



Priyanka's advice

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas reflects on reinvention and the power of strategic pivots in building a lasting career

LEISURE | P2



UK bypoll

British PM Starmer-led Labour Party hits by shock defeat in northern England as Greens directly challenge with vote win

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Growth slips

India's economic growth slowed in the October-December quarter as government spending and private investment eased

BUSINESS | P11



Closer to history

J&K in a prime position to lift their maiden Ranji Trophy title against Karnataka on the penultimate day of the five-day final

SPORTS | P12

Balalore: 72 arrested over assault on Bengal SIR officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balalore, Feb 27: As many as 72 persons were arrested for assaulting two officials from West Bengal, police said Friday.

The duo was deputed for Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal by mistake had entered a village in this district and were assaulted by locals over suspicion of being members of a child-lifting gang, they added.

The incident took place Wednesday when the two officials entered a village in Raibania police station area in Balalore district, which shares a border with West Bengal, the police said.

According to the police, the two officials were deputed as micro-observers for SIR work and were supposed to visit a village in Nayagram block in West Bengal, but had entered the bordering village in Odisha by 'mistake' as their hired auto-rickshaw could not locate the exact destination village where they were supposed to go.

The local people suspected them of being members of a child-lifting gang and assaulted them, the police said.

Getting information, the local police rushed to the spot, but the mob obstructed them from doing their duty and even manhandled the police team. After some time, the police rescued the two officials from the mob.

Balalore Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Niranjan Behera said to this agency over phone Friday that two cases have been registered against the law violators and 72 people have been arrested so far, while a search is on to nab others involved in the incident.

Inspector in charge of Raibania police station, Champabati Soren, said the two SIR officials were admitted to Raibania hospital and discharged from the hospital the same day.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



An opposition leader is acquitted in a fabricated case. I am concerned about the Hon'ble judge



IN ALL PREPAREDNESS

Taliban fighters look up while manning an armed pickup truck at the Afghan side of the Ghulam Khan crossing with Pakistan in Khost province, Afghanistan, Friday

AP/PTI

Pakistan declares 'open war' with Afghanistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 27: Pakistan Friday said it considers itself in an "open war" with Afghanistan, as its forces killed more than 130 Taliban fighters in airstrikes in Kabul, Kandahar and Paktia in response to what Islamabad described as the cross-border attack by the Afghan Taliban.

The 2,611-km-long border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is known as the Durand Line, which Kabul has not formally recognised.

"Our patience has run out. Now there is an open war between us... Now it will be 'Dama Dam Mast Qalandar'. Pakistan's army did not come from across the seas. We are your neighbours; we know your ins and outs," Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said in a post on X.

His comments came hours after Pakistani forces launched attacks on multiple locations in Afghanistan under 'Operation Ghazab lil Haq' late Thursday night in response to what it claimed was "unprovoked firing" from across the border.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence said in a statement that 55 soldiers of Pakistan's military regime were killed in the retaliatory operations by Afghan forces along the Durand Line, Tolo News reported.

Kejri squeaky clean

In a major judicial setback to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), a Delhi court has closed the agency's excise policy case against former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and 22 others — one of the most high-profile corruption probes in India in recent years. The court found no prima facie evidence of a criminal conspiracy, effectively nullifying the CBI's long-running investigation. The judge observed that the chargesheet lacked substantive evidence of conspiracy and pointed to serious gaps in the prosecution's arguments, ultimately refusing to take cognisance of the charges. Though the CBI has challenged the ruling before the Delhi High Court, setbacks of this magnitude underscore ongoing legal, procedural, and reputational challenges facing country's premier investigative body



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: A Delhi court Friday discharged former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia and 21 others in the politically charged liquor policy

case, pulling up the CBI by saying its case was wholly unable to survive judicial scrutiny and stood discredited in its entirety.

Among the 21 people given a clean chit in the case is Telangana Jagruthi president K Kavitha.

"This court has no hesitation in holding that the material placed on record does not disclose even a prima facie case, much less any grave suspicion, against any of the accused persons. Accordingly, Accused Nos 1-23 are discharged of all the offences alleged against them in the present case," special judge Jitendra Singh said.

The CBI has been probing

'BIGGEST POLITICAL CONSPIRACY'

New Delhi: As news came in of the clean chit in the case that helped bring the AAP government down, Kejriwal broke down and said the corruption case against him was the "biggest political conspiracy" in the history of Independent India. "The court has proved that Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and AAP are 'Kattar Imaandar'," the three-time CM said. While Kejriwal was in jail for six months in the case, Sisodia was behind bars for almost two years.

alleged corruption in the formulation and execution of the erstwhile AAP government's now scrapped excise policy.

Meanwhile, the probe agency has immediately appealed in the Delhi High Court against the trial court's judgement.

Several aspects of the probe have been either ignored or not considered adequately, a CBI spokesperson said.

In his order, Singh said the investigation appears to have proceeded on a predetermined trajectory, implicating virtually every person associated with the formulation or implementation of the policy to lend an illusion of depth and credibility to an otherwise fragile narrative.

"A cumulative appraisal of the record further reveals an investigative approach marked

by an attempt to stitch together disparate fragments so as to create an impression of a vast and complex conspiracy, unsupported by legally admissible material," he said.

The judge said that the endeavour to further connect such allegations to the Goa Assembly elections, to project, layering, and utilisation of alleged proceeds of crime, rests more on inference and assumption than on legally sustainable material.

"Once the formulation of the (excise) policy is shown to be the product of deliberation, institutional scrutiny, and procedural compliance, any subsequent attempt to attribute criminality to its implementation becomes wholly untenable," he said.

Ops on in Kandhamal forests to end LWE: DGP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: Security forces have launched a massive operation in the forests of Kandhamal district to end Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in the state, Director General of Police Y B Khurania said Friday.

Issuing an ultimatum to the remaining Maoists, including the state's topmost cadre Sukru, who carries a reward of ₹55 lakh on his head and is suspected to have been hiding in those forests, the DGP asked them to abandon violence and surrender.

"The surviving Maoists now have two options: accept the state government's surrender and rehabilitation scheme, or face the consequences. The security forces have already launched an operation in forests under Daringbadi and Raikia police station limits in Kandhamal district," Khurania said.

He said the authorities have intensified counter-insurgency operations focusing on apprehending Sukru, who allegedly killed his own cadre member Anwesh for intending to surrender along with a group of 12 cadre members.

Hailing from Chittrakonda



area of Malkangiri district, 46-year-old Sukru is now the topmost Maoist leader in the state after elimination of his seniors in recent past.

Sukru, a Special Zonal Committee member (SZCM) of the 8th company under the Communist Party of India (Maoist)'s Kandhamal-Kalahandi-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division in Odisha, is considered a key impediment to eradicating LWE in the state.

The state government Thursday launched the anti-Naxal joint operation by Odisha Police's 13 new SOG teams, District Voluntary Force (DVF), Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), which began in the Daringbadi and Raikia region, where Sukru and his team were expected to be taking shelter.

Remove SocMed posts on 'offending' chapter: NCERT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Friday issued an advisory asking anyone with copies of the banned class 8 textbook that had a chapter on "judicial corruption" to be returned to the council headquarters.

In a strongly worded advisory, the NCERT also called for all social media posts that carry the chapter's content be deleted.

The Union Ministry of Education on Thursday wrote to the ministries of information and broadcasting, and electronics, asking them to stop the dissemi-

nation of a controversial NCERT textbook through digital platforms and electronic media after the Supreme Court imposed a ban on the social science book.

"Any individual or organisation in possession of the NCERT textbook 'Exploring society: India and Beyond', may return it to the (NCERT) headquarters. Any content related to the chapter 'role of judiciary in our society' if posted on social media or any digital platforms be deleted at the earliest possible," the advisory said.

The directive comes after the Supreme Court Thursday imposed a "complete blanket ban" on any further publication, re-

printing or digital dissemination of the NCERT's Class 8 book as it contained "offending" contents on corruption in the judiciary, saying "a gunshot has been fired and the institution is bleeding".

The NCERT's Social Science textbook for Class 8 states that corruption, a massive backlog of cases and the lack of an adequate number of judges are among the challenges faced by the judiciary system.

The NCERT has also apologised for "inappropriate content" after facing the Supreme Court's ire over the chapter and said the book will be rewritten in consultation with appropriate authorities.

Netflix walks away from Warner Bros deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Feb 27: Netflix is walking away from its offer to buy Warner Bros. Discovery's studio and streaming business, in a stunning move that effectively puts Paramount in a position to take over its storied Hollywood rival.

On Thursday, Warner's board announced that Skydance-owned Paramount's latest offer to buy the entire company for USD 31 per share was superior to the agreement it had previously struck with Netflix.

Warner gave Netflix four business days to come up with a counteroffer - but Netflix instead responded less than two hours later, declining to raise



its proposal. It said the new price it would have to pay made the deal "no longer financially attractive".

"We believe we would have been strong stewards of War-

ner Bros. 'iconic brands', Netflix's co-CEOs Ted Sarandos and Greg Peters said in a joint statement. "But this transaction was always a nice to have 'at the right price, not a must

have' at any price."

A Paramount buyout of Warner Bros. Discovery would reshape Hollywood and the wider media landscape. And unlike Netflix - which was only eyeing Warner's studio and streaming business - Paramount wants the entire company. That means HBO Max, cult-favourite titles like "Harry Potter" and even CNN could soon find themselves under the same roof as Paramount's CBS, "Top Gun" and the Paramount+ streaming service.

The prospect of such a combination, which will still need the green light from both Warner shareholders and regulators, poses both antitrust concerns and questions of political influence.

leisure



KENDALL ADDRESSES SPECULATION ABOUT MOTHERHOOD

Kendall Jenner is stepping into her 30s with confidence and no pressure to follow society's timeline. Addressing speculation about motherhood, she confirmed she wants children someday, but not now. The model said she hopes to fully dedicate her time to them, admitting she's currently too busy.

GLOVER ACCUSED OF BATTERY & FRAUD IN NEW LAWSUIT

Hollywood actor Crispin Glover has been accused of sexual assault. The actor has been sued by an alleged former girlfriend who claims the *Back to the Future* actor used her for "sex and free labour" after luring her with the promise of a job opportunity in Los Angeles.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
With your substantial inter-personal abilities, you will accomplish a great deal today, says Ganesh. Your power of expression will impress many people. Financial rewards are on the cards, but be cautious about minor accidents and illnesses.

TAURUS
You have a very pleasant day ahead. Though you are, by nature, restless and excitable you will be very steady and focused in whatever you do today. So says Ganesh. Later you will desire to enjoy the company of your friends and will call them over to chat and gossip with them. The evening will provide you lots of fun and laughter.

GEMINI
You will be lost in the memories of the past today. You will be in a nostalgic frame of mind. Intellectual pursuits will attract you. Do not let your past lay a shadow upon your present and your future, says Ganesh.

CANCER
In all likelihood, this is going to be a fairly easy day for you, says Ganesh. The only tough part of the day would be how to spend it. There will be hardly anything to do, anyone to talk to. Ideally, this is what you would call a perfect day. But not today. Today, you'll miss people. You will find yourself more at peace with the unbearable chaos of the outer world than the deafening calm of your solitude.

LEO
A lot of people will sing your praises, however you will not be satisfied with whatever is occurring. The answers to some questions that have been bothering you will remain elusive. You may become emotional owing to feelings of personal loss. You will also be bothered about the near future, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Family affairs will pre-dominate today. They will even control your thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. Things will look up on the business front. You may spend time relaxing in the evening. Ganesh says a trip to a place of worship is on the cards.

LIBRA
Health is always a key issue, and today, you may have to pay some special attention to the same. It may be some elderly person in the family, or even you. Take the time to give it your full attention in order to avoid any further complications. You may do well to undergo a physical examination yourself.

SCORPIO
A cloud of emotions surrounds you today and you would like to spend the entire day in introspection and self-analysis. You will try to raise your bar at professional level. Your far sightedness and capability to understand human psychology promises a leader in you, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Variety is the spice of life. Add variety of activities to your daily schedule and nothing would seem boring any more, foretells Ganesh. Indulge in creative activities like writing, cooking, gardening or even reading. Catch up with friends and memories of old times; have a blast!

CAPRICORN
You'll have apparently no time for anything else, as partnerships and projects will keep you on your toes. You communication skills and diplomacy will fetch you accolades in meetings, and also enable you to judge a person or a situation correctly, and form the right opinion. The efforts you have in the past may come to fruition today, feels Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You will be able to strike a balance between the emotional and rational side of your personality. You will find pleasure in your work and may successfully mix your personal life into your professional life. Financially, there are no major issues, but negligible matters may keep your mind occupied, feels Ganesh.

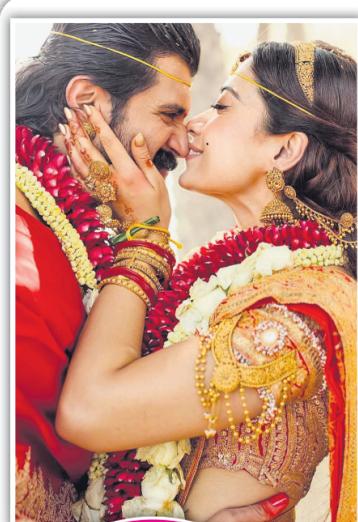
PISCES
You could find yourself re-establishing contact with long lost friends abroad, possibly on matters of business. You will also likely find yourself attending social events. There is a possibility that those who are unmarried, may find their match in these social settings. Long term personal or business relationships will likely be established today, says Ganesh.

PRIYANKA ON REINVENTION

MUMBAI: Priyanka Chopra Jonas recently reflected on reinvention and the power of strategic pivots in building a lasting career. Speaking about navigating competitive industries, she emphasised the importance of recognising one's strengths and refusing to dwell on setbacks. "Recognise your strengths and go after that. Don't waste time on your failures," she said, urging professionals to channel energy into what truly works.

A key theme she highlighted was the courage to pivot. For Priyanka, changing direction is not a sign of defeat but a necessary step toward growth. She explained that feeling stuck is often the clearest signal to evolve, both personally and professionally. Strategic reinvention, she noted, allows individuals to expand beyond limitations imposed by circumstance or perception. Her own journey mirrors this philosophy. After establishing herself in Hindi cinema,

Priyanka deliberately stepped into global spaces, exploring music collaborations with international artists before securing her breakthrough American television role in *Quantico*. That transition, supported by long-time manager Anjula Acharia, marked a defining reinvention. From Bollywood star to global performer, Chopra's career underscores her belief that evolution is essential to longevity and creative fulfilment.



ViRoSh wedding sets record

MUMBAI: The wedding of Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda has created a social media frenzy, rewriting celebrity wedding history online. The couple's wedding photographs, shared February 26, 2026, have become the most-liked celebrity wedding posts in Bollywood, shattering previous records within hours of going live. Each of their Udaipur wedding pictures crossed 17 million likes, while Rashmika's post alone surged past 18 million likes in under 24 hours. The milestone surpasses the previous record held by Kiara Advani, whose 2023 wedding announcement with Sidharth Malhotra garnered 15.8 million likes. Before that, Alia Bhatt's 2022 wedding post with Ranbir Kapoor had amassed 14.1 million likes. Meanwhile, Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma, who pioneered the Instagram wedding reveal in 2017, currently stand at around 7.7 million likes. The celebrations began February 24 with lively pre-wedding events, including a pool party, Sangeet, Mehendi and a playful "ViRoSh Premier League" cricket match. Traditional Haldi and other rituals followed February 25. The couple will host a grand reception March 4 at Taj Krishna. Having long kept their relationship private, the duo previously shared screen space in *Geetha Govindam* and *Dear Comrade*, and is set to reunite in the upcoming period drama *Ranabali*.

MUMBAI: More than a decade after *Gangs of Wasseypur*, Huma Qureshi remains unapologetically unfiltered about her journey and choices. The actor, who has built an eclectic body of work with films like *Dedh Ishqiya* and women-led series such as *Maharani*, says she has never been tempted by big banners or star power alone. For Huma, the only real question is: what am I doing in this story? She refuses to "just show up, look pretty and leave," insisting on bringing what she calls main-character energy to every set. Equally candid about industry inequalities, Huma believes de-

bates around equal pay and work hours, often sparked by voices like Deepika Padukone, are wrongly directed at women. The responsibility, she argues, lies with those who created the rules. Women are only now claiming their space and demanding respect. Her recent film *Bayaan*, showcased at the Toronto International Film Festival, reaffirmed her belief that women's struggles are universal. Confident and unfazed by trolls, Huma declares she knows her worth, stays busy improving herself, and refuses to let noise distract her from meaningful work.

Sanya fulfils her long-held dream

MUMBAI: Actress Sanya Malhotra marked her 34th birthday with a sports carnival she had been dreaming of hosting for the past two years. The actress took to Instagram and shared that she rang in her special day surrounded by her close friends and family, calling it one of her "most incredible" birthday celebrations. She even shared a handful of glimpses from the celebrations. One video featured the actress playing cricket on the ground and even channeled her inner cheerleader as held some pom-poms. "I had the most incredible birthday celebration surrounded by love and support! My loved ones truly make life sooo sooo special." "For my 34th I finally got to have the sports carnival I've been dreaming of for

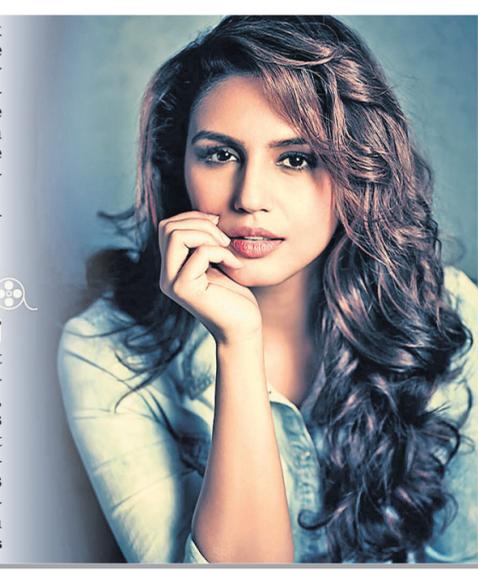


work with films like *Dedh Ishqiya* and women-led series such as *Maharani*, says she has never been tempted by big banners or star power alone. For Huma, the only real question is: what am I doing in this story? She refuses to "just show up, look pretty and leave," insisting on bringing what she calls main-character energy to every set. Equally candid about industry inequalities, Huma believes de-

Unfiltered Huma

work with films like *Dedh Ishqiya* and women-led series such as *Maharani*, says she has never been tempted by big banners or star power alone. For Huma, the only real question is: what am I doing in this story? She refuses to "just show up, look pretty and leave," insisting on bringing what she calls main-character energy to every set. Equally candid about industry inequalities, Huma believes de-

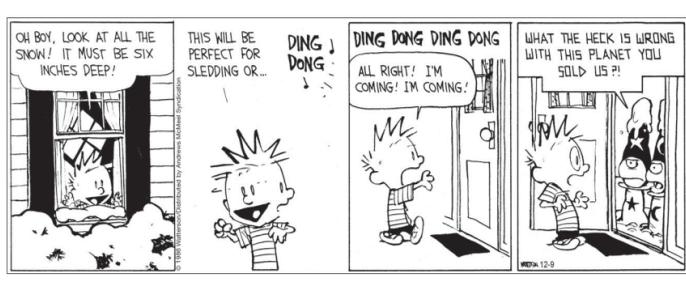
work with films like *Dedh Ishqiya* and women-led series such as *Maharani*, says she has never been tempted by big banners or star power alone. For Huma, the only real question is: what am I doing in this story? She refuses to "just show up, look pretty and leave," insisting on bringing what she calls main-character energy to every set. Equally candid about industry inequalities, Huma believes de-



PEANUTS



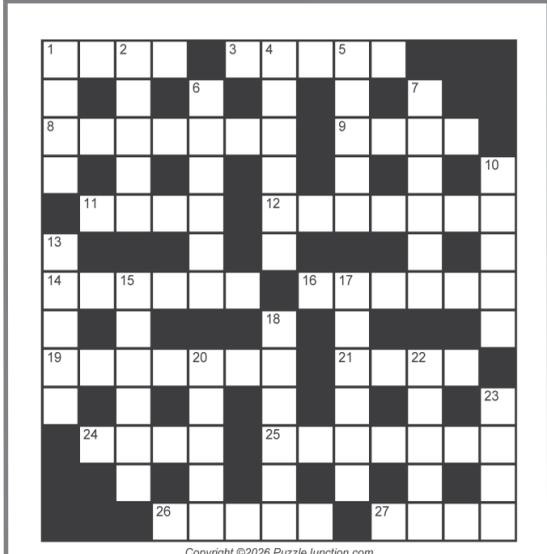
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



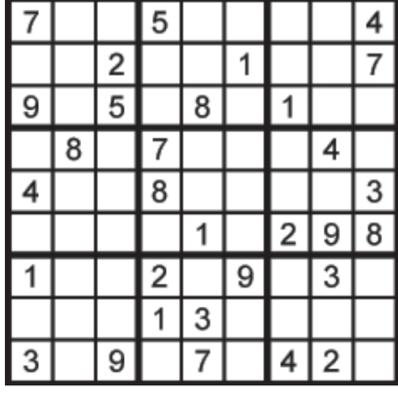
FUN post CROSSWORD



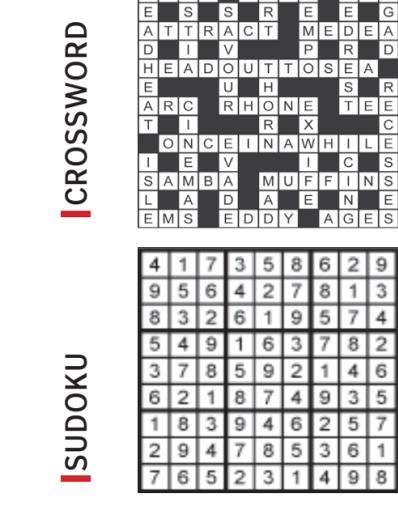
- Across**
- 1 Unexciting
 - 3 Songbird's call
 - 8 Origin of the universe theory (3,4)
 - 9 Emanation
 - 11 Trifling
 - 12 Without weapons
 - 14 Respectful greeting
 - 16 Sock pattern
 - 19 Ill will
 - 21 Cajole
 - 24 Motel of Fiddler fame
 - 25 One in the dock
 - 26 Shade of green
 - 27 Buck the odds
 - Down**
 - 1 Balance sheet item
 - 2 Vantage point
 - 4 Hardship
 - 5 Wool producer
 - 6 Up-to-the-minute
 - 7 Cross
 - 10 Venomous snake
 - 13 Loan shark's interest rate
 - 15 Cavalry member
 - 17 Like
 - 18 Chippendale furniture
 - 19 Compact
 - 20 Kind of layer
 - 22 Seating request
 - 23 Jittery

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.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

MAJHI MEETS NITIN NABIN IN NEW DELHI



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday met Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president Nitin Nabin in New Delhi to discuss organisational coordination and development priorities in the state.

According to official sources, the meeting held at the BJP

headquarters in the national capital focused on strengthening party organisation in Odisha and accelerating key development initiatives.

In a post on X after the meeting, Majhi said the talks were "fruitful" and centered on reinforcing organisational coordination in the state and expediting development measures. He said they reaffirmed their joint commitment to good governance, in-

clusive growth and the welfare of the people of the state.

Although the meeting is officially said to have focused on organisational and developmental issues, it has gained political significance in the context of the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. With Rajya Sabha elections due for four seats from Odisha, speculation has intensified over potential candidates. Based on the cur-

rent strength in the Assembly, BJP is positioned to secure two seats, while Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is expected to win one. The contest for the fourth seat remains uncertain.

The biennial elections scheduled for March 16 will fill vacancies arising after the terms of BJP members Sujit Kumar and Mamata Mohanta and BJD members Muzibulla Khan and Niranjana Bishi end April 2.

12-year-old Angul girl raped, killed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pabitranaagar (Angul), Feb 27: A 12-year-old girl was allegedly raped and bludgeoned to death under NTPC police limits in Kaniha block of Angul district, with police arresting a neighbour within a few hours of recovery of the body Friday.

The minor's mutilated body was found at about 7am in a secluded grass thicket around 300 metres from her house. Family members alleged that the girl was sexually assaulted and killed. According to police, the girl had gone out near her house Thursday afternoon to collect vegetables but did not return. After searching for several hours, her family lodged a missing complaint at the NTPC police station, where a case (44/2026) was registered under Section 137(2) of BNS.

Police immediately launched an intensive search operation under the supervision of the Talcher sub-divisional police officer, forming multiple teams to comb nearby fields,



forest patches and water bodies through the night.

Family members and neighbours resumed the search Friday morning, and discovered the body. Police reached the spot soon after being informed and began an investigation with the assistance of a forensic team and a sniffer dog squad.

Following the recovery, the case was converted to relevant sections of the BNS pertaining to rape and murder, an official said. Angul Superintendent of Police (SP) Rahul Jain visited the scene along with Additional Superintendent of Police Sameer Panda and other senior officers to supervise the probe and ensure coordination. Separate teams were constituted

to trace the suspect, and raids were conducted at multiple locations. Family members alleged that some locals had seen the accused, identified as Ashish Naik, 20, a neighbour, dragging and assaulting the girl Thursday. He had allegedly fled after the incident, they alleged.

Police detained two members of the suspect's family for questioning earlier in the day and later arrested Ashish from a nearby area. A scene reconstruction was carried out in the evening as part of the investigation, said the official.

The district police said that special priority is being given to the case. "Deputy Superintendent of Police, IUCAW, Jogeswari Behera will investigate the case in a time-bound manner under the supervision of the SP," the official pointed out.

All legal formalities, including postmortem and forensic examinations, are being conducted in accordance with the law. Police said stringent action would be taken against the accused.

Mahanadi tribunal visits Hirakud Dam

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT), led by its Chairperson Justice Bela M Trivedi, Friday visited Hirakud reservoir and some other places in Sambalpur district as part of its crucial field assessment of the situation in the downstream of the river, officials said.

The MWDT is hearing the dispute between Odisha and neighbouring Chhattisgarh over sharing of the Mahanadi water. The tribunal was constituted in 2018 after Odisha alleged that the free flow of the water in the river is blocked due to "illegal" construction of barrages and weirs at the upstream area by Chhattisgarh.

During the visit, the team members inspected the Hirakud Dam, the right spillway, power house facilities and the command area dependent on the reservoir. They also assessed conditions at Chiplima Power House, which plays a crucial role in the generation of hydro-power.

Apart from Odisha's Advocate General Pitambar Acharya, government engineers and officials of both states accompanied the tribunal members.

The team was also given a presentation where it was elaborately explained how the blocking of water flow has adversely affected Odisha's livelihood, agriculture, fisheries, ecology and others, officials said.



The team was given a presentation where it was explained how the blocking of water flow has adversely affected livelihood, agriculture, fisheries and ecology in Odisha

Acharya said in a post on X that the MWDT "visited the Hirakud Dam area today as a part of their scheduled visit for amicable resolution of the longstanding Mahanadi Water Dispute."

Later, Acharya told reporters that the tribunal members' visit is "very important" to deliver justice to Odisha. "They should see and feel how Odisha is affected due to the blockage of the free flow of water downstream in Odisha. Their experience will certainly help Odisha," he said.

The advocate general further said that there was a bid to settle the dispute through negotiation between the two states, and this visit of the tribunal team will also help in this regard.

The Mahanadi Bachao Andolan (MBA), an organisation spearheading agitation demanding protection of the Mahanadi, however, oppose the tribunal's visit and said that a similar visit in 2023 had not yielded any result.

Property of cyber fraudster attached

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Feb 27: A court in Ganjam has issued a notice to a man for the attachment of his property, allegedly acquired through operating mule bank accounts to aid cybercriminals, police said on Friday.

The Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Khallikote, issued a 14-day notice to Sushant Sahu of Sankuda within Beguniapada police station limits February 25 for the attachment of his house and land in Berhampur, with a benchmark value of around Rs 35 lakh, under Section 107(5) of the BNS, police said. Police claimed it was the first property attachment case under BNS in the state.

Ganjam SP Suvendu Kumar Patra said the police had petitioned the court after Sahu allegedly earned money by operating mule accounts in banks.

Sahu was arrested on December 2 last for his role in cyber-fraud. He reportedly encouraged villagers to sell their bank accounts and identity cards for commissions and had floated a company to facilitate such operations. Investigations revealed that one of his accounts recorded transactions exceeding Rs 1 crore within three days, which Sahu could not justify, police said. The probe also found that he purchased property in Berhampur using money obtained through these activities.

Following due diligence and investigation involving officers from the GST and Revenue departments, police moved the court for attachment of his property.

CB nets couple for ₹1.55-crore fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: The Crime Branch (CB) of Odisha Police has arrested a couple from Angul in connection with an online investment fraud involving over Rs 1.55 crore, official sources said Friday.

According to CB sources, the victim approached the Cyber Police Station in April last year alleging fraud.

"Unidentified cyber fraudsters initially contacted the victim through social media and later added him to WhatsApp groups named 'Stock Market Pioneers' and 'VIP IVI Service Team570'. The fraudsters prom-



ised high and assured returns through a fictitious online trading platform and provided links to the victim. Believing the assurances, the victim transferred a total of Rs 1,55,66,000 from a single bank account to seven different accounts in multiple transactions, as instructed by the fraudsters," the investigating agency said.

"Soon, a case (13) was registered April 19, 2025 under Sections 318(2), 319(2), 336(2), 336(3), 338, 340(2), 61(2) and 3(5) of BNS 2023 and 66-C and 66-D of the IT Act. And a probe was launched," it said. A team led by inspector Namita Kumari Sahoo analysed transactions and other digital evidence. "This led the team to Angul, where it successfully identified and arrested Himansu Prasad Karna and his wife Sailendri Karna of Rajkishorepada," the agency said.

Transfer judges proposed to be HC CJs in advance: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: The Supreme Court collegium has taken a "policy decision" that a judge, who is proposed to take over the High Court as its Chief Justice, may be transferred well in advance, preferably two months before the vacancy arises.

The collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, said the decision was taken so that the judge, in the meantime, becomes well conversant with the affairs of that High Court and assumes charge



of the office of the Chief Justice on the retirement of the incumbent Chief Justice.

"The collegium has taken a policy decision that in order to strengthen the efficiency and quality of administration of justice, a judge who is pro-

posed to take over the High Court as its Chief Justice may be transferred well in advance, preferably two months before the vacancy arises," said a statement uploaded on the apex court website.

"Following this policy decision, the collegium has resolved to recommend transfer of Justice Lisa Gill, judge, High Court of Punjab and Haryana, to the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and for her appointment as the chief justice of that High Court with effect from the date the vacancy would arise," the statement said.

Indian youths rank 60 in 84-nation mental health study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: Indian young adults have performed poorly in Mind Health Quotient (MHQ) scores, ranking 60 out of 84 nations featured in an ongoing global mental health study.

The study by US-based Sapien Labs - Global Mind Health in 2025 - also revealed that not only did Indian youths in the 18-34 age group score poorly globally, but they also did worse on mental well-being parameters compared to older Indians aged above 55, who were ranked 49.

According to the study, young adults in India had an average MHQ score of about 33, defined under the 'Distressed or Struggling' category, while the average for those above 55 was nearly 100, indicating the 'Managing or Succeeding' category.

"Since we began measuring in 2019, the mind health of adults aged 55 and older has remained consistently at scores of about 100, exactly where a normal population is expected to be on the MHQ scale. On the other hand, young adults under 35, who were already struggling relative to their parents and grandparents before the COVID-19 pandemic, took a sharp nosedive during the pandemic from which they have never recovered," Tara Thiagarajan, founder and chief scientist at Sapien Labs, said in the report. Geographically, the 18-34 age group fared worse than older adults in all countries.

Those countries that have relatively better mind health are predominantly in Sub-Saharan Africa and include Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Tanza-

nia. Those at the bottom include Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and China.

Finland, which consistently tops the World Happiness Index based on their rating of life satisfaction, ranks 28 out of



84 countries on mind health for those aged above 55, and 40 out of 84 for those aged 18-34 years.

The report, which uses data from over one million internet-enabled respondents across 84 nations in 2024 and 2025, also

looks at different aspects of modern life that are worsening the mental health in global youth.

Thiagarajan said the surprising aspect of this decline in mental health in younger generations is that it is most pronounced in the wealthier and more developed countries.

"To solve it, we will have to tackle its root causes rather than simply treat symptoms. For the past four years, we have been probing these root causes to understand what aspects of modern life - diminished family bonds, diminished spirituality, smartphones at a young age, and increasing consumption of ultra-processed food - are driving this trend," she said.

The report notes that those who have poor family relationships are almost four times more likely to have mind health

scores in the distressed or struggling ranges: 44 per cent in those who don't get along with anyone in their family, compared to 12 per cent in those who are close to many family members.

In an associated study of mind health among internet-enabled adults in India, closeness to family was found to matter far more for mind health and well-being than income. In India, nearly 64 per cent respondents in the 18-34 age group reported being close to their families, while the number was higher at about 78 per cent for those above 55.

The global average age at which youngsters got their first smartphones was 14, while in India it was 16.5. The consumption of ultra-processed food was also higher among young adults in India at 44 per cent compared to the older generation at 11 per cent.

Bihar man held in ₹2.06cr online investment fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: The Crime Branch Cyber Police arrested a 31-year-old man from Bihar in connection with a high-value online investment fraud case involving over Rs 2 crore.



The case has been registered under the Cyber PS Case No. 11 dated 28.03.2025 under Sections 318(4), 319(2), 336(2), 336(3), 338, 340(2), 61(2), 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) read with Sections 66-C and 66-D of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

According to officials, the complainant, a City-based businessman was contacted by unidentified cyber fraudsters December 23, 2024 through WhatsApp and was automatically added to a group that claimed to provide expert stock market guidance.

Believing the claims, the victim transferred a total of Rs 2,06,07,500 between December

23, 2024, and March 24, 2025. The amount was sent from three different bank accounts to five separate accounts in 54 transactions, as instructed by the fraudsters.

When the complainant later attempted to withdraw his funds, the so-called 'risk control team' of the platform repeatedly refused to release the money on various pretexts. Realising he had fallen victim to a well-planned cyber fraud conspiracy, he lodged an FIR at the Cyber Crime Police Station.

A special investigation team led by Inspector Tapan Kumar Pradhan analysed transaction

records and digital evidence to trace the money trail. Following technical analysis and field verification, the team conducted a raid in Begusarai district of Bihar.

The accused, identified as Prins Raj (31), son of Devu Singh of Ratanapur, Begusarai, was apprehended during the operation.

During the arrest, police seized incriminating materials including mobile phones and SIM cards allegedly used in the commission of the crime.

The accused was produced before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Begusarai, under the relevant sections of BNS and the IT Act. He has been taken on transit remand and will be forwarded to the court of the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM), Bhubaneswar, for further proceedings.

The CB has reiterated its advisory to the public to remain cautious of unsolicited investment offers on social media and messaging platforms, and to verify the authenticity of trading platforms before transferring funds.

Police verify 18,119 mule accounts, arrest 262

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: In a massive statewide crackdown on cybercrime, Odisha Police has verified 18,119 mule (benami) bank accounts and arrested 262 accused persons under its 'Operation Cyber Kavach' drive.

The operation, aimed at dismantling networks facilitating online financial fraud, is being carried out under the direction of Police DG Y B Khurania, with district SPs and DCPs closely supervising coordinated action by cyber crime units across the state.

So far, police have registered 623 cases linked to mule bank accounts, 28 cases

OPERATION CYBER KAVACH



So far, police have registered 623 cases linked to mule bank accounts, 28 cases involving fraudulent ATM withdrawals, 23 cheque withdrawal fraud cases, and 13 cases related to fake SIM cards and PoS transactions

involving fraudulent ATM withdrawals, 23 cheque withdrawal fraud cases, and 13 cases related to fake SIM cards and PoS transactions.

In addition to the arrests, legal notices have been issued

to 4,152 suspicious account holders and facilitators connected to new cases and 141 previously registered FIRs. Several districts reported significant action, including Puri with 653 accounts veri-

fied and 16 cases registered, Sambalpur with 490 accounts examined, Bhadrak with 327 accounts verified and four arrests, Jajpur with 286 accounts checked and one arrest, Balasore with 217 accounts verified, and Ganjam with 220 accounts examined and one arrest.

Multiple other districts also registered cases and issued notices as part of the intensified drive. Reaffirming the department's commitment to safeguarding digital transactions DGP Khurania said the campaign would be further strengthened in the coming days to ensure stricter enforcement and to move towards building a cyber-crime-free Odisha.

Security heightened ahead of spring festivities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: As the festivities of the spring season approach, an atmosphere of celebration is set to sweep across the state in the coming days. Upcoming festivals include Dola Purnima—March 3, Holi— March 4, Eid-ul-Fitr— March 21, Ram Navami— March 27, and Hanuman Jayanti along with Maha Vishuva Sankranti April 14.

In view of these occasions, the state police have placed top priority on ensuring the safety and security of citizens. A high-level review meeting was held at the State Police Headquarters under the chairmanship of Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania here Friday. The meeting, conducted virtually, focused on maintaining law and order and ensuring that all festivals are celebrated in a disciplined and peaceful environment.

During the meeting, Khurania issued clear instructions to senior officers to make extensive security arrangements across the state. He emphasised strict monitoring of social media platforms to prevent the spread of rumors, misinformation, and provocative content. District cyber cells have been



advised to conduct round-the-clock monitoring of various social media platforms to curb any attempts to disturb communal harmony.

The DGP also directed all district Superintendents of Police (SPs) to intensify police patrolling in sensitive areas, conduct strict checking drives, and ensure adequate security during religious processions. Instructions were given to install CCTV cameras at vulnerable locations, gather intelligence inputs, form peace committees, and hold coordination meetings with various community groups and local public representatives. Action against habitual offenders has also been prioritised.

Additionally, strict measures will be taken against drunk

driving and traffic violations. Police have been directed to enforce regulations against DJ noise pollution, identify rumor mongers, and provide special security arrangements during foot marches and bike rallies. The DGP stressed that all districts must remain fully prepared to deal with any untoward incidents.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Additional DGP (Modernisation) Saumendra Priyadarshi, Additional DGP (Law and Order) Sanjay Kumar, IGP (Personnel) S. Praveen Kumar, DIG (Provisioning) Charan Singh Meena, and DIG (Personnel) Yugal Kishore Kumar Banoth. All Range IGS/DIGs and district SPs also participated virtually in the review meeting.

Amit Shah to visit Odisha March 5

Bhubaneswar: Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to visit Odisha for two days from March 5, during which he will attend several government programmes, including a CISF event, officials said Friday. Shah will reach Bhubaneswar in the evening of March 5 and attend the CISF foundation day programme in Cuttack's Mundali the next day, they said. The union home minister is also scheduled to lay the foundation stone for the National Forensic Science University (NFSU) and the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) Bhubaneswar campus at Jatni in Khordha district, the officials said. He will also inaugurate the NFSU Transit Campus in Bhubaneswar through virtual mode, they said. Shah will inaugurate an exhibition on the new criminal laws in the state's capital March 6. He will launch various projects related to cooperation and other departments. Chief Secretary Anu Garg held a preparatory meeting Thursday evening and instructed the authorities concerned to ensure the repair and illumination of the road from Godisahi to Munduli before Shah's visit. He also stressed cleanliness drives and beautification efforts. An official statement said that security arrangements, traffic and route plans, and site-specific preparations were discussed during the meeting. Garg directed all departments to coordinate effectively and complete preparations within the stipulated timelines.

MITS Group celebrates Graduation Day 2026



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Feb 27: MITS Group of Institutions, Rayagada celebrated Graduation Day at its auditorium Friday. The ceremony marked a significant milestone in the academic journey of more than 250 graduating students from various programmes.

The programme was inaugurated by ECoR's Divisional Railway Manager, Rayagada Amitabh Singhal as chief guest, along with BPUT Director (Examinations) B B Mangaraj as guest of eminence, in august presence of MITS Group Vice Chairman Biswajeet Panda, dean Santanu Mohanty, director C V Gopinath and principal Ramanuja Nayak.

During the ceremony, more than 250 graduates from B Tech, BCA, B Sc (Agriculture, Biotechnology, Food Technol-

ogy), and M Sc programmes of MITS and MIPS were formally honoured and presented with their original degree certificates by the guests.

Addressing the gathering, Singhal congratulated the graduating students and encouraged them to aspire for higher achievements by appearing for prestigious competitive examinations such as UPSC and engineering services and contribute meaningfully to national development through dedicated public service.

Speaking on the occasion, Mangaraj emphasised the difference between merely earning a degree and leading a fulfilling and meaningful life and highlighted the vision of 'Samridhhi Odisha' and 'Vikasit Bharat'. The youth of today are the strongest pillars in realising these national and state development goals, he added.

Contractors launch indefinite hunger strike

Bhubaneswar: The All Odisha Contractors' Association has escalated its ongoing protest by launching an indefinite hunger strike in the capital from Friday. The association earlier had been staging a mass sit-in at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar since February 20. The contractors' body has warned that government construction work across the state may come to a complete standstill if their demands are not met. Essential infrastructure projects, including electricity, drinking water supply, and sewerage works, are likely to be affected. The agitation involves three major contractors' associations in the state, representing nearly 70,000 contractors and impacting around 50 lakh families dependent on the sector. At a press conference convened by Anil Kumar Mallick, the joint forum submitted an eight-point charter of demands to the Chief Minister. The association had earlier warned that if the state government failed to address their demands by February 18, all construction activities would be halted indefinitely from February 20, accompanied by a massive protest rally on the streets of the capital.

State hosts two-day national meet on UDISE+ data systems

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: The department of School and Mass Education, in collaboration with the department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education, co-hosted a two-day national conference on Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) here, commencing Friday. The conference brought together senior officials from various education boards across the country, and key education departments and

organisations to deliberate on strengthening data-driven educational governance.

Inaugurating the conference, Dheeraj Sahu, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, emphasised the critical role of reliable and timely educational data in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective policy implementation. He highlighted that robust data systems like UDISE+ are essential for informed decision-making at all levels.

Delivering the welcome ad-



dress, Pankaj K.P. Shreyas-kar, Deputy Director General, DoSEL, underlined the strategic importance of UDISE+ in supporting major national initiatives, including the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He noted that accurate and

validated data forms the backbone of effective educational planning and monitoring.

The conference was attended by Vikash Gupta, Commissioner, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan; A. Srija, Economic Advisor, DoSEL; N. Thirumala Naik, Commissioner cum Secretary, School and Mass education department, Govt. of Odisha and Ananya Das, SPD, OSEPA, along with other senior officials from central and state education bodies.

Key discussions during the sessions focused on improving

data quality, strengthening validation mechanisms, enhancing system integration, and promoting the effective utilisation of UDISE+ data for planning and monitoring at various administrative levels.

The programme was conducted by Ch. Vijaya Laxmi, Deputy Director, Directorate of Higher Secondary Education (DHSE). The Vote of Thanks was delivered by Sasmitha Sahu, Joint Director, OSEPA. The conference will continue February 28, with further technical sessions and deliberations scheduled.

UU hosts conference on Indian Knowledge Systems

Bhubaneswar: The department of Public Administration at Utkal University (UU) Friday inaugurated a two-day national conference on 'Indian Knowledge Systems: Relevance for Present-Day Governance', marking the formal commencement of academic deliberations on integrating India's civilisational wisdom into contemporary governance and administrative practices. The inaugural ceremony was graced by Odisha Labour Commissioner Indramani Tripathy as chief guest. Sahitya Akademi recipient and former Ravenshaw University Principal Prafulla Kumar Mohanty joined as guest of honour. Utkal University VC Jagnewar Dandapat, CPGC Mitali Chinara, registrar Swati Mishra, and department head Pratima Sarangi were present on the dais. In his address, Tripathy underscored the enduring relevance of Indian Knowledge Systems in public administration. Referring to 'Arthashastra' and 'Bhagavad Gita', he highlighted their ethical and strategic insights for administrators.

VIKASH MANTHAN 1.0 SETS AGENDA FOR VIKSIT ODISHA 2036

'Growth must be inclusive, balanced'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: Growth must be inclusive, regionally balanced and environmentally sustainable, Chief Secretary Anu Garg said during the launch of 'Vikash Manthan 1.0 - Governance in Action', organised by Planning and Convergence department, in collaboration with Odisha Centre of Integrated Development (OCID) at Lok Seva Bhavan here Friday.

The two-day conclave is aimed at charting a strategic roadmap for 'Viksit Odisha 2036' in alignment with national vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'.

Garg urged participants to identify catalytic reforms and scalable innovations to accelerate Odisha's transformation.

The conclave has been conceptualised as a structured platform for policy co-creation, informed deliberation and sector-specific strategy formulation. It brings together senior government officials, policymakers, industry representatives, academics and civil society stakeholders to collectively shape Odisha's long-term development trajectory.

Delivering the keynote address, Garg outlined state's ambition to transform into a high-income, inclusive, cli-

mate-resilient and innovation-driven economy by 2036, coinciding with the centenary of Odisha's statehood. She noted that the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices is estimated at Rs 9.9 lakh crore in 2025-26, marking a 9.5 per cent increase over the previous year. Odisha's real growth rate of 7.9 per cent surpasses the national average, while per capita income has nearly tripled over the past decade to Rs 1,86,761.

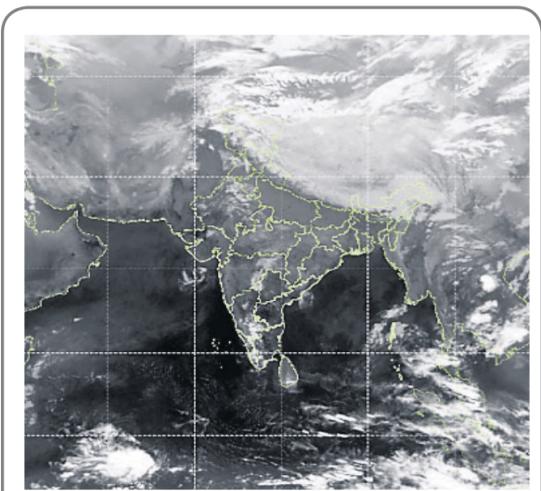
Highlighting sectoral progress, Garg said agriculture and allied sectors continue to perform strongly, the industrial sector contributes over 41 per-

cent to Gross State Value Added (GSVA), and the services sector is projected to grow at 9.3 per cent. She also pointed to enhanced public health expenditure, increased education funding, expansion of digital infrastructure in government schools and the success of the Odisha World Skill Centre in ensuring high placement rates. Women-focused initiatives such as SUBHADRA and the Lakhpati Didi scheme were described as strengthening grassroots economic participation.

In his special address, The Organiser Editor Prafulla Ketkar emphasised that development must be rooted in India's civilisational ethos and cultural identity. He underscored the importance of 'Odia Astita' in shaping a self-defined and culturally anchored growth model that contributes meaningfully to the broader vision of Viksit Bharat.

The inaugural session concluded with a presentation on the 'Vision Document 2036 & 2047' and a vote of thanks by OCID representatives. Vikash Manthan 1.0 is expected to evolve into an annual governance forum driving Odisha's development agenda.

MARKET WATCH table with columns for CURRENCY, BOURSES, and COMMODITIES, showing index and variation for Dollar, Euro, Sensex, Nifty, Gold, and Silver.



WEATHER table with columns for Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, Rainfall, BBSR, CTC, and FORECAST, showing weather details for Bhubaneswar (BBSR) and Cuttack (CTC).

PARADIP MURDER MYSTERY CRACKED

Woman raped twice in a day, thrown off building; 2 arrested



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paradip, Feb 27: A 23-year-old woman was raped twice in a day in separate places by her boyfriend and a stranger offering help and then thrown off a four-storey building, leading to her death in Jagatsinghpur district, police said Friday.

Police arrested both the accused and booked them under various sections of BNS for kidnapping, rape and murder.

The incident took place February 22 after the woman left her house with plans to elope with her boyfriend, who had asked her to come to a temple by promising to marry her. However, he took her to a secluded place, raped her and abandoned her at Rahama bus stand, Jagatsinghpur Superintendent of Police Ankit Kumar Verma told reporters.

As the victim was waiting at the bus stand, another man hailing from Jharkhand, who was heading to nearby Paradip on his motorcycle, saw the hapless woman and offered help.

He, however, took her to the roof of his rented accommodation at a place in Paradip town and raped her again, the SP said.

The accused then threw the woman off the roof of the building, leading to her death, he said, adding her body was found the next morning.

The SP said the victim's brother lodged a complaint at Paradip Model police station February 25, alleging that his sister was raped and murdered

February 22. An unnatural death case was registered February 23 following the recovery of the woman's body.

Earlier, in the evening of February 22, the woman's brother had lodged a missing persons case at Tirtol police station when his sister did not return home.

BJD supremo and Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly, Naveen Patnaik, condemned the incident and demanded justice for the woman and other victims of recent rape incidents.

"How many more innocent lives will be lost? From underage girls to differently abled young women, no one is safe. So, is the rule of law still in place in the state? The news of heinous crimes coming from Kanhari in Angul, Kuchinda in Sambalpur, and Paradip is deeply disturbing. Chaos everywhere, insecurity all around, O Mother!" he said in an X post.

"While the government delivers long-winded speeches on women's safety and law and order, the ground reality is extremely alarming. Even in broad daylight, an atmosphere of fear prevails. Despite repeated instances of such deplorable incidents, the government's failure to take any exemplary, stringent action is emboldening the criminals. The government should take proactive steps to spread awareness on women's safety and ensure the rule of law is upheld in the state," the former CM added.

2 held for murder bid on constable

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Feb 27: A constable was allegedly stabbed in broad daylight near Sai Mandir in the heart of Phulbani town Friday in what police described as an attempt to murder. Police have arrested two persons in connection with the attack.

The injured constable has been identified as Manoranjan Sabat. He was initially treated at a local hospital in Phulbani and later shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur after his condition was reported to be critical.

The accused have been identified as Santosh Swain, 28, and Anjan Pradhan, 25, both residents of Salunki Sahi in Phulbani.

According to reports, the incident

took place at around noon when Sabat was on duty near the temple. An argument reportedly broke out between the constable and the two accused for reasons yet to be ascertained. The altercation escalated, following which the duo allegedly attacked Sabat with a knife and also assaulted him with sticks.

Eyewitnesses present at the spot intervened and overpowered the two assailants, rescuing the injured constable from their clutches. They subsequently informed the police.

A team from Phulbani Town police station reached the scene and took the two accused into custody. A case has been registered in connection with the incident, and the accused have been produced before a local court.

RARE TURTOISES FACE EXTINCTION IN GANJAM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Buguda, Feb 27: Illegal fishing, withdrawal of security and prolonged neglect have pushed hundreds of rare turtles to the brink of extinction at Neela Pokhari in Golia village of Ganjam district, popularly known as Odisha's second Indradyumna Sarovar.

Despite a ban on fishing, nets are routinely cast in the historic pond, resulting in injuries and deaths of the protected turtles.

Neela Pokhari, located near a Shiva temple in Golia village under the Buguda block, is believed to be the only water body after Puri's Indradyumna Sarovar where these large and rare turtles — locally known as kurma — survive. Significantly bigger than common turtles, the species is not found in any other pond in the region, giving Neela Pokhari its distinct status.

The pond's history



dates back nearly five centuries. According to local legend, between 1825 and 1845, a youth from Golia village, D. Enkat Murty Dora, visited Puri during the annual Rath Yatra. When an elephant reportedly ran amok during the festival, Dora brought it under control, impressing the Gajapati king of Puri. As a reward, he sought two turtles from the Indradyumna tank. The king granted the request, and the turtles were later released into Neela Pokhari. Over time, their numbers grew, and Dora came to be known locally as Hatiram Dora.

At present, the pond is home to hundreds of turtles and draws visitors

from distant areas. About a decade ago, the Forest department took over management of the pond and, in collaboration with villagers, formed a committee to protect the turtles and beautify the site. The area was cleaned, fencing installed, lights set up along the embankment and two security guards deployed.

However, those measures have gradually collapsed. Over the past two years, the guards have been withdrawn and the lighting system has stopped functioning. In the absence of maintenance, bushes and creepers have overgrown the surroundings. Although fishing is strictly prohibited, the lack of surveillance has emboldened people to cast nets into the water. When contacted, Buguda Range Officer Manas Kumar Sahu said the matter would be discussed with senior officials and necessary steps will be taken.

Flight trials of VSHORADS missile systems successful

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chandipur, Feb 27: The Defence Ministry Friday said three flight-trials of a very short-range air defence missile system were conducted successfully from Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

It said the trials were carried out to revalidate the capability of the VSHORADS (Very Short-Range Air Defence System) missile system in neutralising high-speed threats flying at varying speed, range, and altitude.

The VSHORADS is a man-portable air defence system designed and developed in-



digenously by Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with other DRDO (Defence Re-

search & Development Organisation) laboratories and Indian industry partners.

"During all the flight-tests, the missiles intercepted and destroyed the high-speed aerial targets mimicking enemy aircraft in various threat scenarios meeting all extreme engagement points," the ministry said in a statement.

"The tests were carried out in final deployment configuration, where target acquisition and missile firing were carried out by field operators," it said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO, armed forces and the industries for the successful flight-tests of the missile system.

"The three consecutive flight

trials of VSHORADS are a great success, and the system can soon be inducted into armed forces," he said.

"The flight data captured by various range instruments like telemetry, electro-optical tracking system and radars deployed by Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, validated the effectiveness of VSHORADS against a wide range of aerial threats," the ministry said.

It said these user validation flight-trials were carried out in the presence of the representatives of joint forces along with senior officials from DRDO and development-cum-production partners.

Woman found murdered

Kutra: A 42-year-old woman was found murdered with her throat slit at Jhirpani village under Kiringisira panchayat in Kutra block of Sundargarh district Friday. The deceased was identified as Sarojini Ekka, a resident of the same village. Kutra police station has registered a case (42/26) and launched an investigation. Inspector In-Charge Lokeshwar Sahu said efforts were underway to arrest those responsible at the earliest. According to police sources, Ekka's husband had died about one-and-a-half years ago. She is survived by a son and a daughter. While her daughter stays in Sambalpur for studies, her son had gone to appear for his matriculation examination Friday. On returning home, the boy found his mother lying in a pool of blood and alerted villagers. They reached the spot and informed police. Police seized the body and sent it for post-mortem. Preliminary investigation suggests it to be a case of murder, though the exact motive is yet to be ascertained. The incident has triggered fear and tension in the village, with residents demanding a thorough probe and early arrest of the accused.

Ganjam SP mandates consent before political congregations

Chhatrapur: Ganjam district Superintendent of Police Suvendu Kumar Patra Friday issued guidelines under Section 30 of the Odisha Police Act for political parties to obtain mandatory written consent before holding rallies, meetings or public gatherings. The SP issued the order to avert clashes ignited due to political differences that could potentially give rise to law and order situation in the district. The SP further stated that any applicant willing to hold rallies or any such public gathering shall submit a written application to their respective SDPO or the nearby IIC at least 72 hours before the scheduled date of a programme. Additionally, the application must carry details such as number of people likely to assemble, number of vehicles to be used, carriage of animals like horses and elephants, use of fire crackers and complete declaration of arms, if any.

Tidal ingress washes away cashew forest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, Feb 27: More than 500 cashew trees have been swallowed by the Mahanadi River due to tidal ingress along the coastal belt of Mahakalapara block in Kendrapara district.

Environmental activist Subhas Swain said more than 500 of the 5,000 cashew trees along the Mahanadi near Bahakud have been lost to tidal waves. Local bidders further alleged that no auction has been conducted in the past two years and that the forest area now shows little sign of cashew or other vegetation.

According to reports, cashew plantations were raised by the Odisha State Cashew Development Corporation Ltd. in 1980 across three mouzas namely Ramnagar (10,000 trees on 354 acre), Pitapat (5,000 trees on 182 acre) and Bahakud (about 5,000 trees on 282 acre).



The plantations earlier generated lakhs of rupees in revenue annually through auctions conducted by the corporation.

However, locals alleged that cashew production has declined in recent years due to air pollution caused by emissions from industries in nearby Paradip. As a result, bidders have

reportedly suffered losses and are no longer showing interest in auctions.

Residents also alleged that the corporation has failed to enforce adequate security measures to protect the cashew forests in these three mouzas. They claimed that trees are being felled in broad daylight and hundreds of trips of sand are being illegally extracted, with no visible action from the administration.

Officials of the corporation's regional office at Chandikhole could not be contacted for comment.

Mahakalapara Tehsildar Rabi Narayan Acharya said the erosion of cashew plantations along the Mahanadi has come to the administration's notice and that the local revenue inspector has been directed to conduct an inquiry.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the partnership firm M/s. Annapurna Foods, having its Principal place of Business at Kolabira, Jharsuguda, Odisha and registered with the Registrar of Firms, Odisha under Registration No. 1420202101013, has been reconstituted with effect from 01.04.2025 vide a Reconstitution Deed dated 01.04.2025.

Outgoing Partner : Prince Agrawal (Ceased to be a partner with effect from 01.04.2025).

Incoming Partners : Linkush Kumar Agrawal, Leena Halwai, Pratap Kumar Patel.

Continuing Partners: Gourav Agrawal, Nagendra Prasad Agrawal, Srikant Sharma.

The firm will continue its business operations under the same name and style.

NOTIFICATION

No. SER/P-CKP/EP/TRS(TATA&ROU), Mech (C&W), Engg./Re-engagement/2026 dated: 24.02.2026

Chakradharpur Division, South Eastern Railway has issued Notification of even no. dated: 24.02.2026 for re-engagement of retired Railway employees for 05 Posts of SSE/P-Way, 10 Posts of SSE/Works, 01 Post of SSE/P-Way/STM, 05 Posts of TM-I, 10 Posts of TM-II, 10 Posts of TM-III, 01 Posts of Sr.Tech/Welder/P-Way, 02 Posts of Tech-II/Grainder/P-Way, 02 Posts of Tech-II/Welder/P-Way, 02 Posts of Tech-II/STM in Engineering, 02 Posts of Sr.Tech/TRS/TATA in Elect/TRS, 10 Posts of Tech-III/TRS/ROU in Elect/TRS, 08 Posts of Tech-III in Mech(C&W) over Chakradharpur Division for 01 year or attaining the age of 65 years or joining of regular candidate for RRB/RRC whichever is earlier, on monthly remuneration basis. Maximum age is 65 years as on 24.02.2026. Applications are invited in offline or online mode. For details please visit <https://ser.indianrailways.gov.in>. Offline application shall be sent to Sr. DPO/DRM office, Chakradharpur, Jharkhand-833102 or Online in [gmail-rectctckp122@gmail.com](mailto:rectctckp122@gmail.com) on or before last date 23.03.2026.

By Order
(PR-1245) Sr. Divisional Personnel Officer/Chakradharpur

South Eastern Railway
We serve with a smile

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. eT-CRW-MCS-EL-10-2025

NAME OF WORK : MISCELLANEOUS NON-CORE WORK IN NON-AC COACHES AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR FOR 24 MONTHS.

Advertisement Value (₹) : 1,32,81,927.07, EMD (₹) : 2,16,400.00, Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 04.03.2026
Closing Date & Time : At 1500 hrs. of 18.03.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.irops.gov.in>

Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, CRW / Mancheswar
PR-1180/Q/25-26

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED

(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India)

HQ: 1st & 2nd Floor, Tower-A, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi - 110029
Website: www.nhidcl.com, Email: direct.recruitment@nhidcl.com

RECRUITMENT NOTICE No. 02/2026

NHIDCL invites ONLINE applications from eligible candidates for the following posts at E2 Grade (IDA pattern) in Finance & Accounts Cadre on Direct Recruitment basis:

Sl. No.	Post (Cadre)	No. of Posts	IDA Pay Scale	Upper Age Limit	Essential Qualification & Eligibility Criteria
1	Deputy Manager (Finance & Accounts)	15* Posts (UR - 08, SC - 02, ST - 01, OBC - 03, EWS - 01) *One (01) Post out of 15 Posts in horizontally reserved for PwBD as under: Blindness and Low Vision - 01 Cat (a)	Rs.50,000 - 3% - 1,60,000	Not exceeding 34 years	CAC/CMA/M. Com/MBA (Finance) or equivalent

(A) Selection Process: Selection shall be based on tests conducted by NHIDCL or an Agency/Agencies nominated by NHIDCL, through a two stage process as explained in Detailed Recruitment Notice No. 02/2026 available on NHIDCL website.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Opening date of Online Application: 28.02.2026 (10.00 A.M.)
- Closing date of online application: 27.03.2026 (05.00 P.M.)
- Crucial date for determination of age shall be the closing date prescribed for the receipt of Online application
- Candidates are advised to regularly check the NHIDCL website for updates/addendum/abatement/corrigendum/notices etc.

How to Apply: Interested candidates are requested to visit company website at www.nhidcl.com (Recruitment Portal) for submission of Online Application. For detailed eligibility criteria, reservations, age relaxations job responsibilities, syllabus for selection tests, general instructions and other relevant details etc. visit www.nhidcl.com or refer to the full & detailed advertisement published in Employment News dated 28th February, 2026.

cbc 37112/12/0013/2526 GM (Recruitment)

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILDING THE NATION

Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd.

REGISTERED OFFICE: The Ruby, 10th Floor, 29 Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar (W), Mumbai-400028. Tel: 022-66581300/www.arcl.co.in CIN-U65999MH2002PLC134884. Website: www.arcl.co.in

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the Authorised Officer of Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited hereinafter referred to as "Arcl" is a securitization and Reconstruction company incorporated under the companies Act, 1956 and registered with the Reserve Bank of India under section 3 of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and whereas the Borrower/Co-Borrowers as mentioned of the below chart obtained loans from Vistara Financial Services Pvt Ltd (VFSPL), and whereas Arcl has acquired the financial assets relating to the loan accounts mentioned of the below chart and Whereas Arcl, being the secured creditor under the Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers as to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons.

Account No	Name of the Borrowers and Co-Borrowers	Total Loan Outstanding (in INR) / as on	Demand Notice Date
0207SB ML01338	1. Mr./Mrs. ABHIMANYU PATRA 2. Mr./Mrs. SATYABHAMA PATRA	Rs. 1,38,987.48 26.12.2025	26.12.2025
0207SB ML01321	1. Mr./Mrs. DILIP KUMAR DALAI 2. Mr./Mrs. PRATAP DALAI 3. Mr./Mrs. DUNA RANI DALAI	Rs. 5,43,862.55 26.12.2025	26.12.2025
0207SB ML02541	1. Mr./Mrs. MAHENDRA KUMAR PANDA 2. Mr./Mrs. PRAMODINI PANDA	Rs. 13,25,497.35 29.12.2025	29.12.2025
0207SB ML02567	3. Mr./Mrs. DEBASIS PANDA	Rs. 93,631.96 29.12.2025	29.12.2025
0207SB ML01154	1. Mr./Mrs. MANMATH BEHERA 2. Mr./Mrs. JAGABANDHU BEHERA 3. Mr./Mrs. PARBATI BEHERA	Rs. 6,29,677.35/- 26-01-2026	30.12.2025
0207SB ML01407	1. Mr./Mrs. MANOJ KUMAR NAYAK 2. Mr./Mrs. CHANDRAKANTI NAYAK	Rs. 19,40,333.66 29.12.2025	29.12.2025
0207SB ML01757		Rs. 2,80,390.69 29.12.2025	29.12.2025
0207SB ML02233	1. Mr./Mrs. PRASHANTA KUMAR SAHOO 2. Mr./Mrs. BALYANTI MALA SAHU	Rs. 3,10,434.13 27.12.2025	27.12.2025
0207SB ML01353	1. Mr./Mrs. PRATAP KISHOR SAHOO 2. Mr./Mrs. SOUMIYA MANASWINI SAHU	Rs. 3,88,956.34 27.12.2025	27.12.2025
0207SB ML01866	1. Mr./Mrs. SATYA RANJAN KHATUA 2. Mr./Mrs. KABITA KHATUA	Rs. 6,06,446.41 27.12.2025	27.12.2025
0207SB ML01989	1. Mr./Mrs. SK AFSAR ALI 2. Mr./Mrs. SONI BIBI	Rs. 11,75,255.11 29.12.2025	29.12.2025
0207SB ML01993	1. Mr./Mrs. SK AFSAR ALI 2. Mr./Mrs. SONI BIBI	Rs. 78,391.15 29.12.2025	29.12.2025

Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of A0.030 decimal, Kismam - Homestead, bearing Plot no. 618/2288/3135, 618/2288/3134 and 618/2443/3200, Khata no. 705/1168 and also measuring an extent of total A0.040 decimal land, Kismam - Homestead, bearing Plot no. 1018/2023/3288, Khata no. 705/1352, in Mouja - Beka, Tahashil - Bhadrak, P.S - Bhadrak, Thana no. 106, Bhadrak District, State - Odisha, and land being bounded on: Boundaries (as per documents): North By: Road, South By: Pond, East By: Road, West By: Pond.

Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of A0.050 decimal, Kismam - Homestead, bearing Plot no 1773/4088, Khata no. 776/536 in Mouja- Mathasahi, Tahashil - Bhadrak, P.S- Bhadrak, Thana No. 111, Bhadrak District, State - Odisha and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Plot No. 1779 & 1780, South By: Private Road, East By: Rest Land of this Seller, West By: Ganesh Prasad Pasupak.

Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of A0.020 decimal, Kismam - Homestead, bearing plot no 603, Khata no. 437 in Mouja- Harishankarpur, Tahashil - Bhadrak, P.S- Bhadrak, Thana No. 175, Bhadrak District, State - Odisha and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Sarat Kumar Senapati, South By: Mayadhar Sahoo, East By: Prafulla Sahoo, West By: Hemanta Kumar Sahoo and Others

Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of A0.030 decimal, Kismam - Homestead, bearing Plot no. 618/2288/3135, 618/2288/3134 and 618/2443/3200, Khata no. 705/1168 and also measuring an extent of total A0.040 decimal land, Kismam - Homestead, bearing Plot no. 1018/2023/3288, Khata no. 705/1352, in Mouja - Beka, Tahashil - Bhadrak, P.S - Bhadrak, Thana no. 106, Bhadrak District, State - Odisha, and land being bounded on: Boundaries (as per documents): North By: Road, South By: Pond, East By: Road, West By: Pond.

Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of A0.030 decimal, Kismam - Homestead, bearing Plot no. 618/2288/3135, 618/2288/3134 and 618/2443/3200, Khata no. 705/1168 and also measuring an extent of total A0.040 decimal land, Kismam - Homestead, bearing Plot no. 1018/2023/3288, Khata no. 705/1352, in Mouja - Beka, Tahashil - Bhadrak, P.S - Bhadrak, Thana no. 106, Bhadrak District, State - Odisha, and land being bounded on: Boundaries (as per documents): North By: Road, South By: Pond, East By: Road, West By: Pond. The total Area (Extent) of the Site/Land: 3049.2 Sq ft.

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers, calling upon them to make payment of the aggregate amount against the respective Borrower/Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice the said amount is found payable in relation to the respective Loan account as on the date. It is made clear that the aggregate amount together with further interest and other amounts which may become payable till the date of payment, is not paid, Arcl shall be constrained to take appropriate action for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described. Steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder.

Place: Bhadrak
Date: 28-02-2026

Sd/- Authorized Officer
Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited,
Arcl - 2026 - 011-Trust



Outer circumstances are merely the reflection of who we inwardly are.
THE MOTHER

Defamation Duel

In the latest episode, the Karnataka High Court has declined to quash the defamation proceedings filed by IPS officer D. Roopa Moudgil against IAS officer Rohini Sindhuri. This feud, which began as an unfiltered exchange of accusations and social media posts in 2023, has now matured into full-fledged criminal litigation. What started as a very public bureaucratic spat has acquired affidavits, counter-affidavits, Supreme Court detours, mediation suggestions, and enough procedural drama to exhaust even seasoned court reporters.

Frankly, civil servants occupy offices that demand discretion, restraint and a certain steel-trap composure. Instead, Karnataka watched two senior officers conduct what looked less like administrative disagreement and more like gladiatorial combat with screenshots.

Roopa alleges reputational harm. Sindhuri wants the case scrapped. The High Court's message is refreshingly simple: argue it out before the trial court. In other words, no shortcuts.

There's a larger discomfort here. When elite officers turn adversarial in public, the damage isn't confined to personal reputations. It chips away at institutional credibility. Bureaucracy thrives on the perception of neutrality and professionalism. Public crossfire erodes that mystique fast.

One can't help asking: is this about justice, vindication, ego, or all three? Either way, the real winner so far is litigation. And perhaps a lesson lurks beneath the wreckage: in the age of instant outrage and permanent digital records, even India's steel frame can rust in public view.

When turbulence hits

When the skies get rough, you don't experiment with new pilots. You bring back someone who's flown the route before.

That's what Air India appears to be doing by appointing former Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola as senior advisor. The move comes amid a leadership reshuffle and just ahead of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's much-anticipated final report on the AI-171 crash. Coincidence? Unlikely. Kharola isn't an ornamental hire. He has been CMD of Air India in its government avatar and later, as Aviation Secretary, oversaw its disinvestment to the Tata Group. Few people understand the airline's bureaucratic DNA and its regulatory pressure points better.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

Industry chatter suggests he'll function as a bridge with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. In plain English: when the regulator knocks, it helps if someone inside knows exactly how hard that knock can get. For Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran, this is textbook consolidation: tighten oversight, steady the narrative, and ensure there are no mixed signals at cruising altitude. The simultaneous changes in corporate communications only reinforce the sense that this is about control, clarity, and getting ahead. Air India's makeover under the Tatas has been bold, expensive and highly visible. But aviation has a cruel memory. Safety questions don't fade with rebranding exercises.

Bringing Kharola back into the fold sends a clear message that when scrutiny intensifies, experience beats experimentation. In this business, reputation flies first class, or it doesn't fly at all.

India's most civilised turf battle

Only in India can two of the country's most elite services find themselves in a turf war over... three letters: IFS.

Not policy. Not budgets. Not national interest. Initials. In 2016, the Ministry of External Affairs essentially told the forest fraternity: "We were born in 1946. You arrived in 1966. Seniority applies. Kindly relocate to IFS." It was the bureaucratic equivalent of "We were here first."

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change was not amused. It shot back with a deliciously pedantic question: how can a service be both "Indian" and "Foreign"? Is it homesick? Confused? Philosophically unstable? Perhaps, they suggested, the diplomats should rebrand — maybe Indian Diplomatic Service. Or Indian External Affairs Service. Problem solved.

And then came the heritage card. Forest administration in India dates back to the 19th century under the British. So, if this is the longest-standing claim contest, shall we rewind the clock further? What makes this episode priceless isn't just the pettiness but the straight-faced seriousness with which it was pursued. Letters were written. Files were moved. Arguments were crafted. Somewhere in North Block and South Block, oxygen was consumed over consonants.

Meanwhile, citizens may have assumed IFS officers were either protecting India's interests abroad or protecting its forests at home. Instead, they were protecting brand identity. In a system obsessed with hierarchy, acronyms are rank badges. And in Delhi's ecosystem, reputation often begins with initials.

Three letters. Two egos. Zero irony. If this is what counts as inter-service rivalry, perhaps the tigers were the only calm participants in the entire affair.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

No matter what you're going through, there's a light at the end of the tunnel and it may seem hard to get to it but you can do it and just keep working towards it and you'll find the positive side of things.
DEMI LOVATO

You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive.
MAYA ANGELOU

The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun.
CHRISTOPHER MCCANDLESS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1827: The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad became the first steam-operated railway in the United States to be chartered as a common carrier of freight and passengers.

1942: During World War II, Japanese troops landed on the island of Java, which they occupied until 1945.

1947: A day after a vendor was assaulted by a government agent in Taipei, protests against the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) spread across Taiwan. Known as the 228 Incident, the uprising was violently suppressed, resulting in thousands dead and decades of martial law.

FOCUS SOCIETY

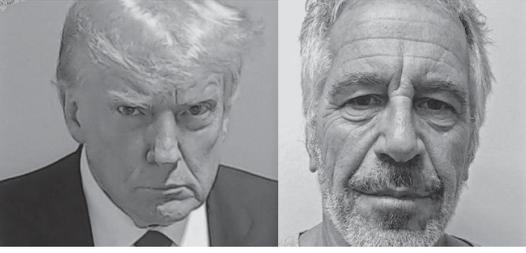
PERILS OF ANTI-ELITISM

Revelations from the files of the convicted sex offender and prolific social networker Jeffrey Epstein keep coming, drip by drip. With every story of well-connected politicians, bankers, billionaires, journalists, academics, and royals socializing with Epstein to raise money, receive stock-market tips, take part in criminal sex acts, exchange gossip, or sometimes just mingle with other famous people, public rage against the world's elites is further inflamed.

There is much to be enraged about, of course. Trafficking underage girls for sex is a horrific crime, and the willingness of so many powerful people to overlook or condone Epstein's predatory behaviour is disgraceful. But our collective obsession with Epstein's perverse deeds risks triggering a moral panic. Hatred of elites can be easily manipulated to undesirable ends, with disastrous and wide-ranging consequences. And the daily dose of allegations, accusations, and scurrilous gossip surrounding the Epstein files is a massive distraction from the political crises undermining US democracy.

The nearest historical precedent to the Epstein affair was more provincial, but no less toxic. In 1934, a swindler named Alexandre Stavisky was the perpetrator of a gigantic financial scam in France. Stavisky made millions by selling bonds that proved to be worthless.

One reason Stavisky got away with his fraudulent practices was that he knew all the right people in all the right places. Like Epstein, he cultivated friendly relationships with politicians, bankers, and other powerful figures. Like Epstein, when he was finally arrested, he supposedly committed suicide. Many people suspected foul play. And, like Epstein, Stavisky also happened to be Jewish.



US President Donald Trump and far-right European leaders are riding a wave of anti-elite sentiment, which is also often deeply illiberal. It doesn't take much these days to stoke popular hostility to the press, universities, financiers, or politicians

Popular anger at the French elites of the 1930s was swiftly exploited by fascist, antisemitic groups such as the Action Française and the Croix-de-Feu to bring down the democratic Third Republic. The illiberal right revived a vile old prejudice about depraved Jews destroying public morals by infiltrating the establishment. Violent demonstrations were held in front of the Chamber of Deputies. Two liberal prime ministers were forced to resign. Demands were made to replace the republic with a strongman.

That didn't happen until Nazi Germany invaded France in 1940 and Marshal Philippe Pétain took charge of the puppet Vichy government. But the response to the Stavisky affair was typical of a more general mood in Europe at the time, when distrust and sometimes hatred of the established elites, often accused of being influenced by nefarious Jewish interests, paved the way to fascism.

We are living in a similarly febrile environment today. US President Donald Trump and far-right European leaders are riding a wave of anti-elite sentiment, which is also often deeply illiberal. It doesn't take much these days to stoke

popular hostility to the press, universities, financiers, or politicians. Since most people in Epstein's social circle came from those worlds, and many of them happen to be Jewish as well, the anti-elite mood is likely to darken even further.

Some people might argue that the elites implicated in the Epstein files betrayed the public trust and have taken their privileges for granted for too long. But this response can easily go too far: Epstein's social network, though wide, was hardly representative of the entire elite of the United States, or anywhere else. And the institutions of a liberal democracy depend on elites to function. The populace does not rule directly; elected representatives stand for the interests of their constituents.

Other pillars of democracy also rely on elites. Independent journalism requires seasoned reporters and editors. Without a strong foundation of experience and expertise — the two essential qualities of any elite — universities, banks, hospitals, and arts institutions would collapse.

Of course, trust must be earned. Powerful people should be held to account. Since the temptations that come with power can be hard

to resist, there will always be transgressions, and people in high places are often good at hiding their wrongdoing and that of their friends. But that is no reason to denounce all elites in principle.

The distrust of elites is partly the result of technology. Who needs editors if anyone can voice their opinions online? Why should doctors be trusted if symptoms can be Googled? And the highly specialized work of academics has become so divorced from the lives of most citizens that fewer and fewer people see the need for universities at all.

But when demagogues deliberately whip up distrust of expertise, higher education, and political representation in a bid to grab power for themselves, liberal democracy is under serious threat. The egregious sexual crimes against young women at the heart of the Epstein affair risk being overshadowed by conspiracy theories that add to that threat. You don't have to search long on X or other social-media platforms to find the cesspool of antisemitism that has collected around the Epstein files.

If this unleashes a popular cry for a strongman to sweep away the corruption of elite governance — a desire voiced as far back as ancient Rome — the result would likely be a political disaster. Trump ran for the presidency by promising to "drain the swamp." That this same man was a close friend of Epstein's for many years is one of history's grim ironies.

The writer is the author of numerous books, including *Year Zero: A History of 1945* (Penguin Books, 2014), *The Collaborators: Three Stories of Deception and Survival in World War II* (Penguin Press, 2023), and, most recently, *Spinoza: Freedom's Messiah* (Yale University Press, 2024).

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY

Sustainable science for future

National Science Day (NSD) marks the ground-breaking discovery of Raman Effect by eminent physicist Sir C.V. Raman on February 28, 1928 and his subsequent felicitation with the Nobel Prize as the first Asian in Physics. Celebrating the day in India is not just remembering Raman and his landmark discovery, but cherishing development and prosperity for a country of 1.4 billion driven by the powers of science. The theme for this year's celebration is 'Sustainable Science for a Better Future' appears to be justified. At a time when global technological advancements like AI and quantum computing are poised to revolutionize our life, the NSD theme highlights the role of science in providing permanent solutions to global challenges such as climate change, healthcare, clean energy, and inclusive growth in alignment with United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

Rapid industrialization, uncontrolled population growth, climate change, environmen-

tal pollution and depletion of natural resources have created complex challenges that threaten to bridge the gap between development and environment. In this context, sustainable science is the only option left to save mankind through its methods of advancing human wellbeing while safeguarding the planet for future generations.

One of the most impactful contributions of sustainable science would be in the field of renewable energy as our stock of conventional sources, the fossil fuel based means, are almost nearing depletion and also are highly emission prone. Research in solar, wind, and biofuels must be geared up for reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and lowering our carbon footprints. Energy efficient technologies, smart grids and clean storage systems must be explored for helping our energy-hungry society transform towards a low carbon economy.

Sustainable science also plays a key role in ensuring food security while protect-

ing the key life supporting components of nature like soil, water and biodiversity. Scientific innovations of developing climate resilient high yielding crops, organic farming practices and new breeds of livestock would help farmers increase their productivity without degrading ecologies.

Fresh water scarcity has been a global concern since the dawn of civilization. Rivers, the lifeline of human civilization and the source of most freshwater needs for communities for ages, are either polluted or have gone dry. Sustainable science would come to our rescue by its contribution through water purification technologies, desalination plant processes, rainwater harvesting systems, wastewater recycling methods and efficient irrigation techniques. These solutions would ensure equitable access to clean water for all while conserving this precious resource for future.

As human health is deeply connected to environmental wellbeing, methods of sus-

tainable science would be required to promote clean air, safer materials and reduced exposure to pollutants. Ground breaking research in green chemistry, safe and affordable pharmaceuticals and environmentally friendly medical practices is required for addressing the health issues of the communities without straining ecology.

For sustainable science to truly shape a better future, innovation must be incorporated into every field of our R&D sector. Besides, encouraging young minds to pursue sustainability-focused education in science would foster a generation of responsible scientists, engineers and policymakers to deliver the boons of science to society.

By choosing a theme of sustainable science for National Science Day, India has asserted the role of science in realizing rapid economic and societal growth.

The writer is Science Officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar.



Ian Buruma

WHEN DEMAGOGUES DELIBERATELY WHIP UP DISTRUST OF EXPERTISE, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN A BID TO GRAB POWER FOR THEMSELVES, LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IS UNDER SERIOUS THREAT



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

SUSTAINABLE SCIENCE ALSO PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN ENSURING FOOD SECURITY WHILE PROTECTING THE KEY LIFE SUPPORTING COMPONENTS OF NATURE LIKE SOIL, WATER AND BIODIVERSITY

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



Mental health policy

Sir, Mental health issue is highly pilloried in Indian society, affecting adolescents predominantly, thus leading to catastrophic consequences like suicides, depression, and substance abuses. Adolescents suffering from mental health disorders need to have access to timely, integrated, and multi-disciplinary mental health services to ensure effective treatment and support. Mental health in India's young population has long been viewed as an individual or family responsibility. However, it is important to accentuate it at a much broader level. There is a need to promote the concept of positive health with public health approaches, including expansion of community services for mental disorders. Also, there is an urgent need to explore newer and innovative models of treatment for mental health apart from the conventional method of hospital-based care. A positive step in this direction could be the formulation of mental health policy for the younger population of the country.
Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Name change

Sir, The Union Cabinet recently approved the proposal to officially rename Kerala as "Keralam," reviving a long-standing demand rooted in cultural identity. As far back as 1924, the Kerala Assembly had passed a resolution favouring the change. The proposal now moves from the Union Home Ministry to Parliament, and once cleared, it will require the President's assent. Thereafter, universities, colleges, institutions, and official letterheads would need to adopt the new nomenclature, entailing administrative effort and an estimated financial burden. Such renaming exercises are neither new nor confined to one region. Bombay became Mumbai, Madras was rechristened Chennai, and West Bengal's attempt to become Bangla, though debated, did not fructify. Internationally too, St. Petersburg was renamed Leningrad and later reverted, Constantinople became part of modern Turkey as Istanbul, and Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City. Each shift reflected political transformation, decolonisation, or ideological assertion. While these changes seek to reclaim heritage or assert national pride, frequent alterations of names of cities, streets, and institutions often generate widespread confusion. Students, and researchers struggle to reconcile textbook references with contemporary maps and official documents. Administrative records, legal papers, and educational materials require repeated revision.
RS Narula, PATIALA

UP signs ₹200 crore MoU with German firm to boost rail infra



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 27: The Uttar Pradesh government has signed a Rs 200-crore investment agreement with a German-based railway infrastructure company to bolster modern rail infrastructure in the state.

According to a statement issued here Thursday evening, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with RAILONE GmbH during a visit to the company's manufacturing plant in Germany.

The move aligns with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision of developing modern infrastructure in the state and enhancing global partnerships, it said.

During the visit, the delega-

tion led by Maurya inspected advanced railway track technologies and modern concrete sleeper manufacturing systems.

The statement noted that the delegation held detailed discussions with company officials to understand production processes, quality standards and global best practices.

The state government expects the agreement to provide Uttar Pradesh with access to advanced technology, high-quality standards and international expertise in rail infrastructure.

The initiative is aimed at strengthening connectivity, building a robust transport network and accelerating industrial development in the state.

Maurya said Uttar Pradesh is fully prepared to welcome global investment and technological collaboration, the statement said.

Rangbhari Ekadashi marks start of Holi festivities in Vrindavan

Tracing the origin of the festival to the 'Dwapar Yuga', Goswami said it was believed that Radha first applied colour on Lord Krishna's cheeks, marking the beginning of Holi traditions in Braj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura (UP), Feb 27: Rangbhari Ekadashi Friday marked the beginning of Holi celebrations in the temples of Vrindavan, with long queues of devotees seen outside major shrines and the town reverberating with traditional 'rasiya' hymns.

The festivities were also streamed live for devotees across the country and abroad, with the Shri Bankey Bihari temple launching a darshan live telecast service from Friday morning. The live streaming began at 7.55 am within the temple premises and from 1 pm on the temple's official social media platforms.

At the Bankey Bihari Temple, priests said the festivities began with Lord Bankey Bihari symbolically playing Holi with devotees.

Gyanendra Kishore Goswami, a 'sewayat' (priest) of the temple, said the ritual commenced with Thakur ji sprinkling saffron, rose water, tesu (flame of the forest) extract

and perfume-filled water from a 'pichkari' on Radha Rani, followed by a playful exchange of colours.

Tracing the origin of the festival to the 'Dwapar Yuga', Goswami said it was believed that Radha first applied colour on Lord Krishna's cheeks, marking the beginning of Holi traditions in Braj.

After Ekadashi rituals, gujia and jalebi were offered to the deity as prasad. Bankey Bihari adorned white attire for the occasion and will continue to do so till Dhuhandi, when he will wear pink garments, he added.

Holi celebrations will be held during both morning and evening darshans.

Historian Prahlad Ballabh Goswami said the tradition of singing 'Holi Rasiya' in Braj has a long history, with compositions penned by both Hindu and Muslim poets.

Since morning, hymns such as "Aaj Biraj mein Holi re Rasiya" echoed not only inside temples but also through the narrow lanes of Vrindavan.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Anant Goswami, another seawayat at the Bankey Bihari temple, said Swami Haridas would sing devotional verses while adoring the deity, a practice that continues even today. Devotees also played flower Holi with the deity, while Laddu Holi and Jalebi Holi are scheduled in the coming days.

Shashank Goswami, a temple seawayat, said despite heavy rush, devotees displayed immense enthusi-

asm while playing Holi with their beloved deity.

However, he expressed concern over administrative movement restrictions, saying they caused inconvenience to senior citizens, women and local residents.

Meanwhile, as a precautionary measure amid heavy footfall, power supply to three local transformers -- 250 KVA at Cheer Ghat, 400 KVA at Ke-

si Ghat and 400 KVA on the road to Jugal Ghat near the Radha Ballabh temple -- was temporarily shut down, officials said.

Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Vrindavan Sandeep said the step was taken as large crowds were moving very close to electricity panels and poles in these areas.

He said supply would be restored once the crowd thinned out and clarified that there was no disruption in power supply to major temples.

At the Radha Damodar Temple, more than 200 foreign devotees participated in the celebrations that began during the previous evening's darshan, said Krishna Balram Goswami, a temple priest. The deities played Holi with a silver pichkari while dressed in basanti (yellow) attire, and prasad was distributed among devotees.

Sukrati Lal Goswami of the Radha Ballabh Temple said a procession accompanied by drums and nagaras would pass through prominent areas of Vrindavan to invite devotees for the evening Holi celebrations.

He said the day holds special significance for the temple as it commemorates the divine wedding of the deity.

8 cheetahs from Africa to arrive at Kuno Nat'l Park

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sheopur (MP), Feb 27: Eight more cheetahs will be airlifted from Africa and brought to Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday morning, an official said Friday.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupendra Yadav will release the big cats into enclosures readied at the park under the ongoing cheetah revival programme in India via intercontinental translocations, he added.

The batch from Botswana, comprising six females and two males, will fly to Gwalior between 9 pm and 10 pm on an Indian Air Force aircraft, Cheetah Project Director Uttam Sharma told PTI.

From Gwalior, two IAF helicopters will transport the cheetahs to Kuno National Park, where they are expected to arrive between 9 am and 10



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

am Saturday. The flight duration from Botswana to Gwalior will be around nine to 10 hours, he said. This will be the third batch of cheetahs arriving from Africa, following earlier introductions from Namibia and South Africa, he added.

With this, the number of cheetahs in India will rise to 46. Sharma said enclosures have been prepared at the park, where the cheetahs will remain in quarantine for about a month. The park has five helipads to facilitate their safe landing, he added.

Like the last time, the IAF will assist the cheetah revival programme by bringing them from Africa, just as it did when transporting the cursorial animal from SA in February 2023, Sharma said.

Earlier, eight cheetahs were brought from Namibia to Gwalior on a private jet in September 2022, after which IAF helicopters transported them to the park, he said.

"The arrival of more cheetahs will strengthen India's cheetah revival programme. With the support of the central government, we aim to increase the population to 50 as soon as possible," Sharma said.

Three big cats were later relocated to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, while 35 remain at Kuno National Park, he said.

According to officials, endangered animals are not kept in a single habitat due to the risk of disease outbreaks that can wipe out their entire population at one go.

17-yr-old student delivers baby in school washroom

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhar (MP), Feb 27: A 17-year-old student gave birth to a premature baby boy in a school washroom during a Class 10 board examination in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district, officials said Friday.

The incident occurred Tuesday at a private school in Pithampur during a Mathematics paper. It has since triggered a police investigation under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act to probe an alleged case of sexual assault.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Parul Belapurkar said the teen complained of a severe stomachache two hours into the examination and sought permission to visit the washroom.

When she did not return to the classroom for a long time, the invigilators checked the washroom and, to their dismay, heard the cries of a baby, an official said.

Female staffers of the school rushed to the scene, and

the girl and the infant were brought to a government community health centre in a 108 ambulance, community health physician Dr Prashant Kajave.

Both the teen and the baby were found to be stable, he said. A preliminary probe revealed that the girl had been 34 weeks (eight months) pregnant, and the infant was premature, he said.

The ASP informed that a case was registered under relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and transferred to the Betma police station.

The teen, in her statement to the Betma police, alleged that she met a boy while participating in a dance programme, and he had sexually assaulted her, which resulted in the pregnancy.

She also alleged that the boy had threatened her into silence and hence, she had not informed her parents about the assault, the official said, adding that a probe is underway.

MP to build grand park at Chandrashekhar Azad's birthplace

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Alirajpur (MP), Feb 27: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav Friday announced that the state government will construct a grand park at Bhabhra, the birthplace of legendary freedom fighter Chandrashekhar Azad, to pay tribute to his legacy.

Azad was born July 23, 1906, and sacrificed his life for the country February 27, 1931.

Speaking at the 'Azad Smriti Samaroh' organised in Bhabhra on the legend's death anniversary, Yadav said Chandrashekhar Azad jumped into the freedom struggle at the young age of 14.

"A grand park will be built in his name in Chandrashekhar Azad Nagar (Bhabhra). Tourist attractions will also be developed at places associated with Azad's legacy with the support of the Culture Department," Yadav said.

Yadav said Azad spent his childhood among the children of the Bhil community of Alirajpur and learned the art of shooting from them, adding that he was an excellent marksman.

"The state government

is committed to preserving the legacy of tribal great men. A university has been established in Khargone in the name of Tantiya Bhil. Similarly, sites associated with other tribal heroes of the freedom struggle are also being preserved," Yadav said.

The Chief Minister inaugurated and performed bhumi puja for 49 development works costing Rs 171 crore in tribal-dominated Alirajpur district.

He said work on the Narmada Irrigation Project, costing Rs 1,800 crore, is underway in the district, and upon completion, 170 villages will receive water.

Yadav, who took part in the famous tribal festival Bhagoria in Udaigarh, said the experience had filled his heart with joy.

The MP government has decided to celebrate Bhagoria as a national festival, he said.

Bhagoria festival is celebrated just before Holi, with weekly fairs that showcase the colourful celebrations of the tribals of western Madhya Pradesh.

These fairs are held at more than 100 locations in tribal-dominated districts like Alirajpur, Jhabua, Dhar, Khargone, and Barwani.

REGIONAL OFFICE (SAMBALPUR REGION)
At: Christian Para, G.M. College Chowk, Dist.: Sambalpur
Odisha, PIN-768001, Mob: 77520-50804

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to be held on 06.04.2026 from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrowers, Co-borrowers, Mortgagees & Guarantors that the below described Immovable properties Mortgaged / Charged to the Secured Creditor, will be sold on the basis of "Physical / Symbolic POSSESSION" of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda. Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned accounts/s. The details of Borrower/ Guarantor/Secured Assets/ Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction Date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below-

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Co-borrowers / Mortgagor / Guarantors	Description of the Properties & the Owner	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increase Amount	Total Dues
1.	PHULBANI BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Ashok Kumar Nayak, S/o- Sankirtan Nayak / Co-Borrowers: 1) Mrs. Mamina Nayak, W/o- Ashok Kumar Nayak, 2) Mr. Asutosh Nayak, S/o- Ashok Kumar Nayak, All are At: Linepada, Anduguda, PS: Tikabali, Kandhamal, Odisha, PIN-762027.	Equitable mortgage of Land and Building having Khata No.: 178/88, Plot No.: 330/882, Area measuring 0.0210 Hectore i.e. 2287 square ft. situated at Mouza: Kusumendi, Tahasil: Chakapada, Thana: Ghumusar Uday Giri, Dist.: Kandhamal, Odisha-762027, KISSAM: Gharabari, property having in the name of Mr. Ashok Kumar Nayak, S/o- Sankirtan Nayak. Bounded by: East: Rakesh Kumar Nayak, West: Muni Nayak, South: Village Road, North: Pradij Nayak.	₹ 24,13,000.00	₹ 16,15,098.35 as on 22.02.2026 plus further interest and charges, legal expenses thereon till full payment
		Equitable mortgage of residential Land situated at Khata No.: 619/65, Plot No.: 3588, Area: Ac.0.080dec. Plot No.: 3587/4638, Area: Ac.0.009dec. and Plot No.: 4502/4639, Area: Ac.0.016dec., Total Area: Ac.0.105dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Jalo, PS No.: 91, PS: Birmaharajpur, Tahasil: Ullunda, Dist.: Sonepur, Odisha, Owner name Mr. Binod Baghar, S/o- Sri Satia Baghar. Bounded by the property- East: Hemsagar Meher, West: Road, North: Road, South: Ganesh Meher.	₹ 6,35,017.19	₹ 6,35,017.19 as on 22.02.2026 plus further interest and charges, legal expenses thereon till full payment
		Equitable mortgage of Land situated at Mouza: Dantapali, PS: Baunsuni, Tahasil: Boudh, Dist.: Boudh, having Khata No.: 136/94, Plot No.: 171/648, Area: Ac.0.100dec., KISSAM: Gharabari. Owner of the property Mr. Sankar Prasad Agrawalla, S/o- Sri Bipin Bihari Agrawalla. Bounded by the property- East: Self, West: Astami Karmi, North: Nayanjori, South: Self.	₹ 23,40,900.00	₹ 11,92,102.62 as on 22.02.2026 plus further interest and charges, legal expenses thereon till full payment
For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in https://baanknet.com				
STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE TO THE BORROWER / GUARANTOR / MORTGAGOR FOR SALE UNDER RULE 8(6) AS PER SARFAESI ACT 2002.				
This may also be treated as notice under rule 6(2) of security interest (Enforcements) Rules, 2002 to the Borrowers / Guarantors of the said loan under holding of E-Auction sale on the above mentioned date				
Place: Sambalpur Date: 27.02.2026			<p>Authorised Officer Bank of Baroda</p>	

Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd.
REGISTERED OFFICE: The Ruby, 10th Floor, 29 Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar (W), Mumbai-400028. Tel: 022-66581300www.arcil.co.in
CIN-U65999MH2002PLC134884. Website: www.arcil.co.in

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the Authorised Officer of Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited hereinafter referred to as "Arcil" is a securitization and Reconstruction company incorporated under the companies Act, 1956 and registered with the Reserve Bank of India under section 3 of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and whereas the Borrower/Co-Borrowers as mentioned of the below chart obtained loans from Vistaar Financial Services Pvt Ltd (VFSPL), and whereas Arcil has acquired the financial assets relating to the loan accounts mentioned of the below chart and Whereas Arcil, being the secured creditor under the Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers as to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reason.

Account No	Name of the Borrowers and Co-Borrowers	Total Loan Outstanding (in INR) as on	Demand Notice Date
01925B ML01022	1. Mr./Mrs. ANAMACHARAN NAYAK	Rs. 8,68,792.11	26-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. PRANATI JENA	26-12-2025	
	3. Mr./Mrs. BANAMALI NAYAK		
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of Ac.0.160 decimal, bearing plot no 142, Khata no. 292/172 corresponding Khata no. 243 in Mouja- Nadhana, Tahasil- Nimapada, P.S- Nimapada, Thana No. 179, Puri District, State - Odisha, Pin- 752106 and land being bounded on: Boundaries(as per deed): North By: Co-Sharer, South By: Road, East By: Plot No. 144 & 143, West By: Plot No. 138.			
01875B ML01628	1. Mr./Mrs. BADAHI PITAMBAR REDDY	Rs. 1,25,140.59	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. BADAHI PADMA	29-12-2025	
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of Ac.0.037 decimal, KISSAM - Gharabari, bearing PlotNo 1505/2638, Khata no. 352/975 in Mouja- Mayurpada, Tahasil - Ganjam, S.R.O - Ganjam, P.S - Rambha, Ganjam District, State - Odisha and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Land of Pitambar Swain, South By: Road, East By: Land of A. Ladu Kishore Reddy, West By: Land of Vendor.			
01875B ML01611	1. Mr./Mrs. BADAHI PITAMBAR REDDY	Rs. 16,58,289.37	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. BADAHI PADMA	29-12-2025	
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of Ac.0.037 decimal, KISSAM - Homestead, bearing Plot no 1505/2638, Khata no. 352/946 in Mouja- Mayurpada, Tahasil - Ganjam, S.R.O - Ganjam, Ganjam District, State - Odisha, Pincode- 760009 and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Land of Pitambar Swain, South By: Road, East By: Land of A. Ladu Kishore Reddy, West By: Land of Vendor.			
01915B ML01476	1. Mr./Mrs. KARTIK SAHOO, 2. Mr./Mrs. KUNI SAHOO, 3. Mr./Mrs. KANHU SAHOO	Rs. 8,48,366.13	26-12-2025
	Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of Ac.0.040 decimal i.e 1742 sq ft, bearing plot no 576/991, Khata no. 321/71 in Mouja- Mangarajpur, Tahasil/SPO- Tangi Choudwar, P.S- Choudwar, Cuttack District, State - Odisha, Pincode- 754025 and land being bounded on: Boundaries(as per deed): North By: Plot no. 570, South By: Plot no. 576(P), East By: Road, West By: Plot No. 576(P).		
	1. Mr./Mrs. MANILAL SINGH, L01385	Rs. 1,28,353.09	
01915B ML01366	1. Mr./Mrs. MANILAL SINGH,	Rs. 9,80,930.87	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. KANAN SINGH	29-12-2025	
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of Ac.0.050 decimal with status - Stitban, KISSAM - Gharabari, bearing Plot no 532, Khata no. 473 in Mouja- Singpur, Tahasil - Jagatsinghpur, S.R.O - Debidol, P.S - Jagatsinghpur, P.S. no. 316, Jagatsinghpur District, State-Odisha, and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Own Plot, South By: Government Road, East By: Plot of Narendra Kumar Singh, West By: Plot of Prafulla Kumar Singh.			
01915B ML00984	1. Mr./Mrs. MANORANJAN NAYAK	Rs. 66,698.49	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. PRATHIMA NAYAK	29-12-2025	
01915B ML00830	1. Mr./Mrs. MANORANJAN NAYAK	Rs. 7,29,744.18	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. PUSPALATA NAYAK	29-12-2025	
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of Ac.0.080 decimal, KISSAM - Homestead, bearing Plot no 1611/2086, Khata no. 607/44 in Mouja- Padasahi, Tahasil - Kisan Nagar no. 545, S.R.O - Debidol, P.S - Kisan Nagar, P.S. no. 25, Cuttack District, State - Odisha, Pincode- 754130 and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Rabinarayana Maharana, South By: Baisnaba Rekha Sahu, East By: Road, West By: Road.			
01875B ML01435	1. Mr./Mrs. NAYAK BEHERA	Rs. 4,95,745.29	27-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. PRATHIMA BEHERA	27-12-2025	
	3. Mr./Mrs. DHUBUNI BEHERA		
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of Ac.0.030 decimal, KISSAM - Gharabari, bearing plot no 588, Khata no. 248/94 in Mouja- Parasama, Tahasil - Chikili, P.S- Nua Gaon, Ganjam District, State - Odisha and land being bounded on: Boundaries(as per deed): North By: Government Land, South By: Road, East By: House of Mr Behera, West By: House of Dandasi Behera			
01925B ML01086	1. Mr./Mrs. SRIDHAR MAHARANA	Rs. 17,29,224.54	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. SAILA BALA MAHARANA	29-12-2025	
01925B ML01093	1. Mr./Mrs. SRIDHAR MAHARANA	Rs. 1,25,617.62	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. SAILA BALA MAHARANA	29-12-2025	
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of total Ac.0.050 decimal, KISSAM - Gharabari, bearing Plot no. 753/1315, Khata no. 398/135, in Mouja - Sobindapur, Tahasil - Puri, P.S - Deitanga, Thana no. 124, Puri District, State - Odisha, and land being bounded on: Boundaries(as per actual): North By: Nityananda Maharana, South By: CC Road, East By: Purna Chandra Maharana, West By: Nityananda Maharana.			
01915B ML01029	1. Mr./Mrs. SURENDRA ROUT	Rs. 2,20,484.8	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. URMILA ROUT	29-12-2025	
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of total Ac.0.080 decimal, KISSAM - Homestead, bearing Plot no. 1312, Khata no. 815/77, in Mouja - Kaitha, Tahasil - Mahanga, P.S - Mahanga, Thana no. 01, Cuttack District, State - Odisha, and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Sandanada Sahoo, South By: Dayanidhi Sahoo, East By: Bikala Bag, West By: Sashinatha Swain and Others. The total Area (Extent) of the Site/Land: = Ac.0.080 Decimal.			
01875B ML00921	1. Mr./Mrs. TSANTOSH KUMAR PATRA	Rs. 9,81,561.38	29-12-2025
	2. Mr./Mrs. TSUVARNAMALA PATRA	29-12-2025	
Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of total Ac.0.027 decimal, KISSAM - Gharabari, bearing Plot no. 1503, Khata no. 687, in Mouja- Rajapur, Tahasil - Digapahandi, P.S - Digapahandi, Ganjam District, State- Odisha, Pincode - 761012 and land being bounded on: Boundaries: North By: Road, South By: Road, East By: House of Kashinath Reddy, West By: House of Biswanath Swain. The total Area (Extent) of the Site/Land: 1176.12 Sq Ft.			

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers, calling upon them to make payment of the aggregate amount against the respective Borrower/Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice the said amount is payable in relation to the respective Loan account as on the date. It is made clear that the aggregate amount together with further interest and other amounts which may become payable till the date of payment, is not paid, Arcil shall be constrained to take appropriate action for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described. Steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder.

Sd/- Authorised Officer
Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited,
Arcil - 2026 - 011-Trust

Place: Bhubaneswar
Date: 28-02-2026



“We have seen, globally, journalists get the opportunity to specialise in technology, economy, strategy, and so many other sectors so that, they can collect that knowledge and have that research potential which is there in them. Next session onwards, we will start that (in IIMC)”

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | UNION MINISTER

K'TAKA GOVT TARGETS ZERO RABIES DEATHS BY 2030

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao Friday said the state has set a target of reducing rabies deaths to zero by 2030 as he launched the State Action Plan for Dog-Mediated Rabies Elimination, aimed at making the state rabies-free. The State Action Plan for Dog-Mediated Rabies Elimination (SAPRE) seeks to strengthen rabies prevention efforts across the state, he said



of the day quote

The CBG plant will process 150 tonnes of source-segregated biodegradable Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) per day. It will generate 5.6 tonnes of compressed biogas and 28 tonnes of organic manure daily. The project is mutually beneficial to both BPCL and the Kochi Corporation

PINARAVI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

Saab always claimed to be a politician of a different type “maybe after the ceasefire with the high command, he has chosen to be like any other Congressman”

JOHN BRITTAS | CPI(M) LEADER

Under the leadership of Modi ji, we are moving ahead with a clear vision of 'Vikas and Virasat'. We are striving towards progress and economic development while preserving our roots, heritage and culture. The Brahmaputra is not just a river; it is our lifeline, our history and future

SARBANANDA SONOWAL | UNION MINISTER



A demonstration being executed by the Indian Air Force as part of Exercise 'Vayu Shakti', near the India-Pakistan border, in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan. The event was attended by President Droupadi Murmu

Avimukteshwaranand welcomes HC stay on arrest in POCSO case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi (UP), Feb 27: Swami Avimukteshwaranand Sarawati Friday welcomed the Allahabad High Court's decision to stay his arrest in a POCSO case and termed the charge against him “false”, as his disciples and supporters celebrated the development at a Varanasi ashram. The spiritual leader has been accused of sexually exploiting two persons, including a minor. The Allahabad High Court reserved its order on Avimukteshwaranand's anticipatory bail plea and directed that he shall not be arrested till the pronouncement of its order, which is expected in the third week of March. It also asked the state government and the informant to file their replies in the matter and directed the applicant to cooperate in the investigation. Reacting to the high court's grant of interim protection, Avimukteshwaranand said, “Our advocates submitted before the court that these chil-

dren never stayed with us. The children themselves are saying that they stayed in Jyotirmath and not with us.”

Terming the charges against him “fabricated”, the seer expressed his faith in the judiciary.

However, the complainant in the case, Ashutosh Pandey, said in Prayagraj, “This (stay on arrest) is not the final decision of the court; the final order is yet to come. We are hopeful that the innocent batuks (young disciples) will get justice. We will submit our affidavit and evidence before the high court.”

Before the developments in the court, Avimukteshwaranand, Friday, said he was willing to undergo a narco analysis test if it helped establish the truth in the sexual abuse case registered against him. “If the truth can be ascertained through a narco test, it should certainly be done. Whatever methods are available to uncover the truth should be adopted,” he told reporters here.

WB SIR TRAINING MODULE ROW

SC: Judicial officers won't be influenced

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joyimalya Bagchi said the judicial officers would not be “influenced by anything” and the orders passed by the apex court in the matter were as clear as daylight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Feb 27: The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain the West Bengal government's objection over the training module issued by the Election Commission for judicial officers deployed in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joyimalya Bagchi said the judicial officers would not be “influenced by anything” and the orders passed by the apex court in the matter were as clear as daylight. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for West Bengal, mentioned the matter before the bench.

“Something strange has happened. While your lordships passed the order that all the modalities will be settled by the chief justice (of the Calcutta High Court) and the committee, what they have done is, behind the back, they have issued directions to the judicial officers and issued a training module saying this is what they should accept

and this is what they should not accept,” Sibal told the bench. The CJI, however, said the judicial officers deployed for the exercise in the state would take a call. “We can't hear like this. There has to be an end to it,” the CJI said. Referring to the February 20 order of the top court, Sibal argued that the bench had said the chief justice of the Calcutta High Court would decide the modalities.

“We know our judicial officers. They are not to be influenced by anything,” the CJI said. “We have made it very clear what the documents are to be looked into. Our orders are as clear as daylight,” the bench said. Another advocate informed the bench that judicial officers in Kolkata were being trained by the poll panel. “Who else will give the training?” the bench asked, and asserted that neither the poll panel nor the state government would go beyond the orders passed by the apex court. “Our judicial officers understand our orders. It is a completely alien responsibility

which we gave to them,” the bench said, noting that it had already specified the documents to be examined “because we thought we will not leave any grey area”. Sibal further requested that the court direct the publication of supplementary lists as and when people are cleared in the claims and objections process.

The counsel appearing for EC said the poll panel would certainly do it. Dismayed over the ongoing tussle between the West Bengal government and the Election Commission, the top court February 20 issued an “extraordinary” direction to deploy serving and former district judges to assist the poll panel in the controversy-ridden SIR of electoral rolls in the state. On February 24, the top court 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 SIR exercise in the state.

OPS joins DMK

A trusted confidant of late AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa, Ottakara Thevar Panneerselvam, popularly known as OPS, joined arch rival DMK, after unsuccessfully struggling for over three years to rejoin his parent outfit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: Three-time AIADMK Chief Minister O Panneerselvam (OPS), who held top party positions before his expulsion in 2022, Friday joined the DMK in the presence of its president and Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin in what is seen as a shot in the arm for the ruling party ahead of the elections.

A trusted confidant of late AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa, Ottakara Thevar Panneerselvam, popularly known as OPS, joined arch rival DMK, after unsuccessfully struggling for over three years to rejoin his parent outfit. “Are you not embarrassed,” asked the AIADMK, highlighting OPS's meteoric rise in the party and underscored that he had even been the official signing authority to endorse the candidature of party nominees in elections.

Seventy-five year old OPS, a prominent face of the influential Mukkulathor community, who had functioned as AIADMK Treasurer and also held the erstwhile top position of party coordinator, joined the DMK along with his son, P Ravindhranath Kumar and supporters. OPS joining the DMK is expected to strengthen the ruling party more in southern districts where the Mukkulathor community wields solid electoral influence.

Incidentally, OPS, an MLA, is the last man in his camp to move out while his prominent supporters including V Vaithilingam and PH Manoj Pandian had already joined the DMK. Others including JCD Prabhakar joined the TVK. Rajya



Sabha MP R Dharmar is the only noted OPS supporter to accept the leadership of AIADMK chief Eddappadi K Palaniswami.

The legal battles OPS had initiated over his expulsion, targeting the AIADMK brass led by Palaniswami (EPS) did not succeed. EPS had, over the recent years, often labelled OPS as a ‘betrayal.’ EPS had often alleged that OPS supported the DMK by his actions and the former always questioned the latter's loyalty to the AIADMK.

Since last month, following a meeting between OPS and minister PK Sekar Babu, speculation has been rife that the ex-CM will join the DMK. Adding to the speculations, OPS supporter P Ayyappan days ago expressed confidence in the TN Assembly that Stalin-led government would be re-elected.

OPS himself said on February 20 that the DMK has the edge and it would win Assembly polls. Today, Sekar Babu, who was himself an ex-AIADMK leader accompanied OPS to DMK headquarters 'Anna Arivalayam'.

420 killed in attacks by wild animals in Maha in five years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 27: A total of 420 people were killed in attacks by wild animals in Maharashtra in the last five years, with 248 or more than half of these fatalities being caused by tigers alone and another 104 by leopards, state Forest Minister Ganesh Naik said Friday.

In a written reply in the legislative council, he said Chandrapur district in the Vidarbha region alone recorded 47 deaths in 2025 and Rs 8.27 crore have been disbursed as financial assistance to the kin of the deceased. Chandrapur district has more than 200 tigers. From 2023-25, the district recorded 91 deaths due to tigers, while other animals were responsible for 10 fatalities, he said.

The Junnar Wildlife Division (in Pune district) recorded 27 casualties in the last seven years, Naik said.

“In the last five years, 420 people died in the state in attacks by wild animals. Of them, 248 died due to attacks by tigers and 104 by leopards,” Naik said in the written response. Listing out steps taken to curb instances of man-animal conflict, Naik said the state had sent a proposal to the central government to sterilise 150 leopards. After the Centre gave its in-principle approval to the proposal, the forest authorities in Junnar sterilised five leopards.

Earthquake hits B'desh, tremors felt in Kolkata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: Tremors were felt in Kolkata and adjacent districts of West Bengal Friday afternoon, after an earthquake of 5.5 magnitude on the Richter Scale jolted parts of Bangladesh, officials said.

The quake was felt at around 1:22pm, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) official said, and left people in panic.

The tremor was recorded at a depth of 10 km below Earth's surface.

The epicentre of the quake was Satkhira district of Bangladesh, located at some 100 km from Kolkata and barely 25 km from the bordering areas of Taki in North 24 Parganas district, he said.

There was no immediate report of any loss of life or major damage to property in the state, although employees of some establishments in the northern parts of Kolkata claimed that walls developed cracks as a result of the jolts.

The tremors lasted for some 10 seconds, throwing people in Kolkata into panic and tizzy, prompting them to scurry out of their buildings and seek the safety of open streets.

No aftershocks of the quake were immediately felt after the first bout of tremors.

Govt to target 1.15cr HPV vaccinations yearly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: The nationwide campaign for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination which will be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday will target approximately 1.15 crore girls aged 14 years every year across all states and Union territories, the Union health ministry said.

The vaccine will be provided free of cost at designated government health facilities. Vaccination will be conducted at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (primary health centres), community health centres, sub-district and district hospitals as well as government medical colleges and hospitals.

Vaccination will be voluntary and informed consent from parents or guardians will be obtained prior to administration, the ministry said adding the special campaign will run



in mission mode over a three-month period, during which eligible girls can receive the vaccine daily at designated facilities.

Thereafter, the vaccine will continue to be available on routine immunisation days.

“The nationwide rollout marks a decisive move in India's public health journey and fulfils the government's

commitment to advancing the vision of 'Swastha Nari', ensuring prevention, protection and equity at the core of women's healthcare,” the ministry stated.

Each session will be supervised by trained medical officers, supported by skilled healthcare teams. All sites will have functional cold chain points (CCPs) and will be linked to 24x7 government health facil-

The vaccine will be provided free of cost at designated government health facilities

Vaccination will be conducted at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (primary health centres), community health centres, sub-district and district hospitals as well as government medical colleges and hospitals

ities to ensure immediate medical support and management of any rare adverse events following immunisation (AEFI). Single-shot Gardasil 4, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18 which cause cervical cancer as well as types 6 and 11, will be administered during the campaign.

Cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India, with over 1.2 lakh new cases and nearly 80,000 deaths annually as per the GLOBOCAN -- an

online database of cancer cases -- data of 2022.

Scientific evidence establishes that almost all cases are caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of HPV, particularly types 16 and 18, which account for more than 80 per cent of cervical cancer cases in India, the ministry said in its statement.

The HPV vaccines are among the most extensively studied vaccines globally with more than 500 million doses administered worldwide since 2006.

Scientific evidence demonstrates 93-100 per cent effectiveness in preventing cervical cancer caused by vaccine-covered HPV types, the statement said.

In June 2022, the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization of the World Health Organization concluded that a single-dose schedule provides protection comparable to two-dose schedules.



“Countries across the world are looking towards India for solutions to their challenges, and their focus is on the demographic strength of our youth”
 OM BIRLA | LS SPEAKER

CPI(M) TO HOLD MASSIVE RALLY MARCH 24
 The Communist Party of India (Marxist) Friday said it will mobilise masses over the Union government's several "anti-people" policy decisions, and a rally would be held at Delhi's Ramliya Maidan March 24. Addressing a press conference here following a meeting of the party politburo, CPI(M) general secretary M A Baby slammed the BJP-led Union government also over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Israel visit and called it a departure from India's long-held position supporting the Palestinian cause



of the day quote

Delhi government will issue two lakh fresh ration cards this year
 REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

The BJP leaders, driven by their corrupt mindset, first hurl accusations at others that are many times bigger than their own wrongdoings (so that their corruption would look trivial compared to these massive charges against others). But when they are caught, they express
 AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

No prima facie case. No credible evidence. Yet years of incarceration. Nothing is more dangerous than the misuse of power and the weaponisation of institutions. Yet somehow it continues unabated
 MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

POST OF THE DAY

Hapur, Uttar Pradesh Food Safety Department caught adulterated sweets (mithai).
 But instead of destroying it, they threw it into a trash can. People picked up the mithai from the trash can and took it home to eat.
 What can you say to such people??
 @PunsterX

SHORT TAKES

6 killed as sleeper bus hits trailer

Jaipur: Six persons were killed while several others sustained injuries after a private sleeper bus crashed into a trailer in Rajasthan's Balotra district Friday, police said. "Six persons have died in collision between a bus and a trailer near Sarwadi village," Balotra Additional Superintendent of Police Harphool Singh said. He said the crash was severe and front of the bus was badly damaged. Rescue operation began with the help of locals and the injured were rushed to nearby hospitals.

PM Modi to launch projects in Ajmer

Jaipur: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch multiple development projects worth over Rs 16,680 crore and address a public gathering in Ajmer Saturday. Modi is also expected to launch a nationwide campaign for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination for girls aged 14 years. The initiative seeks to prevent cervical cancer, one of the leading causes of cancer-related morbidity among women, and is aimed at safeguarding the long-term health of girls and women across the country.

3 of family die in road mishap in AP

Dhone: Three people of a family died and another was seriously injured after their car was allegedly involved in a collision with a crane near Dhone in Nandyal district Friday, police said. The accident occurred around 1:40 pm today when the car carrying a family of four from Bengaluru was heading to Srisailem, they said. "Three persons from Bengaluru were killed on the spot and one was left seriously injured when the car met with an accident near Dhone today," an official told PTI. A crane is suspected to have come in the wrong direction and collided head-on with the car.

'Fake case hatched to finish off AAP'

The court, while granting the relief to Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia and 21 others in the case, was unsparing in its criticism of the CBI saying its chargesheet "suffers from internal contradictions, striking at the root of conspiracy theory"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: After being discharged by a court here in the liquor policy case Friday, former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah alleging they hatched a conspiracy to finish off the Aam Aadmi Party through a "fake" case which was part of the "biggest political conspiracy" in independent India's history.

The court, while granting the relief to Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia and 21 others in the case, was unsparing in its criticism of the CBI saying its chargesheet "suffers from internal contradictions, striking at the root of conspiracy theory". The court has given a historic verdict, Kejriwal said, adding that the judge showed tremendous courage in passing the order "under the existing circumstances when all institutions are under assault".

"The court has proved that Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and

AAP are 'Kattar Imaandar', " he said, accompanied by former deputy chief minister of Delhi Sisodia.

Slamming the BJP, Kejriwal said he has earned only honesty and reputation in his entire life, which was being attacked by Modi and Shah through a "fake" liquor scam case.

"BJP has thrown Delhi into chaos with problems like pollution, polluted Yamuna, damaged roads... I challenge PM Modi to hold fresh polls in Delhi and if BJP wins over 10 seats, I will quit politics," Kejriwal asserted. After the court verdict, Kejriwal broke down while talking to reporters. The AAP convener was present in the court when the order was passed by Special Judge Jitendra Singh.

Later in the day, addressing a press conference, the AAP chief said that they will file an application in a court for discharge in connection with cases registered by the Enforcement Directorate.

Soon after the court's order, celebrations broke out at Kejriwal's home and AAP workers



AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal during a roadshow after he and party leader Manish Sisodia were discharged by a Delhi court in a liquor policy case, in New Delhi

distributed sweets and danced to dhol beats cheering 'Arvind Kejriwal Zindabad.

"Holi has arrived early," party workers rejoiced as they played with gulaal.

Inside the house, Kejriwal was seen hugging his wife and children, visibly emotional. Sisodia was also part of the celebration.

"Today it is a day to celebrate, truth and honesty win. The fake case that Narendra Modi and Amit Shah tried to create through ED has been exposed," a party worker said.

A senior party leader said that the discharge of Kejriw-

al and Sisodia will boost the morale of AAP workers and strengthen the party ahead of upcoming assembly polls. The MCD polls are also scheduled to be held next year.

Kejriwal's wife Sunita thanked the court and the judge for "bravery". "Arvind Kejriwal led his entire life with honesty and for the progress of the country. But these people, in their greed for power, levelled fake charges, jailed his aides... He had faith in God," she told PTI Videos. Kejriwal said that first time a sitting chief minister was "dragged out of his home and put in jail", and reminded people of his and Sisodia's jail.

The entire case was fake, asserted Kejriwal, who was arrested in the alleged liquor scam case in March 2024 by the Enforcement Directorate.

"Mud slinging was resorted to against us. There were round-the-clock TV debates, and news was flashed that Kejriwal is corrupt," he said, breaking down. Kejriwal said people questioned why he became silent and vanished, after returning from jail.

Meanwhile, Opposition parties said in unison that the development was a blow to the Centre's falsehoods and misuse of investigating agencies, though the Congress termed the BJP and the AAP as convenient allies.

SEDITION PLEA

Parl's lawmaking power absolute: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: The Supreme Court Friday said Parliament has the "absolute prerogative" to enact a law and it is not bound by the undertaking which may have been given by the Centre before the court.

The observations came from a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi which was hearing pleas questioning the validity of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Section 152 of BNS deals with the acts endangering sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

One of the advocates appearing for the petitioners said Section 152 reintroduces Section 124A (sedition) of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code. In May 2022, a three-judge bench of the apex court had put on hold the colonial-era penal law on sedition till an "appropriate" government forum re-examines it and directed the Centre and states to not register any fresh FIR invoking the offence. On Friday, the lawyer said in 2022, the Centre had given an undertaking before the top court that they would review the sedition law.

The counsel said the government cannot reintroduce the provision in BNS after giving an undertaking before the court. "The Union of India may have given an undertaking before the court but Parliament is not bound by it," the bench said, adding, "Parliament has the absolute prerogative to enact a law". The counsel then referred to Section 173 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS) and said it violates the apex court's Lalita Kumari judgement which mandates registration of FIR if the information discloses commission of a cognisable offence. The lawyer argued that section 173 allows the police to conduct a preliminary enquiry to ascertain whether there exists a prima facie case for proceeding in a matter. Observing that Lalita Kumari verdict has been misused a lot, the bench said, "Sometimes judgments are delivered sitting in ivory towers."

The bench said Lalita Kumari verdict also says that a preliminary inquiry may be conducted to ascertain whether cognizable offence is disclosed or not. It posted the matter for hearing after the Holi vacations. Last year, the apex court issued notice to the Centre on a separate PIL against the validity of Section 152 of the BNS.

Acharya Balkrishna receives SFE award

AGENCIES

National / Mohali, Feb 27: Acharya Balkrishna, a renowned Ayurvedic scholar and scientist, has been honoured with the SFE Outstanding National Ethno-Pharmacologist Award at the 13th International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFE) held at National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Mohali.

The award recognises his significant contributions to ethnopharmacology and traditional medicine research. Accepting the honour, Balkrishna said the recognition is a proud moment for Ayurveda and India. He reaffirmed Patanjali's commitment to revitalising Ayurveda and making affordable healthcare widely accessible.

He noted that over 90 evidence-based Ayurvedic medicines and natural therapies developed by Patanjali are providing safe and effective healthcare, with research findings published in reputed international journals.

Dr Anurag Varshney, Chief Scientist at Patanjali, said the award reflects the organisation's dedication to scientific advancement of Ayurveda under Balkrishna's leadership. He also highlighted that Balkrishna has been ranked among the world's top 2% scientists by Stanford University and Elsevier for multiple years. Patanjali described the recognition as a major milestone in strengthening the global scientific standing of Ayurveda and India's traditional medical knowledge.



A foreigner takes part in a protest by members of Congress women's wing and INTUC Seva Dal West Bengal, demanding the resignation of Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri after his name figured in the 'Epstein Files' released in the United States, in Kolkata

SNIPPETS

HC gives nod to disciplinary action against Wankhede

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Friday gave its nod to the continuation of disciplinary proceedings against IRS officer Sameer Wankhede in connection with the 2021 Cordelia cruise drugs case. A bench of Justices Anil Khetarpal and Amit Mahajan allowed the Centre's petition and set aside an order of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) which had quashed the disciplinary proceedings against Wankhede in the matter. "This petition is allowed," said the bench while pronouncing the verdict. The central government challenged the CAT order passed January 19, quashing the 'Charge Memorandum' issued to Wankhede August 18, 2025, by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs.

Jharkhand civic polls: Scribe becomes Hazaribagh mayor

Ranchi: Arvind Rana, a journalist with a Hindi newspaper, won the post of mayor in the civic polls for Hazaribag Municipal Corporation by defeating his nearest Congress-backed rival Sarfarz, the results of which were declared Friday. An official said that in Ranchi, BJP-backed mayoral candidate Roshni Khalkho was leading by 13,511 votes against Congress-supported Rama Khalkho after the first round of counting. As many as five rounds of counting are scheduled to take place. Counting of votes for the polls to 48 urban local bodies in Jharkhand has been underway since Friday morning, and it will conclude Saturday, where the exercise will not be completed by night, State Election Commission Secretary Radhe Shyam Prasad said.

Two more arrested in AI protest case; funds under lens

New Delhi: The police arrested two more Indian Youth Congress workers from Delhi in connection with a 'shirtless' protest at the AI Summit, an officer said Friday. The accused, identified as Girdhar and Kuber Meena, take the total number of arrests in the case to 14, the officer said. The Delhi police is also examining the financial trail behind the protest, which was staged during the high-profile summit earlier this week. Investigators suspect that funds allegedly collected for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections may have been diverted to finance the protest. A senior Delhi police officer said multiple bank accounts linked to the arrested accused are under scrutiny.

HC paves way for release of 'The Kerala Story 2'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Feb 27: The Kerala High Court Friday paved the way for the release of 'The Kerala Story 2-Goes Beyond' film by staying the single judge order which had put on hold the movie's screening by 15 days.

A bench of justices Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and P V Balakrishnan passed the interim order on the appeal moved by the film's producer Vipul Amrutlal Shah late Thursday night, hours after the movie's release was stayed.

In its order the bench said that the single judge's finding that guidelines for certification have not been borne in mind by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) were "merely on the basis of a few clippings and without viewing the movie" and therefore, it "cannot be countenanced".

It further said that once a certificate has been issued, there is, prima facie, a presumption that the authority concerned has taken into account all the guidelines, including public order.

The court also said that this presumption includes that the film has been judged in its entirety from the point of view of its overall impacts, by taking into consideration the principles enunciated in the Cinematograph Act, 1952 and the relevant guidelines.

How are NCERT textbooks prepared?

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: A class 8 NCERT textbook, which carried a chapter about 'judicial corruption', is at the centre of controversy with the Supreme Court imposing a "complete blanket ban" on the book, saying it contains "offending" contents. Here is an explainer on how the NCERT textbooks are prepared:
1. Not a one-man job
 According to NCERT officials, a textbook is not prepared by a single author but passes through a rigorous process

where multiple experts contribute to the content.

2. Curricular Area Group (CAG)
 For each subject, a Curricular Area Group is constituted, which is responsible for finding the right experts for drafting the textbook.

3. Textbook Development Committee (TDC)
 The CAG then sets up the Textbook Development Committee (TDC) for each subject, which comprises academicians, pedagogy and curriculum draft-



ing experts, subject-specific experts and also industry experts.

4. Multi-level review
 The draft chapters prepared by the TDCs typically undergo

a multi-level internal review and consultation before approval.

5. Approvals
 Following the multi-level review, the full CAG and the National Syllabus and Teaching-Learning Material Committee (NSTC) give a go-ahead, keeping in mind the factual correctness and age appropriateness of the content.

6. Are industry experts, government officials, or authorities consulted?
 Some industry experts are part of each TDC to get an opin-

ion on the knowledge requirements of a particular area.

7. How is feedback incorporated?
 Whenever suggestions or substantial feedback are received about textbook content, the NCERT constitutes committees to examine and review the material.

8. Who contributed to the controversial textbook?
 The NCERT textbook, which is now banned, had listed over 60 contributors to the book. Officials, however, did not comment on who contributed to the specific portion.

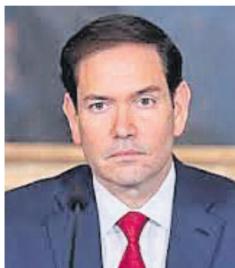


Pentagon has no interest in using AI to conduct mass surveillance of Americans (which is illegal) nor do we want to use AI to develop autonomous weapons that operate without human involvement

SEAN PARNELL | PENTAGON'S TOP SPOKESMAN

RUBIO TO VISIT ISRAEL NEXT WEEK

Secretary of State Marco Rubio will make a quick trip to Israel early next week as tensions between the United States and Iran soar amid a massive buildup of US forces in the Middle East, the State Department said Friday



of the day quote

The island's government is communicating with US officials following the fatal shooting of a US boat in Cuban waters

CARLOS FERNANDEZ DE COSSIO | DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, CUBA

I will start to provisionally implement a massive trade deal with the Mercosur bloc of nations in South America despite not having approval from European Parliament

URSULA VON DER LEYEN | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

It is my belief that during the tenure of Ambassador Mao-ming, Nepal-China friendly relations, cooperation and collaboration will be taken to a new height

SUSHILA KARMI | INTERIM PRIME MINISTER, NEPAL

SHORT TAKES

Protest killing: Hasina named in chargesheet

Dhaka: Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina is among 25 people named in a chargesheet filed by police in a case of murder in the capital during the July Uprising, a media report said Friday.

Sweden intercepts suspected Russian drone

Stockholm: Sweden's military has intercepted a suspected Russian drone off the south of the country as a French aircraft carrier was docked in the port of Malmo, officials said.

Polish Parl okays EU defence loan

Warsaw: Poland's parliament Friday passed a law creating a mechanism to spend 43.7 billion euros (\$51.6 billion) in European Union loans to boost the military, setting up a dilemma for the nationalist president, whose backers want him to veto it.

Taliban seeks 'dialogue' to resolve issues

REUTERS

Kabul/Islamabad, Feb 27: Afghanistan's Taliban rulers said Friday they were willing to negotiate after Pakistan bombed its forces in major cities and dozens of troops were killed in the most serious clashes between the allies-turned-foes.

The strikes by Pakistan were the first time it had directly targeted its former allies over allegations they are harbouring militants; it described the situation as "open war".

Targets in the capital Kabul and the city of Kandahar, where Taliban leaders are based, were hit, signalling a stark rupture in ties between the Islamic neighbours.

Thick plumes of black smoke rose from two sites in Kabul and a huge blaze was also visible in video verified by Reuters.

"The plane came and dropped two bombs, then flew away again. After that, we heard explosions," said Kabul taxi driver Tamim, who was asleep when the strikes hit.

The Taliban said Afghan forces had used drones to hit Pakistani military targets. Pakistan said all the drones had been brought down and there was no damage.

Security sources in Pakistan said the strikes involved air-to-ground missile attacks on Taliban military offices and posts in response to Afghan attacks Thursday.

The Taliban said Afghan forces had used drones to hit Pakistani military targets. Pakistan said all the drones had been brought down and there was no damage.

AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN CONFLICT



- Pakistan carries out air and ground strikes inside Afghanistan
Both sides report heavy losses, issue conflicting tolls
Clashes follow Afghan retaliatory strikes Thursday night

Multiple ground clashes were reported along the border. Pakistan said it killed 130 Taliban officials and militants while Afghanistan said it killed 55 Pakistani soldiers - figures which Reuters was unable to verify.

Pakistan confirmed that 12 of its own soldiers were killed and Afghanistan said it had lost 13 Taliban fighters.

The Taliban, which denies sponsoring militant attacks on Pakistan and makes similar accusations against its neighbour, said it had launched what it described as retaliatory attacks on Pakistani military installations Thursday but was ready to negotiate.

"Afghanistan has never been a supporter of violence and has always preferred to resolve issues based on mutual understanding and respect," the Afghan foreign ministry quoted Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi as telling Qatar's junior Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khalifi by telephone.

"However, this approach will be effective only if the other party demonstrates a practical and sincere willingness to find solutions."

Qatar, which helped stop the fighting between the two countries last year, is working with other countries to help resolve the latest crisis, the statement added. The strikes threaten to unleash a protracted conflict along the 2,600-km (1,615-mile) frontier.

"Our cup of patience has overflowed. Now it is open war between us and you (Afghanistan)," Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said Friday.

Pakistan's foreign ministry warned that any new provocations by the Taliban, or attempts by any "terrorist group" to target Pakistanis, will be met with a "measured, decisive and befitting response".

Pakistan is nuclear-armed and its military capabilities are vastly superior to Afghanistan. However, the Taliban are adept at guerrilla warfare, hardened by decades of fighting with US-led forces, before returning to power in 2021.

Reuters witnesses in Kabul said many ambulance sirens could be heard following loud blasts and the sound of jets.

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said that Pakistani forces carried out air strikes on parts of Kabul, Kandahar and Paktia Thursday night, and on Paktia, Paktika, Khost, and Laghman Friday.

NATIONS SEEK TO RESOLVE CRISIS Amid an escalation of armed clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Russia Friday urged both countries to end the conflict and resolve their differences through diplomatic means.

The Russian Foreign Ministry expressed concern over the "sharp escalation" of armed clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan, "involving regular army units, air force, and heavy weapons".

"There are casualties on both sides, including civilians. We call on our friendly countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, to abandon this dangerous confrontation and return to the negotiating table to resolve all differences through political and diplomatic means," foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in a statement.

China Friday called on Pakistan and Afghanistan to work out a ceasefire while expressing concern over the escalation of the conflict between the two countries.

China is closely following the developments of the situation in the conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here, responding to questions on the current conflict between the two countries.

Shocker for Starmer-led Labour as Green Party wins UK bypoll

REUTERS

London, Feb 27: Hannah Spencer's victory speech on becoming the Greens' fifth lawmaker Friday barely touched on the environmental issues that have defined the party, instead attacking "billionaires" profiting from Britain's working class.

It was a direct challenge to the governing Labour Party of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, criticised by some on the left of his movement for abandoning the party's traditional socialist values to fight a threat from the populist Reform UK.

The landslide victory of the Greens in a so-called by-election in northwest England's Greater Manchester has emboldened the voices calling for Starmer to abandon a strategy of tracking to the right on issues such as tackling illegal immigration to fight Brexit veteran Nigel Farage's Reform.

And while governing parties almost always lose by-elections when voters often air their anger, the thumping defeat could empower those on the left to again challenge Starmer after an attempt earlier this month to force his resignation failed.



- Election winner directly challenges Labour from the left
Unions, lawmakers call on Starmer to change strategy
Gaza message deemed to be divisive, Greens disagree

STARMER STRATEGY NEEDS TO CHANGE, UNION SAYS

The head of UNISON, Britain's biggest trade union which is a large Labour donor, said Starmer was "reaping the electoral consequences" of his strategy in the election for a lawmaker to represent the voting area of Gorton and Denton in parliament.

"A Labour government should be standing up for workers, defending migrants and refugees, and taking the fight to Nigel Farage rather than letting him set the agenda," UNISON general secretary Andrea Egan said in a statement.

"Under Keir Starmer the party is failing on every count, leaving the Greens to fill the vacuum. Cosying up to the rich and powerful, and protecting their interests whilst attacking ordinary working people and the left has singularly failed."

Richard Burgon, a leftist Labour lawmaker who is a member of the Socialist Campaign Group in parliament, said on X the result "means ditching the approach of trying to ape Reform and kicking the left", adding the strategy had "alienated so many people who have voted Labour previously".

Nepal to hold first election since deadly protests

Whoever prevails will become Nepal's 16th prime minister in less than two decades, underscoring the recurring political instability that has marked the Himalayan nation since the monarchy was abolished in 2008

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kathmandu, Feb 27: A former rapper who ran Kathmandu as a mayor. The young leader of Nepal's oldest political party. And a communist veteran politician hoping to return to power after being ousted in youth-led protests in which dozens were killed last year.

They are the three leading contenders as Nepal heads into a crucial nationwide election, the first since the protests led to the fall of former Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli's government in September.

Whoever prevails will become Nepal's 16th prime minister in less than two decades, underscoring the recurring political instability that has marked the Himalayan nation since the monarchy was abolished in 2008.

The protests in Nepal last year revealed the extent of young people's frustration with corruption and a lack of opportunity in the country, where around a fifth of young people are unemployed, but where the children of the political elite seem to enjoy luxury lifestyles and numerous advantages.

After public outrage led to the resignation of the government, millions of Nepalese voters are now gearing up to elect members of the House of Representatives, the powerful lower chamber of parliament. The next prime minister will be chosen after securing a majority in the house.

Balendra Shah, widely known as Balen, is seen as front-runner after emerging as a popular figure during the campaign. He was elected mayor of the capital, Kathmandu, in 2022 and later left the post to become the National Independent Party's candidate for prime minister.



The 35-year-old Shah trained as a structural engineer and later gained modest fame as a rap artist, using his music to take on social issues and politics.

Dressed in his signature black attire and sunglasses, Shah has been touring the country. Supporters often line up to greet him and show support for him and his party.

IAEA blind to Iran's nuclear activities

UN nuclear watchdog says it's unable to verify whether Iran has suspended all uranium enrichment

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vienna, Feb 27: Iran has not allowed the United Nations nuclear watchdog to access nuclear facilities affected by the 12-day war in June, according to a confidential report by the watchdog circulated to member states and seen Friday by The Associated Press.

The report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stressed that therefore it "cannot verify whether Iran has suspended all enrichment-related activities," or the "size of Iran's uranium stockpile at the affected nuclear facilities."

The IAEA report Friday warned that due to the continued lack of access to any of Iran's four declared enrichment facilities, the agency "cannot provide any information on the current size, composition or whereabouts of the stockpile of enriched uranium in Iran."

The report stressed that the "loss of continuity of knowledge over all previously declared nuclear material at af-

ected facilities in Iran needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency."

According to the IAEA, Iran maintains a stockpile of 440.9 kilograms (972 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60 per cent purity - a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent.

That stockpile could allow Iran to build as many as 10 nuclear bombs, should it decide to weaponise its program, IAEA director general Rafael Grossi warned in a recent interview with the AP. He added that it doesn't mean that Iran has such a weapon.

Such highly enriched nuclear material should normally be verified every month, according to the IAEA's guidelines.

Iran long has insisted its program is peaceful, but the IAEA and Western nations say Tehran had an organised nuclear weapons program up until 2003.

The IAEA also reported that it had observed, through the analysis of commercially available satellite imagery, "regular vehicular activity around the entrance to the tunnel complex at Isfahan."

The facility in Isfahan, some 350 kilometres southeast of Tehran, was mainly known for producing the uranium gas that is fed into centrifuges to be spun and purified.

US advises embassy staff in Israel to leave now if they want

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tel Aviv, Feb 27: The US Embassy in Israel Friday told its staff that it could leave the country and urged anyone considering departure to do so immediately, as the threat of an American strike on Iran looms.

US Ambassador Mike Huckabee told embassy employees in an email that discussions with officials in Washington had led to a decision authorizing departures for those who wished to leave.

The email was recounted to The Associated Press by someone involved with the US mission who wasn't authorised to share details. Sent before 10:30 am, it urged staff considering departure to do so quickly, advising them to focus initially on getting any flight out of Israel and to then make their way to Washington.

"Those wishing to take AD should do so TODAY," Huckabee wrote, using an acronym for "authorized departure."

"While there may be outbound flights over the coming days, there may not be," he added.

Huckabee said that there was no need for panic, but for those desiring to leave, it was important to make plans soon. The email came a day after Iran and the United States walked away from nuclear negotiations without a deal. Airlines such as Nether-



lands-based KLM have already announced plans to suspend flights out of Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport, and other embassies have also made plans for authorized departures from Israel and neighboring countries.

Australia on Wednesday "directed the departure of all dependents of Australian officials posted to Israel in response to the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East." India and several European countries with missions in Iran advised citizens to avoid travel to the country as well.

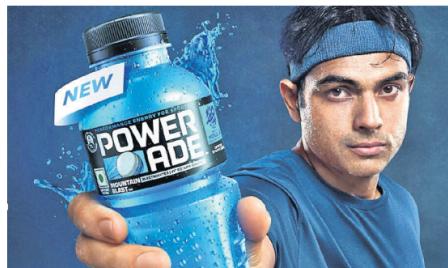
On a town hall meeting Friday after the email was sent, Huckabee told staff that he was encouraging airlines to keep flying.

The departure authorisations signal a new level of contingency planning as a massive fleet of US aircraft and warships mass in the Middle East.



POWERADE ENTERS INDIA
Powerade, Coca-Cola's iconic sports hydration brand, made its debut in India at one of the world's most significant sporting events, the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Powerade's presence as the official sports drink of the tournament aims to reinforce Coca-Cola India's focus on expanding its portfolio with brands rooted in sport, activity and evolving lifestyles

INDIA REMAINS FASTEST-GROWING MAJOR ECONOMY GLOBALLY
GOVERNMENT REVAMPS ECONOMIC DATA FOR ACCURACY
GROWTH AT 7.8% IN OCT-DEC QUARTER; PROJECTED AT 7.6% IN 2025-26
PRIVATE CONSUMPTION EXPANDS 8.7% YEAR-ON-YEAR IN Q3
2026/27 GROWTH SEEN AT 7%-7.4% UNDER NEW GDP SERIES



of the day quote

It is of utmost importance that Indian industry and entrepreneurs rise to the occasion and decisively move towards building India as a true product nation

ASHOK CHANDAK | PRESIDENT, INDIA ELECTRONICS AND SEMICONDUCTOR ASSOCIATION

Our analysis indicates that the current design of the auto PLI scheme, while beneficial for scaling production, inadvertently disadvantages innovation-driven companies that are investing heavily in R&D and new technologies

JAJIT BHATTACHARYA | PRESIDENT, C-DEP

India's affordable housing deficit is most pronounced among economically weaker and low-income households, particularly women, who constitute only 13 percent of homeowners. Addressing this gap necessitates the adoption of sustainable and climate-resilient construction practices

MIO OKA | COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR INDIA, ADB

ECONOMIC GROWTH SLIPS TO 7.8%

New Delhi, Feb 27: India's economic growth slowed in the October-December quarter as government spending and private investment eased, but the South Asian nation remained the world's fastest growing major economy, helped by strong consumption.



The economy grew 7.8% in October-December from a year earlier under a new data series, slowing from 8.4% expansion in the previous quarter. The Indian government's projections under the new data series marginally boosted growth for financial year ending March 31. The economy is estimated to grow by 7.6% in 2025/26, the National Statistics Office said on Friday. It had been forecast to grow by 7.4% under the old data series. For financial year 2026/27, the country's projected economic growth has been revised to 7%-7.4% under the new series, said Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran after the data was released. In his annual report released last month, the economy was projected to grow at 6.8%-7.2% for 2026/27. The South Asian nation will comfortably cross the \$4 trillion

mark in the next financial year, Nageswaran said. **INDIA ATTEMPTS TO OVERCOME TARIFF CHALLENGES** For much of the current financial year, India's economy has contended with uncertainty from tariffs, which have weighed on exports. In response, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration accelerated domestic reforms, including cutting consumer taxes on hundreds of items and pushing ahead with long-delayed labour reforms. Earlier this month, New Delhi reached an interim agree-

ment with Washington that reduces effective tariffs to 18%, easing trade tensions, although the deal has yet to be formally signed. The US Supreme Court's order striking down President Donald Trump's global tariffs may improve India's trade position in its upcoming interim negotiations. Meanwhile, Trump has announced a temporary 10% duty on all nations, including India, and promised to raise it to 15%. **PRIVATE CONSUMPTION REMAINS STRONG** Despite those pressures, pri-

rate consumption remained strong, expanding by 8.7% year-on-year in the October-December period compared with an 8% expansion in the previous quarter. Government spending rose 4.7% year-on-year in October-December, down from a 6.6% increase the previous quarter while private investment grew 7.8%, lower than the 8.4% growth a quarter ago. Manufacturing grew by 13.3% in the third quarter, compared with 13.2% a quarter ago. Financial services and hospitality sectors held strong. Growth in farm output, a sector which employs more than 40% of the workforce, slowed to 1.4% in the current fiscal year from 2.3% a quarter ago. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its key repo rate unchanged earlier this month. **STATISTICAL OVERHAUL** India has overhauled its statistical framework this

year, first updating the consumer price index and now revising the GDP series to better reflect structural changes in the economy. As part of the changes, the government has widened its data sources to include Goods and Services Tax (GST) filings, corporate financial returns and digital platform data to improve coverage of economic activity. At the core of the GDP overhaul is the shift to adopting more granular price deflation to improve accuracy. Until now, it largely deflated only input prices, with heavy reliance on the wholesale price index. The changes are expected to address concerns raised by the International Monetary Fund last year over India's national accounts methodology, including the outdated 2011/12 base year and reliance on wholesale prices, for which it gave the framework a "C" rating.

Centre's fiscal deficit at 63% of full year target

New Delhi, Feb 27: The Centre's fiscal deficit at the end of January stood at Rs 9.8 lakh crore, or 63 per cent of the annual budget target for 2025-26 compared to 74.5 per cent in the year-ago period, government data released Friday showed. The Centre estimates the fiscal deficit (the gap between expenditure and revenue) during 2025-26 at 4.4 per cent of GDP, or Rs 15.58 lakh crore. According to monthly accounts released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), the Centre received Rs 27.08 lakh crore (79.5 per cent of corresponding RE 2025-26 of total receipts) up to January 2026. It comprised Rs 20.94 lakh crore of tax revenue (net to Centre), Rs 5.57 lakh crore of non-tax revenue and Rs 57,129 crore of non-debt capital receipts. The CGA data showed that Rs 11.39 lakh crore has been transferred to state governments as devolution of share of taxes by Government of India, which is Rs 65,588 crore higher than the previous year. Further, total expenditure incurred by Government of India is Rs 36.9 lakh crore (74.3 per cent of corresponding Revised Estimate 2025-26), out of which Rs 28.47 lakh crore was on revenue account and Rs 8.42 lakh crore on capital account.

SHORT TAKES

Forex kitty drops to \$723.608 bn

Mumbai: India's forex reserves dropped by \$2.119 billion to \$723.608 billion during the week ended February 20, the RBI said Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had jumped by \$8.663 billion to a new all-time high of \$725.727 billion. For the week ended February 20, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$1.039 billion to \$572.564 billion, the data released by the central bank showed. Value of the gold reserves dropped by \$977 million to \$127.489 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by \$84 million to \$18.84 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF was also down by \$18 million to \$4.716 billion in the reporting week, according to the apex bank's data.

Norway's sovereign wealth fund exits Adani

New Delhi: Norway's \$1.2 trillion sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, has decided to exclude Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) from its portfolio due to concern about its alleged links to financial crime. Norges Bank, which had in May 2024 excluded Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd, on its website added AGEL to the list of companies that it has decided to exclude from its portfolio. It cited "gross corruption or other serious financial crime" as the criterion for its decision but gave no explanation. When Norges Bank first bought AGEL shares in July 2020, the share price was Rs 341. Today it is Rs 944. While AGEL did not immediately offer any comments, industry officials said a fossil fuel funded sovereign fund is trying to create a narrative against a renewable company.

Bank of Baroda to raise up to ₹10K-cr

Mumbai: State-owned lender Bank of Baroda plans to raise up to Rs 10,000 crore through issuance of green infrastructure bonds March 4. The base issue size is Rs 5,000 crore, with a green shoe option to retain oversubscription of up to Rs 5,000 crore, taking the total issue size to Rs 10,000 crore, market sources said. Bonds will have a tenor of seven years and are scheduled to mature March 5, 2033. The pay-in and allotment date is March 5, 2026.

APRIL-DEC FY26

FDI up 18% to \$47.87bn; inflow from US doubles

Singapore was the largest source of FDI during the period, followed by US, Mauritius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India rose 18 per cent to \$47.87 billion during April-December 2025-26, while the inflow from the US almost doubled to \$7.80 billion during the first nine months of this fiscal, according to government data released Friday. Foreign Direct Investment during April-December FY24 stood at \$40.67 billion. During the October-December quarter of 2025-26, the FDI inflow in equity increased by about 17 per cent year-on-year to \$12.69 billion. However, it dipped by over 23 per cent when compared to the June-September quarter of 2025-26, when the inflows stood at \$16.55 billion. Total FDI, which includes equity inflows, reinvested earnings and other capital, increased by 17.4 per cent to \$73.31 billion during the first nine months of this fiscal year as against \$62.48 billion in the same period of 2024-25. Inflows from the US rose to \$7.8 billion during the latest nine-month period from \$3.73 billion recorded in April-December 2024-25. Singapore was the largest source of FDI during the period, contributing \$17.65 billion.



It was followed by the US, Mauritius (\$4.83 billion), Japan (\$3.2 billion), the UAE (\$2.45 billion), the Netherlands (\$2.29 billion), the Cayman Islands (\$1.97 billion), and Cyprus (\$1.4 billion). The US is the third-biggest investor in India with investments of \$78.46 billion between April 2000 and December 2025. The top investment source is Singapore (\$192.53 billion), followed by Mauritius (\$185 billion) in the same period. Sector-wise, inflows during April-December this fiscal in computer software and hardware rose to \$10.7 billion, which was followed by the inflow in services at \$8.42 billion, and trading at \$3.36 billion. While the inflow in the non-conventional energy sector stood at \$2.53 billion, the automobile sector received \$1.82 billion, construction (infra) activities \$2.1 billion, and chemicals \$702 million during the period.

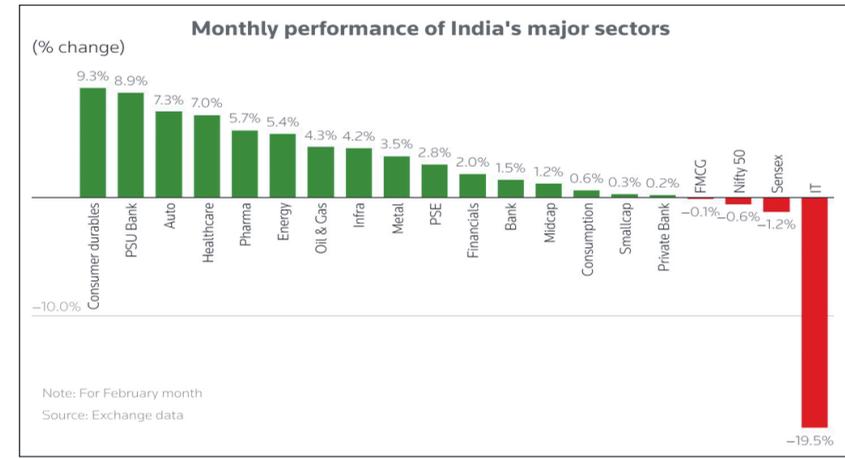
Stocks fall for third month on trot

NIFTY IT FIRMS LOSE \$68.6BN IN MARKET CAPITALISATION IN FEB

REUTERS

Mumbai, Feb 27: Indian shares fell Friday in broad-based declines led by financials, with benchmark indexes posting their third monthly decline, while IT stocks marked their worst month since September 2008 on fears that artificial intelligence could erode their earnings.

IT STOCKS POST WORST MONTH SINCE SEPTEMBER 2008
NIFTY 50 AND SENSEX POST THIRD MONTHLY DECLINE
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS AND CONSUMER DURABLES SEE STRONG GAINS
STATE BANK OF INDIA POSTS BEST MONTH SINCE MARCH 2025



There is now a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the profitability and margin outlook for Indian IT companies because of AI. The road ahead looks murky as investors ponder over the ability of software companies to reinvent their business models for an AI-driven world

SAURABH JAIN | ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, SMC GLOBAL

Its 10 constituents lost about \$62.8 billion in market capitalisation this month after U.S. firms such as Anthropic and Palantir unveiled advances in AI automation tools. Excluding IT, 14 of the 15 other major sectors posted monthly gains. Broader small-cap and mid-cap indexes rose 0.3% and 1.2%, respectively. Public sector banks advanced 8.9%, led by the country's top lender State Bank of India, which gained

11.6% to record its best month since March 2025 on robust earnings. The consumer durables index climbed 9.3% as government tax cuts lifted expectations of a demand revival and stronger earnings. Overall, Nifty 50 companies posted 7.5% year-on-year profit growth in the December quarter, while firms in the broader BSE 500 index recorded a 16% expansion in profit, despite a one-time hit from labour-code

Friday crash wipes out ₹4.98 lakh crore

Investors' wealth was eroded by Rs 4.98 lakh crore Friday as markets faced heavy drubbing, with the Sensex falling over 1 per cent, due to fresh foreign fund outflows and subdued global trends amid rising geopolitical risks. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 961.42 points or 1.17 per cent to settle at 81,287.19. During the day, it dropped 1,089.46 points or 1.32 per cent to 81,159.15. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 4.98,603.42 crore to Rs 4,63,50,671.27 crore (\$5.10 trillion) in a single day.

Gold rises ₹1,800 to ₹1.64 lakh/10g, silver slips ₹2,500

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 27: Gold prices climbed Rs 1,800 to Rs 1,64,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, driven by fresh buying by jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 1,62,900 per 10 grams Thursday. However, silver extended losses for the second consecutive day, declining Rs 2,500, or nearly 1 per cent, to Rs 2,68,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close of Rs 2,70,500 per kg, as per the association. In the international market, spot silver gained \$1.42, or 1.6 per cent, to \$89.72 per ounce; however, gold was trading marginally lower at \$5,172.17 per ounce.

IMFA completes ferro chrome plant acquisition from Tata Steel

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys Ltd (IMFA), the country's leading fully integrated producer of value-added ferro chrome, has announced the completion of the strategic acquisition of Tata Steel Limited's (TSL) ferro chrome plant in Kalinganagar, Odisha. The transaction is valued at Rs 707.26 crore comprising base consideration of Rs 610 crore along with GST and net working capital and has been funded entirely from internal resources. Spread across 115 acres in Kalinganagar, the newly-acquired facility consists of four furnaces capable of producing 100,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) annually which will further



increase to 150,000 tpa when the partially built fifth furnace is commissioned in approximately one year, IMFA said in a statement. Commenting on the acquisition, Subhrakant Panda, managing director, IMFA said, "It is a transformative deal which marks a key milestone in the company's growth journey. We are committed to creating value

for all stakeholders by working towards a smooth and seamless integration which delivers significant operational synergies. Together with our greenfield expansion, it positions us as India's largest producer of ferro chrome and amongst the foremost globally. We will continue to shape the future of ferro chrome - responsibly, sustainably and ambitiously."

CMPDI, WVS Hope sign MoA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ranchi, Feb 27: Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDI), a subsidiary of Coal India Limited, has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with WVS Hope, Ranchi, to provide a dedicated "Animal Rescue Ambulance" under its CSR initiative 'Karuna'. The initiative aims to strengthen public health in the Ranchi Municipal Corporation area through animal birth control measures and anti-rabies vaccination of stray dogs. The MoA was signed by Shishir Dutta, General Manager (HRD/CSR), CMPDI, and Shalini Sinha, Treasurer, WVS Hope. The dedicated animal rescue ambulance will enable WVS Hope, Ranchi, to respond promptly to calls from the local public, CMPDI-Ranchi, the Municipal Corporation, and other agencies for sterilisation and anti-rabies vac-



nation drives. This integrated approach will help control the stray dog population and prevent rabies outbreaks, thereby improving public health in Ranchi. The initiative reflects CMPDI's commitment to safeguarding public health and community welfare while promoting compassionate, scientific, and humane management of stray animals as part of its responsible, people-centric CSR efforts.

RANJI TROPHY

J&K just shy of making history

Five-wicket man Nabi, adventurous Iqbal help J&K reach 186/4, extend lead to 477 runs against Karnataka at the end of Day 4

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hubballi (Karnataka), Feb 27: A by-the-book pacer Aaqib Nabi and an unorthodox opener Qamran Iqbal blended their skills to place Jammu and Kashmir in a prime position to lift their maiden Ranji Trophy title against Karnataka on the penultimate day of the five-day final here Friday.

Iqbal (94 not out) struck his seventh first-class fifty as Jammu and Kashmir reached 186 for four at stumps in their second innings, for an overall lead of 477 runs.

In the earlier part of the day, Nabi took his seventh five-wicket haul (554) of the season as J&K bowled out Karnataka for 293, grabbing an innings lead of 291 runs. Karnataka's first innings revolved around a valiant 160 off 266 balls by former skipper Mayank Agarwal but in the context of the match the knock remained a rather insignificant one.

Nabi was the primary reason behind confining Agarwal's fine hundred to the shades. The J&K pacer was in his elements once Karnataka resumed from overnight 220 for five.

Overhauling J&K's 584 was out of bounds, but Karnataka's realistic hope was to whittle



J&K has shown the world what effort and intent can do. They have made that region so proud of them. Tough environment makes tough people. Aqib Nabi on his way to national colours... England is the place to start in the summer

SOURAV GANGULY | FORMER INDIA CAPTAIN

down the deficit as much as possible and then try to chase a reasonable target in the fourth innings.

Agarwal and Kruthik Krishna (36), seemed to be on course while adding over 80 runs for the sixth wicket.

But J&K's saviour returned when the second new ball was taken. But before Nabi could deal the biggest blow, Sahil Lotra removed Kruthik, trap-

ping the wicketkeeper batter leg before even though the ball might have made a slight contact with the bat.

Left-arm pacer Sunil Kumar ousted Vidyadhar Patil as J&K maintained their upper hand.

But Nabi snuffed out any last vestiges of hope Karnataka entertained, pinged Agarwal's pads and the DRS confirmed the hosts' worst fears.

With one-and-a-half-days play still remaining in the match, Karnataka might have hoped to bowl out J&K cheaply and mount a fourth innings chase, as they had done a couple of times this season.

BRIEF SCORES
Jammu and Kashmir: 584 and 186 for 4 in 57 overs (Qamran Iqbal batting 94)
Karnataka 1st innings: 293 all out in 93.3 overs (Mayank Agarwal 160; Aaqib Nabi 5/54)

Jamshedpur upset East Bengal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Feb 27: Substitute Rei Tachikawa scored a late stunner to help Jamshedpur FC secure a comeback victory in their first away match of the season, beating East Bengal FC 2-1 in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata Saturday.

In what turned out to be one of the most entertaining matches so far, the Men of Steel showed remarkable character to overturn the deficit and registered their third win in a row, beating the Kolkata side in their own backyard.

The Men of Steel knocked on the door as Nikola Stojanovic tried his luck from outside the box with a powerful strike that was comfortably handled by the East Bengal keeper after a neat attacking build-up. However, the hosts struck in the 41st minute to take the lead, forcing Jamshedpur to regroup before the break.

The second half resumed with Jamshedpur showing urgency in search of an equaliser. It finally came soon after when Eze rose highest from a corner to head the ball into the net, bringing Jamshedpur level

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE



and setting up an intense final stretch.

Jamshedpur maintained long spells of possession late in the match, patiently probing for an

opening. The decisive moment arrived in the 87th minute when substitute Rei Tachikawa curled a superb shot into the top far corner to give Jam-

Punjab thrash Bengaluru FC

Bangalore: A clinical first-half brace from Nsungusi Jr. Effiong guided Punjab FC to a 2-0 victory over Bengaluru FC in the Indian Super League here Friday. The Shers registered their first win of the campaign and moved up to seventh in the standings with three points, while Bengaluru FC remain sixth with four points. Nsungusi Jr. was adjudged the Player of the Match. Punjab broke the deadlock in the 20th minute. Manglenhang Kipgen delivered a precise cross into the near post, where Nsungusi Jr rose highest to power a bullet header into the top right corner, giving the visitors the lead. Straight after the water break, Punjab struck again. Nsungusi Jr collected a pass from Ramirez at the edge of the box and drilled a low left-footed effort into the bottom left corner at the near post to make it 2-0.

shedpur the lead. The visitors then held firm through seven minutes of added time to seal a memorable victory. The Men of Steel will next face Inter Kashi at the JRD Tata Sports Complex March 6.

RINKU TO REJOIN SQUAD IN KOLKATA FOR WI CLASH AFTER FATHER'S DEATH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 27: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Devajit Saikia confirmed that left-handed Rinku Singh, who returned home after his father's demise Thursday night due to liver cancer, will join Team India in Kolkata Saturday ahead of their clash against West Indies in the Super 8s clash of the T20 World Cup.

"Rinku Singh will join the team tomorrow in Kolk-



ata," BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia told IANS.

Rinku, who is part of India's T20 World Cup squad, left Chennai at 5:00 am to rush to New

Delhi for the last rites of Khan-chand. Khanchand had been admitted to Yatharth Hospital in Greater Noida February 21 after his condition deteriorated significantly. He was placed on ventilator support before passing away in the early hours of Friday.

Defending champions India face the West Indies in a virtual knockout clash Sunday, with a semi-final berth on the line. The winner of Sunday's match will join South Africa for the semi-finals from Group 1.

T20 WORLD CUP

England beat New Zealand to keep Pak's hopes alive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Feb 27: Already qualified for semifinals, England defeated New Zealand by four wickets to maintain a clean slate in the Super Eights stage and keep Pakistan's hopes alive in the T20 World Cup here Friday.

England have registered three wins in as many matches in the Super Eights. New Zealand are placed second in Group 2 with three points.

Pakistan are placed third with one point and they need to win big against already-ousted Sri Lanka Saturday to dislodge New Zealand from the second spot and qualify for the semifinals.

Earlier, England restricted New Zealand to 159 for seven after the Kiwis opted to bat.

New Zealand batters got starts but couldn't convert them into big scores.

Glenn Phillips (39), Tim Seifert (35), Finn Allen (29) and Mark Chapman (15) all got starts but failed to prolong their stay at the crease.

TODAY'S CLASHES
Sri Lanka vs Pakistan
Time- 7:00 pm

For England, Will Jacks (2/23), Adil Rashid (2/28) and Rehan Ahmed (2/28) were the main wicket takers, while Liam Dawson (1/32) chipped in with a wicket.

Chasing, England started shakily before some useful contributions from Tom Banton (33), Will Jacks (32 not out), skipper Harry Brook (26), Sam Curran (24) and Rehan Ahmed (19 not out) took them home in 19.3 overs.

For New Zealand, Rachin Ravindra (3/19) was the pick of the bowlers.

PRAGUE INT'L CHESS FESTIVAL

Gukesh held by Yakubboev; Aravindh surprises Niemann

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prague (Czech Republic), Feb 27: World Champion D Gukesh played out another draw with Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan, while defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram pulled a rabbit out of the hat to beat Hans Moke Niemann of the United States in the second round of the Masters section of the Prague International Chess Festival here.

Following a draw with Niemann, Gukesh's second white game also did not yield much as Yakubboev seemed well-armed in the Queen's gambit declined. After a couple of trades, the position looked level and Yakubboev uncorked a rook sacrifice to force a repetition of position.

Aravindh continued with his newfound preference for the Philidor Defence, while Niemann seized the early initiative with the white pieces. The American, however, ran short of time at a critical juncture and paid heavily, just when the analytical engines were evaluating his position as winning. Aravindh was quick to capitalise on his chances and soon transitioned into a winning endgame.

Aim to make Odisha gymnastics hub: Patra

RISHABH PAREKH, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 27: The senior & national gymnastics camp which commenced February 11 and will conclude March 15 marks a significant milestone for the Odisha AM/NS India Gymnastics High Performance Centre (HPC).

The selection of the HPC as the official venue to host the national camp is a major achievement, reflecting strong confidence in its world-class infrastructure, high-performance training systems, and integrated sports science support.

In the senior category, Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) athletes Pranati Nayak and Tanu, along with Men's Artistic Gymnastics (MAG) gymnast Tapeswaranath Das from the High Performance Centre, have been selected to participate in the national camp.

Adding to this proud moment, chief coach Ashok Mishra has been appointed as the coach for the senior WAG team at the national camp, further recognizing his expertise and leadership in developing elite gymnasts.



On being asked about the training and exposure in the camp, National Games silver medallist and international gymnast Tapeswaranath said, "Our main targets are Asian and Commonwealth Games. We

have national championships incoming which would be great for the selection process of top gymnasts for the Indian team. We have great foreign coaches here that guide us with our Monday to Saturday routine leaving Sunday to rest."

Mentoring the country's top gymnasts, Rakesh Kumar Patra, Indian gymnastics coach added, "The main thing about gymnastics is artistic, meaning beautiful. WAG gymnastics for girls is the main category which demands choreography. Balance in strength, stability and coordination is what will push woman gymnastics. We are grateful for the top infrastructure and facilities thanks to Odisha AM/NS India Gymnastics High Performance Centre and Ashok sir. The dream is to make Odisha 'a gymnastics hub'."

In the junior category, Odisha's Biru Chandra Rao has been selected for the national camp and will represent India at the prestigious DTB Pokal Stuttgart from March 19-22 in Germany, providing him with valuable international competitive exposure.

Women in Blue lose ODI series against Oz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hobart, Feb 27: Georgia Voll (101) made the most of three lifelines while Phoebe Litchfield hit a belligerent 80 to power Australia to a five-wicket win and an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match women's ODI series against reigning world champions India here Friday.

After India posted 251/9 on a batting-friendly deck following fifties from Pratika Rawal (52) and Harmanpreet Kaur (54), Australia batters romped home with 13.5 overs to spare.

Voll completed her hundred after a dropped catch down the leg by wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh allowed her to scamper for a single. She was dropped twice before reaching her second ODI ton.

Voll added 119 runs for the second wicket with Litchfield to put Australia on track for win after the hosts had lost the T20Is 1-2 earlier.

The 22-year-old was on 19 when Kranti Gaud failed to hold on to a tough chance diving to her front at long on, off Deepti Sharma in the 14th over. Later on, a regulation chance at deep mid-wicket was spilled by Smriti Mandhana off Kashvee Gautam.



Voll eventually fell for an 82-ball 101 with 13 fours and a six. If Voll picked the gaps at will and plundered plenty of runs on the on-side, Litchfield once again tore into the Indian bowlers with her commanding stroke play on either side of the wickets.

With one ODI (two points) and a one-off Test (four points) left to be played, Australia now lead the all-format series 6-4.

The third ODI is scheduled for Sunday at the same venue.

BRIEF SCORES
India: 251/9 in 50 overs (Harmanpreet Kaur 54, Pratika Rawal 52) lost to **Australia:** 252/5 in 36.1 overs (Georgia Voll 101, Phoebe Litchfield 80) by 5 wickets



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ROUND OF 16

Real-City battle; PSG draw Chelsea

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE

Paris, Feb 27: Real Madrid and Manchester City will face off in a Champions League knockout tie for the fifth season running after being drawn Friday to play each other in the last 16, while reigning champions Paris Saint-Germain will take on Chelsea.

The Spanish giants, record 15-time European champions, will host City in the first leg at the Santiago Bernabeu next month before travelling to

England for the return the following week. The clubs have already played each other this season, with Pep Guardiola's City winning 2-1 in Madrid in December during the league phase, in which the Premier League club finished eighth and Real ninth.

That allowed City, Champions League winners in 2023, to advance straight to the last 16 while Madrid had to come through the knockout phase play-offs, in which they beat Benfica 3-1 on aggregate.

This is the eighth season in which the teams have played each other since 2012. Real beat City in the knockout phase play-offs last season, and in the quarter-finals on the way to winning the trophy in

2024. They also emerged victorious in the semi-finals in 2022 with City winning at the same stage the following year.

PSG will be at home to Chelsea in the first leg after qualifying for this stage with a 5-4 aggregate win over Ligue 1 rivals Monaco in the play-offs. Chelsea progressed straight to the last 16 after finishing sixth in the league phase.

Meanwhile, Newcastle United will take on Barcelona with the first leg at St James' Park -- the Spanish side won 2-1 there during the league phase in September.

There is a record total of six English clubs in the last 16. Liverpool will have a rematch against Galatasaray, the Turkish giants

having defeated the Anfield club 1-0 in September in the league phase.

Arsenal will come up against Bayer Leverkusen and Tottenham Hotspur were drawn to play Atletico Madrid.

German champions Bayern Munich will play Atalanta, the sole Italian club left in the competition, while Norwegian upstarts Bodo/Glimt's reward for knocking out Inter Milan is a last-16 tie against Sporting of Portugal.

The first legs will take place March 10 and 11, with the second legs a week later. This season's Champions League final will take place at the Puskas Arena in Budapest on May 30.

DECLARATION
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGISTRATION OF NEWSPAPERS (CENTRAL) RULES 1956
PARTICULARS OF DAILY Orissa POST
(Form IV, Rule 8)

- Place of Publication - Bhubaneswar
- Time of Publication - Daily Morning
- Printer's Name - Adyasha Satpathy
- Nationality - Indian
- Address - B-15, Industrial Estate Bhubaneswar-751010
- Publisher's Name - Adyasha Satpathy
- Nationality - Indian
- Address - B-15, Industrial Estate Bhubaneswar-751010
- Editor's Name - Tathagata Satpathy
- Nationality - Indian
- Address - B-15, Industrial Estate Bhubaneswar-751010
- Name of the Owner - Navajet Printers and Media Private Limited
- Address - 107, Surya Nagar Bhubaneswar-751003

I, Adyasha Satpathy hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Adyasha Satpathy
Publisher, Orissa POST
28.02.2026