

# MASSIVE BLAST At Ordnance Factory Bhandara KILLS 8

- Five others injured
- OF Bhandara appoints probe panel
- CM Fadnavis declares Rs 5 lakh aid to family of each deceased

■ District Correspondent  
BHANDARA, Jan 24

AS MANY as eight persons were killed and five others sustained serious injuries in a massive explosion around 10 am on Friday at Ordnance Factory Bhandara (Jawaharnagar). The Ordnance Factory Bhandara appointed a probe panel to investigate cause of the blast.



Rescue operation underway after a blast at the Ordnance Factory in Bhandara district, Maharashtra on Friday. (PTI)

There were 13 workers in the shift at the Low Temperature Plastic (LTP)-23 building at the time of the explosion. The loud sound of the explosion was heard in the radius of around 15 kms. The explosion created a big crater. It led to fire and subsequent building collapse. People from nearby areas could see smoke rising from the site.

Abhishek Naamdass, District Disaster Management Officer, confirmed the death of eight persons in the incident. Five others were critically injured.

The names of the deceased are Chandrashekar Goswami (59), Manoj Meshram (55), Ajay (Contd on page 5)

## Deeply saddened: Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI, Jan 24 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said he is "deeply saddened" over the explosion at an ordnance factory in Bhandara in which 8 people were dead.

Singh said rescue teams are deployed at the site of the blast and all efforts are being made to provide assistance to the affected people. MoD is yet to put out details of the blast officially.



# EAM Jaishankar meets Indonesian President Subianto

NEW DELHI, Jan 24 (PTI)

INDONESIAN President Prabowo Subianto gracing the upcoming Republic-Day celebrations as the chief guest will be a fitting celebration of the cherished friendship between India and Indonesia, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday. Jaishankar made the comments after meeting the visiting leader. The Indonesian President arrived here on Thursday night on a three-day visit, primarily to attend India's 76th Republic-Day celebrations at Kartavya Path on Sunday.

"Pleased to call on President Prabowo Subianto @prabowo of Indonesia at the start of his State Visit to India," Jaishankar said on X. "Value his guidance and pos-

itive sentiments for the development of our multifaceted bilateral ties. President @prabowo's participation as Chief Guest in India's 76th Republic Day will be a fitting celebration of our cherished friendship," the External Affairs Minister added.

The Indonesian leader will hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

The entire gamut of bilateral cooperation, including in the areas of defence and security, trade and investment, health-care, energy, connectivity, tourism and people-to-people relations, will be reviewed at the talks, people familiar with the matter said.

Several MoUs (memoranda of understanding) and announce-

ments are likely to be concluded during the visit, they said.

It is Subianto's first visit to India as the head of State.

He will be the fourth Indonesian president to attend India's Republic-Day celebrations. Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia, was the chief guest at India's first Republic-Day celebrations in 1950.

A 352-member marching and band contingent from Indonesia will be participating in the Republic-Day parade at Kartavya Path.

This will be the first time that an Indonesian marching and band contingent will participate in a national-day parade abroad.

There has been an upswing in the India-Indonesia ties in the last few years.

# John Ratcliffe confirmed as CIA Director

WASHINGTON, Jan 24 (IANS)

THE US Senate has voted to confirm former Director of National Intelligence (DNI) John Ratcliffe as the next Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director under President Donald Trump.

The Upper Chamber on Thursday voted 74-25 to approve the nomination of Ratcliffe, who served as Trump's Director of National Intelligence for the last eight months of his first term, Xinhua news agency reported.

Confirming the news, the White House shared a post on X and wrote, "@JohnRatcliffe's confirmation as Director of the CIA marks a significant step in advancing President Trump's



Vice President J D Vance swears in John Ratcliffe as CIA Director as his wife Michele holds the Bible in the Vice Presidential ceremonial office in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House campus on Thursday in Washington. (AP/PTI)

vision to restore America's strength on the world stage."

As DNI Director, Ratcliffe led a shift in the US Intelligence Community's priorities to gain a decisive strategic advantage over China and provided oversight of numerous operations to remove designated terrorist leaders from the battlefield.

Director Ratcliffe also made the historic decision to elevate space to a priority intelligence domain by adding the US Space Force as the 18th member of the US Intelligence Community and received the National Security Medal, the nation's highest honour for distinguished achievement in the field of intelligence and national security, according

to White House.

As a Congressman, Ratcliffe was a leading policy maker on national security issues as a member of the House Intelligence, Homeland Security and Judiciary committees.

Ratcliffe previously served as a US House representative for Texas's 4th congressional district from 2015 to 2020.

Twenty-one Democrats joined Republicans in supporting Ratcliffe's nomination, indicating bipartisan support in a divided political climate.

Thursday's vote took place three days after the Senate unanimously confirmed US Senator from Florida Marco Rubio as Secretary of State.

# BPCL's Andhra oil refinery to cost Rs 95,000 crore, costliest so far

NEW DELHI, Jan 24 (PTI)

STATE-OWNED Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (BPCL) proposed 9 million tonnes a year oil refinery-cum-petrochemical complex in Andhra Pradesh is likely to cost around Rs 95,000 crore, its Director (Finance) Vetsa Ramakrishna Gupta said. This will be India's costliest refinery project so far. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) will this year commission a similar size unit at Barmer in Rajasthan at a cost of Rs 71,814 crore. In Modi Government's first term, a mega 60 million tonnes oil refinery and petrochemical complex was proposed at Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra at a cost of Rs 3 lakh crore but the project hasn't seen the light of the day because of land acquisition issues.

In an investor call with analysts post announcement of third quarter earnings, Gupta said the BPCL board last month approved an expenditure of Rs 6,100 crore on pre-project activities such as land acquisition and commissioning of detailed project report (DPR) and certain feedstock studies.

"Roughly the initial indication of capex requirement will be around Rs 95,000 crore at gross level," he said, adding the Andhra Pradesh Government has also indicated a



good amount of capital subsidy incentives.

He however did not indicate the fiscal support from the state Government.

"We will come to a final number in December when DPR and feed study will be over," he said. "Parallely, we are exploring (to induct) a joint venture partner."

No details were given.

The refinery is likely to be commissioned in 48 months from the final investment decision (FID). Giving details of the refinery, he said it will be a coastal refinery and land has been identified. "We are looking for 6,000 acres of land... Land has been identified and an acquisition process has to start."

It will take 6 to 9 months to complete DPR and feedstock studies to be carried out.

"Significant amount of pre-invest-

ment (needs to take place) before taking any financial decision," he said. The refinery will be of 9 million tonnes a year capacity (crude oil processing capacity). This processing will produce 3-3.5 million tonnes of fuels like petrol and diesel, and 3.8-4 million tonnes of feedstock of petrochemicals.

The pre-project activities include initial studies, land identification, and acquisition, preparation of detailed feasibility report, environment impact assessment, basic design engineering package, and front-end engineering design.

BPCL is India's third largest oil refiner behind state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Reliance Industries Ltd.

It currently owns refineries at Mumbai (12 million tonnes a year capacity), Kochi in Kerala (15.5 million tonnes) and Bina in Madhya Pradesh (7.8 million tonnes). It had lost a fourth oil refinery to Oil India Ltd in the aborted privatisation plan.

BPCL had to give up its Numaligarh refinery in Assam to Oil India Ltd when the Government was attempting to privatise the company. The transfer was to keep the Numaligarh unit within the public sector to honour the Assam Accord. But BPCL privatisation was aborted due to lack of interest by bidders.

# WEF Annual Meet ends

■ By Barun Jha  
DAVOS, Jan 24 (PTI)

THE World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025 ended on Friday with a call for working together in this era of uncertainty, after five days of intense discussions on politics, economy, climate and conflicts among various other issues.

Attended by over 3,000 global leaders from 130 countries and from politics, business, academia, civil society and various other areas, the meeting saw discussions spread over more than 500 sessions. In addition, this small city saw hundreds of other sessions held on the sidelines.

With the geopolitical and economic landscapes undergo-

ing a paradigm shift, the meeting explored how to unlock the benefit of new technologies responsibly, strengthen social and economic resilience, safeguard the planet, and advance regional and global security.

"The future does not just unfold. The future is shaped by people," WEF Founder and Chairman Klaus Schwab said.

"By embracing constructive dialogue and believing in our collective capacity and commit-

# World leaders call for working together in era of uncertainty

ment to improve the state of the world, we can shape the Intelligent Age, as an era where every human being can realize their full potential," he added.

"We are in one of the most complex and consequential

moments in generations, when fast-changing geopolitical, economic and technological currents are shaping our societies and our industries and will do so for years to come," WEF President and CEO Borge Brende

said. "In this era of uncertainty, we must find ways of working together because force cannot replace discourse and conflict cannot replace compromise," he added.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said, "From the Middle East to Ukraine, to Sudan and beyond, we still face an uphill battle. We will never give up in calling for peace... But peace grounded on values: The UN charter, international law, including international humanitarian law, and the principles of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of states."

A series of discussions addressed the situation in the Middle East.

## India puts up big show, returns with Rs 20 lakh cr investment commitments

■ By Barun Jha  
DAVOS, Jan 24 (PTI)

AS THE five-day World Economic Forum Annual Meeting ended on Friday, Indian leaders said they could see trust for India in eyes of all global leaders and that was reflected in investment commitments

totalling over Rs 20 lakh crore with Maharashtra grabbing the biggest pie of almost 80 per cent.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who led the largest ever Indian delegation of five Union Ministers and several leaders from States including three Chief Ministers, said trust and talent are the biggest fac-

tors attracting the world to India.

All States and Central Government departments shared space for the first time at two India Pavilions and a joint press conference was held for the first time by State and Union ministers, coming from half a dozen different parties to put up a unified 'Team India' face.

"We are in Davos at a very important juncture in our global geopolitical and geo-economic scenario. Despite all the disruption and all the issues the world is facing, India has emerged as a very trusted country which respects IP rights, a country where democracy is vibrant," Vaishnaw said.

# Federal judge **TEMPORARILY BLOCKS** Trump's executive order ending birthright citizenship

SEATTLE, Jan 23 (AP)

A **FEDERAL** judge on Thursday temporarily blocked President Donald Trump's executive order ending the constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship regardless of the parents' immigration status.

US District Judge John C. Coughenour ruled in the case brought by the States of Washington, Arizona, Illinois and Oregon, which argue the 14th Amendment and Supreme Court case law have cemented birthright citizenship.

The case is one of five lawsuits being brought by 22 States and a number of immigrants rights groups across the country. The suits include personal testimonies from attorneys general who are US citizens by birthright, and names pregnant women who are afraid their children won't become US citizens.

Signed by Trump on Inauguration Day, the order is slated to take effect on February 19. It could impact hundreds of thousands of people born in the country, according to one of the lawsuits. In 2022, there were about 255,000 births of citizen children to mothers living in the country illegally and about 153,000 births to two such parents, according to the four-state suit filed in Seattle.

The US is among about 30 countries where birthright citi-



zenship — the principle of *jus soli* or “right of the soil” — is applied. Most are in the Americas, and Canada and Mexico are among them.

The lawsuits argue that the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees citizenship for people born and naturalised in the US, and states have been interpreting the amendment that way for a century.

Ratified in 1868 in the aftermath of the Civil War, the amendment says: “All persons born or naturalised in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.” Trump's order

asserts that the children of noncitizens are not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and orders federal agencies

to not recognise citizenship for children who don't have at least one parent who is a citizen.

A key case involving birthright citizenship unfolded in 1898.

The Supreme Court held that Wong Kim Ark, who was born in San Francisco to Chinese immigrants, was a US citizen because he was born in the country. After a trip abroad, he faced being denied reentry by the federal government on the grounds that he wasn't a citizen under the Chinese Exclusion Act.

**The case filed by Washington, Arizona, Illinois and Oregon argue 14th Amendment and SC case law which cemented birthright citizenship**