



Tamannaah's economics

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia discusses financial planning, showbiz unpredictability and the importance of smart investments for lasting stability

LEISURE | P2



China-Iran ties

Iran eyes a deal with China to purchase anti-ship cruise missiles as the US deploys force near the Iranian coast

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Bears on prowl

Sensex and Nifty tumble more than 1 per cent, dragged down by heavy losses in IT stocks amid concerns over AI-led disruption

BUSINESS | P11



Bucknor's confession

Steve Bucknor concedes his LBW dismissal decision against Sachin Tendulkar as a mistake at Brisbane's Gabba 22 years ago

SPORTS | P12

Meerut: 5 kids among 6 killed in house fire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Meerut, Feb 24: Six people, including five children, were killed and a woman was injured after a fire, suspected to have been triggered by a short circuit, broke out at a house in the Lisadi Gate area here, police said Tuesday.

"The incident occurred at Kidwai Nagar around 8 pm Monday. Seven people were admitted to the civil hospital with burn injuries. The doctors later declared six of them dead," Meerut SP Avinash Pandey told reporters at the hospital.

According to police, tailoring work was done at the house, for which a large quantity of cloth was stored there, which caused the flames to spread rapidly.

Prima facie, a short circuit is suspected to have triggered the fire, police said, adding that a detailed probe is underway.

The deceased have been identified as Rukhsar (25), Mahbish (12), Hammad (4), Akdas (4), Nabia (4 months) and Inayat (4 months), all residents of Gali No. 3 near the Surahi Wali Masjid in Kidwai Nagar, police said.

The injured woman, Ameer Bano (55), is undergoing treatment, the SP said.



INFERNO: Fire ripped through a market complex near Dhaulii area in Bhubaneswar, late Monday night, with materials worth over ₹5 crore reducing to ashes. More than 40 fire tenders were pressed into service to contain the inferno that raged for nearly 19 hours. (More P-4)

'NO PLAN FOR EARLY PANCHAYAT POLLS'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The state government Tuesday said that the next three-tier panchayat elections in the state will be held at its scheduled time in February 2027.

This was stated by Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water minister Rabi Narayan Naik while replying to a question by BJD member Ganeswar Behera in the Assembly.

"There has been no decision at the government level to hold panchayat polls ahead of its schedule in February 2027," the minister said.

The minister's reply in the House has put a halt to speculations about early rural polls in the state following a statement of Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal. While addressing a party workers meeting last month, Samal had told the party rank and file to be prepared for an early panchayat polls in the state this time.

"There is a possibility of holding the rural polls two to three months ahead of the scheduled time," the BJP state president had stated. He had cited the 2027 census as a possible reason for advancing the timeline of panchayat polls.

Union Cabinet resolves to serve all Indians

The Union Cabinet is upbeat after its first meeting at Seva Teerth, the new Prime Minister's Office (PMO) complex, at the national capital. Seva Teerth projects a strong symbolic message of citizen-centric governance anchored in constitutional values and service ethos. By invoking "Nagrik Devo Bhava" or "The citizen is God" and linking decisions to nation-building, the government frames the new PMO complex as both administrative reform and ideological statement. Among the first major decisions, it has approved to rename Kerala as Keralam, recognising the cultural identity of the southern state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Union Cabinet Tuesday reiterated its commitment to make Seva Teerth, the new PMO complex, a global example of sensitive, accountable, and citizen-centric governance.

Briefing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, in the Seva Sankalp Resolution taken in the first meeting of the Cabinet in Seva Teerth today, the Cabinet resolved that every decision taken in Seva Teerth will be inspired by a spirit of service



toward 1.4 billion citizens and will be connected to the broader goal of nation-building.

It also reiterated its resolve that every decision taken in these premises will be inspired by the sentiment of 'Nagrik Devo Bhava' or 'The citizen is god'.

The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also resolved that for the cabinet, the constitutional values are the expression of that moral commitment which connects governance with the dignity, equality, and justice of every citizen.

Work culture at Seva Teerth will be guided by the spirit, where every policy will be in accordance with the fundamental ethos of the Constitution, and every decision will be accountable to the aspirations of the people.

This meeting and this building are a direct expression of the reconstruction of New India, according to the 'Seva

KERALA WILL NOW BE KERALAM

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet Tuesday approved a proposal of Kerala government to change the name of the state to Keralam, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its first meeting held at Seva Teerth, the new PMO complex. After receipt of the views of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, the government of India will obtain the recommendation of the president for introduction of the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to alter the name of Kerala as 'Keralam' in Parliament, an official release said. The Legislative Assembly of Kerala passed a resolution on June 24, 2024 to alter the name of Kerala to 'Keralam'. P9

Sankalp' resolution.

"With this auspicious beginning, we welcome that future whose foundation has been laid by centuries of effort. After Independence, for so many decades, governments operated from the Prime Minister's Office in South Block, preserving the legacy and envisioning the future. We envisioned an India whose thought is indigenous, whose form is modern, and whose capability is boundless. Today, Seva Teerth is the embodied manifestation of that very vision, which will enhance India's pride as the Mother of Democracy," it said.

Wall collapse claims 2 in City; 3 critical

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: In a tragic incident, two persons lost their lives Tuesday and three others rendered critical as a boundary wall collapsed at Bhoi Sahi under Badagada police limits here. The incident occurred during the construction of a drain.

One of the deceased was identified as Sanyasi Maharana while details about others are yet to be known.

All the victims were construction workers.

According to information, the labourers were engaged in



the construction work adjacent to a boundary wall. Suddenly,

the wall collapsed and the debris fell on five of them. As a

result, they got crushed and sustained grievous injuries. The locals along with the police rushed the injured to the Capital Hospital.

However, two of them were declared brought dead and others were being attended by the doctors.

It is yet to be ascertained that under what circumstances the wall got collapsed. The incident has also raised concerns whether the labourers were working under safety protocol or not.

The police have initiated a probe into the matter and further details are awaited.

Man beaten to death after testifying in court

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, Feb 24: The eyewitness in a murder case was allegedly chased and beaten to death for testifying in court in Mayurbhanj district, Monday.

The incident took place at Gadigaon Deula village under Khunta police limits. The victim was identified as Kanhu Madhei, 47, the sole eye witness in the murder of Bapi Kolhar

Sources said that Bapi and Kanhu were allegedly caught stealing gas cylinders by the villagers at Dhanagera village under Udala police limits November 18, last year. Villagers reportedly assaulted both men, and Bapi later died.



Police arrested 11 persons in connection with the case and produced them in court on murder charges.

Kanhu was also arrested and sent to jail on theft charges and released on bail December 12.

After testifying in the Bapi murder case, Kanhu returned to his village and reportedly had an altercation with Du-

laram Murmu, a relative of one of the accused.

Police said Dularam and three others assaulted Kanhu with stones and bamboo lathis, beating him to death. Later, they fled the scene.

Khunta police registered a murder case-50/26 and arrested Murmu. The body has been sent for post-mortem.

Police said CCTV footage of the attack has aided the investigation, which is underway with assistance from a forensic team.

The attack may have been linked to a dispute over money allegedly given to influence Kahnu's testimony while he turned hostile, Khunta IIC Panchanan Mohanty said.

OVER 800 WILD ANIMALS POACHED IN FIVE YEARS: MIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Over 800 animals were poached in the last five years in Odisha, state forest minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia said in the Assembly Tuesday.

In a written reply to a query by BJP legislator Sanjali Murmu, the minister said 2,836 elephants, tigers and other wild animals died in Odisha from 2020-21 to 2024-25, of which 808 were poached.

As per data provided by Singkhuntia, 586 wild animals died in the state in 2020-21 due to various reasons, including poaching and accidents.

Altogether 532 animal deaths were reported in various forests of Odisha in 2021-22. The state registered the animal deaths of 585, 541 and 592 in the three subsequent years, respectively.

The minister informed the House that 164 wild animals were electrocuted to death between 2020-21 and 2024-25 in Odisha, while diseases claimed the lives of 347 during the period.

Thirty-six wild animals perished after being hit by speeding trains, 89 in road accidents, one due to poisoning and 263 in various other accidents, he said.

Singkhuntia said 17 animals were killed in infighting among themselves during the period.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Not a 'naked protester'... A Dalal Street player

One of universe's biggest stars may explode

AGENCIES

Melbourne, Feb 24: One of the largest known stars in the universe underwent a dramatic transformation in 2014, new research shows, and may be preparing to explode.

A study led by Gonzalo Munoz-Sanchez at the National Observatory of Athens, published in Nature Astronomy Tuesday, argues that the enormous star WOH G64 has transitioned from a red supergiant to a rare yellow hypergiant, in what may be evidence of impending supernova.

The evidence suggests that



a massive star is shedding its outer layers, shrinking as it heats up, and moving closer to the end of its short life.

WOH G64 was first discov-

ered in the 1970s as a star of interest in the Large Magellanic Cloud, a dwarf galaxy orbiting the Milky Way.

It turned out the star was not

only extremely luminous, but also one of the biggest ever discovered: more than 1,500 times the radius of the Sun.

In 2024, WOH G64 was the first star beyond this galaxy ever photographed in detail, thanks to the Very Large Telescope Interferometer. The image showed a clear dusty cocoon around the central giant star, which confirmed it was losing mass as it aged.

WOH G64 is a young star in the grand scheme of the cosmos, with an estimated age of less than 5 million years old. Unlike Sun (currently about 4.6 billion years old), WOH G64

is destined to live fast and die young.

WOH G64 was born big, forming from a huge cloud of gas and dust collapsing until the pressure made it ignite. Like Sun, it would have burned hydrogen in its core by nuclear fusion.

Later it would have expanded and burned helium, becoming what is called a red supergiant.

If lucky, people will see the death of WOH G64 in their lifetimes, not only providing an incredible intergalactic spectacle but also helping scientists complete the puzzle of this fascinating star.

leisure



HANKS TO PLAY ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN LINCOLN IN THE BARDO MOVIE

Tom Hanks is set to portray former US president Abraham Lincoln in the upcoming film adaptation of the book *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Oscar-nominated filmmaker Duke Johnson, known for 2015's *Anomalisa*, is attached to direct and produce the project with author George Saunders, who penned the 2017 best-selling novel, adapting the screenplay

BELLA HADID OPENS UP ABOUT HER LYME DISEASE BATTLE

Bella Hadid recently spoke about battling Lyme disease and stepping away from modeling for nearly a year. Turning down every job made her feel "disposable" in the fast-paced fashion industry. The break was emotionally challenging but transformative, helping her realise her worth isn't defined by constantly saying yes to work



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will desire absolute freedom in whatever you do today. A lot of entertainment is on the cards for teenagers, like window shopping or going for a movie. Kids may demand a treat from you. Generally, family affairs dominate today.

TAURUS
Today you are going to focus on enhancing your looks and appearances, says Ganesha. Instead of trying to seek satisfaction from within yourself you will be flaunting your fine clothes, your hairstyles. A visit to a beauty parlour cannot be ruled out. Your new looks will make you tremendously confident and impressive and will make others see you in a new light.

GEMINI
You will make a reputation for yourself as a leader in your social circle. You yearn for something in your heart, and need to concentrate your energies upon attaining it. Your creative mind will come up with solutions today, to certain questions that have been perplexing you for quite some, says Ganesha.

CANCER
It is high time that you dedicated yourself to your work. If you are looking to try new things, today may not be a very good day to do so. Stick to doing things the way you have been doing them so far, advises Ganesha. All you need is a little attitude adjustment. Today, you are likely to meet an old friend and you will get busy reminiscing about your time together.

LEO
You will relentlessly try to find means to progress at the workplace today. You will remain steadfast in your resolutions. You will not allow those working under you to slack. You will need to let go of your inhibitions and fears to be happy in life. You will receive the benediction of highly placed superiors, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Children will ring in applause and praises - in the classroom and off it too! Processing logic and reasoning will improve too. Ganesha asks you to keep calm and enjoy the joy ride, irrespective of anything that happens during the day.

LIBRA
Unleash the artist in you today! Don't be surprised if you happen to discover a love for the fine arts. The stars bestow on you refined aesthetic sense. As a result, your penchant for interior decoration is sure to get a boost. There is also the possibility of your capitalising on the commercial aspect of your newly acquired hobby, says Ganesha.

SCORPIO
Family matters have been screaming for long for your attention now. Your estranged spouse may deal the final blow to sever all ties, foretells Ganesha. But keep calm, and hold that tongue, advises Ganesha. Your priority should be to secure your family's peace.

SAGITTARIUS
The cloud of worries is likely to keep you gloomy today. Try to burst that cloud, and take a decision that would help you to solve your troubles. There may be some delay, if you want the situation to get back to normal. However, as Ganesha says, you would be the one who would benefit at the end of the day!

CAPRICORN
There are good days and bad days; your day today will oscillate between the two extremes, says Ganesha. While on the one hand, your mind will be flooded with negative feelings that will make you feel miserable, on the other, your efforts at work will yield good results in the future. The need of the hour is to stay calm and take criticisms in your stride.

AQUARIUS
The day is taxing. You may find that others have dumped their share of work on you. But you are not one to admit defeat, and will deal with the challenge squarely, says Ganesha. You will outwit your opponents, and toast your success by starglight!

PISCES
While your day is unlikely to be very satisfactory, keeping your expectations low will help lessen your disappointment, says Ganesha. However, the evening is likely to be as refreshing as your day was depressing, with all the socialising in store for you. A rollicking party awaits you with good food, wine and music as accompaniments.

TAMANNAAH'S financial foresight

MUMBAI: Tamannaah Bhatia began her journey in the film industry at just 15 and, over 21 years, has built a steady and versatile career. Beyond acting, she has expanded into entrepreneurship with her own jewellery brand, reflecting a growing focus on financial independence and long-term planning. In a recent interview, Tamannaah spoke candidly about money management and the unpredictable nature of showbiz.

She shared that in the early years of her career, her father played a crucial role in handling her finances. At a young age, when she was focused on work, her parents ensured her earnings were managed wisely. She credits her father's foresight and guidance for helping her understand the importance of structured investments.

Today, Tamannaah follows a diversified investment approach. Her portfolio includes real estate, jewellery and other avenues that create a balanced financial cushion. She emphasised that in the entertainment industry, high earnings do not automatically translate into long-term security. Without timely savings and smart investment strategies, even substantial income can diminish over time. For her, financial stability comes from thoughtful planning, disciplined saving and multiplying wealth through calculated decisions rather than relying solely on consistent work opportunities.

Industry, high earnings do not automatically translate into long-term security. Without timely savings and smart investment strategies, even substantial income can diminish over time. For her, financial stability comes from thoughtful planning, disciplined saving and multiplying wealth through calculated decisions rather than relying solely on consistent work opportunities.



MUMBAI: Actress Saiyami Kher is asking for accountability from the authorities, who are entrusted with keeping the Mumbai air clean.

Tuesday, the actress took to her Instagram, and shared a picture of herself wearing a mask. She also penned a long note in the caption, as she wrote, "I started running a decade ago. Every morning, I'd find myself on Carter Road, chasing the ocean breeze. I want to feel it again. And dystopian as it is, I put on a mask before lacing my shoes. It took me back to the pandemic. Except there's no virus in the air endangering our life. The air itself could kill us."

She further mentioned, "I moved my runs to a treadmill, staring at a wall instead of the sea. And it still isn't enough. Running is the thing that keeps me whole. It heals something in me that nothing else reaches. Pollution is undoing what years of discipline and sweat and devotion built, one breath at a time. This isn't seasonal anymore. It shouldn't be political."

"But somewhere between the data and the denial, people like me are out there in masks, grieving a morning run, mourning a city we loved. Is basic accountability really too much to ask for?", she added.

MUMBAI'S DECLINING AIR QUALITY
SAIYAMI seeks accountability



Bhubaneswar Music Circle's Samarpan 2026 begins today



Bhubaneswar: Bhubaneswar Music Circle is all set to host *Samarpan* - a three-day long annual festival featuring Sufi and devotional singers from pan India. The festival is organised in collaboration with Odia Language Literature and Culture department and SNM Group.

The festival opens today with Vidushi Koyel Bhattacharya from Kolkata, followed by Sufi Qawwali by Jenab Ateeq Husain Khan Bandanawazi and group from Hyderabad.

On the inaugural evening, the 'Indira Textiles Lifetime Achievement Award' will be presented to Ghanashyam Panda. The annual award is instituted by Sardar Manjit Singh in order to honour an eminent senior artiste who has enriched the field with their contribution. This year, the award constitutes cash price of Rs 60,000 and a citation.

The second day will open with Vidushi Rakhi Sen from Cuttack, who will present selections from writings of Vishwaguru Rabindranath Tagore, Guru Atul Prosad and Kazi Nazrul Islam. Later, Vidushi Smita Bellur from Hyderabad will perform nirgun bhajans.

The third and concluding day February 27 will feature meera bhajans by Priya Kanungo from Bhubaneswar. The festival will conclude with *Chaar Yaar*. Hailing from four different religions, friends sing poetry of universal love and brotherhood.

Entry to the festival is open to all music lovers.

28TH KALINGA NATIONAL NATYA MAHOTSAV CONCLUDES



Artists from Bhubaneswar-based theatre group Uttar Purush staged Odia play *Karna* on the final evening of the event at Rabindra Mandap, Tuesday. Written by Bijaya Satpathy and directed by Prasanna Mishra, the play marked the culmination of the five-day theatre festival organised by City troupe Satabdira Kalakar.

PEANUTS



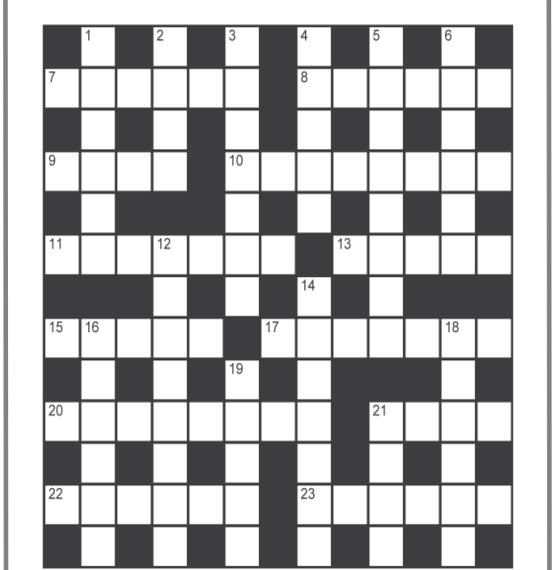
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



- Across**
7 Know-it-all
8 Weather map line
9 Rainbow goddess
10 Resident
11 Arabian Nights boy
13 Secret supply
15 High-strung
- Down**
17 Tan provider
20 Review, of sorts (6-2)
21 Fencing sword
22 Hindu incarnation
23 Horseshoes score
- Down**
2 Tops
3 Baltic Republic
4 Get rid of
5 Health facility
6 Pleasure trips
12 Barren
14 Claim
16 Develop
18 Posted
19 They hold water
21 Locate

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

2 panels for Ratna Bhandar inventory

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has constituted two committees to oversee and execute the inventory and appraisal of the Ratna Bhandar valuables, SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Kumar Padhee said Tuesday.

Addressing media in Puri, Padhee said the move follows the state government's approval of a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), outlining the process for the inventory and valuation of the temple treasury valuables.

"While the supervisory committee will oversee and monitor the entire exercise, the handling committee will carry out the physical inventory and appraisal of the Ratna Bhandar valuables," he said.

"The state government has approved a comprehensive 14-page SOP which details the methodology for inventory, documentation, security measures, and valuation. Following the approval, temple administrators and senior officials convened a meeting to discuss its implementation," Padhee said.

The SJTA reviewed the temple calendar from March up to Niladri Bije, the concluding ritual of Rath Yatra. Of the next 135 days, nearly 100 days are unsuitable due to major festivals such as Rath Yatra, and heavy devotee footfall on weekends. Around 24 days before Niladri Bije have been identified as feasible for conducting the inventory without disrupting rituals or darshan, the SJTA chief said.

He said the list of suitable days will be submitted to the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee (SJTMC). "The SJTMC, after consulting experts and considering auspicious timings, will finalise the exact date and time to begin the process," Padhee said.

Specific duties have been allocated to designated officials to ensure the smooth, secure, and systematic execution of the Ratna Bhandar inventory and appraisal process, he pointed out.



CLOSE SHAVE: Police personnel inspect the wreckage of a Pawan Hans helicopter that crashed into the sea after taking off from Rangat in the North and Middle Andaman district, Tuesday. Seven people, including two crew members, who were on board, were rescued (Story P8)

Painter's body found hanging; kin cry foul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Feb 24: The body of a painter was found hanging from a tree at Radharaman Pada under Town police limits here Tuesday, with the family members alleging foul play.

The deceased was identified as Hiran Nayak, 22, of Nuakheta. Hiran, who was residing in a rented accommodation at Radharaman Pada along with his family for several years, was working as a house painter.

Hiran had dinner with his family members Monday and went to sleep in a separate room. However, the family members found him hanging from a guava tree in front of the house.

On seeing that his feet were touching the ground, his family alleged that he might have been killed and then his body might have hanged to make it appear as a case of suicide. A case was registered and probe is on.

PUSH FOR ADVENTURE TOURISM

Safety first is the cornerstone of Odisha's adventure tourism, says Deputy CM Pravati Parida

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: In a significant step towards positioning Odisha as a premier adventure tourism hub in Eastern India, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who also holds the Tourism portfolio, Tuesday launched the 'Go-Adventure' portal at Lok Seva Bhavan and signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) and the Aero Club of India (ACI).

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy CM emphasised safety as the cornerstone of the state's adventure tourism expansion. Through international partnerships and a new focus on spiritual and experience-based travel, the government plans to modernise the sector and attract fresh investment from young entrepreneurs. She appreciated the joint efforts of the Tourism, Sports and Home departments in opening a new

chapter in Odisha's tourism landscape and called upon all departments to work collectively to make Odisha a world-class tourism destination.

Chief Secretary Anu Garg, who was present at the event, said the state government is prioritising Tourism development with the vision of achieving 'Utkarsh Odisha' by 2036 and 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

She stressed that all the departments should explore ways to contribute to tourism growth alongside their core responsibilities

and emphasised the importance of collective efforts. Garg expressed hope that adventure tourism would boost local economies and create large-scale employment opportunities, and called upon stakeholders to adopt the mantra "Think India, Think Odisha".

Officials said the Go-Adventure portal will simplify registration, verification and licensing procedures for adventure tourism projects.

The MoU with the IMF is expected to strengthen safety audits and training programmes for land-based adventure activities such as trekking and rock climbing.

The partnership with the ACI will regulate aerial adventure sports like paragliding and paramotoring in line with national aviation safety norms, officials said.



KEY TAKEAWAYS Govt launches Go-Adventure portal

MoUs signed with Indian Mountaineering Foundation and ACI

Chief Secy calls for adoption of 'Think India, Think Odisha' mantra

Licences issued to adventure tour operators

chapter in Odisha's tourism landscape and called upon all departments to work collectively to make Odisha a world-class tourism destination.

Chief Secretary Anu Garg, who was present at the event, said the state government is prioritising Tourism development with the vision of achieving 'Utkarsh Odisha' by 2036 and 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

She stressed that all the departments should explore ways to contribute to tourism growth alongside their core responsibilities

and emphasised the importance of collective efforts. Garg expressed hope that adventure tourism would boost local economies and create large-scale employment opportunities, and called upon stakeholders to adopt the mantra "Think India, Think Odisha".

Officials said the Go-Adventure portal will simplify registration, verification and licensing procedures for adventure tourism projects.

The MoU with the IMF is expected to strengthen safety audits and training programmes for land-based adventure activities such as trekking and rock climbing.

The partnership with the ACI will regulate aerial adventure sports like paragliding and paramotoring in line with national aviation safety norms, officials said.

The MoU with the IMF is expected to strengthen safety audits and training programmes for land-based adventure activities such as trekking and rock climbing.

The partnership with the ACI will regulate aerial adventure sports like paragliding and paramotoring in line with national aviation safety norms, officials said.

WEST BENGAL SIR SC for Odisha, J'khand judges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Supreme Court Tuesday allowed the deployment of West Bengal civil judges, in addition to 250 district judges, and the requisitioning of judicial officers from Jharkhand and Odisha to handle 80 lakh claims and objections of those facing deletion from the electoral roll in the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) exercise in the state.

A bench of CJJ Surya Kant, and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi took note of a February 22 letter of Calcutta High Court Chief Justice Sujoy Paul that even if 250 district judges deployed in the SIR exercise, it will take around 80 days to deal

with the claims and objections of those put under logical discrepancy and unmaped categories. The logical discrepancies in progeny linking with the 2002 voter list include instances of a mismatch in the parent's name and the age difference between a voter and his/her parent being less than 15 years or more than 50 years.

While issuing a slew of fresh directions, CJJ Kant took note of the fact that even if each judicial officer deals with 250 claims and objections per day, the exercise will take around 80 days to conclude. The deadline for West Bengal SIR is February 28.

The SC said the travel, honorarium and other expenses of the judicial officers shall be borne by the

EC and asked the Chief Justices of Jharkhand and Orissa High Courts to sympathetically and urgently consider the request.

The bench said, "The judicial officers involved in the exercise will do the verification of claims and objections with respect to documents referred to in (a) notification dated October 24, 2025, declaring the commencement of SIR in WB read with the June 24, 2025, notification, the order passed by this Court September 8, 2025 whereby Aadhaar card was allowed to be accepted and order passed by this court January 19, 2026 whereby Maadhyamik (Class X) admit card and Maadhyamik pass certificate was also allowed to be submitted."

others suffered injuries when a large hoarding fell on them as they took shelter under the iron structure during the rain, police said.

The injured persons were undergoing treatment at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, they said. Similar weather conditions were reported in some parts of Cuttack, Subarnapur, Koraput and Bargarh districts during the day.

The thunderstorms occurred under the influence of a low pressure area formed over southwest and adjoining areas of central Bay of Bengal. It is very likely to continue to move nearly northeastwards and weaken gradually during the next 24 hours, the IMD said.

NCERT introduces 'corruption in judiciary' in Class VIII book

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Corruption, massive backlog of cases, and lack of an adequate number of judges are among the 'challenges' faced by the judicial system, according to the new social science NCERT textbook for Class VIII.

The section 'corruption in the judiciary' in the new book states that judges are bound by a code of conduct that governs not only their behaviour in court, but also how they conduct themselves outside it. The revised chapter, titled 'The Role of the Judiciary in Our Society', goes beyond explain-

ing the hierarchy of courts and access to justice, and addresses challenges faced by the judicial system. The earlier editions of the textbook largely focused on the structure and role of courts.

"...people do experience corruption at various levels of the judiciary. For the poor and the disadvantaged, this can worsen the issue of access to justice. Hence, efforts are constantly being made at the State and Union levels to build faith and increase transparency in the judicial system, including through the use of technology, and to take swift and decisive action against instances of corruption

wherever they may arise," the chapter reads. The book pegs the approximate number of pending cases in the Supreme Court at 81,000, in high courts at 62.40 lakh, and district and subordinate courts at 4.70 crore.

It highlights the judiciary's internal accountability mechanisms and refers to the established procedure for receiving complaints through the CPGRAMS.

The textbook also quotes former CJI BR Gavai, who in July 2025 said that instances of corruption and misconduct within the judiciary had a negative impact on public confidence.

others suffered injuries when a large hoarding fell on them as they took shelter under the iron structure during the rain, police said.

The injured persons were undergoing treatment at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, they said. Similar weather conditions were reported in some parts of Cuttack, Subarnapur, Koraput and Bargarh districts during the day.

Hoarding collapse in City kills 1, injures 2

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: One person died and two others sustained injuries when a roadside hoarding collapsed on them during a hailstorm at Aiginia Square under Khandagiri police station here Tuesday, police said.

The deceased was identified as Surendra Goud, a resident of Aiginia. Thunderstorms, accompanied by rain, lightning strikes and gusty wind, lashed the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack in the evening, bringing down the temperature.

Due to the rain, commuters were seen taking shelter at bus stops and under flyovers. One person died and two

A senior official from Paithan police station termed the phenomenon as 'routine'. "Whenever the water level of the river drops, people arrive with small nets and sieves and venture into the river. They sieve the silt from the riverbed in search of valuables," he said. People believe that the holy river has given them a valuable object when they find something, the official said.

others suffered injuries when a large hoarding fell on them as they took shelter under the iron structure during the rain, police said.

The injured persons were undergoing treatment at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, they said. Similar weather conditions were reported in some parts of Cuttack, Subarnapur, Koraput and Bargarh districts during the day.

Gold rush: Villagers comb Godavari for valuables

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Feb 24: For most people, a receding river is a sign of a dry spell, but for locals in Maharashtra's Paithan town, when water levels in the Godavari dip, it is time for them to head to the riverbank in search of gold.

Armed with sieves and nets, people from villages around the holy town in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar thronged the banks of the Godavari River Monday, looking for valuables as the water receded.



nagar thronged the banks of the Godavari River Monday, looking for valuables as the water receded.

nagar thronged the banks of the Godavari River Monday, looking for valuables as the water receded.

Insurance Bhi, Savings Bhi

Dreams | **Goals** | **Responsibilities** | **Security**

My Regular Premium Plan!

Presenting LIC's **NAV JEEVAN SHREE**

UIN: 512N387V01 | Plan No.: 912

Regular Premium Payment Plan

Assurance

Comfort | **Independence** | **Security**

My Single Premium Plan!

Presenting LIC's **Nav Jeevan Shree**

Single Premium

UIN: 512N390V01 | Plan No.: 911

Single solution to achieve our goals

- Guaranteed Additions payable as a percentage of Tabular Annual Premium without taxes.
- Limited Premium Payment Term.
- Attractive Premium Payment Terms of 6/8/10/12 years.
- Policy Term Options : 10 to 20 years.

One Time Premium Payment

- Guaranteed Addition @ ₹85/- per ₹1000/- Basic Sum Assured.
- Settlement Option On Maturity/Death.
- Attractive Rebate for existing policyholder.
- Provision for granting loan during the Policy Term.

(A Non-Par, Non-Linked, Life, Individual, Savings plan)

These are two different products with different features.

Download LIC Mobile App

Visit: licindia.in

Call Centre Services (022) 6827 6827

Our WhatsApp No. 8976862090

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch/visit www.licindia.in

Follow us: LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

BEWARE OF SPURIOUS PHONE CALLS AND FICTITIOUS / FRAUDULENT OFFERS. IRDAI or its officials do not involve in any activities of insurance business like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums, refund of amounts. Policyholders or the prospects receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.

भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

Har Pal Aapke Saath

Govt neglecting Odisha farmers, women: Naveen

Rain, hailstorm batter Capital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Thunderstorms accompanied by heavy rain lashed the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, along with several other areas, Tuesday evening, bringing temporary respite from soaring temperatures while causing brief disruptions in parts of the city.

Several localities in the Capital also witnessed hailstorms, intensifying the sudden spell of inclement weather. Bhubaneswar recorded 17.6 mm of rainfall during the downpour.

Earlier in the day, the Regional Meteorological Centre of India Meteorological Department (IMD) had issued a nowcast warning forecasting light to moderate thunderstorms with lightning and light rainfall in several districts of Odisha. The advisory included Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, and extended to Puri, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur.

According to the IMD, a low-pressure area over the southeast Bay of Bengal persisted over the region in the morning Tuesday. The associated cyclonic circulation extends up to 3.1 km above mean sea level. The system is likely to move eastwards and gradually weaken over the next 24 hours.

In addition, an upper air cyclonic circulation over Ganget-



ic West Bengal and adjoining north coastal Odisha, at about 1.5 km above mean sea level, continues to persist, contributing to unstable weather conditions in parts of the state.

The IMD has forecast light rain or thunderstorms at one or two places in districts including Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Gajapati, Ganjam, Khurda, Puri, Malkangiri, Koraput and Rayagada, while dry weather is likely to prevail in the remaining parts of Odisha.

Shallow to moderate fog is

also likely during the early morning hours at isolated places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Khurda and Puri districts.

Under a Yellow Warning for the next 24 hours, thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty surface winds reaching 30-40 kmph are very likely at isolated places over Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur and Mayurbhanj districts. Dense fog is also likely at isolated pockets in Jagatsinghpur, Khurda and Puri districts. Authorities have

advised caution and asked concerned departments to remain prepared for any weather-related contingencies.

Light to moderate rainfall has been recorded at one or two places across Odisha. The highest maximum temperature of 36.6°C was recorded at Paralakhemundi, while the lowest minimum temperature of 15.3°C was reported at Jharsuguda in the plains. Meteorologists said weather conditions are expected to remain dynamic over the next 24 hours under the influence of the prevailing systems.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: BJD supreme Naveen Patnaik Tuesday alleged that 'non-performance' of the BJP government in the state has caused 'misery' for farmers, women, and all other sections of society.

Addressing the 'Chasi Surakshya Samabesh' here Tuesday, he asserted that people need work, "not long speeches or sermons by leaders".

Patnaik made such aggressive remarks against the 20-month-old BJP government during the rally.

Farmers from various districts of the state took part in the programme to voice concerns over the alleged 'mismanagement' in paddy procurement during the ongoing kharif marketing season.

The BJD president began his address with the 'Jai Jagannath' slogan and said, "This government will complete two years in office soon, but is unable to make decisions or implement them. But the party (BJP) made promises during elections."

Alleging that farmers are the worst sufferers during the BJP's rule, Patnaik said his BJD government had made a special budget for cultivators. "Our government made 'Ka-

lia Yojana', facilitated loans and also provided irrigation facilities for farmers. But what has this double-engine government done for farmers?" Patnaik asked.

He alleged that farmers are not getting fertilisers in time, unable to sell their produce in the state-run mandis and forced to go through 'Katni Chhatni'.

'Katni-chhatni' refers to illegal deduction of paddy weight, often 7 to 8 kg per quintal, at the state-run mandis.

"I had written to the government recently regarding the problems of farmers. I requested the administration to fulfil their election promises sincerely and proposed to create a special squad to stop 'katni chhatni', break the nexus between millers and officials," the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly said.

In the letter, Patnaik urged the government to "remove the 150 quintal ceiling from the input subsidy scheme and give money to farmers through DBT (direct benefit transfer) within 48 hours and buy all paddy from them within 72 hours on their arrival at mandi."

The BJD supreme claimed, "Sadly, 15 days have passed, but nothing has happened. The government is spending hundreds of crores of rupees on its publicity,

but not concerned for the farmers."

He said the BJD workers and leaders are on the streets and fighting for the interest of farmers.

"Our party has been fighting for farmers both in the assembly and also outside...The government is giving the 'Jai Kisan' slogan, but in reality, it has turned out to be 'Bhago Kisan' from mandis. The government is not run by speeches, but by work, which is grossly missing in the BJP government," Patnaik alleged.

Referring to the prevailing law and order situation, the BJD supreme said it is "better not to speak of the crimes".

"No one, particularly women, is safe in this state," he claimed.

"Farmers have been denied their rights, women have not been getting protection, and the youth have been facing difficulties in employment. All exam paper leaks. This government cannot even organise even a single exam properly," Patnaik alleged.

He also claimed, "This government doesn't listen to the suffering of the common people. What is this government doing? People need services, not the promises of leaders. The government is not run on 'Kahani' (story), it needs 'Karma' (work)."

Odisha sets world record in terracotta

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Odisha has earned global recognition by securing two new entries in the World Book of Records for terracotta craft at the 'Grand Terracotta Craft Creation' event organised by the Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Department.

A total of 1,000 terracotta artisans participated in the competition, setting a new record for the highest number of participants in a single event. Additionally, seven skilled artisans broke the previous record for the number of terracotta items crafted within a set time.

In a remarkable feat, terracotta artisan Sebak Rana from Bargarh crafted 310 clay glasses in just one hour, securing the top position.

Other record-setting artisans included Madhab Muduli from Nayagarh (248 items), Thana Sundar Rana from Bolangir (232 items), Ramesh Chandra Muduli from Balasore (230 items), Bijay Behera from Angul (227 items), Basant Rana from Bolangir (219 items), and Makar Ketan Sahu from Kendrapara (218 items).

It is noteworthy to mention that, the previous record was held by Michael Weber from the USA, who made 212 clay items in one hour. Odisha's artisans have now surpassed this milestone, showcasing the skill and tradition of Indian terracotta art.

OUAT hosts workshop on Jute & allied fibres

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The 37th annual workshop of All India Network Project (AINP) on Jute and allied fibres was organised at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) here Tuesday, bringing together leading scientists and policymakers to deliberate on the future of the jute sector.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) deputy DG (Crop Science) DK Yadava graced the occasion as chief guest and emphasised the urgent need to enhance jute production across the country. Yadava described jute as an eco-friendly, sustainable and future-oriented fibre crop capable of meeting diversified market demand while addressing climate change challenges. He stressed that adoption of advanced tech-

nologies and skill upgradation would be crucial in scaling up production and aligning it with evolving market needs. He also encouraged the university to focus on diversified applications and value-added jute products.

ICAR-Central Research Institute of Jute and Allied Fibres Director G Kar attended as guest of honour and highlighted recent developments in the jute sector. He underlined the importance of reducing plastic usage and promoting jute as a sustainable alternative.

The workshop also witnessed release of several publications on jute by the dignitaries. OUAT Research dean N Panda delivered the welcome address and organising Secretary Sarika Jena proposed the vote of thanks.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Khordha, No.3241/01.11.2025, Vill- Palla, PO-Palla Hat, Dist- Khordha, PIN No.-752056, Odisha declare that I have changed my Son's name from Sai Datta Baral to SAIDUTTA DILIP BARAL. Henceforth he shall be known as SAIDUTTA DILIP BARAL for all purposes. DILIP KUMAR BARAL

I, Sunamati Chhachhan, D/o.- Narasingha Dutiachand, resident of A.N. Guha Lane, P.O.- Sambalpur, P.S.- Town, Tahasil and Dist. Sambalpur- 768001, Odisha hereby declare by Affidavit No. 7823 that I have changed my surname from Sunamati Chhachhan to Sunamati Dutiachand. Henceforth, I shall be known as Sunamati Dutiachand for all purposes.

I, Mvgs Vamsi Krishna, S/o.- Mallapragada Subba Rao, resident of Satyavati Nllayam, Santi vihar, Raniguda Farm, P.O./Dist.- Rayagada, Odisha PIN- 765001 declared by this affidavit No. 1817 dated 23.02.2026 that now onwards I shall be known as Mallapragada Vamsi Krishna for the future purposes. Sd./- Mallapragada Vamsi Krishna

Manipal Hospitals highlights liver transplant expertise



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, Tuesday hosted a press meet where doctors reaffirmed the institute's reputation as a leading centre for liver transplantation, supported by years of clinical expertise and multidisciplinary excellence.

They highlighted the rising burden of liver disease in Odisha, with studies indicating that nearly one in three people may have fatty liver disease and one in six could develop Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis (NASH), a severe inflammatory condition that can progress to cirrhosis. With cirrhosis prevalence in

the state estimated at 16.7 per cent and nearly half of chronic liver disease patients in eastern India diagnosed at a late, experts stressed the urgent need for early detection and timely referral.

The expert panel included Consultant Liver Transplant Surgeon Raj Shekhar K, Cluster Director (South East) Saktimaya Mohapatra, Senior Consultant Medical Gastroenterologist Pratap Behera, and Medical Gastroenterology Consultants Gyanranjan Rout and Sambit Kumar Bhuyan.

"Liver transplantation is the most effective treatment for end-stage liver disease when medications fall short, with

success rates exceeding 95 per cent," said Raj Shekhar K. "Early referral to a transplant team improves patient outcomes," he said.

Mohapatra added, "Our aim is to provide patients not only advanced treatment but also reassurance, compassion, and confidence throughout their care journey."

Behera emphasised, "A liver transplant is not just a surgery; it is a journey that patients and families undertake with us, supported by a dedicated multidisciplinary team and round-the-clock critical care."

For transplant recipients, the event was deeply personal. Sudhir Bhutia from Angul, an employee of Nalco recalled, "My transplant was performed on Raksha Bandhan, when my sister gave me a new lease on life by donating part of her liver. I urge others not to ignore symptoms."

Suryakant Samal from Kendrapara described his transplant as a turning point. "My wife courageously donated a part of her liver. The constant support from the medical team reassured us."

BSNL, TWWO organise blood donation camp

BHUBANESWAR: With support from the Indian Red Cross Society, Cuttack, and under the joint auspices of the Telecom Women's Welfare Organisation (TWWO), a blood donation camp was organised Tuesday by Bharat



Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Odisha Circle, at BSNL Bhawan here. DK Behera, Chief General Manager of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Odisha Circle, inaugurated the camp. On the occasion, Mamata Behera, president of the Telecom Women's Welfare Organisation (TWWO), Odisha, was also present. Behera urged everyone to donate blood for the noble cause and help save precious human lives. Employees and volunteers participated enthusiastically in the programme. The Indian Red Cross Society, Cuttack Blood Bank, collected 33 units of blood during the camp. Among others present were Gajendra Kumar Yadav, General Manager (Human Resources and Administration), Gayatri Mallick, TWWO Secretary, and Lili Jenamani, an active TWWO member, along with several other dignitaries.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The massive fire at a market complex in Lingipur area here was brought under control after 19 hours of operation, officials said Tuesday.

There were no reports of any injuries or fatalities due to the fire that broke out around 10pm Monday night, and spread to the entire four-storey building, as a large stock of inflammable

materials, including plywood, rubber and plastic, was stored in the mall, they said.

Two employees trapped in the fire have been rescued immediately from the complex, officials said.

A total of 60 fire tenders were pressed into service to contain the inferno, which continued to rage for 19 hours till 6pm, a fire service officer said.

"Our team has doused the flames on three floors of the

four-storey market complex. It was difficult for firefighters to conduct the operation because only one entrance was there to the building and there was no window or other space to enter into the mall," said Sudhanshu Sarangi, DG of Fire and Emergency Services.

The fire service officers broke down a portion of the side wall of the building to spray water inside the structure, he said. "Through the blaze was brought under control, our officers will remain there to see further outbreak of fire, if any," the fire service DG said.

The blaze was so extensive that the building was also damaged in the incident.

Sarangi said only civil engineers can give opinion whether the building is safe or not after inspection.

While the first two floors of the building were used for sale purposes, different items, including huge plastic, rubber and other items, were stored in the other two floors used as godown, said the shop owner.

The mall owner also claimed that properties worth ₹4 crore were gutted in the fire incident.

The blaze is suspected to have been caused by a short-circuit, officials said.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.91 ▲ 0.02	SENSEX	82225.92 ▼ 1068.74	GOLD	₹159,560 ▼ ₹2038
EURO	107.28 ▲ 0.01	NIFTY	25424.65 ▼ 288.35	SILVER	₹258,513 ▼ ₹6820

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	32.6°	30.8°	Light rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur
Min Temp	22.4°	21.2°	
Humidity	78%	85%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

16-year-old girl held for killing mother, brother

In a chilling case that has stunned Odisha's Koraput district, a 16-year-old girl allegedly conspired with her boyfriend to murder her mother and younger brother after they opposed her relationship, police said

LOVE TURNS LETHAL



Koraput/Borigumma, Feb 24: A 16-year-old girl has been detained for allegedly killing her 45-year-old mother and 14-year-old brother in Borigumma area of Koraput district, police said Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Anushka Parida (45) and her son Ahem Parida (14), residents of Borigumma town.

The murder surfaced after relatives lodged a missing complaint at Borigumma police station February 21, stating that the mother and son had been untraceable since February 20. Suspicion

deepened as both their mobile phones were switched off.

Locals spotted a body in a sack floating in Andira Munda canal under Kotpad police limits Monday, and alerted authorities. Police, assisted by fire services personnel and a scientific team, recovered the body, which was later identified as Ahem. His throat had been slit and his hands and legs tied, indicating a brutal killing.

A day later, Anushka's body was recovered from Jayantigiri canal.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the teen girl was

in a relationship with a local youth, which her mother had reportedly opposed. Police suspect that frequent quarrels over the relationship led the teenager to allegedly plot the murders with her boyfriend.

The girl, her boyfriend and another person have been detained for questioning. Police also conducted a reconstruction of the crime scene as part of the investigation.

Further probe is underway to determine the exact sequence of events and whether more persons were involved, Borigumma SDPO Satyabrata Lenka said.

Nabarangpur rolls out Gondhi-based learning

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Feb 24: The district administration Tuesday launched 'Aame Padhiba Aama Bhasare', a mother tongue-based early education initiative, at the Block Conference Hall here. Collector and District Magistrate Maheshwar Swain chaired the programme.

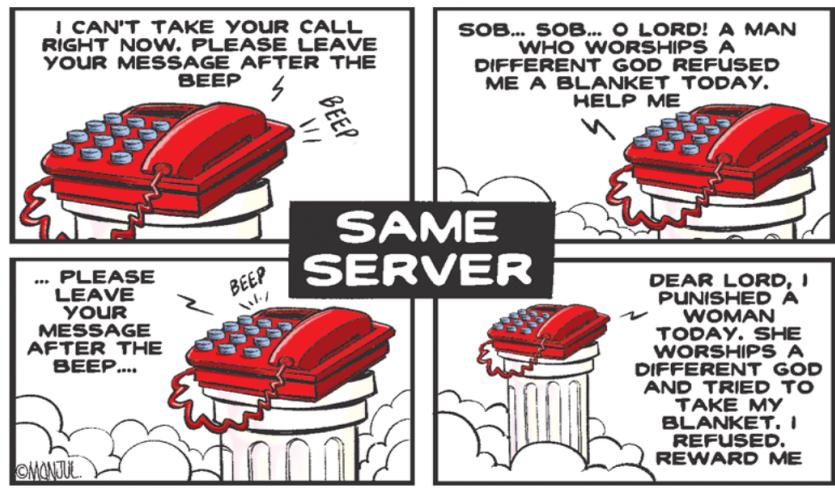
The initiative will be implemented in 30 anganwadi centres in Raighar block as a pilot project, focusing on foundational learning in Gondhi, the mother tongue of a large tribal population in the district. The programme is being implemented with technical support from Piramal Foundation.

Addressing officials and community representatives, Swain said early education in Gondhi would improve comprehension, participation and confidence among tribal children. He called for coordinated efforts to ensure effective implementation at the grassroots level.

The district education officer said the initiative aligns with foundational literacy and numeracy goals and stressed convergence between schools and anganwadi centres. The principal of DIET highlighted the academic value of multilingual education and culturally relevant learning materials.

Training sessions during the orientation covered implementation strategies, community awareness planning and classroom activities using Arunima books. Officials including the district social welfare officer, child development project officers and block-level education authorities participated in the sessions along with anganwadi workers and selected sarpanches, parents and community volunteers. The programme includ-

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



TIGER CENSUS 27 leopards, 3 cubs spotted in Atei, Karlapat forests



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 24: As many as 27 leopards and three cubs have been spotted in the Atei and Karlapat reserve forests under the Keonjhar forest division, Divisional Forest Officer HD Dhanaraj said.

While 18 leopards were found in the Karlapat reserve forest in Telkoi, nine leopards and three cubs were recorded in the Atei reserve forest during the recent tiger census.

As per reports, a Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) had been spotted in the Atei reserve forest two years ago, the first such sighting in the Keonjhar forest division. The Forest Department had installed 54 trap cameras across a 1.4-kilometer grid in Atei reserve forest to monitor its movement. The trap cameras were used to track the movement of the big cat in the reserve forest. However, no RBT movement has been captured on camera for more than a year.

Officials earlier suspected the tiger might have returned

either to the Similipal Tiger Reserve or the Satkosia Tiger Reserve, as tigers are known to move between the two habitats. The latest census appears to confirm its absence.

The leopard sightings were monitored through trap cameras and pugmark impression pads set up at key locations. Sand beds measuring 6 meters in length and 3 meters in width were prepared to collect pugmarks. Samples of scat, urine and hair were also collected for analysis, officials said.

The forests are also home to several species, including the rare four-horned antelope, sambar, wild boar, porcupines and deer. Similarly, forest department has learnt about the presence of leopards in Janghira, Revena and Chamakpur forests under Harichandanpur block.

The tiger census was conducted from November 1 to January 31, involving about 25 forest personnel, including foresters, forest guards and assistant conservators of forests, the DFO said.

Renowned pathologist Maya Nanda dies at 85

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Renowned pathologist and academician Maya Nanda died February 20 in Bhubaneswar at the age of 85 following a month-long respiratory illness, family sources said, leaving an irreplaceable void in Odisha's medical fraternity.

Born in 1940 in Puri, Nanda was the daughter of noted freedom fighter and physician Basant Kumar Nanda. She completed her MBBS from SCB Medical College and achieved the rare distinction of earning MD degrees in both biochemistry and pathology.

During her distinguished career, she served as professor, head of the department of pathology and chief of the central laboratory at MKCG Medical College, VIMSAR and SCB Medical College, Cuttack. She also played a key role in establishing the pathology departments at IMS and SUM Hospital and served for several years as national treasurer of the Indian Association of Pathologists and Microbiologists.

An inspiring teacher and mentor, Nanda remained engaged in social service, supporting organisations working for underprivileged children, women and the elderly.

She is survived by two sons, a daughter and other family members.



TPSODL strengthens grid in remote Koraput



BERHAMPUR: TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, has commissioned a 4.73 circuit-km 33-kV line at Marthampur in Lamtaput block of Koraput district, strengthening power infrastructure in the region. More than 2,000 consumers are expected to benefit. Located along the Andhra Pradesh border in the Eastern Ghats, Koraput's hilly terrain, dense forests and heavy monsoon rains have long posed challenges to maintaining uninterrupted supply. Earlier, Marthampur Primary Substation received power through a 70-km 33-kV line from Sunabeda Grid Substation, often leading to delays in fault detection and restoration. The new feeder from Lamtaput Grid Substation provides a dedicated source of supply, reducing dependence on the longer line. An N-1 contingency arrangement through the Nandapur feeder ensures backup during faults or maintenance. The project is expected to reduce voltage fluctuations, improve stability and speed up restoration. Households, farmers, small businesses, schools and health centres are likely to see improved service reliability. TPSODL CEO Amit Kumar Garg said the initiative reflects the company's focus on strengthening infrastructure in geographically challenging areas and delivering reliable power across its operational region.

Abducted bride rescued; accused arrested

Tarbha/Bolangir/Sonepur: Police in Subarnapur district have rescued a newlywed bride and arrested a man accused of abducting her at gunpoint while she was going to her in-laws' house after marriage. The accused, Sanjeeb Sahu (35) of Badachheppali village under Kantamal police limits in Boudh district, was arrested Tuesday from a rented house in Sambalpur town. The bride was rescued unharmed two days after the incident. Subarnapur Superintendent of Police Narayan Nayak said at Tarbha police station that the abduction was premeditated and aimed at looting the woman's gold ornaments. According to a complaint filed February 22 by Haribandhu Putei of Kamakhi Nagar in Bolangir town, he was returning home late February 21 after marrying a woman from the Kantamal area when their car was waylaid on the outskirts of Tarbha. A man allegedly brandishing a firearm forced the bride into another vehicle carrying three to four accomplices. Police registered case -60/26 and formed two special teams. Acting on intelligence and mobile phone tracking, they traced the accused to the Professoropada area of Sambalpur and conducted a raid, rescuing the bride. Police seized a gold necklace, chain, nose ring, a pair of earrings, a silver ring, a Samsung mobile phone and ₹340 from the accused. No firearm or vehicle used in the crime has been recovered, and efforts are underway to trace other suspects.



ed with an implementation roadmap, including community mobilisation, mentoring support and periodic reviews to ensure quality delivery and sustained academic progress. The initiative aims to strengthen inclusive and culturally responsive education in the district by improving early learning outcomes through Gondhi-based instruction.

Odisha's critical mineral sector to hit \$20 bn by 2032

New Delhi: Odisha's critical minerals sector is set to hit USD 18-20 billion by 2032 from USD 8 billion currently, while the processing and manufacturing share will quadruple, a study by an industry body said. According to new projections by the Net Zero Energy Transition Association (NETRA) released at the recently concluded Global Cleantech Expo-Odisha 2026, the state is set for a transformative leap in the critical minerals sector. The study revealed that Odisha's mineral production value is expected to skyrocket from USD 8 billion in 2025 to USD 18-20 billion by 2032, with a dramatic shift in the state's mining, processing, and manufacturing profile, from 40 per cent, 10 per cent and 5 per cent in 2025 to 50 per cent, 40 per cent, and 30 per cent, respectively, by 2032, driven by focused policy and industrial investment. The two-day Global Cleantech Expo-Odisha 2026, held in Bhubaneswar February 20-21, was inaugurated by state MSME Minister Gokulnanda Mallik. The expo featured over 75 exhibitors from across the clean technology spectrum, including Luminous, GMR, AMAZE, Havells, MGM Green Energy, ICON Solar, Trontek, NED Energy, Navitas, Novasys, PV Blink, World Green Energy and others. The event witnessed the presence of senior government officials and industry leaders, highlighting Odisha's growing stature as a cleantech investment destination. Debi Prasad Dash, Executive Director, NETRA, said, "Odisha's rapid rise as a preferred destination for critical minerals and cleantech investment reflects the state's progressive vision and proactive policy environment. Backed by recent discoveries, including lithium in Nayagarh and graphite, vanadium and cobalt, the state is accelerating its drive to build robust supply chains and maximise value addition. Initiatives like the Rare Earth Corridor in Ganjam and a dedicated auction calendar for critical mineral blocks are further positioning Odisha as India's centre for solar, battery, and EV manufacturing."

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 67/ET/SP/ENGG/2025-26, Dated: 17.02.2026
(1) e-Tender No. 12-eT-SETT-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK: REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING WATER PIPELINE BY PROVIDING NEW PIPELINE FROM HIRAKUD PUMP HOUSE TO SAMBALPUR FILTER HOUSE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER/SETTLEMENT/SAMBALPUR IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 2,98,59,929.29, Bid Security: ₹ 2,99,300/-

(2) e-Tender No. 13-eT-SETT-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK: IMPROVEMENT OF WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM BY REPAIRING THE EXISTING PIPELINE AND PROVIDING NEW WATER PIPELINE FROM FILTER HOUSE TO CHERUAPADA TANK, STATIONARY WATER BOOTH LINE, AND TOWARDS LEVEL CROSSING GATE NO. JT-25 AT SAMBALPUR SETTLEMENT UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER/SETTLEMENT/SAMBALPUR.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 1,99,01,045.50, Bid Security: ₹ 2,49,600/-

Completion Period for the Work : 06 (Six) Months (for both SI. Nos.).

Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 Hrs. of 11.03.2026 (for both Tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person 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: www.irps.org.in

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.) Sambalpur
PR-1159/Q/25-26

QUOTATION OF TWO-THREE-FOUR-WHEELER PARKING CONTRACT AT ROURKELA FOR A PERIOD OF 60 DAYS

It has been decided to call a quotation of Two-Three-Four-Wheeler parking contract at Rourkela Railway Station main entry for a period of 60 days through manually for and on behalf of the President, Union of India, the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, CHAKRADHARPUR Division, South Eastern Railway over Chakradharpur Division. The detail of the quotation is as follows: Category : Parking, Quotation No. : Comm1.75/Two-Three-Four-Wheeler/Parking/ROU/26, dtd. 23.02.2026. Closing Date: 26.02.2026, Closing Time : 10.00 hrs. Bid Submission location: Tatanagar, Chakradharpur, Rourkela, Jharsuguda at concerned SMR office or CCI/Office. Interested parties to take note of this and please contact nearest stations i.e. Tatanagar, Chakradharpur, Rourkela & Jharsuguda for collecting the quotation documents and further submission. For enquiries/clarifications if any, please contact the office of the undersigned. (PR-1229)

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Chakradharpur
South Eastern Railway
We serve with a smile

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RWS&S DIVISION, BARGARH

Email: eerwss_bgh@nic.in, Ph(O):-06646 233220, FAX:06646 234626 No. 390/ Dt. 17.02.2026

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Bid Identification No. 10, Dt of 2025-26 No.25001/240/2526: The Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bargarh on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites tenders from the valid licensed holder contractors of class "B" or "A" registered with any Department of State Government or equivalent class of Central Govt. etc to be eventually drawn up in G2 Contract Form for the below work as per terms and condition noted below.

- Name of the Work: Water Supply to District Head Quarter Hospital Bargarh at Khedapali under Bargarh District.
- Approx. Estimated Cost: Rs.57.75 Lakh
- Date and Time of availability of document in the portal: Dt.24.02.2026 to Dt.12.03.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal: Dt.12.03.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date & Time of Opening of Bids: Dt.13.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
- Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid: Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bargarh District- Bargarh

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<http://tendersorissa.gov.in>."

The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. Sd./ Superintending Engineer RWS&S Division, Bargarh OI/PR-25001/25018/1/25-26/0001

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NANDANKANAN ZOOLOGICAL PARK

P.O.: Barang, Dist.: Khordha, Odisha, PIN-754005, Phone No.: 9437022023, E-mail: deputydirector.kanan@gmail.com, Web: www.nandankanan.org

TENDER NOTICE

Notice No. 13/NKZP/2026-27 No. 8001/100/2526: The Nandankanan Zoological Park Authority, Bhubaneswar invites tender in sealed cover from reputed distributor/stockists/firms for supply of Veterinary Medicine, Drug, Surgical Equipments and other accessories for the period of one financial year 2026-27 for use in Zoo Veterinary Hospital for treatment of Zoo Animals. The detailed terms and conditions along with tender documents shall be available at the website: www.nandankanan.org from 24.02.2026 onwards. The last date of submission of bid is 11.03.2026 at 05.00 P.M. and date of opening of Bid will be on 12.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M. OI/PR-8001/8070/1/25-26/0024

Date: 23.02.2026 Sd./ Deputy Director, Nandankanan Zoological Park

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
Bank of India

Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Mob.: 7008973027

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice Under Rule 8(6) of security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

(E-Auction) Sale of secured movable / immovable Assets under SARFAESI Act, 2002

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISO TO RULE 8(6) / 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Whereas, the Authorised Officer of **Bank of India** had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. **The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://baanknet.com>**

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower / Mortgagee / Total Dues	Description of the Properties	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount
1.	ARB, CUTTACK, PH. : 8249067773 / 7008973027 / Borrower: M/s. Mahaveer Food Processing, Prop.: Mr. Pradipta Kumar Rout, S/o.: Mr. Bhaskar Rout, At: Plot No.: 1351, Mahanadi Vihar, Nayabazar, Cuttack-753003 / Total Dues: ₹37,12,000/- + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.	Equitable Mortgage of Factory Shed pertaining to Plot No.: 205/602, Khata No.: 116/41, Area: Ac.0.500 Dec. i.e. 21,780sqft., KISSAM: Gharabari at Mouza: Suarini, P.S.: Tangi, SRO/Tahasil: Tangi-Choudwar, Dist.: Cuttack, Odisha, Standing in the name of Mr. Pradipta Kumar Rout, S/o.: Mr. Bhaskar Rout, North: Tangi-Haripur Road, South: Bimal Kumar Rath	₹41,39,000/- (excluding GST & other statutory dues) / ₹4,13,900/- / ₹ 50,000/-
2.	ARB, CUTTACK, PH. : 8249067773 / 7008973027 / Borrower: M/s. Mahaveer Food Processing, Prop.: Mr. Pradipta Kumar Rout, S/o.: Mr. Bhaskar Rout, At: Plot No.: 1351, Mahanadi Vihar, Nayabazar, Cuttack-753003 / Total Dues: ₹37,12,000/- + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.	All that part & parcel of Machine and Equipments i.e.: 1) Machine Frames, 2) Machine Boxes, 3) One Motor, 4) Panel Boxes & 5) Iron Items, Situated over Khata No.: 116/41, Plot No.: 205/602, Mouza: Suarini, P.S.: Tangi, SRO/Tahasil: Tangi-Choudwar, Dist.: Cuttack, Odisha, Standing in the name of Mr. Pradipta Kumar Rout, S/o.: Mr. Bhaskar Rout	₹2,62,000/- (excluding GST & other statutory dues) / ₹26,200/- / ₹ 20,000/-

Date & Time of E-Auction: 30.03.2026 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.

Last Date and Time for submission of EMD and Documents in their wallet by 30.03.2026 i.e. Before E-Auction Date & Time in the Portal.

Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 27.03.2026 with prior appointment of the authorised officer

***Successful Bidder to deposit 25% of the bid amount by next working day which includes EMD money. The balance amount to be paid on or before 15th Day of confirmation of sale.**

TERMS & CONDITIONS: 1) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: <https://baanknet.com>. Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch as mentioned in above list. 2) This is a statutory 30 days sale notice to the above mentioned borrower/guarantor/mortgagee under Rule 8(6) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002. 3) This is a 30 days notice to the borrower / guarantor / mortgagee of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date. 4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. 5) The Authorized Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. 6) The Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.

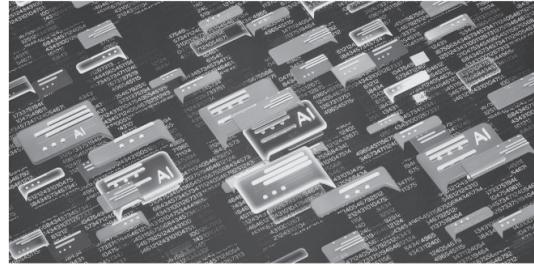
STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Borrowers/Mortgagees are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.

Place: Bhubaneswar Date: 25.02.2026 **Authorised Officer Bank of India**

FOCUS TECHNOLOGY

STANDING UP TO BIG TECH



Preserving journalism in the era of AI most likely require a system that incorporates prior authorization as the default for training uses and a fixed payment scale. But pressure from Big Tech to shoot down any legislation that requires remuneration for training materials is mounting

which groups of authors or individual publications have to sue AI companies, is slow, expensive, and unfair. When relatively powerless authors and news publishers face off against powerful tech firms, the playing field is hardly level, and settlements are often small. In September 2025, Anthropic agreed to pay \$1.5 billion to settle a class-action copyright lawsuit, or around \$3,000 for each book – a shockingly low sum when you consider that authors can spend decades researching and writing one title.

Some countries have recognised the power imbalance between Big Tech and creators, and the negative effect this has on the perceived value of creative output. In 2021, Australia passed the News Media Bargaining Code, which resulted in search and social-media giants paying media outlets for content shared on their platforms. It should take a similar approach to AI companies. In the United States, by contrast, copyright has a broad definition of “fair use” that AI firms have relied on to defend their content scraping.

Europe has indicated a willingness to address the issue,

with policymakers discussing whether and how to update the European Union’s copyright directive, which currently includes a “text and data mining” exception. In late January, the European Parliament’s Committee on Legal Affairs adopted draft proposals, on which Parliament is expected to vote in March, to ensure that copyright holders are fairly compensated.

The proposals came from a report, commissioned by the Committee on Legal Affairs and released in June 2025, highlighting the ambiguities and shortcomings of applying the current copyright structure to AI training. The report calls for a new system that imposes a remuneration obligation on providers of general-purpose AI models and creates a licensing market that restores rights-holders’ bargaining power. The first steps could include facilitating collective licensing agreements and enforcing the remuneration obligation even before broader reviews or reforms are made. The report also recommends transparency obligations for AI firms, a special regime for news media, and a central register for organizations that want to opt out

of scraping.

Many hope that the report will also set the agenda for the European Commission’s upcoming review of the 2019 copyright directive, which could lead to new binding legislation later this year or in 2027.

Of course, questions remain over whether all rights-holders in Europe would be automatically opted in to a compensation framework and what an opt-out mechanism would look like. We support some mandatory payments for publishers and creators, while recognizing that simplified rules – which do not distinguish according to quality as much as desired – may have to prevail. This could look like a fixed, predetermined scale of fees like those used in pharmaceutical licensing and music royalties.

What is essential is that laws ensure fair collective bargaining, which must include outlets of all kinds and sizes. The current system, under which only the biggest news organizations can strike deals with AI firms, does not promote an open information ecosystem or media pluralism.

Preserving journalism in the era of AI will most likely require a system that incorporates prior authorization as the default for training uses and a fixed payment scale. But pressure from Big Tech to shoot down any legislation that requires remuneration for training materials is mounting. Europe must act now, before these firms become too powerful to regulate.

Anya Schiffrin is Co-Director of the Technology Policy and Innovation Concentration at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs. Roberta Carlini is assistant professor in the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom at the European University Institute.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Anya Schiffrin & Roberta Carlini

THE CURRENT SYSTEM, UNDER WHICH ONLY THE BIGGEST NEWS ORGANIZATIONS CAN STRIKE DEALS WITH AI FIRMS, DOES NOT PROMOTE AN OPEN INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM OR MEDIA PLURALISM

Media outlets worldwide are dying. On top of a persistent lack of funding, they must now contend with AI summaries and chatbots, which are siphoning away audiences. A recent study found that in 2025, online traffic to news sites fell by one-third. This problem should concern everyone, not just journalists and media executives, because democratic societies cannot function without quality information. At a time of polarization, fragmentation, and democratic backsliding, news outlets that provide quality journalism are more necessary than ever.

But to produce it, publishers must be compensated – a perennial problem in the internet age. For years, search engines like Google and social-media platforms like Facebook profited handsomely from news content while paying outlets little or nothing. The same is true of AI firms, which scraped the content they needed to train their large language models without compensating its producers or obtaining their consent. Since then, OpenAI has made deals with a few major publishers (including News Corp, Axel Springer, and Le Monde) to ensure that ChatGPT has access to the latest information. But many others have been left out in the cold.

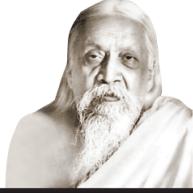
In a new working paper, we argue that AI firms should automatically pay for the content they use. The current path – allowing essentially unlimited use of news articles without compensation – leads to the demise of original content. But banning generative AI from using all creative output is virtually impossible and would not be in anyone’s interest. The most sustainable policy is to require payment to publishers and creators – known as “statutory licensing” – for use of their output.

Governments must step in to help make these deals, because the current process for demanding compensation, in

War of Attrition

The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature.

SRI AUROBINDO



President Vladimir Putin of Russia believed he could finish off, within months, the conflict that he started on European soil against Ukraine. This war could be labelled the biggest since World War II. But four years to this day, he still has not secured the victory he had hoped for. In the process the human cost of his ambition mounts ever higher. It is significant that across a 750-mile frontline to the east of Ukraine, Russian forces make minimal progress despite relentless efforts.

When Russian troops invaded Ukraine on 24 February, 2022, Putin claimed his aim was to “de-Nazify” and “demilitarize” the country. He soon unveiled his plan in an essay titled, “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians.” This essay was published on the Kremlin’s official website and it clearly announced his “special military operation” was intended to bring a change of power in Kyiv and demonstrate the greatness of “eternal Russia” in the face of what he viewed as an aggressive and decadent West. That objective remains illusory since the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is still in office and has held firm with European support. What is worse is that the war is now entering its fifth year whereas the “Great Patriotic War,” against Nazi Germany that had begun in 1941 ended in 1945. The comparison is necessitated by the fact that Russia’s propaganda machine regularly uses that conflict as a reference point to justify its offensive against the so-called “fascist regime” in Kyiv.

But Putin seems to have been trapped in his own war game and the huge loss, both in terms of human lives and weaponry, is hardly justified for only limited territorial gains so far. The Russian President even tried to take advantage of Donald Trump’s return to the White House so as to quickly clinch a “peace agreement” with Washington’s cooperation. Trump fed his ambition with his conciliatory stance and Moscow kept putting forward maximalist demands, which the Russian-Ukrainian talks – led by envoys from the US President since May 2025 – failed to moderate. The demand for territorial gains included Ukrainian regions even outside of Russian military control. Russia also rejected Kyiv’s inclusion in NATO and demanded the complete withdrawal of Western troops to guarantee peace. It was expected that Ukraine would spurn them and it did so in unequivocal terms.

It is not difficult to understand a secret tradeoff between Putin and Trump for realizing the Russian goals in Ukraine. That alone explains why Putin maintained a deafening silence on American pressure on Venezuela, Iran and Cuba and he did not come to the rescue of these historic but distant allies of his country. Ukraine certainly appears to have remained his main concern. Putin is unable to achieve his end so far because his military has, seemingly, not been fighting fit. He could have been further weakened because he intends to reach an agreement on his own terms. He is not bothered by reports suggesting weakening of his country’s economy which was initially boosted by the insatiable demands of the military-industrial complex, but has now reportedly begun to tip into stagflation.

The Russia-Ukraine war is at the moment dangerously poised with neither side emerging as the winner or the loser. A lot depends on the position that Trump would take. The question is whether he would side with his European allies or strengthen Putin’s case. Time is running out for the US President who once told the world that he would end the war within 24 hours and is likely to try again to browbeat Zelenskyy over the Donbas before November’s midterm elections. With a scandalous loss of face in his own global tariff war following the US Supreme Court’s ruling declaring it illegal, Trump may be tempted to adopt desperate remedies to the desperate situation.

WISDOM CORNER

You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait, be quiet still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice, it will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

FRANZ KAFKA

Reflect upon your present blessings of which every man has many - not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.

CHARLES DICKENS

Since boredom advances and boredom is the root of all evil, no wonder, then, that the world goes backwards, that evil spreads. This can be traced back to the very beginning of the world. The gods were bored; therefore they created human beings.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1570: As pope, Pius V excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I of England from the Roman Catholic Church.

1870: American clergyman, educator, and politician Hiram Rhodes Revels was sworn in to the U.S. Senate, becoming the first African American to serve in the U.S. Congress.

1943: British musician George Harrison—lead guitarist of the Beatles, one of the most important and influential bands in the history of rock and roll—was born.

1947: The state of Prussia is dissolved. At its peak, the most important state of the German empire encompassed parts of modern-day Germany, Poland, and Russia.

1956: The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union came to a close after First Secretary Nikita S. Khrushchev delivered a secret speech denouncing the late Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

1964: American boxer Muhammad Ali, known at the time as Cassius Clay, became the world heavyweight champion by knocking out Sonny Liston in seven rounds.

1986: Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos, under pressure from the United States, fled his country for Hawaii after a fraudulent electoral victory over Corazon Aquino, who replaced him as president.

1991: The Warsaw Pact is declared disbanded. Following the end of the Cold War, the defense treaty between 8 communist states had lost its purpose. It had been signed in 1955 as an antagonist of NATO.

LOL

CALMING ALBERT

In the supermarket was a man pushing a cart which contained a screaming, bawling baby. The gentleman kept repeating softly, “Don’t get excited, Albert; don’t scream, Albert; don’t yell, Albert; keep calm, Albert.” A woman standing next to him said,



“You certainly are to be commended for trying to soothe your son, Albert.” The man looked at her and said, “Lady, I’m Albert.”

IN JEST THIS

Monkey learns social skills as world watches



Melvin Durai

ABANDONED BY HIS MOTHER, PUNCH WAS NURSED BY ZOOKEEPERS BEFORE THEY RETURNED HIM TO HIS TROOP IN THE MONKEY ENCLOSURE

During the Winter Olympics, while Americans were cheering for Americans, Norwegians were cheering for Norwegians, and Germans were cheering for Germans, people of all nationalities were cheering for a little monkey named Punch.

The 7-month-old macaque monkey was having trouble making friends with his fellow monkeys at Ichikawa City Zoo, outside Tokyo. Abandoned by his mother, he was nursed by zookeepers before they returned him to his troop in the monkey enclosure. But Punch had trouble integrating with the troop. His plight was captured in a series of videos that went viral and made Punch an internet celebrity. One video showed Punch being dragged around by an adult monkey before seeking comfort in the arms of the only creature that was always around to love him: a stuffed orangutan toy.

The youngster’s struggle to fit into monkey society tugged at the heartstrings of millions of people around the world, some eager to take the next flight to Tokyo to rescue him. As one woman wrote on X, “I’ve had enough. My mission in life now is to rescue Punch from the horrible monkeys he’s with and make him my baby. He is going to be my baby and I am going to take care of him and love him.”

But Punch did not need to be rescued. As the videos showed, Punch was gradually making it in the monkey world. The zoo released a statement on Punch’s welfare, explaining that he had been dragged by the adult monkey after trying to communicate with another baby monkey.

“The adult monkey that dragged Punch is probably the mother of the monkey with whom Punch tried to communicate,” the zoo stated. “She probably felt that her baby was annoyed by Punch and got upset, expressing ‘don’t be mean.’”

Although Punch has been

scolded many times by adult monkeys, none have shown “serious aggression” toward him, the zoo said. “While Punch is scolded, he shows resilience and mental strength.”

In an effort to allay the concerns of people around the world, the zoo allowed me to conduct a 15-minute Zoom interview with Punch using an AI-powered tool called MTT (monkey talk translated).

Me: “Punch, do you realize what a celebrity you have become?”

Punch: “I did not realize it -- until L’Oréal asked me if I wanted to endorse their shampoo. They were going to create a special online store called L’Oréal Punch.”

Me: “Did you accept the deal?”

Punch: “No. It’s against zoo rules. There’s a sign that says, ‘No monkey business.’”

Me: “I hope this question isn’t too personal. Is it true that your mother abandoned you?”

Punch: “She didn’t abandon

me. She gave me to the world. She said, ‘Punch, you belong to everyone now.’”

Me: “When she said ‘everyone,’ did she mean the other monkeys, or was she including the non-monkeys too?”

Punch: “She was including the other creatures that come to watch us and learn from us.”

Me: “What do you think they can learn from monkeys?”

Punch: “They can learn what I am learning -- how to get along with others in society. You have to be resilient. One monkey may drag you around, but another monkey will lift you up. The monkey that dragged you around will show up the next day to scratch your back.”

Me: “You are getting a lot of attention these days. The zoo is packed with visitors eager to see you. How do you feel about that?”

Punch: “It’s okay -- as long as they respect my nap time. No autographs from 1 to 2 p.m.”

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Tariff relief

Sir, The US Supreme Court’s 6-3 ruling to strike down the core of the Trump administration’s tariff agenda represents a definitive judicial reassertion of constitutional boundaries. By rejecting the use of the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) as a valid mechanism for imposing broad import duties, the Court clarified that executive emergency powers do not grant the President unilateral authority over trade policy. This decision effectively dismantles the legal justification for tariffs based on trade deficits or social crises, reinforcing the principle that significant shifts in trade architecture require explicit congressional authorisation or narrower statutory grounds. The immediate economic impact of the ruling has been characterised by a notable reduction in market volatility and a projected eight-percentage-point drop in the average effective tariff rate. However, this tariff relief is tempered by unresolved fiscal questions regarding the potential refund of \$175 billion in collected duties

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Digital healthcare

Sir, India has rapidly expanded its digital healthcare infrastructure through large-scale public initiatives aimed at improving access and equity. The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) has created a unified digital health ecosystem with tens of crores of Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHA IDs) and interoperable medical records. This enables seamless data exchange across healthcare providers, supporting continuity of care and connecting millions of health facilities and professionals nationwide. A key achievement of India’s digital health strategy is eSanjeevani, one of the largest telemedicine platforms in the world. Serving urban and rural populations, it has facilitated tens of crores of consultations, breaking geographic and accessibility barriers. The platform supports multiple languages and both community health center and home-based consultations, reducing costs and expanding reach. India’s approach — combining ABHA IDs, interoperable medical records, and large-scale telemedicine — demonstrates how technology, policy, and public systems can work together to improve healthcare access and equity.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Over 80,000 missing women, girls traced in 2 yrs: Fadnavis



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Tuesday informed the legislative Assembly that 86,228 women and girls who had been reported missing in 2024 and 2025 were traced by the police.

Of the 93,940 women reported missing over the last two years, 67,458 were found, as per the information provided by Fadnavis who holds the Home portfolio.

Similarly, of the 23,429 girls who were reported missing during this period, 18,770 were reunited with their families, the CM's reply said.

In Mumbai alone, the police traced 4,455 minors out of the 4,515 reported missing. In Navi Mumbai, the police successfully located 313 boys and 627 girls over the two-year period.

Fadnavis also highlighted the success of Operation Muskan

which focussed on the rescue of exploited and missing children.

"Between July 2015 and December 2024, 13 phases of Operation Muskan were implemented, leading to the rescue of over 41,000 children. Currently, the 14th phase of the drive is operational across the state from January 20 to February 20, 2026, and 1401 children have been rescued," the chief minister said.

In Nagpur, 3,432 women and 723 girls were traced during the two-year period. In Raigad district, the police achieved a 100 per cent success rate in 2024, tracing all 102 reported missing girls.

A special 'Missing Cell' led by a woman officer has been established at every police station in the state, the reply said. Further, an Additional Director General-rank officer oversees women's safety and reviews these cases every two months to curb human trafficking, it said.

J&K: Jammu records highest case backlog

Jammu courts lead in pendency among J&K districts with nearly 78,000 cases, 3.89 lakh pending statewide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 24: Subordinate courts across Jammu and Kashmir are grappling with a pendency of 3,89,210 cases till January-end, with criminal matters accounting for nearly two-thirds of the total backlog and over 58,000 cases lingering between five to 30 years, official data shows.

The government is actively pursuing multiple measures to tackle the persistent pendency of cases in the high court and subordinate courts of Jammu and Kashmir, alongside efforts to fill judicial vacancies, as highlighted in a recent legislative response, officials said.

Among 20 districts, Jammu accounts for the highest pendency at 77,992 cases, with over a thousand cases pending for a period between 15 to 30 years -- more than Srinagar, which stands at 62,785.

According to official data, there is a pendency of 3,89,210 cases in the 232 district and other lower courts in Jammu and Kashmir for the past 30 years till January 2026.

Of this, 2,40,718 (62 per cent) cases are criminal litigation

JUSTICE GRIDLOCK DEEPENS



while 1,48,492 are civil, with criminal proceedings exceeding civil disputes by over 92,000 cases, the data shows.

Year-wise distribution indicates that the backlog is heavily skewed towards recent filings, suggesting a sustained inflow of fresh litigation. "As many as 2,38,373 cases -- over 60 per cent of the total -- are less than one year old. In the medium-term brackets, 36,849 cases are pending for three to five years, 25,746 for five to seven years and 20,732 for seven to ten years," it said.

However, legacy cases continue to weigh on the system, with 9,778 matters pending for 10-15 years and 1,857 for 15-20 years. The data further reveals that 424 cases have been pend-

ing for 20-30 years, while 13 cases have crossed the 30-year mark, underscoring the persistence of decades-old litigation.

District-wise, Jammu accounts for the highest pendency at 77,992 cases -- much above Srinagar, which stands at 62,785 cases, the data shows. "Together, the two districts contribute almost one-third of the Union territory's total backlog."

Jammu district has the highest number of aged cases above 30 years, 11 out of a total of 13 cases, followed by 238 cases pending for a period between 20 to 30 years, 830 (15-20 years), 3,516 (10-15 years) and 13,736 cases pending between five to ten years, it said.

It is followed by Srinagar

with two cases pending above 30 years, followed by 96 (20-30 years), 336 (15-20 years), 1,281 (10-15 years) and 6,988 cases pending between five to ten years.

Among other districts reporting substantial pendency are Anantnag with 31,969 cases, Baramulla with 28,495, Budgam with 21,070 and Kupwara with 18,874.

In contrast, districts such as Kishtwar (3,852), Reasi (6,857), Baderwah (7,840) and Ramban (8,060) report comparatively lighter caseloads, the data revealed.

Overall, the figures highlight a dual challenge for the judicial system in Jammu and Kashmir -- managing a continuous surge of fresh filings while attempting to clear a limited but enduring cluster of long-pending disputes, officials said.

They emphasised that pendency remains a nationwide challenge, and concerted steps are underway in the Union territory to overhaul legal handling and significantly reduce arrears, particularly in government litigation.

The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has formulated a model action plan aimed at reducing arrears pendency in the high court and district judiciary, officials said. This aligns with broader national initiatives, including phased action plans for arrears reduction in district judiciary, such as ongoing phases targeting old

cases from July 2025 onward, they added.

Officials highlighted key initiatives to minimise pendency, including continuous and regular upgrading of judicial infrastructure, computerisation of courts to streamline processes creation of courts at various levels and regular holding of Lok Adalats for amicable settlements through mediation and reconciliation.

"In 2024-25 alone, Lok Adalats settled as many as 8,68,414 cases, contributing substantially to pendency reduction. Steps to operationalise Dehi Adalats as village-level dispute resolution forums are being taken, apart from digitisation of court processes, which has accelerated disposal rates," they said.

For subordinate courts, out of the sanctioned strength of 339 judges, 284 are working while 55 posts are vacant, they added.

"Vacancies in subordinate courts are being filled on a regular basis. Currently, the process for filling 42 posts of civil judge (Junior Division) is at the final stage, with selections being conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission," officials said.

These efforts reflect a multi-pronged strategy combining infrastructure enhancement, technology adoption, alternative dispute resolution and timely recruitment to ensure faster justice delivery in the region, they added.

Proposal for subsidy to rain-hit paddy farmers

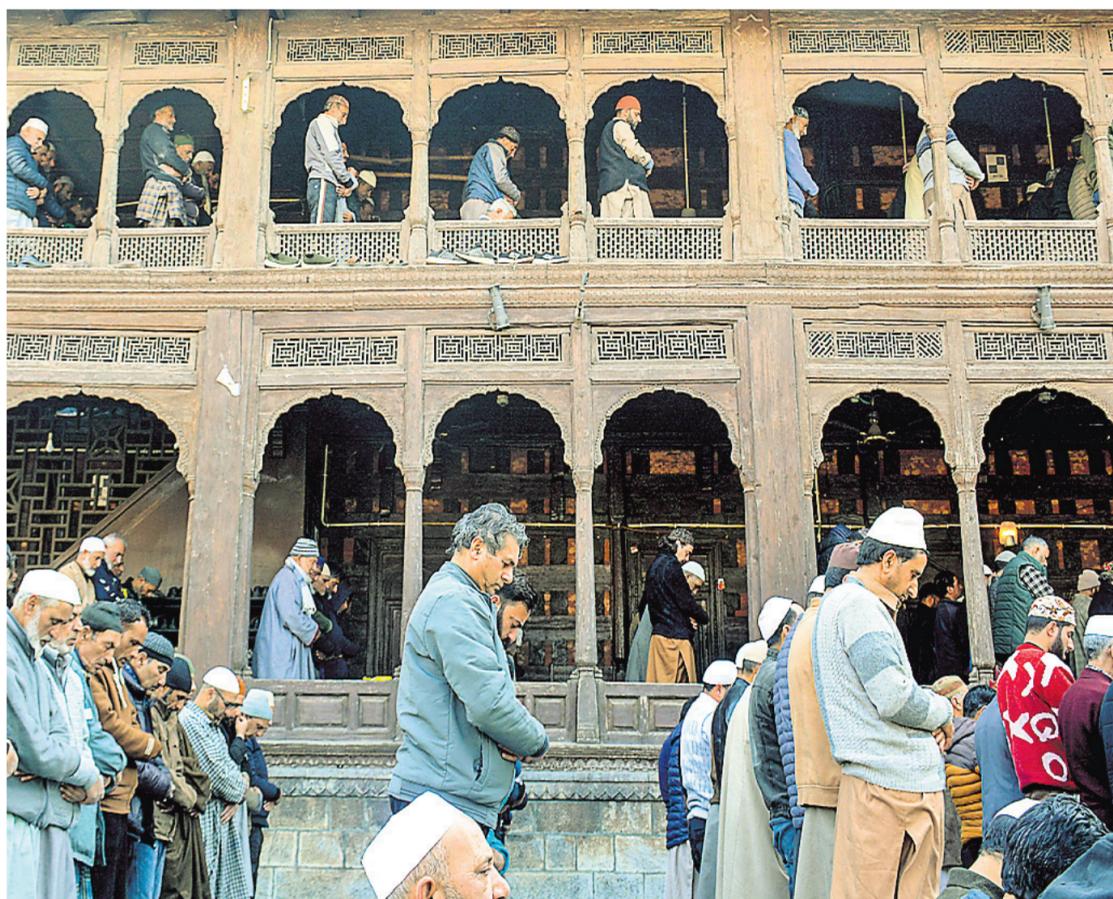
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: A proposal to grant a subsidy to paddy farmers in eastern Vidarbha affected by unseasonal rains will soon be placed before the Maharashtra cabinet, Minister of State Yogesh Kadam told the legislative assembly Tuesday.

Replying to a calling attention notice by BJP's Sudhir Mungantiwar, the minister stated that farmers in Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Bhandara and Gondia districts have suffered heavy losses due to unseasonal rains. The state government had announced a subsidy of ₹20,000 per hectare for paddy growers in these districts and issued a government resolution March 25, 2025, but the amount has not yet been disbursed, he said.

Mungantiwar alleged that while funds for farmers are delayed on various grounds, there are no such constraints when it comes to salary hikes for employees or legislators, questioning the government's priorities.

Congress leader Vijay Wadetiwar also criticised the government, saying it was not taking a positive stand on releasing the subsidy. To this, Kadam said the government is serious about supporting paddy farmers and is taking steps to ensure that subsidy funds are transferred directly to farmers' bank accounts.



People offer prayers during the holy month of 'Ramzan' at Khanqah-e-Moula shrine, in Srinagar, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

CM asks J&K students in Iran to return, warns against ignoring advisory

The advisory comes in the wake of Saturday's protests in Iran following 40-day memorials for people killed in January during anti-government rallies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Feb 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday urged students from Jammu and Kashmir studying in Iran to follow the Union government's advisory and return home while commercial travel remains operational.

In its latest advisory, the Embassy of India asked its citizens to "leave Iran by available means of transport, including commercial flights."

The advisory comes in the wake of Saturday's protests in Iran following 40-day memorials for people killed in January during anti-government rallies.

"I would tell them that please do not ignore this advisory from the government of India, because it otherwise becomes an issue for us," Abdullah told reporters in Ganderbal district in central Kashmir.

The chief minister said the situation in Iran is currently stable, with airports open and commercial flights operating. "I appeal to all the students and those who work there, who do not ignore this advisory, book your tickets and leave Iran," he said.

"The Ministry of External Affairs has not issued this advisory unnecessarily. If, God forbid, the situation worsens, then it will be an issue for us as to how to evacuate them. So, I appeal to them to take the advisory seriously and leave from there," he added.

To a question on the alleged harassment and eviction threats faced by Kashmiri students studying at CT University in Punjab, the chief minister said he would raise the issue with his counterpart in Punjab.

"I will talk to the Punjab chief minister on this. It must be the University's doing, because the government of Punjab has always supported Jammu and Kashmir. I can say with certainty that the Punjab government will not allow this, and the University will be asked about it," he said, adding, if any Kashmiri student is facing such difficulties, it will be addressed.

Earlier in the day, the chief minister inaugurated and laid foundation stones for major development projects worth ₹84.41 crore in Ganderbal -- the constituency Abdullah represents in the assembly.

These projects include ₹7.70 crore for beautification and development of Ganderbal town, ₹7.50 crore for road widening, ₹8.40 crore for installation of a CT scan machine at the District Hospital, and several water supply schemes -- giving a major push to healthcare, sanitation, water supply, roads and urban infrastructure in Ganderbal in central Kashmir.



Mumbai's rising air pollution raises lung cancer risk

Breast cancer cases among women are showing an alarming trend, with delays in early detection having contributed to the overall rising case load, says Health Minister Prakash Abitkar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: Findings of a cancer screening campaign conducted by the Maharashtra health department indicated that rising levels of pollution in Mumbai are contributing significantly to lung cancer, which accounts for 57 per cent of diagnosed cases, the legislative assembly was told Tuesday.

Breast cancer cases among women are showing an alarming trend, with delays in early detection having contributed to the overall rising case load, Health Minister Prakash Abitkar said.

He stated that the government has decided to expand cancer screening and treatment facilities, and to set up a three-tier healthcare system at the taluka, district and state

levels to tackle the rising burden of Cancer cases.

The issue of increasing cancer cases was raised through a calling attention motion by MLA Sunil Prabhu, who urged the government to provide immediate funds to Tata as well as government and private hospitals for strengthening treatment facilities.

Several members, including Amin Patel, Sulabha Khodke, Babasaheb Deshmukh, Kishor Patil, Bhaskar Jadhav, Rajkumar Badole, Sameer Kunawar and Devayani Pharande, expressed concern over the rising number of cancer patients.

"A cancer screening campaign conducted by the Public Health Department detected 1,677 patients across Maharashtra. The findings indicated that rising pollution levels



in Mumbai are contributing significantly to lung cancer, which accounts for 57 per cent of diagnosed cases. A substantial number of patients with oral, cervical and breast cancers were also detected, with breast cancer cases among

women showing an alarming trend," Abitkar said.

Replying to the discussion, he said the government is working on developing a three-tier system for cancer care at the taluka, district and state levels, and emphasised

the need to set up around 100 hospitals on the lines of the Tata Memorial Hospital to meet the growing demand.

Currently, radiotherapy services have been started in eight out of the state's 36 districts, he said, adding that tenders have been floated to begin such facilities at 26 more locations soon.

Responding to a query by MLA Babasaheb Patil, the minister said the government is also planning to include PET scan diagnostics under the Mahatma Phule Jan Arogya Yojana, as the test is expensive for patients.

The minister further said that only eight cancer diagnostic vans are currently operational in the state, but the government has decided to increase the number and deploy such mobile units across all 36 districts.

Admitting that delays in early detection have contributed to the rising case load, Abitkar said that screening and diagnostic infrastructure would be expanded to ensure timely diagnosis and treatment.



V K Sasikala, confidante of late AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa Tuesday announced the launch of a new political party asserting that, "we are going to witness a new political chapter"

I am confident that India will gain prestige as a global healthcare destination DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT



of the day quote

Strongly condemn the shameful incident of racial abuse faced by our three young sisters from Arunachal Pradesh residing in Malviya Nagar, South Delhi. Such behaviour is absolutely unacceptable and has no place in our society



We are making a new Bihar and this is being reflected in all the steps we take. I issued directions to strictly implement the rules in a recent departmental meeting, which have been framed to ensure proper hygiene and social harmony



Kerala has been renamed since there is an alliance growing between the BJP and the CPI(M). The alliance is no longer unwritten after today. Why will Bengal always face deprivation? One day, you (BJP) will not be in power. We will get the name changed



'Scrap the deal': Rahul dares PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Feb 24: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Tuesday said the Indo-US interim trade deal was sealed under pressure and dared Prime Minister Narendra Modi to scrap the "anti-farmer" agreement, following the US Supreme Court ruling.



Addressing the 'Kisan Mahachaupal' rally in Bhopal, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha described the agreement as "an arrow in the heart of farmers".

"After the US Supreme Court ruling on the trade deal (global tariffs), I challenge PM Modi to scrap it if he has courage...but he won't be able to do so," said the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. In a major setback to Trump's pivotal economic agenda for his second term, the US Supreme Court, in a 6-3 verdict, ruled that the tariffs imposed by the president on nations around the world were illegal and that he had exceeded his authority when he imposed the sweeping levies.

claiming that the pact had been stalled for months before being cleared suddenly. He questioned that the India-US trade agreement had been stalled for four months, but what happened that made Prime Minister Modi suddenly agree to it?"

"There are two reasons for this. The first reason is the lakhs of Epstein files lying in America. There are 30 lakh files. It contains emails, messages, and videos," the Congress leader said.

Rahul alleged that the Prime Minister approved the agreement under external pressure linked to the threat of releasing "Epstein files" and an ongoing criminal case involving industrialist Gautam Adani in the US.

"Narendra Modi is compromised. He has been trapped. He has signed this agreement under pressure. This is not a deal, it is an arrow in the heart of the farmer," Rahul said,

He said Union Minister Harddeep Singh Puri's name figured in the "Epstein Files" and claimed that the release of such material was meant to intimidate the Prime Minister.

"By doing so (releasing the files), the US has sent a message that if PM Modi does not listen to them, the evidence from the files will be revealed," the Opposition leader alleged.

SKM announces nationwide stir

Kurukshetra/New Delhi: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) Tuesday declared a nationwide agitation against the proposed India-US trade agreement and other key policy issues, announcing that it would hold a 'worker-farmer Parliament' at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi March 9, when the Budget Session resumes after a recess. The decision was taken at the SKM National Council meeting held at Jat Dharamshala in Kurukshetra, according to a press release issued by its media cell.

Rahul Gandhi said that another reason behind Modi agreeing to the trade deal was the ongoing criminal case against Adani in the US.

"This case in America is not aimed at Adani. It is aimed at Narendra Modi. The target is not Adani; it is Narendra Modi. The arrow is not directed at Adani; it is directed at Narendra Modi. These are the two reasons why Narendra Modi approved the trade deal," he added.

The Congress leader challenged the Prime Minister to cancel the agreement "if he has the courage," asserting that fear of the alleged files and the US case prevented him from doing so.

He claimed that the Prime Minister approved the deal with the US without consulting the Union Cabinet and without taking into confidence senior ministers, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Agriculture) and Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways).

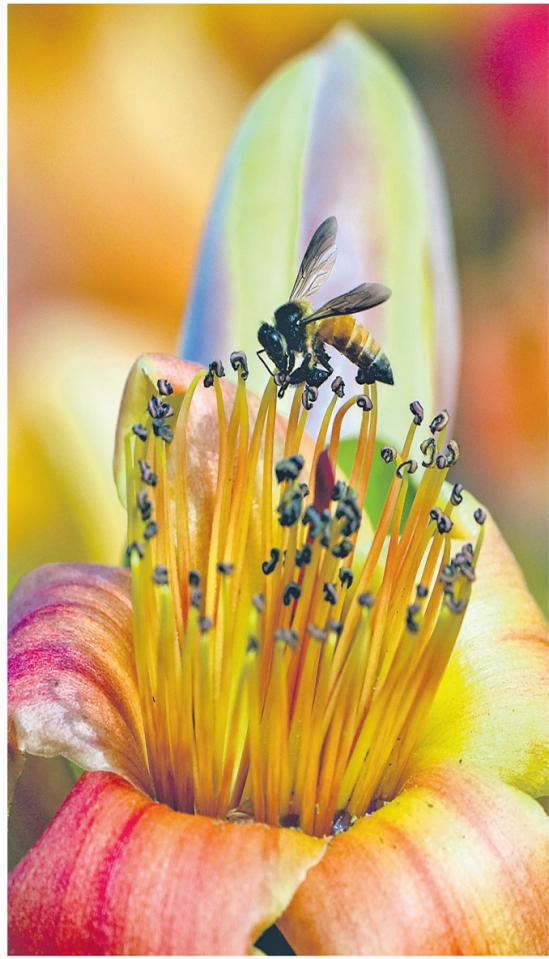
He alleged that the agreement compromised India's agriculture, data, textile and import

sectors. Rahul claimed he was not allowed to speak in the Lok Sabha after the President's address because he wanted to comment on former Army Chief Manoj Naravane's memoirs, calling it unprecedented for a Leader of the Opposition.

He said he intended to refer to an unpublished book by Gen Naravane (retd), which, he claimed, described a lack of response from the political leadership during Chinese troop movements near the border.

According to Rahul, the decision to go to war is a political one, not of military, alleging that the government "abandoned" the Army leadership at a critical time.

Citing General Naravane's unpublished work, Gandhi said the former Army chief has written that when Chinese tanks were approaching the Indian border, he had called up Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Advisor Ajit Dobhal, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to seek the government's orders regarding action, but received no response.



A honeybee collects nectar from a flower on a tree, in New Delhi

SHORT TAKES

AIADMK unveils third phase of poll promises

Chennai: AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami Tuesday unveiled the party's third phase of poll promises for the upcoming Assembly elections. He said the AIADMK would provide a one-time ex gratia payment of ₹10,000 to each family to ease hardships caused during the DMK's rule, when the prices of essential commodities rose sharply.

Top Maoist leader Devuji surrenders

Hyderabad: Top Maoist commander and the key "strategist" of the banned CPI (Maoist) outfit, Thippiri Tirupati, also known as Devuji, surrendered before the Telangana police Tuesday, after spending over four decades of underground life, police said. Devuji, a key Central Committee member of the proscribed organisation and the politburo member of the Maoist party, along with another central committee member Malla Raji Reddy, formally surrendered in the presence of state DGP B Shivadhar Reddy. Besides Devji and Raji Reddy, two other ultras-- Bade Chokka Rao @ Jagan and Nune Narasimha Reddy @ Ganganna also laid down their arms, Reddy said.

UPSC extends exam deadline by 3 days

New Delhi: The last date for submission of online application form for the civil services examination has been extended by three days to February 27, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) said Tuesday. The decision comes amid reports of technical glitches experienced briefly by aspirants on the UPSC's application portal, which were later resolved.

Four dead, several hurt in road mishap

Bhagalpur (Bihar): Four people died and several others were injured in an accident involving a bus, a goods carrier and a rickshaw in Bihar's Bhagalpur district Tuesday evening, a police officer said. The accident occurred in Naugachia subdivision of Bhagalpur district.

SNIPPETS

Boy murdered; 7 minors detained

Shivamogga (Karnataka): A 16-year-old boy was murdered outside a government school in Sulaebailu Tuesday, sparking tension in the area, police said. Following the incident, a large police force was deployed in the city. Condemning the killing, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah assured justice to the bereaved family and said all necessary steps would be taken to secure strict punishment for the accused. He added that the government would provide ₹15 lakh in compensation to the deceased student's parents. The victim, Sanketh (16), an SSLC student of Government High School at Urugadooru, Monday, had attended a special class ahead of examinations, police said. Superintendent of Police Nikhil B told reporters that Sanketh intervened in an argument outside the school involving a group of boys who were discussing a cricket match.

Boy killed father over pressure to clear NEET

Lucknow: A day after a 21-year-old man was arrested for allegedly shooting dead his father, dismembering the body and hiding the torso in a drum in Ashiyana area here, an officer Tuesday said the accused has been sent to police remand and is being further questioned to ascertain other aspects of the case. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Jitendra Kumar Dubey told PTI that the accused, Akshat Singh, is in police custody and is being interrogated. "Prima facie, the root of the incident appears to be anger over his father repeatedly pressuring him to focus on studies and clear the NEET medical entrance examination. However, further questioning is underway and a thorough investigation is in progress," Dubey said.

Army conducts mega wargame in Pokhran

New Delhi: The Indian Army Tuesday carried out a mega wargame in Rajasthan's Pokhran deserts, featuring a plethora of unmanned aerial vehicles, counter-drone systems, precision strike rockets, modern artillery platforms and surveillance assets. The troops of the Southern Command of the Army conducted exercise 'Agni Varsha', demonstrating their operational preparedness to deal with any security challenges, according to officials. The exercise validated coordinated employment of combined arms, precision long-range fires and network-enabled command and control in a realistic operational environment, the Army said.

Haryana government recovers ₹583 crore from IDFC First Bank

New Delhi, Feb 24: IDFC First Bank Tuesday said it has paid out 100 per cent of the principal and interest to the relevant departments of the Haryana government, which works out to ₹583 crore. "The bank remains committed to working together with the relevant Haryana Government departments and the law enforcement agencies to pursue actions against the perpetrators of the fraud and looks forward to recovering our dues," IDFC First Bank said in a regulatory filing. It further said even though the investigation into the matter is ongoing, the bank has paid out 100 per cent of the principal and interest to the relevant departments of the Haryana Government as claimed, which works out to a net amount of ₹583 crore. Earlier in the day, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini informed the Assembly that the state government had recovered nearly ₹556 crore owed to it in the IDFC First Bank case.

DGCA tightens norms for non-scheduled operators

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Asserting that safety lapses cannot be simply blamed on pilots, aviation watchdog DGCA Tuesday announced a raft of strict measures for non-scheduled operators, including intensive audits and a safety ranking mechanism, amid safety concerns raised in the wake of recent aircraft accidents. After a special audit found various lapses, the regulator has also grounded four planes of Non-Scheduled Operator VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd, whose aircraft crashed at Baramati, killing Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others January 28.



A day after a plane, operated by a non-scheduled operator (NSOP), crashed in Jharkhand, killing seven people onboard, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) held a meeting with all such operators Tuesday. The meeting was held to "address a recent surge in aviation incidents and emphasised the critical need for an increased focus on safety across the sector", the regulator said. It also happened on a day when a Pawan Hans helicopter carrying

seven people crashed into the sea in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and all of them were rescued. While announcing the slew of measures for NSOPs Tuesday, the watchdog stressed that accountable managers and senior leadership of NSOPs would be held personally responsible for systemic non-compliances, and stressed that "safety lapses cannot simply be blamed on pilots".

To detect "unauthorised operations or the falsifying of data" by NSOPs, increased random Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) audits, cross-verification of ADS-B (Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast) data, fuel records, and technical logs of their aircraft will be carried out. There would also be a safety ranking mechanism of all NSOPs and the criteria for such ranking, safety rankings will be published on the DGCA website for public information, according to a statement. According to the statement, pilots found violating Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) or attempting to land 'below safety minima' may face licence suspensions of up to five years, while NSOPs failing to meet compliance standards would be penalised and their licences or permits could be suspended. Mentioning that weather-related accidents are often the result of poor judgment rather than unpredictability of weather, DGCA said operators would be mandated to establish real-time weather update systems and strict compliance of established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Woman out with boyfriend gangraped by 7 men in Assam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Silchar, Feb 24: A 28-year-old woman was allegedly raped by seven men who also extorted money from her while she was out with her boyfriend near Silchar town in Assam's Cachar district, police said Tuesday.

The victim filed a complaint of the incident, which took place February 19, and a case has been registered in this connection, a senior police officer said.

The victim identified two persons, who were subsequently arrested, while efforts are on to identify and nab the others, he added.

The case was registered at Silchar Sadar Police Station under sections 308 (5) (extortion by death threat), 310 (2) (dacoity), 351(2) (criminal intimidation), 61(2) (unlawful act committed by two or more persons), 70(1) (gangrape), 76 (criminal force against woman with intent to disrobe her or compel her to be naked), 79 (Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, police said.

Govt set to launch HPV vaccination for girls aged 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: In a major step towards eliminating preventable cancers among women, the Union government will soon launch a nationwide human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14 years, official sources said Tuesday.



According to sources, the programme will use a single-shot Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, as well as types 6 and 11. The drive would be a special vaccination campaign and not under the government's Universal Immunisation Programme. It is in line with the World Health Organisation recommendations, which identify HPV vaccination as a central pillar of the Global Strategy to Eliminate Cervical Cancer.

"Strong global and Indian scientific evidence confirms that a single dose provides robust and durable protection when administered to girls in the recommended age group," an official source said. The nationwide programme will target girls aged 14 years, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus. In the open market, quadrivalent Gardasil-4 is a two-dose vaccine -- each costing ₹3,927 -- for those above 15 years, three doses of the vaccine are re-

quired. Gardasil-4 vaccine is manufactured by MSD India. The vaccine has an excellent safety record, supported by more than 500 million doses administered globally since its introduction in 2006. Widespread vaccination has led to substantial reductions in HPV infection, precancerous lesions, and cervical cancer incidence in several countries.

Once the vaccination programme is launched, India will join 160 countries that

Scientific evidence establishes that almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV), particularly HPV types 16 and 18, which together account for more than 80 per cent of cervical cancer cases in India.

Despite being largely preventable through vaccination and early screening, cervical cancer continues to impose a heavy burden on women and families.

According to sources, the forthcoming vaccination programme directly addresses this challenge by preventing HPV infection before it can progress to cancer. The drive will be conducted at designated government health facilities, including Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Primary Health Centres).

All vaccination sites will be linked to 24/7 government health facilities, ensuring immediate medical support and reinforcing safety and parental confidence.

- ◀ In the open market, quadrivalent Gardasil-4 is a two-dose vaccine -- each costing ₹3,927 -- for girls below 15 years
◀ For those above 15 years, three doses of the vaccine are required
◀ Gardasil-4 vaccine is manufactured by MSD India



THE recent incident involving racial discrimination against three women from Arunachal Pradesh in New Delhi is concerning and unfortunate

HIGH COURT: 'THE KERALA STORY 2' MISREPRESENTS SECULAR KERALA

The Kerala High Court Tuesday observed that 'The Kerala Story 2 - Goes Beyond' depicts a state like Kerala where everyone lives in communal harmony in a wrong light.



of the day quote

Migration is a global phenomenon driven by economic aspirations

It is deeply unfortunate that BJP leaders are choosing to mislead innocent students even now to serve their narrow political interests

The racist abuse faced by Arunachali women in Delhi is deeply disturbing and unacceptable.

Kerala to officially be Keralam after Cabinet nod

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Delhi, Feb 24: The Union Cabinet Tuesday approved a proposal of the Kerala government to change the name of the state to Keralam, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

The decision, which comes ahead of the Assembly elections in the state, was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its first meeting held at Seva Teerth, the new PMO complex.

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal for altering the name of Kerala to Keralam, Vaishnaw said. Prime Minister Modi hailed the Cabinet decision, saying it reflects the will of the people of the state.

"It is in line with our efforts to strengthen the connect with our glorious culture," he said in a post on X.

The Kerala Assembly elections are due in April this year, with the tenure of the



140-member current Assembly ending May 23.

After the Union Cabinet's approval, the president of India will refer a Bill, namely the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, to the Kerala Assembly for expressing its views under the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India.

After receipt of the views of the Kerala Assembly, the government of India will obtain the recommendation of

the president for the introduction of the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to alter the name of Kerala to Keralam in Parliament, an official release said.

Asked why a decision like this was coming just ahead of the Assembly elections in Kerala, Vaishnaw said decisions are taken by the Union Cabinet under Prime Minister Modi without keeping elections in view.

The Kerala Assembly

Shashi Tharoor's witty take on

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor had a witty take on Kerala's name change Tuesday, asking what happens now to the terms "Keralite" and "Keralan" for the "denizens" of the new "Keralam".

passed a resolution June 24, 2024 to alter the name of Kerala to Keralam.

"The name of our State is 'Keralam' in Malayalam Language. States were formed on the basis of language on the 1st day of November, 1956. The Kerala Piravi Day is also on the 1st day of November."

"Since the time of National Independence Struggle, there has been a strong demand for the formation of United Kerala for the people speaking Malayalam language. But in the First Schedule to the Constitution the name of our State is record-

ed as 'Kerala'. This Assembly unanimously appeals to the Central Government to take urgent steps as per Article 3 of the Constitution for modifying the name to 'Keralam'."

Thereafter, the Kerala government requested the central government to take necessary steps to amend the First Schedule to the Constitution by altering the name of 'Kerala' as 'Keralam' according to Article 3 of the Constitution. The Article 3 of the Constitution provides for the alteration of names of existing states.

Modi to embark on two-day Israel visit from today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a two-day visit to Israel beginning Wednesday to shore up bilateral defence and trade cooperation amid the ongoing tensions in the Middle-east including deteriorating ties between the US and Iran.

Modi's engagements will include his address to Israel's parliament, wide-ranging talks with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu and a meeting with President Isaac Herzog.

"This visit will reaffirm the deep and long-standing strategic partnership between the two countries and will present an opportunity to review the common challenges as well as re-align efforts towards achieving their shared vision for a robust partnership between two resilient democracies," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

It is learnt that boosting overall defence and security cooperation will be a major area of discussions during delegation level talks between the two prime ministers on Thursday.

Netanyahu is scheduled to host a private dinner for Modi Wednesday night.

It will be Modi's second visit to Israel in nine years. The India-Israel relationship was elevated to the level of strategic partnership during Modi's first visit to that country in July, 2017.

Netanyahu had made a return visit to India in January 2018. India and Israel share a robust strategic partnership with strong cooperation across science and technology, innovation, defence and security trade and investment, agriculture, water, and people-to-people relations.

It said the leaders are also expected to exchange perspectives on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

In their talks, the two prime ministers are also likely to deliberate on the prevailing situation in the Middle-East including in Gaza.

POST OF THE DAY

I strongly condemn the incident of racism against girls from Northeast India in Malviya Nagar.

Such behaviour is completely unacceptable and has no place in our society. India's diversity is our strength and every citizen deserves dignity and respect.

Strictest and swift action must be taken against those responsible.

@SwatiJaiHind

SHIRTLESS PROTEST

Police arrest IYC president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Delhi Police Tuesday arrested Indian Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib as the "main conspirator" and "mastermind" of the shirtless protest at the AI Summit last week, and added charges of rioting against him and other seven IYC workers held earlier.

While the Congress strongly slammed the government, terming the arrest of its workers as 'murder of democracy in India', the BJP alleged that Rahul Gandhi was the "mastermind" and asserted that the long arm of the law will soon reach the "rogue" person who organised the "anarchic incident" to defame India from behind the scenes.

In the evening, amid slogans of "death of democracy", IYC workers staged a protest outside its office against the arrest of Chib. The protesters raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri during the demonstration.

Earlier, police added sections 191(1) (rioting) and 192 (wantonly giving provocation with

intent to cause riot- if rioting be committed; if not committed) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) in the case.

Addressing a press conference, Special Commissioner of Police (Crime and Police Management & Media Cell) Devesh Chandra Srivastva described the accused as "aggressive elements" and said that a premeditated attempt was made to breach the security cordon in the presence of dignitaries, delegates and visitors attending the international event.

"On February 20, while the India AI Impact Summit was underway at Bharat Mandapam, a premeditated attempt was made to breach the security cordon in the presence of dignitaries, delegates and visitors attending the international event. The aggressive elements were immediately overpowered. During the process of restraining them, some police personnel deployed on duty sustained injuries," he said.

Later in the day, a Delhi court sent Chib to four days of police custody, even as the investigating officer (IO) sought seven days of custodial interrogation.



Indian Youth Congress national president Uday Bhanu Chib is taken into police custody



A special heritage ride of tram no. 498 'Gitanjali', a wooden tram built during World War II, is flagged off to mark the 153rd anniversary of the Calcutta tram service, in Kolkata, West Bengal

J'KHAND AIR AMBULANCE CRASH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Feb 24: A day after an air ambulance crashed in Jharkhand's Chatra district killing all seven people on board, two teams from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) arrived in the state Tuesday and began investigating the accident, an official said.

After post-mortem examination at Sadar Hospital in Chatra, the bodies of the victims were handed over to their families, barring one from Amritsar. The Beechcraft C90 air ambulance, operated by Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd, was en route to Delhi from Ranchi when it crashed Monday evening in the Bariatu Panchayat area of Simaria, located deep inside a forest, and left all seven dead. The deceased were pilots Captain Vivek Vikas Bhagat and Captain Savrajdeep

Bodies handed over to families



Singh, patient Sanjay Kumar, his sister Archana Devi, Dr Vikas Kumar Gupta, and para-medical staff Sachin Kumar Mishra and attendant Dhruv Kumar.

While the body of Gupta, the doctor accompanying the patient, is being taken to his Bihar home, the family members of Captain Singh are on their way to Chatra from Chandigarh, officials said. "Two teams from the DGCA have arrived here, and they have begun the probe. It will take another two days for them to come to a conclusion. A five-member team from Kolkata

and a two-member team from Delhi will conduct the investigation," Chatra Deputy Commissioner Keerthishree G told PTI. The aircraft took off from Ranchi airport at 7.11 pm and went missing around 7.30 pm. It lost contact with the air traffic control about 20 minutes after departure. Ranchi Airport Director Vinod Kumar

said inclement weather could be a possible reason behind the crash, though the exact cause would be ascertained after a detailed probe. Jharkhand Health Minister Irfan Ansari said the state government will conduct a probe into how permission was given to the aircraft to fly during "inclement weather".

Andamans: Helicopter carrying 7 crashes into sea, all rescued

Sri Vijaya Puram: A Pawan Hans helicopter carrying seven people, including two crew members, crashed into the sea just 300 metres away from its scheduled landing at Mayabunder helipad in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Tuesday, and all of them were rescued, officials said. The crash occurred around 9.30 am, after the chopper took off from Rangat in the North and Middle Andaman district, they said. All five passengers and the two crew members, rescued from mid-sea, have been admitted to a hospital, one of the officials said. "The helicopter crashed into the sea around 9.30 am. A preliminary inquiry revealed that there was some technical snag, and the pilot made a crash-landing on the sea," a senior Civil Aviation official said. An inquiry has been initiated, he said.

IIT-K develops world's first 3D model to predict solar activity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur have developed the world's first three dimensional data-driven model to predict solar activity, contributing towards monitoring space weather.

Solar activity, including solar storms, is governed by a cyclic intensifying and weakening of the internal dynamo process, which creates the Sun's magnetic field. One cycle of solar activity, involving a peak maxima of heightened activity and a minima of reduced activity, typically spans about 11 years.

A huge amount of charged particles, energy and magnetic fields can be discharged into the Solar System during a so-

lar storm. On Earth, the sudden influx of cosmic particles can disrupt satellite-based services and cause communication blackouts, potentially bringing modern society to a standstill.

The duo of physicists Gopal Hazra and Soumyadeep Chatterjee say that if the 3D model -- first of its kind in the world -- is fed with observations of the solar surface of at least 11 years, it can estimate solar activity, up to five years in the future. Sunspots are active regions on the Sun's surface that can trigger solar storms and solar flares.

"What will be the scenario then? How many flares, how many solar storms will occur? We can estimate, for example, on the basis of the presence of a lot of sunspots,



a possibility that a solar storm will occur," Hazra said on a video call with PTI.

The model, described in a paper published in January in The Astrophysical Journal Letters, is among the many efforts around the world directed at tracking space weather to is-

sue timely alerts of disruptions from the Sun -- but the IIT-K model is the first data-driven three dimensional one.

The researchers modelled the interior magnetic fields of the Sun using past three decades of data of surface magnetic fields, recorded by past missions of

THE DUO OF PHYSICISTS GOPAL HAZRA AND SOUMYADEEP CHATTERJEE SAY THAT IF THE 3D MODEL -- FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD -- IS FED WITH OBSERVATIONS OF THE SOLAR SURFACE OF AT LEAST 11 YEARS, IT CAN ESTIMATE SOLAR ACTIVITY, ALSO CALLED 'SUNSPOT' ACTIVITY, UP TO FIVE YEARS IN THE FUTURE

SUNSPOTS ARE ACTIVE REGIONS ON THE SUN'S SURFACE THAT CAN TRIGGER SOLAR STORMS AND SOLAR FLARES

THE RESEARCH ENABLES BETTER PREDICTIONS OF SOLAR CYCLES

surface with theoretical predictions of how strength of a solar cycle changes.

However, the model might be somewhat limited in forecasting a future solar cycle "because it requires data to be incorporated well after the current cycle has already started. So it loses the long term predictive value that earlier (2D) models have already demonstrated," said Dibyendu Nandi, a space weather expert and professor at IISER, Kolkata.

He noted that decade-old models from earlier studies assimilate observations of magnetic fields on the Sun's surface into 2D models to predict solar activity, whereas the novelty of the IIT-K study is that it directly assimilates surface observations into a 3D dynamo model.

international



The Gaza adventure imposed a big cost on Lebanon. We hope that we will not be dragged into another adventure

HUMANOID ROBOTS STAGE MARTIAL ARTS SHOW

During Chinese New Year celebrations at Beijing's Temple of Heaven, 49 humanoid robots performed a synchronized martial arts display. In a video by Unitree, G1 robots executed punches, kicks, and high-difficulty flips



of the day quote

For the record: Ukraine has already denied such absurd Russian claims many times before, and we officially deny them again now. We urge the international community to reject and condemn Russia's dirty information bombs

HEORHI TYKHVI | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, UKRAINE

It will, naturally, affect his capacity to exercise his mission in our country. When these explanations have taken place, then the US ambassador in France will, naturally, regain access to members of the French government

JEAN-NOEL BARROT | FOREIGN MINISTER, FRANCE

Those in the opposition who are stirring things up will go to their Western masters and say, look how bad they are. They are repressing homosexuals. They don't even believe what they are saying

OUSMANE SONKO | PRIME MINISTER, SENEGAL

China-Iran ties deepen

Iran nears deal to buy supersonic anti-ship missiles from China

REUTERS

London, Feb 24: Iran is close to a deal with China to purchase anti-ship cruise missiles, according to six people with knowledge of the negotiations, just as the United States deploys a vast naval force near the Iranian coast ahead of possible strikes on the Islamic Republic.

The deal for the Chinese-made CM-302 missiles is near completion, though no delivery date has been agreed, the people said. The supersonic missiles have a range of about 290 kilometres and are designed to evade shipborne defences by flying low and fast. Their deployment would significantly enhance Iran's strike capabilities and pose a threat to US naval forces in the region, two weapons experts said.

Negotiations with China to buy the missile weapons systems, which began at least two years ago, accelerated sharply after the 12-day war between Israel and Iran in June, according to the six people with knowledge of the talks, including three officials who were briefed by the Iranian government as well as three security officials. As talks entered their final stages last summer, senior Iranian military and government officials travelled to China, including Massoud Oraei,



Iran's deputy defence minister, according to two of the security officials. Oraei's visit has not been previously reported.

"It's a complete gamechanger if Iran has supersonic capability to attack ships in the area," said Danny Citrinowicz, a former Israeli intelligence officer and now senior Iran researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies think tank. "These missiles are very difficult to intercept."

"Iran has military and security agreements with its allies, and now is an appropriate time to make use of these agreements," an Iranian foreign ministry official told Reuters. **US FORCES GATHERING NEAR IRAN**

The potential sale would underscore deepening military ties between China and Iran at a moment of heightened re-

gional tension, complicating US efforts to contain Iran's missile programme and curb its nuclear activities. It would also signal China's growing willingness to assert itself in a region long dominated by US military might.

China, Iran and Russia hold annual joint naval exercises, and last year the US Treasury Department sanctioned several Chinese entities for supplying chemical precursors to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for use in its ballistic missile program. China rejected those allegations, saying it was unaware of the cases cited in the sanctions and that it strictly enforces export controls on dual-use products.

While hosting Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian for a military parade in Beijing in September, Chinese President Xi Jinping told the Iranian leader that "China supports Iran in safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity."

China joined Russia and Iran in a joint letter October 18 to say they believed the decision to reimpose sanctions was flawed.

"Iran has become a battlefield between the US" on one side and Russia and China on the other, said one of the officials who was briefed by Iran's government on the missile negotiations. The deal comes as the US assembles an armada within striking distance of Iran, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and its strike group. The USS Gerald R. Ford and its escorts are also heading to the region. The two ships together can carry more than 5,000 personnel and 150 aircraft.

"China does not want to see a pro-Western regime in Iran," said Citrinowicz, the Israeli specialist on Iran. "That would be a threat to their interests. They are hoping that this regime will stay."

Canada moves to revoke Rana's citizenship ahead of Carney's visit to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Toronto, Feb 24: Ahead of Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to India, the Canadian government is pushing to revoke the citizenship of a Pakistan-born, Tahawwur Rana Hussain, accused of playing a key role in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

Rana, 64, is a Pakistan-born Canadian national and close associate of one of the main conspirators of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, David Coleman Headley, alias Daoud Gilani, a US citizen. Documents obtained by Global News show that immigration officials have notified Rana that they intend to strip him of the Canadian citizenship he acquired in 2001. He immigrated to Canada in 1997 and was later convicted in the US of plotting to attack staff at a Danish newspaper.

Rana, the mastermind behind the 26/11 attack, which killed 166 people, was extradited from the United States to India in April 2025. He was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) as soon as he landed in New Delhi. In its decision, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) wrote that Rana's citizenship was being revoked not for terrorism, but rather because he lied on his application form, the report added.

When Rana applied for citizenship in 2000, he claimed to have lived in Ottawa and Toronto for the previous four years, with only a six-day absence from the country, the IRCC wrote in a report. An RCMP investigation, however, determined he had actually spent almost that entire time in Chicago, where he owned several properties and businesses, including an immigration firm and a grocery store.



The revocation decision accused him of "a serious and deliberate deception," and said his "lack of respect for the citizenship laws of Canada" had led immigration officials to wrongly grant him citizenship. "Yours is a case in which it appears that you misrepresented your residence in Canada during the application process for citizenship by deliberately failing to declare your absences from Canada," IRCC wrote to him May 31, 2024. The government said it was referring his case to the Federal Court, which has the final say on whether citizenship was obtained by "false representation or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances."

When Rana applied for citizenship in 2000, he claimed to have lived in Ottawa and Toronto for the previous four years, with only a six-day absence from the country, the IRCC wrote in a report. An RCMP investigation, however, determined he had actually spent almost that entire time in Chicago, where he owned several properties and businesses, including an immigration firm and a grocery store.

The revocation decision accused him of "a serious and deliberate deception," and said his "lack of respect for the citizenship laws of Canada" had led immigration officials to wrongly grant him citizenship. "Yours is a case in which it appears that you misrepresented your residence in Canada during the application process for citizenship by deliberately failing to declare your absences from Canada," IRCC wrote to him May 31, 2024. The government said it was referring his case to the Federal Court, which has the final say on whether citizenship was obtained by "false representation or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances."

TRUMP WARNS HIGHER TARIFFS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 24: US President Donald Trump Monday warned countries against backing away from recently negotiated trade deals with the US after the Supreme Court struck down his emergency tariffs, saying that if they did, he would hit them with much higher duties under different trade laws.

Trump, in a series of social media posts, said he also may impose license fees on trading partners as uncertainty over his next tariff moves gripped the global economy and sent stocks lower. "Any Country that wants to 'play games' with the ridiculous supreme court decision, especially those that have 'Ripped Off' the USA for years, and even decades, will be met with a much higher Tariff, and worse, than that which they just recently agreed to. BUYER BEWARE!!!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Trump said that despite the court's decision to invalidate his tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, its decision affirmed his ability to use tariffs

Trump says countries could be worse off if they abandon trade deals

EU parliament delays vote to ratify US trade deal-sources

Trump suggests new license fees possible, but no details offered

US to stop collecting illegal duties, switch to new temporary tariffs at midnight

Markets drop as tariff uncertainty grips global economy

under other legal authorities "in a much more powerful and obnoxious way, with legal certainty, than the Tariffs as initially used."

He suggested that the US could impose new license fees on trading partners, but did not provide any details.

In Brussels, the European Parliament decided Monday to postpone a vote on the European Union's trade deal with the US after Trump said he would impose a new temporary import duty of 15% on imports from all countries.

EU goods under the deal would face a 15% US tariff, with exemptions for hundreds of food items, aircraft parts, critical minerals, pharmaceutical ingredients and other goods, while the EU would remove duties on many imports from the US, including industrial goods.



Tree branches that snapped from heavy snow and wind in a storm lie next to cars parked on East 19th Street PTI PHOTO

72 tigers at tourist parks died of canine distemper

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, Feb 24: The deaths of 72 tigers in two animal parks for tourists in northern Thailand shouldn't be a major concern for the public, officials said Tuesday, because they were caused by a virus not known to affect humans, rather than bird flu.

No one has shown any symptoms so far, but authorities were nonetheless monitoring the health of people who had recently come into contact with the animals.

"There has not been an animal-to-human infection case," Public Health Minister Pattana Promphat said at a news conference at Government House in Bangkok. The tigers in the parks in Mae Taeng and Mae Rim districts in Chiang Mai province became sick and died during a roughly 10-day period



between Feb 8 and Feb 18. The Chiang Mai regional livestock office announced in a statement that autopsies of the animals found genetic material of canine distemper virus, or CDV, and traces of bacterial infection, but no avian influenza type A virus, also known as bird flu Friday.

"If we detect any sick persons, we will prepare for a nationwide monitoring measure," said Monthien Khanasawat, director-general of the Public Health Ministry's Disease Control Department. "This will include contact tracing and treatment as necessary."

Zelenskyy marks war anniversary vowing to fight on

REUTERS

Kyiv, Feb 24: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukraine's allies Tuesday to sustain their support for its four-year-old battle against Russian invasion, as divisions among its European partners overshadowed commemorations of the start of the conflict.

European Union nations had hoped to agree a fresh package of sanctions against Russia as well as a 90 billion euro loan for Ukraine but Hungary, which maintains close ties with Moscow, had Monday kept up its veto on both.

Hungary and neighbouring Slovakia accuse Kyiv of deliberately blocking their supplies of Russian oil via the Druzhba pipeline, which Ukraine says it

is trying to repair after a Russian strike last month.

ZELENSKIY SEEKS TO BIND UKRAINE TO EUROPE

In a televised address to the European Parliament to mark the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, Zelenskyy urged members of the 27-nation EU to keep defending the European way of life.

Zelenskyy says EU membership would be a guarantee of Ukraine's future security after a peace deal is signed, and Kyiv will be ready by 2027. The EU is considering ways to give Ukraine at least some benefits of membership before it has introduced all the many economic, democratic and judicial reforms required for full accession.

"Russians must learn that

UKRAINE-RUSSIA WAR



Europe is a union of independent nations and millions of people who do not tolerate humiliation and will not accept violence," Zelenskyy said.

Dignitaries including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Finnish

President Alexander Stubb and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen attended prayers with Zelenskyy in Kyiv's Saint Sophia cathedral. But, in contrast to previous years, no heads of major Western governments attended the

- Hungary vetoes EU sanctions and loan for Ukraine
- Zelenskyy invites Trump to visit
- Moscow not ready to announce resumption of talks
- Peace negotiations stalled over territorial disputes

anniversary.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was due later to lead a call of the Coalition of the Willing group of Kyiv's allies.

Zelenskyy has repeatedly urged allies above all to tighten sanctions on Russia's economy and send Kyiv more weaponry, particularly air defence missiles.

But in a televised statement,

Zelenskyy criticised nations still buying Russian oil for helping to fund the conflict. "Putin has not achieved his goals. He has not broken the Ukrainian people. He has not won this war," he said.

He also invited US President Donald Trump, "Only by visiting Ukraine and seeing our lives and struggles with your own eyes, by understanding our people and the enormity of their pain, can you see what this war is really about."

Hundreds of thousands of soldiers on both sides have died or been wounded in Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War Two. Russian forces have also killed tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and destroyed cities with missile and drone strikes.

business

of the day quote

ADB's support will unlock formal credit for underserved lower-income families and entrepreneurs while accelerating the shift toward climate-aligned and gender responsive housing finance

As there is a requirement for more copper, aluminium and steel, it leads to a 5-15 per cent increase in the production cost per unit

Today we process around 12 to 13 per cent of our agro products, and we are targeting that in the next six to seven years, we are going to double that. What does that mean? That means till now, whatever we have done in the last 80 years, the same thing will replicate in the next 6 or 7 years

SHORT TAKES

India, Israel begin talks for FTA

New Delhi: India and Israel have started the first round of negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) here with an aim to further boost commercial ties and promote investments, an official said. The four-day talks will end February 26, the official said. In November last year, the two countries signed the terms of reference (ToR) to formally start the negotiations for the pact. In such pacts, two sides significantly reduce or eliminate import duties on maximum number of goods traded between them. Besides, they ease norms to promote trade in services and investments. The ToR includes market access for goods by eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers, investment facilitation, simplification of customs procedures, increasing cooperation for innovation and technology transfer, and easing norms to promote trade in services. The ongoing negotiations are important as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Israel February 25-26. India and Israel were engaged earlier also to negotiate a similar agreement. Eight rounds were held, but talks stalled later. The last round was held in October 2021. Now both sides have again started the negotiations.

India-GCC talks for free trade pact

New Delhi: India and the six-nation bloc of Middle Eastern nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), started negotiations for a proposed free trade agreement (FTA), an official statement said Tuesday. In this regard, a joint statement was signed between the visiting Secretary General of the council, Jasem Mohammad Al Budaiwi, and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal here. "The Joint Statement on the India-GCC FTA... in New Delhi formally launching negotiations for a comprehensive and mutually beneficial agreement," the commerce ministry said. Al Budaiwi emphasised that the FTA will serve as an important tool to further strengthen trade and investment ties between India and GCC countries by infusing predictability and certainty for businesses. GCC is India's largest trading partner bloc, with bilateral trade reaching USD 178.56 billion (exports worth USD 56.87 billion and imports valued at USD 121.68 billion) in 2024-25, accounting for 15.42 per cent of India's global trade. In the last five years, India's trade with the GCC has expanded steadily, registering an annual average growth rate of 15.3 per cent.



I would say this transition (brought by AI) is different from the other transitions. Its going to be painful because it really involves people

V. JAYAKUMAR | HCL TECHNOLOGIES MD AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

GOLD UP ₹405; SILVER STAYS FLAT

Gold prices rose by ₹400 to ₹1,63,200 per 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday amid persistent buying by stockists and a weaker rupee, according to the local marketmen. However, silver prices remained unchanged at ₹2,72,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes).



IT rout drags Sensex 1,000 pts down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent Tuesday, dragged down by heavy losses in IT stocks amid concerns over artificial intelligence-led disruption and renewed trade-related uncertainties.

Rising global crude prices amid escalating US-Iran tensions and sluggish global cues also hit investor sentiment, traders said.

Snapping its two-session rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 1,068.74 points, or 1.28 per cent, to settle at 82,225.92. During the day, the benchmark plunged 1,359.93 points, or 1.63 per cent, to hit an intraday low of 81,934.73.

A total of 2,802 stocks declined, while 1,422 advanced and 143 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty fell 288.35 points, or 1.12 per cent, to close at 25,424.65. In the intraday session, it depreciated by 385.4 points, or 1.49 per cent, to hit a low of 25,327.60.

As many as 32 of its components ended in the red while 18 settled in the green territory.

"Investor sentiment weakened amid renewed concerns over global trade developments and rising geopolitical tensions, which kept crude oil prices elevated. Moreover,



continued pressure on global technology stocks and fears of AI-led disruption further dragged domestic IT shares, amplifying the decline in the benchmark indices," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Tech Mahindra emerged as the biggest laggard, declining by 6.6 per cent, followed by HCL Technologies, Eternal, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen & Toubro, Trent, Bharati Airtel, HDFC Bank, Bharati Electronics Ltd and ICICI Bank.

On the other hand, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Steel, PowerGrid, Titan, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, and Sun Pharmaceuticals were among the gainers.

"Domestic markets registered a sharp decline, led by significant weakness in IT stocks amid renewed global concerns over AI-driven disruption and margin pressures for traditional service providers. Global trade and tariff worries resurfaced as well, with additional pressure arising from Trump's warnings on trade deals and reports of possible national-security tariffs. Meanwhile, escalating US-Iran tensions, marked by embassy staff evacuations and Iran's warnings of wider regional escalation, intensified risk aversion. Overall, markets remain highly sensitive to geopolitical risks and sector-specific pressures, driving investors toward defensive, domestically

Tata Sons defers decision on Chandrasekaran's 3rd term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: The board of Tata Sons Tuesday deferred a decision on the re-appointment of Natarajan Chandrasekaran for a third term as Chairman, according to sources, signalling potential differences within the holding company of the coffee-to-cars-and-software conglomerate.

According to sources, Noel Tata, the chairman of Tata Trusts, which owns two-thirds of the corporate grouping, set a slew of conditions for the reappointment of Chandrasekaran, which ultimately led to the decision being deferred.

Chandrasekaran's term ends in February 2027, and the board of Tata Sons was discussing extending the same when a set of conditions was put forth by Noel Tata, sources said.

They said Noel Tata raised concerns about losses in certain group companies, and the conditions also include the addition of debt by Tata Sons, which would invite a situation where the group is forced to list on bourses.

Sources said Noel Tata was also not in favour of the listing of Tata Sons and wanted a written commitment.

The meeting, held at group headquarters Bombay House, was a long one, and the agenda item on reappointment was discussed at length, the sources said, adding that none of the four other directors, including Venu Srinivasan, Harish Manwani, Anita George and Saunabh Agrawal, had any issues with it.

As per sources, Chandrasekaran explained challenges in making a firm commitment on

the listing not taking place at all, explaining that the regulations will have to take its own turn.

Chandrasekaran, 62, received the backing of several board members who felt the losses at one group company should not eclipse the group's overall performance or the chair's contribution over the years. Some directors called for a vote, but Chandrasekaran urged a deferral.

According to RBI's regulations, a set of 15 entities, including Tata Sons, were given a September 30, 2025, deadline to list.

In response, Tatas have applied to surrender its core investment company (CIC) registration to avoid the listing mandate, but the central bank is reportedly yet to take a decision on the application, and Governor Sanjay Malhotra has said that an entity can continue doing business until its registration is not cancelled.

At one point during the deliberations, there was an idea of putting the proposal of reappointment to a vote, the sources said, adding that this is where Chandrasekaran requested deferring any decision on the item.

"I recommended that it should be deferred because that was the request by one of the directors," Chandrasekaran told reporters while emerging from the building in the evening.

Declining to specify what transpired at the board meeting, he said "nothing changes" for Tata Sons.

There is no clarity on when the next board meeting will be held, while sources indicated that it will be held once some solutions are found.

Outstanding retail loans up 18% to ₹162L-cr in Q3: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: Outstanding retail loans grew 18.1 per cent in December quarter 2025 to ₹162 lakh crore, helped by jump in lending against gold amid a rally in prices, festivities and the GST rationalization, a report said Tuesday.

The home loans segment, the top contributor to retail loans, grew 10.5 per cent during the quarter to ₹43 lakh crore, data shared by CRIF High Mark said. Gold loans by all the lending institutions grew 44.1 per cent to ₹16.2 lakh crore, and the outstanding in the personal loan segment grew 11.6 per cent to



₹15.9 lakh crore.

The GST rationalization helped segments such as auto loans (up 14.6 per cent on-year), two-wheeler loans (12.3 per cent) and consumer durable loans (up 14.3 per cent), the credit information company said. Outstandings in the loans availed by sole-proprietor entities jumped 26.2 per cent in the December quarter.

AVERAGE PAY HIKE ACROSS SECTORS PROJECTED AT 9.1% IN 2026: SURVEY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: Employees across sectors are expected to get a salary hike of 9.1 per cent on average in 2026, slightly higher than the increment of 8.9 per cent received last year, a survey said Tuesday.

The projected 9.1 per cent salary increase reflects a slight uptick from the actual 8.9 per cent hike recorded in 2025, which signals sustained salary movement, said global professional services firm AON, citing its 'Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2025-26 India'.

The latest survey, the 32nd edition, is based on an analysis of data from more than 1,400 organisations across 45 industries in the country.

The projected salary hikes will vary depending on industries, it said.

The workforce in the real estate and infrastructure sectors is expected to get the maximum pay hike of 10.2 per cent on average, followed by those working in non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) at 10.1 per cent, it said.

Employees in the automotive and vehicle manufacturing sectors are expected

India aims to raise \$20bn from IPOs of state-run firms by 2030



REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 24: India said it aims to raise 1.79 trillion rupees (\$20 billion) from selling stakes in state-run firms through initial public offerings by the 2029/30 financial year, after previously backing away from outright privatisation plans.

The IPOs will be part of a broader push to raise \$183.7 billion by monetising state assets over the next four years, the government's top policy think tank NITI Aayog said in a report released late Monday.

The IPOs will be in the railway, power, petroleum and natural gas, aviation and coal sectors, NITI Aayog said.

They are part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second four-year plan for asset monetisation, after the first raised 5.3 trillion rupees by 2024/25, nearly 90% of the government's 6 trillion rupee target.

New Delhi has previously struggled to raise funds through outright privatisation of state-run firms and has more

recently focused on monetising assets and subsidiaries of these companies to raise capital for reinvestment.

Modi's government deferred plans to privatise state-run companies after he failed to get a complete majority in the 2024 general elections.

Funds raised via asset monetisation go directly to firms to reinvest and can limit the burden on government finances to recapitalise these firms while maintaining their status as government entities.

Minority stake sales and privatisation form an important part of the government's overall plan to reduce its budget gap, even as New Delhi stopped setting specific targets for divestment after 2024.

Under the new plan, the government aims to divest stakes in seven railway companies through IPOs that could potentially fetch 837 billion rupees by 2030, the report said.

It targets raising 170 billion rupees of that through stock market listings in the coming financial year starting April 1, 2026, the report said, without naming the companies.

It also plans to list subsidiaries of state-run power firms to raise 310 billion rupees over the next four years, alongside 483 billion rupees from initial public offerings of subsidiaries of Coal India and the renewable energy assets of NLC India Limited.

Rupee declines 6 paise to settle at 90.95 against dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: The rupee traded in a narrow range Tuesday and settled 6 paise lower at 90.95 against the US dollar amid a firm greenback and higher crude oil prices.

A sharp fall in domestic equity markets and uncertainties over the India-US trade deal further pressured the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.91 and traded in a narrow range of 90.91-90.97 due to possible intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It ended the session at 90.95, down 6 paise from its previous close.

The rupee gained 5 paise to settle at 90.89 against the US dollar on Monday.

"The rupee declined on weak domestic markets and a surge in crude oil prices, uncertainty over tariffs after US President Donald Trump threatened to impose higher duties on countries not honouring the trade deal despite the Supreme Court ruling," Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

However, the RBI may have sold dollars to prevent the rupee from falling below the psychological barrier of 91 levels, he said, adding that the rupee spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹90.75 to ₹91.20 on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.16 per cent higher at 97.86.

Trai backs sale of all available spectrum, proposes lower entry barriers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) Tuesday recommended auctioning the entire available radiowave spectrum while proposing lower entry barriers for new players and a uniform 35 per cent spectrum cap to safeguard competition in the telecom sector.

While urging the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to reclaim spectrum held by telecom companies undergoing insolvency, Trai proposed halving the networth criteria for new entrants from ₹100 crore

to ₹50 crore per licensed service area (and from ₹50 crore to ₹25 crore for Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast) to encourage more participation.

All available spectrum, across nine frequency bands, should be put to auction in the forthcoming bidding, the telecom regulator recommended.

While the reserve or base price is lower than 2022 auctions for most LSA (Licensed Shared Access) and band combinations, in a few cases, it is higher than the previous sale.

In its recommendation that spans the modalities for spectrum auctions, such as appli-



cable reserve price, band plan, block size, and associated conditions for spectrum bids, Trai said DoT should immediately reclaim spectrum held by pro-

viders undergoing insolvency and include those airwaves in the upcoming auction.

The spectrum, in the frequency bands identified for

IMT, should be auctioned on Telecom Circle/ Metro Area basis with a validity period of 20 years. For participation in the forthcoming spectrum auction, the eligibility conditions, as prescribed in Notice Inviting Application 2024 or the 2024 bid document, should be continued for all frequency bands, according to the regulator.

A uniform spectrum cap of 35 per cent has been recommended across low, mid and high-frequency bands - including 600 MHz, sub-1 GHz bands, 1800-2500 MHz bands, 3300 MHz, 26 GHz and 37-40 GHz - with no requirement for operators

already exceeding the cap to surrender existing holdings.

"The entire available spectrum in the 600 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz and 26 GHz frequency bands should be put to auction in the forthcoming auction," Trai said.

The rollout obligations for the existing frequency bands, that is, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz, and 26 GHz bands, should be the same as those prescribed for respective frequency bands in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) 2024.

FIH MEN'S PRO LEAGUE

Searching for victory



Shootout heartbreak continues as Men in Blue go down 3-4 after 1-1 draw against Spain

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hobart, Feb 24: India went down fighting 3-4 in a shootout against Spain following a tense 1-1 draw in regulation time during the Hobart leg of the FIH Men's Pro League 2025-26 Tuesday. Despite holding a 1-0 advantage until the 59th minute, courtesy of a brilliant strike from Maninder Singh, a late equaliser from Spain's Bruno Font forced the shootout. Spain started strongly, controlling early possession and testing the Indian defence. They won their first penalty corner in the 4th minute, but the drag-flick was comfortably

saved by Indian goalkeeper Mohith. Spain thought they had taken the lead in the 8th minute, but Jose Basterra's goal was disallowed. Shuffling off the pressure, India earned a penalty corner in the 14th minute, but Amit Rohidas's drag-flick was denied by Spanish goalkeeper Luis Calzado, keeping the first quarter goalless. The breakthrough arrived in the 19th minute. Skipper Hardik Singh dispossessed a Spanish player, turned brilliantly, and set up Maninder, who smashed a tomahawk into the net to give India a 1-0 lead. India's Abhishek also came close after a superb dribble, but India held their slender 1-0 lead at halftime. In the third quarter, Spain pressed high while India looked to absorb the pressure. Spain's persistence earned them back-to-back penalty corners, both expertly saved by Mohith. As the quarter wound down,

Spain was reduced to 10 men following a green card for Fortunio. India nearly capitalised on the advantage in the 44th minute, but Calzado made a tight save against Jugraj Singh's penalty corner strike. The final quarter saw India reduced to 10 men after Sanjay received a green card in the 45th minute. With India trying to run down the clock, a costly defensive lapse in the 59th minute allowed Bruno Font to strike a superb equaliser. Spain won three consecutive penalty corners in the frantic final 13 seconds, but the Indian defence held firm to end regulation time at 1-1. In the ensuing shootout, misses from Abhishek and Hardik Singh proved costly as India fell 3-4, walking away with a single point from the hard-fought encounter. India will next take on Australia in the fourth game of the Hobart leg of the FIH Men's Pro League February 25, Wednesday.

WOMEN'S ODI

Australia outplay India in opener

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Feb 24: Australia outplayed reigning world champions India in all departments to pick up a comfortable six-wicket win in the first Women's ODI here Tuesday. India put up an ordinary performance with the bat to be bowled out for 214 despite solid fifties from Smriti Mandhana (58 off 68) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (53 off 84). Australia chased down the modest target with little difficulty following fifties from skipper Alyssa Healy (50 off 70), who is in the middle of her farewell series, and Beth Mooney (76 off 79). Spinner Ashleigh Gardner was the standout bowler for the home team, returning figures of three for 33 in seven overs. The multi-format series is now locked at 2-2 with India winning the preceding T20 series 2-1. Following the three-match ODI series, a one off Test will be played in Perth at the end of which Healy will call time on her career. Despite a drought-ending ICC title in November, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side still remains a work in progress and doesn't have the aura of the all-conquering Australian side. The positive for India with the ball was the performance of left-arm spinner Shree Charani, who was rewarded with wickets of Phoebe Litchfield and Georgia Voll in successive balls in the 11th over. India had won the toss and opted to bat at the Allan Border Field. With Kim Garth and Ellyse Perry out of the three-match series due to injuries, pacers Megan Schutt and Lucy Hamilton were called up to the Australian side at the 11th hour.

T20 WORLD CUP

Brook's ton takes Eng to semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pallekele, Feb 24: Skipper Harry Brook played the most defining innings of his T20 career, smashing a 51-ball 100 to propel England into the semifinals of the T20 World Cup with a narrow two-wicket victory over Pakistan. Chasing a target of 165 on a slightly difficult surface, England were 35 for 3 and then 58 for 4 before Brook almost singlehandedly carried them through with the two-time champions winning it with five balls to spare. Brook's innings was not only his best individual score in T20s but also the highest by an England skipper in the history of the T20 World Cups. England have now reached their fifth straight T20 World Cup semi-final and first to qualify in the current edition. Brook, batting at No 3 for the first time, showed admirable cricketing smarts during an innings that had 10 fours and four sixes as he picked his battles with precision. He did not take any undue risks against Usman Tariq (2/31 in 4 overs) and stood tall even as Shaheen Shah Afridi (4/30) wreaked havoc in his opening spell, during which he claimed three wickets. Brook completed his maiden T20 century with a six and a chipped boundary over mid-off before getting bowled trying to go for third big hit against Afridi. By then, he had ensured a last four berth for England and received a warm handshake from the Pakistan pacer. The hallmark of Brook's innings was how he attacked spinners Saim Ayub, Mohammed Nawaz and Shadab Ahmed. The footwork - both front and back, was immaculate



and he made full use of the big ground, running 13 twos after pushing the ball to the vacant areas in the deep. Brook teed off with a 17-run over off left-arm spinner Nawaz which included a six and couple of boundaries. The shot of the match certainly will be the inside out slash that sailed over cover and point. The turn of wrist was deliberate and the shot breathtaking. The match as a contest was over in Tariq's final over when he bowled one bad half tracker which was pulled over square leg fence and got a boundary off the next ball putting the bowler on his haunches. Once Brook fell, Nawaz got Jacks and Jamie Overton but Jofra Archer pulled the first ball off Salman Mirza's final over for a boundary to take England into the last four stage. Agha's captaincy left a lot to be desired as a spinner like Saim Ayub would have troubled tail-enders way more.

Brief Scores:
Pakistan: 164 for 9 in 20 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 63; Liam Dawson 3/24) lost to **England:** 166 for 8 in 19.1 overs

Rinku returns home due to family emergency

Middle-order batter Rinku Singh on Tuesday returned home, owing to an emergency situation in the family. BCCI sources informed PTI. Rinku did not attend India's training session at the MA Chidambaram Stadium here, while rest of his colleagues were present at the nets. As per sources, Rinku's father Khanchand Singh is reportedly admitted in a hospital in Greater Noida in serious condition and hence the player had to rush back. Rinku's sudden departure from the camp has raised doubts over the left-hander's availability for India's must-win Super Eights match against Zimbabwe here Thursday

TODAY'S CLASHES
Sri Lanka vs New Zealand
Time: 7:00 pm

UCL

No Mourinho, Prestianni at Bernabeu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madrid, Feb 24: There won't be another confrontation between Vinicius Junior and Gianluca Prestianni in the Champions League this week. Real Madrid and Benfica will meet at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium Wednesday, but UEFA Monday provisionally suspended Prestianni for one match following accusations he racially abused Vinicius in the first leg of the knockout round last week. Madrid won 1-0 in Lisbon with Vinicius scoring a second-half winner. The game was halted for nearly 10 minutes after the Brazil forward scored and celebrated by the Benfica corner flag, upsetting local fans and players. After being confronted by Prestianni, Vinicius accused the Argentine player of calling him "monkey." Prestianni has denied racially insulting Vinicius. The anti-racism protocol was activated but no further action was taken during the match as there was no evidence against Prestianni.

ADCA T20I ASIA CUP

India cruise past Nepal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 24: India registered a convincing victory over Nepal in the ADCA T20I Asia Cup clash at the Barabati Stadium here Tuesday, continuing their strong run in the tournament with a dominant all-round performance. Nepal won the toss and opted to bat first, but their innings never gathered momentum against a disciplined Indian bowling attack. The Nepal batting lineup struggled to cope with the movement and accuracy of the Indian bowlers getting bowled out for just 53 runs in 19.2 overs. Abhishek Kumar Mishra was the top scorer for Nepal with 17 runs, while Ranjan Niraula and Mohammad Sabir chipped in with small contributions. India's bowlers shared the spoils effectively with Sibun Nanda delivering an outstanding spell that broke the backbone of Nepal's batting, supported well by Akash Saini and Vaibhav. In reply, India chased down the modest target with ease, reaching 54 for 1 in just 5.1 overs. Opener Sai Akash led the charge with an aggressive unbeaten 33 off 20 balls, dis-



playing clean hitting and positive intent from the outset. Abhishek Singh remained not out with a brisk 14, ensuring India crossed the line without any further trouble. The post-match presentation ceremony was graced by distinguished guests Sumit Jain, President of the Asian Deaf Cricket Association (ADCA) & Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA); Sharmila Subramanian, CEO of Odisha Deaf Cricket Association (ODCA) and Sagarkanta Senapati, General Secretary of ODCA, who jointly presented the Player of the Match award. Sibun Nanda was adjudged Player of the Match for his impactful bowling performance that set up India's emphatic win.

ISL OFC, Inter Kashi share points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Odisha FC and Inter Kashi FC played out a goalless draw in an Indian Super League match here Tuesday. Despite nine attempts from Odisha and eight from Inter Kashi, only two shots on target were registered by each side. Odisha's Rahul KP, a former FIFA U17 World Cupper, was named the Player of the Match. The visitors started brightly. In the opening minute, Inter Kashi midfielder Tomba Singh forced Odisha custodian Amrinder effect a sharp low save from distance. Odisha responded around the quarter-hour mark when Rahul KP fired over from long range, following a quick transition initiated by Lalthathanga Khawhring. Shortly after, Suhair VP headed over for Odisha from close range after a set-piece delivery by Isak Vanlalruatfela. Midway through the first half, Thoiba Singh won a free-kick for the hosts on the right and later headed narrowly wide from Khawhring's delivery. Suhair again failed to hit the target from another set-piece situation. At the other end, Planas saw a close-range effort



blocked by the defence. Just before the break, Vanlalruatfela tested Lluís Tarres with a low strike from distance, but the Inter Kashi custodian gathered comfortably as the teams went into the interval on level terms. Early in the second half, Inter Kashi forward Rohit Danu had a header blocked in-

side the area. A little after the hour mark, Vanlalruatfela came closest for the Juggernauts, but his left-footed effort from a tight angle was blocked by defender David Humanes. In the 73rd minute, Danu dragged a shot wide from the left after being picked out by Prasanth Mohan.

Deep into stoppage time, he attempted another effort from distance, which sailed just over the crossbar. Both teams pushed in the closing ten minutes, with Inter Kashi threatening more. However, neither could apply the finishing touch as the contest ended goalless, with both sides sharing the spoils.

MINI NAT'L ROLL BALL C'SHIP

Odisha girls clinch silver



POST NEWS NETWORK

Trichy (Tamil Nadu), Feb 24: Team Odisha delivered a historic performance at the 15th Mini National Roll Ball Championship 2025-2026, finishing as runners-up and clinching the silver medal in a memorable campaign. While the Odisha boys' team showed grit to reach the quarterfinals before narrowly missing a semifinal berth, it was the girls' team that stole the spotlight with a dominant run. The girls team defeated Tamil Nadu (3-2), Chhattisgarh (11-0) and Jharkhand (5-2) in the league stage, followed by emphatic

wins over Andhra Pradesh (9-1) in the quarterfinal and Haryana (3-0) in the semifinal. In a thrilling final, the hosts Tamil Nadu edged Odisha 2-1. Captain Amrita Baral emerged as the tournament's highest goal scorer with 15 goals, earning a ₹10,000 cash prize. The runners-up trophy and silver medals were presented by Roll Ball Federation of India (RBF) Secretary Pratap Pagar; Odisha Roll Ball Association (ORBA) Secretary Soudamini Patra and other officials. ORBA Founder Partha Sarathi Jena said the state is immensely proud of its young champions.

BUCKNOR REGRETS TENDULKAR DISMISSAL

The legendary umpire made several contentious calls on Tendulkar, notably a shocking Gabba LBW 22 years ago

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: More than two decades after making what was then widely seen as a "dreadful" decision against Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, legendary umpire Steve Bucknor has finally expressed regrets and accepted that "it was a mistake." Bucknor, who retired in 2009, was one of the most respected umpires in world cricket for over two decades. However, he did make a few contentious calls involving Tendulkar, the most shocking being an LBW dismissal during an India-Australia Test match at Brisbane's Gab-

ba 22 years ago. In an interview with the West Indies Cricket Umpires' Association, when Bucknor was asked about one of the most difficult decisions he had to live with as an umpire, he said, "Giving Sachin Tendulkar out leg before wicket, and it's a matter of knowing that it was a mistake, but until this day, every day, people talk about it. "Why did I give him out? Was he out and so on? But then in life, mistakes happen. I have accepted that it was a mistake, and life goes on." In that match at Gabba in the 2003-04 series, Tendulkar was given out LBW by Bucknor following a loud appeal from Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie and his teammates. Batting on 3, Tendulkar had attempted to leave the ball, which struck him high on the pads, but Bucknor was convinced by the Australian appeal. Television replays later confirmed the ball was clearly going over the stumps. In the



TWO DECADES OF SILENCE

dreadful" decision and he was not the only one who thought that way at the time. The match, the first of a four-match series and in which India skipper Sourav Ganguly struck a fluent 144, ended in a draw. That was not the only instance when Bucknor gave Tendulkar out wrongly. In a match against Pakistan at Eden Gardens in 2005, the Jamaican adjudged Tendulkar caught behind off Abdul Razzaq despite a half-hearted appeal. Replays, however, showed a wide gap between the bat and the ball. During an interactive session with fans in 2024, Tendulkar was asked about his relationship with Bucknor, and in lighter vein, he had said, "When I am batting, give him boxing gloves to wear (so he can't raise his finger)." Bucknor, 79, officiated in 128 Test matches between 1989 and 2009 and also holds the record for standing in five consecutive World Cup finals from 1992 to 2007.