any gap between the approved cost of supplying electricity and the tariff actually recovered from consumers must not exceed 3 per cent and that such gaps must be cleared within a fixed time.

The DMK-ruled Tamil Nadu is going for Assembly polls this year.

The SC, which issued notices to the Centre and

others on the plea of Tamil Nadu firm, said it was quite understandable if states hand-hold the poor who are in need.

“Yes, some people cannot afford it. Some people cannot afford education or basic life. Yes it is the State’s duty to provide. But the ones who are enjoying freebies landing in their pockets first, is it not something that should be looked at,” the bench asked.

“Most of the states in the country are revenue deficit states and yet they are offering such freebies overlooking development,” it said.

Making it clear that it was not singling out Tamil Nadu, the bench said most of the states are revenue deficit states and yet they indulge in populist schemes like giving free ration, free cycles and asked was it not destroying the work culture?

“We are not talking of Tamil Nadu in particular. We are talking of pan-India. What kind of culture are we developing? What is the distinction between persons who are capable of paying the electricity bill and persons who are marginalised? It is understandable that, as a welfare state, you want to provide relief to the marginalised. But without drawing any distinction between those who can afford and

those who cannot afford, if you start giving, will it not amount to a sort of appeasing policy,” the CJI asked.

He said due to these populist measures, most of the state governments are performing two functions and they are funding the distribution of largesse and paying salaries and all other development work like making hospitals and good roads are put on the backburner.

“State governments should generate employment, make roads and hospitals so that poor are saved... but in the name of welfare schemes we are giving cash, free ration, free kerosene, free cycles to all,” the CJI said.

The bench asked as to why the Tamil Nadu firm suddenly decided to loosen the purse strings after the electricity tariff was notified.

The CJI said in some states, even large landlords receive free electricity, allowing them to keep lights and machines running without cost. “If you want to have a facility, you pay for it,” he said.

Senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam, appearing for the Tamil Nadu firm, said that there must be equity in allocation of resources and that the widening gap between revenue and expenditure was a matter of governance. Justice Joymalya Bagchi raised concerns about fiscal planning and regulatory processes, particularly in the context of electricity subsidies.

“After the tariff has been notified suddenly the state government decided to open its purse a bit more,” he said, adding, “If you really want to do all this, put it in the budgetary allocation and then justify how you will do so.”

Paddy ruckus stalls House for second straight day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: Demonstrations by Opposition BJD and Congress MLAs, alleging mismanagement in the paddy procurement process, disrupted the proceedings of the Assembly for the second consecutive day Thursday.

As soon as the House assembled for the Question Hour at 10:30am, BJD and Congress members rushed to the Well with placards, raising slogans against the government.

Some of the BJD members were seen scaling the Speaker’s podium during the demonstrations.

BJD MLAs alleged that due to mismanagement in Kharif paddy procurement process, farmers were facing harassment.

The Congress legislators, on the other hand, attacked the BJP government, alleging that it was not being able to fulfill its pre-poll promises, including providing 300 units of free electricity.

As the agitating members did not pay heed to Speaker Surama Padhy’s repeated

CYCLONES CLAIMED 147 LIVES IN 12 YRS

Bhubaneswar: A total of 147 people lost their lives in the cyclones that hit the state in the last 12 years, Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari told the Assembly Thursday. In a written reply to a question by Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati, Pujari said the state was affected by 12 cyclones between 2014 and 2025, and in four of those, 147 people lost their lives. He said the state suffered damage of ₹19,529 crore due to these cyclones. The highest of 73 people were killed by cyclone Titli in 2018, while 68 people lost their lives in cyclone Fani, which hit the state in 2019, he said. Three people were killed in cyclone Hudhud in 2014, and another three in cyclone Yaas in 2021, he added. Pujari said the state incurred a loss of properties of ₹9,336.27 crore due to cyclone Fani, while cyclone Hudhud damaged properties worth ₹4,949.39 crore. The damage caused by cyclone Titli was ₹2,779.32 crore, he said, adding over 54.21 lakh livestock were killed in these cyclones.

Gold reserves in Mayurbhanj dist

Gold reserves of more than 1.46 tonne have been discovered in Mayurbhanj district, Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena told the Assembly Thursday. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) conducted a survey for gold reserves in different areas in Bangiriposhi constituency of the district, Jena said in a written reply to a question of MLA Sanjali Murmu. During the survey, the GSI has found gold deposits of 1462.73 kg along with copper reserves of 17.06 million tonne in Madanashi-Kanjia area of the district, he said.

appeals to return to their seats, she adjourned the proceedings till 11:30am.

The House could function



BJD MLAs stage a protest over paddy procurement issues in the Assembly, Thursday

for three minutes during the Question Hour.

When the House reassembled for Zero Hour, similar scenes were witnessed. Six minutes later, the Speaker announced a second adjournment till 4 pm.

BJD member Goutam Budha Das said they want the resignation of Food Supplies Minister KC Patra and the government’s apology to farmers.

“The BJP government is not holding discussions with the farmers, who are the victims of the paddy procurement mismanagement. The state-run mandis are not procuring paddy from farmers and putting them in trouble on some pretext or another,” he told reporters outside the House.

Congress MLA Sofia Firdous alleged that the state government is not listening to the people, even as it claims to be a “people’s government”.

“We strongly condemn the government calling farmers ‘fake’ and their plight as ‘noutanki’ (drama). The BJP has developed the habit of not listening to the people,” she said.

18 quintal ganja seized; 7 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul/Chhendipada, Feb 19: Days after illegal opium cultivation worth nearly ₹5 crore was destroyed in Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary area in Angul district, police Wednesday seized 264 kg ganja from the region, while another 1,573 kg cannabis was seized Nisha police limits.

Police said a total of seven persons were arrested in the seizure of more than 18 quintal ganja in the district.



According to police, a special squad of Angul police conducted a raid near Kandhakoili Chhak under Purunakote police limits. A group of youths waiting to transport ganja fled the scene on seeing the police near the Sanctuary area. Six were apprehended, while two others escaped under the cover of darkness.

Police seized about 264 kg ganja packed in 17 plastic sacks, a country-made gun, a motorcycle and five mobile phones from the accused. The accused persons, residents of Antulia, Balijerang and Kandhakoili villages under Purunakote police limits were produced in the court.

In the second crackdown conducted on the directions of Angul SP Rahul Jain, a joint team of the special squad and Industrial Area police raided near Jamunda forest and seized more than 1,573 kg of ganja. Further investigation is underway.

The main accused, Tikan Behera of Durgapur village under Jarapada police limits, has been arrested.

School peon hangs self in Koraput dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nandapur, Feb 19: A peon ended life by hanging himself at Jabagada Project Upper Primary (UP) School under Nandapur block of Koraput district Thursday morning, police said.

The deceased was identified as Shiba Nayak, 40, who worked as a peon at the state-run school that has residential facilities for students of SC & ST communities.

Based on complaints filed by headmaster Ramesh Chandra Khosla and Shiba’s wife, Sumitra Naikam, Machhkund police registered a case (1/2026) of unnatural death and sent the



body to Lamtaput CHC for postmortem, said IIC Kulamani Buruda. Preliminary investigation suggests Shiba had been staying in the school hostel for the past four-five days due to reported family disputes and had not returned home. Police suspect that after completing hostel duties Wednesday night, he allegedly hanged himself from a ceiling fan in the office room using a piece of cloth.

Laser-written glass can store data for over 10K yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: Encoding data into glass through laser could be a promising avenue for holding huge quantities of data for more than 10,000 years, as the technique is resistant to moisture, temperature changes and electromagnetic interference, according to a study.

The Project Silica team at Microsoft Research in Cambridge, UK, said the technology could prove effective for a long-term storage of legal, personal and commercial data that need to be preserved successfully.

The current techniques of preserving data – such as magnetic tapes or hard disk drives – degrade after a few years or decades, making

them unsuitable for a long-term storage.

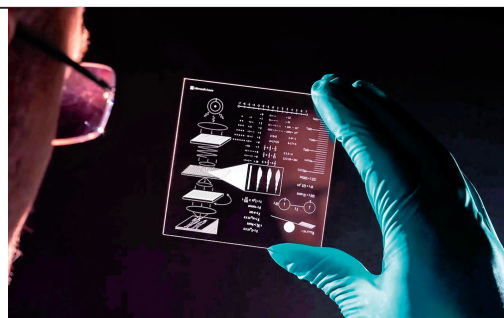
The team said they present an archival data storage system called ‘Silica’ – described in a paper in the journal Nature – which writes data in glass using a multibeam femtosecond laser.

The authors “report an optical archival storage technology based on femtosecond laser direct writing in glass that addresses the practical demands of archival storage, which we call Silica”.

“Optical storage approaches, particularly laser writing in robust media such as glass, have emerged as promising alternatives with the potential for increased longevity,” they said.

However, previous studies have largely optimised individual aspects of ar-

The system can encode units of data called voxels – three-dimensional pixels – into glass, which are each capable of storing more than one bit of data, the researchers said



They added that the system has a writing capacity of 65.9 megabits of data per second for a data density of 1.59 gigabit per cubic mm or 4.84 terabytes in a 12-square-centimetre, 2-mm-deep piece of glass

chival data storage using laser-modified glass, such as data density, but not an “end-to-end system, including writing, storing and retrieving information”, the team said.

The system can encode units of data called voxels – three-dimensional pixels – into glass, which are each capable of storing more than one bit of data, the re-

searchers said. They added that the system has a writing capacity of 65.9 megabits of data per second for a data density of 1.59 gigabit per cubic mm or 4.84 terabytes in a 12-square-centimetre, 2-mm-deep piece of glass.

“This storage is equivalent to about 2 million printed books or 5,000 ultra-high-definition 4K

films,” Feng Chen and Bo Wu of China’s Shandong University, who were not involved with the study, wrote in an associated News and Views article.

The Project Silica team conducted experiments to gauge the estimated lifetime of Silica that suggest that the data could be readable for up to 10,000 years if stored at 290 degrees Celsius, indicating

that it could likely last longer at room temperature. However, a limitation of the study’s lifetime experiments is that the lifetime estimates did not account for influences such as mechanical stress or chemical corrosion, which can degrade the glass media and its data, the authors said.

Chen and Wu said, “Silica unites performance, durability and practical feasibility, transforming a laboratory concept into a viable solution for preserving the records of human civilisation.”

Implementing the storage technology at scale could be a “milestone” in the history of knowledge storage, similar to oracle bones, medieval parchment or the modern hard drive, they said.

RDWU TO HOST ‘MEDIA-NTAR’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Rama Devi Women’s University (RD-WU) will host its Annual Media Fest 2026, titled ‘Media-ntar’ February 26 and 27, bringing together students, academicians and media professionals for a two-day exploration of media literacy and industry trends.

The fest will focus on addressing the growing challenges of misinformation in the digital age. As information circulates rapidly across digital platforms, the event aims to equip young minds with the skills to critically analyse content and distinguish facts from falsehood.

Department head Ambika Sankar Mishra said the objective of the fest is to sensitise youth to rise of misinformation and strengthen their understanding of media ethics and literacy. The programme is being organised by students and faculty members of the department with support from the Higher Education department.

Media-ntar 2026 will feature a range of competitions, including photography, short films, audio jingles, advertisement posters, extempore speaking, storytelling and talent hunt events.

‘Protection of Lord’s land a moral responsibility’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: Lord Jagannath is revered as the supreme spiritual landlord of the Odia community, and protecting all His landed properties is a collective moral responsibility, said Additional Chief Secretary of the Revenue and Disaster Management department Arabinda Padhee while chairing a high-level meeting at Lok Seva Bhawan here Thursday to review measures for safeguarding the deity’s land.

During the meeting, Padhee directed officials to take necessary steps for the effective implementation of all orders and judgments of the Supreme Court and the Orissa High Court concerning the protection and restoration of land belonging to Lord Jagannath.

Padhee emphasised the need for correction of land records (Record-of-Rights) for all properties registered in the name of Lord Jagannath through the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) and called for expeditious disposal of pending cases.

Discussions were also held on evicting illegal encroachments



Revenue and Disaster Management department Additional Chief Secretary Padhee directed officials to ensure effective implementation of all orders of Supreme Court and Orissa High Court on protection and restoration of Lord's land

He also stressed correction of land records for properties under the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration and called for speedy disposal of pending cases

from lands under the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration, particularly in various tahasils of Khurda district and along national and state highways. It was decided that a review meeting on the protection of the Lord’s landed properties will be held on the first Wednesday of every month

under the chairmanship of the Khurda Collector.

Further, to strengthen the protection and management of the Lord’s landed properties, Padhee directed the establishment of a dedicated Shri Jagannath Mahaprabhu Land Cell within the Revenue department. He added that state-level meetings under his direct supervision, along with periodic district-level reviews, will continue to ensure effective monitoring and protection of the properties.

The meeting was attended by Amrit Raturaj, Collector of Khurda district, Debabrata Sahu of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration, senior officials of the Revenue department’s Land Reforms Branch, and Sub-Collectors and Tahasildars of Khurda district.

Excise sleuths raid dance bar in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The Bhubaneswar Excise department raided No Limit River bar under Capital Police Station limits late Wednesday night and sealed the establishment for allegedly engaging women to dance and violating Excise norms. The bar was also found operating beyond permitted hours.

According to sources, a video of the bar went viral where women were seen dancing inside the premises in front of intoxicated youths. Besides, the video also portrayed some youths throwing cash on the female dancers.

The Excise team raided the bar at around 1:30 am Thursday. However, before officials could act, customers were alerted and vacated the premises.

Sources said the bar had multiple entrances, allowing partygoers to escape before the raid.

“As part of the investigation, we tried to access the CCTV footages but the data was deleted and we suspect it was done deliberately to destroy the evidence,” said Bhubaneswar Excise SP Debasish Patel.



Patel also informed that they found some cash lying on the floor which confirmed that they have violated excise norms by engaging women to perform dance inside a bar, which has been banned under Odisha Excise rules amended by the state government in 2024.

“After verification, we have sealed the bar for flouting Excise rules. We have also written to the Excise commission to cancel the bar’s license and take serious action against it,” said SP Patel.

6 Odias stranded in Thailand; state seeks Centre’s help

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: The Odisha government has written to the Centre, urging the authorities concerned to take immediate steps for the safe return of six stranded Odia workers from Thailand.

The six labourers, who are reportedly working in a ply wood company in Thailand, are “facing severe hardship as they have not been paid their salaries for the last three months”, said Delhi-based Principal Resident Commissioner Vishal Gagan in a letter to the additional secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Wednesday.

The Odia workers went to the Southeast Asian country through an agent from Gora-khpur district in Uttar Pradesh, he said. The principal resident commissioner said that the workers have pleaded on social media for their rescue and safe repatriation from Thailand to their native places in Odisha’s Kendrapara and Bhadrak districts.

Sharing the passport details of the six stranded Odia workers, he wrote, “In view of the serious nature of plight of the workers, it is requested that urgent action may please be initiated for disbursement of remuneration of emigrant workers as per their due entitlement and their urgent rescue and safe repatriation of 6 emigrant workers from Thailand back to their native place in Odisha.”

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Notary, Govt. of Odisha, dated 26th September, 2025 I, Bharat Bhusan Panigrahy, Address : At/PO-Tikabali, Dist.-Kandhamal, PIN-762010, Odisha declare that, I have changed my son’s name from Debadutta Panigrahy to Dev Panigrahy. Henceforth, he shall be known as Dev Panigrahy for all purposes. Bharat Bhusan Panigrahy

LOST

I, Mr. Naresh Behera, S/o. Madhu Behera residing at Vill: Arakhakuda, P.O.: Arakhakuda, P.S.: Arakhakuda, Dist.: Puri. Started that on 25.01.2025 due to our carelessness our original link ROR bearing Khata No. 119/453, Mouza: Manikapatna was lost or misplaced somewhere and inspite of our best efforts it is still untraced. If anybody found that document please contact our advocate. Adv. Biswajit Pattnaik, Contact No.: 9438080023.

VIT’s Viswanathan gets honorary doctorate from Thailand varsity



Vellore: Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) Vice-President Sankar Viswanathan has been conferred an honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering and Technology Management by Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep (RMUTK), Thailand. The prestigious degree was awarded following unanimous approval by the University Council, recognising Sankar Viswanathan’s exceptional leadership, professional achievements, and contributions to engineering and technology management. The honour was conferred by Palakorn Suwanrath, Privy Council of Thailand, and Pichai Janmanee, President of Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep. The honorary degree represents the highest academic recognition conferred by the institution for distinguished service and professional excellence. In his acceptance address, Viswanathan highlighted the shared cultural and knowledge ties between India and Thailand, and called for stronger academic collaboration between the two nations. The ceremony was attended by VIT Chancellor G Viswanathan, Assistant Vice-President Kadhambari S Viswanathan, along with Ramani Balasundaram and Sravan Krishna.

Odisha Yatri adds SOS safety, enables ₹10cr driver earnings

Bhubaneswar: In a major step to enhance public safety, Odisha Yatri, the state government’s people-first mobility platform, is set to evolve into a comprehensive safety platform with advanced emergency response features, expanding its footprint with a strong focus on citizen safety, digital innovation, and driver empowerment. The upgraded system will enable direct SOS connectivity with police, emergency triggers without opening the app, live location sharing, and instant alerts to designated emergency contacts. These tech-enabled interventions aim to ensure safety is accessible anytime and anywhere across the state, reinforcing the platform’s role beyond mobility services. Alongside strengthening safety infrastructure, Odisha Yatri has facilitated over ₹10 crore in cumulative driver earnings under its zero-commission model, allowing drivers to retain 100 per cent of their ride income. This transparent and equitable approach has improved driver livelihoods, strengthened trust, and positioned Odisha Yatri as a fair, government-backed mobility solution. The FASTicket initiative has further accelerated the digitisation of Ama Bus services, enabling passengers to scan QR codes inside buses, book tickets within seconds, receive instant digital tickets, and avail exclusive discounts.

OUAT HOSTS NAT’L WORKSHOP

Experts call for women-friendly farm tools

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: A two-day national workshop under the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on “Ergonomics and Safety in Agriculture and Allied Sectors” concluded at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), with experts stressing the urgent need for women-friendly farm tools to reduce drudgery and improve productivity.

Addressing the inaugural session as chief guest, Mrinalini Darswal, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Women & Child Development Department, emphasised that appropriate farm mechanisation can significantly empower women farmers. She noted that tools designed specifically for women would reduce physical strain, improve efficiency, and enhance income and self-reliance.

Highlighting recent innovations, she said drudgery-reducing equipment has enabled many women to boost farm productivity with less physical effort, strengthening their



Women & Child Development Department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Mrinalini Darswal said women-friendly farm mechanisation can improve efficiency, and boost income and self reliance

DIRECTOR OF THE ICAR-CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING, BHOPAL CR MEHTA CALLED FOR FOCUSED EFFORTS TO EMPOWER WOMEN THROUGH SUITABLE TECHNOLOGIES AND ENHANCE RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

economic status and contributing to national development. She stressed the need for intensified university-level research and improved access to such technologies for grassroots farmers.

Presiding over the session, OUAT Vice-Chancellor Pravat Kumar Roul highlighted the importance of mechanisation in modern agriculture and urged scientists to strength-

en research in ergonomics and safety to address emerging challenges in the farming sector.

Deputy Director General (Agricultural Engineering) at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi SN Jha highlighted the rising demand for farm machinery and its crucial role in improving agricultural efficiency.

Director of the ICAR-Cen-

HONOURING STATE ICONS

Govt forms steering committee for ‘Baraputra Aitihya Gram Yojana’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswarm, Feb 19: In a significant step towards preserving Odisha’s rich historical and cultural legacy, the state government constituted a state-level project steering committee to oversee the implementation of ‘Baraputra Aitihya Gram Yojana’ in state.

The yojana is aimed at commemorating prominent freedom fighters, and eminent personalities who shaped the socio-cultural and literary landscape of the state.

The committee will be chaired by Odia Language, Literature and Culture (OLL&C) Minister. Members include heads or representatives from the coordinating departments.

Other members of the committee include OLL&C secretary and director, concerned District Collector, and a distinguished archaeologist nominated by Odisha State Archaeology. The OLL&C special, additional, joint secretary will serve as the convenor member.

The decision, cleared by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) and approved by government, following a proposal, prepared by Finance department, seeks to transform the native



villages of the eminent personalities into heritage hubs. The initiative is designed not only to conserve their memories but also to inspire and motivate future generations by showcasing their contributions to Odisha’s identity and progress.

The scheme will be implemented under the overall guidance and coordination of multiple key departments, including Housing, Revenue and Disaster Management, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water, Planning and Coordination, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Textiles and Handicrafts.

The collaborative framework is expected to ensure integrated development of identified heritage villages, combining cultural preservation with infrastructure enhancement and tourism pro-

The committee will be chaired by Odia Language, Literature and Culture (OLL&C) Minister. Members include heads or representatives from the coordinating departments

motion. The notification was issued by order of the Governor and signed by Culture department principal secretary Vijay Ketan Upadhyay.

The yojana is expected to strengthen Odisha’s cultural roots while fostering heritage tourism and community pride across the state.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY			BOURSES		COMMODITIES
INDEX	VARIATION		INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX
DOLLAR	91.116	▲ 0.34	SENSEX	82498.14	▲ 1,236.11
EURO	107.1490	▲ 0.15	NIFTY	25454.35	▼ 365.00
					GOLD ₹156,183
					SILVER ₹245,800

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.5°	30.6°	Dry weather likely to prevail
Min Temp	15.9°	15.4°	
Humidity	68%	79%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

NH-26 project crawls, Semiliguda pays price 3.59L qtls paddy of 8,019 farmers lifted in Kesinga

NARENDRA RAUT, OP

Koraput, Feb 19: The long-pending expansion of National Highway 26 passing through Semiliguda in this district has once again come under sharp criticism as incomplete construction continues to disrupt daily life for residents, commuters, and business owners.

The widening of NH-26 was announced decades ago, soon after the formation of the Sunabeda Municipality. Funds sanctioned at the district level were distributed among concerned departments – National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for road construction, the Electricity Division for street lighting, and the PHD Division for drains and bridges. The approved project included a 72-feet-wide double-lane road from NALCO Chowk to the bus stand, along with road extension and drainage on both sides, planned in two phases.

After years of struggle and repeated representations by MLAs from Pottangi and Kora-



put, the matter was raised before the Urban Development Minister and the District Collector. Although construction finally began, work progressed only on one side from NALCO Chowk to Ganga Maa Mandir,

before coming to an abrupt halt midway.

Municipal Chairman Rajendra Patro expressed strong displeasure over the delay. “Residents, commuters, and traders meet me almost daily demand-

ing speedy completion of the road widening project along with drains and street lights. The NH division assured us the work would resume soon, but there has been no response so far,” he said.

A senior citizen of Semiliguda said, “This road was promised even before my children grew up. Today my grandchildren are facing the same dust, traffic jams, and accidents. It is shameful that such an important highway remains incomplete.”

Local business owners echoed similar concerns. One trader near the bus stand said, “Customers avoid this stretch due to traffic and bad roads. Our daily sales have dropped drastically.” Another businessman added, “Dust, blocked drains, and unfinished work are affecting health and business alike. Authorities must act immediately.”

Residents have now demanded urgent intervention to resume and complete the NH-26 expansion without further delay.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, Feb 19: A report published in **OrissaPOST** February 2 highlighting delays in paddy procurement in Kesinga block of Kalahandi district has spurred prompt action as authorities lifted more than 3.59 lakh quintal paddy from 8,019 farmers.

According to the office of the Regulated Market Committee (RMC), 3,59,512 quintal paddy has been procured from 15 mandis operating under seven Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) in the block as of Thursday.

Earlier, farmers had been forced to guard their harvested paddy day and night under the open sky in cold conditions due to delays in lifting of paddy.

According to the procurement details available from various PACS, 52,551 quintal paddy has been procured from 1,036 farmers at one mandi under Gokuleswar PACS while 294.24 quintals remain to be lifted.

Similarly, 47,262.40 quintal paddy has been procured from 98 farmers across three mandis under Kashrupal PACS while 522.87 quintals are still lying at the mandis.

In Kandel PACS, 43,880.34 quintal paddy has been lifted from 1,098 farmers from three

mandis while 107.65 quintals remain to be procured.

Similarly, across two mandis under Kesinga PACS, 20,621.44 quintals have been procured from 514 farmers, with 299.44 quintals yet to be lifted.

In total, around 2,000 quintal paddy is still lying in seven PACS awaiting procurement.

At the paddy procurement centre under the Pastikudi PACS, 46,619.08 quintal paddy has been procured from 1,051 farmers. Another 204.59 quintals remain at the mandi.

Similarly, at three procurement centres under the Tundla PACS, 70,659.66 quintals have been lifted from 1,664 farmers, while 526.93 quintals are still lying at the mandis.

Under the Utkal PACS, 77,917.92 quintals have been procured from 1,670 farmers at two mandis. However, 482.92 quintal paddy is yet to be lifted.

According to the Kesinga RMC, 2,438.64 quintal paddy procured from 8,019 farmers across 15 mandis was yet to be lifted as of Thursday.

When contacted, Kesinga RMC secretary Jyoti Ranjan Dash said some paddy was lifted from Kikia and Pastikudi Thursday. He added that all pending stocks at seven PACS are expected to be cleared within the week.

MYSTERY SHROUDS SALESGIRL’S DEATH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, Feb 19: Mystery shrouds the death of a 20-year-old salesgirl working at a shopping mall in the main market area of Basudevpur, who died under suspicious circumstances while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Cuttack Wednesday.

The deceased, identified as Kamini Kanchan Dhal, was employed at Cosmo Bazaar shopping mall. Her father, Surendra Prasad Dhal of Bhairavpur village, has lodged a written complaint at the Basudevpur police station alleging that the mall manager, Rahul Nayak, was responsible for her death.

In his complaint, Surendra alleged that Rahul had taken his daughter for a picnic January 31 to Balasore, Remuna and Chandipur. During the trip, he alleged, his daughter was administered slow poison in a soft drink or food item. She reportedly fell ill the day after returning from the picnic.

Family members first admitted her to the Basudevpur hospital and later to a private clinic in the town. As her condition did not improve, she was shifted to a private hospital near Tangi in Cuttack, where she died during treatment. Surendra further alleged that months before the picnic, Rahul had been harassing and blackmailing his daughter over a one-sided romantic interest. Holding Rahul fully responsible for his daughter’s death, he demanded strict action against him.

Police have registered a case (94/26) and detained Rahul for questioning. Basudevpur IIC Neeraj Kumar Samal said an investigation is underway. Rahul’s mobile phone has been seized, and further inquiry, including questioning of other mall employees and examination of his rented accommodation, is expected to reveal more details.

MALL MANAGER ARRESTED

Man, daughter found dead in river; 2 missing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boipariguda, Feb 19: Two members of a family were found dead in a river while two others remain missing in Koraput district, police said Thursday.

The deceased were identified as Lalit Pujari, 27, and his 4-year-old daughter Gelhi of Dandabadi village under Ramgiri police outpost in Boipariguda police limits.

According to reports, Lalit, his wife Gori, 24, and their two daughters, Tulabati, 6, and Gelhi, had left home February 1, saying they were going for fishing in a nearby river. They did not return.

Failing to trace them, Lalit’s uncle, Padamal Pujari, lodged a missing complaint at Boipariguda police station

February 15. Police registered a case and began an investigation.

Clothes, food items and fishing nets belonging to the family were later found on the banks of the Sabari River

MASS SUICIDE SUSPECTED

near Badudi hill, prompting a search operation.

An ODRAF team from Koraput, along with police and a scientific team, recovered the bodies of Lalit and his younger daughter from the river

Wednesday evening. Gelhi’s body was found tied to Lalit’s waist

Government of Odisha

Office of the Superintending Engineer

Rural Works Division, Dhenkanal

E-Mail : se.rwddivisiondhenkanal@yahoo.co.in

e-Procurement Notice No.20/Road Works/2025-26

1. Name of the Work : Road Works

2. Total No. of Works : 05 Nos

3. Estimated Cost : Rs.8.47 to 27.11 lakh (approx)

4. Class of Contractor : "D" "C" & "B" Class

5. Period of Completion : 15 (Fifteen days)

6. EMD Required : As mentioned in the Annexure at Column-04

7. Online for bidding : 23.02.2026 at 11.30 A.M. to 05.03.2026 up to 2.00 P.M.

8. Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification : 02.03.2026 upto 4.00 P.M.

9. Date & Time of opening of tender : 05.03.2026 at 5.00 P.M.

Other Details can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.

Sd./ Superintending Engineer

R.W. Division, Dhenkanal

OIPR-25001/25101/1/25-26/0001

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

Bank of India

ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH, CUTTACK

1st Floor, Plot No.: 293/1523, Infront of OSRTC Bus Stand, At: Kunheipara, Trisulia, Cuttack-754005

PUBLIC NOTICE

We have taken Physical Possession of All the part and parcel of the immovable property mortgaged in NPA loan account of **M/s. Harapriya Engineering and Fabrication Work, Managing Partner: Mr. Manas Ranjan Samantaryan (Property Owner), Partner: Mrs. Anitarani Das** situated over Khata No.: 620/970, Plot No.: 2273/2985, Area: Ac.0.075 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Tarol, P.S.: Tangi No.: 72, Tahasil: Tangi-Choudwar, Dist.: Cuttack, Bounded by North: Alekha Swain, South: Babuli Bank & Ranjan Bank, East: Road, West: Ramakanta Biswal on **13.01.2026** under SARFAESI ACT 2002, after obtaining order from DM, Cuttack and with assistance of Jagatpur Police. We have found some unused machineries, furniture & goods are lying in the above mentioned Premises and informed the related parties for taken back of their machineries, furniture & goods however the machineries, furniture & goods has not been taken back by the related parties or their representative till date. We hereby inform to related parties of the above mentioned property to take their belongings from the Undersigned within **15 days** from the date of publication, failing which Bank will consider no claim and Bank will take appropriate action to dispose the machineries, furniture & goods as per extant norms.

Authorised Officer

श्री गुरुदेव

श्री गुरुदेव

CENTRAL SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY

(Established by an Act of Parliament)

56-57, Institutional Area, Janakpuri

New Delhi - 110058

Inviting online applications for

Affiliation of Ayurveda Gurukulam

Ayurveda Gurukulams offer a residential seven and a half year Ayurveda education programme, comprising the Pre-Ayurveda Programme followed by the Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) degree in accordance with the norms prescribed by the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM). Accordingly, the Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi invites applications from eligible institutions for affiliation of Ayurveda Gurukulams under the Gazette-notified regulatory framework of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM). Government of India. Ayurveda Gurukulams are envisaged to impart traditional Gurukula-based education in Ayurveda, aligned with the Pre-Ayurveda Programme leading to the BAMS degree, as prescribed by the competent authority.

Admission to Ayurveda Gurukulams shall be open to students after completion of Class X or equivalent through an All-India Entrance Test, as per applicable norms.

Interested institutions may apply through the University website: https://www.sanskrit.nic.in/ayurveda_gurukulam.php. For detailed guidelines, eligibility criteria, and application procedure, please visit: www.sanskrit.nic.in

Date: 09.02.2026

cbc 21212/12/0005/2526

Sd./- Registrar

श्री गुरुदेव

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Chola

Enter a better life

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED

CORPORATE OFFICE : "CHOLA CREST", C54 & 55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, India

Branch Office : 2nd Floor, Plot No. 394, Bomikhal, Near Santoshi Maa Temple, Cuttack Road, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751 010

POSESSION NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(1) - FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited**, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 hereinafter called the Act in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rules 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice on the date mentioned the account calling upon the respective Borrowers, to repay the outstanding amount with Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers in particular and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the Property mortgaged with the Company described herein below on the date mentioned against the account in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Rules made there under. The Borrowers in particular and the Public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with property mentioned herein below and any such dealings will be subject to the charge of **M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited** for an amount mentioned against the account along with Interest and other charges.

Loan Account No. : HE01URI00000076272

Name and Address of Borrower / Co-borrower :
1. **Sujana Kumar Bastia** (Applicant), S/o. Sri Khetra Mohan Bastia Chakrapada, Astaranga, Namaro, Kakatapur, District - Puri, Pin - 752 109.

2. **M/s. Maa Narayani Chuda Mill** (Co-applicant)
Plot No. 606/772, Namaro, Chakrapada, Kakatapur, Puri, Odisha, Pin - 752 109.

3. **Ramamani Bastia** (Co-applicant), W/o. Sujana Bastia Chakrapada, Astaranga, Namaro, Kakatapur, District - Puri, Pin - 752 109.

Description of the Immovable Property: All that part and parcel of the property bearing Khata No. 130/14, Plot No. 606/772, Mouza - Chakrapada, Area. 0.200 Decimal, Tahasil-Astaranga, P.S. - Astaranga, Tahasil No. 657, P.S. No. 172, KISSAM - Gharabari, District - Puri.

Date of Demand Notice : 10.11.2025

Outstanding Amount : Rs. 60,99,940.00 (Rupees Sixty Lakhs Ninety Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Forty only) as on 10.11.2025 and interest thereon.

Date of Symbolic Possession : 17.02.2026

Authorised Officer
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited

Date : 20.02.2026

Place : Puri (Odisha)

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

Bank of India

Zonal Office : Sambalpur Zone, Near Sarlakani Chowk, PO.: Dhanakauda, Dist.: Sambalpur - 768006 (Odisha)

Bank of India

E-Auction Sale Notice Under SARFAESI ACT, 2002

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI ACT) read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) and 6(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the Symbolic/Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Bank of India, will be sold on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** and **"AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"** and **"WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS"** on **10.03.2026**, for recovery of the below mentioned amount due to the Bank of India ,respective branch, from the below mentioned Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s).The Reserve Price, EMD amount and Property details are as mentioned here under:

Date & Time of E-Auction: 10.03.2026 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 5 (Five) minutes if bidding continues till sale is concluded

Last date for submission of EMD & Documents: 10.03.2026 upto 4.30 P.M.

Date & Time of Inspection of Property: 09.03.2026 upto 4.00 P.M.

For inspection please contact the Respective Branch Head or Recovery Department, Zonal Office, Sambalpur (Mrs. Lilima Panda, Mob.: 8144002101, Mr. Sujit Kumar Badhai Mob.: 7004717984)

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower/Guarantor / Total Dues	Description of the Properties	Reserve Price / EMD / Type of Possession/Prop. ID
1.	MAIN ROAD BRANCH, ROURKELA / Branch Head: Mr. Gagan Raj Thapa - 9178221168 (M) Borrower: Mrs. Sana Arju / Co-Borrower: Mr. MD Irfan Elkhlaque , Both are Resident of At: Flat No.: 1-B, 1st Floor, Al-Sattar Palace, Behind Old Razak Talkies, Main Road, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh-769001 / Total Dues: ₹30,04,000/- as on 17.01.2025 plus further interest, costs and incidental expenses thereon.	All that part & parcel of the property consisting of Flat Bearing No.: 1-B in 1st Floor of the residential Apartment of "AL-SATTAR PALACE" with super-built up area 862 sqft. Constructed on Plot No.: 511/2598, having an area of proportionate undivided Share Ac. 0.004 dec. out of total area of Ac. 0.05 dec. in Khata No.: 492/401 in Mouza: RTU 35 Rourkela, P.S.: Plant Site, Tahasil: Rourkela(Panposh), within the registration Sub-Registrar Office Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh, Odisha, standing in the name of Mrs. Sana Arju .	₹45,50,000/- / ₹4,55,000/- / Symbolic / BKID0000151
2.	JEYPORE BRANCH, JEYPORE / Branch Head: Ashutosh Satpathy - 9437616007 (M) Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Samir Kumar Patnaik , S/o.: Simadri Patnaik, At: Bapuji Nagar, Near Deepthi Convent School, Jeyapore, Dist.: Koraput, Odisha-764001 / Total Dues: Rs.31,56,000/- as on 30.05.2025 Plus Further Interest, Costs and Incidental Expenses.	1) All that Part & Parcel of the Land & Building situated at Khata No.: 69/1140, Plot No.: 101/1420 & 102/1440, Area: Ac.0.011 Dec, KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Dubli, Tahasil: Jeyapore, Dist.: Koraput, Standing in the name of Mr. Samir Kumar Patnaik , Bounded by East: Balance Portion of Plot No.: 102, West: 20 feet Road, North: Rest portion of Sub Plot No.: 232 of Samir Patnaik, South: Sub Plot No.: 233, 2) All that Part & Parcel of the Land & Building situated at Khata No.: 69/1502, Plot No.: 101/1424 & 102/1443, Area: Ac.0.010 Dec, KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Prasanaput Bayaguda, Tahasil: Jeyapore, Dist.: Koraput, Standing in the name of Mr. Samir Kumar Patnaik , Bounded by East: Balance Portion of Plot No.: 102, West: 20 feet Road, North: Sub Plot No.: 231, South: Sub Plot No.: 233.	₹24,50,000/- / ₹2,45,000/- / Symbolic / BKID0000152

Terms and conditions of E-Auction: To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorised Officer, there is no encumbrance on the property/ies. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property/ies put on auction and claims/ rights/ dues/ affecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The e-Auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the bank. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the bank. The Authorised Officer/ Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/ rights/ dues. It shall be the responsibility of the interested bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the property before submission of the bid.Particulars specified in the schedule above have been stated to the best of information of the Authorised Officer / Bank. Authorised Officer and / or Bank will not be answerable for any error, mis-statement or omission in this public notice. The auction will be online E-Auction Sale/Bidding and shall be done only through "Online Electronic Bidding" process through the website: <https://baanknet.com>.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.bankofindia.co.in/tenders>

Place: Sambalpur

Date: 19.02.2026

Authorised Officer

Bank of India

Youth held, sent to jail in rape, trafficking case

Kendrapara: Acting on a complaint lodged by a minor girl, the Kendrapara Sadar police station has arrested a youth for alleged rape, immoral trafficking, and criminal intimidation. A case was registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956. The victim's statement was recorded under Section 180 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. Both the victim and the accused were sent for medical examination. The accused was produced before the ADJ-cum-Special POCSO Court, which remanded him to judicial custody. Kendrapara SP Siddharth Kataria confirmed that further investigation is ongoing, and legal proceedings are being carried out in accordance with the law. The accused, identified as Bapi alias Rahul Kumar Malik, resident of Arua Kadaliwana village under Pattamundai Model police limits, was apprehended following an investigation. The SP informed the media that the victim approached the police Wednesday with her complaint. According to the police, the minor girl alleged that she was lured by the accused through social media under a false identity. She reported that after meeting him in Kendrapara, she was sexually assaulted and subsequently forced into immoral trafficking. The accused allegedly threatened and blackmailed her using photographs and videos.

Happy Birthday

NIRANJAN BISWAL

General Manager - Civil

Levenson Management extends warm birthday wishes on 20th February to a visionary leader whose experience and dedication continue to strengthen every foundation he builds for our society.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. MSM-WLI-ECOR-2-26

NAME OF WORK : PROVISION OF WATER LEVEL INDICATOR FOR COACHES WITH UNDERSLUNG AND OVERHEAD WATER TANKS.

Approx cost of the Work (₹) : 8,63,87,184.00, EMD (₹) : 5,81,900.00, Completion period of the work : 12 Months

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 09.03.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete details and Tender documents will be available at website <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Sambalpur

PR-1134/Q/25-26

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. MCSW-Brake-Van-25-26-29

NAME OF WORK : PROVISION OF ADJUSTABLE GUARD CHAIRS & OTHER ESSENTIAL AMENITIES IN BRAKE VANS AND UPGRADEATION OF BRAKE VANS DURING PERIODICAL OVERHAULING AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR AND WALTAIR DIVISION.

Advised Value : ₹ 40,51,120.50, EMD : ₹ 6,20,300/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 20.02.2026.

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 06.03.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (POH-II), PR-1138/Q/25-26 | CRW/Mancheswar

EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-26/E-Tender/111 Dt. 16.02.2026

1) Tender No. eTender-SouthKUR-354-2025, Dtd.: 09.02.2026

DESCRIPTION : EXECUTION OF CTR(S) ON LOOP LINES OF ICHHAPURAM YARDS ON KHURDA ROAD - PALASA SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 49.66 Lakhs, EMD (₹): 99,300.00

2) Tender No. eTender-SouthKUR-355-2025, Dtd.: 09.02.2026

DESCRIPTION : EXECUTION OF CTR(S) ON LOOP LINES OF BRAHMAMPUR YARDS ON KHURDA ROAD - PALASA SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 49.08 Lakhs, EMD (₹): 98,200.00

3) Tender No. eTenderEastkur-356-2025, Dtd.: 09.02.2026

DESCRIPTION : BALANCE WORK FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ONE 18 BEDDED RUNNING ROOM AT HARIDASPUR (HDS) STATION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.

Approx Cost of the Work (₹): 60.09 Lakhs, EMD (₹): 1,20,200.00

Completion Period : 06 (Six) Months (for Sl. No. 1 & 2), 03 (Three) Months (for Sl. No. 3)

Tender Closing Date and Time At 1500 Hrs. of 03.03.2026 (for all the tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigendum issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), Khurda Road

PR-1144/Q/25-26

When Shivaji drew large crowds during 1666 visit to Aurangabad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Feb 19: Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (formerly Aurangabad), though not part of the then Hindavi Swarajya, holds a notable place in history for hosting Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj during his journey to Agra in April 1666, eight years before his coronation.

His arrival at the then capital of the Mughal province of Deccan drew large crowds, reflecting the growing stature of the Maratha warrior king, whose birth anniversary is being celebrated Thursday.

Aurangabad derives its name from Emperor Aurangzeb. Bhimsen Saxena, a Mughal administration official, wrote about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's visit to the city in his Persian memoir 'Tarikh-i Dilkusha', later translated into English by historian Jadunath Sarkar.

The memoir recorded Shivaji



Maharaj's contingent of horsemen and the public enthusiasm surrounding him.

The visit followed the Treaty of Purandar with Mughal Subhedar Mirza Raja Jaisingh, after which Shivaji Maharaj was to go to meet Aurangzeb

in Agra.

During his stop in Sambhajnagar in April 1666, he travelled with 500 well-dressed and armed soldiers, drawing huge crowds.

A letter sent by Parkaldas, an official of Amber state (present

Jaipur) in Agra May 29, 1666, to another official, also recounts that Shivaji Maharaj's escort comprised of 200-250 men, including 100 horsemen.

His entourage included a gold and silver-plated palqui (palanquin), two elephants with haudas (carriage or seat on the jumbo's back), a few camels carrying luggage, and his distinctive orange and vermilion flag with golden decoration.

Parkaldas described Shivaji Maharaj as lean, fair-complexioned, and commanding, noting also the handsome appearance of his nine-year-old son Sambhaji Maharaj.

"Without even finding out who he is, one does feel instinctively that he is a ruler of men," Parkaldas wrote in the letter, which is part of 'Rajasthan Records' by Sarkar about the Maratha warrior's famous visit to Agra.

When Shivaji Maharaj rode out in his 'palqui', many footmen wearing large Turkish-style caps marched ahead of him.

Many of his senior officers also travelled in palakis, so his entourage carried several of them along the journey, he wrote.

Saxena also recorded an incident involving Mughal officer Saf Shikan Khan, who initially failed to personally receive Shivaji Maharaj.

Khan sent his nephew to receive him, which displeased the Maratha king, who then headed to Mirza Raja's house here.

When the nephew informed Shivaji Maharaj that Khan was waiting for him in their general court, he said, "Who is this Saf Shikan Khan? Why has he not come to see me? What does he do here?"

Later, Khan and other Mughal officials visited Shivaji Maharaj, and the following day, he met Khan at his residence, along with other dignitaries, who treated him with respect befitting his status, Saxena wrote. After a brief stay, Shivaji Maharaj continued his journey to Agra, as documented in the memoir.

About 13,000 teacher posts vacant in J&K: Education Min

According to the district-wise data, Rajouri (1,416), Kathua (1,332), Jammu (1,234), and Poonch (946) are among the districts with the highest vacancies in the Jammu division, while Anantnag (1,016), Budgam (797), Pulwama (764) and Kupwara (621) top the list in the Kashmir division

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 19: A total of 12,977 teaching posts are vacant across Jammu and Kashmir, and the School Education Department has not upgraded any school since 2024, Education Minister Sakeena Itoo said Thursday.

In her written reply to a starred question by BJP MLA Shri Shakti Raj Parihar in the Legislative Assembly here, the minister said 7,985 teacher posts are vacant in the Jammu division and 4,992 in the Kashmir division.

According to the district-wise data, Rajouri (1,416), Kathua (1,332), Jammu (1,234), and Poonch (946) are among the districts with the highest va-



cancies in the Jammu division, while Anantnag (1,016), Budgam (797), Pulwama (764) and Kupwara (621) top the list in the Kashmir division.

Regarding promotional vacancies of Masters, Itoo said 1,722 posts are vacant in the Kashmir division and 224 in the Jammu division.

Itoo said all promotional vacancies are being filled through Divisional Level Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs) in accordance with rules.

In response to another query, the minister said that no middle, high or higher secondary school has been upgraded since November 2024.

"There is no immediate proposal under consideration for upgradation of schools to the next level, particularly in hilly and remote areas of Doda district," Itoo said.

She added that upgradation requires the development of infrastructure and creation of teaching and non-teaching posts, which involves financial implications and requires concurrence from the Finance Department.

However, whenever such a proposal is mooted, feasible schools in Doda district would be considered strictly in accordance with feasibility reports, existing norms and requirements, the minister said.

Winding up the discussion Demands for Grants in the legislative Assembly here, Abdullah said his government worked step by step' to revive tourism in the aftermath of the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack, at a time when many in the industry believed visitors would not return to the Union Territory for years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 19: Highlighting the efforts to revive tourism following the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announced Thursday that all currently closed tourist destinations are expected to reopen by May.

He also revealed that the government is working on plans to introduce nine new tourist destinations to further strengthen and diversify the tourism industry in the Union Territory.

Winding up the discussion Demands for Grants in the legislative Assembly here, Abdullah said his government worked "step by step" to revive tourism in the aftermath of the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack, at a time when many in the industry believed visitors would not return to the Union



Territory for years.

He said the administration engaged extensively with tourism stakeholders, rebuilt confidence through sustained outreach, and gradually restored activity despite several destinations remaining closed and restrictions in place at key locations.

The chief minister mentioned that improving tourist infrastructure is a key priority, as visitors often point out that while Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Sonamarg are exceptionally beautiful, they lack adequate basic facilities such as toilets and other conveniences. "The government is committed to addressing these gaps," Abdullah said.

The chief minister emphasised that attracting first-time visitors to J&K is not difficult, but true success lies in ensuring they return. "Repeat tourism is the real benchmark of a strong and sustainable tourism industry, and that is where the government is now placing its focus."

Highlighting the turnaround,

Abdullah noted that hotels in famous winter destinations like Gulmarg and Sonamarg are now operating at full capacity, while Srinagar is witnessing significant tourist footfall, asserting that these indicators reflect the steady revival of the sector.

"Tourism is a very important sector for Jammu and Kashmir. The reality is that when we were discussing the budget and grants last year, we had no idea that we would face such difficult circumstances (the Pahalgam attack that left 26 persons, mostly tourists, dead). We revived tourism at a time when we were forced to tell people that 'you can come to Kashmir, but you cannot visit Doodhpathri or Yousmarg'. We even had to tell tourists that 'you may go up by the gondola (cable-car), but you cannot move beyond the roadside eateries on the right side'. Despite all this, we gradually brought tourism back to life," the chief minister said.

ANIMAL WELFARE OVER LIVELIHOOD

Mumbai court rejects plea to return seized horse to owner



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 19: A Mumbai court gave preference to animal welfare over a man's claim to livelihood by dismissing his plea seeking return of a horse, used in traditional ceremonies, that was seized by police on the charge of cruelty.

Additional Sessions Judge (Mazgaon court) Mujiabodeen S Shaikh, in a ruling passed earlier this month, upheld a magistrate's decision to put the horse in an Animal Welfare Board-recognised centre rather than returning the animal to its owner.

Based on an FIR filed by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), the police had seized the horse from south Mumbai last year under provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Later, one Jagannath Kunjuprasad Rajbhar, claiming to be the proprietor of a traditional ceremonial horse rental business, moved the magistrate court seeking return of the animal. He submitted that he used to provide horses for 'buggies' in marriage functions and claimed he possessed valid and necessary documents.

Rajbhar claimed he had provided the horse for a marriage function in May last year, where someone had taken its photograph and filed a false FIR. He also contended he had not ill-treated the horse in any manner.

Asserting that the detention of the horse has caused unnecessary hardship to his business, he urged the magistrate to hand over its custody.

The police opposed Rajbhar's

plea citing a prohibition on 'Victorias' (horse-drawn carriage rides) in Mumbai city and that he had committed breach of a Bombay High Court order.

The police was referring to a June 2015 judgment in which the HC declared the use of Victoria horse-drawn carriages for joyrides in Mumbai as illegal and had directed a complete ban within one year due to animal cruelty and lack of licences.

PETA (intervenor) had prayed for an order to keep the horse in the Animal Rahat Organization, which is recognized by the Animal Welfare Board.

In its verdict delivered in July last year, the magistrate noted that Rajbhar was doing business in the city, but had not shown any licence for the same. "Therefore, prima facie, it seems he is doing such business without any valid licence," the lower court had said.

Rejecting Rajbhar's plea, the magistrate handed over the interim custody of the horse to PETA on a bond of Rs 2 lakh and on the condition that the organisation will return the horse as and when directed by the court.

Aggrieved with the magistrate's ruling, the man filed a criminal revision application in the sessions court, which was opposed by PETA and the police contending it was not maintainable against the property return order.

They submitted that such a plea is maintainable only against final orders or intermediate orders, but not against interlocutory orders.

The sessions judge, finding merits in the submissions of the intervenor and police, rejected Rajbhar's revision plea.

J&K passes ₹74,690 crore grants for 13 departments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 19: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Wednesday passed grants amounting to Rs 74,690 crore for 13 departments, including Finance, Power and Housing.

The grants were passed after extensive two-day discussions in the House. The Assembly also passed 19 supplementary grants amounting to Rs 3,523 crore. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed gratitude to legislators for their active participation and appreciated the efforts of the administrative machinery in this exercise.

Replying to the discussion on Demands for Grants, the Chief Minister said 43 members participated in the debate. "I would like to thank all the honourable MLAs for taking part in the discussion. By listening to them, we get an opportunity to learn, to understand and to correct some mistakes," he said.

He also appreciated the efforts of the administrative machinery, including secretaries, heads of departments, officers

and staff, particularly in view of the record number of cut motions. "As you said, there were more than 500 cut motions. Each and every query was answered. The pile of papers on my table is the result of their hard work," he remarked.

Speaking department-wise, the Chief Minister said the core purpose of the GAD was to ensure smooth functioning of the administration. He said the process of regularisation of daily wagers would begin during the current financial year.

Highlighting Jammu and Kashmir's financial constraints, Abdullah said tax and non-tax revenue cover only about 25 per cent of expenditure, while 75 per cent comes through the central share and assistance. "This is not a situation created today, it has been inherited," he said, adding that efforts are underway to improve financial self-reliance.

He explained the new system of centrally sponsored schemes, under which each scheme now operates through a separate RBI account, requiring the UT's

matching share before funds can be utilised. "This has reduced financial flexibility, and many states and UTs have faced similar consequences," he said, expressing confidence that implementation would improve next year.

Underlining the importance of SASCI, the Chief Minister called it one of the best schemes for J&K, particularly due to the provision of 50-year interest-free loans. "If we take a loan of Rs 3,000 crore today, after 50 years it will be equivalent to about Rs 97 crore," he said.

Abdullah asserted that the government has ended off-budget borrowing practices. "Today, in J&K, not a single penny is off-budget borrowing. Whatever debt we take is fully recorded. There is no hundi system," he said.

Acknowledging delays in retirement benefits, he said disbursements have been significantly increased. "In 2026, we released Rs 3,173.39 crore in GPF, Rs 1,170.21 crore in gratuity, Rs 838.28 crore in commutation and Rs 425 crore in leave salary," he said.

Maha relaxes promotion norms for faculty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 19: Maharashtra has substantially diluted several eligibility conditions under the Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) for faculty in government and aided diploma and degree institutes under the Directorate of Technical Education, officials said Thursday.

The relief will ensure CAS benefits are retroactively granted to certain lecturers regularised from contractual or temporary appointments, who were granted until December 31, 2023, to complete refresher courses. The government has also waived the mandatory PhD requirement for placement in a higher pay band under CAS for lecturers appointed before March 5, 2010.

The new relaxations concerning academic, training and qualification requirements for promotions were brought out through a GR issued Wednesday.

The move follows a February 7, 2025, order of the Maharashtra Administrative Tribunal, which partly allowed petitions filed by lecturers challenging a Government Resolution (GR) of June 2022 and quashed a related circular over CAS norms.

Citing the tribunal's direc-



tions and representations received from faculty, the state had constituted a five-member committee under Dr Pramod Naik, Joint Director, Technical Education (Mumbai region), to review the June 2022 GR.

Acting on the committee's recommendations submitted in October 2025, the government has now amended multiple CAS clauses, relaxing academic, training and qualification requirements for several categories of teachers, particularly those regularised from contractual or temporary service.

One of the most significant relaxations concerns lecturers regularised from contractual or temporary appointments through government decisions taken in 2015-16. Such faculty had been granted until December 31, 2023, to complete refresher or training courses, in line with extensions reportedly granted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Those who completed the required courses by the extended deadline will now receive CAS benefits, effective retroactively.

Even those who complete the courses later will be granted benefits from the date of completion, effectively shielding a large pool of faculty from earlier disqualification, according to Wednesday's GR.

In another major move, the government has waived the mandatory PhD requirement for placement in the higher "Pay Band-4" under CAS for lecturers appointed before March 5, 2010.

As per the June 2022 GR, a PhD was mandatory, in line with AICTE norms, for grant of Pay Band-4 under the Sixth Pay Commission structure. The latest GR now exempts pre-2010 appointees from this condition.

Further, lecturers appointed in 2003 and 2004 in Science and Humanities streams will now be granted CAS benefits on the basis of MA or MSc qualifications, as was the earlier practice under the Fifth Pay Commission, instead of being subjected to subsequently introduced higher qualification benchmarks.

In yet another concession, contractual or temporary lecturers appointed in 2003-04 have been exempted from the mandatory requirement of ME/MTech for CAS eligibility.

of the day **note**

HERE, NOW
The return of Kashmiri Pandits with full dignity and security is the commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi
MANOJ SINHA | J&K LT GUV

I respectfully request the CM again to seek a CBI probe into the matter so that the culprits behind the misappropriation can be caught and punished
RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | KERALA BJP PRESIDENT

The growing concerns raised by the Leader of the Opposition, Tika Ram Jolly, and other legislators in the Assembly regarding the rising cases of cardiac arrests and sudden deaths among youths and children are extremely serious
ASHOK GEHLOT | EX-RAJASTHAN CM

SHORT TAKES

CPI(M) leader quits as KTDC Chairman

Palakkad (Kerala): CPI(M) leader and former MLA P K Sasi has resigned as Chairman of KTDC amid speculation that the UDF is holding discussions with him to contest the upcoming Assembly election. Sasi told reporters here Thursday that he had submitted his resignation to the Tourism Minister, the Tourism Director and the Tourism Secretary. He said he was stepping down from the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) for personal reasons and clarified that he has not resigned from the CPI(M) or from his trade union positions.

Shots fired targeting editor of newspaper

Imphal: Gunshots were allegedly fired targeting the editor of a local newspaper in Manipur's Imphal East district, police said Thursday. Armed men intercepted Khoirum Loyalakpa's car near Hatta Cemetery around 10 pm Wednesday, they said. Two rounds were fired at his vehicle, which shattered the rear glass. Following this, the attackers physically assaulted him, they added. Loyalakpa was taken to a hospital with a bloody nose and discharged after primary treatment, police said.

Terror associate held with 2 foreign pistols

Jammu: A terror associate with direct links to Pakistan-based handlers was arrested along with two foreign-made pistols in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Thursday. Sachin Kumar alias Pamma, a resident of Sair village near the Line of Control, was arrested in a joint operation by police and Rashtriya Rifles from a forward village in Nowshera sector, a police spokesman said. He said a terror module was busted with the arrest of Kumar who, as per preliminary investigation, was in direct contact with Pakistan-based narco-terror operatives.

3 Delhi schools receive bomb threat e-mails

New Delhi: At least three schools in Delhi received bomb threat emails Thursday morning, triggering swift evacuation and search operations by emergency agencies. The threats were later declared a hoax, officials said. Police teams, bomb disposal squads, dog squads and local administration officials were deployed at the schools soon after the alerts were received, officials said. As a precaution, school authorities evacuated students and staff.

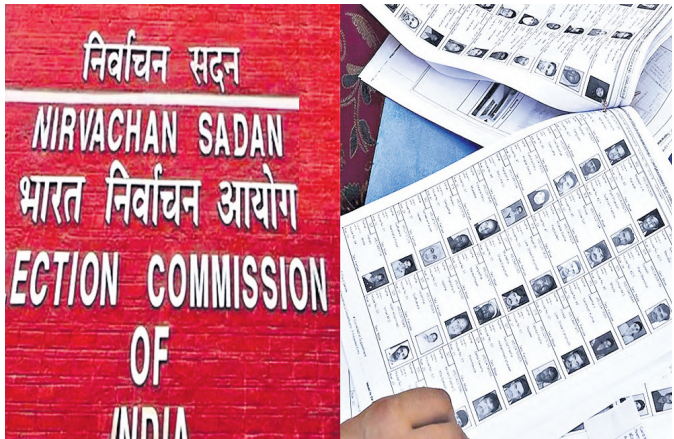
NEXT PHASE OF SIR EXPECTED IN APRIL

EC notifies 22 states, UTs

In a letter to chief electoral officers of 22 states and UTs, EC said pan-India SIR of voters' list was ordered in June last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Election Commission Thursday asked 22 states and Union Territories including Delhi to complete preparatory work related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) at the earliest as the exercise is "expected to start from April". Once the exercise is completed, all states and UTs will be covered. In a letter to the chief electoral officers of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram,



Nagaland, Delhi, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, Telangana and Uttarakhand, the poll authority said pan-India SIR of voters' list was ordered in June last year.

Battling "vote chori" allegations levelled by the opposition Congress, the Election Commission held the SIR of electoral rolls in 13 states and UTs and a 'special revision' in Assam this year. It is all set to hold a similar exercise in the remaining 22 states and UTs this year.

While the exercise, which kept the EC in the news, was

completed in Bihar, it is ongoing in 12 states and UTs with nearly 60 crore electors.

The remaining 40 crore electors will be covered in these 17 states and five UTs. In Assam, a 'special revision', instead of SIR, was completed February 10.

Due to a variety of reasons, SIR in the nine states and three UTs have seen frequent tweaking in schedules. Like Bihar, political parties have approached the Supreme Court challenging SIR in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

With the cooperation of all, we have built not just a housing complex. It is a confident response to the neglect and apathy shown towards the state
PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

SC GRANTS BAIL TO VIKRAM BHATT

The Supreme Court Thursday granted bail to filmmaker Vikram Bhatt in a multi-crore rupees cheating case lodged in Rajasthan. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi also regularised the interim bail granted on February 13 to Bhatt's wife Shwetambari Bhatt in the case



Helicopters fly over the Jal Mahal during a rehearsal ahead of the Sarang and Surya Kiran Air Show, in Jaipur, Rajasthan

Only thumbnails shown, wife tells SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali J Angmo alleged in the Supreme Court Thursday that four videos which formed the basis of her husband's detention were not shown to him and only the thumbnails on pen drive were displayed.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing in the court for Angmo, told a bench of justices Aravind Kumar and Prasanna B Varale that not supplying the videos violated Wangchuk's right to effective representation before the advisory board as well as the government. "It is now alleged by the State that that DIG came with a laptop and shown four videos. The laptop was provided to detainee October 5, 2025, but those four videos were not there."

"Let us assume they showed it to be, that is not the requirement of law. The requirement is to give it to me. They have to provide the document, I don't have to ask. It is there constitutional duty to supply. We have said that time and again that the four was never supplied," Sibal said.

Another lawyer assisting Sibal informed the court that the pen drive was inserted in the laptop before Wangchuk and he only saw the thumbnails.

Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj submitted that there is a video in which the conversation with the DIG and detainee will show everything. The top court said it see the relevant video recordings, including a 40-minute video of the interaction between police officials and the detainee. The matter is now posted for hearing February 23.

WANGCHUK DETENTION



The court previously questioned the accuracy of transcripts of videos submitted against Wangchuk
Angmo argues that the violence in Leh cannot be attributed to Wangchuk's actions and that he condemned the violence

On Monday, the apex court had questioned the Centre about the transcripts of videos submitted by it against Wangchuk and said the translations should be precise in the age of artificial intelligence.

It had told Nataraj that it wanted actual transcripts of Wangchuk's statements from the government after Sibal submitted that some of the words attributed to the activist were never said by him. The top court was hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by Wangchuk's wife, Gitanjali Angmo, seeking a declaration that his detention under the National Security Act (NSA), 1980, is illegal.

The NSA empowers the Centre and the states to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India."

The maximum detention period is 12 months, though it can be revoked earlier. Angmo said the violence in Leh September 24 last year cannot be attributed in any manner to the actions or statements of Wangchuk.

Wangchuk himself condemned the violence through his social media handles and categorically said it would lead to the failure of Ladakh's "tapasya" and its peaceful pursuit of five years, Angmo said, adding that it was the saddest day of his life.

Anti-CAA pleas: Top court to start hearing petitions May 5

The CAA seeks to grant citizenship to migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Parsi communities who came to the country from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Supreme Court Thursday said that it will commence the final hearing May 5 over 200 pleas including the lead one of IUML challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA). The CAA seeks to grant citizenship to migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Parsi communities who came to the country from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi issued procedural directions with regard to final hearings on the petitions which are pending since 2019-2020.

The bench said it will hear petitioners including the leader the Indian Union of Muslim League (IUML) for one-and-a-



half days and the Centre will be granted a day for advancing its arguments.

The CJJ said the bench would conclude the hearing on the petitions May 12. The bench asked the parties to file additional documents and submissions within four weeks.

The bench said it will hear the pleas related to pan-India application of the CAA first and then take note of the petitions pertaining to Assam and Tripura later. It said Assam's problem is different from the rest of the country as the earlier cut-off date for citizenship was March 24, 1971, which under the CAA was extended to December 31, 2014. These matters were last listed before a bench on challenging the validity of the law.

The apex court, however, refused to stay the operation of the Rules that would give effect to the CAA as sought by

a battery of senior advocates representing the petitioners.

The Centre March 11, 2024 paved the way for the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, with the notification of the relevant rules, four years after the contentious law was passed by Parliament to fast-track Indian citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014.

The president gave his assent to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 December 12 that year turning it into an Act. Over 200 petitions were filed challenging the constitutional validity of the CAA. Among those who have filed pleas are the IUML, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, RJD leader Manoj Jha, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra and AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi.

Ch'garh community bars engaged couples from chats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balod, Feb 19: A community in Chhattisgarh's Balod district has banned engaged couples from speaking to each other privately on the phone till the wedding, citing an increase in relationship break-ups.

The Sen community, which falls under the Other Backward Class category, has a population of approximately 250,000 across the state. About 70 per cent of the community works in salons. Santosh Kaushik, the community's Balod district president, said they observed that many couples were parting ways after engagement, causing distress for both parties.

"We discovered that the reason behind this was the communication between the boy and the girl via mobile phone before marriage. Therefore,



we have made a rule that there should be no communication between the boy and the girl after the engagement and before the marriage," he said.

If necessary, the conversation should take place in front of the

parents, he said. Gauri Shankar Shrivastava, the state organisation secretary of the community, welcomed the decision by their Balod district unit. "The ban has been imposed in Balod district and will soon

be implemented across the state. Previously, the community had also banned pre-wedding shoots," he said.

The younger generation is divided over the idea. Balod resident Sakshi (20) welcomed the

The Sen community, comprising approximately 250,000 people, primarily salon workers, implemented the phone ban after observing increased post-engagement separations

Community leaders believe pre-marital phone communication contributes to break-ups and advocate for parental supervision during necessary conversations

move, saying if mobile phones are breaking engagements, it's not right for couples to talk for hours before the wedding.

"This decision is good for both the family and society," she said.

Poonam Ritu Sen, a journalist, is urging the community to reconsider the restriction.

"This is not only a matter of

personal freedom, but also of choosing a life partner. If you want to spend your entire life with someone, it's important to understand them," said the 29-year-old.

If anything suggests a couple is incompatible, it is better to break off the engagement than end up divorcing after marriage. "The community should reconsider this decision," she added.

Umesh Kumar Sen, the community spokesperson in Balod district, said they have also decided that sisters-in-law will no longer be able to hide their brother-in-law's shoe during weddings, a long-standing tradition, as this can create conflicts between the two parties. He said the community has also decided to sever ties with a member if they embrace a different faith.

of the day quote

During the 2027 Census, the Asamese community will become almost a minority

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA
| ASSAM CM

Karnataka's public health-care system is crumbling under the Congress government

R ASHOKA | LEADER OF OPPN IN KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY

Many countries of the world have been facing an economic crisis for many years and there is a political crisis, too, globally due to tension among different countries. Amid this scenario, India's growth rate has been steady and impressive

NITIN NABIN | BJP PRESIDENT

POST OF THE DAY

The embarrassment caused by Galgotias University at Delhi's AI meet is what happens when people instead of spending time doing science, maths, literature, spend their time showing that 5000 years ago their ancestors did science, maths, literature.

@kaushikcbasu

SHORT TAKES

Haryana Budget Session begins

Chandigarh: The Budget Session of the Haryana Assembly, beginning Friday, is likely to be stormy, with the Opposition preparing to corner the BJP government over several issues, including law and order, unemployment, and farmers' welfare. The nearly month-long session will commence with the governor's address and the Budget will be presented March 2 by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, who also holds the finance portfolio. The session will continue till March 18, with several holidays in between.

Man kills toddler by throwing her into well

Bhadoli (UP): A three-year-old girl was killed after being allegedly thrown into a well by her uncle Thursday in Bhadoli district following a dispute over a suspected illicit relationship with her mother, police said. The accused, Ranjit Bind, 30, has been arrested, and the body of the child, Aanchal, was recovered from the well and sent for post-mortem, a senior police officer said. The incident took place in the afternoon in Danupur Paschim Patti village in the Suryawa area, Additional Superintendent of Police Shubham Agrawal said.

3 killed as two groups clash

Mumbai: Three persons were killed during a pre-wedding ceremony after two groups clashed over a minor dispute in Maharashtra's Dhule district, police said Thursday. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the incident that took place Wednesday at Pimlaner in Sakri tehsil, near the Gujarat-Maharashtra border, an official said. The deceased were identified as Suresh Gosavi (50), Sahil Gosavi (35) and Devendra Pawar (36), he said. The accused and the victims got into a fight over a trivial issue during the ceremony.

We will contest unit-edly and strongly. We consider this election a battle. We have many warriors, and we will win

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA
| CONGRESS LEADER

NAXAL-AFFECTED DISTRICTS REDUCE TO 7

A fresh review of the regions affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) has brought down the number of affected districts in the country to seven from eight, a development that aligns with the Union government's declaration on ending Naxal menace by March 2026



NATIONAL HERALD CASE

Delhi HC to hear ED plea March 9

New Delhi, Feb 19: The Delhi High Court Thursday listed for hearing March 9 a plea by the ED challenging the order of the trial court that refused to take cognisance of its chargesheet against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others in the National Herald related money laundering case.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma granted time to the Gandhis and others to file their replies. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), objected to the request made by the counsel for the respondent leaders for additional time to file responses, saying notice was served to them two months ago.

Terming it a "neat question of law", he said the case has to be argued on law and not facts, and the findings of the trial court were "coming in the way" of other cases. The reasons given by the trial court to refuse taking cognizance in the case were "patently perverse", the solicitor general said.

On December 22, the high court



had issued notice to the Gandhis and others on the main petition as well as on the ED's application seeking a stay on the December 16, 2025 trial court order, which held that cognizance of the agency's complaint in the case was "impermissible in law" as it was not founded on an FIR. Besides Gandhis, the high court had also issued notices to Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, Young Indian, Dotex Merchandise Pvt Ltd and Sunil Bhandari on the ED's plea.

The ED has accused Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, as well as late Congress leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes, along with Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, and a private company, Young Indian, of conspiracy and money laundering.

CONGRESS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST INDIA-US TRADE DEAL

New Delhi: The Congress Thursday launched the first phase of its campaign against the interim India-US trade deal with senior leaders alleging that the Modi government "compromised" the country's sovereignty and self-reliance. The Opposition party claimed that the deal will hurt the interests of farmers in the country, alleging that the opening of the agriculture sector will help the US flood its agri products, including genetically modified ones, into the Indian market. As part of the party's campaign, senior leaders addressed press conferences over the issue in several states across the country. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu addressed a presser in Srinagar, while party general secretary Sachin Pilot addressed another one at Mumbai and Deepender Hooda in Patna. The second phase of the campaign will be launched this weekend when three more press conferences by senior party leaders are planned in Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, sources said.

IMAGE HIT OVER COUGH SYRUP DEATHS: SC RAPS PHARMA FIRM

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Feb 19: "Do you realise what dent it has caused to the country's image," the Supreme Court Thursday asked a pharmaceutical firm whose cough syrups allegedly resulted in death of more than 18 children in Uzbekistan.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pandhori refused to quash an order which summoned the firm and some of its officials on a complaint alleging various violations including manufacture and sale of drugs declared "not of standard quality".

"Only for the sake of money, you indulge into this? The nation's image is dented due to this," the bench said. The counsel for the firm and its officials said there was nothing on record to show that consumption of the syrup has caused any death.

"Do you realise what dent it

has caused to the country's image?" the bench asked.

The top court refused to interfere with the Allahabad High Court verdict that had dismissed the pleas filed by the firm and some of its officials, who had challenged a January 2024 summoning order passed by the chief judicial magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar.

The chief judicial magistrate had passed the order in a complaint case filed under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 in Noida.

The top court was hearing a plea filed against the high court's order.

A complaint was filed by the drugs inspector alleging various violations including manufacture and sale of drugs declared "not of standard quality" and further invoking sections related to adulterated and spurious drugs, procedural non-compliance, and liability of company officials.

INDORE WATER CONTAMINATION Cong creates din in MP Assembly

Press Trust of India

Bhopal, Feb 19: The Madhya Pradesh assembly witnessed stormy scenes and four successive adjournments Thursday as the Opposition Congress launched a scathing attack on the Mohan Yadav-led government over the contaminated water crisis in Indore.

While the Congress claimed 35 people have died, labeling it "murder by the system", the state government officially revised its figure upward to 22 deaths -- sharply contradicting its own "death audit" report submitted to the High Court last month which cited only 16 fatalities. The Congress, which has 64 MLAs in the 230-member House, relented only after Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar assured to hold a discussion on the issue Friday.

The House functioned smoothly for a while during the Question Hour Thursday. But as soon as the issue of deaths due to the waterborne disease outbreak in Indore came up, the Congress demanded the resignation of two ministers and Indore mayor.

Leader of the Opposition Umang Singhar termed the incident a failure of the system and demanded the resignation of Urban Development Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya and Health Minister Rajendra Shukla.

He claimed that while 35 people have died in Indore due to the contaminated water, the ministers responsible were sitting in the House. "These are not deaths, but murders, and the system has led to the murder of 35 people in Bhagirathpura. On moral grounds, these ministers should resign," he said. Congress members began creating a ruckus and shouting slogans demanding the ministers' resignations. Amid the din, health minister Shukla admitted that 22 people have died in Indore due to water contamination.

PM pitches for democratisation of AI

Inaugurating the India AI Impact Summit here, Modi unveiled the 'MANAV' vision for a human-centric approach and use of artificial intelligence (AI) with a strong accent on sovereignty and inclusivity

Press Trust of India



New Delhi, Feb 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday strongly pitched for democratising artificial intelligence, and said some countries believe that AI should be developed in a confidential and closed manner but India thinks it will truly serve the good of the world when it is shared and its codes are open.

Inaugurating the India AI Impact Summit here, Modi unveiled the 'MANAV' vision for a human-centric approach and use of artificial intelligence (AI) with a strong accent on sovereignty and inclusivity.

He asserted that the country does not fear AI but sees a fortune in it and a blueprint of tomorrow. "Some countries believe that AI should be developed in a confidential and closed manner. But India is different. We believe AI will truly serve the good of the world when it is shared and its codes are open. Only then will millions of young minds be able to improve it further," he said.

Emphasising the importance of child safety, the prime minister said just as school syllabi are curated, the AI space must also be child-safe and family-guided.

He said there are two kinds of people "those who see fear in AI and those who see fortune" and asserted that India sees fortune and future in AI, backed by talent, energy capacity and policy clarity. Welfare and happiness of all is "our benchmark" for AI to ensure that humans don't become a data point or raw material, Modi stressed.

"I present the MANAV vision for AI where M stands for moral and ethical systems, A for accountable governance, N for national sovereignty, A for accessible and inclusive, and V for

valid and legitimate," Modi said in the presence of world leaders at the Bharat Mandapam here.

The prime minister also said the MANAV vision will become a crucial link for humanity's welfare in the AI-driven world of the 21st century.

AI, he said, must be given an open sky, but command must remain in human hands.

Global leaders, including UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, French President Emmanuel Macron, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Swiss President Guy Parmelin, and CEOs from leading technology companies from around the world were among those present at the Summit.

India's strides in AI were showcased during Modi's speech, which was dubbed live in 11 languages along with an AI-enabled sign language interpretation.

The AI-enabled sign language interpretation was projected on a large screen behind the prime minister, ensuring that the speech was accessible to everyone. Later, addressing a leaders' plenary session, the prime minister said India has built a vibrant digital public infrastructure, which it is sharing with the world because for the country, technology is not a medium of

power but of service, not to dominate but to empower.

"In recent years, India has built a vibrant digital public infrastructure and is sharing it with the world, because for India, technology is not a medium of power but of service, not to dominate but to empower. The AI too must follow this direction to ensure the welfare of humanity," he said.

He also stressed that as the future of AI is discussed, the aspirations and priorities of the Global South must be placed at the centre of AI governance.

The prime minister emphasised that the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) ensured seamless online transactions even in difficult circumstances and played a major role in bridging the digital divide. He also said that India is providing its startups with world-class computing power at highly-affordable rates.

India also created the AIKosh national dataset platform, through which more than 7,500 datasets and 270 AI models have been shared as national resources, he said. The Prime Minister emphasised that India's direction and vision for AI are clear, which is, AI is a shared resource for the welfare of humanity.

Recalling Lord Buddha's teaching that "right action

SNIPPETS

Man detained for threatening to shoot Rahul, other Cong MPs

Jaipur: A man who allegedly put out a video threatening to shoot Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and 25 other MPs of the opposition party was detained by police in Rajasthan's Kota Thursday, a senior official said. The man, who identified himself as Raj Singh, the spokesperson of the right-wing group Karni Sena, said in the purported video that all BJP and Karni Sena workers were angered by the way 25 Congress MPs verbally abused Speaker Om Birla in the Lok Sabha during the recently concluded first part of the Budget session of Parliament.

DRDO conducts key test for Gaganyaan drogue parachute

New Delhi: India's human spaceflight programme Gaganyaan has achieved a key milestone with the DRDO conducting a test that proved India's expertise in designing and manufacturing high-strength ribbon parachutes, the defence ministry said Thursday. The test was conducted February 18 at the Rail Track Rocket Sled (RTRS) facility of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL) in Chandigarh, the ministry said in a statement. "India's human spaceflight programme has achieved a key milestone with the successful qualification level load test of drogue parachute for the Gaganyaan programme," it said.

India likely to join 'Pax Silica' today

New Delhi: India is likely to formally join a US-led strategic alliance, known as 'Pax Silica', which is aimed at building a resilient supply chain for critical minerals and artificial intelligence. The move comes amid efforts by the two sides to finalise the proposed trade deal and move forward on several other initiatives to solidify the bilateral ties after a spell of severe strain in the relations. India is likely to formally join the 'Pax Silica' initiative Friday, people familiar with the matter said. The initiative was launched in December to build a secure, resilient, and innovation-driven supply chain for critical minerals and artificial intelligence (AI). The Pax Silica Summit was held in Washington December 12 where partner nations signed the Pax Silica declaration. The declaration lays out a shared vision of deep economic and technology cooperation across supply chains -- from raw materials through semiconductors and AI infrastructure -- and commitment to mutual prosperity and security. The member nations of the Pax Silica include Australia, Greece, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor last month announced an invitation to New Delhi to join the strategic alliance.

FURORE OVER 'THE KERALA STORY 2'

Parties divided, producer says real life stories

Press Trust of India

New Delhi/Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 19: The yet to be released Hindi film "The Kerala Story 2: Goes Beyond" on religious conversion is at the centre of an escalating row, much like its 2023 predecessor, with Left and Congress leaders terming it hate propaganda and the BJP backing it as "legitimate concern".

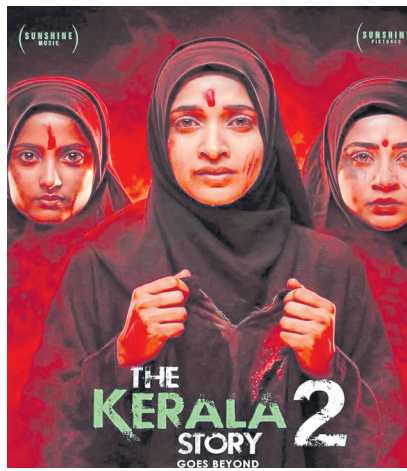
The trailer of the film, produced by Vipul Amrutlal Shah and directed by Kamakhya Narain Singh, released Tuesday and landed straight into controversy. It tracks the stories of three Hindu women from three different states going against their families to marry Muslim men and then being forced to convert.

"The movie is based on real life stories... I want audiences to judge whether we are

showing is the truth or propaganda," Shah told PTI as the storm brewed in Kerala and elsewhere too.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan slammed the filmmakers, saying the intent is to "spread hatred against the state and undermine its secular tradition".

"The reports regarding the release of a sequel to the hate-mongering film 'The Kerala Story' should be seen with utmost gravity. Having already seen through the communal agenda and blatant lies of the first part, Kerala will once again reject this attempt to demonise our secular fabric with contempt," the CPM leader said in a post on X. Congress general secretary K C Venugopal agreed. He alleged that the BJP-led Central government, which honoured



the first film with a national award, was encouraging and legitimising such hate campaigns. The film received support from the BJP.

Kerala BJP chief Rajeev

- THE TRAILER OF THE FILM, PRODUCED BY VIPUL AMRUTLAL SHAH AND DIRECTED BY KAMAKHYA NARAIN SINGH, RELEASED TUESDAY AND LANDED STRAIGHT INTO CONTROVERSY
- IT TRACKS THE STORIES OF THREE HINDU WOMEN FROM THREE DIFFERENT STATES GOING AGAINST THEIR FAMILIES TO MARRY MUSLIM MEN AND THEN BEING FORCED TO CONVERT

Chandrasekhar accused Vijayan and the Congress of selective outrage and said in a post on X, "Freedom of expression for radicals. Moral outrage when the vote bank feels un-

comfortable. This is the #CPM-CongressKuruvuSangam's idea of secularism - selective outrage for political survival."

The first film, titled "The Kerala Story", was also based on the religious conversion and radicalisation of young women and was also the centre of furious debate. It was directed by Sudipto Sen and earned over Rs 300 crore despite being banned in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. Besides, it won the National Film Award for best direction for Sen and best cinematography.

Shah, who produced "The Kerala Story" as well and has co-written the second one, fought back against the criticism of his new project.

He said the film does not target any particular state, religion or community and talks about the racket of forced conversions.

of the day

quote

In some ways, it went well. But in other ways, it was very clear that the president has set some red lines that the Iranians are not yet willing to actually acknowledge and work through

JD VANCE | VICE PRESIDENT, US

The state must respond to this not only with generosity, but also with humility and a deep sense of duty. No nation can progress by undermining the youth

SUSHILA KARKI | INTERIM PRIME MINISTER, NEPAL

More than 5 million Americans came to France in 2025, part of a record 102 million foreign tourists during the year

SERGE PAPIN | TOURISM MINISTER, FRANCE

SHORT TAKES

Apple to manufacture iPhones in Pakistan

Islamabad: Pakistan has agreed to provide incentives to American tech giant Apple to start manufacturing iPhones in the country, a media report said Thursday. Apple has also agreed to refurbish iPhones in Pakistan for re-export under the new framework. The government expects \$100 million from the re-export of refurbished iPhones in the first year, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. It said the Apple management had asked for the provision of land at discounted rates, 8% performance incentive and plans to repair two to three-year-old iPhones.

UK condemns 10-year sentence for couple

London: British foreign minister Yvette Cooper Thursday condemned as “totally unjustifiable” the 10-year sentence given to a British couple in Iran for spying, saying the government would continue to press for their release. Craig and Lindsay Foreman had been charged with espionage after Iran accused them of gathering information in several parts of the country. “We will pursue this case relentlessly with the Iranian government until we see Craig and Lindsay Foreman safely returned to the UK and reunited with their family,” Cooper said in a statement. The Foremans were arrested January 3 of last year while travelling through Iran on a global motorcycle journey. Iranian state media announced their detention the following month over espionage charges and they have now been held for more than 13 months.

Meta’s Zuckerberg denies at LA trial

Los Angeles: Meta Platforms CEO Mark Zuckerberg Wednesday repeatedly said during a landmark trial over youth social media addiction that the Facebook and Instagram operator does not allow kids under 13 on its platforms, despite being confronted with evidence suggesting they were a key demographic. Mark Lanier, a lawyer for the woman suing Instagram and Google’s YouTube for harming her mental health when she was a child, pressed Zuckerberg over his statement to Congress in 2024 that users under 13 are not allowed on the platform. Lanier confronted Zuckerberg with internal Meta documents. The case involves a California woman who started using Instagram and YouTube as a child. She alleges the companies sought to profit by hooking kids on their services despite knowing social media could harm their mental health.

Trump threatens to bomb Iran

REUTERS

Washington, Feb 19: President Donald Trump warned Iran Thursday that it must reach a deal over its nuclear program or “bad things” will happen, and appeared to set a 10-day deadline before the US might take action.

Amid a massive US military buildup in the Middle East that has fueled fears of a wider war, Trump said negotiations with Iran were going well but insisted Tehran has to reach a “meaningful” agreement.

“Otherwise bad things happen,” Trump, who has repeatedly threatened to attack Iran, told the first meeting of his Board of Peace in Washington.

Trump spoke of the US airstrikes carried out in June, saying Iran’s nuclear potential had been “decimated,” adding “we may have to take it a step further or we may not.”

“You’ll be finding out over the next probably 10 days,” he said, without elaborating.

‘GOOD TALKS’: TRUMP

US threats to bomb Iran, with the two sides far apart in talks on Tehran’s nuclear programme, have pushed up



Trump has threatened to bomb Iran over its nuclear program

US sends warships and fighter jets to region

Kremlin urges all sides to show restraint

Oil prices have risen on fears of fresh attack on Iran

oil prices, and a Russian corvette warship Thursday joined planned Iranian naval drills in the Gulf of Oman, a vital sea route for global energy.

Iranian and US negotiators met Tuesday and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas

We will meet them looking to connect them with shelter, looking to them with services, looking to connect them with a city that wants them to be sheltered and indoors and warm and safe. And that is something that I believe will yield far better results



ZOHRAN MAMDANI | MAYOR, NEW YORK

US TO HOST G20 FINANCE MEETING

The United States will host meetings of G20 finance officials in Asheville, North Carolina, in late August and September 1, the Treasury Department said Thursday. President Donald Trump will host the G20 leaders’ summit in Miami December 14-15 at Trump National Doral in Miami, Florida



New Mexico probes claim of bodies buried near Epstein ranch



REUTERS

New Mexico, Feb 19: New Mexico’s Department of Justice said Wednesday the state was investigating an allegation, which emerged from documents released by the US Department of Justice, that the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein ordered the bodies of two foreign girls buried outside his remote New Mexico ranch.

New Mexico Department of Justice spokesperson Lauren Rodriguez said it had requested from the US Justice Department an unredacted copy of an email in 2019 containing the allegation.

The US Justice Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The FBI declined comment.

“We are actively investigating this allegation and are conducting a broader review in light of the latest release from the US Department of Justice,” Rodriguez said in an emailed response to queries about the case.

A day earlier, New Mexico’s legislature launched the first comprehensive investigation into accusations that Epstein sexually abused girls and women at the Zorro Ranch 30 miles (48 km) south of Santa Fe for more than two decades. Pressure from Democratic lawmakers to uncover Epstein’s crimes has become a major political challenge for President Donald Trump.

The redacted 2019 email, contained in the latest release of Epstein-related documents by the US Justice Department,

had been sent a few months after Epstein’s death to Eddy Aragon, a New Mexico radio show host who had discussed the Zorro Ranch on his program.

The sender, claiming to be a former Zorro Ranch employee, requested payment of one bitcoin in return for videos that the email said had been taken from Epstein’s house and showed the financier having sex with minors.

Aragon said in a phone interview that he believed the email to be legitimate and immediately forwarded it to the FBI. He said he did not receive any payment from or have any further contact with the sender, although he recently tried to respond to it for the first time but the address was no longer functioning.

The redacted email to Aragon said two foreign girls had been buried on Epstein’s orders “somewhere in the hills outside the Zorro” and that the two had died “by strangulation during rough, fetish sex.”

A 2021 FBI report, also contained in the latest Epstein file release, said Aragon visited an FBI office to report the email, which offered seven videos of sexual abuse and the location of two foreign girls buried on Zorro Ranch in return for one bitcoin.

The Justice Department warned last year that some of the files it disclosed from its investigation of Epstein “contain untrue and sensationalist claims,” and that they include anonymous accusations that investigators did not corroborate, or in some cases determined to be false.

16 killed in explosion due to suspected gas leakage in Karachi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Feb 19: At least 16 people, including many children, were killed and 14 others injured when a suspected gas leakage led to an explosion in a residential building in Pakistan’s Karachi Thursday morning.

“The explosion took place around 4:30 am on the first floor of the building located in the Old Soldier Bazar area when everyone was awake for Sehri time,” police official Jamshed Asher said.

The first day of Ramzan is being observed in Pakistan today. The police official said that the reason for the explosion apparently was a gas leakage.

Due to gas shortage in Pakistan’s biggest city, many families especially in lower income residential areas use liquid petroleum gas cylinders at their homes. Police surgeon Dr Samaiya Syed confirmed that they have received 14 bodies so far from the blast site while 14 injured are under treatment.

The explosion caused a part of the building structure to collapse due to its dilapidated condition. “We are still searching through the rubble and debris to see if there are any more bodies or survivors,” Chief Fire Officer Humayun Khan said.

The deceased include at least nine children aged between two and 17 while the injured also include seven children.

This is the second major tragedy to occur in Karachi. Last month, a fire broke out in the basement of the Gul Shopping Plaza, a wholesale and retail market, in the Saddar area killing at least 79 people and leaving scores injured.



Public workers clean a subway platform after heavy snow falls during the night in Frankfurt, Germany, the day when public traffic employees went on a strike, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

SK’s ex-Prez Yoon gets life in prison for insurrection

REUTERS

Seoul, Feb 19: A South Korean court sentenced former President Yoon Suk Yeol to life in prison Thursday, after finding him guilty of masterminding an insurrection linked to his December 2024 attempt to impose martial law.

Prosecutors had sought the death penalty in the case, closely watched in a deeply divided country. It is the most consequential of a series of trials for the ousted leader, whose bid triggered a national political crisis and tested democratic resilience.

Yoon conspired with his then-defence minister, Kim Yong-hyun, to subvert the con-

- Prosecutors sought death penalty for insurrection
- Yoon’s martial law attempt lasted only six hours, but triggered a political crisis
- Seoul court ruling most consequential of cases for Yoon
- Yoon’s legal team to discuss whether to appeal

stitutional order by deploying troops to parliament, intending to paralyse its functions, Judge Jee Kui-youn told a packed courtroom.

“It is the court’s judgment that sending armed troops to parliament ... and using equipment to try to make arrests all constitute acts of insurrection,”



he said, speaking for the panel of three judges.

Yoon led a number of officials and troops in criminal activities December 3, 2024, and “because of the martial law decla-

ration, an enormous social cost was incurred,” Jee said as he handed down the life term for the former leader.

SHOCKWAVES IN SOUTH KOREA

While Yoon’s bid to impose

Hamas tightens grip in Gaza as Trump pushes peace plan

REUTERS

Cairo/Jerusalem, Feb 19: Hamas is cementing its hold over Gaza by placing loyalists in key government roles, collecting taxes and paying salaries, according to an Israeli military assessment seen by Reuters and sources in the Palestinian enclave.

Hamas’ continuing influence over key Gaza power structures has fuelled widespread scepticism about the prospects of US President Donald Trump’s peace plan, which requires the militant group to give up its weapons in exchange for an Israeli military withdrawal from the territory.

Trump’s international Board of Peace, which is meant to supervise Gaza’s transitional governance, is holding its inaugural meeting in Washington

Thursday.

“Hamas is advancing steps on the ground meant to preserve its influence and grip in the Gaza Strip ‘from the bottom up’ by means of integrating its supporters in government offices, security apparatuses and local authorities,” the military said in a document presented to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in late January.

Hamas says it is ready to hand over administration of the enclave to a US-backed committee of Palestinian technocrats headed by Ali Shaath, a former Palestinian Authority official in the occupied West Bank. But it says Israel has not yet allowed committee members to enter Gaza to assume their responsibilities.

NEW GOVERNORS

Hamas has named five district governors, all of them



with links to its armed al-Qasam Brigades, according to two Palestinian sources with direct knowledge of its operations. It has also replaced senior officials in Gaza’s economy and interior ministries, which manage taxation and security, the sources said.

And a new deputy health minister was shown touring Gaza hospitals in a ministry

video released this month.

“Shaath may have the key to the car, and he may even be allowed to drive, but it is a Hamas car,” one of the sources told Reuters.

Israel’s military appears to have reached a similar conclusion. “Looking ahead, without Hamas disarmament and under the auspices of the technocrat committee, Hamas will succeed,

Hamas appoints loyalists to key roles ahead of government handover

Group’s continuing influence over key Gaza power structures fuels scepticism about prospects of Trump’s peace plan

Hamas says ready to hand over administration of Gaza to committee of technocrats

Trump’s Board of Peace to discuss next steps Thursday

in our view, to preserve influence and control in the Gaza Strip,” it said in its assessment, which was first reported by Israel’s Channel 13 news. This is the most complete account of the document’s contents.

Ismail al-Thawabta, director of the Hamas-controlled government’s media office, denied these were new appointments, saying temporary replacements

had been found for posts left vacant during the war to “prevent any administrative vacuum” and ensure residents receive vital services while negotiations continue over next steps in the peace process.

The appointment of Shaath’s committee in January marked the start of the next phase of Trump’s plan to end the war in Gaza, even as key elements of the first phase - including a complete cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas - remain unfulfilled.

The Board of Peace is expected to receive reports on the committee’s work Thursday.

Trump is also expected to announce countries that will commit personnel for a UN-authorized stabilization force and help train a new Palestinian police force, which the NCAG is expected to manage.

of the day

quote

We strongly believe in the potential of the helicopter market in India... we strongly believe that H125 helicopters can be a key enabler to boost this civil helicopter market in India

BRUNO EVEN | CEO, AIRBUS HELICOPTERS

Embraer is committed to delivering not only a world-class aircraft but also a robust, long-term support ecosystem tailored to India's operational and industrial requirements

BOSCO DA COSTA JUNIOR | PRESIDENT AND CEO, EMBRAER DEFENCE & SECURITY

The signing of these Tripartite Agreements reflects BPCL's structured approach towards integrating Compressed Bio-Gas into our CGD network and advancing the greenification of India's fuel ecosystem

RAHUL TANDON | BUSINESS HEAD, BPCL

SHORT TAKES

Agri products, auto exports surge in EU

New Delhi: India's exports of agricultural products and automobiles are making greater inroads into European markets, recording healthy growth during April-December 2025, according to Commerce Ministry data. Of India's \$19.3 billion in global automotive exports during the first nine months of 2025-26, the EU's share rose to 11.6 per cent from 9.8 per cent in April-December 2024, the data showed. The shipments grew from \$1.6 billion in April-December 2024 to \$2.2 billion in April-December 2025 to the European Union, with which India has recently announced the conclusion of negotiations for a free trade agreement. India's exports from this sector to the world also rose from \$16.8 billion to \$19.3 billion during the nine-month period of this fiscal. Similarly, India's exports of fish, coffee, tea, spices, cereals, gums, and resins to the EU have also recorded healthy growth rates during the period under review. Cereal shipments have risen from \$181 million during April-December 2024 to \$339 million in April-December 2025. Zero-duty access under the trade agreement will further push shipments of these goods.

Adobe to give free AI tools to students

Chandigarh: Global software company Adobe Thursday announced that it will offer its flagship products, including Photoshop, Acrobat and Firefly, free of cost to students across India to strengthen AI skills and support the country's growing creator economy. The announcement was made here, with the company saying the initiative aligns with the central government's focus on artificial intelligence and digital skill development. Under the initiative, students from accredited higher education institutions will get free access to Adobe's creativity and productivity tools along with AI-based learning modules, training and industry-recognised certifications. Adobe has partnered with Nasscom FutureSkills Prime, a digital skilling programme supported by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), to provide free AI-first courses and certificates. The company said the move supports the government's "Create in India" vision and complements the Union Budget 2026 announcement to create two million jobs in the Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) sector by 2030. Adobe Chair and CEO Shantanu Narayen said the initiative will empower millions of students with AI skills and help accelerate the vision of Viksit Bharat.



India must move from being a tech services-led nation to an IP-led nation; services scale with effort. IP scales infinitely

ROSNI NADAR MALHOTRA | CHAIRPERSON, HCL TECHNOLOGIES

NESTLE TO SELL ICE CREAM BIZ

Nestle is in talks to sell its remaining ice cream businesses as part of CEO Philipp Navratil's drive to streamline the sprawling Swiss consumer food group, the company said at its fourth-quarter results Thursday. The maker of Maggi stock cubes and Nescafe coffee, said it was in advanced talks to sell ice cream businesses in Asia, Canada and parts of Latin America to Haagen-Dazs owner Froneri, a joint venture which Nestle established with European buyout firm PAI Partners



Brokers seek 6-month freeze on RBI curbs on bank lending

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 19: An Indian brokers' body has sought a six-month pause on rules that will tighten bank lending to stock brokers and other market intermediaries from April 1, according to a document reviewed by Reuters Thursday.

The Reserve Bank of India tightened the norms last week, including raising collateral for bank guarantees and banning lending for proprietary trading by brokers.

The brokers' body, The Association of NSE Members of India (ANMI), has written to the markets regulator, seeking intervention.

The new rules would restrict access to bank financing for proprietary trading positions, reduce liquidity, raise trading costs and are likely to discourage foreign portfolio investors' participation, the brokers said.

They would "unintentionally constrain proprietary market makers and arbitrage desks, which are key providers of liquidity and price efficiency," the brokers' body said.

Restricting funding would also create an uneven playing field between local and foreign firms, potentially shifting market share to overseas participants, who can continue to finance transactions through foreign banks, it said.

A six-month pause would give market participants time to submit feedback, conduct impact assessments and engage in constructive consultations, according to the letter.

Ambani, Adani vow \$210bn for AI push

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: Conglomerates run by billionaires Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani committed \$210 billion investment to creating infrastructure that will help India emerge as an AI development hub.

At the India AI Impact Summit, Ambani announced a \$10 lakh crore (about \$110 billion) investment in artificial intelligence over the next seven years in gigawatt-scale AI-ready data centres in Jamnagar, leveraging up to 10 GW of green power surplus, and a nationwide edge-compute layer integrated with telecom and digital operator Jio's networks to deliver low-latency AI across India.

Adani, on the other hand, unveiled a \$100-billion investment to develop renewable-energy-powered, hyperscale AI-ready data centres by 2035 – one of the world's largest integrated energy-compute commitments

B'desh bars SpiceJet from using airspace over dues

Last week, SpiceJet reported a loss of ₹269.27cr in the three months ended Dec 2025 as higher costs and one-time expenses took a toll on the budget carrier's bottom line

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 19: Bangladesh has barred SpiceJet from using its airspace as the budget

carrier is yet to repay pending dues, according to sources.

With the Bangladesh airspace not being available, the airline is taking longer routes for some of its flights from Kolkata, including to Guwahati.

When contacted, a SpiceJet spokesperson Thursday said the airline was in regular dialogue with the relevant authorities on operational and procedural matters, including navigation-related charges.

"These are routine industry issues and we are working constructively towards an



early resolution. Our flight operations remain unaffected, and we continue to operate our scheduled services in line with regulatory requirements," the spokesperson said in a statement.

While specific details were not disclosed, the sources said Bangladesh has banned the airline from using its airspace due to non-payment of dues.

Details about the nature of dues could not be immediately

BEAR ROUT

Investors' wealth erodes by ₹6.8L-cr



Sensex, Nifty crash more than 1% on selling in RIL, HDFC Bank amid escalating geopolitical tensions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 19: Investors' wealth was eroded by nearly ₹7 lakh crore Thursday as the stock markets took a heavy beating with the BSE Sensex tumbling 1,236 points or 1.5 per cent amid escalating geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,236.11 points, or 1.48 per cent, to settle at 82,498.14. During the day, the benchmark nosedived 1,470.05 points, or 1.75 per cent, to hit an intraday low of 82,264.20.

The 50-share NSE Nifty slumped 365 points, or 1.41 per cent, to close at 25,454.35. In the intraday session, the broader NSE Nifty tanked 430.6 points, or 1.66 per cent to hit a low of 25,388.75, as 47 of its compo-

nents ended in the red while three closed in the positive zone.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms slumped by ₹6.79 lakh crore (₹6,79,210.1 crore) to ₹465 lakh crore (₹4,65,22,014.57 crore (\$5.13 trillion)).

Selling pressure was widespread, led by IndiGo, followed by Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Trent, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Adani Ports, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, ITC, Eternal and PowerGrid.

The sharp selloff in equities today was triggered by news of an imminent US strike on Iran. The US Vice President JD Vance's statement that Iran didn't meet all expectations of Washington and the President has the military option to strike Iran, sent fear in markets, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

He added that Brent crude shot up above \$70 per barrel and the fear gauge India VIX

rose 9 per cent.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹880.49 crore Thursday, while domestic institutional investors were also the net sellers of stocks worth ₹596.28 crore, according to the exchange data.

"Institutional selling - both domestic and foreign - was limited. Yet the Sensex tanked by 1,236 points, reflecting fear in the market. The market rally during the last three days, assisted by improving Q3 numbers and FIIs turning buyers, enabled profit booking by bulls. This magnified the selling pressure, finally ending in a sharp correction," Vijayakumar said.

In European markets, Berlin's DAX declined the most by 1 per cent, Paris' CAC 40 by 0.86 per cent, and London's FTSE 100 by 0.76 per cent.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi settled 3 per cent higher, while Japan's Nikkei 225 benchmark closed 1 per cent higher. Markets in Hong Kong and mainland China remained closed for the Lunar New Year holidays.

Broader indices ended lower, with the BSE Midcap Select Index declining 1.71 per cent, while Smallcap Select Index fell 0.98 per cent.

Among the sectoral indices, Realty dropped the most by 2.54 per cent, followed by Power by 2.22 per cent, Capital Goods by 2.18 per cent, Services by 2.11 per cent, Auto by 2.09 per cent, Consumer Discretionary by 1.91 per cent, Utilities by 1.90 per cent, and Industrials by 1.81 per cent.

A total of 2,927 stocks declined, while 1,276 advanced and 164 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Maruti Suzuki unveils e-Vitara in City



The unveiling ceremony at Tushi Motors was attended by Amitabh Thakur, Transport Commissioner and Chairman of STA Odisha, as the chief guest. On the occasion, Tushi Motors Managing Director Preeti Pallavi Patnaik, Director Anshuman Patnaik, VP Harmohan Mohanty and Regional Director Gaurav Dave were also present

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: Maruti Suzuki India Limited marked a major milestone in its electrification journey with the official launch of its first all-electric SUV, the e-Vitara, in authorized dealerships Tushi Motors and Sky Automobiles in Bhubaneswar Thursday.

Positioned as a "Made-in-India, For-the-World" product, the e-Vitara is being manufac-

tured at the company's Gujarat facility and will be exported to over 100 global markets. The launch signals Maruti Suzuki's aggressive push into the fast-growing electric vehicle (EV) segment.

The e-Vitara is built with HEARTECT-e architecture, featuring a long 2,700 mm wheelbase and flat-floor design to maximize interior space and passenger com-



The launch ceremony at Sky Automobiles was attended by Vijay Kumar Satpathy, AGM SBI; Rashmi Ranjit Dalabehera, Deputy Commissioner, Transport; Saurav Yadav, Territory Sales Manager of Maruti Suzuki; Prabin Kumar Lath, COO, Nexa; Tushar Ranjan Behera, COO, Aena; Sanjay Kumar Gupta, GM, Sky Automobiles; B Kumar Nayak, SSM; Prashant Kumar Behera, GM Nexa; and Rashmi Rekha, QM, Sky Group

fort. The SUV is offered with two Lithium Iron Phosphate battery options — 49kWh and 61kWh.

Safety remains a highlight, with the SUV securing a 5-star rating from Bharat NCAP. It comes equipped with seven airbags, all-disc brakes and a Level-2 ADAS suite that includes adaptive cruise control and autonomous emergency braking.

To simplify EV ownership, Maruti Suzuki unveiled its 'e For Me' ecosystem, offering home charging installation support, access to over 2,000 charging points across 1,100+ cities and 1,500 EV-ready workshops nationwide.

The e-Vitara is priced between ₹15.99 lakh and ₹19.79 lakh (ex-showroom, introductory), positioning it competitively in India's premium electric SUV segment.

Taneira expands footprint in Bhubaneswar with new store

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: Taneira, a Tata product, continues to expand its presence in Bhubaneswar with the launch of its newest store located in Chandrasekarpur here Thursday.

Spanning 3,337 square feet, the store was inaugurated by Somprabh Singh, CSMO, Taneira; Sah Gaurav Krishn, RBH - East, Titan Company Ltd and Yogendra Hans and Family, Business Associates.

Designed to reflect Bhubaneswar's cultural identity, the store draws inspiration from local art forms such as Patachitra painting, Pipli applique and Dokra craft, offering visitors an immersive retail experience. Celebrating the city's renowned textile craftsmanship, the store features a dedicated wedding zone for brides-to-be with a wide selection of bridal wear for the season. Speaking on the launch,

Somprabh Singh, CSMO, Taneira, said, "We are pleased to strengthen our presence in Bhubaneswar with the launch of our new store in Patia, a locality that reflects the city's artistic spirit and traditions. It is an important market for us given its strong cultural roots and deep appreciation for handloom, making it a natural destination for a brand committed to craftsmanship and quality. This store stands as a tribute to the country's diverse weaving traditions, bringing the finest expressions of India's textile legacy together under one roof."

To mark the grand launch, Taneira is offering a complimentary gold coin offer on a minimum purchase of ₹25,000 from February 19 to 23, inviting customers to experience the artistry and richness of India's textile heritage with a special gesture marking the occasion.



MEN IN BLUE NEED TO TACKLE TOP-ORDER PREDICTABILITY GOING INTO SUPER 8s

Finger spin struggles out in open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 19: India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate has acknowledged two pressing issues facing the team heading into the Super 8s of T20 World Cup: the predict-ability of the left-handed top-or-der and the batters' struggles against finger spinners.

Speaking to select media after the win over the Nether-lands in their final league fix-ture, Doeschate said the over-whelming title contenders have not played a perfect game yet.

With India's top-three be-ing left-handers including Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kis-han and Tilak Varma, he also conceded that it has made it easier for opposition teams to plan against them.

Netherlands off-spinner Ary-an Dutt bowled three overs in the powerplay Wednesday and removed Sharma and Kishan.

Doeschate feels India don't have an off-spin issue per se, and it is the overall play against the finger spinners that needs major improvement. The home team will need to find a way to deal with fingers spinners in their Super 8 games against South Africa, Zimbabwe and West Indies.

"It has (made it easier for teams to plan against India). We don't have many options (in the top three). We've got Sanju sit-ting on the side and we feel on balance, particularly with the games coming up, if we look at what finger spin is, we are going to come up against New Zealand.

"We've got a few guys who bowl finger spin and so do the West Indies and so does South Africa if you include Markram. But on balance, we still feel that these are our best batters and we're going to make do with the abundance of left-handers," said Doeschate.

Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus had foxed the Indian

TODAY'S CLASH

Australia vs Oman

Time- 7:00 pm



INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Mumbai City start on winning note

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 19: Mumbai City FC began their Indian Super League season on a winning note, edging past Chennaiyin FC 1-0 at the Mumbai Football Arena here Thursday.

A tightly-contested encounter was decided by an own goal in the 48th minute by Pritam Kot-al as the Islanders secured all three points. Neither team could create much flow in the match as they cancelled each other out in the midfield. Chances were at a premium in the first half as the attackers found it difficult to break the opposition defence.

Jorge Pereyra Diaz forced a fine save out of Mohammad Nawaz after he was played through by Jorge Ortiz. Minutes later, Brandon Fernandes found Lallianzuala Chhangte at the far post. The forward laid the ball on the path of Ortiz but the Span-iard's effort only found the goal-keeper. Chennaiyin relied on long balls with Irfan Yadwad and new signing Inigo Martin as the target men, but they were well marked by the Mumbai City defence.

Karnataka to face J&K in title clash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 19: Karnata-ka entered the Ranji Trophy final after a hiatus of 11 years, advancing by virtue of a first innings lead from their drawn semifinal match against Uttara-khand here Thursday.

Karnataka will face Jammu and Kashmir in the title clash at Hubballi from February 24.

Resuming the fifth and final day from their overnight 299 for six, Karnataka lost the remain-ing four wickets quickly to get bowled out for 323 for an overall lead of 826 runs.

Uttarakhand fought through fifties by Avneesh Sudha (66),



batters with his round arm off-spin in Delhi before Pakistan's Usman Tariq, Salman Agha and Saim Ayub were able to put the arch-rivals under pressure in Colombo.

Doeschate said batters need to find a way against fingers spinners when the ball is hold-ing a bit.

"I wouldn't say off spin, I'd say finger spin," said the as-sistance coach about the areas of improvement going into the next phase of the ICC event.

"If you take the combined, I think Pakistan bowled 14 overs of finger spin in the last game and off the top of my head I want to say something like 4 for 78 or something like that. So it's not great numbers.

"Colombo was a particularly difficult wicket and I think the numbers tonight got sort of im-proved towards the back end. But again, Aryan Dutt bowling four overs, it is a big challenge.

"I think these two venues with the bigger boundary here (Ahmedabad) and obviously a slower wicket in Colombo sort of does exag-gerate that. But it's something we're going to have to focus on,

like I said, with the amount of finger spin we're going to get in the next three games," said

Doeschate.

India play South Africa in their Super 8s opener here Sun-

UNBEATEN WEST INDIES FINISH AS GROUP TOPPERS

Kolkata: Skipper Shai Hope top-scored with a 46-ball 75 before his bowlers did what was expected of them as West Indies beat Italy by 42 runs to enter the Super 8s of the T20 World Cup as group toppers here Thursday. West Indies posted 165 for six in their final Group C fixture and then bundled out Italy for 123 in 18 overs. Shamar Joseph (4/30) and Matthew Forde (3/10) were the top bowlers for the Caribbean side. Asked to bat first, West Indies were well served by Hope, who hit six boundaries and four sixes, but their other top-order batters failed to make significant contributions in the face of some disciplined bowling by Italy. Sherfane Rutherford (24 off 15 balls) and Matthew Forde (16 off 8 balls) played useful cameos towards the end and remained not out. Sri Lanka-born leg-spinner Crishan Kalugamage was the most impressive bowler for Italy, returning figures of 2/25 in four overs.

ZIMBABWE STUN SRI LANKA AT HOME BY SIX WICKETS

Colombo: Zimbabwe notched up a stunning six-wicket win over Sri Lanka in their final Group B T20 World Cup match here Thursday. Opting to bat, Pathum Nissanka carted eight fours en route to a 41-ball 62 and Pavan Rathnayake blasted a 25-ball 44 in the back end as SL posted 178 for 7. In reply, Brian Bennett (63) hit a fifty and skipper Sikandar Raza (45) produced the needed acceleration as Zimbabwe chased down the total, scoring 182-4 in 19.3 overs to top the group. Earlier, Graeme Cremer (2/27), Blessing Muzarabani (2/38) and Brad Evans (2/35) claimed two wickets each for Zimbabwe. Both the teams have qualified for the Super 8s.

AFGHANISTAN CRUSH CANADA TO BOW OUT ON A HIGH

Chennai: Afghanistan, powered by a belligerent unbeaten half-century by opener Ibrahim Zadran and a fine bowling display by Mohammad Nabi, defeated Canada by 82 runs in an inconsequential T20 World Cup Group D match here Thursday. Sent in to bat, Zadran blazed an unbeaten 95 off 56 balls, striking seven fours and five sixes, and forged a 95-run third-wicket partnership with Sediqullah Atal (44 off 32) to power Afghanistan to a formidable 200 for 4 in their final match of the tournament. Canada were then restricted to 118 for 8 with Mohammad Nabi (4/7) and Rashid Khan (2/19) taking four and two wickets respectively.

WOMEN'S T20I SERIES

All-round Australia outplay India

Kangaroos beat Women in Blue by 19 runs in 2nd match to level series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Canberra, Feb 19: A record opening stand between Georgia Voll and Beth Mooney paved the way for Australia to level a three-match T20I series with a 19-run victory against India in the second match here Thursday.

Voll and Mooney added 128 runs for the first wicket to reg-ister Australia's highest open-ing stand against India in T20Is, with the hosts posting 163 for 5.

India, despite making a spar-kling start to the chase, crum-bled in the end to finish at 144 for nine. Ashleigh Gardner claimed 3/22, while Kim Garth, Annabel Sutherland and Aus-tralia captain Sophie Molineux took two wickets each.

The series-deciding third T20I will be played at the Ad-elaide Oval Saturday.

India were 65/1 in the ninth over when their slide began as the visitors lost six wickets for seven runs towards the end.

India were off the blocks



quickly as Shafali Verma's ear-ly fireworks was followed by Smriti Mandhana opening up. The two Indian openers put on 54 in the powerplay to put the team on track of the chase.

With India struggling at 71 for three, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (30) and Richa Ghosh (19) joined forces and did well to add 55 runs for the fourth wicket.

However, the asking rate kept moving up which in turn forced the Indians to take un-wanted risks. Harmanpreet was caught by her counterpart Molineux off Garth on the pen-

Historic deaf T20I

Asia Cup kicks off



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 19: The first edi-tion of the Asian Deaf Cricket Association (ADCA) T20I Asia Cup, 2026 was inaugurated at Barabati Stadium, Cuttack with a grand opening ceremo-ny Thursday.

The tournament was inau-gurated by chief guest, Rishi Pathania Vice President, Jindal Steel Limited, marking a signif-icant milestone for the inaugural tournament hosted by Indian Deaf Cricket Association (ID-CA) supported by Odisha Deaf Cricket Association (ODCA) and Odisha Cricket Association (OCA). The tournament features three national teams - India, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Speaking about the tourna-ment, Sumit Jain, President, ADCA, said, "The first edition of the ADCA T20I Asia Cup 2026 reflects our continued com-mitment to promoting cricket among hearing-impaired athletes from across Asia. The ADCA was founded with a simple but a powerful vision to create a glob-al platform where deaf athletes can compete, grow and be cele-brated with dignity and equality. We are deeply honoured to have Rishi Pathania as the chief guest. I would like to extend my gra-titude to team Sri Lanka, Nepal and India for being part of this historic first edition."

Dedicated to nurturing up-coming sports talent among specially abled athletes, the ADCA T20I Asia Cup, 2026 continues to receive strong support from corporate and in-stitutional partners, reflecting the growing commitment of In-dia's corporate sector towards promoting inclusive sports and creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The opening ceremony was attended by a distinguished line-up of Guests of Honour,

including Rishi Patania (Vice President, Jindal Foundation), Jayanta Kumar Mohanty (Head CSR, Jindal Foundation), Shailesh Rai (TSM Tata Mo-tors Passenger Vehicles Ltd); Kunal Gupta (Assistant Man-ager CSR, Hero MotoCorp – We care) and Bankim Mohanty (ED cum Secretary, Astha School Of Management).

Roma Balwani, CEO, IDCA, commented, "The first edition of the ADCA T20I Asia Cup 2026 stands as a testament to the resilience and determi-nation of India's decision to establish Asian Deaf Cricket Association by Sumit Jain, a veteran former hearing-im-paired Indian cricketer. As we light the torch of this tourna-ment, let this be a beginning of a long and impactful journey that expends to more coun-tries, more tournaments and greater opportunities for deaf athletes across Asia."

India beat SL in opener



India edged Sri Lanka by 4 wickets in a tight low-scoring match at Barabati Stadium in the opener of the ADCA T20I Asia Cup. After choosing to bowl first, India restricted Sri Lanka to 132 all out in 18.4 overs, with Pranil More (3.4-24-3) leading the attack, supported by Hilal Wani (3-16-2) and Sibun Nanda (3-21-2). Chasing 133, India reached 133/6 in 18.5 overs. Sai Akash (35 off 37) anchored the chase and was named Player of the Match. Sri Lanka's bowlers fought back, but India held nerve and registered their first win.

India's Kaur becomes highest-capped woman in international cricket

Harmanpreet Kaur became the highest-capped player in women's international cricket when she made her 356th appearance for India in Thursday's Twenty20 match against Australia, surpassing New Zealand great Suzie Bates. Indian captain Kaur, 36, has now played six tests, 161 One-Day Internationals and 189 T20 matches for her country since 2009. Bates, two years her elder, has not played for New Zealand since making her 355th international appearance in October during the ODI World Cup. Kaur's compatriot Sachin Tendulkar holds the record for the most international appearances in men's cricket, having represented India 664 times across formats. Kaur has scored eight centuries and 38 fifties for India, and led the country to their first Women's World Cup title on home soil in November.

PAK HOCKEY CRISIS

PHF chief resigns after banning skipper for criticism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Feb 19: The crisis in Pakistan hockey deepened Thursday as the national fed-eration's President Tariq Bug-ti resigned in the aftermath of the mismanagement that left players on the streets during a recent tour of Australia but not before imposing a two-year ban on skipper Ammad Shakeel Butt for his criticism of the PHF. Bugti said he has sent his resignation to the pa-tron-in-chief of the federation, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "I have sent my resignation let-



ter to the PM but I urge him and Field Marshal Asim Munir to con-duct an impartial inquiry into the whole situation which took place in Australia during the FIH Pro League hockey," he said.

Butt had lambasted the PHF in Lahore Wednesday, stating that players were forced "to

clean the kitchen and wash dishes" before going out to com-pete during the tour in which the side lost all its matches of the FIH Pro League against the home team and Germany.

This was after they spent hours on the road after the hotel earmarked for them de-clared them entry for lack of an advance payment by the PHF, despite the body getting the re-quisite funds from the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB).

Pakistan have to travel to Egypt after four months to take part in the final qualifying tour-nament for the World Cup.