



Taapsee on sensuality

Actor Taapsee Pannu discusses objectification and heightened sensual portrayal of female bodies in film song shoots

LEISURE | P2



Armed man shot dead

Cops gun down armed man, who drove into US President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Volatile week ahead

Domestic data, F&O expiry, and Trump tariff fallout may roil Indian markets this week, analysts say

BUSINESS | P11



SA overpower India

South Africa execute clinically with the ball to choke India and secure a handsome 76-run win in the Super 8s of T20 WC

SPORTS | P12



ETHNIC LOOK: Young women from Tamil Nadu in traditional attire take a selfie during the Bharatiya Bhasha Parv cultural programme at Chiman Bagh Ground in Indore, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

5 policemen killed in SUV-truck collision

CM ANNOUNCES ₹5 LAKH EX GRATIA

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Jharsuguda, Feb 22: In a devastating road mishap, at least five police personnel were killed and four others sustained grievous injuries when a police vehicle (an SUV) and a truck collided head-on on National Highway-49 in Jharsuguda district Sunday, police said. The accident took place near Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya (OAV) in Jharsuguda Sadar police station area when eight personnel were returning from a wedding, while the truck was moving in the opposite direction, a senior police officer said. "Five police personnel from Jharsuguda district were killed, while two were seriously injured and are undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Bargarh. The condition of another injured policeman is stable," Jharsuguda ASP Madhusikta Mishra said. The truck driver has also been injured in the accident, and he is undergoing treatment, she said. "A case has been registered and probe is on," Mishra said. The truck turned to its side after the collision and the police vehicle was completely dam-

aged in the accident, she added. The deceased were identified as APR personnel Kashiram Bhoi and Debadatta Sa, Drill SI Niranjan Kujur, APR havildar Lingaraj Dhuria, and home guard Bhaktabandhu Mirdha. The injured are: Dubaraj Miriga and Akash Nayak, and sergeant Rajib Bharsagar. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi condoled the deaths and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured police personnel.



"I'm deeply grieved and heartbroken to learn about the untimely demise of 5 dedicated police personnel in a tragic road accident that occurred in Jharsuguda. I extend my deepest condolences to the bereaved families during this sorrowful time. Along with praying for the eternal peace of the departed souls, I pray to the Almighty for the swift recovery of others injured in the accident," Majhi wrote on X. The CM has announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each for the next of kin of the five deceased police personnel. The compensation will be paid from CMRF

Ganjam: 2 dead in elephant attack

Berhampur: Two persons were trampled to death by a wild elephant in Ganjam district Sunday, officials said. The victims were identified as Urmila Rout, 53, and Gopinath Pradhan, 67, residents of Jalameripalli village in Digapahandi block. The incident took place while they were working in their vegetable field, when the lone tusker, separated from its herd, suddenly attacked them. Locals rushed both of them to the nearest Digapahandi CHC, where the doctors declared them dead. P5

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We promised to deport infiltrators last time. If we had, what would we promise now?

India delays US trade talks

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 22: India has delayed plans to send a trade delegation to Washington this week, primarily because of uncertainty after the US Supreme Court struck down tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump, a source in its trade ministry said Sunday. One of the first concrete reactions among Asian nations to the decision, it follows Trump's move Saturday to levy a temporary tariff of 15 per cent, the maximum allowed by law, on US imports from all countries, following the court's rejection. "The decision to defer the visit was taken after discussions between officials of the two countries," said the source, who sought anonymity as the matter is a sensitive one. "No new date for the visit has been decided." The delay came mainly from the uncertainty over tariffs following Friday's judgement, the source added. The delegation had been set to leave Sunday for talks to finalise an interim trade deal February 23, after both countries agreed on a framework for Washington to



The delay came mainly from the uncertainty over tariffs following Supreme Court verdict

cut punitive tariffs of 25 per cent on some Indian exports linked to New Delhi's Russian oil purchases. US tariffs on Indian goods were set to be cut to 18 per cent, while India agreed to buy US items worth \$500 billion over five years, ranging from energy supplies to aircraft and parts, precious metals and technology products. India's Opposition Congress party had called for the interim pact to be put on hold, urging a renegotiation and questioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to issue a joint statement

before the court's ruling. The Indian trade ministry Saturday said it is studying the implications of the judgement and later US announcements. Last week, Trade Minister Piyush Goyal said the interim pact could take effect in April, after outstanding issues were resolved during the delegation's visit to Washington. Significantly, Trump, Saturday, announced to impose 15 per cent global tariffs, hours after declaring 10 per cent tariffs on all the countries. "Based on a thorough, detailed, and complete review of the ridiculous, poorly written, and extraordinarily anti-American decision on Tariffs issued yesterday, after MANY months of contemplation, by the United States Supreme Court, please let this statement serve to represent that I, as President of the United States of America, will be, effective immediately, raising the 10 per cent Worldwide Tariff on Countries, many of which have been "ripping" the US off for decades, without retribution (until I came along!), to the fully allowed, and legally tested, 15 per cent level," Trump had said in a social media post.

Two Maoists killed in Kandhamal encounter

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Feb 22: At least two Maoists were killed in an encounter with security forces in a forest along Kandhamal border Sunday, a police officer said. The encounter took place in Karada forest area within the jurisdiction of Raikia police station in Kandhamal district, Superintendent of Police (SP) Harisha BC said. The deceased have been identified as Jagesh, an area committee member, and Rashmi, a party member of the CPI (Maoists). According to police, both had a combined bounty of ₹27.50 lakh on their heads. Belonging to the Kalahandi Kandhamal Boudh Nayagarh (KKBN) division of the CPI (Maoists), the deceased were very active in the district and allegedly involved in several violent incidents, police added. Several weapons and items were seized by the security personnel from the spot, the SP said.



Several weapons and items were seized by the security personnel from the spot

He said no police personnel sustained injuries in the encounter. The encounter took place when the Maoists opened fire on the security forces, which had been conducting an anti-Maoist operation in the area over the past two days following a tip-off. Around nine to ten ultras were present, but only two to three fired at the security forces, police said.

Bride abducted at gunpoint

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir/Tarbha/Sonepur, Feb 22: A newlywed bride was allegedly abducted at gunpoint while returning home with the groom after their wedding in the early hours of Sunday, police said. The groom, Haribandhu Pute, alias Rinku, of Kamakhi Nagar in Bolangir town, had married Chandini, alias Rashmi, of Rathapada under Kantamal police limits in Boudh district earlier Saturday. According to police, the couple was traveling in a decorated car after the ceremony when armed assailants waylaid their vehicle near a bridge on the outskirts of Tarbha town around 3am. The attackers, who arrived in a Maruti Vitara Brezza, allegedly brandished firearms and sharp weapons, threatened the groom and other occupants and forcibly took the bride away before fleeing in their vehicle. A case has been registered at Tarbha police station in Subarnapur district. A special team has been formed to trace the woman and identify those involved. Police said neither the bride nor the suspects had been located till filing of this report. Sources said the wedding procession had travelled from Kamakhi Nagar to Rathapada earlier in the day, and the ceremony was conducted as per traditional rituals without incident. The couple left for Bolangir late at night. Speculation among locals suggests the abduction may be linked to a prior love affair. Some residents alleged that a youth from the Kantamal area, along with associates, planned the act after the woman married another person. Police have not confirmed this angle and said the probe is underway.

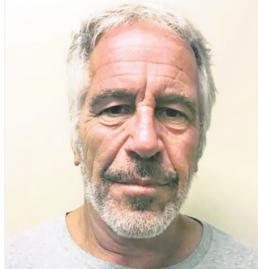


Newlyweds Rinku & Rashmi

Epstein stain: Will the mighty in US meet Andrew's fate?

The stunning arrest of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor by UK police on suspicion of misconduct in public office must have chilled many powerful American men to the bone. They may now wonder: could something like this now happen in the US? The former Prince's arrest is related to his association with dead sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and allegations he shared confidential material. Andrew has consistently denied wrongdoing and has been released under investigation. To see UK police making arrests over allegations relating to Epstein contrasts strongly with the US where, so far, little has happened to further investigate those linked to the disgraced financier. So, will we now see stronger

Epstein-related investigative efforts and possibly even arrests in the US? And why haven't we seen anything like that, so far? The million dollar question now is will this actually prompt stronger action in the US now? In Congress, US lawmakers are pushing hard for accountability. It's important to remember the collapse of the rule of law in the US is far from inevitable. The Epstein story still has a long way to play out yet, if only because of the weight of the documentary evidence that needs to be sorted through. It's also possible the arrest and potential prosecution of Mountbatten-Windsor (and others outside the UK) may end up revealing more from the Epstein story than has come out of the Department of Justice (DOJ) releases, which have been selective.



If the Mountbatten-Windsor case goes to trial – which is still far from certain – and as the scandal reverberates across Europe, that may end up circumventing efforts we have seen so far from the DOJ to slow-walk the release of Epstein-related documents and information. However, the most obvious reason why big arrests like

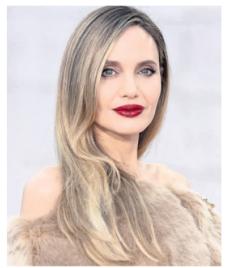


this is not happening in US is the stranglehold the Trump administration has on the DOJ. The performance of the attorney-general, Pam Bondi, in the recent judiciary committee hearing is a fair indication of that. To have the attorney-general – instead of being accountable and answering legitimate questions about the Epstein

files – waxing lyrical about US President Donald Trump being the greatest president in American history tells you a lot about the political capture of that department. Another extremely unsubtle sign of that capture is the large banner featuring Trump's face that has just been slung across the Justice Department building. All this tells you the DOJ is not an independent government department anymore. It has been captured and weaponised by the Trump administration. It's the same story at the FBI; instead of taking strong action over revelations appearing in the Epstein files, the agency appears to be focused on investigating Trump's claims about 2020 election "fraud" in Georgia. The unfortunate truth is there's no satisfactory answer

as to why no significant arrests have been made in the US in relation to the Epstein files. It's partly the Trump administration's capture of these agencies and departments. But it's also that the Epstein scandal implicates so many of the powerful in the US. These are enormous networks that span political divides, including some of the richest people in the world. And, of course, they're very good at protecting themselves. It's also a marker of Trump's capture of his political base. Viewed from the outside, it defies logic. You'd think a movement that coalesced around conspiracy theories there was a powerful cabal of paedophiles at work in the US would be loudly calling for arrests after the Epstein revelations. THE CONVERSATION (PTI)

leisure



ANGELINA TALKS ABOUT HER SCARS & SURVIVAL

Angelina Jolie described her double mastectomy scars as part of the life she chose so she could stay present for her children. The comments struck a chord because she did not frame the marks as something to hide. She framed them as proof of survival and a decision she stands by

ALEXANDRA DADDARIO, ANDREW FORM ANNOUNCE DIVORCE

Actor Alexandra Daddario, known for her role as Annabeth Chase in the *Percy Jackson* film series, decided to part ways with her husband and producer Andrew Form after 3 years. It was a mutual decision to divorce, and the couple plans to continue co-parenting



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
 Today nostalgia tinges your mood, and this reflects in your dealings at work, where others see your softer side. You even spend carefully, seeming to be wiser regarding your savings. Ganesha sees profits for cashiers and money lenders.

TAURUS
 You may find yourself compromising against your will today, predicts Ganesha. Stand strong despite things going awry instead of feeling disillusioned due to poor results. Ongoing negotiations might come to a logical end and a few important decisions are likely to be delayed due to lack of proper information.

GEMINI
 A progressive day awaits you. However, you need to keep yourself in check when enjoying yourself. You will spend time with your friends and family and bond emotionally. Do not neglect your family members in the group activities that you take up, says Ganesha.

CANCER
 Dame Luck will patronise you today. You will gain from land, house or building trade. You will get total support and co-operation from bosses and colleagues in the office. Ganesha indicates it as a very profitable day for you.

LEO
 Unlike Dennis or Calvin, expect your sometimes haughty and mostly naughty kids to behave 'just right' at the right time. It's not that children like to break rules, they just want to have some fun, reminds Ganesha. Keep this in mind while you go about arranging for special classes to improve their academic skills and performance.

VIRGO
 Ganesha foretells that you will start off on a long, arduous path to success. Some tough work will play a vital role in your progress. Don't cut corners, and your labours will pay rich dividends and you will reap due rewards. Some opportunities are best left alone as they involve too much risk.

LIBRA
 Ganesha says you will be more conscious about your beauty and outward appearance and try to enhance it by going to a beauty parlor or by purchasing expensive cosmetics. To enhance your appearance and personality you may also go on a shopping spree for clothes. Ganesha says you will gain benefits for your money today.

SCORPIO
 Keep your guards up and be wary today, warns Ganesha. A heat seeker meant for someone else may hit you in mid-flight. But all that watchfulness will save you from embarrassment. Like those old fables, these experiences have a lesson in them, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
 The rewards of hard labour will be sweet, so start off by unwinding with some fun today. Ganesha sees quality time being spent with friends and family. All in all, a fun day.

CAPRICORN
 Numerous projects and building work pressure can keep you busy, but get done with whatever you have on hand, for Ganesha says the day has a host of recreational activities lined up for you. This will also be the right time to reach out to more people, and devour whatever knowledge or information they have to offer.

AQUARIUS
 Optimism rules today, and you are assured of your success. You are not usually affected by others' opinions, and that is how it should be. But you must keep in mind the inconvenience your decisions may cause people. Any stress or tension will vanish in the arms of your beloved, says Ganesha.

PISCES
 Confusion and uncertainty will linger like dark clouds in today's sky which will rain on your decision making parade and make it hard for you to find tangible solutions to problems. Steer clear of controversy and try and delay any important decisions and stick to your daily routine, advises Ganesha. If you can isolate yourself and find time to spend in solitude to mull over your problems, then you might be better equipped to make the right choices.

Taapsee calls out female objectification

Mumbai: Having worked across Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam cinema, Taapsee Pannu says each industry shaped her craft and worldview. In a recent interview discussing her Delhi upbringing and her film *Assi*, she addressed the rarely discussed treatment of female bodies during song shoots. Speaking about the emphasis on the midriff in Bhojpuri and South songs, she noted that while Hindi item numbers also highlight sensuality, the focus differs. "Hindi cinema is more about cleavage," she said,

pointing to contrasting visual grammar across regions. She also described an uncomfortable practice she witnessed in the South, where actresses were sometimes asked to wear padded bras mid-shoot. Instructions, she said, would pass through multiple crew members, making the process awkward and embarrassing on crowded sets. Taapsee revisited an earlier anecdote about a coconut being tossed at her midriff during filming, a remark that sparked backlash from Telugu audiences, especially as it was linked to veteran filmmaker K. Raghavendra Rao. She later apologised, clarifying she meant no disrespect. Taapsee debuted with the Telugu film *Jhummadi Naadam* and rose to Hindi prominence with *Pink*. Her latest release, *Assi*, directed by Anubhav Sinha, is a courtroom drama exploring sexual violence and justice.



Rashmika's fitness mantra

Mumbai: "Good girls don't gatekeep," and India's National Crush, Rashmika Mandanna, is refreshingly honest about her fitness journey. Amid hectic shoots and constant travel, the *Pushpa: The Rise* star never skips her workouts. For her, fitness isn't about aesthetics alone, it's about strength, flexibility, agility, and overall well-being.

Rashmika follows a disciplined routine, training different muscle groups on dedicated days to achieve balanced results. Core workouts are her absolute priority, forming the foundation of her washboard abs and strong posture. She also practices kickboxing, which helps her manage stress, improve coordination, and boost metabolism. Functional training is another key element in her regimen, allowing her to build endurance and real-world strength rather than just focusing on appearance. Consistency is her biggest flex. No matter where she is or how packed her schedule gets, she finds a way to work out. She believes showing up every single day matters more than chasing perfection. Hydration and proper protein intake support her routine, ensuring recovery and sustained energy. For Rashmika, fitness is a lifestyle choice powered by discipline and self-love. Her mantra is simple yet powerful: keep moving, stay committed, and never miss a chance to work on yourself.

AGENCIES



Leaving home my best decision: Shalini

Mumbai: Actress Shalini Pandey opened up about her independent journey in the entertainment industry. During an exclusive interaction with this news agency, she said that everyone should pursue their dreams. The *Dabba Cartel* actress added that she looks back on her decision to leave her home to become an actress with kind eyes. Shalini was asked, "You have had an independent journey in cinema without any industry legacy. When you decided to leave your home to pursue your dreams, how do you look back at that phase of your life?" To this, the *Maharaj* actress told, "I think that was the best decision of my life because I feel anyone who wants to do something should pursue their dreams. I believe if I had not pursued my dream and had done something else, I would not have been happy. So, I am glad that I made that decision. I always look

back and see it with very kind eyes, and I am very grateful that I made myself go through that to be here." Reflecting on making her space in the industry without any help, Shalini shared that it is very crucial to be patient and consistent when you are in your growth phase. The *Arjun Reddy* actress further stated that the industry has taught her to have self-belief.



MULTILINGUAL DRAMA FEST: DAY III

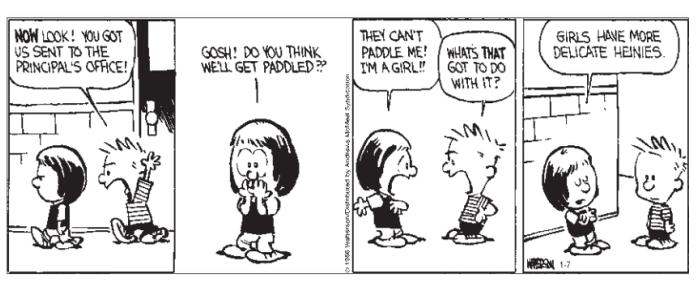


Artists of Uttar Pradesh's Bhartendu Natya Academy staged Hindi play *Ab Na Banegi Dehari* on the third evening of the event at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Sunday. Written by Padma Sachdev, the drama was directed by Bipin Kumar. The five-day National Kalinga Natya Mahotsav is being organised by the city-based theatre troupe Satabdira Kalakar as part of its golden jubilee celebrations

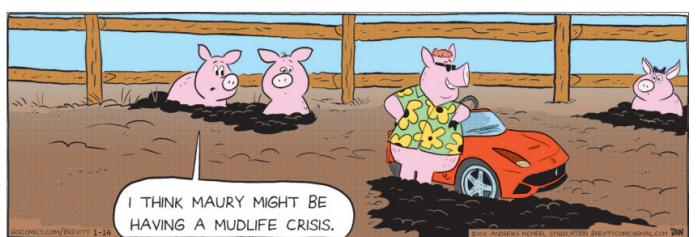
PEANUTS



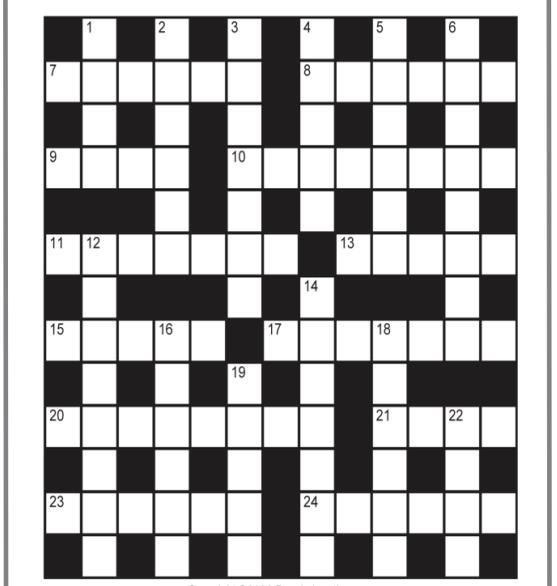
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Offended
 - 8 Reveal
 - 9 Family group
 - 10 Lighten the load
 - 11 Set apart
 - 13 Counterfeit
 - 15 Question
 - 17 Wide-angle lens
 - 20 Hair problem (5,3)
 - 21 Mountain pool
 - 23 Sphere
 - 24 Cereal fruit
 - Down**
 - 1 Small stream
 - 2 Cone shape
 - 3 Fine-tunes
 - 4 Dine-up elephant
 - 5 Cook too long
 - 6 Flotation device (4,4)
 - 12 Venomous stinger
 - 14 Obstructs
 - 16 Kind of gown
 - 18 Empty words (3,3)
 - 19 Denims
 - 22 Police action

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SC to hear Meta, WhatsApp privacy policy case today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Supreme Court is slated to hear pleas of Meta and WhatsApp against a Competition Commission of India (CCI) order imposing a penalty of ₹213.14 crore over their privacy policy Monday.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJ) Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi is likely to hear the matter.

The bench had made strong observations against Meta Platforms Inc and WhatsApp February 3, saying they could not “play with the right to privacy of citizens in the name of data sharing” and alleged that they were creating a monopoly in the market and committing theft of private information of customers.

Decrying WhatsApp’s privacy policy, the bench referred to “silent customers” who were unorganised, digitally dependent and unaware of the implications of data-sharing policies, and asserted, “We will not allow the rights of any citizen of this country to be damaged.”

The NCLAT November 4, 2025, had set aside a section of a CCI order that banned WhatsApp from sharing data with Meta Platforms Inc for advertising purposes for five years, but retained the ₹213-crore penalty.

It clarified that its order on privacy and consent safeguards also applies to user data collection and sharing for non-WhatsApp purposes



Indian Coast Guard personnel pose with detained crew members after intercepting the Iranian boat Al Mukhtar carrying 200 cartons of smuggled foreign cigarettes. The boat was being escorted to Porbandar, Sunday

₹1.73cr sanctioned to upgrade 12 institutions

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The state Higher Education department has sanctioned ₹1.73 crore for the development of 11 colleges and one university across Odisha under the ‘Ama Gourav Ama College’ scheme, aimed at strengthening infrastructure and academic facilities in higher educational institutions.

Among the institutions set to benefit from the initiative are Ravenshaw University, Agalpur Panchayat Samiti (Degree) College, Bijepur (Degree) College, Salipur (Autonomous) College, Biren Mitra

Memorial Women’s (Degree) College, Panchayat Degree College, Kalla, Hindol (Degree) College, Mahima Degree College, Belaguntha Science Degree College, Naktideul Degree College, Government Autonomous College, Phulbani, and Jasoda Bishnu College.

The sanctioned funds will be utilised for a range of development projects, including strengthening library resources, construction and upgradation of laboratories, development of sports and academic complexes, installation of Wi-Fi connectivity, and enhancement of campus security through CCTV surveillance systems.

Officials said the initiative is part of the state government’s continued efforts to modernise higher education infrastructure and provide improved learning environments for students.

CB red-flags Kendrapara schoolgirl’s gangrape

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, Feb 22: Odisha Police’s Crime Branch has classified the alleged gangrape of a class-7 girl at a private school in Kendrapara district as a ‘Red Flag’ case for fast-track investigation and close monitoring, an official said Sunday.

While the investigating officer will remain the same, the Crime Against Women & Children Wing (CAW&CW) of the Crime Branch-CID will monitor the case, a police officer said.

The ‘Red Flag’ category, introduced in 2014, applies to serious crimes against women, such as rape and murder, to ensure immediate attention and top-priority investigation.

Four teachers, including a woman, and a peon of the private school have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the repeated sexual assault of the 13-year-old student, police said.

The matter surfaced when the victim refused to attend school January 14. Later, she disclosed being sexually assaulted multiple times within



‘RED FLAG’ CATEGORY, INTRODUCED IN 2014, IS USED FOR SERIOUS CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN, INCLUDING RAPE AND MURDER, ENSURING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND PRIORITY INVESTIGATION

school premises over two years, with the accused threatening her into silence.

The arrests were made Saturday after the student’s father and the district child welfare committee lodged separate complaints at Rajkanika police station, alleging that the accused teachers had raped the minor, a senior officer said. The committee initially investigated the allegation and brought the matter to police, the officer said.

“A complaint was lodged February 18. A team was dispatched to the school after receiving the petition, meeting the survivor, her parents, teachers, staff and principal.

After a 48-hour-long investigation, we referred the case to the police for legal action,” child welfare committee member Swagatika Patra said.

The panel also directed the district education officer to carry out a separate investigation into the allegation, she said.

“The accused persons were arrested on the basis of preliminary investigation. Further probe is underway,” Rajkanika police station inspector-in-charge Sanjay Mallick said.

Meanwhile, opposition BJD submitted a memorandum to the Kendrapara SP and demanded stringent punishment for the culprits.

IRS officer in City faces rape charge

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: In a shocking incident, a young woman was allegedly raped by an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer at his government quarters in the City.

The victim is a resident of Kujang area in Jagatsinghpur district and friend of the accused IRS officer’s sister.

According to the complainant, the officer’s sister, accompanied by the victim, visited them at the government quarters in Satsang Vihar area after the accused and his wife fell ill earlier this month.

February 15, when the officer’s wife and sister reportedly left the quarters for some errands, the accused allegedly forced the victim to watch obscene video and raped her.

When the victim tried to file a police complaint against the officer, the latter allegedly threatened to make her private videos public. Later, February 18, the victim learnt that the accused has sent a recorded video of her to a person in Kujang area, prompting her to file a complaint with Saheed Nagar police.

Senior police official said, “A case has been registered and investigation is underway by verifying all the evidence and action will be taken accordingly.”

Three Pakistani terrorists killed in J&K encounter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 22: Three members of the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror outfit were killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir’s Kishtwar district Sunday, officials said.

The bodies of all the slain terrorists were charred beyond recognition as the mud house they were hiding in caught fire during the gunfight, they said, adding that preliminary assessments by security agencies suggest that one of the deceased is Saifullah, a notorious JeM commander.

He had reportedly infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir nearly five years ago and had since remained active in the region, allegedly masterminding several deadly attacks on security forces, including one in July 2024 that left four soldiers dead. Saifullah had escaped a number of encounters in the past.

The officials said the body of the third terrorist, along with a weapon, was retrieved from the gutted hideout of the ultras in the evening. Earlier, Northern



Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma complimented the White Knight Corps troops for their “swift and precise” action to neutralise the terrorists.

The terrorists were neutralised during the “Trash-I” operation in the general area of Passerkut in the Chatroo belt and two AK-47 rifles, along with ammunition, seized.

Sharing preliminary information, the officials said the

terrorists were hiding inside a mud house on the foothills and opened fire on the approaching search parties, leading to an intense gunfight. The mud house caught fire during the gunfight and was gutted.

The charred bodies of the terrorists were retrieved from the scene and efforts are on to identify them, the officials said, adding that the intelligence inputs had suggested the presence of Saifullah and two of his associates, both Pakistani nationals.

The Chatroo forest belt has witnessed nearly half-a-dozen gunfights between terrorists and security forces since January 18, resulting in the killing of a soldier and a Pakistani terrorist. While the soldier lost his life January 18, the terrorist was eliminated February 4.

With the killing of the three terrorists Sunday, a total of seven JeM ultras have been eliminated by security forces in separate encounters in the Jammu region this year. Earlier, two terrorists were killed in the Ramanagar forest in Udhampur February 4 and one was neutralised in Parhetar village of Kathua January 23.

Mother, son get life term for dowry murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, Feb 22: In a 30-year-old dowry harassment and murder case in Athmallik NAC area of Angul district, a local court handed down life imprisonment to a man and his mother, sources said.

The court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Ranjan Kumar Sutar at Athmallik Friday pronounced the verdict in the case.

The court convicted the husband of the victim, Mahadev Goduka, and mother-in-law, Devakibai Goduka, sentencing them to life imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 each, apart from the punishment. In case of a default of payment, they will have to undergo an additional two years in prison.

Victim’s sister-in-law, Saroja Devi, and brother-in-law, Binayak Goduka, were acquitted due to lack of evidence.

According to the prosecution, the victim Sarita Agrawal, elder daughter of Nathu Ram Agrawal of the FCI area in Angul, was married to Mahadev Goduka, elder son of Nathulal Goduka of Ratha Sahi in Athamallik, March 5, 1994.

Sarita was allegedly subjected to dowry harassment and murdered January 5, 1996. Her father had lodged a complaint at Athamallik police station in this connection.

Based on the complaint, police arrested her father-in-law Nathulal Goduka, husband Mahadev Goduka, mother-in-law Devakibai Goduka and brother-in-law Binayak Goduka.

MANN KI BAAT Modi lauds Odisha farmer’s success story

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged an Odisha farmer who has secured extra income through better land use and water savings, in his monthly radio broadcast, ‘Mann Ki Baat’, Sunday. The PM also mentioned a Kerala village’s success in growing 570 varieties of rice in a single field.

Modi said the results of the country’s farmers’ hard work are reflected in the statistics and India has now become the world’s largest rice producer.

He said producing more than 150 million tons of rice is no small achievement as the country is meeting its own needs and contributing to the global food basket.

Modi said farmers are not just food providers, they are the true



devotees of the earth and people should learn from them farmers how to turn soil into gold.

He said many farmers are blending tradition and technology, and some are focusing not just on production but also on quality, value addition and new markets.

In his fortnightly radio programme, the PM said, “The story

Modi: Don’t share OTP, Aadhaar, bank details

NEW DELHI: “Do not share your OTP, Aadhaar number, or bank account details with anyone. Most importantly, change your passwords regularly, just as you adapt your food and clothing with each season” said Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his monthly radio address, ‘Mann Ki Baat’, Sunday. He said that many people are being targeted through digital arrest and financial fraud, and quite often, senior citizens have been swindled of their lifelong earnings. To protect themselves, the PM urged everyone to remain vigilant and advised that KYC (Know Your Customer) or re-KYC procedures should only be carried out through bank branches, official apps, or authorised platforms. Modi said often, people come across news of fraud involving businessmen.

of a young farmer from Odisha named Hirod Patel is truly inspiring. Until about eight years ago, Patel cultivated paddy in the traditional way with his father, Shiv Shankar Patel, but then, he began to approach farming from a new perspective.”

“He built a strong mesh structure over his farm’s pond, grew creeper vegetables on it,

planted bananas, guavas and coconuts around the pond, and also started fish farming in the pond,” PM Modi said.

In other words, he said, traditional farming, growing vegetables and fruits and fish cultivation have been undertaken in one place and this has led to better land use, water savings and additional income. “Today,

farmers from far and wide come over to see his model,” he said.

In Kerala’s Thrissur, there is a village where 570 varieties of rice are grown in a single field, the prime minister noted.

“This includes local varieties, herbal varieties and even varieties imported from other states. This is not just farming, it is a massive campaign to preserve seed heritage,” he added.

Modi said agricultural products are now reaching foreign countries more easily by air like Nanjangud bananas from Karnataka, Mysuru betel leaves and Indi lemons were exported to the Maldives.

“These products are known for their taste and quality, and have even received the GI tag. Today’s farmer seeks quality, is also increasing quantity and making his mark as well,” he said.

MANDATORY SELF-DEFENCE TRAINING

Govt pulls up colleges over delay; sets deadline

Departmental review found that only a limited number of colleges have uploaded details of their activities, raising concerns about delays as the financial year approaches its close

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: State Higher Education department has issued a stern directive to government and government-aided colleges across the state, expressing concern over the slow implementation of self-defence club activities for the 2025-26 academic session. Although funds had been sanctioned and disbursed through the Student Academic Management System (SAMS) accounts months ago, many institutions are yet to effectively carry out the training programmes on the ground, department under secretary Smrutimayee Rout noted.

Departmental review found that only a limited number of colleges have uploaded details of their activities, raising concerns about delays as the financial year approaches its close.

Reiterating the importance of timely execution and financial accountability, the department has set clear deadlines—March 31 as completion of all



self-defence training sessions and workshops and April 30 as final date for submission of Utilisation Certificates (UCs) and activity reports through the HIMS portal.

The letter emphasised that adherence to these timelines is 'non-negotiable', warning institutions against treating the initiative as a mere procedural formality.

The self-defence club initiative forms a key part of the state government's efforts to enhance campus safety, particularly for girl students. The programme aims to equip students with practical self-defence skills while fostering mental resilience and confidence.

The initiative is structured around three major components—practical training forming the basic martial arts techniques, escape strategies, and emergency response drills. The second component is awareness sessions about information

on legal rights, personal safety measures, and situational awareness.

The third in line is confidence building, which is about interactive sessions to reduce vulnerability and encourage leadership qualities among students.

In order to ensure transparency and prevent misuse of funds, colleges have been directed to upload comprehensive documentation on the HIMS portal.

College principals have been instructed to treat the matter with 'top priority'. The department warned that failure to submit UC within the stipulated timeframe may affect future funding allocations and could invite administrative scrutiny.

The HE department reiterated that the objective of the initiative is not merely compliance on paper, but the creation of a safer and more empowered campus environment for students across Odisha.

Students' demand not ignored: Suryabanshi Suraj

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: Odisha Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj Sunday asserted that the long-standing demand of students to grant university status for Shailabala Women's Autonomous College in Cuttack has not been overlooked.

Responding to criticism following the State Budget 2026-27, Suraj said the state government is implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in a phased manner, which envisages establishing one university in each of 30 districts.

"As per NEP 2020, there will be 30 universities across all districts and this will be implemented in many phases. In this year's budget, priority has been given to districts that current-



ly do not have any university," Suraj said.

The statement comes after CM Mohan Charan Majhi announced plans to set up new universities in four districts — Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak and Jharsuguda — during the current phase of expansion.

Following the announcement, students of Shailabala

Women's Autonomous College in Cuttack staged demonstrations, demanding women's college to be upgraded to university status. Students argue that the institution has the required academic credentials, faculty strength and infrastructure to merit university status.

Student representatives said the demand has been pending for years despite repeated as-

surances. They believe granting university status would significantly strengthen women's higher education in the region.

Talking to OrissaPOST, Mousumi Mohanty, a student, said, "We want answers from the government. What does the government plan to do? Our college is one of the oldest women's colleges in the state, and despite that, the state government has been neglecting the institution. We have spoken with Barabati MLA Sofia Firdous, and she has assured us that she will raise the issue in the Assembly."

Suraj reiterated that while immediate priority has been given to districts without universities, the government remains committed to addressing the aspirations of institutions like Shailabala Women's Autonomous College.

AIYF hosts state-level young women's meet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Odisha state council of All India Youth Federation (AIYF) Sunday organised state-level Young Women's Convention at Bhagwati Bhawan here, chaired by Aparna Routray.

The convention highlighted a range of issues affecting young women across the country, including rising unemployment, growing incidents of violence against women, gender discrimination, and concerns over access to education under the National Education Policy. Speakers demanded concrete measures to ensure employment opportunities for young women and called for 50 per cent reservation for women in the State Legislative Assemblies and Parliament.

Scientist-farmer meet to boost livestock productivity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: A farmers' training and scientist-farmer interaction programme was organised recently in President Droupadi Murmu's village in Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj, bringing together experts and over 200 farmers from Uperbeda, Hatabadra, Aharabandha and Kusumi villages.

The programme was jointly conducted by Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar, and ICAR-National Institute of Animal Nutrition and Physiology (ICAR-NIAP), Bangalore. The initiative focused on improving livestock productivity, scientific feeding practices and sustainable agricultural interventions



among Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste farmers in the region. ICAR-NIAP director Artabandhu Sahoo attended the event as chief guest and interacted extensively with farmers and discussed scientific methods for enhancing livestock production, with special emphasis on balanced feeding of dairy animals. He also distributed animal feed, mineral supplements and rubber mats to beneficia-

ries to support better animal health and productivity.

OUAT Research dean Niranjan Panda graced the occasion as guest of honour and advised farmers on backyard poultry rearing, proper feeding techniques and timely vaccination of coloured poultry birds popular in the region.

Mayurbhanj Sub-Divisional Veterinary Officer Sushanta Kumar Singh elaborated on various livestock development programmes being implemented in the district and encouraged farmers to avail themselves of government schemes. National Dairy Research Institute former principal scientist T K Mohanty highlighted the importance of scientific feeding and reproductive management in dairy cows.

OKCL calls for 'AI for all'

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The Annual Network Meet 2026 of Odisha Knowledge Corporation Limited (OKCL), functioning under state's administration of Electronics and Information Technology (E&IT) department, sought the simple use of artificial intelligence (AI) for everyone and in every work.

E&IT Minister Mukesh Mahaling attended the programme as chief guest, addressed the gathering and showcased the visionary roadmap for making Odisha a completely digitally literate state.

Mahaling inaugurated two flagship programmes of OKCL— 'Odisha State - Advanced Certificate in Information Technology (OS-ACIT)' programme and OKCL Internship Portal. These initiatives are set to serve as a guiding force, opening new avenues and opportunities for the youth of Odisha in the times ahead.

The programme was inaugurated by Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) CEO and E&IT special secretary Pradeep Kumar Raut.

Addressing the gathering of more than one thousand authorised learning centers, centre heads, and trainers from across the state, Raut highly appreciated the collective efforts of all stakeholders for OKCL's impactful performance during 2025. On this occasion, Raut also felicitated centres that demonstrated outstanding performance.

OKCL MD Manoranjan Puthal attributed the corporation's success to the dedicated efforts of the grassroots-level 850 authorised learning centres in the state.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

Consequent upon an affidavit duly sworn by me Jhilima Limma daughter of late Edmohan Limma, Gaiba, Gajapati. I have changed my name as Jhilima Limma instead of Muni Limma. Henceforth, my name will be known as Jhilima Limma for all official purposes.

Sd./- Jhilima Limma
Gaiba, Gajapati.

BGU invites applications for first batch of MBA in FinTech

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: Birla Global University (BGU), a premier university in Odisha, invites applications for the first batch of its MBA in Financial Technology (FinTech) programme. The programme is designed to meet the growing industry demand for professionals who can operate effectively at the intersection of finance and technology across banking, FinTech, consulting, and digital financial services domains. Making it an ideal choice for students seeking future-ready careers in one of the fastest-growing and innovation-driven sectors of the global economy.

In alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises interdisciplinary learning, experiential education, and competency-based outcomes, BGU takes a significant step in expanding its management education portfolio with a strong focus on technology-driven financial leadership.

The MBA in FinTech is structured to prepare future-ready professionals capable of navigating the evolving landscape of digital banking, blockchain, financial analytics, algorithmic trading, risk management, and



AI-powered financial services. The programme also emphasises practical exposure and industry-aligned learning to equip graduates for leadership roles in the rapidly transforming FinTech ecosystem.

Some of the key highlights of the programme includes interdisciplinary curriculum, technology-driven learning, industry-aligned programme, experiential pedagogy and career-oriented outcomes.

Speaking about the new programme, BGU VC Kulbhushan Balooni said, "The future of finance lies at the intersection of technology, innovation, and data-driven intelligence. At Birla Global University, we are committed to nurturing leaders who can navigate this transformation with strategic insight and ethical responsibility. The MBA in Financial Technology reflects our vision to equip students with the capabilities required to lead in an increasingly digital and innovation-led financial ecosystem."

'Empathy remains central to delivery of justice'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 22: Empathy remains central to the delivery of justice, noted Delhi High Court Judge Justice Swarnika Kanta Sharma while addressing a distinguished guest lecture at National Law University Odisha (NLUO) here Sunday.

Addressing the gathering, Justice Sharma underscored the importance of compassion in judicial decision-making. She also highlighted the pivotal role of trial courts, describing them as the foundational stage of a case where minute factual details are examined. Stressing the need for meticulous attention at this level, she noted that the strength of the judicial system lies in the rigour of its grassroots processes.

Justice Sharma also spoke candidly about the emotional labour involved in judicial work, particularly in the context of heavy daily caseloads.

The lecture, organised by NLUO Recruitment Coordination Committee (RCC), titled 'Journey to the Bench: Evolution from Advocacy to Adjudication', offered students and



faculty a rare glimpse into the Judge's professional evolution from legal practice to the judiciary. She also acknowledged the extensive efforts required not only from judges but also from the dedicated teams supporting them behind the scenes.

Encouraging aspiring lawyers, she advised students to begin their careers at the grassroots level of the judiciary, emphasising the invaluable experience gained through trial court practice. She further highlighted the significance of judicial internships and clerkships, describing them as crucial stepping stones that shape long-term professional growth.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Mandar Prakhari (Member, RCC 2026), who expressed the university's delight in hosting Justice Sharma and outlined her notable accomplishments. He also briefly set the tone and structure for the interactive session.

The discussion was moderated by Raghav Pruthi, a fourth-year student, along with Tinnashree J (Member, RCC 2027), who engaged Justice Sharma in a thought-provoking conversation covering her experiences at the Bar and on the Bench.

The lecture concluded with an engaging question-and-answer session, allowing students to interact directly with Justice Sharma.

IMD forecasts light rain, thunderstorms

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: Odisha may see a change in weather as a low-pressure system over the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Sunday.

According to the IMD, a well-marked low-pressure area over the southwest Bay of Bengal continued at 2:30pm Sunday. The system is expected to move west-northwestwards and then recurve northeastwards over the next 48 hours.

Light rain or thunderstorms are likely at one or two places in districts including Sundergarh, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Khurda, Puri, Keonjhar, Jajpur and Kalahandi between February 23 and the morning of February 24.

The IMD has issued Yellow Warning for thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds of 30 to 40 kmph at isolated places in Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur and Cuttack.

People in these areas have been advised to stay alert during thunderstorm activity.

AWAY FROM POTENTIAL ENEMY STRIKES, SEISMIC RISK

RBI builds high-security data centre in Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Reserve Bank of India has built a high-security data centre in Odisha, strategically located well away from potential cross-border threat zones and high seismic-risk regions, as part of efforts to safeguard critical financial infrastructure and strengthen continuity of core systems.

The greenfield facility in Bhubaneswar is designed to house core computing systems supporting the central bank's currency management, payment and settlement operations, and regulatory data functions, analysts and officials said.

"When RBI began work on its 18.55-acre campus at Info Valley-II, Khurda in 2023, few questioned the location. Beyond logistical and operational considerations, strategic factors

are likely to have weighed on decision-makers," an analyst tracking the sector said.

The Odisha site, he added, lies well away from India's western and northern borders, reducing exposure to potential cross-border missile or drone threats.

It also falls outside the country's highest seismic risk zones, lowering vulnerability to major earthquake activity - factors that "strengthen the safety and continuity framework for infrastructure that underpins critical financial systems," he said.

This is RBI's second data centre. The Primary Data Centre is located in Kharghar, Navi Mumbai. Another analyst noted that unlike Mumbai and Chennai - which host a large share of India's data centres - Odisha is not a landing point for major subsea communication cables. By situating the facility

away from these hubs and dense digital traffic corridors, the RBI may be seeking infrastructure that is more insulated from concentrated cyber risks and network vulnerabilities, he added.

The central bank's site strategy appeared to gain resonance last year when a leading commercial bank reportedly shifted its data centre operations overnight from Jaipur to Mumbai amid heightened tensions during the India-Pakistan conflict, which saw the use of drones along the border.

An email sent to the RBI for comments remained unanswered. World over, central banks and top financial institutions are increasingly building and operating their own secured data centres, prioritising data safety, operational control and systemic resilience over reliance on public infrastructure, analysts say.

The Odisha facility has been designed and built to ensure a high level of redundancy, resil-

ience and system availability, incorporating in-built fault tolerance, according to RBI. It has achieved Tier IV certification for its design, underscoring its compliance with the highest standards of reliability and performance.

Other than the RBI, institutions such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the State Bank of India have built or are building their own data centres, officials said.

Analysts noted that data centres require land, water and power - all available in abundance in Odisha - and that the location offers strategic depth from potential cross-border threats while avoiding concentration of critical infrastructure in high-risk corridors. From a geological standpoint, large parts of Odisha lie in lower seismic risk zones compared with the Himalayan belt, reducing vulnerability to high-intensity earthquakes.

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	35.7°	32.8°	Dry weather likely to prevail
Min Temp	18.4°	20.0°	
Humidity	65%	86%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

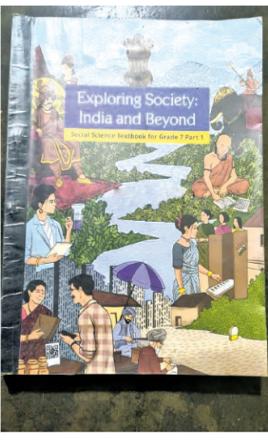
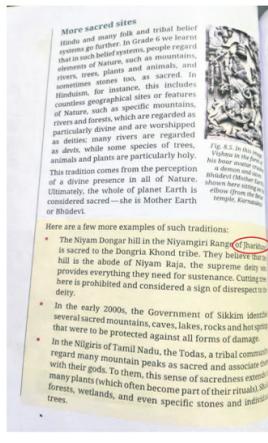
Niyamgiri Hills located in J'khand: NCERT book

The discrepancy came to light when a private tutor in Kalyansinghpur block of Rayagada district noticed the error while teaching a Class VII student of an OAV

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada/Kalyansinghpur, Feb 22: An error has been identified in the new Class VII Social Science textbook for the 2025-26 academic year prescribed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The book titled "Exploring Society: India and Beyond" reportedly misidentifies the location of the Niyamgiri Hills as Jharkhand. The inaccuracy has raised concerns among educators and parents over the credibility of information presented in the curriculum.

In the book's Chapter 8 titled "How Land Becomes Sacred," the text states that the Niyamgiri Hills are located in Jharkhand and describes their religious and spiritual significance to the Dongria Kondh community. The chapter mentions that the community believes their deity, Niyam Raja, resides in the hills and provides them with food and other necessities for their sustenance. It al-



so notes that cutting trees in the hills is prohibited and considered disrespectful to their deity. The discrepancy came to light when a private tutor in Kalyansinghpur block of Rayagada district noticed the error while teaching a Class VII student of an Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya (OAV). He pointed out that the Niyamgiri Hills are actually located in Rayagada district of Odisha and are home to the primitive Dongria Kondh tribe, particularly in Kalyansinghpur block. The hills are a distinct identity of the region.

The tutor expressed concern that such inaccuracies could adversely affect students' learning and called for immediate

correction of the mistake. When contacted, Kalyansinghpur OAV Principal Sangeeta Palaka acknowledged the error and said the department had already been informed for necessary correction.

Notably, the state government has established OAVs in various districts of the state to promote and provide free quality education. The schools aim to strengthen students especially from rural areas by providing education in English medium by inculcating the 21st century learning skills through a holistic and integral approach for their physical and aesthetic development apart from academic learning.

25 migrate to Kakinada for work

Kalyansinghpur: As many as 25 people including women from three villages under Kalyansinghpur block in Rayagada district left for Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh in search of work, Sunday. The migration of the villagers outside the state has highlighted the continuing distress migration from the tribal-dominated region. The matter came to the light when around 25 residents from Debagiri Nuasahi, Panasapadar and Danusahi villages under Sadar panchayat of this block were seen leaving for the Vijayawada-Kakinada region of Andhra Pradesh to work as daily wage labourers. According to Mandangi Parbati, a labourer, they have been promised ₹750 per day along with free food and accommodation to harvest black gram on farmlands owned by a person identified as Panasa Chandrasekhar in the Kakinada area. The work is expected to continue for 20 to 25 days. With no employment available locally, they said they were compelled to leave their homes to support their families. Among those who migrated are Shanti Kadra, Singari Palaka and Mandangi Parbati.

3 more held in Kandhamal jumbo electrocution case

Baliguda, Feb 22: Forest officials have arrested three more poachers in connection with the death of an elephant due to electrocution in the Munduti forest under the Belghar range of the Baliguda forest division in Kandhamal district.

The accused have been identified as Kshama Patra, 76, Brushabha Patra, 44, and Gokul Patra, 41; all residents of Jhiripani village under the Belghar range.

According to Forest department officials, the trio had allegedly laid live electric wires in the Munduti forest January 4 to hunt wild boar. However, an elephant was electrocuted after coming in contact with the live wire January 5.

During questioning, the three accused reportedly admitted to laying the electric trap and said they were present at the site after the elephant died.

Earlier, forest officials had ar-

rested three other poachers from the Jhiripani area February 4. The department seized three country-made firearms, electric wires, animal hides, horns and skeletal remains of wild animals during the operation.

With the latest arrests, a total of 10 people including six poachers, the absconding deputy ranger's driver and an excavator operator have been arrested and forwarded to court in connection with the case.

Investigators said the accused attempted to cover up the incident by dismembering the elephant's carcass into 32 pieces and burying them.

Deputy Ranger Binay Kumar Bishi, who has been suspended, remains absconding. Sources said no further action has been taken by senior Forest department authorities against him so far. Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Suryakanta Behera has also been suspended for allegedly attempting to suppress the investigation report.

Koraput Collector reviews Kotia projects

Koraput: Koraput Collector Manoj Satyaban Mahajan spent Saturday on field duty in the remote and hilly Kotia region, trekking nearly three kilometres and climbing steep terrain to inspect development works in interior villages. Mahajan walked to villages under Kotia panchayat to review ongoing welfare and infrastructure projects and ensure timely and quality implementation. The visit covered areas under Pottangi block, one of the district's most geographically remote regions. He assessed initiatives under the state's "Viksit Gaon, Viksit Odisha" programme, with focus on livelihood projects such as the Millet Tiffin Centre run by local women's self-help groups. Mahajan interacted with members and discussed ways to strengthen income generation through skill development, market linkages and government support. The Collector also visited the Jagannath Temple at Kotia, a residential school and the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya, reviewing hostel facilities, classroom infrastructure and student welfare measures. He emphasised the importance of quality education in tribal and remote areas. Villagers welcomed the outreach, saying direct engagement with officials helps address long-pending issues. Mahajan directed officials to expedite pending works and reiterated the administration's commitment to inclusive development in Kotia.

Mushrooming poppy cultivation sparks concern

Bonai, Feb 22: The spread of illegal poppy or opium cultivation across forests and remote areas of Sundargarh district and other parts of the state has raised concerns, with reports alleging possible involvement of unscrupulous officials.

Excise officials Wednesday destroyed illegal poppy plantation spread over 3 acres of forest land in Gurundia police station area of Bonai sub-division in Sundargarh district. The estimated value of the seized crop is about ₹42 lakh. No arrests have been made so far.

Observers said that despite



frequent crackdowns by police, excise and forest officials, the illegal cultivation continues to expand. They alleged that the cultivation on forest land going unnoticed by excise and police personnel is normal as the areas are not under their jurisdiction. They participate in any raid only when they are

Bengal's intrusion sparks tension

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhograi, Feb 22: An alleged attempt by West Bengal authorities to undertake road construction inside Odisha territory was foiled Sunday after local residents protested, prompting intervention by the district administration.

Officials from the Revenue department of Rannagar block in Purba Medinipur district, West Bengal, along with the Digha-Shankarpur Development Authority, allegedly intruded into Odisha territory near Shahabajipur village under Bhograi block in Balasore district and began laying a concrete road along the Chandaneswar-Digha route.

Villagers from the bordering area strongly opposed the move, leading to heated arguments between both sides and



a tense situation for several hours.

On receiving information, Bhograi Additional Tehsildar Prajnaparamita reached the spot along with police personnel. The authorities seized a road roller machine being used for the construction work and took it to Talasari Marine police station.

In a separate incident, locals intercepted a sand-laden dump-

er truck allegedly heading towards West Bengal through the same route and handed it over to the Talasari Marine police.

Sources said a closed-door meeting was reportedly held at a hotel Sunday evening by West Bengal administrative officials and representatives of the Digha-Shankarpur Development Authority to discuss strategy following the incident.

The development comes amid

ongoing boundary sensitivities involving Odisha. While a long-standing border dispute persists between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh over the Kotia region, similar tensions along the Odisha-West Bengal border have also surfaced periodically.

Residents alleged that parts of Shankhamedi village have effectively come under West Bengal's control, and repeated attempts have been made to assert influence in border villages such as Udaypur, Shahabajipur and Shagada Sahi through road construction activities.

Bhograi MLA Gautam Buddha Das has taken serious note of the incident and apprised the district administration. He urged border residents to remain vigilant in safeguarding their land, identity and mother tongue.

Further administrative action is awaited.

Woman hacked to death; lover held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bonai/Lahunipara, Feb 22: A 40-year-old woman was hacked to death with an axe reportedly by her lover in Bhagaban Sahi under Mahulpada police limits in Sundargarh district, police said.

The accused, identified as Shukra Munda, was arrested Sunday and produced in a Bonai court. He was remanded to judicial custody after his bail plea was rejected. Police have seized the weapon used in the crime.

A murder case (12/26) has been registered in this connection and further investigation is underway.

According to police, the deceased, Gurubari Munda, was living separately from her husband, Soma Munda. She was reportedly in a relationship with the accused. Friction had developed between the two in recent days.

The incident occurred when Shukra allegedly called Gurubari to his house Saturday night, where an argument broke out between them. In a fit of rage, he allegedly attacked her with an axe, killing her on the spot.

The body was discovered Sunday morning, following which Soma informed police. Mahulpada police IIC Sibashankar Alada reached the spot, seized the body and sent it for post-mortem. The body was later handed over to family members.

Police registered the case based on Soma's complaint and detained Shukra for questioning. During interrogation, the facts of the case were established, police said.

8 held, 86 mule accounts unearthed in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur/Buguda, Feb 22: A one-day crackdown on cyber fraud in Ganjam district led to the arrest of eight alleged culprits — including two B.Tech students — who are accused of routing more than ₹9.5 crore through 86 mule bank accounts, police said Sunday.

Suwendu Kumar Patra, superintendent of police, Ganjam, said district police apprehended the suspects during "Operation Cyber Kavach" conducted Saturday,

February 21. Police registered 11 FIRs and issued notices to 11 accused persons as part of the operation. The arrested cyber fraud suspects were identified as Pintu Das, Baya Das, Rajesh Patra and Saroj Patra of Hinjilicut. Manoj

OP CYBER KAVACH

Swain and Ashwini Kumar Rout of Aska were arrested by Buguda police. Two engineering students — Biswaranjan Gahana and Subhrajit Barik — were held by Chamakhandi police station.

ELEPHANT TRAMPLES 2 TO DEATH IN GANJAM

PNN AND AGENCIES

Berhampur, Feb 22: Two persons were trampled to death by a wild tusker in Ganjam district Sunday, officials said.

The victims were identified as Urmila Rout, 53, and Gopinath Pradhan, 67; residents of Jalameripalli village in Digapahandi block.

The tragic incident took place while they were working in a vegetable field, when the lone tusker, separated from its herd, suddenly attacked them.

"The elephant first attacked my wife when she tried to flee the spot. It then picked the man up by the trunk and tossed him up in the air," Simanchal Rout said.

Locals rushed both of them to the nearest community health centre at Digapahandi, where the doctors declared them dead.

Paralakhemundi Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Nagaraju K said the tusker had crossed Ghodahada River in Digapah-

andi range and entered Jalameripalli village.

After killing the two persons, it again returned to Digapahandi range, he said.

The DFO said the movement of the elephant was being actively tracked by the staff of both Chandragiri and Digapahandi ranges under Paralakhemundi and Berhampur forest divisions, respectively.

The DFO said compensation under government provisions would be provided to the families of both deceased.

An initial amount of ₹1 lakh each will be disbursed within 24 hours, with the remaining ₹9 lakh to follow after completion of all formalities, including post-mortem examination.

The Ganjam district administration has also provided ₹30,000 from the Red Cross fund to each family to conduct the last rites. In a humanitarian gesture, Urmila's family donated her eyes. Doctors collected the corneas with the family's consent.

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
E-AUCTION OF PARKING STAND	
STATION & LOCATION:	
Khurda Road - 2 wheeler (East entry side)	
Auction Start Date & Time :	05.03.2026 at 1500 Hrs.
Auction End Date & Time :	05.03.2026 at 1530 Hrs.
Note : Prospective bidders are advised to visit the website : https://www.irps.gov.in and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.	
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager / PR-1151/Q/25-26 Khurda Road	

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
Tender Notice No. ST-OT-EARTHING-KUR-543, Dt. 13.02.2026	
NAME OF WORK: IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING EARTHING SYSTEM, SHIFTING OF MEEB FROM RELAY ROOM TO IPS ROOM AND OTHER ENHANCEMENT WORK FOR EARTHING FOR ALL OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.	
Tender Value in (₹) :	7.41,26,693.00, EMD (₹) : 5,20,600.00
Bidding Start Date :	23.02.2026.
Date and Time of Closing of Tender :	At 1100 Hrs. of 09.03.2026.
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.irps.gov.in	
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigendum issued for this tender.	
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) / PR-1147/Q/25-26 Khurda Road	

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
Auction Catalogue No.SBP-CAT-G-8-26	
CATERING-GENERAL MINOR UNIT (GMU)	
SL. NO. 1 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (GENERAL MINOR UNIT) AT MAHASAMUND STATION "D" CATEGORY (MSMD) / PLATFORM - 1 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
SL. NO. 2 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (GENERAL MINOR UNIT) AT NAWAPARA STATION "D" CATEGORY (NPD) / PLATFORM - 01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
SL. NO. 3 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (GENERAL MINOR UNIT) AT NOLA ROAD STATION "D" CATEGORY (NLR) / PLATFORM - 02 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
CATERING-SPECIAL MINOR UNIT (SMU)	
SL. NO. 4 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (SPECIAL MINOR UNIT-OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES) AT SAMBALPUR CITY STATION "D" CATEGORY (SBPY) / PLATFORM - 2/3 (SAMBALPUR END) RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
SL. NO. 5 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (SPECIAL MINOR UNIT-MINORITY) AT RAIRAKHOL STATION "D" CATEGORY (RAIR) / PLATFORM - 01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
SL. NO. 6 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES-WOMEN) AT RAIRAKHOL STATION "D" CATEGORY (RAIR) / PLATFORM - 01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
SL. NO. 7 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (SPECIAL MINOR UNIT-MINORITY) AT RAIRAKHOL STATION "D" CATEGORY (RAIR) / PLATFORM - 02 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
SL. NO. 8 - ASSETS DESCRIPTION :	
PROVISION OF TEA STALL (SPECIAL MINOR UNIT - SCHEDULE CASTE) AT BOINDA STATION "D" CATEGORY (BONA) / PLATFORM - 01 RAILWAY STATION FOR 05 YEARS.	
Auction Start Date & Time :	27.02.2026, 1100 hrs. (for all Sl. Nos.)
Auction Close Date & Time :	27.02.2026, 1240 hrs. (for all Sl. Nos.)
Complete details are available at website: www.irps.gov.in	
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager / PR-1150/Q/25-26 Sambalpur	

Endangered Irrawaddy dolphins found during census in Ganjam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Feb 22: The Rushikulya River mouth in Ganjam district, which is known for the mass nesting of the endangered Olive Ridley Turtles, was found to be a potential habitat for Irrawaddy dolphins, a forest officer said.

The Forest department officials have sighted a congregation of 13 such critically endangered dolphins near Bateshwar under Khallikote forest range during the counting of the sea mammal, he said.

The three-day dolphin census was carried out between

January 20 and 22. During the survey, the dolphins were observed surfacing and moving in groups within the area, said the forest officer.

"The census has indicated the healthy presence of dolphins along the Purunabandh-Prayagi stretch," said Dibya Shankar Behera, Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), Khallikote range.

Earlier, the forest officials have found other species of dolphins like bottlenose and humpbacks in the area, officials said. The Irrawaddy dolphins, which were sighted in large numbers in the Chilika Lake,



might have migrated to the Rushikulya River mouth area, they said.

People of the nearby villages, especially the fishermen, have been well aware of protecting the Olive Ridley turtles, which have been visiting the beach for mass nesting in the last few years.

"Now the villagers are also aware of protecting the other aquatic animals like dolphins and the winged guests. We are creating awareness among the villagers for the protection of Olive Ridley, besides other animals and birds," said the ACF.

The sighting of Irrawaddy dolphins near the river mouth has strengthened the importance of the Rushikulya estuary

as a biodiversity-rich ecosystem, said Rabintra Nath Sahu, a wildlife activist. The estuary is famous for a major rookery of the Olive Ridley turtles, as thousands of the sea creatures visit the site for their mass nesting during the third week of February. The place also hosts several migratory birds, especially Bar-headed geese during every winter, he said.

As the area is considered as a biodiversity hotspot, Sahu urged the government to take urgent conservation measures for the protection and conservation of different aquatic animals.



FOCUS MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE

BLUEPRINT FOR DOMINATION



Rubio's call for the revival of European colonialism under the leadership of American imperialism is a blueprint for domination

citizenship rights. Rubio's speech also undermined the UN and highlighted its failures in the Gaza and Ukraine conflicts. These two conflicts are partly created and supported by the Yankee foreign policy of the US. He also called Palestinians barbarians. Such language is not new. Rubio learned this language from British colonialism, which branded indigenous communities as barbarians and criminals as they fought against British colonialism in India. He loathed the idea that colonialism was defeated through anti-colonial struggle and the rise of 'godless communists.'

liberal order, aka the capitalist present and future. Rubio started his speech by branding communism as an evil ideology. "A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies." These words were written by Marx and Engels while writing the preamble to the Communist Manifesto, and they never thought that even after 179 years, their words would echo in the 2026 MSC.

of the ruling classes and their capitalist system, which failed to provide prosperity to the people of Europe and America. Rubio's speech did not offer any alternative but called for unity between the US and Europe based on the sacred inheritance of Western civilisation shaped by Christianity. He also called for the "renewal and restoration, driven by a vision of a future as proud, as sovereign, and as vital as our civilization's past." God, guns, and national glory define Rubio's speech, which celebrates the colonial past of Europe and the imperialist present led by the US. Rubio forgets that slavery, colonial plunder, and imperialist displacement define Western civilisation, which stands on the ruins of the lives, liberties, and livelihoods of working people in Europe, the US, and across the world. The welfare state has lost its value due to capitalist consolidation; therefore, Rubio blamed massive investment in welfare states for the reduction in the defence budget for maintaining a security apparatus shaped by the Pentagon's profit-driven military-industrial alliance in the name of national security. The welfare state and democracy are twin threats to war-mongering imperialists and capitalists. Because welfare states empower people and democracy deepens

Rubio's call for the revival of European colonialism under the leadership of American imperialism is a blueprint for domination. His words reveal the real intentions behind destroying Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Palestine and weaponising trade for the world to surrender before US imperialism. Rubio, in his speech, celebrated the bombing of Iran and the kidnapping of Venezuelan president Maduro. These actions are part of Rubio and his breed's way to "revitalize an old friendship and renew the greatest civilization" which was shaped by colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism.

It is within this context that the world needs a united front against the ruling elites of Europe and America, who wish to sustain capitalism by promoting colonial plunder and imperialist wars and conflicts at the cost of peace, people, and prosperity. It is time to create a global alliance against colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. Struggles against these forces are central to the survival of life on the planet. History is witness to the victory of all struggles led by working people. This time will be no different.

The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University.

The 62nd Munich Security Conference (MSC) was held from 13th to 15th February, where more than forty heads of state and government were in attendance. However, most of the leaders were from Europe and were fundamentally concerned about technological and geopolitical challenges to European security and the future of the transatlantic alliance (NATO) led by the US. The MSC was founded in 1963 by resistance fighters among German army officers who wanted to kill Adolf Hitler and prevent wars and conflicts within and outside Europe, and to establish world peace through open debates, discussions, and dialogues. The organisers of the MSC claim that it is a marketplace of ideas for "peace through dialogue," and its objective is "to build trust and to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts by sustaining a continuous, curated, and informal dialogue within the international security community."



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

THE WELFARE STATE AND DEMOCRACY ARE TWIN THREATS TO WAR-MONGERING IMPERIALISTS AND CAPITALISTS

However, the MSC does not follow the idealism it professes. It is rather designed to pursue imperialist, colonial, and racialised capitalist agendas to maintain white supremacy over people and control resources around the world. The 62nd MSC and the content of speeches by various leaders from the US and Europe reveal the unashamed nakedness of a war-mongering white supremacist ideology that intends to celebrate, sustain, and promote the colonial past and the imperialist and capitalist present.

On 14 February, when people were busy celebrating their love in parks, restaurants, and city breaks during the Valentine's Day, the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, addressed the MSC and appealed to revive the imperialist and colonial past to sustain the spirit of the so-called

SPECTRUM INDIA

Epistemic pluralism in research

The Indian ethos of inquiry and knowledge creation, Bharatiya Anusandhan Parampara, is a legacy that predates recorded civilisational histories. Rooted in the ancient system of logic, observation, and interpretation, the Indian research tradition has contributed paradigms that transformed human understanding across disciplines. Today, as India navigates global scientific competitiveness and socio-technological complexity, this tradition must serve as both foundation and compass for future research excellence.

made foundational contributions to mathematics and astronomy. Panini described a generative grammar of Sanskrit that parallels modern computational linguistics. Although the Mughal era contributed to Indian history, it was the colonial encounter that transformed the research landscape. Colonial institutions introduced Western science and marginalised indigenous knowledge. Despite this, Indian scholars engaged dialogically with science, exemplified by polymaths and reformers navigating dual epistemic worlds. Post-independence, India revived formal research infrastructure, establishing institutions like IITs, IIMs, IISERs, ICMR, CSIR, and universities to foster knowledge creation.

innovation, AI and data science, climate science and sustainability research, and social sciences and humanities, examining development dynamics. However, the quantitative growth must be balanced with quality, impact, and relevance.

curricula, foster public-private partnerships, and build international collaborations that respect intellectual sovereignty.

Research in the 21st century must be ethically grounded, socially inclusive, and aligned with societal needs. India's research agenda should prioritise the Sustainable Development Goals, digital public goods, equity-centred technology deployment, and responsible AI and data governance. Beyond policy and infrastructure, the essential catalyst for research excellence is culture. A culture that encourages curiosity, tolerates failure, rewards creativity, and upholds integrity. Bharatiya Anusandhan Parampara offers a philosophical foundation for inquiry that is compassionate, holistic, and future-oriented. It is a living intellectual reservoir. As India advances, its research tradition must evolve, retaining philosophical depth while embracing technological frontiers. The nation's future as a knowledge society hinges on its ability to kindle inquiry at all levels, from village innovation hubs to global scientific collaborations.

The writer is a research scholar, Department of Business Administration, Berhampur University.

Despite progress, structural and systemic challenges persist due to limited research intensity, as reflected in R&D expenditure relative to GDP. Furthermore, fragmentation among academic institutions, industry, and policy bodies, inadequate support for integrating indigenous knowledge into mainstream research frameworks, and gaps in skills, research culture, mentorship, and ethical research practices constrain India's ability to fully realise its research potential.

India encounters a pivotal juncture, necessitating the integration of its ancient research ethos with contemporary scientific and innovative pursuits. Its future hinges on epistemic pluralism, integrating indigenous knowledge like Ayurveda and ecological wisdom with scientific methods. This can lead to breakthroughs in healthcare, sustainable agriculture, climate adaptation, cognitive sciences, and education. To thrive, India must invest in research infrastructure, embed research in



Ashyashree Praharaj

THE NATION'S FUTURE AS A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY HINGES ON ITS ABILITY TO KINDLE INQUIRY AT ALL LEVELS, FROM VILLAGE INNOVATION HUBS TO GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATIONS

Indian research tradition traces its origin to ancient scholarly practices embedded in Vedic, Upanishadic, Buddhist, and Jain epistemologies. The intellectual climate of ancient India was characterised by rigorous debates (Vada), systematic observation (Dhriti), and logical reasoning (Tarka). Knowledge was preserved but continuously refined through dialogue and practice. The Nyaya and Vaiseshika schools developed formal frameworks for logic, inference, and epistemology that prefigure aspects of modern scientific methods. Scholars such as Charaka and Sushruta advanced empirical investigation in medicine and surgery. Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, and Bhaskara



Love is the keynote, Joy is the music, Knowledge is the performer, the Infinite All is the composer and audience.

SRI AUROBINDO

Trump Torpedoed

Once bitten, twice shy is an old idiom. But when it comes to US President Donald Trump, it loses its meaning as he refuses to learn any lessons from the past. Trump in his tariff war has thrown caution to the wind undermining old diplomatic and trade relations, even to the detriment of American consumers and importers. In this backdrop, the US Supreme Court has struck down Trump's tariff policy even as he projects this is his bid to revitalise American manufacturing sector and its strained economy.

The US president has reportedly called the SC ruling a "disgrace". What has happened is a remarkable act that displays judicial independence. The apex court reasserted the primacy of the law over presidential arbitrariness. The decision encourages members of Congress to fully perform their role in the teeth of opposition from a hyper-active President firmly entrenched in the White House. Trump had declared 2 April, 2025 "Liberation Day" when he announced an array of tariffs on imports from almost every country in the world. He even went on to say that his countrymen would look back in years to come and pronounce he was right. Just ten months later, the US Supreme Court has ruled that he was wrong, at least from a legal standpoint. A majority of six out of the nine justices found that Trump had gone too far by imposing tariffs without clear authorization from Congress. This is a huge setback to Trump's plan and credibility, considering three conservative justices who were expected to blindly support Trump's action, voted against the President's tariffs. They found that the US president had overstepped his authority by invoking the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

The justices upheld the position of American businesses and the dozen federal states who argued they had suffered harm as a result of these tariff barriers. Contrary to Trump's repeated claims, it was indeed American businesses and households that bore the brunt of the tariffs' cost, as several independent studies confirmed. In effect, these barriers could be considered taxes that the President did not have the authority to impose without Congressional approval. The tariffs, set at varying rates, covered dozens of countries from war-torn Syria and impoverished Lesotho to the UK, China, Canada, Mexico, Japan, India and EU countries. The conservative-majority court ruled six to three in the judgment, saying the IEEPA — the 1977 law designed to address national emergencies Trump had used to implement them — "does not authorise the President to impose tariffs". The decision affirms earlier findings by lower courts that the tariffs Trump imposed under the IEEPA were illegal.

The ruling has wider international economic and political ramifications, while Trump shows no signs of relenting from his policy of weaponizing tariffs to force nations to cough up billions of dollars into the US exchequer. Soon after the apex court decision, Trump held a press conference where he vowed to keep tariffs in place using a different law than the IEEPA. He announced a new 10% global tariff and said that his administration would conduct additional "investigations" into unfair trading practices using the Trade Act of 1974. A day later, he increased the global tariff to 15%. While the White House has these other alternative routes to pass tariffs, there are more restrictions in the form of capped amounts and durations of tariffs, along with procedural prerequisites such as investigations and hearings. The relevant section of the Trade Act, 1974, stipulates tariffs of up to 15% can be imposed to address "fundamental international payments problems" and it could be effective only for 150 days.

Trump adopts the stance that he would not back down and increased tariffs would continue though the new measures would be "a little more complicated, but the end result is going to get us more money," he said.

New complications will arise inevitably as those, who have already paid increased tariffs, would approach the courts for refund. That is why Trump has virtually resigned himself to such a fate stating that his presidency would be spent in the courts for the next few years.

India's leadership is shown in poor light in this context after its desperation, hurry and nervousness to clinch the Indo-US trade deal that was heavily tilted in favour of the US. And thereby hangs a tale. However, the US Supreme Court's ruling against Trump's tariffs has come in as a saving grace for India. How well India negotiates this deal from here on depends on its diplomatic agility.

WISDOM CORNER

The only true measure of success is the ratio between what we might have done and what we might have been on the one hand, and the thing we have made and the things we have made of ourselves on the other.

HG WELLS

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself and you are the easiest person to fool.

RICHARD P. FEYNMAN

All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost.

JRR TOLKIEN

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1455: The Gutenberg Bible is published. Johannes Gutenberg's Bible edition was the first book ever printed in movable type, heralding the age of the printed book in the West.

1822: Boston, home to cultural cornerstones such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Museum of Fine Arts, and Harvard University, was granted a charter to become a city.

1917: The February Revolution begins in Russia. The demonstrations and armed clashes ultimately resulted in the demise of the Russian Empire.

1941: Glenn T. Seaborg and his team chemically identify Plutonium. The radioactive element plays an important role as nuclear fuel or in nuclear weapons.

LOL DRUNK AT THE BAR



One night a police officer was staking out a particularly rowdy bar for possible DUI violations. At closing time, he saw a fellow stumble out of the bar, trip on the curb and try his keys on five different cars before he found his. The man sat in the front seat fumbling around with his keys for several minutes. Meanwhile, all the other patrons left the bar and drove off. Finally he started his engine and

began to pull away. The police officer was waiting for him. As soon as he pulled onto the street, the officer stopped him, read him his rights and administered the breathalyzer test to determine his blood-alcohol content. The results showed a reading of 0.0. The puzzled officer demanded to know how that could be. The driver replied, "Tonight I'm the designated decoy."

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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



Striking irony

Sir, A farmer in Vidarbha squints under a flickering bulb, his irrigation pump dry, while a thousand kilometres away, a server hall gulps the power of a small village, dreaming in data. India is making bold promises at global AI summits — announcing massive investments, gigawatt-scale data centres, and sovereign semiconductor ambitions. Yet an uncomfortable question persists: can a country where millions still struggle for reliable electricity and clean water sustain the insatiable appetite of AI? Globally, data centres already account for a growing share of power demand, and India, a water-stressed nation with a grid that still faces seasonal strain, must confront this reality early. Rural towns continue to endure outages even as urban centres prepare for hyperscale computing expansion. The irony is striking. A nation aspiring to become the world's next AI powerhouse is simultaneously firefighting the foundational resources that AI infrastructure requires. India today is chasing two futures at once — one gleaming with technological promise, another still waiting for a reliable power socket. The challenge before policymakers is not to slow innovation but to power it responsibly so that it does not deepen existing inequalities. The real summit challenge isn't geopolitics or chips. It's the grid.

Sagar Gambhir, PUNE

Strategic pivot

Sir, India's decision to join the Pax Silica Declaration marks a strategic pivot in its pursuit of economic and technological sovereignty. As China continues to dominate global manufacturing, New Delhi's entry into this alliance alongside key partners like Japan, South Korea, and the UK is both timely and necessary. By embedding itself within this silicon value chain, India can effectively hedge against supply shocks and the "weaponization" of industrial chokepoints. Furthermore, this participation serves as a vital diplomatic bridge to the United States, helping to mend bilateral ties following recent trade frictions and reinforcing a shared vision for a secure, high-tech corridor. The core objective of Pax Silica is the establishment of a resilient, innovation-driven ecosystem that spans from critical mineral extraction to advanced semiconductor fabrication and AI infrastructure.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

FIRST ATTEMPT

Over 300 students from govt schools ace JEE Mains

This feat represents a remarkable 63% increase from last year's 187 qualifiers in Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 22: Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains Saturday said 305 students from government schools qualified in their first attempt of the joint entrance examination (JEE) Mains 2026.

This number reflects an increase of 63 per cent from last year's 187 successful candidates, he said describing the achievement as a defining moment for the state's school education system.

Bains shared that five students from his constituency Sri Anandpur Sahib also cracked the prestigious examination.

He announced that the government will organise a special

three-week residential training camp to prepare the qualified students for JEE Advance, ensuring they receive focused guidance for the next stage.

"This feat marks a moment of immense pride for our entire school education department. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our dedicated teachers. The recent JEE Mains Phase 1 results showcased an outstanding performance by the Punjab government schools, with 305 students cracking the competitive engineering exam," Bains said.

He also shared that Bhavishya, a Class 12 non-medical student from the School of Eminence in Amritsar secured an impressive 98.182 percentile.



His father runs a mobile repair shop and his mother works as a tailor.

"Despite financial constraints, his determination to

Achieving such a significant milestone in just one year is a testament to the transformative power of our Punjab 'Sikhya Kranti' initiative. We are committed to further accelerating our progress

HARJOT SINGH BAINS | EDUCATION MINISTER, PUNJAB

pursue engineering and uplift his family remained unshaken. With strong school support and disciplined preparation, he achieved outstanding success," he said.

He further informed that Dilkhush Jha, a government school student from Bathinda,

scored 95.091 percentile in JEE Mains. With his father being a labourer and mother a homemaker, and an annual family income of ₹1.2 lakh, he relied on self-study.

Similarly, Priyanka Sharma, a science student from the School of Eminence, Sangrur, secured a 96.44 percentile in JEE Mains while simultaneously preparing for NEET.

Bains said no other state government has matched this scale of achievement in government schools.

He congratulated all 305 students and their parents, and thanked the teachers for making what he described as a historic day for Punjab's government school system.

'JAADUI PITARA'

Rajasthan initiates measures to support students' mental health

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Feb 22: The Rajasthan Education Department has initiated measures to strengthen mental health support in government schools, in view of rising stress and anxiety among students during examinations, officials said Sunday.

According to officials, the move aims to create a supportive, safe and positive environment to ensure that students are not only academically competent but also emotionally balanced and confident.

School Education Secretary Krishna Kunal said that initiatives such as yoga sessions,

"gratitude expression" activities and a play-based learning kit called "Jaadui Pitara" are being introduced to promote emotional well-being.

Students are being encouraged to enhance their cognitive, linguistic and social development through the "Jaadui Pitara", a play-based learning resource designed to stimulate thinking, communication and social interaction.

Primary students are being engaged through stories, games and creative activities, while older students are encouraged to express emotions through camps, motivational content and sports, officials said.

Punjab faces severe groundwater crisis

OVER-EXTRACTION


Punjab has played a pivotal role in making the country self-reliant in food production. However, this contribution has come at a cost, particularly in the form of depletion of groundwater resources. Today, 117 out of 151 blocks in Punjab have been declared dark zones due to over-extraction of groundwater

HARPAL CHEEMA | FINANCE MINISTER

cial infrastructure, renewable energy, and other sectors. This comprehensive roadmap will help align institutional credit with the state's developmental priorities," he said.

Highlighting the state's historic contribution to national food security, Minister Cheema said, "Punjab has played a pivotal role in making the country self-reliant in food production. However, this contribution has come at a cost, particularly in the form of depletion of groundwater resources. Today, 117 out of 151 blocks in Punjab have been declared dark zones due to over-extraction of groundwater."

Referring to initiatives of the Bhagwant Mann government, minister Cheema said, "Our government is actively promoting canal irrigation and constructing small water channels, known as 'khalas', to farmers' fields to restore groundwater levels. Crop diversification is essential for conserving water resources, and we urge NABARD to extend greater support towards such initiatives."

Reaffirming the state government's commitment to ensuring a trader- and investor-friendly environment, Minister Cheema said, "A meeting of top police officials, including district heads, was recently held with the Punjab State Traders' Commission to send a strong message to anti-social elements and to ensure a secure and stable business climate in the state."

ARD has played a significant role in strengthening Punjab's economy and accelerating development across key sectors. Through various lending and credit schemes, it has supported growth in agriculture, education, and social sectors in the state."

The Finance Minister said that the State Focus Paper projects a total priority sector credit potential of ₹3,08,66,614 lakh for Punjab.

"The projections cover farm credit, agriculture infrastructure, allied and ancillary activities, micro, small and medium enterprises, export credit, education, housing, so-



People take part in a 'kalash yatra' ahead of the Hanuman Katha by the Bageshwar Dham head priest Dharendra Krishna Shastri in Pushkar, Ajmer district in Rajasthan, Sunday

Punjab: Army personnel, dismissed cop among six arrested for links to Pak-backed drug cartel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 22: An Army man, a dismissed Punjab Police personnel and two women were among six people arrested Sunday as the state police unearthed a well-organised heroin trafficking network.

The accused were involved in multiple drug trafficking cases, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said.

In an X post, he said, "In a major breakthrough, Faridkot Police, after a two-month-long jail-based interception, busts a well-organised heroin trafficking network, apprehends six accused, including one Army personnel and one dismissed police personnel, and recovers 4.8 kilograms of heroin, one weapon, and a Thar and an XUV."

The DGP said an FIR has been registered and further investigation is underway to establish forward and backward linkages.

In a later statement, he said the breakthrough was the result of a meticulously planned, intelligence-led operation and a two-month-long jail-based interception that exposed the cartel's deep-rooted linkages.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the accused



were in direct contact with Pakistan-based smugglers, who used drones to push heroin consignments into the Indian territory, Yadav said.

According to a statement from the Punjab Police, those arrested have been identified as Jarnail Singh alias Goldy, a Ludhiana resident currently serving in the Indian Army; Amardeep Singh alias Boxer, a Punjab Armed Police cadre employee who was dismissed in 2021; Dimple Rani of Ferozepur; and Ramandeep Kaur, Sarabjit Singh alias Sabba and Amritpal Singh alias Abhijot, all residents of Moga.

Addressing a news confer-

women accomplices in the vehicles while transporting the consignment also points to a well-thought-out modus operandi," she said.

The two women -- Dimple Rani and Ramandeep Kaur -- were actively involved in the drug network and used to travel with the other accused, she added.

The SSP said they established backward linkages and found that the mastermind was Boxer, the dismissed policeman, who was a habitual offender with nine previous criminal cases registered against him, while most other members also have significant criminal records under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and the Arms Act.

"Boxer faces nine cases, of which two are registered in Haryana's Sirsa and one case by Punjab's Counter-Intelligence," she said.

Explaining the origin of the police probe, she said that some time ago, Faridkot Police had arrested a person and recovered some weapons from him. The subsequent probe into this network and human intelligence led to the successful busting of the current network, she said.

ACT OF BRAVERY

NRI woman fights off robbers with sword

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Feb 22: An NRI woman thwarted an alleged robbery bid -- wielding a sword as she challenged two bike-riding persons who were tailing her car in Punjab's Ludhiana.

Seeing the woman standing in the middle of the road brandishing her sword, the alleged miscreants fled the scene, shows a viral clip on social media.



The purported video of the incident, said to have occurred Friday evening, was captured by the woman's aunt who was travelling with her in the car. Kaur was driving while her aunt was on the front seat.

Harjind Kaur, who recently returned from Australia, was travelling with her aunt and mother-in-law to a relative's house in Ludhiana when she suspected two persons on a motorbike were following their vehicle.

A slight swagger in her tone, Kaur said, "They chose the wrong target."

Aerial display enthralls Jaipur crowd

JAIPUR: A large crowd gathered at the iconic Jal Mahal promenade here Sunday to witness a spectacular aerial display by the Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team and Sarang Helicopter Display Team. Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde and Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma also attended the event.



Praising the courage and technical excellence of the Air Force, Sharma said the event was a matter of pride for Jaipur. "After the grand Army Day parade, this programme once again proves that Jaipur is fully prepared to host national events of such scale. Such events inspire youth to join the armed forces and strengthen the bond between citizens and the military," the chief minister said. Referring to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the chief minister said the prestige of the armed forces was rising and cited operations such as the Balakot air strike as examples of the Air Force's valour and preparedness. He said the Air Force not only guards the nation's borders but also emerges as a ray of hope during natural disasters and health emergencies.

Rajsakhi fair inaugurated in Rajsamand

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rajsamand (Rajasthan), Feb 22: A seven-day Rajsakhi Fair showcasing products made by women's self-help groups under the Rajasthan Grameen Aajeevika Vikas Parishad (Rajeevika/RGAVP) was inaugurated in the state's Rajsamand district Sunday, with herbal colours (gula) prepared from local vegetation emerging as the star attraction ahead of Holi.

The fair, being held from February 22 to 28 under the joint aegis of the Rajeevika group and the district administration, features

a wide range of handmade products brought by women's groups from across the state for marketing and sale.

Superintendent of Police Mamta Gupta, Zila Parishad CEO Brijmohan Bairwa, Rajeevika DPM Dr Suman Ajmer, BJP district President Jagdish Paliwal, and other officials and public representatives were present at the inauguration. The dignitaries cut the ribbon, inspected various stalls, and interacted with the participants. With Holi approaching, herbal colours produced from locally available flowers and leaves have become a major crowd-pull-



er. The skin-friendly colours are not only environmentally safe but also provide livelihood opportunities to rural women.

Bala Devi, a member of a Rajeevika women's group from Kumbhalgarh, said the group has been producing herbal colours for the past four years, and demand has been steadily rising. "It has no side effects, and around 30 to 35

women are getting employment through this activity," she said.

Consumer Bhagyashree Khatik said she purchased red colour made from palash flowers and green colour prepared from custard apple and neem leaves, adding that the product is safe for the skin.

Mukesh Kumar Nuwal, Manager of the Rajeevika Group in Rajsamand, said the colours are made entirely from natural sources -- yellow from marigold flowers, green from custard apple and neem leaves, red from palash flowers, and maroon from beet-root juice.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
SOUTHERN N.H. CIRCLE, BERMAMPUR
 Email - nshsouthern@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. 19/CCE NH, South of 2025-26
(e-Procurement Notice)
 No.24001/48/2526 No. 525 / Dtd : 18.02.2026

- The Chief Construction Engineer, Southern NH Circle, Bermampur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in **ONLINE MODE** from eligible contractors for construction of **Building Works** as detailed in the table below.
- Nature of Work : Building Works
- No. of Work : 1 No.
- Tender Cost : Rs 10,000/-
- Class of Contractor : "A" Class & "B" Class
- Availability of Bid document : 11:00 A.M. of 02.03.2026 to 05.30 P.M. of 16.03.2026
- Date of Opening of Bid : 17.03.2026 at 11.30 A.M.
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
- Any Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancellation of will be displayed in the e-tender website only.

OIPR-24001/24415/1/25-26/0010 Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Southern NH Circle, Bermampur



The Congress is a party committed to social justice. This ideological commitment has been demonstrated not merely through words but through action

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

FIRST BORDER PILLAR BETWEEN ASSAM, ARUNACHAL ERECTED

The first border pillar between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh was erected at Seijosa Sunday, in a significant step towards implementing the Namsai Declaration, aimed at resolving the interstate boundary dispute, officials said. The installation of the border pillar was closely monitored by officials from both states, they said



of the day quote

If that is the case, today 25 lakh jobs should have been created. What the chief minister is saying is a blatant lie

EDAPPADI K PALANISWAMI | AIADMK GENERAL SECRETARY

If India has indeed concluded trade deals on its own terms, it would be better if this is a reality and not merely a government claim

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

It was inspiring to hear how AI is being used not only for cutting-edge innovation but also in everyday life, from helping dairy farmers monitor livestock health round-the-clock to preserving ancient manuscripts and traditional knowledge for future generations

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

SHORT TAKES

Man murdered by neighbour

Kurukshetra: A man was murdered allegedly following a heated dispute between neighbours in Jogna Khara village here in the district Sunday, police said. According to the police, the incident occurred after an ongoing disagreement between the victim, Labh Singh and his neighbour, Surjit Singh, escalated. In a fit of rage, when Surjit allegedly attacked the victim with a "Kasi" (a sharp tool used in farming) and repeatedly struck him on the head, Labh collapsed on the spot, police said.

Student drowns off Chennai coast

Nagpur: A student from Maharashtra drowned and another went missing after venturing into the sea at a beach in Chennai, officials said Sunday. The incident occurred Saturday, they said, but did not specify which institution the students were from. The Maharashtra government has appealed to the Tamil Nadu authorities to expedite the search and rescue operation. A group of 26 students went for a stroll at the Golden Beach in Chennai where three of them entered the waters, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' Office said on X, quoting information received from the Tamil Nadu government.

Man dies after jumping from mall

Vadodara: A 35-year-old man died after he allegedly jumped from a window of a shopping mall in Vadodara during a suspected theft attempt, police said Sunday. The incident occurred around 6 pm Saturday when the man, identified as Hitendrasinh Parmar, apparently jumped from the first floor of the Agora City Mall in the city's Sama area, they said.

Pawar hospitalised

Pune: NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar was admitted to a private hospital in Pune Sunday after suffering from mild dehydration, doctors said. The condition of the 85-year-old Rajya Sabha member was stable, they said. "He has been admitted to the Ruby Hall Clinic for mild dehydration and requires intravenous fluids. His condition is stable. He will remain in the hospital for two days and is expected to be discharged thereafter," Dr Purvez Grant, chief cardiologist and chairman and managing trustee of the hospital, said in a statement.

DELHI POLICE BUSTS LeT TERROR MODULE

Eight held in pan-India raids across Bengal, TN

The arrests followed coordinated raids in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, after investigators traced the group's involvement in putting up pro-Pakistan and pro-terror posters, featuring photographs of terrorist Burhan Wani, at multiple locations in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: In a major counter-terror operation spanning three states, the Delhi Police has dismantled a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) module comprising eight operatives, including seven Bangladeshi nationals who had illegally entered India and procured forged identity documents, an official said Sunday.

The arrests followed coordinated raids in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, after investigators traced the group's involvement in putting up pro-Pakistan and pro-terror posters, featuring photographs of terrorist Burhan Wani, at multiple locations in Delhi. The module was being handled from Bangladesh by Shabir Ahmad Lone alias Raja alias Kashmiri, a trained LeT terrorist from Jammu and Kashmir who was previously arrested by the Delhi Police's Special Cell in 2007 in a case involving the recovery of arms and ammunition, including an AK-47 rifle and grenades, Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said.

He said Lone, who hails from Kangan in Srinagar, had fled to Bangladesh after his release from Tihar Jail in 2018 and was working to revive the LeT's terror network in India by activating sleeper cells of Bangladeshi operatives residing illegally in the country. The posters featured photographs glorifying slain Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist Wani and carried messages, such as "India stop genocide" and "Free Kashmir", along with Urdu slogans translating to "Hum Pakistani Hain, Pakistan Hamara Hai" and "Kashmiri Ek Jut-ta Divas".

An FIR was registered and further investigation launched by the Special Cell. The initial groundwork was carried out by a team of the Delhi Police's Metro unit and the probe was later transferred to the Special Cell. Kushwah said the Special Cell, already tracking activities of LeT operatives with Bangladeshi connections in the wake of recent developments in Bangladesh, intensified human intelligence and technical surveillance. Based on analysis, a team traced two suspects to Majherpara at Hatiara Gote in Kolkata.

On February 15, a raid was



conducted and two accused -- Umar Faruk (31), a resident of West Bengal's Malda, and Robiul Islam (31), a native of Bangladesh -- were arrested. "On February 21, simultaneous raids were carried out in Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu, leading to the arrests of six more operatives, identified as Mohammad Mizanur Rehman (32), Mohammad Sefayat Hossain (34), Mohammad Zahidul Islam (40), Mohammad Liton (40), Mohammad Uzzal (27) and Umar (32) -- all natives of Bangladesh's Bogura district," the officer said.

He said preliminary interrogations revealed that Faruk came in contact with Lone in March 2025 and was indoctrinated by him. Lone allegedly appointed Faruk to spearhead LeT operations in India, using Bangladeshi nationals who had assumed Indian identities.

ED sets target of filing 500 chargesheets this fiscal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has set a target of filing 500 chargesheets in money-laundering cases in the current financial year and investigating officials have been directed to ensure that once a case is registered, the probe should be completed within one to two years, except in "complex" matters, the agency said Sunday.

These measures were discussed and finalised during the federal probe agency's 34th Quarterly Conference of Zonal Officers (QCZO) held in Assam's capital, Guwahati, December 19-21 last year. The meeting was chaired by ED Director Rahul Navin. The agency has been holding

this once-in-three months conference outside Delhi since last year, with the last two editions held in Kevadia (Gujarat) and Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir). Officials were told that the focus must be on "meaningful" achievement of targets, logical conclusion of investigations, timely filing of prosecution complaints and ensuring that attachments and penalties are legally sustainable and effectively realised.

The ED officials were also told that the powers given to them under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) come with a corresponding responsibility and they should exercise those with caution, fairness and accountability.



A Nagapatri performs rituals during the Nagamandala celebrations, in Muniyal village, Udipi, Karnataka PTI PHOTO

'Community urban farm' set to soon sprout under flyover

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 22: In a bid to reclaim neglected city spaces, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has planned a pilot project to convert the area beneath a flyover near the airport's Terminal 1 into a sprawling "community urban farm", officials said.

The initiative, expected to be a first for the Western Express Highway (WEH) corridor in the metropolis, aims to transform a 24,000-sqft stretch into a lush agricultural zone where locals can grow vegetables, fruits and other plants, they said.

The project, likely to be launched next month, is next to the T1 Aqua Line Metro station near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport. The BMC's role is to provide land, water and electricity connection, and the rest of the work has been taken up by local organisations like the Swachh Parle Abhiyan and Parle Vriksha Mitra. "The idea is to move beyond



the traditional concept of just beautification or jogging tracks. We are creating a functional green ecosystem in the heart of the city's concrete sprawl," a senior civic official told PTI. Under the proposed plan, the BMC will create dedicated cultivation pits of about 6 ft x 3 ft, which will be offered to local people on an adoption basis. Residents of other suburbs are also welcome, Varsha Karam-

blekar of the Swachh Parle Abhiyan said. So far, 24 pits have been constructed and will be extended as per the demand and people's participation. The participating families will be responsible for the maintenance and harvest of their respective plots, fostering a "farm-to-table" culture within the metropolis, she said. The project is dedicated to all types of vegetables and fruits.

Top Maoist leader Devji surrenders before T'gana police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Feb 22: Top Maoist commander and the organisation's key "strategist" Thippiri Tirupati alias Devji has surrendered, a top police official said Sunday.

Devji hails from Telangana's Jagtial district and his surrender can be seen as a deadly blow to the outlawed organisation, which now lacks leadership.

Devji (62) is believed to have succeeded the late CPI (Maoist) general secretary Nambala Keshav Rao alias Basavaraju, who died in May 2025.

Another senior Maoist leader, Malla Raji Reddy, along with several cadres of the CPI (Maoist) have also surrendered. Their surrender comes days before the Union government's March 2026 deadline to eliminate Naxalism in the country.

"The surrender will be officially shown in a couple of days...they are with Telangana Police," the official told PTI. According to reports, Devji, carrying a bounty of ₹1 crore on his head, created the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) and went on to become a key Central Committee member of the CPI (Maoist) and the politburo member of the Maoist party. Devji, presently working as the in charge of Central Military Commission (CMC), operated from Maad in Chhat-tisgarh. In 1982, while studying Intermediate in Korutla in Jagtial District, he was attracted towards the Radical Student Union (RSU), sources said.

He said preliminary interrogations revealed that Faruk came in contact with Lone in March 2025 and was indoctrinated by him. Lone allegedly appointed Faruk to spearhead LeT operations in India, using Bangladeshi nationals who had assumed Indian identities.



US TRADE DEAL

Cong dubs pact 'Trump se haar', seeks review



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Congress Sunday alleged that the Modi government had hurriedly announced the "one-sided" Indo-US interim trade deal as a distraction strategy after Rahul Gandhi raised the issue of external security in Parliament and demanded that the framework agreement be kept in "cold storage" due to the "confusion" created by the US Supreme Court's verdict striking down President Donald Trump's global tariffs.

The terms of the framework for the interim agreement must be renegotiated to protect farmers' interests, and the clause talking about import liberalisation, especially of agricultural products, must be scrapped, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, adding that India would have been in a much stronger position had the government waited for the Supreme Court's verdict and not acted in haste.

Ramesh said an agreement is about give and take, but India had only given under the interim trade pact. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given a slogan in Houston in 2019 - 'Abki baar Trump Sarkaar' but this

framework for an interim agreement is proof of 'Abki baar Trump se haar'," the Congress leader told PTI Videos.

Sharing a screenshot of the US Supreme Court calendar on X, Ramesh said, "This is the calendar of the US Supreme Court decided and released months in advance. It clearly marks out February 20th as a non-argument day - i.e., a day when arguments will not be heard and a judgment could be released."

The Court had already heard arguments relating to tariffs November 5th 2025, and it was well known that the Justices were not expected to be favourably inclined to President Trump's tariffs, Ramesh said.

Why then did India not wait until February 20th to sign the trade deal, he asked.

"What was the desperation to do so February 2nd, 2026?" Ramesh said. What happened February 2 that there was a need for the prime minister to "force" President Trump to announce the trade deal, Ramesh asked while speaking to PTI Videos.

The framework for the interim trade agreement states that in the event of any changes from either side, the US and India agree that they can modify their commitments, Ramesh pointed out.

LPG cylinder blast during firefighting operation injures 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: An LPG cylinder exploded while fire and police personnel were trying to douse a house fire in northwest Delhi's Majlis Park Sunday, leaving 14 injured, officials said.

The cylinder blast injured three police and three fire personnel deployed at the house where a fire erupted around 9 am.

Several locals who were present at the building or nearby also sustained injuries at the time. Police and fire brigade teams rushed to the spot and began firefighting and rescue operations.

"During the operation, an LPG cylinder exploded, causing injuries to several personnel engaged in dousing the flames and evacuating residents," a senior police officer said.

Three police personnel from Adarsh Nagar police station and three officials from the Wazirpur Fire Office sustained injuries in the incident.

All the injured were initially taken to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial Hospital for treatment. Due to the serious nature of their injuries, they were later referred to Safdarjung Hospital for further medical care, the officer said, adding that their condition is being monitored.

Additionally, three fire officials were also injured. They have been identified as LF Suresh Bahal (30 per cent burns), FO Seeta Ram Meena (25 per cent burns) and FO Ved Prakash (20 per cent burns).

The fire was eventually brought under control after sustained efforts by the fire department.

Authorities are currently assessing the extent of the damage caused to vehicles and property parked in the still area.



From North to South, the rivers may be different, the banks may be different, but the stream of faith is the same, this is Bharat
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

STRICT VIGIL

In a bid to control potential rioters during various Holi-related events in Mathura, including the famous Lathmar Holi of Barsana, security personnel will be deployed among the crowds, disguised as 'Huriyars' and ordinary devotees, to keep an eye on rioters and suspicious individuals



SIR

Electorate in 9 states, UTs shrink by 1.70cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: Voter base in nine states and Union territories has shrunk by more than 1.70 crore following the publication of final electoral rolls as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) according to official data.

The data shared by the chief electoral officers of Gujarat, Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa and Kerala Saturday showed that their combined voter base stood at over 21.45 crore before the SIR exercise began October 27 last year.

It shrunk to 19.75 crore after publication of their final electoral rolls this week, a net change of over 1.70 crore electors.

While the exercise, which kept the Election Commission in the spotlight, has been completed in Bihar, it is currently underway in 12 states and Union territories covering nearly 60 crore electors.

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

Due to a variety of reasons, the SIR in the nine states and three Union territories have seen frequent tweaking in schedules.

As in Bihar, political parties have approached the Supreme Court challenging the exercise in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Patanjali varsity hosts 'From Yog-Dharam to Yug-Dharam' event

AGENCIES

Haridwar, Feb 22: Patanjali University here organised the annual cultural and educational event 'Abhyuday 2026' based on the theme 'From Yog-Dharam to Yug-Dharam'.

On this occasion, the students of Patanjali University staged a play on 'Yog-Dharam Se Yug-Dharam'. Speaking on the occasion, Swami Ramdev, Vice Chancellor of Patanjali University termed the students of the varsity as flag bearers of 'Rishi Culture'.

He said that the principals which this varsity is forwarding are deeply housed in the students of the institute. The event was presided over by the Head of Parmarth Ashram of Rishikesh, Swami Chidanand Muni Ji.

Acharya Balkrishnan lauded the presentation of Patanjali University students in the form of play and credited Sadhvi Devpriya for that.

The spiritual guide from Rishikesh, Sadhvi Bhagwati Saraswati, Swami M Lal Ji and Sadhvi Devpriya of Patanjali University also spoke on the occasion.



The chief guest on this occasion was Vice Chancellor of Central Sanskrit University, Dr. Shrinivas Varkhedi while the special guest was head of Sangeet and Natak Academi, Dr Sandhya Purecha.

Faculty of Banaras Hindu University, Dr Brijbhushan Ojha expressed optimism that Bharat will again become Vishav Guru.

The main speaker was Mahamandleshwar Swami Harichetanand Ji and he said that both Swami Ramdev and Acharya Balkrishnan have revolutionised the world of Yoga and Ayurveda.

At the end of the programme medals and certificates were distributed among the participants and also to those who excelled in the event.

NE women face racial abuse



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: Three women from Arunachal Pradesh were allegedly subjected to racial slurs, humiliation and intimidation by their neighbours, who called them "dhandhewali", following a dispute over some repair work at their rented flat in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar.

The police said an FIR under BNS sections pertaining to outraging a woman's modesty and promoting enmity on grounds of religion, race, etc. has been registered against two people - Harsh Singh and his wife Ruby Jain.

On February 20, the women had called an electrician at their fourth-floor flat around 3.30 pm for getting an air conditioner installed.

A senior police officer said during the process, dust and debris from the drilling work fell to the floor below, prompting objections from their neighbours, Harsh Singh and his wife.

What began as a disagreement over falling debris soon turned ugly, with the women alleging that the couple hurled abuses and made derogatory and racial remarks targeting them and the northeastern community.

A purported video of the incident also has been making rounds on social media.

In the video, the accused woman can allegedly be heard calling the northeastern women "momo" and saying, "Rs 500

mei massage parlour mei kaam karne waali dhandhewali (You work at massage parlours as sex workers for ₹500)."

"Are you sitting here to do business? Have you opened a massage parlour at home?" the accused woman said.

A police officer was present at the spot when the altercation was happening. In the video, the policeman is also seen intervening and trying to pacify the situation.

The man, identified by police as Harsh Singh, is also allegedly heard using derogatory remarks during the heated exchange.

The accused woman was also seen saying that the man they are talking to is a son of a "big politician".

The victims are seen confronting the couple in the video. "Everyone heard what you said about my image. You made false allegations that I drink alcohol. Go check my room if you find any bottles there," one of the northeastern women can be heard saying.

In another portion of the video, the accused woman is heard making further offensive remarks. "Why don't you sleep with him? Go to my bedroom. You will come to know how old is he," she says.

The Arunachali women further alleged that they were subjected to racist abuse. The accused duo, in the video, can be heard calling the victims "gutter-chaap" and telling them to "go and sell momos" and saying "northeast people

■ Three women from Arunachal Pradesh in Delhi allege racial slurs and harassment by neighbors after a dispute over dust from AC installation

■ The neighbors allegedly called the women derogatory names and made offensive remarks about people from Northeast India

■ An FIR has been registered against the accused couple under sections related to insulting a woman's modesty, criminal intimidation, and promoting enmity based on race

■ The victims are demanding a formal apology, stating the remarks were an affront to the entire Northeastern community and highlight persistent racial prejudice

■ The incident underscores the challenges faced by people from Northeast India in feeling safe and respected in other parts of the country

are shit".

At one point, the accused woman, in a perceived attempt to assert social and economic superiority, also says, "Teri aukaat nahi hai... custom officer ka beta hai woh... politician ka beta hai. (You have no standards. He is the son of a custom officer... a politician's son.)" The FIR was registered at Malviya Nagar police station under BNS sections 79 (word intended to insult a woman's modesty), 351(2) (criminal intimidation), 3(5) (common intention) and 196 (promoting enmity on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc.) against Harsh Singh and his wife Ruby Jain, the police said. However, no arrests have been made in the matter so far.

Section 196 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita is a non-bailable and cognizable offense.

"No physical injuries were reported. However, the complainants have alleged mental harassment and humiliation," the senior officer said.

Sidda, HDK trade barbs over caste, 'chair' politics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 22 : Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy Sunday engaged in a sharp war of words, trading charges over caste politics, family dominance and social justice.

The exchange escalated after Siddaramaiah dismissed Kumaraswamy's allegation that he had invoked caste considerations to cling to power. "I have taken his allegation that I have dragged caste into the picture for the sake of a chair lightly," Siddaramaiah said, while launching a counterattack on the JD(S) leadership. Hitting out at the JD(S) patriarch H D Deve Gowda and

his family, the Chief Minister said, "Kumaraswamy and his revered father Deve Gowda are certainly not casteists; they are against their own caste. More importantly, they are family-centric. For them, caste is merely a vote bank."

He alleged that "past, present, and future top JD(S) leaders will be members of the Gowda family," and asserted that it was the Congress that had politically groomed Vokkaliga leaders. "From Kengal Hanumanthaiah to S M Krishna, hundreds of Vokkaliga leaders have been nurtured. If Kengal Hanumanthaiah, Kadidal Manjappa, and S M Krishna became chief ministers, it was because of the Congress," he said.



Young monks during the 86th anniversary celebration of the enthronement of the Tibetan Spiritual leader, the 14th Dalai Lama, in Dharamshala

'Retail tech works best when it supports, not replaces staff'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: Human resource technology in retail works best not when solely relying on advanced systems, but when it helps frontline employees in turning store space into a better customer experience, according to recent research.

The findings of the study conducted by researchers from the Goa Institute of Management (GIM), Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ranchi and the University of Missouri, Kansas City, USA, have been published in the International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy.

The study found that, considering the social and technological context in which firms operate, their strategic choices shape their HR strategy, which in turn guides technology choices.

The research, which comes at a time when Indian retail leaders face pressure from competitors and consultants to digitise



human resources and workforce management, shows that simply adopting technologies used by large global retailers often does not work effectively in many retail contexts.

"In retail, technology does not create value, frontline employees do. The real question is not what technology exists, but what helps a store earn more per square foot profitability with the people it already has

and in the location it operates," Anamika Sinha, Professor, Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management, GIM, told PTI.

She added that "Socio-technical thinking helps leaders make disciplined choices instead of expensive mistakes."

The study also finds that the right technology with frontline employees not only improves sales, basket size, and custom-

er engagement, but also the use of store resources to meet its goals.

Retail formats differ widely in location strategy, customer traffic, price sensitivity, and labour intensity, it added.

These differences mean frontline staff need different levels of autonomy, and technology may need to assist, replace, or simply stay out of the way.

"Many retail technology investments ignore these differences, resulting in higher costs without better results," Sinha said.

According to her, the key factors driving productivity improvements include digital literacy among frontline employees, inventory systems, and training systems that build assisted selling capability.

In addition to this, operational factors such as store layout, hiring practices, supervisory behaviour and peer-driven learning culture also influence

whether technology helps or creates obstacles, Sinha said.

Emphasising that data-driven recommendations tend to work better in premium stores, Sinha said,

"In high-frequency hypermarkets, staff guiding customers through crowded aisles can save time, raise basket size, and build loyalty."

The research highlights that technology ignoring social and operational context often adds more complexity than performance.

The largest gains were observed where technology supported employee judgment, allowing employees to act as informed sellers rather than just processing purchases, it said.

Defying the concept of ubiquitous best practices and contradicting the retail industry by refusing the use of technology. Unlike other studies, it evaluates the realities of the retailers, which are not best practices, Sinha said.

of the day quote

The BJP government is playing with my security. I had NSG security, but it was withdrawn. The government should have disclosed why
AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF



What one chooses to watch depends on one's discretion, and that content on religious and cultural topics is also available on these platforms
DR MOHAN BHAGWAT | RSS CHIEF

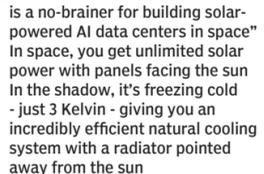


Madhya Pradesh is emerging as an important centre for sports for divyang persons. Many players from the state have made a name nationally and internationally
MOHAN YADAV | MP CM



POST OF THE DAY

ELON MUSK PREDICTS SPACE WILL BE THE CHEAPEST PLACE TO RUN AI INFERENCE
"I think the case is a no-brainer for building solar-powered AI data centers in space" In space, you get unlimited solar power with panels facing the sun in the shadow, it's freezing cold - just 3 Kelvin - giving you an incredibly efficient natural cooling system with a radiator pointed away from the sun
@XFreeze



SHORT TAKES

Mizoram: 3 kids drown in pond

Aizawl: Three kids drowned in a pond in Mizoram's Serchhip district while swimming, police said Sunday. The victims have been identified as H. Lalhrualtuanga (9), Lalmuansanga (9), and C. Lalbiakhluna (7), all residents of Thenzawl town. According to local residents, the trio had been playing together since Saturday morning. Concern grew when they failed to return home later in the day, prompting their families to launch a search, the sources said. The search party was led to the pond after a friend of the boys said they had planned to go swimming there. Upon reaching the site, volunteers discovered the children's sandals on the banks.

IndiGo flight diverted to Imphal

Dibrugarh: An IndiGo flight from Ahmedabad with 144 passengers on board was diverted to Imphal Sunday after a severe dust storm rendered visibility at Dibrugarh airport "dangerously low", officials said. The sudden weather shift forced the flight crew to make a swift decision to re-route the aircraft from Dibrugarh to the nearest viable alternative in Manipur, they said. Flight 6E-6457, operating from Ahmedabad to Dibrugarh via Guwahati, departed from the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA) in Guwahati at 10.20 am, an airport official told PTI.

Retired army officer shoots self dead

Gurugram: A retired army officer allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his licensed revolver in Sohna Sunday, police said. The deceased was identified as Krishna Raghav (42), a resident of Khedla village, police said. After retiring from the Indian Army, Krishna was working at KR Mangalam University in Sohna, they added. After getting information, a police team reached the spot and took the body into custody.



I want to tell US President Donald Trump that we don't want a new Cold War
LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA | BRAZIL PRESIDENT

INDIAN ENVOY CALLS ON BANGLADESH FM

India looks forward to engaging with the new government in Bangladesh, Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pranay Verma said Sunday, expressing New Delhi's willingness to reengage with Dhaka



of the day quote

We spoke to the Indian embassy ... They are in panic from this. Prime Minister of India, Modi, is invited to the Knesset next Wednesday, something that is a matter of honour for all of us



YAIR LAPID | LEADER OF THE OPPN IN ISRAEL

As of today, 1,152 new applications have been received, for a total of 1,557 that are being addressed immediately, and at this moment hundreds of releases of persons deprived of liberty who are benefiting from the Amnesty Law are already taking place



JORGE RODRIGUEZ | VENEZUELA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADER

We will not consent to the adoption of the 20th package of sanctions, because we have previously made it clear that until the Ukrainians resume oil shipments to Hungary, we will not allow decisions that are important to them to be approved



PETER SZIJARTO | HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

70 militants killed in Afghan strikes: Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 22: Pakistan Sunday claimed to kill 70 terrorists in the military strikes targeting at least seven militant hideouts in Afghanistan in retaliation for the recent rebel attacks in the country.

"Afghanistan has long been exporting terrorism. Pakistan is taking all actions to secure the life and property of its citizens," Pakistan State Minister for Interior Talal Chaudhry said while speaking on Geo News' programme.

Earlier, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting confirmed the strikes in retaliation to the recent suicide bombings in Islamabad, Bajaur and Bannu, even as Kabul warned of a "necessary and measured response" to the strikes.

In the latest terrorist incident, an army lieutenant colonel and a soldier were killed in a suicide attack in the Bannu area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Saturday.

According to a statement by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Pakistan has conclusive evidence that these acts of terrorism, including at a Shiite mosque in Islamabad, one each in Bajaur and Bannu, followed by another incident in Bannu Saturday, were allegedly perpetrated by Khwarizj on the behest of their Afghanistan-based leadership and handlers.

"Responsibilities for these attacks were also claimed by Afghanistan-based Pakistani Taliban belonging to Fitna-al-Khwarizj (FAK) and their affiliates, and Islamic State of Khorsan Province (ISKP)," the ministry said. Fitna-al-Khwarizj is a term that the state uses for the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

It said that despite repeated efforts by Pakistan to urge the Afghan Taliban regime to take verifiable measures to prevent the use of Afghan territory by



Afghanistan has long been exporting terrorism. Pakistan is taking all actions to secure the life and property of its citizens

TALAL CHAUDHRY | PAKISTAN STATE MINISTER FOR INTERIOR

terrorist groups and foreign proxies to carry out terrorist activities in Pakistan, it "failed" to undertake any substantive action against them.

"In this backdrop, Pakistan, in a retributive response, has carried out intelligence-based selective targeting of seven terrorist camps and hideouts belonging to Pakistani Taliban of FAK and its affiliates and ISKP at the border region of Pakistan-Afghan border with precision and accuracy," it said.

Chaudhry said that most of the 70 terrorists killed were Pakistani nationals. "There is ample evidence suggesting that most of the slain terrorists were Pakistanis," he said.

He emphasised that during the 2020 Doha accords, the Afghan Taliban had promised the world that they would not allow their soil to be used for terrorism, but the Kabul interim government had failed to live up to their promise to stop terrorism.

Pakistan Sunday said that it expects and reiterates that the interim Afghan government fulfil its obligations.

Pakistan also expects the international community to play

a positive and constructive role by urging the Taliban regime to stand by its commitments as part of the Doha Agreement to deny use of its soil against other countries; an act vital for regional and global peace and security, the ministry stated.

It further said that Pakistan has always strived to maintain peace and stability in the region, but at the same time, the "safety and security of our citizens remains our top priority".

Following the attacks, the Taliban Foreign Ministry summoned Pakistan's ambassador to Kabul, Ubaid ur Rehman Nizamani, and handed him a protest note over the attacks, according to sources.

Afghanistan, in a statement, warned that the Pakistani strikes on the provinces of Paktika and Nangarhar will be met with a "necessary and measured response".

It termed the strikes as a "clear violation" of Afghanistan's national sovereignty, international law, principles of good neighbourliness, and Islamic values, adding that the attacks targeted civilian and religious centres, calling them "clear evidence" of intelligence and security failures within Pakistan.

The statement said that Afghanistan will not remain silent in the face of continued cross-border violations and reaffirmed the country's right to defend its territorial integrity.

EU lawmaker urges delay to US trade deal vote

REUTERS

Brussels, Feb 22: A senior EU lawmaker proposed Sunday postponing a vote on the EU-US trade deal that had been planned for this week, arguing that the terms and legal basis on which the deal was struck had changed.

The US Supreme Court struck down President Donald Trump's global tariffs Friday, prompting Trump to put in place a temporary tariff of 10%, which he hiked to 15% Saturday.

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"Pure tariff chaos from the US administration. No one can make sense of it anymore — only open questions and growing uncertainty for the EU and other US trading partners," Bernd Lange wrote in a post on X.

The European Union and the US agreed at Trump's Turnberry golf course in Scotland last July on a deal averting a trade war under which the EU is to remove its import duties on many US products in return for a 15% US tariff on most EU goods exports.

The reduced EU duties need clearance from EU governments and the European Parliament.

Armed man shot dead at Mar-a-Lago perimeter

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Feb 22: An armed man drove into the secure perimeter of Mar-a-Lago, President Donald Trump's resort in Palm Beach, Florida, as another vehicle was exiting before being shot and killed early Sunday morning, according to a spokesman for the US Secret Service.

The man, who was in his early 20s and from North Carolina, had a gas can and a shotgun, according to Anthony Guglielmi, the spokesman. He had been reported missing by his family a few days ago, and investigators believe he headed south and picked up the shotgun along the way. Guglielmi said a box for the weapon was discovered in the man's vehicle after the incident, which took place around 1:30 am. Trump has faced threats to his life before, including two assassination attempts during the 2024 campaign.

Although the president often spends weekends at his resort, he and first lady Melania Trump were at the White House when the breach at Mar-a-Lago occurred.

After entering near the north gate of the property, the man was confronted by two Secret Service agents and a Palm Beach County sheriff's deputy,

according to Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw.

"He was ordered to drop those two pieces of equipment that he had with them. At which time he put down the gas can, raised the shotgun to a shooting position," Bradshaw said at a brief press conference. The two agents and the deputy "fired their weapons to neutralise the threat."

The FBI asked residents who live near Mar-a-Lago to check any security cameras they may have for footage that could help investigators.

The man who was killed has not been publicly identified. Investigators are working to compile a psychological profile and a motive is still under investigation. Asked whether the individual was known to law enforcement, Bradshaw said "not right now."

The incursion at Mar-a-Lago took place a few miles from Trump's West Palm Beach club where a man tried to assassinate him while he played golf during the 2024 campaign.

A Secret Service agent spotted that man, Ryan Routh, aiming a rifle through the shrubbery before Trump came into view. Officials said Routh aimed his rifle at the agent, who opened fire and caused Routh to drop his weapon.

Canadian national goes missing in Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, Feb 22: A Canadian national who came to Pakistan this month to conduct doctoral research on 'anti-imperialist politics' has gone missing in Lahore city, police said Sunday.

Lahore police have registered a kidnapping case against "unidentified suspects" on the complaint of Yousuf Rashid, a friend of Canadian citizen Hamza Ahmad Khan. "Khan had arrived in Pakistan to work on his PhD thesis (anti-imperialist politics) on Feb 13 and he was staying with me in the Defence Housing Authority. Khan left the house on

the night of Feb 19 after booking a ride to go somewhere and did not return. Unidentified men might have kidnapped him," Rashid told police. Lahore Deputy Inspector General Faisal Kamran said police are investigating the case from all aspects.

"We are also probing whether the missing scholar's research work has something to do with his kidnapping," he said.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed serious concern over the kidnapping of the Canadian national. "We are gravely concerned by reports that Hamza Ahmed Khan, a student of polit-

ical science at the University of Toronto, has gone missing. Mr Khan was visiting Pakistan for field research, and colleagues in Lahore have alleged that he was abducted by unidentified persons 19 February. The authorities must trace Mr Khan's whereabouts immediately and ensure that he is recovered and returns home safely," the HRCP posted on social media.

Political activist Ammar Ali Jan said he recently met Khan in Lahore. "Khan worked on anti-imperialist politics. Yesterday, Hamza was abducted in Lahore as this regime is waging a relentless attack on dissent," Jan said.

WEEK'S BEST PICS



A member of 41 Canadian Brigade Group, as part of Task Force Grizzly, patrols on skis as Canadian Armed Forces deploy to "Operation Nanook-Nunaliut," a yearly series of drills designed to highlight the military's ability to defend the Canadian Arctic, in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada



Palestinians gather to break their fast by eating iftar meals on the first day of the holy month of Ramadan, near the rubble of residential buildings destroyed during the two-year Israeli offensive, in Gaza City



Drum Queen Juliana Paes from the Unidos do Viradouro samba school performs during the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Protesters hold a banner reading "Olympics - No Thanks" during a demonstration under the same slogan on the day of the Winter Olympics closing ceremony, in Verona, Italy



A performer blows fire during Lunar New Year celebrations at Chinatown in Binondo, Manila, Philippines



Edoardo Zorzi of Italy in action during the Men's Ski Cross Seeding



PERNOD RICARD RULES OUT INDIA IPO
 French liquor major Pernod Ricard has ruled out an IPO of its India business as part of its deleveraging strategy, even as it reported a 4 per cent rise in net sales in the country. With growth accelerating to 8 per cent after excluding Imperial Blue, a brand that has now been disposed of and closed by the French Liquor major, it expects the momentum to continue in the second half of FY'26, its Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Alexandre Ricard said



of the day **QUOTE**

I think of India as a net exporter of talent. I haven't thought about this as a zero-sum equation



JETU PATEL | PRESIDENT AND CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER, CISCO

By next year, only Gevra mine will be producing 63 MT and will become the number one mine in the world



HARISH DUHAN | CMD, SECL

The tempo has been maintained with power consumption continuing to rise in January as well, due to a harsh winter and general improvement in economic activities. This, we believe, will boost coal demand in the coming days



VINAYA VARMA | MD, MJUNCTION SERVICES

SHORT TAKE

Mcap of six of top 10 valued firms climbs

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 valued firms climbed Rs 63,478.46 crore last week, led by Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of India, which emerged as the biggest winners. The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 187.95 points, or 0.22 per cent, over the past week. Larsen & Toubro, State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Bajaj Finance, and Reliance Industries were the gainers, while Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, and Tata Consultancy Services saw their valuations erode. The market valuation of Larsen & Toubro jumped by Rs 28,523.31 crore to Rs 6,02,552.24 crore. SBI added Rs 16,015.12 crore to Rs 11,22,581.56 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most-valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Life Insurance Corporation of India, and Infosys.

INDIA REBALANCES CRUDE SLATE

Saudi gains, Russian flows ease under sanctions pressure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Delhi, Feb 22: India's crude import strategy is entering a phase of calibrated rebalancing rather than abrupt realignment, with Middle Eastern suppliers led by Saudi Arabia regaining market share even as Russian volumes remain significant but increasingly shaped by geopolitics and compliance constraints, according to shipping data and analysts.

While Saudi Arabia is currently positioned as India's largest supplier in February (till date), followed by Russia and Iraq and as the month closes

SUMIT RITOLIA | LEAD RESEARCH ANALYST, KPLER



India are estimated at around 1.0-1.2 million bpd in February, easing toward roughly 800,000 bpd to 1 million bpd in March," said Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst, Refining & Modeling at real-time global commodity intelligence and analytics Kpler. Import of Russian crude, which India started to binge on once they were available at a discount post Ukraine war in 2022, are seen stabilising rather than collapsing. "However, we continue to see this as a short-term stabilisation rather than a return to the mid-2025 peak, and we expect Russia's share in India's crude slate to gradually stabilise to a lower range in 2026 compared to 2024-2025 as commercial and policy frictions build," he said. This assessment is based on reports of a pragmatic understanding between the United States and India that effectively allows "baseload" Russian imports while discouraging any material expansion. Near-term volatility is expected to remain driven by sanctions risk, shipping constraints and logistics rather than pure pricing dynamics. As Russian volumes ease, the Middle East Gulf is filling the gap. Shipments from Saudi Arabia are set to reach 1 million to 1.1 million bpd in February - the highest since November 2019 - with month-to-date arrivals tracking even higher at around 1.4 million bpd before expected moderation into early March, Ritolia said. On current trends, Saudi Arabia is positioned as India's top supplier in February, followed by Russia and Iraq. Post Ukraine war, Russia had replaced Iraq as India's biggest supplier, accounting for as much as 40 per cent of all crude oil that India imported for processing into fuels like petrol and diesel, at peak. Wave of EU and US sanctions have since tapered imports

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THE OIL SHIFT

SHIPMENTS FROM SAUDI ARABIA ARE SET TO REACH 1 MILLION TO 1.1 MILLION BPD IN FEB - THE HIGHEST SINCE NOV 2019

RUSSIAN SHIPMENTS TO INDIA DECLINING FROM 1.28 MILLION BPD IN DEC 2025 TO 1.22 MILLION BPD IN JAN AND FURTHER TO AROUND 1.09 MILLION BPD IN FEB

POST UKRAINE WAR, RUSSIA HAD REPLACED IRAQ AS INDIA'S BIGGEST SUPPLIER, ACCOUNTING FOR AS MUCH AS 40% OF ALL CRUDE OIL THAT INDIA IMPORTED FOR PROCESSING INTO FUELS LIKE PETROL AND DIESEL, AT PEAK

from Russia. At the core of Russian oil imports is Vadinar refinery in Gujarat. The unit, where Russia's Rosneft is the biggest shareholder, has been cut from other suppliers after EU slapped sanctions on its for links with Moscow. The unit now solely relies on Russia to meet its crude needs. Ritolia said the expectation seems to be that India can maintain volumes needed to support refinery operations and domestic fuel supply, but should avoid materially increasing purchases beyond that baseline. From a market structure perspective, India is not positioned to fully replace Russian barrels without cost, he said. However, Venezuelan crude import will only be at a marginal or supplementary level and cannot replace Russian barrels. "That said, Venezuelan supply is structurally constrained by production limits, logistics, and compliance risks, so it is unlikely to fully replace Russian volumes - but it can help reduce the cost impact at the margin if flows continue to build," he said. With flows from Saudi Arabia rising to the highest level since November 2019, the immediate replacement for softer Russian flows has largely come from the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia.

Capex contracts 23.4% as spending adjusts after H1 frontloading

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 22: India's capital expenditure saw a year-on-year contraction of 23.4 per cent in the third quarter of FY2025-26, a new report said Sunday.

The moderation in government spending is expected to slightly temper economic growth momentum during the quarter, although overall activity remains supported by festive demand and state-level capex expansion, data compiled by ICRA showed.

However, state governments showed improved momentum. Data available for 24 states showed that their combined capital outlay and net lending rose by 21.9 per cent in Q3, reversing a contraction seen in the previous quarter.

In absolute terms, the capex of these states increased to Rs 2.1 trillion in Q3 from Rs 1.8 trillion in Q2, almost matching the Centre's capital spending level, the report stated. Overall, when combined, Central and state capital expenditure stood at Rs 4.2 trillion in Q3 FY2025-26, slightly lower than Rs 4.4 trillion in the same quarter last year.

This compares with a strong 16.7 per cent growth recorded in Q2 -- indicating a phase of normalisation after earlier momentum.

ICRA has projected that India's GDP growth may ease to 7.2 per cent in Q3 FY2025-26, compared to 8.2 per cent in the previous quarter.

Despite the moderation, growth is expected to remain above 7 per cent, supported by healthy festive demand and benefits from GST rationalisation.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist and Head of Research & Outreach at ICRA, said estimating GDP growth under the new base year remains challenging.

"The reasons for the estimated sequential slowdown include an unfavourable base effect, contraction in Government capital spending, subdued state government revenue expenditure, and weak merchandise exports," Nayar added.

On the revenue side, the pace of contraction in the Centre's non-interest revenue expenditure narrowed significantly.

It declined by 3.5 per cent year-on-year in Q3, compared to a sharper 11.2 per cent contraction in Q2.



All Odisha Union Bank Retirees Association supplies grocery items to M/S Ashray, child care home for orphanages Sunday

Khimji unveils 'Nibhayenge Always'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: Khimji Jewellers has unveiled its new wedding campaign, 'Nibhayenge Always' — a heartfelt tribute to marriage's eternal vow. More than a bridal collection, the campaign positions jewellery as a timeless symbol of love, commitment and togetherness.

Moving beyond ceremony, 'Nibhayenge Always' captures jewellery as a silent keeper of promises — from the bride's first step into a new family to the many milestones that follow.

Designed for the modern bride who blends confidence with tradition, the collection features statement necklaces, heritage bangles, ornate



chokers and elegant earrings. Thoughtfully curated for every wedding ritual — from mehendi to reception — the designs combine contemporary aesthetics with timeless craftsmanship.

The campaign extends to the groom and the entire wedding party, offering coordinated pieces that celebrate every member of the family, ensuring everyone shines in

moments that matter.

To make celebrations even more special, Khimji Jewellers is offering flat 45% off on making charges for gold jewellery, reinforcing its commitment to value without compromising on purity or quality.

Mitesh Khimji, Managing Director, said, "Nibhayenge Always gives form to the promise that defines every marriage. Like that vow, our jewellery is pure, enduring and grows more valuable with time. These are pieces meant to be lifelong companions."

With 'Nibhayenge Always', Khimji Jewellers once again strengthens its legacy of trust — transforming wedding jewellery into a lasting reminder of love.

Excise waiver on CBG-CNG blend can unlock ₹1L-cr investment: IBA

The excise waiver fixes a long-standing imbalance: CBG is a renewable fuel that is better for the environment, but it was taxed the same way as CNG



ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY

India's CBG potential is considered to be about 60 million tonne per year, based on organic wastes like paddy straw, press mud, MSW, and cattle dung

CBG cuts greenhouse gas emissions by 70-90% over its whole life cycle, especially when it is made from agricultural waste

A 10% blend could lower emissions by 12-15 million tonne of CO2-equivalent every year

ing could realistically grow to 7-8 per cent by 2032. This would double the investment potential to almost Rs 1 lakh crore," it said.

This initiative (waiver) not only implies a reduction in gas prices; it also changes few dynamics of the biogas sector such as speeding up private investment, making energy more secure, and has measurable benefits for the climate and rural development, it noted.

The excise waiver fixes a long-standing imbalance: CBG is a renewable fuel that is better for the environment, but it was taxed the same way as CNG, it opined.

Waiving the excise part

on the biogas of the blended fuel makes it instantly more cost-effective.

For CGD companies, this means lower weighted-average fuel costs.

For consumers, it means prices stay the same or go down. For producers, it means guaranteed sales and bankable revenue streams, it stated.

The excise waiver should significantly raise project internal rates of return (IRR) for typical 4.8-10 TPD plants, depending on the mix of feedstock and logistics, it stated.

This improvement is sufficient to unlock financing for projects that were previously marginal, it stated.

TRUMP TARIFF UNCERTAINTY

Markets to stay volatile next week

On a weekly basis, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 187.95 points, or 0.22%, while the Nifty went up 100.15 points, or 0.39%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: Domestic macroeconomic data, monthly F&O expiry and global developments following US President Donald Trump's tariff hike after the Supreme Court verdict are likely to keep equity markets volatile next week, analysts said.

Besides, the trading activity of foreign investors, developments between the US and Iran, movements in crude oil prices and global monetary signals will also guide market movement during the week, they added.

"Markets are likely to remain volatile in the coming week, particularly with the monthly F&O expiry scheduled for February 24. On the domestic front, key data releases include GDP figures, government budget value, foreign exchange reserves, and infrastructure output (YoY)," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

He said investors will assess the implications around a fresh executive order by Trump which may influence trade dynamics, tariff structures, and global risk sentiment following the US Supreme Court ver-

dict on tariffs.

Trump Friday levied a 10 per cent tariff on countries, including India, for 150 days following the court ruling, and a day later raised it to 15 per cent, heightening concerns of renewed trade tensions and potential global spillovers, analysts said.

In a major setback to Trump's pivotal economic agenda in his second term, the US Supreme Court ruled that the tariffs imposed by Trump on nations around the world were illegal and that the president had exceeded his authority when he imposed the sweeping levies by using the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) of 1977.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments, said the investors will closely monitor the developments between the US and Iran, crude oil price movements, and global monetary signals, adding that the release of India's GDP data next week will be keenly watched for its implications on earnings momentum and broader market positioning.

"Market sentiment remained volatile during the week, oscillating between caution and optimism. Strong buying interest in banking,



Silver, gold set for further gains

Silver and gold are expected to extend their gains next week as investors sought safety in safe-haven assets amid renewed trade tensions following US President Donald Trump's decision to raise global tariffs and rising geopolitical strains in the Middle East, analysts said. Market participants will closely watch key economic indicators, including the US Producer Price Index (PPI), consumer confidence data, weekly initial jobless claims and the People's Bank of China's lending rate decision, for cues on the direction of precious metals, they added. The brokerage firm said escalating geopolitical risks and Trump's move to raise global tariffs after the US Supreme Court's ruling have revived trade uncertainties and strengthened safe-haven demand for bullion. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, silver futures climbed Rs 8,584, or 3.5 per cent, while gold advanced Rs 981, or nearly 1 per cent, over the past week.

financials, power, and select FMCG counters helped absorb the impact of persistent global uncertainties," Nair said.

He added that IT stocks remained subdued as concerns around AI-led disruption and margin pressures weighed on sentiment.

Despite these challenges, resilience in large caps, selec-

tive sectoral flows, and optimism around India's participation in Pax Silica ensured that the market ended on a positive bias," he said.

Analysts said the domestic market is likely to continue its range-bound movement in the near-term, with liquidity flows and global risk sentiment acting as key triggers.

T20 WORLD CUP

Proteas humble Men in Blue



While four victories on the trot in the group stage papered over the visible lacunae, the Indian batters totally faltered on a slightly sluggish surface

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 22: The one dimensional "attack at all cost" template of Indian batting unit was thoroughly exposed as the hosts failed their first big test against South Africa, comprehensively losing their opening Super Eights game by 76 runs in the T20 World Cup here Sunday.

TODAY'S CLASH
Zimbabwe vs West Indies
Time- 7:00 am

The defeat, India's first since the semi-final loss to England in the 2022 edition, has left the group wide open and make their next two games against Zimbabwe (February 26) and West Indies (March 1) literally must-win games in order to qualify for the last four stage.

Jasprit Bumrah's (3/15 in 4 overs) superlative bowling performance was completely undone by an inept batting show as India were bowled out for a lowly 111 in 18.5 overs in pursuit of 188.

Marco Jansen (4/22), Keshav Maharaj (3/24) and Corbin Bosch (2/12) were the wreckers-in-chief in what was a complete performance by the Proteas.

But David Miller's 63 and useful contributions from Dewald Brevis (45) and Tristan Stubbs (44 n.o.) should also get honourable mention especially as they nullified Varun Chakravarthy (1/47 in 4 overs) with aplomb.

But anyone who saw the

Indian batters stutter against the USA, Namibia and the Netherlands knew that it required just one good team to force them to change gears, and they found their bogey unit in South Africa.

On a black soil surface where the ball was gripping, none of the Indian batters got the mea-

sure of Proteas' attack which fired collectively.

Skipper Aiden Markram made the job easier by removing the dangerous Ishan Kishan (0) with a delivery that stopped on him and he played the ugliest cross-batted hoick.

Tilak Varma's (1) approach towards batting in the whole

Jacks of all trades sinks SL

Pallekele: Will Jacks impressed with bat and ball to rescue England from a poor start and help them to a 51-run victory over Sri Lanka in a low-scoring Super Eight match at the Twenty20 World Cup Sunday. Tournament co-hosts Sri Lanka appeared to be well set after restricting England to a below-par 146-9 in the Group 2 match at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium. Jacks, who made 21 useful runs down the order, returned to claim 3-22 as England bowled out Sri Lanka for 95 inside 17 overs to prevail. Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka elected to field after winning the toss and had reasons to feel vindicated as England slumped to 68-4 at the halfway mark of their innings. Phil Salt (62) raced to a 36-ball fifty but holed out in the 15th over to give Wellalage his third wicket of the match. Jacks added late runs but England fell short of the 150-mark. They needed a lion-hearted bowling effort and produced one to reduce Sri Lanka to 22-4 inside five overs. Jacks dismissed Kusal Mendis and Pavan Rathnayake off successive deliveries after Jofra Archer had sent back Sri Lanka's in-form opener Pathum Nissanka.



FIH PRO LEAGUE

Shootout blow for India after draw against Oz



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hobart, Feb 22: The Indian men's hockey team dished out a much improved show but still went down to formidable Australia in the penalty shootout in their FIH Pro League match here Sunday.

The two sides were tied at 2-2 after full time with Amit Rohidas (15th) and Jugraj Singh (43rd) putting India in front before a brace from Joel Rintala (47th, 56th) helped Australia get back on level terms.

In the shootout, though, Australia emerged 5-4 victorious.

This was after India lost five matches in a row in the FIH Pro League this year, including four in the home leg in Rorukela. They lost to Spain 0-2 in their first match of the Hobart leg Saturday. Australia had the lion's share of possession in the opening exchanges, pushing India back in their own half. India stayed solid at the back and grew into the game to pile some pressure back on Australia, forcing Jed Snowden into action on a couple of occasions.

India were rewarded with a penalty corner late in the first quarter, and made the most of it as Rohidas scored from

his drag-flick to give them a 1-0 lead. Australia continued to dominate possession after the restart. The Indian defensive line remained resolute at the back though, keeping the hosts at bay and preventing them from creating any clear cut opportunities.

India doubled their lead with Jugraj converting a powerful drag-flick from a penalty corner to close out the third quarter.

The hosts managed to reduce the deficit early in the fourth quarter, with Rintala scoring from a penalty corner.

With time running out, Australia eventually found the leveller from a set-piece as Rintala netted his second goal of the night from a penalty corner four minutes from the final hooter. With the two teams tied at 2-2 after full time, the game went into a shootout to decide the winner.

It was an intense shootout with both teams converting their first four penalties, finishing their chances expertly.

However, Aditya Arjun Lalage was denied by Snowden in the final penalty, giving Australia a hard-fought win in this enthralling match. India will next take on Spain in their third game of the Hobart leg Tuesday.

SHORT TAKES

Adkar ends runner-up at ITF Women's Open

Bangalore: Wildcard Vaishnavi Adkar's tremendous run ended with a runner-up finish at the ITF Women's Open after losing a lop-sided singles final to world number 124 Hanne Vandewinkel here Sunday. The Belgian capped a dominant week with a 6-0, 6-1 victory over Adkar, the 21-year-old from Pune, ranked world No 690. For her title run, Vandewinkel earned 100 WTA ranking points and USD 15,239 as prize money, while Adkar added 65 ranking points to her tally and got richer by USD 8,147. The Belgian broke Adkar in the opening game before she could settle and quickly built a 3-0 lead, capitalising on unforced errors while dictating play with her forehand. The Indian emphasised on the positives after the final.

Sakellaridis steals Delhi Open title

New Delhi: Greek player Stefanos Sakellaridis claimed his maiden singles title on the ATP Challenger circuit with a gruelling three-set win over fifth seed Briton Oliver Crawford at the Delhi Open here Sunday. The 21-year-old secured a hard-fought 7-5 5-6 7-6(6) victory in the final that lasted three hours and nine minutes. There were five breaks of serve in the opening set that Sakellaridis pocketed to nose ahead. The Greek carried the momentum into the second set, breaking early to take a 2-0 lead. However, Crawford responded strongly, drawing on his experience to turn the set around and level the match. Sakellaridis broke in the opening game of the deciding set but was unable to consolidate. Crawford then won six of the next seven games to surge ahead 5-2. Just when the match appeared to be slipping away, the Greek staged a remarkable comeback, winning three consecutive games to level the set 5-5. The contest was eventually decided in a tense final-set tie-break, where Sakellaridis prevailed 8-6 on his second match point to seal the title. With the win, Sakellaridis earned 75 ATP ranking points and USD 17,000 in prize money, while Crawford collected 44 ranking points and USD 9,600.

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Highlanders share spoils at Bengaluru FC's home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 22: Bengaluru FC were held to a 1-1 draw by NorthEast United FC in their Indian Super League match here Sunday.

The Blues took a first-half lead through Braian Sanchez in the 18th minute, but the Highlanders responded after the break through Lalrinzuala in the 68th minute.

Despite NorthEast United's early pressure, it was Bengaluru who struck first. Ashique Kuruniyan released Braian on the left. The Argentine cut inside and drilled a right-footed shot into the bottom corner from outside the box.

NorthEast United continued to press but failed to equalize before the interval. The Highlanders resumed strongly after the break. Zabaco headed wide, and Gurpreet produced a fine



diving save at the hour mark to deny Asheer Akhtar. Moments later, he stood tall again to keep out Jairo's effort.

Benali introduced Lalrinzuala in the 64th minute, and the substitute made an immediate impact with a right-footed finish over Gurpreet into the top corner to level the score at 1-1.

Neither side could find the decisive goal as the contest ended level in an entertaining encounter at the Kanteerava Stadium.

IPL: Dhoni available but may not play all games for CSK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 22: The perennial question around MS Dhoni's future resurfaced once again as the Indian Premier League caravan readies for the 2026 season - will the iconic former skipper feature in all matches for Chennai Super Kings this year?

Dhoni, who will turn 45 later this year, will be available for CSK for the upcoming IPL season, a top franchise source confirmed.

However, with CSK's prize transfer Sanju Samson now in the ranks, it is unlikely that the legendary former India captain would play all the league games.

"We can confirm this much that he is coming to Chennai and had confirmed his availability for the season," a top CSK source told PTI on condition of anonymity.



"Whether he will play all games or not is something we can't say at the moment," the source added.

In any case, with the Impact Player rule in place, Dhoni the batter has not been required extensively over the past two editions. His role has largely

been situational, often limited to late-order cameos.

This season, CSK have three wicketkeeper-batters in their line-up. Samson is certain to don the gloves in games where Dhoni does not feature. There is also Urvil Patel in the squad, besides Rs 14.20 crore recruit rookie Kartik Sharma, who will be groomed as a finisher alongside Shivam Dube.

Over the years, Dhoni has managed issues related to his knee and back, and the physical demands of keeping wickets with limited turnaround time between matches can take a toll at this stage of his career.

What appears certain, though, is that Dhoni will play most of CSK's home games in Chennai, where his mere walk into the Chepauk arena sends the crowd into a frenzy, underlining his enduring bond with the franchise and its faithful supporters.

L AFC THRASH MIAMI CF 3-0



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Los Angeles, Feb 22: Lionel Messi and Inter Miami got off to a rough start in their MLS Cup title defense when David Martinez, Denis Bouanga and Nathan Ordez scored in Los Angeles FC's 3-0 victory. Son Heung-min set up Martinez's opening goal for LAFC, which emphasized its status as a primary threat to Miami's crown during a lively MLS season opener between two of the league's marquee clubs.

The matchup drew 75,673 fans - the second-largest crowd in MLS history - to the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, which is next-door to LAFC's home BMO Stadium. The huge crowd celebrated a convincing win for the home team and still enjoyed a good look at Messi, who played the full match despite dealing with a strained hamstring this month.

Bouanga exchanged jerseys with Messi after the match because the LAFC star's son demanded it, he said with a grin.

LAFC went ahead in the 38th minute when Son controlled the ball in traffic and slotted a perfect pass to Martinez, who found the far bottom corner in stride. The 20-year-old Martinez has started his MLS career slowly, but LAFC remains confident the Venezuelan forward will be a star.

Bouanga had a hat trick in CONCACAF Champions Cup play earlier this week, and he added his first MLS goal of the season in the 73rd minute. LAFC added a third goal in second-half injury time when Ordez converted a pass from Bouanga. LAFC improved to 4-2-0 against the Herons in the clubs' history.

DONE IN 50 MINUTES

Alcaraz sinks Fils, lifts Qatar Open

The title triumph marked Alcaraz's ninth ATP 500 trophy, drawing him level with former World No 1 Andy Murray for the fourth-highest tally in the category since its inception in 2009

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Doha, Feb 22: Carlos Alcaraz swept past resurgent Frenchman Arthur Fils 6-2, 6-1 in just 50 minutes to secure the Qatar Open trophy, just 20 days after becoming the youngest man in history to complete the Career Grand Slam at the Australian Open.

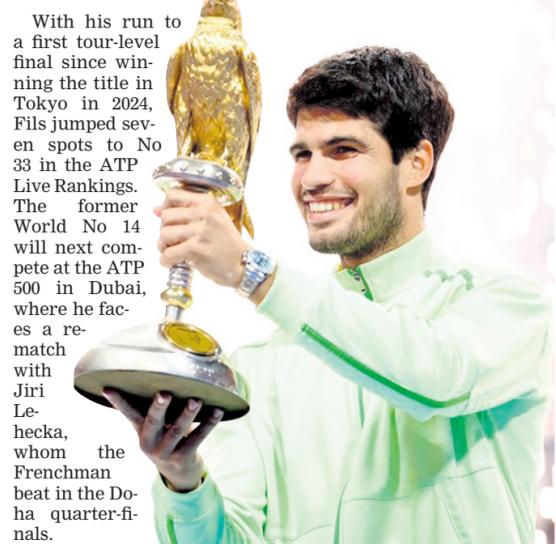
"I came this year hungry for more. I think after every tournament, we just have to set new goals. I'm just really happy and proud of everything I have done with my team on and off the court," Alcaraz said.

The title triumph marked Alcaraz's ninth ATP 500 trophy, drawing him level with former World No 1 Andy Murray for the fourth-highest tally in the category since its inception in 2009

From the outset, Alcaraz dictated terms, striking early and defending with breathtaking athleticism. Even after Fils raised his level and began trading blows from the baseline, the Spaniard repeatedly produced spectacular retrievals and clutch shotmaking to extend his winning streak to 12 matches, ATP reports.

It's been a really strong start to the year. It wasn't easy... I had to be strong mentally with my team. I'm just playing great tennis and I'm really happy about this week. This trophy means a lot to me
CARLOS ALCAZAR

Alcaraz has also extended his outdoor hard-court winning streak to 30 matches — a run that includes major triumphs at the Australian Open and US Open. By clinching the title in Doha — his 26th tour-level title — the Spaniard now boast a 292-65 record, according to the ATP Win/Loss Index.



With his run to a first tour-level final since winning the title in Tokyo in 2024, Fils jumped seven spots to No 33 in the ATP Live Rankings. The former World No 14 will next compete at the ATP 500 in Dubai, where he faces a rematch with Jiri Lehecka, whom the Frenchman beat in the Doha quarter-finals.