



DSPL-675



ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷାରେ ଅର୍ଥ ଆଉ ସାଜିବନି ବାଧକ ନୂଆ-ଓ ଛାତ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ହେବ ସହାୟକ ।

- ❖ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷାର ରୂପାନ୍ତରଣ, ମାନବୃଦ୍ଧି ଓ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ଅଭିବୃଦ୍ଧିକୁ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ରଖି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର 'ନୂଆ-ଓ ଛାତ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି' ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଛନ୍ତି ।
- ❖ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ ଅଧୀନରେ ଥିବା ରାଜ୍ୟର ସମସ୍ତ ରାଜ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ସରକାରୀ ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଅନୁଦାନପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଏବଂ ବିଶେଷ କରି ସାମ୍ବ (SAMS) ପୋର୍ଟାଲ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ ନେଉଥିବା ବେସରକାରୀ ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ମାନେ ଏହି ଯୋଜନାରେ ସାମିଲ ହେବେ ।
- ❖ ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ଶିକ୍ଷାନୁଷ୍ଠାନରେ ପଢୁଥିବା ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଯୁକ୍ତି/ ପିଜି ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ନୂଆ-ଓ ଛାତ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ପରିସରଗତ ହେବେ (ସେଲ୍ସ ଫାଇନାନ୍ସିଙ୍ଗ କୋର୍ସ୍ in PPP Mode ବ୍ୟତୀତ) ।
- ❖ ଛାତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କୁ ୯ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା ଓ ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ୧୦ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାର ବାର୍ଷିକ ବୃତ୍ତି ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯିବ ।
- ❖ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି ଓ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜନଜାତି ତଥା ନିର୍ମାଣ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ପୁଅଙ୍କୁ ୧୦ହଜାର ଓ ଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ୧୧ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାର ବାର୍ଷିକ ଛାତ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଉଛି ।
- ❖ କାଳିଆ ବୃତ୍ତି ପାଉଥିଲେ ପିଲାମାନେ ଏହି ଯୋଜନାର ଲାଭ ପାଇପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ ।
- ❖ ଯେଉଁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ବାପା/ମା ଆୟକର ପରିସରଭୁକ୍ତ ଥିବେ କିମ୍ବା ରେଗୁଲାର ସରକାରୀ ଚାକିରିରେ ଥିବେ / PSU / AUTONOMOUS BODIES ରେ ଥିବେ କିମ୍ବା ଅନୁଦାନପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଶିକ୍ଷାନୁଷ୍ଠାନମାନଙ୍କରେ ଅନୁଦାନପ୍ରାପ୍ତ କରୁଥିବେ, ସେମାନେ ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ପାଇଁ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବିବେଚିତ ହେବେ ନାହିଁ ।
- ❖ କେବଳ ସ୍ୱ ଆର୍ଥିକ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତ ପାଠ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା (ସେଲ୍ସ ଫାଇନାନ୍ସିଙ୍ଗ କୋର୍ସ୍ in PPP Mode), distance course, Open School ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଜରିଆରେ ପଢୁଥିବା ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ଏହି ଯୋଜନାରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ହେବେ ନାହିଁ ।
- ❖ ଡିବିଟି (DBT) ବା ସିଧାସଳଖ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଆକାଉଣ୍ଟକୁ ବୃତ୍ତି ବାବଦରେ ଅର୍ଥରାଶି ପଠାଯିବ । ଏଥିନିମନ୍ତେ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ଆବେଦନ ସମୟରେ ଏକ ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଘୋଷଣାନାମା ଦାଖଲ କରିବେ ।
- ❖ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷାରେ ଉତ୍ତ୍ସାହ ଓ ଗୁଣବତ୍ତାର ଅଭିବୃଦ୍ଧି ନିମନ୍ତେ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଏହି ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ଶିକ୍ଷାରେ ଆର୍ଥିକ ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକକୁ ଏଡାଇବାରେ ସମ୍ମତ ହେବ ।



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Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Brajesh Pathak
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi'
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NRI & Investment Promotion, Uttar Pradesh

Jaswant Singh Saini
Minister of State, Parliamentary Affairs &
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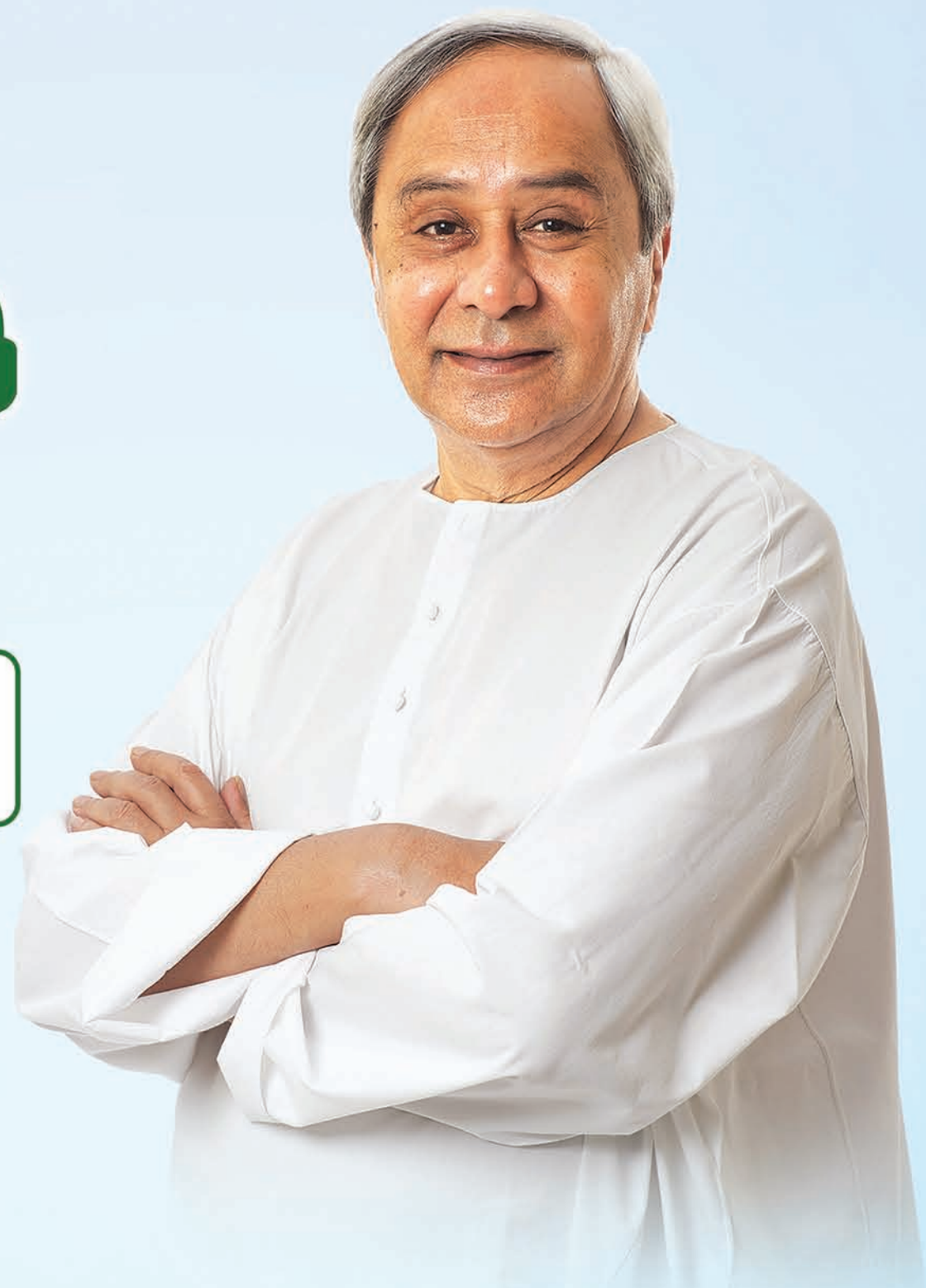
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ଘରେ ଘରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ

ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଯୋଜନାର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ

- ଗ୍ରାମାଞ୍ଚଳରୁ ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ ବସ୍ ସଂଯୋଗ
 - ସୁଲଭ ଓ ନିର୍ଭରଯୋଗ୍ୟ ସେବା
- ମହିଳା, ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟକୁ ସମ୍ବଳ କରିବା
- ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ ଏବଂ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଅର୍ଥ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାକୁ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ
 - ଯାତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ସଡ଼କ ସୁରକ୍ଷାକୁ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ
- ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ ଏବଂ ବୈଷୟିକ ଜ୍ଞାନକୌଶଳ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରିଚାଳିତ ସାଧାରଣ ପରିବହନ



ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ

କଟକ | ସମ୍ବଲପୁର | ଝାରସୁଗୁଡ଼ା
ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣପୁର | କନ୍ଧମାଳ

୧୯ ଫେବୃଆରୀ ୨୦୨୪



ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବହନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

State's first vaccine plant to start production by May



5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian Sunday visited the sub-units of the plant and interacted with its management and employees

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Sapigen Biologix vaccine plant at Odisha Biotech Park in Andharua area of the City here, the first such facility in the state, will start commercial production by May this year, officials said, Sunday.

5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian Sunday visited the sub-units of the plant and interacted with its management and employees. He instructed all government agencies to assist in the commissioning of the plant within the next three months.

The plant will have a capacity to produce 2.4 crore doses

SAPIGEN BIOLOGIX'S PLANT AT ODISHA BIOTECH PARK WILL HAVE A CAPACITY TO PRODUCE 2.4 CRORE DOSES OF DIFFERENT VACCINES PER DAY

AT FULL CAPACITY, THE FACILITY WILL BE THE BIGGEST VACCINE-PRODUCING PLANT IN THE COUNTRY

IT IS EXPECTED TO PRODUCE OVER 15 VACCINES FOR VARIOUS DISEASES, INCLUDING CHOLERA AND MALARIA

THE RS 1,500-CRORE VACCINE PLANT WILL CREATE DIRECT EMPLOYMENT FOR 1,500 PEOPLE, WITH MOST OF THEM BEING LOCAL RECRUITS

of different vaccines per day, they said.

"At full capacity, the facility will be the biggest vaccine-producing plant in the country," the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement.

It is expected to produce over 15 vaccines for various diseases, including cholera and malaria.

The Rs 1,500-crore vaccine plant will create direct employment for 1,500 people, with most of them being local recruits, the CMO said.

The variety of vaccines produced in Bhubaneswar will be supplied to many parts of the world. It will help make Odisha a leader in the field of biotechnology. The project is in complete sync with the motto of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Odisha government - 'Every Life is Precious'.

During the visit, the 5T Chairman assured all assistance from the state government and informed about the Biotechnology Policy which has been approved by the state Cabinet.

The Nabin Odisha Chairman expressed confidence that with this plant, many other biotech-related product companies will get attracted to Odisha Biotech Park, bringing major investments and creating jobs in the field.



DOG SHOW: Various breeds of dogs with their trainers at a show organised as part of Matsya Pranees Samavesh at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

HSC EXAM STARTS FEBRUARY 20

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: The Annual High School Certificate (HSC) Examination for Class-X will commence on February 20 and continue till March 4. The Board of Secondary Education (BSE) set to make use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to monitor the conduct of the annual high school examinations this year.

As per reports, AI-powered cameras will be installed at strong rooms, DEO offices, and examination halls. In case any discrepancies are noticed, the operators at the command will be intimidated about it.

As per the schedule, the examination will begin with the first language Odia paper on February 20 while the exam for the second language English will be held February 23. The students will appear for



Mathematics paper February 26, Hindi/Sanskrit February 28, Science March 2, and social science March 4.

The vocational practical examinations will be conducted in respective schools by OSEPA between January 15 and 31.

The HSC examinations will be held in 2,991 centres in Odisha while 5,51,611 students have registered to appear for the exams. As many as 7,831 students will sit for the SOSOC examination in 55 centres while 3,037 students will appear for the Madhyama examinations at 107 centres.

According to officials, keeping in view the possible heat

wave, there will be no second sitting in the examinations. The evaluation of question papers will start from March 15 and is likely to be completed in the subsequent 12 days.

Meanwhile, amid preparations, thousands of secondary school teachers have been staging protest at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar for the last 11 days. No concrete step was stated to have been taken to resolve the issue, sources said.

The teachers, under the Odisha Secondary School Teachers' Association (OSSTA), are protesting against the alleged failure of the state government to address their 21-point charter of demands. These demands include grants to eligible schools, salary system revisions, removal of pay grade anomalies, extension of retirement age, and pension benefits for retired teachers of unaided schools.

Remuneration hike for matrons

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday announced enhancement in the monthly remuneration of women matrons working in hostels run by the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare department from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000.

This apart, if any working woman matron dies due to misfortune, her heirs will be paid a lump sum of Rs 2 lakh. The CM also announced that they will be given a lump sum of Rs 1 lakh when they stop working at the age of 60. For this, the state government will spend over Rs 15 crore annually.

18 new degree colleges soon

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: The state government has decided to establish 18 new degree colleges in Odisha in this academic year, said Higher Education (HE) Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, Sunday.

The decision came in response to recommendations gathered by 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian during his recent visits to districts, the HE minister said.

Nayak highlighted the government's commitment to addressing faculty crunch by hiring 1,056 lecturers within the next week, building on previous appointments in recent academic years.

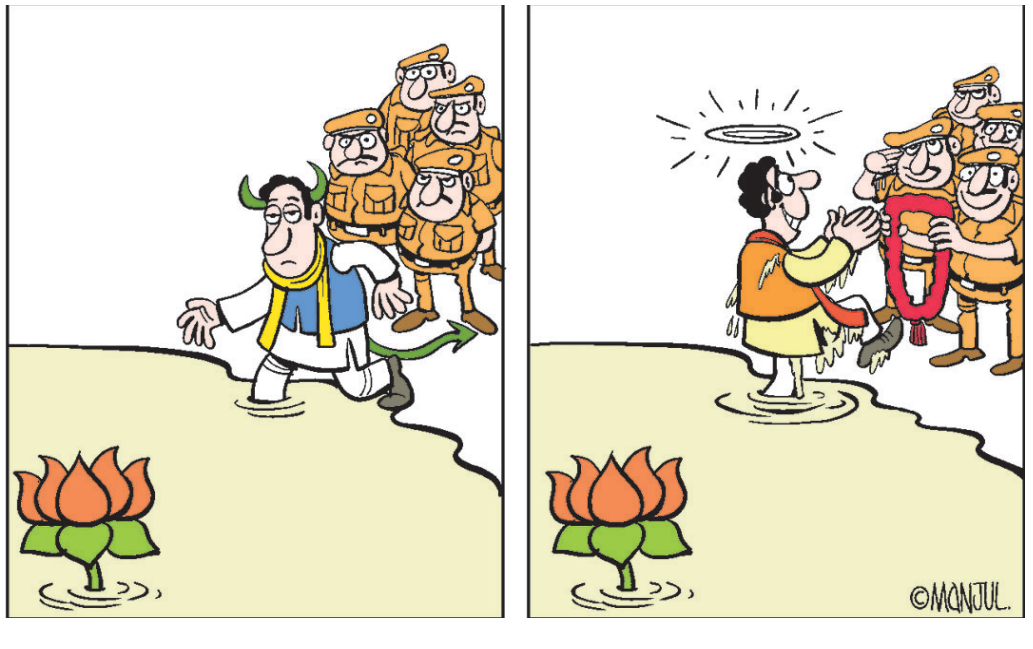
The state's educational landscape has significantly expanded, with the number of degree colleges growing from 548 in 2000 to 1,040 presently, accompanied by an increase in universities from five to 24, the HE minister said.

Man murdered over obscene comments

ANGUL: A man was allegedly killed in Dhenkanal district for allegedly making obscene comments on women, a police officer said, Sunday. The deceased was identified as Dharmananda Dehury of Kandar village. The murder took place Friday night and police arrested the accused, identified as Sridhar Dehury Saturday, the police officer said.

Prabha Tripathy, sub-divisional police officer (SDPO), Kamakhyanagar said Dharmananda, under the influence of alcohol, went to Sridhar's house Friday evening and allegedly passed obscene comments on the women members of the latter's family.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I Golap Mishra, W/o Late Birabadal Mishra of Charchika, Banki, Cuttack, at present village- Kotadwar samil Sunadeipur, Banki, Cuttack, by this affidavit no. 779/7.8.2023 states that my name has been wrongly mentioned as Manjubala Mishra in my deceased husband's service record. Myself Golap Mishra and Manjubala Mishra, W/o Birabadal Mishra is one and same person. Hence this affidavit for all purpose.

Basanti Sarovar now a go-to spot for Steel City denizens

THE WHOLE AREA ENCOMPASSING THE POND HAS NOW BECOME A PLEASANT SITE TO WATCH AFTER UNDERGOING A COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION LAST YEAR



boating facility has further added charm to the pond.

After the fallen statue of the hockey player near the stadium, this pond has become the next favourite spot for denizens. Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) is also showcasing the pond area to attract visitors to the place. Besides, the three-day street food festival, which was introduced last year, is held near the pond.

The whole area encompassing the pond has now become a pleasant site to watch after undergoing a complete transformation last year. Earlier, the pond was like any other uncared for water body filled to the brim with hyacinth and other aquatic weeds.

Earlier used by the nearby slum dwellers to clean dirty clothes, bathe buffaloes, and for angling, the city administration would clean a portion of the mud-filled pond to make way for offering of prayers during the Chhat festival. Besides, with the fall of the day, it would become a haven for drug peddlers and anti-socials.

The pond and its peripheral infrastructure are spread over 10 acre area. The boating facility began August 1 with two motorised boats that can accommodate six persons each in one ride. Besides, there are four pedal boats with sitting capacity of two and four persons.

The charge for a 20-minute ride in the pedal boat is Rs 50 and for the same duration, it costs Rs 120 in the motorised one. The facility is available for visitors from 8am in the morning till 7.30pm in the evening.

Speaking about the park and its facilities, Karunakara Behera, who along with two others has got the lease from the RMC, said, "The boats have been provided by the RMC. We are simply managing and maintaining those. Besides, we are allowing marriage functions on the vacant land on the other side towards the DAV Polytechnic with a nominal charge of Rs 17,000 per day."

"Presently we are incurring losses but are hopeful that in the long run we will make profit out of it. Because we are gradually getting visitors in larger numbers starting this winter," he added.

New app for waste recycling

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: To encourage people to recycle their domestic waste, British Deputy High Commissioner for East and Northeast India Andrew Fleming recently launched here the pilot Recycle Pay App developed by City-based startup Ceiba Green Solutions.

Incubated at the Atal Incubation Centre, Nalanda Institute of Technology Foundation, Ceiba Green Solutions' Recycle Pay App operates on a circular economy business model. It allows users to effortlessly convert their household scrap to instant money by providing them on-demand, free waste pickup service and transparent pricing.

While addressing the audi-

Engineering student dies in road accident

Keonjhar, Feb 18: A 21-year-old youth, an engineering student at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology (IGIT) at Sarang in Dhenkanal district was killed in an accident Sunday morning while travelling on a bike to Maa Tarini temple at Ghatagaon in Keonjhar district. The deceased was identified as Om Prakash Naik of Kusumi village under Pranjank block of Dhenkanal district. The bike rider Ambuja Charan Biswal was also injured in the accident and is currently undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital here.

Om Prakash was second year student of Mechanical Engineering. His family members are in shock after coming to know of his untimely demise.

Sources said seven friends on three bikes left their institute for Ghatagaon at about 4.00am, Sunday. The other students were identified as Shakti Ranjan Sahu (22), Ritesh Sahu (17), Shubhra Jyoti Sahu (18), Chandramani Murmu (23) and Pintu Naik (22).

The mishap occurred when Ambuja lost control of the bike close to Maa Tarini temple. He fell down from the bike, but did not suffer any serious injuries as he was wearing a helmet. Om Prakash, who was without a helmet, suffered serious injuries after falling down from the bike. His head hit a large stone and Om Prakash lost his consciousness. Their friends, who were behind them, rescued Om Prakash and Ambuja and rushed them to the district headquarters hospital in a car.

However, Om Prakash succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Police personnel from town police station rushed to the spot and launched an investigation.

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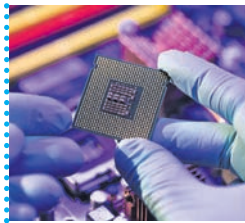
Hundreds detained
Over 400 people have been detained in Russia while paying tribute to Opposition leader Alexei Navalny

INTERNATIONAL | P4



Embracing responsibility
Ananya Panday reflects on turning 25, stressing gradual change over instant transformation and embraces increased responsibility with age

LEISURE | P6



Two chip plants soon
Two full-fledged semiconductor fabrication plants are going to come up in India very soon, says Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar

BUSINESS | P7



Stunning victory
India's women shuttlers win historic gold in the Badminton Asia Team Championships beating Thailand in the final

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY FEBRUARY 19 2024



Biggest in 577 Tests: India crush England

REUTERS

Rajkot, Feb 18: India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and home hero Ravindra Jadeja combined to fashion a 434-run romp to victory against England in the third test Sunday, exposing holes in the touring side's high-risk approach in the process. There was no inkling of any imminent collapse when opener Ben Duckett smashed an 88-ball hundred to lead England's strong reply to India's first-innings 445 at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium. Joe Root then played a highly debatable shot, a reverse scoop against India's premier seamer Jasprit Bumrah, to depart, which triggered a spectacular collapse. Cruising at 224-2, England folded for 319 as they conceded a lead of 126 that allowed India to nose ahead in a contest that had looked evenly poised after two days. Jaiswal then almost single-handedly batted England out of the contest with his unbeaten 214, which allowed India to declare on 430-4 setting England an improbable target of 557. The opener, who retired hurt on 104 Saturday with back spasms, returned to pummel the England attack, equalling Wasim Akram's record of 12 sixes in a test innings. It followed his 209 in the second test in Visakhapatnam.

RISING STAR: India's Yashasvi Jaiswal celebrates scoring 200 runs during the 4th day of the 3rd cricket Test match between India and England, at Niranjan Shah Stadium, in Rajkot, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

Union ministers, farm leaders hold 4th round of talks

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, Feb 18: A panel of Union ministers began the fourth round of talks with farmer leaders here Sunday evening over their demands, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for crops. Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Minister Arjun Munda, Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai reached the Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration in Sector 26 for the talks. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann also joined the meeting. The Union ministers and farmer leaders had met earlier February 8, 12 and 15 but the talks remained inconclusive. The meeting comes amid thousands of farmers from Punjab staying put at the Shambhu and Khanauri points of the state's border with Haryana after their 'Delhi Chalo' march was halted. Besides a legal guarantee of MSP, the farmers are demanding the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations, pension for farmers and farm labourers, farm debt waiver, no hike in electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases and 'justice' for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence, reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, and compensation to the families of the farmers who died during a previous agitation in 2020-21.

Seeking third term for benefit of India: Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted Sunday that the BJP's return to power with a strong mandate is the first condition for India to realise its big goals as he exhorted thousands of party members to work with renewed energy, vigour and enthusiasm for the next 100 days to ensure a big victory. Addressing nearly 11,500 BJP delegates from across the country at Bharat Mandapam here, he said he is seeking power not for 'satta bhog' (enjoying power) but for the country's benefit, and slammed the Opposition, especially the Congress, saying they make all kinds of false promises but lack a road map for making the country developed. This is something only the BJP can do, he said, exuding confidence about his return to power while noting that many foreign countries have invited him for engagements in July, August and September. This suggests that these countries also know that 'aayega toh Modi hi' (Modi's re-election is inevitable). In his 65-minute valedictory speech at the BJP's national convention ahead of the Lok Sabha elections expected in April-May, the prime minister stuck to the



We have to connect with everyone, not for forming government but to build the country

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

message of the country's growth and rising global standing besides his government's measures for empowering every section of society, especially the poor. He asked BJP members to connect with all sections of society, including those who have not been inclined to the party, say-

ing they have to earn the trust of everyone. When everyone makes an effort, then the BJP will win more than 370 seats and the NDA led by its strongest and noted that he was the first prime minister in a few decades to visit the UAE. The Congress government used to look at West Asia through the prism of Pakistan, he said. Five Arab countries have bestowed their highest honours on him. Modi said the nation no longer thinks and dreams small. It now has big dreams and has taken big resolutions to make India a developed country by 2047, he added.

Nadda to continue as BJP prez till June 30

Incumbent party president JP Nadda's tenure has been extended till June 30 in view of Lok Sabha polls as the BJP's national convention Sunday amended the party's constitution, allowing its apex organisational body -- the Parliamentary Board -- to take a decision related to its president, including his or her term and its extension, in 'emergency' situations. A proposal to this effect was brought by the party's general secretary Sunil Bansal. The party president is generally elected through organisational polls after a few elections are carried out in at least 50 per cent of its state bodies. The state BJP organisation poll is also contingent upon elections in district bodies and so on.

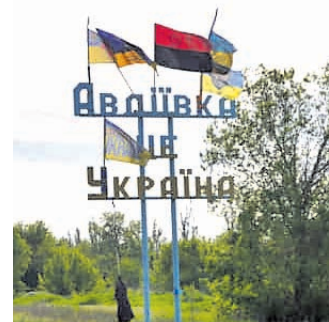
Russia in full control of Ukraine's Avdiivka

REUTERS

Moscow/Kyiv, Feb 18: Russia Sunday said it had full control of the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka after Ukraine withdrew though Moscow said that some Ukrainian troops were still holed up in a vast Soviet-era coke plant after one of the most intense battles of the war.

The fall of Avdiivka is Russia's biggest gain since capturing the city of Bakhmut in May 2023 and comes almost two years to the day since President Vladimir Putin triggered a full-scale war by ordering the invasion of Ukraine. Russia's defence ministry said its troops had advanced 8.6 km in that part of the 1,000-km front line, and that Russian troops were pressing forward after a deadly urban battle that has left the town an almost completely depopulated wreck.

BIGGEST WIN IN 9 MONTHS



- Ukraine forced to abandon eastern bastion of Avdiivka
- Russia says Ukrainian units entrenched at Avdiivka coke plant
- Putin claims important victory, congratulates troops
- Kyiv facing critical shortages of artillery rounds
- White House blames congressional inaction

Ukraine said it had withdrawn its soldiers to save troops from being fully surrounded after months of fierce fighting. Putin hailed the fall of Avdiivka as an important victory and congratulated Russian troops. After the failure of Ukraine to pierce Russian lines last year, Moscow has been trying to grind down Ukrainian forces just as Kyiv ponders a major

new mobilisation and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appoints a new commander to run the war. "The head of state congratulated Russian soldiers on this success, an important victory," the Kremlin said in a statement on its website. Avdiivka, which is called Avdeyevka by Russians, has endured a decade of conflict. It

holds particular symbolism for Russia as it was briefly taken in 2014 by Moscow-backed separatists who seized a swathe of eastern Ukraine but was then recaptured by Ukrainian troops who built extensive fortifications. Capturing Avdiivka is likely to provide a morale boost for Russia ahead of Putin's bid for re-election next month, which he is almost certain to win. US President Joe Biden had warned that Avdiivka could fall to Russian forces because of ammunition shortages following months of Republican congressional opposition to a new US military aid package for Kyiv. It is also seen as another step towards securing Moscow's hold on the regional centre of Donetsk, about 20 km to the east, held by Russian and pro-Russian forces since 2014.

Chandigarh mayor resigns, three AAP councillors join BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 18: BJP leader Manoj Sonkar resigned as Chandigarh mayor and three AAP councillors joined the saffron party Sunday, a day before the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a plea alleging irregularities in the recently held mayoral polls. Sonkar has submitted his resignation to the municipal commissioner, said Chandigarh BJP president Jatinder Pal Malhotra. The Congress and the AAP do not have an alliance and are only befriending the public. They will be exposed before the public, Malhotra told PTI. Meanwhile, senior BJP leader Arun Sood said three AAP councillors have joined the BJP. The BJP had swept the January 30 Chandigarh mayoral polls, in a setback to the Congress-AAP alliance that alleged tampering with ballot papers by the presiding officer. Sonkar had defeated the AAP's Kuldeep Kumar for the mayor's post, polling 16 votes against his rival's 12. Eight votes were declared invalid. Kumar had later moved the Supreme Court. On February 5, the Supreme Court had rapped the returning officer who conducted the Chandigarh mayoral polls, observing that it was obvious that he defaced the ballot papers and that he should be prosecuted, adding that his action amounted to "murder and mockery" of democracy. The court had also ordered preservation of ballots and the video of the poll proceedings besides seeking the returning officer's personal appearance during the next hearing in the case February 19.

Woman shot at by poachers in forest

Bhanjanagar: A young woman sustained critical bullet injuries on her thigh after being shot at by suspected poachers in a forest near Bediguba village under Bhanjanagar police limits in Ganjam district. The incident took place Saturday evening, while the matter came to light Sunday after she was rushed to Bhanjanagar Hospital for treatment. The injured woman identified as Swapna Sahu had gone to the forest along with her mother to pluck sal leaves for making plates Saturday. While she was busy making bundles of the leaves, suddenly a bullet struck her leaving her critically injured.

Tenders floated for Puri int'l airport

Bhubaneswar: The IDCO has invited tenders for the first-phase development, operation and maintenance of the proposed international airport at Puri. The Sri Jagannath International Airport will be constructed near Sipasaruabali in Puri district. The first phase entails work on public-private-partnership mode for 4.6 million passengers per annum (mppa) capacity at an estimated cost of ₹2,203 crore. As per the tender, the eligible bidder will complete the construction work in 1,095 days and maintain it for seven years from the date of commercial operation. The tenders can be submitted between February 21 and April 20.

Japan's 'Naked Men' fest yields to ageing population

■ 'Sominsai' festival is the latest tradition impacted by the country's ageing population crisis

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Tokyo, Feb 18: A steam of sweat rose as hundreds of naked men tussled over a bag of wooden talismans, performing a dramatic end to a thousand-year-old ritual in Japan that took place for the last time. Their passionate chants of "jasso, joyasa" (meaning "evil, be gone") echoed through a cedar forest of the northern Japan's Iwate region, where the secluded Kokuseki Temple has decided to end the popular annual rite. Organising the event, which draws hundreds of participants and thousands of tourists every year, has become a heavy burden for the ageing local faithful, who find it hard to keep up with the rigours of the ritual. The 'Sominsai' festival, re-

garded as one of the strangest festivals in Japan, is the latest tradition impacted by the country's ageing population crisis that has hit rural communities hard. "It is very difficult to organise a festival of this scale," said Daigo Fujinami, a resident monk of the temple that opened in 729. "You can see what happened today -- so many people are here and it's all exciting. But behind the scenes, there are many rituals and so much work that have to be done," he said adding, "I cannot be blind to the difficult reality." **Ageing population** Japan's society has aged more rapidly than most other countries. The trend has forced countless schools, shops and services to close, particularly in small or rural communities. Kokuseki Temple's Sominsai festival used to take place from the seventh day of Lunar New Year through to the following morning. But during the Covid pandemic, it was scaled down to prayer ceremonies and smaller rituals.



The final festival was a shortened version, ending around 11:00pm, but it drew the biggest crowd in recent memory, local residents said. As the sun set, men in white loincloths came to the mountainous temple, bathed in a creek and marched around temple's ground. They clenched their fists against the chill of a winter breeze, all the while chanting "jasso joyasa". Some held small cameras to record their experience, while

dozens of television crews followed the men through the temple's stone steps and dirt pathways. As the festival reached its climax, hundreds of men packed inside the wooden temple shouting, chanting and aggressively jostling over a bag of talismans. **Changing norms** Toshiaki Kikuchi, a local resident who claimed the talismans and who helped organise the festival for years, said he hoped the ritual will return in the future.

"Even under a different format, I hope to maintain this tradition," he said after the festival. "There are many things that you can appreciate only if you take part." Many participants and visitors voiced both sadness and understanding about the festival's ending. "This is the last of this great festival that has lasted 1,000 years. I really wanted to participate in this festival," Yasuo Nishimura, 49, a caregiver from Osaka, told AFP. Other temples across Japan continue to host similar festivals where men wear loincloths and bathe in freezing water or fight over talismans. Some festivals are adjusting their rules in line with changing demographics and social norms so that they can continue to exist -- such as letting women take part in previously male-only ceremonies. From next year, Kokuseki Temple will replace the festival with prayer ceremonies and other ways to continue its spiritual practices.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It was a bad speech by the minister. PM's name could have been mentioned at least three more times

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.6°C	33.2°C
Min Temp	22.5°C	22.0°C
Humidity	91%	87%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

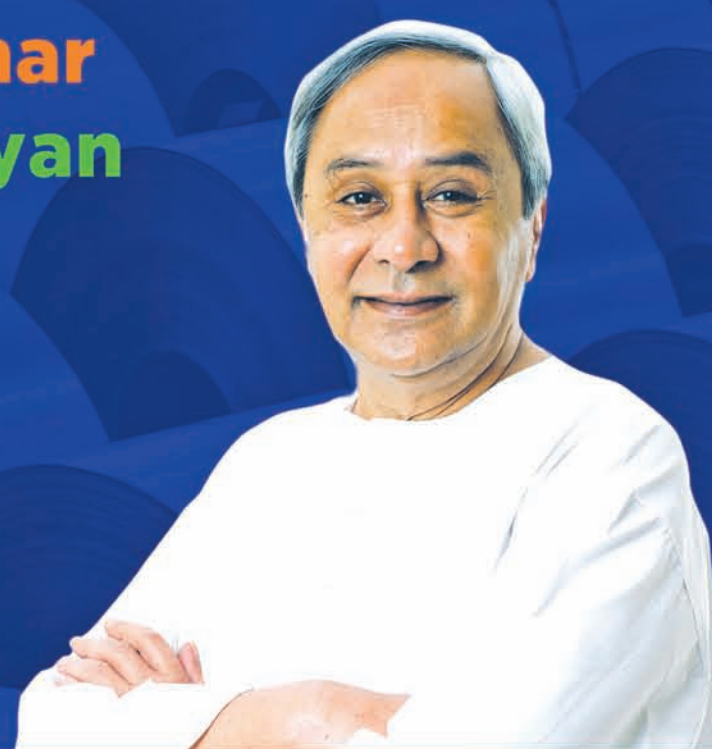
FORECAST
FOG/MIST IN THE MORNING

INSPIRED BY THE HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER SHRI NARENDRA MODI'S VISION OF

AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan



SHRI NARENDRA MODI
HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA



SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK
HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER OF ODISHA

JSW GROUP, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, BREAKS GROUND ON A GREEN FIELD 13.2 MTPA INTEGRATED STEEL PLANT COMPLEX

₹65,000 Cr
Total Investment

30,000
Employment Potential
(direct and indirect)

13.2 MTPA
Integrated
Steel Plant

52 MTPA
Greenfield
Jetty Project

900 MW
Captive
Power Plant

10 MTPA
Cement
Grinding Unit

30 MTPA
Iron Ore Slurry
Transportation
System



Better Everyday

international

of the day quote

We are going in the direction that at the start of Parliament's spring session we can ratify Sweden's accession to NATO

Even now, police are picking up our workers and leaders and pressuring them. This was not the job of any caretaker setup. They exceeded their mandate

Life-saving assistance is not reaching those who need it the most, and we are already receiving reports of people dying of starvation

SHORT TAKES

UK extends visas for Ukrainians

London: The UK government Sunday extended its visa scheme for war-hit Ukrainians who sought refuge in the country in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, allowing an additional 18-month stay on their current terms.

Earthquake jolts northern Afghan city

Kabul: An earthquake struck Mazar-i-Sharif city, the provincial capital of north Afghanistan's Balkh province, and adjoining areas Sunday, with no report about casualties, locals said.

Yemeni military official found dead

Cairo: The Yemeni embassy in Egypt announced Sunday that a senior Yemeni military official was found dead in his apartment in Cairo.

Philippines landslide death toll rises to 98

Manila: The death toll from a landslide in a mining town in Davao de Oro province in southern Philippines has climbed to 98, a regional disaster prevention office said.

Jordan kills five drug smugglers

Amman: Jordanian soldiers have killed five smugglers who allegedly tried to bring drugs into the country from neighbouring Syria, the country's military said.



Nice to see Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki. Exchanged views on the current situation in Gaza

GERMAN LABOUR UNION CALLS STRIKE

A labour union in Germany has called on ground staff for Lufthansa to walk off the job at seven airports Tuesday following a similar strike earlier this month



NAVALNY'S MOURNING Hundreds detained

The sudden death of Navalny, 47, was a crushing blow to many Russians, who had pinned their hopes for the future on President Vladimir Putin's fiercest foe

AGENCIES

Moscow, Feb 18: Over 400 people were detained in Russia while paying tribute to Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died at a remote Arctic penal colony, a prominent rights group reported Sunday.

Navalny remained vocal in his unrelenting criticism of the Kremlin even after surviving a nerve agent poisoning and receiving multiple prison terms.

In an exchange with reporters shortly after leaving a Saturday church service, President Joe Biden reiterated his stance that Putin was ultimately to blame for Navalny's death.

Meanwhile, Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, published a picture of the couple on Instagram Sunday in her first social media post since her husband's death.

Courts in St. Petersburg ordered 42 of those detained Friday to serve from one to six days in jail, while nine others were fined, court officials said late Saturday.

In Moscow, at least six people were ordered to serve 15 days in jail, according to OVD-Info. One person was also jailed in the southern city of Krasnodar and two more in the



city of Bryansk, the group said. The news of Navalny's death came a month before a Presidential election in Russia that is widely expected to give President Vladimir Putin another six years in power.

Questions about the cause of death lingered, and it remained unclear when the authorities would release Navalny's body. More than 12,000 people have submitted requests to the Russian government asking for the politician's remains to be handed over to his relatives, OVD-Info said Sunday.

Navalny's team said Saturday that the politician was "murdered" and accused the authorities of deliberately stalling the release of the body, with Navalny's mother and lawyers getting contradicting information from various institutions where they went in their quest to retrieve the body.

A note handed to Navalny's mother stated that he died at 2:17 pm Friday, according to Yarmysh. Prison officials told

his mother when she arrived at the penal colony Saturday that her son had perished from "sudden death syndrome," Ivan Zhdanov, the director of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Navalny had been jailed since January 2021, when he returned to Moscow after recuperating in Germany from nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin.

Hours after Navalny's death was reported, his wife, Yulia Navalnaya, made a dramatic appearance at the Munich Security Conference.

Ex-Thai PM Thaksin released on parole

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, Feb 18: Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was released on parole early Sunday from a Bangkok hospital where he spent six months serving time for corruption-related offenses.

Thaksin was seen wearing a neck support inside one of the cars in a convoy leaving the Police General Hospital just before sunrise, and he arrived at his residence in western Bangkok less than an hour later.

A polarising figure in Thai politics over the last two decades, Thaksin was in office from 2001 until he was toppled in a 2006 coup. He was later convicted of abuse of power and other misdeeds while in office and returned in August from more than a decade of self-imposed exile to serve his prison sentence.



His original eight-year sentence was commuted to only a year by King Maha Vajiralongkorn September 1. Thaksin had called his convictions politically motivated.

Justice Minister Taweewee Sodsong confirmed approval of Thaksin's parole last week, citing the possibility of early release for inmates who have serious illnesses, are disabled or are over the age of 70.

He was confined to a police hospital in Bangkok. Opponents charged that serving his sentence in a hospital was a special privilege.

ELECTION RIGGING

Imran's party demands judicial investigation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 18: Jailed former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's party Sunday demanded a judicial probe into rigging even as two major political parties failed to reach a power-sharing formula to form a coalition government.

Though independent candidates backed by Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won the maximum number of seats in Parliament, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have announced that they will form a coalition government after the February 8 elections resulted in a hung Parliament.

The post-poll alliance by the PML-N and the PPP could mean that PTI will not be able to form the next federal government, prompting Khan's party to allege that the two rival parties were trying to steal the people's mandate with the help of the powerful establishment.

Khan's beleaguered party received a major boost Saturday when a senior government official in charge of the election process in the garrison city of Rawalpindi alleged that rigging took place and dragged the Chief Election Commissioner and the Chief Justice into it.

Buoyed by the allegations of vote rigging, the PTI Sunday demanded a judicial probe into the manipulation of the results of the elections.

Rawalpindi Division Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chattha in a bombshell press conference Saturday alleged that he oversaw the rigging to deprive the PTI of 13 seats which were given to losing candidates after fake votes were added to their name.

PTI leader Gohar Ali Khan at a press conference said that efforts were made to keep the party out of the electoral arena when people responding to the call Imran Khan went to the polling stations in huge numbers.

"This is the first time a commissioner is raising his voice according to his conscience. He (Chattha) said that he made sure candidates who lost were made to win while those who won were made to lose," he added.

SNIPPETS

China to ramp up patrols near Taiwan

Bangkok: China is stepping up patrols in the waters off the coast of Taiwan's Kinmen archipelago, days after two of its fishermen drowned while being chased by the Taiwanese coast guard, which accused the boat of trespassing.

Israel strikes across Gaza

Rafah (Gaza Strip): Israeli strikes across Gaza killed at least 18 people overnight and into Sunday, according to medics and witnesses, as the United States said it would veto another draft UN cease-fire resolution.

2 officers, 1 first responder killed in shooting

Burnsville: Two police officers and one first responder were shot and killed early Sunday while responding to a domestic abuse call in a Minneapolis suburb, according to a law enforcement association. The deaths of the two Burnsville police officers and the first responder were confirmed by the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, which represents public safety professionals in the state.



A carnival float depicting a queen parades through Place Massena during the opening ceremony of 151st edition of the Nice Carnival in Nice, southern France

TRUMP HAWKS \$399 BRANDED SHOES AT 'SNEAKER CON'

The launch comes a day after a judge in New York ordered Trump to pay a whopping \$355 million in penalties, finding that the former president lied about his wealth for years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Philadelphia, Feb 18: As he closes in on the Republican Presidential nomination, former President Donald Trump made a highly unusual stop Saturday, hawking new Trump-branded sneakers at "Sneaker Con," a gathering that bills itself as the "The Greatest Sneaker Show on Earth."

Trump was met with loud boos as well as cheers at the Philadelphia Convention Center as he introduced what he called the first official Trump footwear.

The shoes, gold lame high tops with an American flag detail on the back, are being sold as "Never Surrender High-Tops" for \$ 399 on a new website that also sells Trump-branded "Victory47" cologne and perfume for \$99 a bottle.

On Friday, a judge in New York ordered Trump to pay a whopping \$355 million in pen-

alties, finding that the former president lied about his wealth for years, scheming to dupe banks, insurers, and others by inflating his wealth on financial statements. That penalty came after Trump was ordered to pay \$83.3 million to the writer E Jean Carroll for damaging her reputation after she accused him of sexual assault.

Trump's appearance was met with clashing boos from his detractors and chants of "USA!" from supporters who arrived at the sneaker event decked out in Trump gear.



HEADS LOVE TRUMP? "There's a lot of emotion in this room," Trump said of the reaction, after holding up and showing off a pair of gold shoes, then placing one on each side of his podium.

As he spoke, the smell of weed occasionally wafted through the room. Some of those who attended said they were unaware Trump would be there and continued to shop as a crowd gathered around the stage.

The attendees skewed younger and more diverse than Trump's usual rally crowds. Trump's campaign is hoping he will be able to win over younger and minority voters, particularly young Black men, in a likely rematch against President Joe Biden in November.

This isn't the first money-making venture Trump has announced since launching his third campaign for the White

House in 2022. Trump last year reported making between \$1,00,000 and \$1 million for a series of digital trading cards that portrayed him, through photo editing, in a series of cartoon-like images, including an astronaut, a cowboy, and a superhero.

Trump's new sneaker website says it is run by CIC Ventures LLC, a company that Trump reported owning in his 2023 financial disclosure. A similarly named company, CIC Digital LLC, owns his digital trading card NFTs, or non-fungible tokens.

A Trump spokesman did not respond to questions about the event, including whether Trump was paid to attend.

national

of the day quote

India has been pushing for a two-state solution to the Palestine issue for many decades and an increasing number of countries are now not only supporting it but seeing it as more urgent than before

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The INSAT-3DS satellite, placed into orbit by the ISRO's GSLV rocket, will transform meteorological services and enhance weather forecasting

KIREN RIJU | UNION MINISTER FOR EARTH SCIENCES

Be aware, they (BJP-led Centre) are deactivating Aadhaar cards. Several Aadhaar cards have been deactivated in many districts of Bengal. They (BJP-led Centre) are delinking Aadhaar cards so that before polls people do not get benefits of Lakshmi Bhandar through banks, free ration

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

SHORT TAKES

Naxalites kill CAF personnel

Bijapur: A Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) personnel was hacked to death by Naxalites at a village market in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Bijapur district Sunday, police said. The attack occurred around 9:30 am in a village under Kutru police station limits, where a CAF team was deployed for security at a market, a senior official said. "A small group of Naxalites attacked company commander Tijau Ram Bhurya, who was leading the CAF team," he said. The Naxalites hacked Bhurya to death with an axe before fleeing the scene, he said. Bhurya belonged to the 4th battalion of the CAF, he said.

PM to visit UP

Lucknow: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on a daylong visit to Uttar Pradesh Monday during which he will lay the foundation stone of the Shri Kalki Dham Temple in Sambhal district and address a gathering there, according to a statement. The temple is being constructed by the Shri Kalki Dham Nirman Trust whose chairman is Acharya Pramod Krishnam, who was expelled by the Congress for "anti-party remarks" days after he had met PM Modi and invited him to lay the foundation stone. The inauguration programme around 10:30 am will be attended by many saints, religious leaders and other dignitaries, said the statement issued Saturday.

3 shot dead

Begusarai (Bihar): A 25-year-old woman and her father and brother were shot dead allegedly by her father-in-law in Bihar's Begusarai district Saturday evening, police said. The incident took place in Bishnupur Ahuk village in Sahebpur Kamal police station area. The deceased have been identified as Neelu Kumari (25), her father Umesh Yadav and brother Rajesh Yadav. They were residents of Sreenagar area of Begusarai district.

Selfie point near LoC in Uri now a major tourist attraction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Uri (Kashmir), Feb 18: A selfie point near the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir has become a major attraction for tourists as it allows them to capture the mesmerising beauty of Uri's remote border region and offers a panoramic view of the Jhelum river, officials said here. The INDIA selfie point provides visitors with an engaging environment symbolising a sense of nationalism in the region, they

said. The army had last year opened 'Kaman Setu', zero-point at the LoC here, for tourists. The selfie point was opened for the public around the Republic Day this year. The selfie point is the brainchild of artist and RFA founder Roubale Nagi. It has been positioned strategically along the National Highway-44 and the structure offers a panoramic view of the picturesque Jhelum river, enhancing the pride of the locals as well as the tourists, the officials said. The army thanked Nagi's foun-



The Constitution belongs to every citizen of the country and efforts to undermine its foundations must be thwarted

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

EMERGENCY LANDING

A Chinook helicopter of the Indian Air Force made a precautionary landing following a technical snag in Punjab's Sangrur district Sunday, police said



Pak increases telecom towers in PoK

This rouge telecom infrastructure supports infiltrating terrorists and their contacts in the Jammu and the Kashmir regions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 18: The number of telecom towers along the Line of Control in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) has been increased in recent times with an aim to aid terrorists and their associates in infiltration activities, officials said here.

Terror groups have been using highly encrypted YSMS services, a technology that merges smartphones and radio sets for covert communication purposes, the officials said after a study of the pattern of infiltration bids and recent terror attacks, particularly in the south of the Pir Panjal range in the Jammu region.

With this technology, a handler of a terror outfit in PoK is connected with the infiltrating group and its reception party in the Jammu region on a telecom network used across the LoC. This is done to avoid detection by the army or the BSF, which guard



the borders with Pakistan. The project for boosting telecom signals has been completely handed over to the Special Communication Organization (SCO) led by Pakistani army officer Maj Gen Umar Ahmad Shah, believed to be formerly working with Pakistan's spy agency ISI. The strategic placement of telecom towers near the LoC and the international border, generally used for aiding terrorists and their associates in infiltration activities, stands in violation of Article 45 of the constitution of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a body under the United Nations. Article 45 of the ITU's constitution requires all 193-member countries to take the steps required to prevent the transmission or circulation of identification signals, "and to collaborate in locating and identifying stations under their jurisdiction transmitting such signals".

The officials said, the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) under the ITU has reiterated that all stations are "forbidden to carry out unnecessary transmissions, or the transmission of superfluous signals, or the transmission of false or misleading signals, or the transmission of signals without identification". The matter is being discussed at the ministerial level for taking it up at the international forum concerned, they said. The new telecom towers are operating on the Code-Division Multiple Access (CDMA) technology and the encryption has been done by a Chinese firm mainly for catering to YSMS operations, the officials said.

This rouge telecom infrastructure supports infiltrating terrorists and their contacts in the Jammu and the Kashmir regions. The deployment of CDMA technology along the LoC has been done with the aim to complicate monitoring efforts as the technology allows multiple signals on a single transmission channel, posing challenges in controlling illegal communications. Past instances of use of such technology in 2019 and 2020 were thwarted by security agencies by breaking the encryption. The officials said the present attempt of terror groups aided by state actors of Pakistan would meet a similar fate. Despite the towering presence of the SCO in PoK, including in Gilgit and Baltistan, telecom towers offer minimal advantages in the Kashmir Valley due to its elevated terrain. But, their signals extend into the Jammu plains, with traces even reaching sensitive places like the Kot Balwal jail area.

Jharkhand announces Bihar-like caste survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Feb 18: Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren has given the go-ahead for a caste-based survey in the state on the lines of neighbouring Bihar, a senior official said Sunday.

The CM has directed the personnel department to prepare a draft (SOP for conducting the survey) and place it before the cabinet for approval, he said. If everything goes according to the plan, the exercise will begin after the Lok Sabha elections, the official said.

Indicating the survey, the CM posted on X, "Jiski Jitni Sankhya Bhari, Uski Utni Hissedari (Bigger the population, bigger the share). Jharkhand is ready".

Vinay Kumar Choubey, principal secretary to the CM, said, "The personnel department will prepare a standard operating procedure (SOP) to conduct the survey in Jharkhand. It will be placed before the cabinet for approval." The caste survey will be conducted on the pattern of neighbouring Bihar, where data collection was conducted between January 7 and October 2 last year, he added. Choubey said that several departments, including rural and welfare, were considered but the personnel department was finalised for carrying out the survey.

He said that if everything goes according to the plan, the caste survey would commence just after the Lok Sabha elections. Legislators of the ruling JMM-Congress-RJD government in Jharkhand have been demanding a caste-based survey in the state.

Nath won't switch to BJP: MP Cong chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Feb 18: Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Jitu Patwari Sunday evening sought to dispel speculation about Kamal Nath's possible switch to BJP, claiming that the senior Congress leader had told him that he was not going anywhere.

"The BJP misuses the media and questions the integrity of a person and this has come to light. I had a talk with Kamal Nath ji who told me that the reports floating in the media were part of a conspiracy. He told me that he was a Congressman and will remain in Congress," Patwari said.

"His relationship with the Gandhi family is unshakable. He has lived with the ideology of Congress and will remain with it till the end. This is what he told

me," the Congress leader said. Asked why Nath was not himself putting forth his side, Patwari said that the MP Chief Minister would speak at the right time. "What I said was on his behalf," he claimed.

Nath and his son and Chhindwara MP Nakul Nath arrived in the national capital on Saturday afternoon, while Nakul Nath dropped Congress from his bio on social media. Around half a dozen Madhya Pradesh MLAs loyal to Kamal Nath reached Delhi Sunday, accentuating the speculation that the father-son duo was set to join the ruling BJP.

In MP capital Bhopal, Nath's Congress colleague Digvijaya Singh expressed confidence that his "old friend" won't forsake the party from where he began his political journey.



A fisherman posts black flag on a boat during a protest demanding for the immediate release of the Rameswaram fishermen who are languishing in Sri Lankan prisons, in Rameswaram, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

Rape survivor alleges sexual abuse by judge in Tripura court



A THREE-MEMBER PANEL HEADED BY DHALAI DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE GAUTAM SARKAR HAS INITIATED A PROBE INTO THE ALLEGATION, A SENIOR ADVOCATE SAID SUNDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Feb 18: A rape survivor has alleged that she has been sexually abused by a magistrate inside his chamber in a court in Tripura. A three-member panel headed

by Dhalai District and Sessions Judge Gautam Sarkar has initiated a probe into the allegation, a senior advocate said Sunday. The woman alleged that the incident of sexual abuse took place on February 16 when she went to the chamber of first class judicial magistrate, Kamalpur to get her statement recorded in connection with her rape. In her complaint to the additional district and sessions judge, Kamalpur, the woman stated, "I went to the chamber of the first class judicial magistrate to get my statement recorded on February 16. When I was about to give my statement, the judge groped me. I rushed out of his chamber and informed the lawyers and my husband about

the incident." The woman's husband also lodged a separate complaint with the Kamalpur Bar Association over the incident. Acting on the survivor's complaint, District and Sessions Judge Gautam Sarkar, along with Chief Judicial Magistrate Satyajit Das, visited Kamalpur's additional district and sessions judge's office to investigate the matter. "The three-member panel headed by the district and sessions judge also met the members of Kamalpur Bar Association on the court premises and sought our point of view on the allegations of the woman. We placed our points before the panel," Shibendra Dasgupta, secretary of the advocate body, said over phone. Responding to the allegation brought against the judge, Registrar General, Tripura High Court, V Pandey said, "We have not yet received any official complaint regarding the issue. Like other people of the state, I too came to know about it from the media and social media platforms. Once we receive a complaint in a proper format, we will definitely take appropriate action."



Red Fort reopens

New Delhi: The historic Red Fort complex, which was closed for visitors about a week ago due to security reasons in view of a farmers' march, has been reopened, official sources said Sunday. The iconic Mughal-era monument, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in old Delhi, was "suddenly sealed" late Monday night "due to security reasons". It was reopened a couple of days ago, "a source at the Archeological Survey of India said. However, the Red Fort is regularly closed for visitors Mondays, so they will not get entry inside the complex February 19. The site was temporarily closed amid a massive deployment of police and paramilitary forces in central Delhi in view of the farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' march.

REGIONAL OFFICE (SAMBALPUR REGION) CORRIGENDUM With reference to the "E-Auction Sale Notice" published in The Orissa Post on 18.02.2024 in the above address Regional Office (Sambalpur Region) should be read as Regional Office Sambalpur instead of Regional Stressed Assets Recovery Branch: Sambalpur. All other facts remain unchanged. Dt. 18.02.2024/Authorised Officer

निवेशक शिक्षा और जागरूकता अभियान म्यूचुअल फंड्स के बारे में और अधिक जानने के लिए इसमें अवश्य भाग लें. बुधवार, 21 फरवरी 2024, शाम 7:00 बजे से. रजिस्ट्रेशन अनिवार्य है. रजिस्ट्रेशन का समय सुबह 9:30 बजे से शाम 6:00 बजे तक होगा.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BIDDYADHARPUR CANAL DIVISION, BIDDYADHARPUR Bid Identification No. SEBCD-22/01 of 2023-24

Name of the Procurement Office	Name of work	Bid No.	Tender Cost in Lakhs (Approx.)	EIMD cost	Cost of bid document (Online)	Availability of tender	Date of opening
Superintending Engineer, Bidyadharpur Canal Division, Bidyadharpur	Supply of security personnel for engagement at Salandi Dam, Hadagarh, Salandi Barrage, Bidyadharpur, Salandi IB, Bidyadharpur Office and Head Regulators (HR) of SRMC and SLMC for the period from April-2024 to March-2025.	SEBCD-23/01 of 2023-24	44.38	45000/-	6000/-	From 19.02.24 11.30 hrs. To 29.02.24 17.00 hrs.	01.03.24 11.30 hrs.

leisure



MUSIC HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY ESCAPE: GLORIA

Singer Gloria Esteban recently admits that music has always helped her through her toughest times. She told *Billboard*, "For me, lyrics and music have been something that had me sit with the records and read who wrote everything. I read the lyrics, I absorbed them! It helped me through very difficult times and has been my escape."

RUSSELL BROKE LEGS FILMING ROBIN HOOD

Actor Russell Crowe broke both legs while filming *Robin Hood*. It wasn't until years later that he felt mysterious pain, attributing it to a decade-old incident where he hurriedly executed a scene, jumping onto inadequately prepared terrain, without recognizing the severity at the time.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
You will be in a tight fix as the day starts. However, that's exactly the kind of situation in which your skills are tested. In the evening you will draw a lot of praise for your excellent performance. If Ganesh chooses to shower his blessings on you, you will sign new deals.

TAURUS
This day is meant for taking some time out from your busy schedule, and seeking some fun and relaxation. So says Ganesh. It is possible that you will be getting together with your friends and family members for a fun filled evening followed by a great dinner and a late night movie.

GEMINI
You are likely to be in a romantic mood today. You may just end up falling in love today. A difficult situation will bring out the competitive streak in you and spur you on to physical and mental excellence. Your capacity and intelligence will be testified to by your work, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will focus on financial matters and plan accordingly. Compared to expenses, you will save more. A beneficial day for cashiers, money lenders and petty traders. Ganesh counsels hard work to achieve success.

LEO
You will be unable to express the feelings that rise up inside you in spite of wanting to. However, keep them close to your heart. You will be very serious about your work today. There is a possibility of some delay in your schedule today due to unforeseen problems, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
In all likelihood, you will be eager to grab the monetary challenges that come your way, as they only enhance your desire for success. You will bring up new ideas and better methods of tackling the challenges on hand. Ganesh gives you an assurance that your present business views will do you a world of good.

LIBRA
Ganesh advises you not to take stress about small issues or matters. To avoid tension and to gain mental peace it is advised you perform yoga or meditation. There will be pressure put on you regarding certain matters at the work-front. You should take decisions regarding critical matters only after carefully weighing the pros and cons.

SCORPIO
Thank Ganesh that you have the grace to handle pressure at work, because today, you are going to be bogged down with a lot of work pressure. By the end of the day, try some stress busting activities like yoga, meditation of listening to soft music.

SAGITTARIUS
Ganesh predicts a day full of romantic developments today. Mushy talks and whispering sweet nothings in your beloved's ears may give you little joys of life. However, brace yourselves as there are times when relationships do not work out, and you may experience this soon.

CAPRICORN
Your lover is in for many pleasant surprises today. You'll be in a completely romantic mood, making every wish of your sweetheart your command. Both of you will go shopping, and have fun. Extravagant expenditures will keep you charged up for the day. You will achieve what you had wanted, that is the happiness of your sweetheart.

AQUARIUS
Travelling is on the cards for you today. Ganesh advises you to travel alone, because if you take people with different tastes along with you, their preferences may dampen your mood and spoil the trips. But, once put in such a situation, you will try to adjust yourself and find enjoyment in that, too.

PISCES
Your planetary configuration not being favorable, you are advised not to start any new projects today. The benefits accrued by any project you take up today might not justify the risks associated with it. Businessmen need to be extra careful in all their dealings.

Ananya: Not a child anymore

Mumbai: Actress Ananya Panday is enjoying the current phase of her life, having completed a quarter of a century. She admits that turning 25 has marked a significant shift in her perspective on life and career.

"I'm already halfway through my 20s. I think we make a big deal out of every birthday. This also happens on New Year's, you just see a big change in one day...but it doesn't happen like that," she tells us, highlighting the introspection that often accompanies reaching such a pivotal age.

Reflecting on the expectations and pressures associated with reaching a certain age, she emphasises that real change and evolution happen gradually, over time.

The *Student of the Year 2* actress also acknowledges a sense of increased responsibility with age as she says, "I feel like I've let go of the childhood excitement and I feel like I'm properly going adult now, but I feel like that's something anyone can decide on at any age, like someone can make that decision at 21, while someone at 30 might not feel that change."

"Initially, my excitement for acting stemmed from the thrill of being on the big screen, dancing, and singing. However, as I delve deeper into projects like *Gehraiyan* and *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan*, my passion shifts towards the acting process. I aspire to make meaningful contributions to storytelling, showcasing diverse facets of myself, even in minor roles, to offer audiences something unique," concludes Ananya.



Films are reflection of society: Shilpa

New Delhi: Actress Shilpa Shetty has said that films in the 90s were looked at as a medium to 'escape from reality' and things were far-fetched, hence, the actresses were glamorous because one 'didn't want to see drab stuff.'

Shilpa has been ruling the roost since her debut in 1993 with *Baazigar*. Since then, she has made her mark in many 90s and 2000s films. And with *Indian Police Force*, the actress made her series debut on a streaming platform in 2024.

Talking about filmmakers now taking women seriously as compared to the 90s, Shilpa told IANS: "Times have changed and with time, content has changed. Films are nothing but a reflection of the fabric of our society. Back in the day I think films were looked at as a medium to kind of escape from reality. So,

things were far-fetched, actresses were glamorous because you didn't want to see drab stuff. And there was a clear dichotomy between art films and commercial cinema. Today, I feel lines are blurred."

"In today's society, emphasis is on quality content reflecting the modern woman's identity. Examples like Shefali Shah in *Delhi Crime*, Vidya Balan in *Shakuntala*, or Tara Shetty in *IPF* showcase this shift. Adapting to the times is crucial, comparing decades is futile as the future remains uncertain," she concluded. IANS



Tollywood is patriarchal, male-dominated: Radhika

Mumbai: Actress Radhika Apte's remarks on the Telugu film industry have stirred online debates. She critiques its patriarchal nature, emphasising mistreatment of women and her personal struggles. Social media discussions vary from industry critique to individual accountability.

In an old interview with film critic Rajeev Masand, she sparked controversy by criticising the Telugu film industry. She stated, "The one industry I've struggled the most with is Telugu. That industry is so patriarchal, sort of male-dominated... male chau-

vinist. It's unbearable the way women are treated."

The actress, who has appeared in a variety of Indian language films, including Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu, highlighted her struggles within the Telugu industry. She added, "Even their part in the films is like *My Man is the God*. On set, you are treated like some third person and the actor! They don't even ask the actors anything. You know, they say that the actor's mood right now is not good, and he wants to have Chai. I have constantly struggled, and I put an end to it. I have realised that's it for me."

Apte's bold remarks have ignited a stir on social media platforms. Some social media users claimed it was an act to defame the industry, while others argued that the actions of a few individuals should not tarnish the reputation of the entire industry. AGENCIES



Rakul shares her aspirations

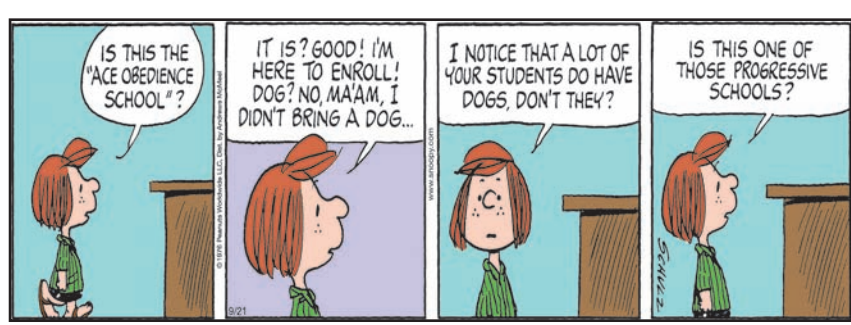
Mumbai: There are quite a few actresses in the Hindi industry who have tried their hands at other departments of filmmaking too after being an actor. From Hema Malini and Konkona Sensharma to Kangana Ranaut, the actresses went on to direct films; likewise, there's Juhi Chawla, Shilpa Shetty Kundra, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Anushka Sharma, Deepika Padukone, and Alia Bhatt, who turned producers while juggling their careers as an actor. Now, actress Rakul Preet Singh says that given a choice between direction and production, she would pick the latter.

She shares, "I don't think I can direct. Considering I am good with numbers, I might produce. But direction is something I don't think I can ever do. I think that's not my cup of tea, and so I don't even want to try." Interestingly, her boyfriend, Jacky Bhagnani, is an actor turned producer, and we wonder if her interest in production comes from there.

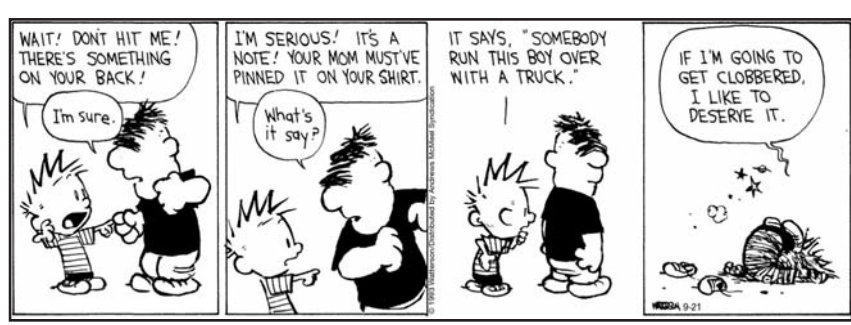
Rakul and Jacky's wedding celebrations will take place over two days, from February 19 to 20, and the wedding will take place on February 21. AGENCIES



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

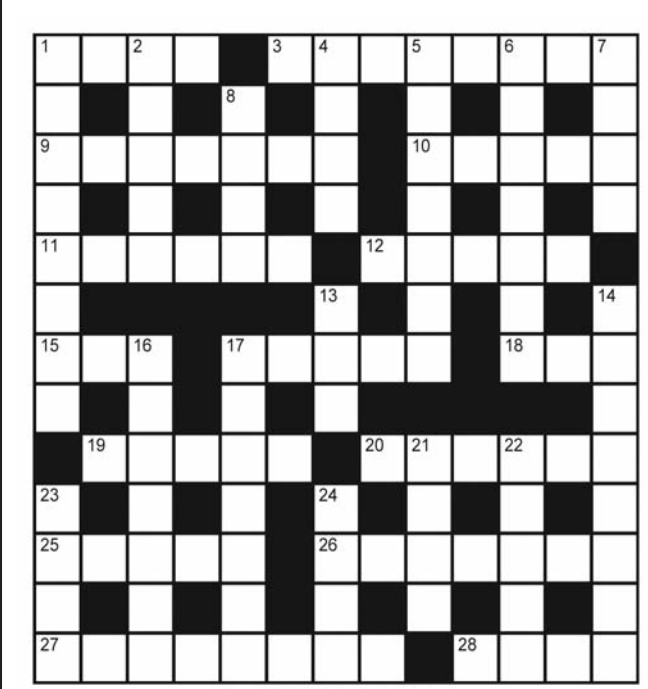


BREVITY



FUN post

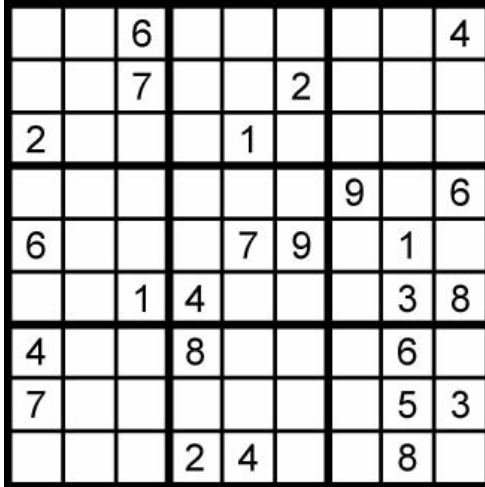
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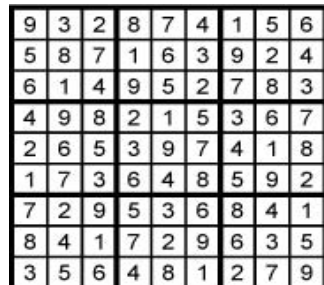
- Across**
- 1 Buck
 - 3 Complete computer nerd
 - 9 Fatty, as tissue
 - 10 Demolish
 - 11 Clone
 - 12 Biscuit
 - 15 Prune
 - 17 Bridge support
 - 18 In-flight info, for short
 - 19 Mountain nymph
 - 20 Prolonged revelry
 - 25 Razz
 - 26 Role model
 - 27 Like some apex and sloths
 - 28 Red Planet
 - 6 Radical
 - 7 Hardy cabbage
 - 8 After fish or finger
 - 13 Pool tool
 - 14 Vagabonds
 - 16 Cause vexation
 - 17 Bulldozer
 - 21 Nobleman
 - 22 Words to live by
 - 23 Ancient gathering place
 - 24 Samoan capital

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

