



STARTLING CLAIM

Actor Kangana Ranaut claims that a top rated actor of the Hindi film industry has been spying on her for a while

LEISURE P2



IRAN PARDONS PRISONERS

Iran pardons 'tens of thousands' of prisoners including some arrested in recent anti-government protests

INTERNATIONAL P10



EMPHASIS ON FIELDING

Ahead of the Test series against Australia, the Indians are training hard to improve their close-in catching

SPORTS P12

Pakistan's ex-military ruler Musharraf dies

AGENCIES

Islamabad/Dubai, Feb 5: Pakistan's wily former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil War in 1999, died Sunday in Dubai after battling an incurable disease.

Musharraf, 79, who lived in self-imposed exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in Pakistan, died after a prolonged illness at American Hospital in Dubai.

He was suffering from amyloidosis, a rare disease caused by a build-up of an abnormal protein called amyloid in organs and tissues throughout the body, according to his family.



In a statement issued immediately after Musharraf's death, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistan military, said that Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad and all the services chiefs express their heartfelt condolences.

"May Allah bless the departed soul and give strength to the bereaved family," it said.

Musharraf's family has filed an application in the Pakistani consulate in Dubai to shift the former military leader's body to Pakistan.

His illness came to light in 2018 when his party - the All Pakistan Muslim League (APML) - announced that the former military ruler was suffering from amyloidosis. In June last, he was hospitalised in Dubai for three weeks.

MORE ON PAGE 10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I love my govt. It has always kept me in the zero-tax slab and never made any effort to provide me employment

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.5°C	31.4°C
MIN	14.0°C	14.8°C
Humidity	40%	53%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	MAINLY CLEAR SKY	

DRIVE AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE

Assam's 2am crackdown leaves women in lurch

2,278 ARRESTED IN 3 DAYS IN NORTHEASTERN STATE'S RUTHLESS ACTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Morigaon, Feb 5: Nimee's eyes do not sparkle with the joy of new motherhood, instead, they reflect fear, insecurity and sense of foreboding that stalks her village in Assam's Morigaon district.

Rezina Khatun stares vacuously into the distance - trying to make sense of the sudden apocalypse, which has struck her till-now happy world.

While Nimee is among the thousands of child brides whose husbands were arrested in a statewide crackdown against child marriage by the Assam Police over the last three days, Rezina is a mother whose son's romantic escapade, which had ended with marriage, has landed him in jail now.

In the drive against child marriage, police till Sunday arrested 2,278 people, including Hindu and Muslim priests who conducted such weddings. Police said there is a list of a total 8,000 accused.

The police had registered 4,074 cases of child marriage in less than a fortnight after the state Cabinet decided January 23 to arrest offenders, besides launching an extensive awareness campaign against the menace.

"There was a knock on the door



Women who are allegedly involved in child marriages, at a government-run shelter home amid Assam government's statewide crackdown on child marriages, in Morigaon district

around 2 am Thursday. We opened the door and found policemen outside. They took away my husband," Nimee told PTI in a feeble voice, as her one-and-half-month-old son cried in her arms just as he had when his father was being arrested.

The 17-year-old had eloped and tied the knot with Gopal Biswas,

who is in his twenties, more than a year back, and they were starting off their family with the husband providing for them by selling pakoras and other savouries.

The names of those affected were changed to protect their identities.

"We barely earn enough to feed our own families. Who will look

after Nimee and her son? She has been inconsolable, barely eating anything. The child is also getting sick now," said Yudhishter, Gopal's elder brother, who lives in the same house along with their aged parents.

Rezina's son Rajibul Hussain was picked up from their home around 6 pm Thursday, barely a few minutes after he had reached home with his father after returning from a trip to Kerala, where they had gone to bring back his injured uncle.

"My daughter-in-law is not underage but there was some error in her Aadhaar card due to which my son is now behind bars. She has gone to our native place, some distance away, to get her birth records," Rezina claimed, trying to convince whoever cared to listen.

A neighbour of the family claimed that many like Rajibul's wife were not minors at the time of the marriage but their dates of birth were wrongly entered while enrolling for Aadhaar cards.

"Data on the age was taken by the police from local health workers, who have the information based on the Aadhaar. Now, we are helping these women to get their original birth records so that their husbands can get bail," he claimed.

Contd...4

Mother bear, 2 cubs killed in accident



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, Feb 5: A mother bear and its two cubs were killed after being hit by an unknown vehicle at Patana on the Ajodhya-Mitrapur road under Nilagiri forest range in Balasore district, in the wee hours of Sunday.

The mishap occurred when the mother bear was crossing the road with its two cubs. An unknown vehicle hit them and sped away. The three animals died on the spot.

Nilagiri forest ranger Aisha Akhtari Nisha reached the spot with forest officials and conducted an investigation.

Carcasses of the animals were recovered and a veterinarian conducted their post-mortem. Later, the carcasses were buried at a forest nursery near Sajanagarh.

Notably, the mother bear and its two cubs had strayed into nearby

villages in search of food and were returning back to the jungle in early morning when the mishap occurred.

The bear is a Schedule I animal protected under the Wildlife Protection Act for which attacking the animal is a punishable offence. Environmentalists said that shrinking forest cover has led to the loss of habitat for the animal and shortage of food in the forest. As a result, the animals often stray into nearby human habitats at night in search of food.

This results in man and animal conflicts as their straying into human habitats threatens the safety of humans while endangering the lives of the animals.

Moreover, the animals end up losing their lives either in attack by villagers or in road accidents while returning to forests in the morning.

Centre bans over 200 Chinese apps

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 5: Following constant complaints against Chinese loan and betting apps, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has started the process of banning 138 betting apps and 94 lending apps that had Chinese links, on the instructions of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

The MeitY was recently instructed by the MHA to ban such apps, which operate through a third party link.

Sources said that all these apps were found violating Section 69 of the IT Act and contained material which was deemed as a threat to India's sovereignty and integrity.

As per sources, these apps were used to trap financially strapped people in a debt trap by increasing their interest on loans up to 3,000 per cent.

Many such people who were caught in the debt trap committed suicide when the people working

for the apps mentally harassed them. The issue came to the fore after several cases of suicides by borrowers were seen in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

On the other hand, the Chinese apps can potentially misuse server-side security by using them as spying tools as they have access to the important data of many Indians.

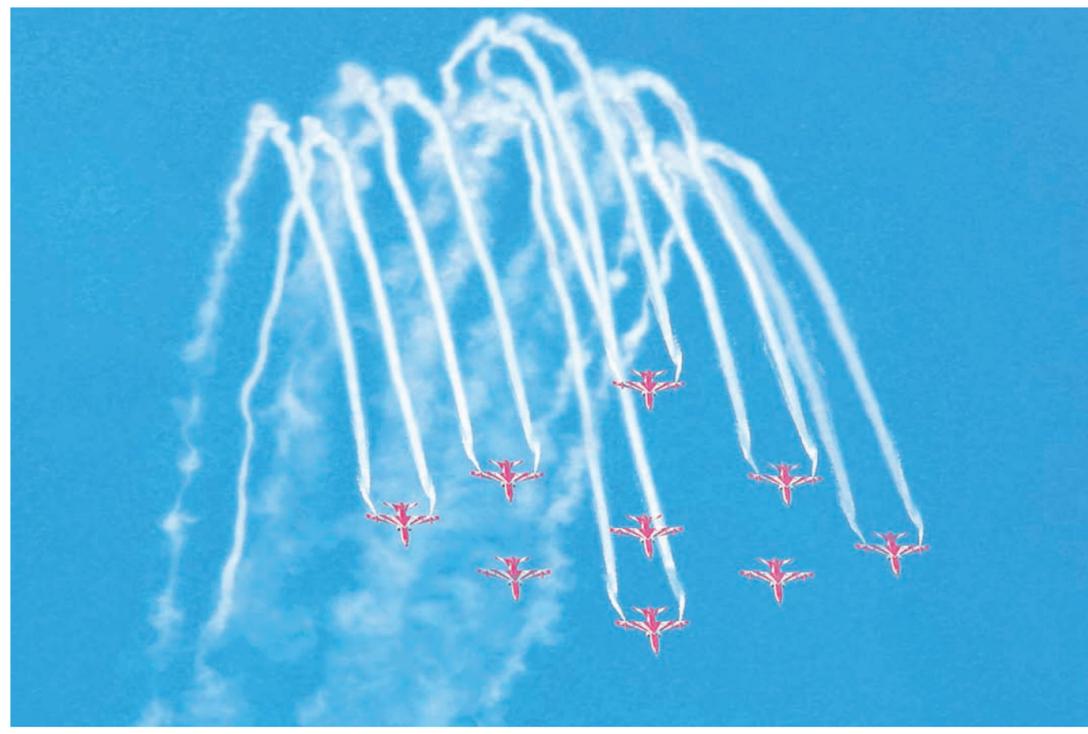
Access to such data can be used for espionage on a large scale, due to which all such apps are being considered as a threat to the country.

The MHA had started investigating some Chinese loan-giving apps around six months ago.

It was revealed that 94 such apps were available on the e-store and operated through third party links.

Around that time, security agencies had asked the Ministry to impose a ban on such betting and loan-lending apps.

Significantly, the Centre had banned 54 Chinese apps that posed a threat to the country's security in 2022.



GLORY IN THE SKY: Indian Air Force's team Surya Kiran performs an aerobatic display at Shankhumukham in Thiruvananthapuram, Sunday

US DOWNS CHINESE SURVEILLANCE BALLOON

AGENCIES

Washington/Beijing, Feb 5: The US military has downed the suspected Chinese spy balloon over the Atlantic Ocean and launched a mission to recover all the equipment from its debris, drawing a strong reaction from China which Sunday warned of repercussions over America's use of force against its civilian unmanned airship.

At the direction of President Joe Biden, the US military at 2.39 pm EST Friday shot down the Chinese surveillance balloon in the Atlantic Ocean, some six miles (9.65 kms) away from the US shores in South Carolina, with no damage to the life and properties of Americans, a senior defence official told reporters in Washington. "I told them to shoot it down,"



Biden told reporters in Hagerstown, Maryland. "Wednesday, when I was briefed on the balloon, I ordered the Pentagon to shoot it down as soon as possible. They decided - without doing damage to anyone on the ground - the best time to do that was as it got over water, outside within the 12-mile limit," Biden said.

MORE ON PAGE 10

India turning Russian oil into the West's fuel

New Delhi meeting the West's twin goals of crimping Moscow's energy revenue while preventing an oil supply shock

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 5: India is playing an increasingly important role in global oil markets, buying more and more cheap Russian oil and refining it into fuel for Europe and the US, the Bloomberg reported.

Yet New Delhi has faced little public blowback because it's meeting the West's twin goals of crimping Moscow's energy revenue while preventing an oil supply shock. And as Europe ramps up sanctions, India is only going to become more central to a global oil map that's been redrawn by Vladimir Putin's year-long war in Ukraine.

"US treasury officials have two main goals: keep the market well supplied, and deprive Russia of oil revenue," said Ben Cahill, a senior



fellow with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "They are aware that Indian and Chinese refiners can earn bigger margins by buying discounted Russian crude and exporting products at market prices. They're fine with that."

India shipped about 89,000 barrels a day of gasoline and diesel to

New York last month, the most in nearly four years, according to data intelligence firm Kpler. Daily low-sulfur diesel flows to Europe were at 172,000 barrels in January, the most since October 2021.

India's importance is expected to expand after fresh European Union sanctions on Russian petroleum exports take effect. The ban will

remove a huge volume of diesel from the market and see more consumers, especially in Europe, tap Asia to fill the supply gap.

That will make cheap Russian oil even more attractive to India, which relies on imports to meet around 85% of its crude needs. Its refiners, including state-run processors that are responsible for meeting domestic demand, ramped up exports last year in order to profit from higher international prices.

"India is a net exporter of refined product and much of this will be going to the West to help ease current tightness," said Warren Patterson, Singapore-based head of commodities strategy at ING Groep NV. "It's pretty clear that a growing share of the feedstock used for this product originates

from Russia." Under EU guidelines, India is likely operating within the rules. When Russian crude is processed into fuels in a country outside of the bloc such as India, the refined products can be delivered into the EU because they're not deemed to be of Russian origin.

The Group of Seven nations are keen to cut Moscow's revenue as much as possible, but they also have an interest in ensuring that Russia's oil and refined products continue to flow to avoid a global supply crunch, said Serena Huang, lead Asia analyst at Vortexa Ltd.

A US National Security Council spokesperson said a price cap had been put in place that countries including India could leverage to keep energy markets stable, while limiting the Kremlin's revenue.

leisure



MCCARTNEY TO PERFORM AT KING CHARLES' CORONATION

Sir Paul McCartney is tipped to be given the honour of ringing in King Charles III's reign with a special performance on the day of the monarch's coronation, according to *Mirror.co.uk*. The concert is expected to be fronted by some of the world's biggest entertainers.

ASHTON KUTCHER RECALLS CALLING HARRY STYLES A KARAOKE SINGER

Ashton Kutcher has revealed an embarrassing anecdote about how he first met Harry Styles during a karaoke party thrown by his and wife Mila Kunis' neighbour. He told *Esquire* magazine that he is "an extraordinarily well-known singer" and that he was "really good" at karaoke.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today you might feel home-sick if you are out of station. And if you are contacting your family members, Ganesh suggests that you get in touch with your long-neglected friends too. Knowing that you are loved gives a different kind of pleasure.

TAURUS
Your skills in managing professional relationships will play a vital role today. The atmosphere, the impression you create is going to mean a lot. Be professional, but be warm and cordial. This day you will be particularly concerned about the way others see and evaluate you. You will be focusing on identifying interests and issues that are of real importance to your friends.

GEMINI
You need a break from your daily routine. You will feel fatigue in keeping up with the demands of everybody around you. You will try to regain your courteous and pleasant manner in the afternoon. You will be able to relax and unwind if you have the company of family and friends in the evening, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Dig out some old contacts today, says Ganesh! Go through your old diary; make an attempt to connect with a lost pal, for chances are high that you may benefit a great deal from an old connection! Your ability to get with others will improve your performance at work.

LEO
It will be difficult for you to achieve a specific goal you have set for yourself in the morning, but as the day progresses, your problems will ease out. Your inherent capability will help you scale the ladder of success. When you sit down to analyse your weaknesses and strengths, do so with an unyielding and unbiased critical eye, advises Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you will feel nostalgic which will make you home-sick and you will feel it is better to avoid contemplation. Today you will make earnest attempts to strengthen your relationships. Your energy levels will be very high. Ganesh says it is an optimistic day.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today is a good day to enhance your joy by arranging a family meeting or gathering. Guests coming home will make you happy with their presence. The presence of your beloved will make your evening a romantic thing. Ganesh says that his blessings will be with you always.

SCORPIO
Relationships are the crux of life, and you put in all your efforts to maintain your personal relations, says Ganesh. Managing kids and their demands may be slightly challenging; but well, kids are after all kids. Haste makes waste; avoid taking hasty decisions or you may end up taking decisions that would benefit others more than you.

SAGITTARIUS
Variety is the spice of life, and you seem to be taking this a bit too seriously. Today, your brain data chooses all random things, from health and weight-loss to occult and spirituality. In short, your thoughts go hay-wired, says Ganesh. However, amidst all this confusion, don't forget to keep a check on your coffers or you may end up making a hole in your pocket.

CAPRICORN
Emotions are difficult to understand for you, especially of your lover. He/She will be more open and expressive today, and it'll help you both understand your relationship better. Also, spend some quality time with each other and strengthen your bond by giving him/her a pleasant surprise or a gift, suggests Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will feel inclination towards antiques and arts, foretells Ganesh. You appreciate the beauty of life, but often forget to bring these emotions to the surface. You will be very sensitive today and probably the smallest of disputes may hurt your feelings badly, foresees Ganesh.

PISCES
You will look for the company of near and dear ones today. You will not be willing to attend social functions and spend time with colleagues or acquaintances but you will be forced to. As a result you might wander off or keep to your own in the crowd and might lead to people mistaking this as arrogance.

Kangana claims being spied on by an actor

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut, who recently made her comeback on Twitter, has alleged that a well-known actor from the film industry is "spying" on her. The actress shared that things have got to a point where not just in the streets, she is being spied on even in her building's parking and her terrace.



she is being followed by an actor, who also once tried to push himself on her. She also alleged that the actor's wife is well aware of her husband's actions but instead of putting an end to it, she is supporting her husband.

Referring to nepotism Kangana said: "This obsessed nepo mafia clown, who once landed at my doorstep uninvited and forced himself on me, is a known womaniser and Casanova but now vice president of nepo mafia brigade as well, forces his wife to become producer, do more female centric films, dress like me even make home interiors like me they even hired my stylist and even home stylists of many years who then refused to work with me."

Although she didn't take any names, it seems the actress has pointed the guns at Ranbir Kapoor. **ANS**



'Deepika is a Hindi film hero'

Mumbai: With *War* and now *Pathaan*, Siddharth Anand is basking in the glory of two blockbusters back-to-back. Following the Rs. 780 crore gross worldwide, *Pathaan* continues to shatter box office records. In a recent conversation, Siddharth spoke about what it's like working with Deepika.

When asked about working with Deepika Padukone in *Pathaan*, Siddharth Anand told a news portal, "Deepika Padukone is a massive star and you realise it when you work with her and watch the expectations of her fans. She's like a hero. She's akin to a three-hero film - Shah Rukh Khan, John and Deepika, three hero film totally. So you have the pressure of mounting and satisfying those fans of hers. And she's so effortless, she is so full of grace."

He added that Deepika Padukone is "brilliant to work with. She's like you want to see her on set. She is like eye candy also. She's so effortless on screen when she does action, when

she does the motion, when she dances, she's a complete Hindi film hero." Helmed by Siddharth Anand, *Pathaan* is currently running in theatres in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

AGENCIES



SRK's humble reply to a toddler

Mumbai: Actor Shah Rukh Khan has reacted after a child said that she didn't like *Pathaan*. Taking to Twitter Sunday, a person shared a video of a child Ahana talking about the film. *Pathaan*, an action-spy film, marks Shah Rukh's return to the big screen after four years.

In the video, a person asked the child, "Ahana, kaunsi movie dekh k aayi thi (Which movie did you watch)?" She replied, "*Pathaan*." The person asked her, "Did you like it?" She replied, "Nah." The video ended with the person asking why and the child smiling. The person captioned the post, "@iamsrk Ooops." Shah Rukh shared the tweet and wrote, "Oh oh!! Have to work harder now. Back to the drawing board."

Can't let the younger audience be disappointed. Desh ke youth ka sawaal hai (It is a matter of the country's youth). PS: Try *DDLJ* on her please....maybe she is the romantic types....kids u never know!" *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ)* is the actor's film released in 1995.

Reacting to Shah Rukh's tweet, a fan commented, "Why are you such a cutie patootie? And you replying randomly to tweets feels like everything back to the best times we had with you here. May this remains the same here onwards."

Another fan said, "You are sooooo beautiful & loving. You just spread happiness. Thanks love, stay happy, stay here with us."

AGENCIES

Mumtaz recalls rejecting Shammi's marriage proposal

Mumbai: Veteran actress Mumtaz has rarely been seen in any television reality show. However, she will be seen appearing in the upcoming episodes of the popular singing reality show, *Indian Idol 13*. Apart from having fun with the contestants, the 74-year-old actress will also recall actor Shammi Kapoor's proposal to her when she was just 17 years old.



Shammi Kapoor's marriage proposal at 17; says, "I do miss him

rejecting Shammi Kapoor, Mumtaz tied the knot with Ugandan-based

sometimes." For the unversed, rumours about Mumtaz and Shammi Kapoor having a romance were rife back in the day. However, after

businessman Mayur Madhvani at the age of 27 in 1974. In one of the mini-video clips, Mumtaz can be seen shedding some light on how Shammi Kapoor proposed to her. It all happened when host Aditya Narayan gave a shout out to Mumtaz and Shammi Kapoor's jodi. She asserts, "He directly said 'I want to marry you.' I was 17 years old. I didn't want to get married and so I didn't. But I do miss him sometimes".

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

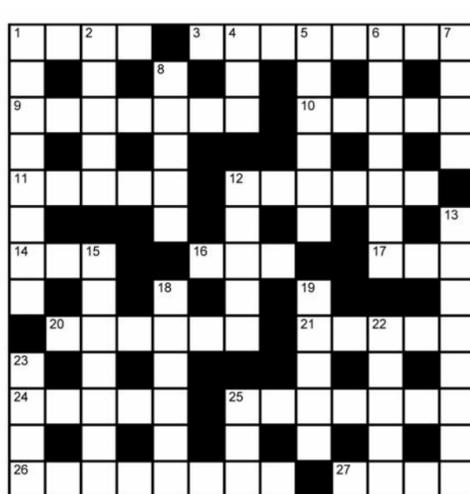


BREVITY



FUN post

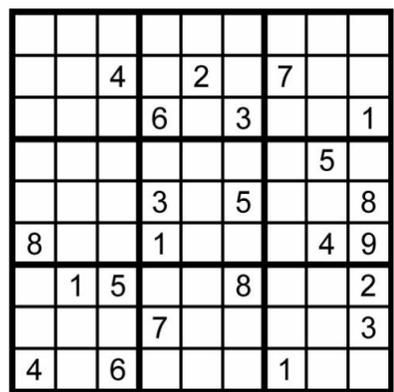
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Liability
 - 3 Cooking utensil
 - 9 Passenger mover
 - 10 Distribute
 - 11 Cheek
 - 12 Drudgery
 - 14 Beach shade
 - 16 Vaporise
 - 17 Farm female
 - 20 Conundrum
 - 21 Muscle spasm
 - 24 Ice house
 - 25 Agreement
 - 26 Dinner finishers
 - 27 Wight or Capri, e.g.
 - Down**
 - 1 Explode
 - 2 Large dog breed
 - 4 Priest's vestment
 - 5 Ill-tempered
 - 6 Contaminate
 - 7 Pub offering
 - 8 Musical group, at times
 - 12 Alpaca cousin
 - 13 Verbal comeback
 - 15 Baffle
 - 18 Give the cold shoulder
 - 19 Neckwear
 - 22 Accumulate in great quantities
 - 23 Uncivilised
 - 25 Cricket equipment

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.

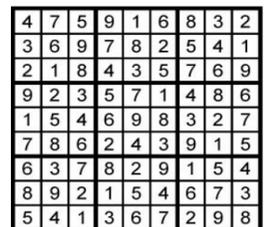


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



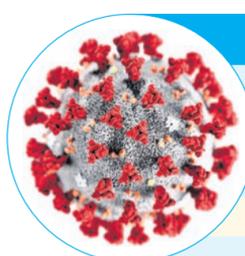
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



MATTER OF FAITH

'Agni Utsav' celebrated at Abhay Mahaveer temple in Puri, Sunday, with devotion and fervour



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,62,06,330	64,86,07,827	67,71,699
India	4,46,83,363	4,41,50,801	5,30,745
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

BJP, BJD SPAR OVER LAW & ORDER

The appointment of a retired judge to monitor the probe into Health Minister Naba Das' murder is not in accordance with the Commissions of Inquiry Act: BJP

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: With the Odisha Police still in dark about the reasons behind the assassination of Health Minister Naba Kishore Das by a policeman, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sunday slammed the state government over the law and order situation while the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) said the government has never neglected any investigation.

Expressing concern over the law and order situation in Odisha, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Sunday said the state government has no clue why an on-duty policeman shot dead Health Minister Naba Kishore Das.

Talking to reporters, Pradhan said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who also holds the Home portfolio, has not spoken publicly on the killing of the influential minister other than condoling his death.

"No one has a clue why an on-duty policeman shot dead a minister from point blank range with a gun provided by the government. And one week after the incident, the DG is saying 'we have hope in Jagannath'. It shows the law and order situation of the state," he said.

Das, 60, breathed his last January 29 evening, hours after he was shot by the policeman at Gandhi Chhak in Brajarajnagar area of Jharsuguda district, where he had gone to attend an event. "There is no clarity on the role of the retired High Court judge who has been assigned to monitor the investigation. The retired judge has not been appointed in ac-



No one has a clue why an on-duty policeman shot dead a minister from point blank range with a gun provided by the govt

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION MINISTER



The government has never neglected any investigation. Only the opposition can say why it is not satisfied

SHASHI BHUSHAN BEHERA | BJD MLA

cordance with the Commissions of Inquiry Act, instead the Odisha government wrote to the registrar of the High Court, following which he was given the responsibility," said Pradhan. The High Court suggested the state government to engage Justice (Retd) JP Das to supervise and monitor the probe in the matter. The state government announced an inquiry by the Crime Branch immediately after the murder.

Pradhan also attacked the government over the allegations of rape against Tirtol BJD MLA Bijay Shankar Das, stating that the High Court had to intervene for the police to register the case.

He also hit out at the BJD gov-

ernment over the attack on a sub-collector and his driver in Balasore district allegedly by sand mafia.

"All these incidents prove what kind of government is this. It also proves that law enforcement agencies are not doing their basic duties," he claimed.

Discarding the allegation, senior BJD MLA Shashi Bhushan Behera said the state government is taking steps to maintain law and order situation.

"In all these incidents, the state government is taking steps. The government has never neglected any investigation. Only the opposition can say why it is not satisfied," said Behera, the former finance minister.

Use of modern tech to boost library movement: KIIT V-C

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: Library science experts Sunday converged at a seminar organised at the KIIT Deemed to be University here to discuss threadbare the open source movement. University Vice-Chancellor Sasmita Samanta emphasised on the introduction of information analytics and data science in the syllabus to expand and broaden the opportunities for students of library science.

Addressing the seminar "Open Source Movement: What Next", Samanta favoured increased use of modern technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data science to give a fresh impetus to the library movement. She said KIIT Central library embodies the best of library science and reflects the global perspective. "I am attending this event with people who are committed to protecting, preserving and disseminating knowledge. You are key stakeholders acting as a bridge between the generation," she said.

The seminar aims to provide information on open source software, journals and databases among library professionals to help the researchers and teachers freely carry out research without any monetary investment, said Director of the KIIT Central Library Bijayalaxmi Rautaray. She praised the efforts of the Founder of KIIT and KISS Achyuta Samanta for not only creating a world-class library but also being a great source of inspiration for the growth of library professionals to support teaching and research.

The speakers at the seminar spoke eloquently about the KIIT Central Library, commending it for its infrastructure and its objectives.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Class X SA-II starts March 10

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 5: The Class X Summative Assessment (SA)-II will begin March 10 and conclude March 20 this year, the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) said while releasing the high school, Madhyama and state open school examination schedule.

Students will get two hours—8am to 10am—for all the papers barring Mathematics for which extra 15 minutes will be allowed, the BSE said. High school students will have to sit for first language test (Odia, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Telugu and alternative English) March 10. The second language (English, Hindi and Environment and Population Studies for the dumb and the deaf) examination will be held March 13. On March 14, high school students will

write the third language paper (Odia, Hindi, Parsi and Sanskrit). General Science exam has been scheduled for March 16, Social Science March 18 and Mathematics March 20. Students have to appear for the Vocation Trade practical examination at their respective schools between February 15 and 18, the BSE said, adding that barring Vocational Trade, other exams will be of 80 marks.

This time, there will be multiple choice questions of 50 marks. Students will be given OMR sheets for the purpose. However, booklets will be provided for answering subjective questions, which will be of 30 marks.

Similarly, Madhyama examinees will write Paper IV (Odia) March 10,

Paper VIII (English) March 13 and Paper II (Sanskrit Sahityam) March 14. While Paper I (Sanskrit Grammar) exam will be held March 15, Students will take up the Paper VI (General Science) exam March 16, Paper III March 17, Paper VII (Social Science) March 18 and Paper V (Maths) March 20.

The BSE will hold Odia, Telugu, Hindi and Urdu test as part of the state open school examination March 10. Students will write the Home Science exam March 11, English March 13 and Indian Culture and Heritage March 14. Home Science practical is scheduled for March 15, Science exam March 16, Painting (theory) March 17, Social Science March 18, Painting (practical) March 19 and Mathematics 20, the Board said.

Students will get two hours—8am to 10am—for all the papers barring Mathematics for which extra 15 minutes will be allowed



DSPL-446

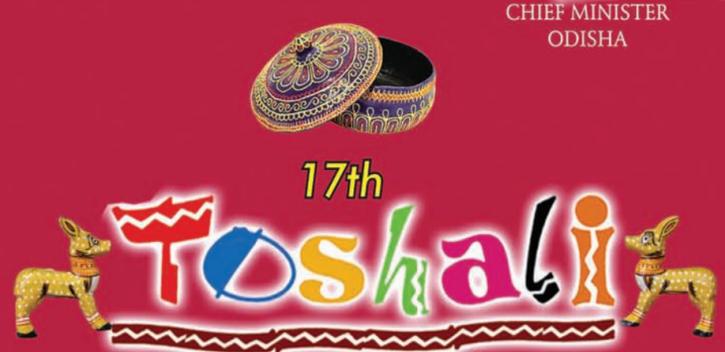


सत्यमेव जयते Government of Odisha

"The soul of India shines through the skillful hands of Odisha"

Naveen Patnaik

CHIEF MINISTER ODISHA



17th Toshali National Crafts Mela

Bhubaneswar - Janata Maidan

1st February to 12th February 2023

2.30PM to 9.30PM

Organised by

State Institute for Development of Arts & Crafts, Bhubaneswar

In Association with

Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India
Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India

Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts Department

OIPR-31036/13/0019/2223



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- In case of a fraudulent transaction, inform your bank immediately
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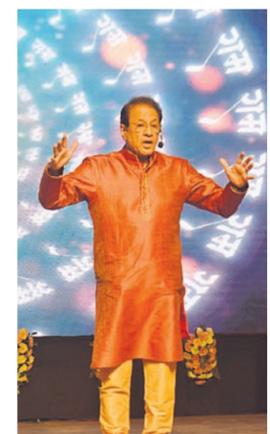
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Arun Govil launches 'Suno Sriram Kahani'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: Actor Arun Govil, who portrayed Lord Ram in the popular Doordarshan series 'Ramayan', inaugurated "Suno Sriram Kahani" - a programme to deliver Ram Katha in Bhubaneswar, Sunday. Various chapters of the Indian mythological epic Ramayan were picturised at Utkal Mandap.



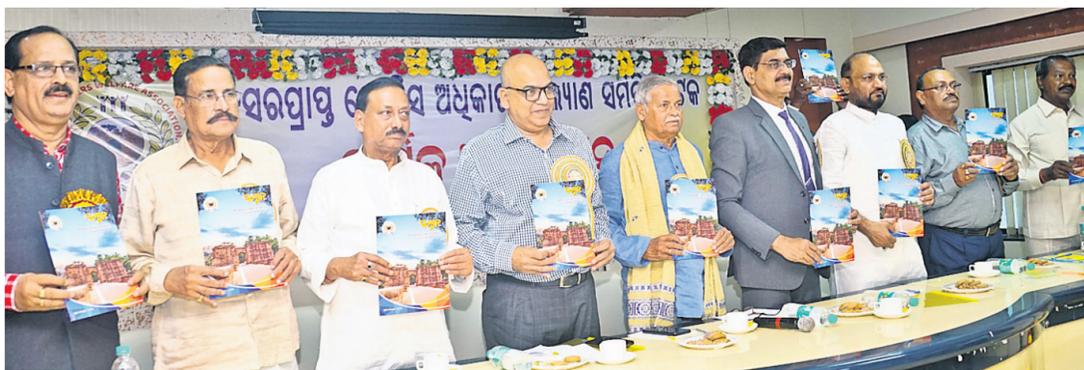
A musical programme had been choreographed illustrating various events from the life of Lord Ram. Arun had a major role to play in the entire act. Renowned vocalist filled the auditorium with devotional songs of Lord Ram and weaved a spiritual ambience. Arun also shared with audience his experiences of playing Ram and his stern faith in the lord.

Many esteemed personalities including Puri Gajapati Maharaj Dibyasingha Deba graced the occasion in which more than 2,000 guests enjoyed the spiritual and

entertaining screenplay.

"I offered prayers to Lord Jagannath at Puri Jagannath Temple and sought blessings for the event. I appeal one and all to engage in 'Suna Sriram Katha' to get blessed by his divinity," said Arun Govil.

To ensure the event's success, it was telecast across all the major social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. A similar event will be organised at Cuttack and in some other cities, which will be coordinated by Neelam Charitable Trust.



DOCUMENTING POLICE SERVICE: Dignitaries including OPSC chairman Satyajit Mohanty, Barabati MLA Mohammed Moquim and twin city Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarsi releasing Retired Police Officers Welfare Association's mouthpiece 'Amlan' during its annual meeting at OCA conference hall in Cuttack, Sunday

Seminar on effects of chemical usage

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: A seminar on the topic 'Chemicals harming health and environment' was organised by the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) to address the toxic nature of chemicals and the aftereffects of their usage.

In 21st century, we are exposed to various chemicals in our everyday life to meet our escalating material demands. As per the estimation, on a regular basis we come across about 500 chemical compounds, which are synthetic as well as toxic in nature.

"Many of these toxic chemicals have the potential to initiate health hazards in living beings. These chemicals also contaminate our environment including soil, water and air, and ultimately the chemical particles enter the human body through the food chains. Concentration of these toxic chemicals in human body becomes higher through the process of bio-magnification, thus causing diverse health-related disorders and disruptions," said one of the environmental experts.

Dysfunction of organs, development of allergies, respiratory and cardiac disorders, weakening of immune system, hormonal dis-



turbances, reproductive problems and birth defects, growth-related issues and increased occurrence of cancer are some of the important manifestations. Most of the chemicals are also used in cosmetics and personal care products, surface cleaners and disinfectants, food preservatives, solvents and paints, air fresheners, bleaching chemicals, batteries and pesticides used in agriculture.

Lead and other heavy metals are carcinogenic in nature, which wreak havoc with our body's regulating system.

Hence, we must take every possible step towards reducing the use of these destructive chemicals and to avoid the radiations involved with them, the speaker added.

The chief speaker of the seminar Shreerup Goswami, who is a faculty of Geology, Utkal University, made an elaborate description of the contemporary diverse syn-

thetic chemicals that includes serious health concern. Female hormone Oxytocin is injected into cattle for better milk production, hens for more eggs, vegetables to get larger in size and well shaped. Formaldehyde is used to preserve fish, and Melamine and urea are added to milk to create a fake impression of enhanced protein and fat. Dexamethasone is given to cattle, goats and sheep to produce more meat. Even cold drinks are laden with pesticides, apples are coated with wax, and chemical colours are added to fruits and vegetables to look fresh and to enhance flavour.

Goswami dismayed over such happenings that trigger mankind towards grave health disasters. Presiding over the seminar, former Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF Wildlife), Bijay Kumar Patnaik emphasized on spreading awareness among people and strict enforcement of existing laws that prevent the use of certain chemicals.

The welcome address by the secretary Jaya Krushna Panigrahi suggests giving utmost priority to the use of products derived from natural resources to meet our basic needs and how to reduce the use of synthetic chemicals to the greatest possible extent.

Assam's Zam crackdown leaves women in lurch

Continued from P1

While some are getting help and support from their families, many like Riya Devi are left to the mercy of the authorities after the arrest of their husbands.

"We don't have any other family as we had eloped and got married. Where am I to go with my one-year-old daughter now from here?" questioned 16-year-old Riya, who is staying temporarily at a government-run shelter home.

Another inmate Rupa Das (16) who is nine months pregnant, shared the same uncertainty. "Set my husband free. We had married with consent. What will I do now if he is not around," she pleaded.

"We knew there was some kind of law but it was never implemented. Government should have warned us that there is such strict action for any lapse and we would have been careful," Yudishter maintained.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that the drive against child marriage will continue till the next Assembly elections in 2026.

Visitors enjoy food, music at crafts mela

Bhubaneswar: The 5th evening of the 17th Toshali National Crafts Mela, organised by the Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department was set in motion by Commerce and Transport department principal secretary Usha Padhee. Handicrafts director Shyambhakt Mishra and special secretary Srikanta Prusty were also present on the occasion. Renowned Odia singer Krishna Beura was the major attraction of the evening. The millet stall proved to be a terrific crowd-puller.

At least 20% EVs in govt offices

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: At least 20 per cent of the existing vehicles in government offices will be replaced with EVs on lease rental as per the conditions laid down by the Energy department.

All the departments have to submit the required specifications of EVs for their respective offices to Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA), which will help them in assessing the requirements and the supply chain. The monthly rental of EVs will

be notified by the Finance department on the recommendation of the technical committee under the chairmanship of Transport Commissioner.

The policy has been mandated under the Odisha Electric Vehicle Policy, 2021, for adoption of EVs in government offices on priority basis. In this connection, OREDA has been authorized to act as an aggregator for fulfilling the demand from various government departments / agencies to provide EV fleet services after selecting vehicle manufacturers through competitive bidding.

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AFFIDAVIT

Affidavit before the Notary Public, Koraput, Affidavit No.3994 Dtd.23.07.22, I, Govinda Bhatra, age about 60 years, S/o Vinod Bhatra of Village Lulla, P.O.- Lulla, P.S. Dasamantpur, Dist.- Koraput, at present residing of At- Admunda, P.O.- A.Malkangiri, Dist.- Koraput do hereby solemnly affirm and state on oath as follow: That I am working in Central Water Commission (CWC) and designation Wark Sarkar GR-II, where my name wrongly mentioned Govind Bhatra instead Govinda Bhatra. That in my all documents my name is mentioned Govinda Bhatra except my service book. That Govinda Bhatra, S/o- Vinod Bhatra and Govind Bhatra, S/o- Vinod Bhatra are one and same person.

LOST

I Mishru Arka, W/o- Harekrushna Arka, R/o- Gochhura, P.S.- Mahulpali, Dist.- Sambalpur have a land area of Ac 10 decimal by registered sale deed No.-236 dt 09.05.1995 and vide Khata No.-177/164, Plot No.-918/3313, Kisam-Gharabari on dt. 30.06.22 I am along with my son "Bijay Arka" going to Gochhura from Ullunda the said original registered sale deed was lost on the way. I have searched the same but could not found. I have also applied the home loan at SBI, Burla Branch on the aforesaid property.



HEAVY RUSH: People through the ongoing Toshali Crafts National Mela at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

People will vote us to power, claims BRS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: The Odisha unit of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has claimed that the party will form the government in Odisha in the coming election.

The BRS Sunday asserted that several high-profile leaders are going to join the BRS in a month. In the first phase, leaders of the erstwhile Janata Dal will join. Then the leaders of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress who are sidelined in their respective parties will join.

The Odisha unit of the BRS also said they are going to replicate the Telangana models in Odisha. For this, a two-point jojana has already been formulated. First, capable people will be given the charge of the 147 Assembly constituencies.

Second, the party will go to the villages with its party symbol 'car'.

"The leaders once in the Janata Dal will be the first ones to join the party. Then the leaders of the BJD, the BJP and the Congress sidelined in their parties will come. Our party symbol is car. It will reach each and every village of Odisha," said BRS leader Jayaram Pangi. Echoing the same, another BRS leader Akshay Kumar said, "If the political backbone of the farmers is not strengthened, farmers will be bargained. The Telangana model will be suitable for this. This month, we will bring the potential persons of the 147 constituencies to the centre."

Meanwhile, the political corridors in the State are abuzz with the tittle-tattle about leaders like Bijoy Mohapatra and Dillip Ray, Debashish Nayak and former MP

Tathagata Satapathy from the BJD and Mohammed Moquim joining the BRS. On the other hand, the BJD, the BJP and the Congress attached little importance to the claim of the BRS leaders.

State BJP president Samir Mohanty said, "Time will say whether people will sideline the party or vote to power."

Similarly, OPCC president Sarat Patnaik said, "It is common to find parties claiming to form the government. But the reality is far from the truth. There will be no BRS impact on Odisha. So the real fight in the 2024 general elections will be between the BJD and the Congress.

In his reaction, BJD MLA Sashi Bhushan Behera said, "By the time the people of Odisha will come to know what is the BRS, the election would have ended. It would have no impact on the BJD."

Critical ignoring needed to beat information overload

The web is an informational paradise and a hellscape at the same time.

A boundless wealth of high-quality information is available at our fingertips right next to a ceaseless torrent of low-quality, distracting, false and manipulative information.

The platforms that control search were conceived in sin. Their business model auctions off our most precious and limited cognitive resource: attention. These platforms work overtime to hijack our attention by purveying information that arouses curiosity, outrage, or anger. The more our eyeballs remain glued to the screen, the more ads they can show us, and the greater profits accrue to their shareholders.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, all this should take a toll on our collective attention. A 2019 analysis of Twitter hashtags, Google queries, or Reddit comments found that across the past decade, the rate at which the popularity of items rises and drops has accelerated.

In 2013, for example, a hashtag on Twitter was popular on average for 17.5 hours, while in 2016, its popularity faded away after 11.9 hours. More competition leads to shorter collective attention intervals, which lead to ever fiercer competition for our attention - a vicious circle. To regain control, we need cognitive strategies that help us reclaim at least some autonomy and shield us from the excesses, traps and information disorders of today's attention economy.

The textbook cognitive strategy is critical thinking, an intellectually disciplined, self-guided and effortful process to help identify valid information. But is it enough in a world of information overabundance and gushing sources of disinformation? The answer is "No" for at least two reasons.

First, the digital world contains more information than the world's libraries combined. Critically thinking through all information and sources we come across would utterly paralyse us because we would

never have time to actually read the valuable information we painstakingly identify.

Critical ignoring is the ability to choose what to ignore and where to invest one's limited attentional capacities. Critical ignoring is more than just not paying attention - it's about practising mindful and healthy habits in the face of information overabundance.

Three main strategies exist for critical ignoring. Each one responds to a different type of noxious information.

Self-nudging aims to empower people to be citizen "choice architects" by designing their informational environments in ways that work best for them and that constrain their activities in beneficial ways. We can, for instance, remove distracting and irresistible notifications. We may set specific times in which messages can be received, thereby creating pockets of time for concentrated work or socialising.

Lateral reading is a strategy that enables people to emulate how



- Social media platforms work overtime to hijack our attention by purveying information that arouses curiosity, outrage, or anger
- To regain control, we need cognitive strategies that shield us from the traps and information disorders of today's attention economy
- Critical ignoring is more than just not paying attention, it's the ability to choose what to ignore and where to invest one's limited attentional capacities
- Strategies such as do-not-feed-the-trolls heuristic, lateral reading, self-nudging can be used to enhance the benefits of critical ignoring

professional fact checkers establish the credibility of online information. It involves opening up new browser tabs to search for in-

formation about the organisation or individual behind a site before diving into its contents.

The do-not-feed-the-trolls heuris-

tic targets online trolls and other malicious users who harass, cyberbully or use other antisocial tactics. Trolls thrive on attention, and deliberate spreaders of dangerous disinformation often resort to trolling tactics. One of the main strategies that science denialists use is to hijack people's attention by creating the appearance of a debate where none exists.

The heuristic advises against directly responding to trolling. Resist debating or retaliating. Of course, this strategy of critical ignoring is only a first line of defence. It should be complemented by blocking and reporting trolls and by transparent platform content moderation policies including debunking.

The philosopher Michael Lynch has noted that the Internet "is both the world's best fact-checker and the world's best bias confirmer - often at the same time."

Navigating it successfully requires new competencies that should be taught in school.

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Not only Olive Ridleys, red crabs too struggle for life at Gahirmatha

Red crabs play a great role in protecting the ecological balance in the mangrove forests, maintaining biological diversity and in protecting the marine environment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, Feb 5: Red crabs have started their migration to the expansive sea beach of Gahirmatha marine sanctuary under this block in Kendrapara district for mating and spawning.

The scene of red crabs gathering in hordes on the vast sand bed of Hukitola, Madali, Lunchghola, Tanda, Agarnasi islands of the sanctuary is a sight to behold. The deep burrows dug out by them on these islands have become their new homes as they arrive in hordes for spawning.

After mating, male crabs go back and the females stay behind in burrows for about two weeks to lay eggs. Each female can produce up to one lakh eggs, which it deposits into the ocean.

Red crabs play a great role in protecting the ecological balance in the mangrove forests, maintaining biological diversity and in protecting the marine environment.

These crabs dig out two to three feet deep burrows and make it their new home for mating. They feed on dead seaweeds, dead fish and small marine creatures. Breeding mostly takes place during the winter season when the female crabs give birth to hundreds of baby crabs. Later, they move on the beach and then into the sea with the mother crabs.

Not more than two inch in length, these crabs survive till two years. They prefer to live in hordes and are apt in sensing natural calamities and in changing places before

its arrival. They immediately go into hiding in their burrows or crawl into sea on sighting any enemy.

Such crabs had a very big population in the 90s but climate change, frequent sea storms and environmental damage and toxic effluents discharged into the sea by the industrial plants have greatly affected their population. Moreover, coastal erosion and plastic materials which get washed ashore and dumped on the beach have proved to be impediments for their free movement on the beach. Birds such as kites and crows, dogs and jackals mostly prey on these crabs.

An environmentalist Samarendra Mahali said that red crabs play an important role in maintaining ecological balance. The environment remains clean as they feed on marine waste for which their protection and conservation is the need of the hour.

A local intelligentsia Subhash Swain said there was a time when these crabs were found in great numbers in Gahirmatha but their population is dwindling due to various reasons. He said that their population can be increased if the Forest department and government take some urgent measures before it is too late. Otherwise the future generation will only see them in pictures. The tourists visiting the beach have also a role to play," he added.

When contacted, Gahirmatha forest ranger (in-charge) Manas Kumar Das said that his department is aware of their importance and taking necessary steps for their protection.



2 CRITICAL IN WILD BOAR ATTACK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bheden, Feb 5: Two persons sustained critical injuries in a wild boar attack at Badipali village under Bheden police limits in Bargarh district, Sunday.

The injured persons were identified as Sudam Bag, 65, of Keshripali village and Chamara Bag, 62, of Bardola village in the area. The incident occurred when the two were on their way to the house of Dolamani Bhoi in Badipali village to buy some bamboo trees.

They were near Harijanpada when a wild boar suddenly appeared on the scene and attacked them from rear. Chamara Bag fell down and sustained injuries on his body while Sudam suffered a fracture on his left leg and private parts.

Locals rescued the two and admitted them to Binka community health centre. Later, doctors shifted Sudam to VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla after his health condition deteriorated.



FESTIVE FERVOUR: A man in the attire of Lord Hanuman blesses a foreign tourist with his mace at the Magha Mela in Joranda of Dhenkanal district, Sunday

Cancer projections for 2021-25 show a worrisome figure: Experts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Feb 5: The cancer projections for 2021-2025 show a worrisome figure and are looking at an increase to 29.8 million in 2025 from 26.7 million in 2021, as per the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) report, with men contributing to 14.7 million Years of Life Lost (YLLs) and women up to 13.6 million YLLs in India, said Dr Sharat Damodar, Chairman, Oncology Collegium, Narayana Health.

People above the age of 40 need to be vigilant towards symptoms of prolonged fever, weight loss, abnormal swellings or any bleeding symptoms and get themselves

screened immediately, said Sharat Damodar, who is also a senior consultant and head of Adult Hematology and BMT.

One should adopt healthy lifestyle, avoid smoking, alcohol, high fatty foods, packaged food, adulterated food, polluted surrounding with unhealthy gases or radiations, etc. Exercising regularly, having natural, non-processed diet made through fresh non-contaminated vegetables and fruits and trying to lead a stress-free life can be key towards a cancer-free tomorrow, he said.

Most common cancers seen in men include oral, lung, stomach, colon, oesophagus and in woman include breast, cervix, ovary, oral cav-



ity and colorectal, according to some of the past data. The commonest cancer in children is leukaemia which comprises about 30 per cent of cancers and around 80 per cent

of these are acute lymphatic leukaemia, with high cure rates, Damodar said. Though North and North-East India shows the highest vulnerabilities, the ICMR-NCDIR Report, 2021 of cancer and related factors for the Karnataka state showed cumulative risk of developing cancer of any site in 0-74 years of age group was 1 in 7 for males and 1 in 6 for females, he said.

"At Mazumdar Shaw Medical Centre, Narayana Health City, we are treating 1100 to 1200 new patients a year out of which 500 to 600 are males, 500 females and around 100 children. In last 4-5 years, we are seeing that of all cancers 15 to 20 per cent are breast cancer, 15 per cent to 20 per cent head and neck cancers and around 10-15 per cent of gynaecology-related cancer cases," Damodar said.

Considering the burden of the disease not seeing any reduction in numbers, we need to pledge towards self-awareness around the disease. The pandemic registered less detection of cases hence lesser number of diagnosed cases, he said.



FIRE FIGHTING SKILLS: Students of Malkangiri, Kalimela and MV-79 participated in a training programme on fire safety measures and fire fighting skills under the supervision of Fire Services personnel held at the DRDA office in Malkangiri, Sunday

Case filed against Anandapur MLA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 5: Anandapur MLA Bhagirathi Sethy was caught on the wrong foot after the local police registered a case against him on charge of hurling abuses and issuing threat at BJP's Zilla Parishad (ZP) (zone no-3) member Ashima Mishra during a meeting of the Anandapur Panchayat Samiti, last year.

The case-24/2023 under Section-294 and Section-506 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered after the Orissa High Court directed the police to register a case on the complaint filed by Mishra at Anandapur police station.

"The case was registered following a direction of the Orissa High Court and action will be taken after conducting a probe," Anandapur IIC Debaki Nayak said. The incident occurred during a review of the developmental works at a meeting of the Anandapur Panchayat Samiti, August 30, 2022. The MLA flew into rage and asked Mishra to get out from the meeting when she questioned the progress of the developmental works being implemented in the area.

Hurling abuses, Sethy told her that she has no rights to ask ques-



tions, the woman ZP member alleged. He even threatened her of dire consequences, she alleged. She first lodged a complaint at Anandapur police station and later, filed a written complaint with the SP.

However, she moved the high court after she failed to get justice from the district police.

When contacted, Sethy rejected the charges. He said that the meeting was underway and several male and female members as well as officials were present in the meeting. The authenticity of the allegations will be proved when police undertake a probe, he added.

State govt to build alternative route of Dwarasuni ghat road

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Feb 5: With Dwarasuni ghat road on National Highway-49 under Bangiriposi limits in Mayurbhanj district witnessing frequent accidents and subsequent traffic jams, the state Rural Development department has planned for an alternative route to fix the problems.

The department has decided to construct a 31-km long road connecting Bisoi-Joka-Saraskana and Jharpokharia in Mayurbhanj district to fix the problem. The road will be nine metre in width with 5.5 metre of it will be blacktopped. It is expected to get completed towards the end of 2023.

At the outset, the Rural Development department has prepared a plan outlay of Rs 41 crore and sent it for approval by the department authorities. This was stated here by superintendent engineer Aswini Dandapata while talking to media-persons here, Saturday. After construction, the road will prove to be an alternative route to Dwarasuni ghat road (Bamanghati) in the district, he said.

Earlier, the road was connected with two roads built under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana from Bisoi to Hatichhad and from to Joka. A blacktopped road connects



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

Joka with Saraskana. The road, when completed, will resolve the commuting and traffic problem on Dwarasuni ghat. The alternative road will be 14 km more in length than the Dwarasuni ghat road but the commuting time will be same for two roads, he said.

Sources said that the NH-49 connecting Mumbai with Kolkata passes through this 17-km long stretch of Dwarasuni ghat road. Expressing concerns over the frequent mishaps, the state government has written to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) urging to fix the road problems without delay.

However, the NHAI authorities have failed to carry out its expansion and double-laning works as the Union Forest Ministry is yet to give its approval on environmental clearance.

This has stalled the expansion

works of the ghat road following which road mishaps have become a regular occurrence leading to deaths and injuries. Mishaps also lead to frequent traffic jams on the ghat road.

The scene of hundreds of vehicles getting stranded on the route for hours together is a regular sight. Several agitations have been carried out demanding expansion of the hilly road but so far they have failed to give any result so far.

Construction of the alternative route became reality after Collector Vineet Bharadwaj called an emergency meeting with the Rural Development department and Works department officials and held a discussion with them on the issue. Later, his discussion with the superintendent engineer paved way for construction of an alternative road.

Mason electrocuted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Langaleswar, Feb 5: A mason was electrocuted after he touched a tree that had come in contact with an 11-KV transmission wire at Simulipal village under Singla police limits in Balasore district, Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Chakradhar Mandhata of the area. Locals rushed him to the Basta community health centre where doctors pronounced him dead. Singla police

registered a case and started an investigation after family members lodged a complaint at the police station. The body has been sent for post-mortem.

Sources said that Mandhata was engaged in the construction of a house of a local resident Tampada Patra near the local market. He went to relieve himself near a tree during work and accidentally touched it without knowing that it was in contact with an 11-KV transmission wire.

'Operation Sandstorm' in Balasore

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Feb 5: Aiming to put an end to illegal mining and lifting of minor minerals Balasore police have launched 'Operation Sandstorm' in the coastal district.

SDPOs of Balasore police district have been tasked with identifying the areas where sand mining is occurring rampantly despite NGT ban. Under this planned operation, they have been directed to take strict action against the perpetrators

which includes registering criminal cases and starting a financial investigation against them, an official press release said. This will help in curtailing the economic capacity of the sand mafias, the release said.

Under this initiative, Nilagiri police successfully apprehended seven drivers and detained six tractors and one tipper-truck from Sono river bed on charges of illegal sand mining, Sunday morning. Criminal case under OMMC Act will be registered against the accused.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER POTTERU CANAL DIVISION, MV-79 No.A-1113:

e-mail Id: eepcdbhba65@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice No.-SE-PCD-MV79-03/2022-23

- Type of Works: System Improvement works.
- Total No. of Works: Forty Four (44) Nos.
- Estimated Cost: Varies from Rs. 1.52 Lakhs to Rs. 33.29 Lakhs.
- Period of Completion: 120 (One hundred twenty) days.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount (Rs. in Lakhs)	Availability & Submission of Bids online
Superintending Engineer, Potteru Canal Division, MV-79, Malkangiri	SE-PCD-MV79-03 (I) 2022-23 to SE-PCD-MV79-03(30) 2022-23	Varies From Rs. 1.52 Lakhs to Rs. 33.29 Lakhs	From 07.02.2023 10.00 A.M. to 16.02.2023 5.00 P.M.

Date of Opening of the Tender / Bid: 17.02.2023 at 11.00 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

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FOCUS ECONOMY

HEALTH SPENDING ESSENTIAL



The momentum created by announcing PMJAY in 2018 should not be halted and public financing should be stepped up in order to increase its share to 2.5-3% of GDP

India is gradually recovering from the pandemic downturn and in 2023-24, the economy is projected to grow at 6-6.8%. This is considered as the fastest among the major economies. Amid the growth expectations, the allocation to health sector has not witnessed a substantial rise. It is just 2% of the total central government expenditure in 2023-24 BE. The attention that health sector should have drawn following COVID years is missing in the budget. In 2023-24 BE, the finance minister has provisioned ₹92,802 crore for the department of health and family welfare, health research and AYUSH together, which is only 4% more than the previous year's BE. An intra-allocation shows ₹86,175 crore for health and family welfare department, 4% rise from the last budget, approximately ₹2980 crore for health research, 7% reduction from the previous year's BE and ₹3647 crore for department of AYUSH. Further, compared to the revised estimate of 2022-23, the purposed allocations to health and family welfare saw 12.83% rise in 2023-24 BE. This however, does not answer the decline in the expenditure in 2022-23 RE compared to 2022-23 BE, when the nation is expected to absorb more resources to recoup from the pandemic.

During last four years, 2021-22 was an exception, which not only witnessed a higher increase in the budget estimate of health and family welfare, AYUSH and health research together, but there was a quantum jump in health and family welfare expenditure in the actual of the same year. For instance, the actual expenditure on health and family welfare increased to ₹81,779 crore in 2021-22 from ₹71,268 crore BE of the same year, a 15% increase compared to BE. Similar was the case in 2020-21 when the actual expenditure was more than the BE. This corroborates to the pandemic year additional expenditure on health prevention, promotion and expenditure to plug loopholes in public health system.

A stark reality that the pandemic has shown us is that if we

do not invest more on basic healthcare, surveillance systems, and public health functions, the damage would be enormous. In this context, the allocation and expenditure in the previous two years were in right direction. However, this momentum was disrupted in 2023-24 BE.

Within the health and family welfare department, the budget allocations to several priority areas - National Health Mission (NHM), PMJAY, PM Health Infrastructure Mission and National Digital Mission are critical as they build necessary health infrastructure, support primary care development and provide financial protection against regressive out of pocket expenditure due to hospitalisation. In 2018, the announcement of PMJAY, the largest public funded health insurance scheme in the world, brought health to the center of political discourse. The allocation to PMJAY stands at ₹7200 crore in 2023-24 BE and this was ₹6412 crore in 2022-23 BE. Being a demand driven scheme, the expenditure on PMJAY is contingent upon healthcare utilisation by the beneficiary. And therefore, empanelment of hospitals, disbursement of funds to hospitals, quality of care and administrative issues are more important than resource allocation.

Allocation to the NHM, another flagship programme which aims at strengthening both rural and urban health systems along with

addressing maternal and child health issues, has remained more or less stagnant in the previous two budgets. In 2021-22 actual, total spending was ₹27,447 crore against ₹36,576 crore in the BE of the same year, a substantial reduction. This was in contrast to 2020-21 where actual spending was more than the BE of the same year. Moreover, in 2023-24 BE, the purposed allocation is ₹29,085 crore, slightly more than the previous year's BE. Several evidences suggest NHM has contributed largely to improve the health system at primary level and increased uptake of institutional delivery and antenatal services, particularly among the poorest socioeconomic groups. Given this reality, the institutional architecture created over the years at the ground should be funded adequately and managed suitably so that comprehensive primary healthcare is delivered.

Though research and innovation has been a priority area as mentioned in the budget speech, the government intends to collaborate with private sector largely to attain so. A major thrust has been to support pharmaceutical research through center of excellence and encouraging investment from the industry. A slight decrease in health research allocation from ₹3200 crore in 2022-23 BE to ₹2980 crore in 2023-24 BE can be viewed in this context.

A major boost to the National Digital Health Mission by allocat-

ing ₹341 crore in current budget compared to ₹200 crore in last budget is notable. This will create and strengthen the much-needed digital ecosystem in order to improve service delivery and ease access.

The health sector priorities were announced within the inclusive development agenda, one of the seven priorities declared by the finance minister. To achieve inclusive development, the announcement to create a sickle cell mission and eliminate sickle cell by 2047 is commendable, as this will benefit a large segment of population in tribal areas. Another bold announcement that will contribute to the holistic development of PVTG within the tribal population is the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission with a budgetary support of ₹15,000 crore for three years.

Furthermore, this budget has aptly identified other social determinants of health especially highlighting the role of millets for improving nutritional deficiency observed among a large segment of population. Our progress on nutritional front as revealed from the NFHS V especially, declining stunting and wasting among the prosperous states is quite perplexing and this needs to be contextualised considering the announcement of Mission Poshan 2.0 in 2021 budget and emphasis on millets in the current budget.

Health is one of the important pillars of achieving sustainable development goals by 2030 and the priorities should not be out-of-place as healthcare challenges are manifold. The momentum created by announcing PMJAY in 2018 should not be halted and public financing should be stepped up in order to increase its share to 2.5-3% of GDP. This however, requires equal or higher commitment from states so that India's tag as a low public financier for health is reversed soon.

The writer is Additional Professor, Indian Institute of Public Health, Bhubaneswar. Views are personal.



Sarit Kumar Rout

THE ATTENTION THAT HEALTH SECTOR SHOULD HAVE DRAWN FOLLOWING COVID YEARS IS MISSING IN THE BUDGET

Myanmar Mess

The bad news from Myanmar is that its military junta has imposed martial law in areas where anti-military resistance is growing from strength to strength and extended the state of emergency for six months. It means the people there, accused of everything from treason to 'spreading false news,' will be tried by military tribunals. No one has a shadow of doubt that the charges will be trumped up. In the 37 townships affected by the new measures announced in the state-controlled media February 3, no appeals will be allowed for convictions handed down by military tribunals. Only cases where the death penalty is imposed will have to be approved by military chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

One implication of the extension of martial law and the state of emergency is that the possibility of holding elections expected in August as announced before, whatever their worth, becomes uncertain. The new measures show the military junta has grown nervous even two years after it staged a coup and did not allow the installation of an elected government. This is because resistance against military dictatorship has spread throughout the country so much that the junta itself has admitted that its fiat does not run in one-third of the country. A measure of the determination of the people of Myanmar to stand up to the junta is the silent protest observed in the country to mark the second year of the military coup February 1. Streets in many cities fell quiet after protesters urged people to stay indoors and asked businesses to close. The main message of the silent strike is that the military "shall never rule the country's people."

In fact, the announcement appears to indicate that the military is looking for new ways to stamp out resistance in areas where people have taken up arms to fight against its seizure of power. The official explanation for the expansion of martial law is but an eyewash. Germany's foreign ministry rightly described the new measures as "illegitimate steps" and rightly called for an end to the military's violence and human rights abuses.

The military authorities stated the aim is "to exercise more effective undertakings for ensuring security, the rule of law and local peace and tranquility." The 37 townships affected by the imposition of martial law are located across eight states and regions. Regular clashes between the military and the anti-coup People's Defence Force, the armed wing of the opposition's underground National Unity Government, have been continuing in the new areas to come under martial law.

Myanmar's military has been struggling to contain a nationwide insurrection by opponents of military rule who took up arms after peaceful protests against the coup in February 2021 were suppressed with lethal force. According to an independent watchdog, at least 2,948 civilians have been killed since the military grabbed power and toppled elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

On the other hand, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) shrunk by almost a fifth in 2021 before growing by just 3 per cent from a much smaller base the following year. The World Bank this week put Myanmar's growth for the fiscal year ending in September at 3 per cent but warned that per capita GDP would remain about 13 per cent below its level before the COVID-19 pandemic. That means Myanmar's 2023 GDP will still be smaller than the pre-coup economy.

Recovery from the shocks of COVID-19 and the coup "is expected to remain subdued in the near term, constrained by significant macroeconomic and regulatory uncertainty, persistent conflict, and ongoing electricity outages," the World Bank said in its update.

The military regime has detained some of Myanmar's tycoons and confiscated the passports of foreign corporate executives. Business groups and diplomats, including the friendly Chinese Ambassador, have openly expressed their dissatisfaction over the junta's economic measures.

It means the international community, including the regime's main supporter China, finds it difficult to invest in Myanmar plagued by a repressive regime, growing protests in large swathes of the land and a faltering economy. The junta appears to be fighting a losing battle. The best remedy for both the military and the people will be to begin dialogue and revive at least the hybrid democracy prevailing in the country before the military takeover. Tyranny and terror by the junta will plunge Myanmar into greater turmoil and chaos.

WISDOM CORNER

- Almost all of our sorrows spring out of our relations with other people. - ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER
- To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering. - FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
- There is no greatness where there is no simplicity, goodness and truth. - LEO TOLSTOY

WORDSWORTH

Forthwith

Forth is one of those words that has gone out of the language except in a number of set phrases. Way back beyond the Norman Conquest it meant forwards. That sense lingers in the phrase back and forth, backwards and forwards. Another semi-archaic phrase is from this day forth, in which it has the figurative sense of onwards; and so forth includes it in a similar sense; henceforth includes the same idea of time as does forthwith; to hold forth is to talk at length about some subject, often tediously; sally forth is still known. Round the middle of the twelfth century, the phrase forth mid appeared (mid being essentially the same as the modern German word mit, with), later forth with, to go somewhere in the company of other people. Necessarily, if you go forth with others, you go at the same time as they do. It seems this sense of time eventually took over, though the process of transition isn't very clear, and it's mixed up with other phrases that also referred to time. Certainly, by about 1450 the phrase had condensed to a single adverb with the modern meaning of immediately, without delay. Much of the idea of forth has been taken over in today's language by forwards, but that word itself is a contracted compound of forth with the suffix -ward, to go in a specified direction.

Fossick

Fossick is a characteristically Australian word (and, let us not forget, of New Zealanders too). As you've discovered, it isn't widely used in Britain, though there are so many Antipodean writers working in the media over here that the word is by no means unknown. These days, it means to search about in an unsystematic way in the hope of finding what you're looking for, or just searching in the hope of turning up something interesting. My New Zealand dictionary also says it can refer to pottering about more or less aimlessly (a travel writer in the Guardian in October 2005 used it this way: "And so back on board, for a last fossick through the Kattegat and Skaggeak.") But the original sense, and one that's still used, is to search gold-mine waste dumps or abandoned claims in the hope of turning up a few overlooked nuggets. That dates from the late 1850s in Australia and a few years later in New Zealand. Its origin isn't altogether clear, but the experts point to Cornish dialect. Cornishmen were well represented in early migrants to both countries and were known everywhere for their expertise in hard-rock mining. The English Dialect Dictionary a century ago included the Cornish dialect fossick in the sense of "to obtain by asking; to 'ferret out'", as well as fursick or fossick, East Anglian words for pottering over one's work, and fussock about, a rather more widely distributed dialect term for making a fuss or bustling about in an irritating way. The truth is lurking in there somewhere.

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

Preempting a generative AI monopoly



Diane Coyle

IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT LEAVING IT TO THE MARKET TO DECIDE HOW THESE POWERFUL TECHNOLOGIES ARE USED, AND BY WHOM, IS A VERY RISKY PROPOSITION

ChatGPT, the new artificial-intelligence chatbot developed by the San Francisco-based research laboratory OpenAI, has taken the world by storm. Already hailed as a milestone in the evolution of so-called large language models (LLMs), the world's most famous generative AI raises important questions about who controls this nascent market and whether these powerful technologies serve public interest. OpenAI's release of ChatGPT last November quickly became a global sensation, attracting millions of users and allegedly killing the student essay. It is able to answer questions in conversational English (along with some other languages) and perform tasks, such as writing computer code.

The answers that ChatGPT provide are fluent and compelling. Despite its facility for language, however, it can sometimes make mistakes or generate factual falsehoods, a phenomenon known among AI researchers as "hallucination." The fear of fabricated references has recently led several scientific journals to ban or restrict the use of ChatGPT and similar tools in academic papers. But while the chatbot might struggle with fact-checking, it is seemingly less prone to error when it comes to programming and can easily write efficient and elegant code.

For all its flaws, ChatGPT obviously represents a major technological breakthrough, which is why Microsoft recently announced a "multiyear, multibillion-dollar investment" in OpenAI, reportedly amounting to \$10 billion, on top of the \$1 billion it had already committed to the company. Originally a nonprofit, OpenAI is now a for-profit corporation valued at \$29 billion. While it has pledged to cap its profits, its loose-fitting structure limits investors' returns to 10,000%.

ChatGPT is powered by a GPT-3, a powerful LLM trained on vast amounts of text to generate natural-sounding, human-like answers. While it is currently the world's most celebrated generative AI, other Big Tech companies such as Google and Meta have been developing their own versions. While it is still unclear how these chatbots will be monetised, a paid version of ChatGPT is reportedly forthcoming, with OpenAI projecting \$1 billion in revenues by 2024.

To be sure, bad actors could abuse these tools for various illicit schemes, such as sophisticated online scams or writing malware. But the technology's prospective applications, from coding to protein discovery, offer cause for optimism. McKinsey, for example, estimates that 50-60% of companies have al-

ready incorporated AI-powered tools like chatbots into their operations. By expanding the use of LLMs, companies could improve efficiency and productivity.

But the massive, immensely costly, and rapidly increasing computing power needed to train and maintain generative AI tools represents a substantial barrier to entry that could lead to market concentration. The potential for monopolisation, together with the risk of abuse, underscores the urgent need for policymakers to consider the implications of this technological breakthrough.

Fortunately, competition authorities in the US and elsewhere seem to be aware of these risks. The UK's communications regulator, Ofcom, launched an investigation of the cloud computing market, on which all large AI models rely, late last year, while the US Federal Trade Commission is currently investigating Amazon Web Services, which, along with Google and Microsoft Azure, dominates the market. These investigations could have far-reaching implications for AI-powered services, which rely on enormous economies of scale.

But it is not clear what, if anything, policymakers should do. On one hand, if regulators do nothing, the generative-AI market could end up dominated by one or two

companies, like every digital market before it.

As was debated at the recent World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, generative AI is too powerful and potentially transformative to leave its fate in the hands of a few dominant companies. But while there is a clear demand for regulatory intervention, the accelerated pace of technological advance leaves governments at a huge disadvantage. To ensure that the public interest is represented at the technological frontier, the world needs a public alternative to for-profit LLMs. Democratic governments could form a multilateral body that would develop means to prevent fakery, trolling, and other online harms, like a CERN for generative AI. Alternatively, they could establish a publicly-funded competitor with a different business model and incentives to foster competition between the two models.

Whichever path global policymakers choose, standing in place is not an option. It is abundantly clear that leaving it to the market to decide how these powerful technologies are used, and by whom, is a very risky proposition.

The writer is Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge. #PROJECTSYNDICATE

Save jumbos

Sir, It's heartening that the safety and security of wild animals, especially the endangered ones, are receiving a lot of attention, and the courts are seized of the matter. The Supreme Court, the other day, wanted to know the status of the 2010 "Gajah report" and whether or not the Centre is keen on setting up the National Elephant Conservation Authority (NECA) and provide the body a statutory status. In turn, there was an affirmative nod by the Centre which said the elephant-count in India was on the rise. In 1992, "project elephant" was launched in the country and the jumbos were accorded the national heritage status in 2010. However, between 2014 and 2019 as many as 23,000 elephants were killed in India. Steps have to be initiated to save the animals from accident, electrocution and poaching. Securing the elephants in a non-exploitative and sustainable environment is key to their overall wellbeing. More and more elephant corridors and enhanced budgetary provisions for ensuring elephants are safe are paramount.

Silent killer

Sir, India is largely a religious and god-fearing nation. The temples that dot the nation in order to maintain the heaven-like aura light incense and earthen lamps. This habitual lighting of incense is proving to be a killer of the pandits and purohits who conducts rituals in temples. According to a recent study, one incense stick inside a closed room is equal to 500 cigarettes. This continuous exposure to thousands of incense sticks every day has damaged the lung capacity of the pandits as reported by a study. According to the same study result most of the pandits who were subjects in this study were found to be suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) which is a major killer as India sees more than 9 lakh deaths due to COPD every year. It is, even more deadlier than cancer because cancer deaths in our country are close to 8 lakh which is more than lakh cases behind the COPD deaths. India reports more than one crore cases of COPD every year but looking at its severity it has not been taken seriously. We are already under a heavy blanket of pollution. I think we should do away with incense and mosquito-repellent coils.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 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

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Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

national

of the day quote

Pervez Musharraf, Former Pakistani President, Dies of Rare Disease: Once an implacable foe of India, he became a real force for peace 2002-2007

SHASHI THAROOR | SENIOR CONG LEADER

There are 370 posts lying vacant and out of these 370, 126 were approved by LG Sir. For the remaining, he has asked us to conduct a study. I want to ask LG sahab: These schools are functioning with the help of vice-principals. How can we conduct the study on feasibility of a principal?

MANISH SIDODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

Had the good fortune to visit Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra Ji's Satsang Ashram in Deogarh today. Anukulchandra Ji was not only a philosopher but also a physician, his life was devoted to the welfare of the poor

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

3 killed in two road accidents

Giridih (Jharkhand): Three people were killed and seven others were injured Sunday in two separate road accidents in Jharkhand's Giridih district, police said. In the first accident, a person was killed and another injured when a fish-laden vehicle collided with a truck on GT road in Hesia area under the Bagodar Police Station limits, around 160 km from the state capital Ranchi. Two persons were killed and six others were injured after two cars collided head-on near Pandeydih area on the Giridih-Dumri road. The identity of the deceased in both accidents is being ascertained, while the injured are undergoing treatment at hospitals, the officer added.

Sena (UBT) MLA alleges threat calls

Akola (Maha): Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Nitin Deshmukh, who represents Balapur Assembly constituency in Maharashtra's Akola district, alleged that he received threat calls by two unidentified persons on Sunday morning.

Violence in Sikkim

Gangtok: Violence broke out in South Sikkim district's Namchi Sunday as supporters of the ruling Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) allegedly vandalised an office of the opposition Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), police said. The incident happened at Damthang Road amid the 48-hour bandh called by the SDF, protesting the Supreme Court's observation on the Sikkimese Nepali community. Soon, a police team reached the spot and controlled the situation, officials said, adding that adequate forces were deployed in the area.



Nearly one lakh hectare of paddy fields in the Cauvery delta region is submerged in water due to unseasonal rains

MK STALIN | TAMIL NADU CM

DA LIKELY TO BE HIKED BY 4%

The government is likely to raise the dearness allowance (DA) for employees and pensioners by 4 per cent, according to reports. The DA hike will be effective from January 1, 2023, however it needs to be cleared by the Union Cabinet first. If hiked, this would take the DA to 42 per cent from the existing 38 per cent



Artistes from Zimbabwe perform during the 36th Surajkund International Crafts Mela in Faridabad

PTI PHOTO

2 TMC workers killed in bomb blast in Birbhum

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 5: Two ruling Trinamool Congress workers on a motorbike were killed when bombs were hurled at them in West Bengal's Birbhum district ahead of the panchayat elections, the police said Sunday.

While the opposition BJP and the Congress alleged that the killings were a fallout of the TMC's infighting, the ruling party pointed fingers at the grand old party of India. The superintendent of police of the district was transferred within 24 hours of the incident, though the administration claimed that the move is not related to the killings.

TMC workers Newton Sheikh and his companion Laltu Sheikh, brother of the local panchayat chief, were going somewhere on a motorcycle when some miscreants hurled bombs at them on Saturday evening, police said. While Newton died at night, Laltu succumbed to his injuries at SSKM Hospital in Kolkata, where he was shifted from Rampurhat Hospital in the district. The relatives of the deceased



persons alleged that the bombs were thrown by goons of the Congress as the party was scared of the "increasing popularity" of the two in the area ahead of the panchayat polls due this year. Countering their claims, West Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the party has little presence at Margram to be able to carry out such an attack.

Plea seeking review of verdict on note ban filed in Supreme Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: A plea seeking a review of the judgement that upheld the Centre's 2016 decision to demonetise ₹1,000 and ₹500 currency notes was filed in the Supreme Court Sunday.

A five-judge Constitution bench, in a 4:1 majority verdict, January 2 had given its stamp of approval, saying the decision-making process was neither flawed nor hasty.

The review plea was filed by lawyer ML Sharma, one of the 58 petitioners who had moved the top court challenging the demonetisation exercise announced on November 8, 2016.

Sharma, in his review plea, contended that the bench did not consider his "written arguments" in its verdict on the batch of pleas which led to "serious injustice and miscarriage of justice". "It is, therefore, most respectfully prayed that... May be pleased to: (i) Review the Judgment..." it said.



The top court's judgment came on a batch of 58 petitions including the one filed by lead petitioner Vivek Narayan Sharma challenging the demonetisation exercise

Observing that the scope of judicial review in matters of economic policy is "narrower", a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer, since retired, had said there has to be great restraint in matters of economic policy and the court will not interfere with any opinion formed by the government if it is based on the relevant facts and circumstances or on expert advice.

Justice B V Nagarathna, however, had dissented and said the demonetisation of the ₹500 and ₹1,000 currency notes was "vitiating and unlawful".

Oppn raises pitch on Adani issue

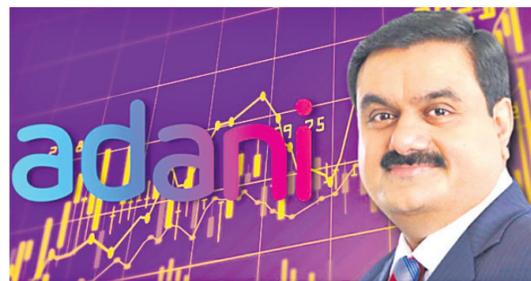
THE CONGRESS HAS ANNOUNCED NATIONWIDE DISTRICT-LEVEL PROTESTS OUTSIDE ALL LIC AND SBI OFFICES MONDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: Opposition parties Sunday stepped up their attack on the Modi government over the Adani issue, with the Congress alleging that its "silence smacks of collusion".

Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said his party will pose three questions a day to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue and "your government cannot hide from saying 'HAHK' (Hum Adani Ke Hain Kaun)".

What action has been taken, if ever, to investigate the serious allegations made over the years against the Adani Group and is there any hope of a fair and impartial investigation in the matter under the prime minister, he said in a statement and asked the prime minister to break his "silence" over the issue. Telangana Chief Minister and BRS leader K Chandrasekhar



Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said his party will pose three questions a day to Prime Minister over the issue and "your government cannot hide from saying 'HAHK' (Hum Adani Ke Hain Kaun)"

Rao endorsed the demand of opposition parties for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) into the Adani "scam", while BSP chief Mayawati said India's image is at stake but the government is taking the issue "very lightly".

Adani group stocks have taken a beating on the bourses after US-based activist short-seller Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations including fraudulent transactions and share price manipulation against the Gautam Adani-led group which has dismissed the allegations as lies.

Ramesh said that amid the allegations against the Adani Group, the Modi government has maintained a "loud silence which smacks of collusion".

He alleged Vinod Adani, the brother of Gautam Adani, was named in the Panama Papers and the Pandora Papers as someone "who operates offshore entities in the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands". "What does the fact that a business entity you are well acquainted with faces serious allegations tell us about the quality and sincerity of your investiga-

tions?" the Congress general secretary said. "How is it possible that one of India's largest business groups, one that has been allowed to build monopolies in airports and seaports, could have escaped serious scrutiny for so long despite persistent allegations?" Ramesh said. Other business groups have been harassed and raided for much less, he alleged.

"Was the Adani Group essential to a dispensation that has profited from 'anti-corruption' rhetoric all of these years," Ramesh said.

Tagging his statement, the Congress leader tweeted, "The eloquent silence of the PM on the Adani MahaMegaScam has forced us to start a series, HAHK-Hum Adanike Hain Kaun. We will be posing 3 questions to the PM daily beginning today." The opposition parties have alleged that the recent meltdown in Adani Group shares is a scam that involves common people's money as public sector LIC and SBI have invested in them.

Parliament was adjourned for the second consecutive day Friday without transacting any business after the Opposition raised slogans demanding a discussion and a JPC probe into the issue. On Sunday, Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Derek O'Brien said his party wants debate not disruption in Parliament and is raring to take on the government.

'3L doses of intranasal vax sent to hospitals'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: Bharat Biotech dispatched three lakh doses of its intranasal Covid-19 vaccine to some hospitals two days ago, the company's executive chairman Krishna Ella said Sunday.

He was speaking on the sidelines of an event here at which a bilateral agreement was signed between the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison Global Health Institute (GHI) and the Ella Foundation for the establishment of the first-ever UW-Madison One Health Centre in Bengaluru.

"We dispatched three lakh doses of the world's first intranasal Covid-19 vaccine to some hospitals two days ago," Ella said. On whether Bharat Biotech is looking at exporting the vaccine, he said some countries and international agencies are approaching the company for the intra-nasal vaccine.

INCOVACC is also the world's first intranasal Covid-19 vaccine to receive approval for the primary 2-dose schedule, and as a heterologous booster dose for adults.

Ella said the UW-Madison One Health Centre in Bengaluru is expected to be operational by the end



of 2023. It will advance the development and production of new vaccines for India. Furthermore, the partnership will enable collaboration across disciplines and geographic boundaries, provide

INCOVACC, the world's first intranasal COVID-19 vaccine, was launched January 26

The vaccine is now available on CoWIN and priced at ₹800 for private markets and ₹325 for the government of India and state governments

Indian students and researchers access to UW expertise and training, and build research capacity in India, he said.

"Both Ella Foundation and UW-Madison GHI share a common vision to advance innovation in science, research, and knowledge

sharing. Establishing the UW-Madison Global One Health Centre holds great significance as it will advance global health through research, education, and community engagement by facilitating student, faculty exchanges, research and education," he added. The India One Health Centre joins a global network that includes Africa and Latin America and will open new opportunities for research, education, and provide actionable outcomes to benefit humans, animals, and ecosystems that advance equitable and sustainable health across India and the world.

Ramdev charged for hate speech



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Barmer (Rajasthan), Feb 5: An FIR was registered on Sunday against Yoga guru Ramdev for allegedly promoting enmity and outraging religious feelings over his provocative remarks at a meeting of seers in Rajasthan's Barmer district, police said.

The FIR was registered at Chauhanat police station based on a complaint filed by a local resident, Pathai Khan, a police officer said.

According to Chauhanat police station SHO Bhutaram, the case was registered under IPC sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence), 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) and 298 (uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person). At the meeting of seers on February 2, Ramdev accused Muslims of resorting to terror and abducting Hindu women while comparing Hinduism to Islam and Christianity.

INDIA SEES SIX-FOLD JUMP IN VOTERS SINCE 1951

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: India has witnessed a nearly six-fold increase in the total number of voters since 1951 to over 94.50 crore this year, but almost one-third of them stayed away from exercising their franchise in the last Lok Sabha polls.

This has prompted the Election Commission to walk the extra mile to bring them to the polling booths.

In 1951, when the voter lists for the first general elections were prepared, India had 17.32 crore registered electors and 45.67 per cent had turned up to exercise their franchise in the newly-born Republic.



The number of registered electors witnessed a gradual increase over the years, and so did their participation in the subsequent elections. In the 1957 general elections, the number of registered

electors was 19.37 crore and 47.74 per cent cast their ballots to send their representatives to the Lok Sabha. Amid talks of taking the voter turnout to 75 per cent, the Election Commission has flagged

the issue of the 30 crore voters who did not turn up at the polling booths in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. People from urban areas, youth and migrants are part of the category of these 30 crore missing voters.

The EC has pointed to urban apathy in the recently-held assembly polls on Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat. For migrants who have their names in electoral lists in their home state and cannot afford to go there to cast vote due to various reasons, the poll panel has proposed remote voting technology. But it needs political consensus, followed by change in legislative framework to roll out remote

electronic voting machines.

As it prepares to hold several assembly polls this year and Lok Sabha elections early next year, the poll panel aims to push voter percentage through innovative communication strategies.

Peoples' participation in the election process breached the 50 per cent for the first time in 1962 general elections when 55.42 per cent of the 21.64 crore voters exercised their franchise. By 2009, the total number of registered voters had zoomed to 71.70 crore but the turnout to the polling booths was only 58.21 per cent, a marginal increase in percentage terms over 1962.

YET, ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF VOTERS - PEOPLE FROM URBAN AREAS, YOUTH AND MIGRANTS - STAYED AWAY FROM EXERCISING THEIR FRANCHISE IN THE LAST LOK SABHA POLLS, ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION

'Queen of Hills' skips its white winter

EXPERTS BLAME DEFORESTATION FOR THE CHANGE IN SHIMLA'S CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, Feb 5: Planning to head to the Himachal Pradesh capital to enjoy the snowy landscape? You will be disappointed, as declining forest cover and rise in pollution have rendered this hill destination unusually 'warm' this winter with long sunny days.

This is for the first time in many years that the 'Queen of Hills', as Shimla was fondly called by the British, is almost bereft of snow cover and parched too.

An official with the local Meteorological Centre told IANS Saturday that only Shimla's Mount Jakhu (the highest peak in the town) received mild snowfall this season, while commercial centre Mall Road, the historic Ridge and the US Club are yet to get snow cover.

However, even in the Jakhu area the snow melted within a few hours.

Under the guise of climate scepticism, most of the locals narrate the tale of indiscriminate construction that has turned the summer retreat of the then British rulers into a concrete jungle in the past few decades.

To highlight that climate change is already having visible effects on Shimla's precipitation patterns, old-timers have shared their photos posing with a cone of ice-cream in the backdrop of the British-era Christ Church on the social media.

Octogenarian Shyam Saran Begta, who was born and brought up in Shimla, said the British had dug several wells in Mount Jakhu where the snow is stored during the winter. The wells helped in recharging the groundwater, which enabled spouting of perennial springs in the peak summer.

"Where have those wells gone? Now multi-storeyed concrete structures are standing on them. The for-



est cover has declined, so the noticeable change in weather patterns," he said.

Sounding alarm bells on climate change, another old-timer Ramesh Thakur said icicles are missing this year from Shimla's landscape. "We feel a delight to see these hanging icicles outside windows," Thakur, who lives in Jakhu hills, told IANS while pointing towards a smoke chimney, once the city's landmark on heritage buildings.

The icicles were the common feature till the 1980s and they were five-six feet long at that time. Now their size has drastically reduced, he added. Icicle, a pendent spear of ice formed by the freezing of dripping rooftop water, indicates a harsh winter.

Hospitality industry representatives are worried about their businesses. They say lack of snow can impact tourism as the town draws a large number of holiday-makers from across northern India.

According to the Meteorological

Earlier, the children used to take out sledges with the onset of winter in November. Sledging on the snow-laden streets of Shimla was once their favourite pastime. It's now in the memory albums only

MOHAN LAL SUD
| SKATER AND SHIMLA NATIVE

Centre, Shimla saw 102.4 cm of snowfall in eight days in January 2022, while there was no snow in January 2021. This year Shimla saw just scanty snow of 6 cm January 13, while there was no snowfall in December 2022.

In January in the years 2009 to 2022, the highest spell of 14 days was recorded in 2012 in Shimla when a total 95 cm of snow was recorded.

Some residents have been wondering if the rise in minimum temperatures in recent years in winter is a result of global warming, though scientists have said the overall warming trend should not

have any effect on local weather on such short-time scales, as per current models.

Currently, most of the tourist destinations like Shimla, Kufri, Kasauli, Chail, Dharamsala, Palampur and Manali have been witnessing long sunny days.

Richa and Abhishek Pathak, a couple from Mumbai, said they have come to enjoy snowy landscapes. "Our travel agent is advising us to travel to Narkanda as it is still wrapped in snow. Now we don't want to travel further. So we are enjoying long sunny days in Shimla," Richa said.

The far-off mountain peaks viewed from Shimla's historic Ridge have been wrapped in a thick white blanket of snow, she added.

Experts blame deforestation for the change in Shimla's climatic conditions.

The shift in temperatures and weather patterns reminds of Vivek Mohan's 30-minute documentary For Whom the Jingle Bells Toll

Study confirms drastic effect of climate change

A study by the local Met Department has confirmed the experts' fears. The study examined the snowfall trend in Shimla in the past 20 years. It concluded that Shimla's harsh winter, which normally commenced in November and ended in March, has declined after the mid-1980s.

The snowfall pattern has undergone a drastic change after 1991 with the snowing days shrinking at a rate of 11 days per decade, said the study.

Published in the Journal of Agro-meteorology, the study said the decadal average overall precipitation from December to March has declined from 283.9 mm (1991 to 2001) to 235.1 mm (2002 to 2010-11). The quantum of snow has come down and most of the precipitation was in the form of rain.

Even the percentage of snowfall to the total precipitation during this period has declined to 30 from 39.

The snowfall trend has also changed. The snowfall is being recorded more in February in Shimla than in December and January, said the study.

That is based on climate change in Shimla during Christmas. It showcases how Shimla is slowly but surely moving out of the seasonal snowline.

Mohan, who is now based in Mumbai but spent his childhood tramping through the snow-laden streets of Shimla, asks, "Will there be a white Christmas or not?"

It's advantage BJP as egos come in the way of Oppn unity in UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 5: Aspirations need wings but, unfortunately, alliances clip them - at least this is what is happening in Uttar Pradesh.

Opposition unity in Uttar Pradesh - despite repeated efforts - remains a distant dream and is likely to remain so in the next Lok Sabha elections.

Even as the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party reiterate their commitment to defeating the BJP, they fight shy of forging an alliance with the Congress, the only national political player which could offer an alternative to the BJP. And the reasons are more than evident.



Both the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) were born from the vote base of the Congress - the BSP with Dalits and the SP with Muslims. Muslims, Dalits, along with Brahmins, were once the mainstay of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh.

A veteran SP leader puts it rather clearly when he says, "Aligning with the Congress at this point when the party is looking towards a revival after the Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) would amount to hakiri. We cannot give our own vote bank (Muslim in this case) a political option. What is the guarantee that Muslims will not return to the Congress if we forge an alliance with them?"

The SP leadership, after several brainstorming sessions in the party and the family, therefore decided that it would be a better idea to continue projecting themselves as the only alternative to the BJP and use the 2022 assembly results to push the point.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav has consciously avoided being seen in the frame with Rahul Gandhi. Even though several top Congress leaders visited his Saifai home to offer condolence when his father Mulayam Singh passed away in October last year, Akhilesh did not soften his stand and refused to join the BJJ.

Similarly, Mayawati, who suffered a major erosion of her vote bank in the last assembly elections - with a large part of her Dalit vote bank shifting to the BJP - is now wary of the Congress which is blatantly targeting the Dalits.

The Congress leadership in Uttar Pradesh now comprises of leaders culled from the BSP - from Brijlal Khabri to Nakul Dubey to Naseemuddin Siddiqui - all of whom are using their previous connect with the BSP to bring Dalits closer to the Congress.

Mayawati now claims that the Congress is following the culture and ideology of the BJP and hence,

she is maintaining a safe distance from the party.

Interestingly, the Samajwadi Party has also started gnawing at the BSP's Dalit vote base and the recent controversy over the use of the word 'Shudra' in Ramcharitmanas is an example.

By supporting Swami Prasad Maurya who created the row, Akhilesh wants to pull back state politics into casteism and dilute the BJP's 'Hindu First' card.

Moreover, there is a strong belief in the state's political circles that whenever a larger party allies with a smaller one, it is the latter which fattens up and leaves the former leaner and weaker.

This is a time-tested belief and

similar to the 'leech technique'. The BJP allied for the first time with BSP in 1995, supporting the first Mayawati government. The party rapidly lost ground and remained out of power for 14 years till it made a comeback in 2017. Similarly, when the BSP allied with the Congress in 1996, it was the BSP which gained while the downfall of the Congress began. In 2019, the SP allied with the BSP and it was the BSP that gained while the SP lost ground, said a SP leader.

The Congress, for apparent reasons, is now considered 'small' in UP and parties are naturally wary of joining hands with it and losing their own ground.

Another factor that is obstructing alliances in UP is the aspiration of both, Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati, to attain the status of a national leader.

Both the leaders have been unsuccessfully trying to find a toe-hold in other states but have not got much success so far.

As the countdown begins to the 2024 general elections, it is clear that the Samajwadi Party will contest the polls in alliance with Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) which is gaining strength in western UP. Another addition to the alliance may be the Azad Samaj Party, popularly known as the Bhim Army.

Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar is known for his proximity to RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary and the latter could help in cementing the alliance between the SP and the Bhim Army which is looking to make inroads in the BSP's Dalit votes.

The BSP, as in the past, will go it alone in the Lok Sabha polls.

Interestingly, both the SP and the BSP are supremely confident of faring better in the 2024 polls and feel that the BJP will lose ground due to the anti-incumbency factor.

However, the BJP is not perturbed and is working, in fact, to improving its numbers in Uttar Pradesh.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

UP Police, Meta agreement saves 2 lives in just a week

More than 10 lives have been saved so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 5: An agreement signed between Meta (Facebook's parent company) and Uttar Pradesh Police has helped save two people's lives in the state in a span of less than a week.

One of them was a college student in the Ambedkarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, who late Friday night said she was going to commit suicide in an Instagram post, posting pictures of pills she was going to pop up.

The other occurred in Ghaziabad January 31, when a man, as he prepared to hang himself from a ceiling fan, beamed a live telecast of the act on Instagram.

In both cases, the tech giant managed to scupper their attempts by alerting in time the local police, who then traced the two people and stopped them from committing suicide.

Under the prevailing agreement between Uttar Pradesh Police and Facebook from March 2022, if any person posts something related to suicide or self-harm on Facebook



or Instagram, then Meta Hqs USA immediately sends an alert to the social media centre of PHQ UP Police through phone and email, Rahul Srivastav, Additional Superintendent of Police ATS In-charge of Social Media Centre of UP Police, told PTI Sunday.

He added that more than 10 lives have been saved so far.

In Ambedkarnagar incident, Meta sent an alert to the Social Media Centre of UP Police at 11.37 pm with her details, after which police reached the woman's place in 15 minutes, thwarted her pursuit and took her family into confidence, Srivastav said.

On the directions of Additional Director General, Law and Order, Prashant Kumar, Superintendent of Police of Ambedkarnagar Ajit

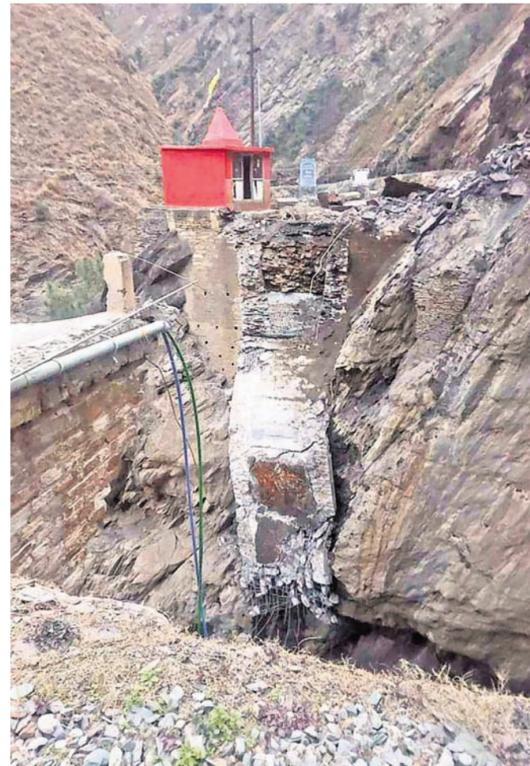
Kumar Sinha has deputed a female officer, Rukmani Verma, to counsel the girl.

In the Ghaziabad incident, after receiving an alert from the Social Media Centre of UP Police, Vijayanagar Police Station Inspector Anita Chauhan reached the spot within 13 minutes and prevented the man from killing himself. The man was depressed after losing 90,000 in a business.

The Ghaziabad Police counselled the youth and also spoke to his family.

"UP Police is making diverse use of social media for the cause of public service offering a bouquet of online services. We have a dedicated and well-trained team of more than 500+ police personnel who work round-the-clock to render any kind of assistance," he said.

Srivastav said, "Considering the sensitivity of the issue, we are coming up with a detailed SOP for such cases in which there shall be a provision for sustained follow-up and counselling by professional counsellors of Unicef."



COMMUTING WOES: A bridge on the Chamba-Bharmour National Highway collapsed, in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, Sunday
PTI PHOTO

Benaras gets a 'roti ATM' to feed stray dogs, cows

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Varanasi, Feb 5: Benaras has got a 'roti ATM', a first-of-its-kind initiative to feed speechless stray dogs and cows.

Grootguardian, the organisation which Gaurav Rai set up along with his four friends for the noble purpose, now houses 40 youths.

Grootguardian President Gaurav Rai said that he got inspiration for the work from his friend Siddharth Singh who passed away in a road accident.

Rai said that Singh was an animal lover and wherever he used to see hungry animals, he used to feed them biscuits and jaggery.

"We have started this ATM after his sudden demise. We feed the food collected in the ATM to stray

dogs and cows," Rai said. First ATM is installed in a society in Pandeypur in Banke Bihari, in which around 100-150 chappatis are being collected. The next ATM will be installed in Shivpur where 200 families reside.

"We are being supported by around 40 people including Prajwal, Harsh, Aman, Mrintujay, Vikas, Kavish, Sadas, Avinash, Shivani, Tulika, Akshara, Kritika, Himalaya and Nihal," he said.

Prajwal said that organisation was founded in 2019 and during the Covid pandemic, they used to feed the stray animals and distribute ration to the poor people.

His team is continuously working for animal welfare, women and child education and environment conservation, Prajwal said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, Feb 5: The two young entrepreneurs - Haneesh Katnawer and Sonam Sodha, founders of the startup Himalayan Hemp - said they were using hemp plants to produce sanitary pad, apparels (shirts, T-shirts and designer wear), bags and shoes, besides protein powder, anti-aging and edible oils, and other cosmetic products.

They claimed their startup had used hemp plants to enable small farmers and women artisans lift their incomes in the hill states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Haneesh Katnawer, a production engineer from Himachal Pradesh, and Sonam Sodha, an MBA from Gujarat, who are also a writer and dancer, respectively, have left their well-paid private sector jobs in Gujarat to launch the startup 'Himalayan Hemp', a



community of hemp farmers, artisans and innovators from the two hill states.

During a discussion with IANS, the young entrepreneurs said they registered their startup in 2019 in Himachal, processing the stem and seeds of the hemp plants successfully for producing protective face masks during the Covid-19 pan-

FROM FACE MASKS TO DESIGNER CLOTHES

Startup turns hemp into prized ingredient

Katnawer, who is the CEO of 'Himalayan Hemp', said they will be launching the first of its kind hemp fibre sanitary pad in two months. He disclosed that the start-up is working with 70 small hemp farmers in four districts of Uttarakhand, including Dehradun, Bageshwar, Pithoragarh and Nainital and 30 women artisans from the weaker sections in Kangra and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh.

"We get raw hemp fibre and seeds from the 70 farmers. The hemp stem fibre is subsequently processed into cloth in our mechanized systems (financed by government grants) and the resultant cloth is stitched into designer wear, masks and the soon to be launched first of its kind hemp fibre sanitary pad by 30 women artisans in Himachal," Katnawer told IANS.

But it's not just apparel and hemp seed oil based products which

are part of the start-up's product line, as the unique venture also claims to have built the first of its kind carbon negative and high thermal insulation clay hut in Kullu district, made out of bricks created from a mixture of hemp huds (generated through hemp stem stalks), lime and clay.

"We are already selling the face masks and hemp seed oil based products, but the complete apparel line, including the first of its kind sanitary pads will be launched soon, after rigorous quality control and testing," added Sonam Sodha, who is the MD and COO of the start-up.

The duo's start-up, which showcased their hemp based products at the Start-Up Expo of the four-day India International Science Festival (IISF-2022) that concluded in Bhopal in January, has already won four national and three international awards, besides government grants.

of the day quote

In the Amrit Kaal of Independence, the country is forging new definitions and creating a new order

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

How can Adani episode be forgotten on Ravidas Jayanti as it is a new cause of concern. Instead of finding solution to such matters, government is making new promises ignoring the people.

MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

A conspiracy in the RSS is under way to make Pralhad Joshi the Chief Minister of the State after the Assembly polls. Joshi does not belong to a culture that is most prominent in southern Karnataka

H D KUMARASWAMY | JD(S) LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Morbi civic body gets fresh notice

Morbi (Gujarat): The state Urban Development Department has issued a fresh notice to the Morbi Nagar Palika, asking it to explain why it should not be superseded?

3 more members of banned PFI held

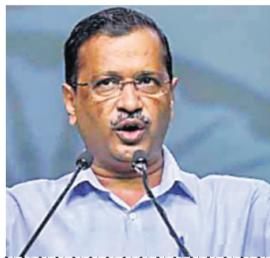
Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh Police have arrested three members of the banned outfit Popular Front of India (PFI) on charges of conspiring against the government and indulging in unlawful activities.

3 killed as bus, van collide

Coimbatore: Three people, including two women, were killed on the spot and three others injured Sunday when the van they were travelling in collided head-on with a bus near Vellakoi in Tirupur district of Tamil Nadu.

Jolt for BJP in WB

Kolkata: Ahead the forthcoming panchayat polls in West Bengal, the BJP Sunday received a major jolt as another party MLA shifted to the ruling Trinamool Congress.



Even the country's Parliament has accepted that the air quality in Delhi is improving. This is the result of the continued efforts of Delhiites

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

CJI, SC JUDGES VISIT AMRIT UDYAN

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Justice DY Chandrachud and judges of the Supreme Court Sunday visited Amrit Udyan -- earlier known as Mughal Garden, in the Rashtrapati Bhavan on a special invitation by President Droupadi Murmu.



1 in 4 users unaware of crypto cybercrime risks: Report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 5: Nearly one in four users are unaware of crypto cybercrime risks, while half of the users are hit by crypto cybercrime, a new report has shown.

According to the cybersecurity firm Kaspersky, just 25 per cent of those surveyed felt well-informed about potential cryptocurrency cyberthreats, while 23 per cent had no information at all.

The report also discovered that nearly half (49 per cent) of the respondents had been affected by cryptocurrency crime in some way,

with 40 per cent of crypto owners did not believe current protection systems for cryptocurrency were effective.

"This survey emphasises the need for increased awareness and education about the potential risks faced by cryptocurrency owners. As the adoption of digital assets continues to grow, it is essential for individuals to take appropriate measures to protect themselves from cyber threats," said Vitaly Kamuk, Head of the APAC unit, Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team.

Moreover, cyber threats such as virtual theft and scams, were among



the most frequently mentioned negative aspects of cryptocurrency use, with 27 per cent and 26 per

cent of respondents citing them as their top concerns, respectively.

The report also mentioned that nearly 38 per cent of respondents were unaware they could become a target of crypto threats -- even if they do not own cryptocurrency.

Moreover, cyber threats such as virtual theft and scams, were among the most frequently mentioned negative aspects of cryptocurrency use, with 27 per cent and 26 per cent of respondents citing them as their top concerns, respectively

When it comes to market management, the report added that 54 per cent would like to see regulation by an independent authority, while 44 per cent agree cryptocurrency regulation should be carried out by banks.

BRS vows to form farmers' govt

Rao said political parties and leaders are winning polls but people are losing



BRS President and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao during a public meeting in Nanded

AGENCIES

Nanded (Maharashtra), Feb 5: Recalling Chhatrapati Shivaji's achievements, Telangana Chief Minister and BRS President K Chandrashekar Rao Sunday said his party will take a pledge at Shivneri, the erstwhile Maratha ruler's birthplace, to form a government for farmers' welfare in the country.

Speaking at a public meeting here, he said within 10 days, the BRS party vehicles will go to every village in all 288 Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra to form farmers' committees.

Leaders belonging to various political parties joined BRS and KCR, as Rao is known as, welcomed them by offering pink scarves.

"Within a few days, BRS party work will start in Maharashtra. Within eight to 10 days, BRS vehicles will come to the village in Maharashtra. Committees will be formed. In order to unite farmers

We will visit the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Shivneri, bow our head and take oath for making a farmers' government. The process to make farmers' committees in entire Maharashtra will begin

K CHANDRASEKHAR RAO | BRS PRESIDENT

in Maharashtra which has 288 Assembly constituencies, all 288 vehicles will start at once," he further said.

"I request you (farmers) to unite. I will also visit western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and north Maharashtra," Rao added.

Pointing out that Maharashtra has recorded the highest number of farmers' suicides in the country, BRS president and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao said here on Sunday that the time has come for peasants to take the

reins of the country. Addressing Bharat Rashtra Samithi's (BRS) first public meeting outside Telangana at Nanded, he said political parties and leaders are winning in polls but people are losing.

"That's why BRS slogan is 'Abki ki baar, kisan sarkar' (This time around, a government for the farmers). If we unite, it is not impossible. In our country, farmers constitute more than 42 per cent and if the number of farm labourers is also added to that it will be more than 50 per cent which is sufficient to form government", Rao said.

"Today, time has come. 75 years is a long period. Farmers should also be able to write and make rules," he said.

There are several rivers like Krishna and Godavari flowing in Maharashtra. Even then, why is there water shortage in Maharashtra, he questioned.

"Why there is scarcity of water in Maharashtra? Who is responsible for it? Think over it. Congress ruled the country for 54 years and BJP ruled for 16 years. These two parties are 'kasoovavaar' (guilty). I want farmers' suicides to stop. If a farmers' government is formed then water problem will be solved," Rao, popularly known as KCR, said.

After his arrival from Hyderabad earlier, Rao along with his daughter and BRS MLC K Kavitha, Telangana Minister for Endowments Indrakaran Reddy and some senior leaders of the party accompanied Rao and offered prayers at a gurudwara in Nanded.

AIMPLB calls for curbs on hate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 5: The AIMPLB Sunday appealed to the "highest authorities" to place stringent measures to control "hated being spread" in the country even as it passed resolutions against the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code, and razing of people's properties.

Meeting here in Lucknow, the board also urged the judiciary to take a serious note of "injustice" being meted out to the weaker sections and the minorities.

"Houses built for decades are getting razed. Those holding peaceful demonstrations are framed

The board urged the judiciary to take a serious note of "injustice" being meted out to the weaker sections and the minorities

under the most stringent of laws and put behind bars indefinitely," said the All India Muslim Personal Law Board in a statement.

The reference was apparently to the bulldozing of allegedly illegal properties in UP, actions which critics say targets Muslims. In its appeal to the "highest authorities," the board urged them

to control the spread of hate "before irreparable damage was done to the fabric of our nation's harmony." The board passed several resolutions in the meeting, organised at the Islamic Seminary Nadwatul Ulama here, including against "illegal" appropriation of the waqf properties and demanding the proper implementation of the Places of Worship Act.

In one such resolution, according to AIMPLB general secretary Khalid Saif Ullah Rahmani, the board said that the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code will deprive citizens of the privileges provided to them by the Personal Laws.

SC set to get five new judges today



Combo photo of newly appointed Supreme Court judges; (L-R) Rajasthan HC Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal, Patna HC Chief Justice Sanjay Karol, Manipur HC Chief Justice PV Sanjay Kumar, Patna HC judge Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, and Allahabad HC judge Justice Manoj Misra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: The Supreme Court is all set to get five new judges, taking its strength to 32 against the sanctioned strength of 34, Monday when three chief justices-- Justice Pankaj Mithal, Justice Sanjay Karol and P V Sanjay Kumar -- of high courts of Rajasthan, Patna and Manipur respectively will take oath alongside two other senior high court judges.

Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah of the Patna High Court and Justice Manoj Misra of the Allahabad High Court will also be administered oath of office by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) as apex court judges in a ceremony to be held at the court's auditorium in its new building complex.

The senior most among the five judges, whose names were officially announced by the Centre Saturday, is Justice Mithal whose parent cadre is the Allahabad High Court.

Justice Mithal was elevated as additional judge of the Allahabad High Court July 7, 2006, and took oath as permanent Judge July 2, 2008. He took oath as the Chief Justice of the Common High Court for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh January 4, 2021.

The second senior-most judge who will take oath Monday, is Justice Karol, whose parent HC cadre is Himachal Pradesh. He was the chief justice of the Patna High Court at the time of elevation.

Justice P V Sanjay Kumar, who originally belonged to the Telangana

High Court, is third in the list of five judges and was heading the Manipur High Court at the time of recommendation by the Collegium December 13 last year and subsequent clearance by the Centre.

Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah of the Patna High Court is the fourth judge who has been appointed to the SC.

Justice Manoj Misra, the fifth in the list, was born June 2, 1965. He enrolled as an advocate December 12, 1988, and was elevated as additional judge at the Allahabad High Court November 21, 2011. He took oath as a permanent judge August 6, 2013.

All the five names for the judgeship in the top court were recommended by the six-member Supreme Court Collegium December 13 last year.



The balancing act in Padma awards

This year's Padma awards hogged the limelight as the Modi government chose to honour late Mulayam Singh Yadav and S K Krishna, a former Karnataka Chief Minister and Union Minister in the Congress regime with Padma Vibhushan. But a close look at the list containing 106 awardees gives an insight into the pattern.

these awards for decades had to remain content with just three. Another political move can also be seen as Narendra Chandra Debarra (Posthumously) who founded IPFT in Tripura who played a key role in the BJP win in 2018 Assembly polls is also part of the Padma Shri win. Interestingly, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and J&K together got only 4 awards between them -- all Padma Shri. This is the lowest ever tally in recent times for the entire northern region. It may also be noted that five Padma awards have been given to Muslims in the field of Arts for their outstanding performance signaling 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'.

Amrinder may not replace Koshiyari

There is a strong buzz in political circles that former Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amrinder Singh may be sent to Maharashtra as Governor. With Bhagat Singh Koshiyari expressing his desire to quit, a search has begun for his successor. But those considered close to the Modi Establishment say that the BJP may not like to send the Captain to Maharashtra as his services may be needed by the BJP at

least until the Lok Sabha polls in May 2024. The BJP could win only two seats (Guradaspur and Hoshiarpur) and that too in alliance with the Akali Dal. With Akali Dal walking out of the NDA, the BJP leadership is working hard to galvanize the party cadre and expand its base.

Kamal Nath brings new culture in MP

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and president of the State Congress unit Kamal Nath surprised party MLAs by issuing a new directive to them. The directive created a new working culture that Kamal Nath is trying to bring in the party. Since the Assembly elections are due to be held this year end, Kamal Nath wants his MLAs not to crowd around state capital Bhopal all the time. He is nowadays busy in changing the working system of his party leaders. Whenever party MLAs rang up Kamal Nath seeking his time, he firmly told them, "You stay put in your constituency and let me know what can I do for you. I will deliver whatever you need in your constituency. You need not waste your time by coming all the way to Bhopal." This surprised party MLAs and

leaders as no former CM or party president ever told them. Kamal Nath wants that the leaders should spend more time in their Assembly constituencies only. Perhaps, Kamal Nath has his own working culture.

7 lakh cos facing debt recovery proceedings

Nearly seven lakh companies have either been shut down or facing debt recovery proceedings under the stringent SARFAESI Act for their failure to repay debt taken from financial institutions and banks. As many as two lakh companies were taken to Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs) by banks and financial institutions in the first year itself after the SARFAESI Act was amended by the Modi government in 2016. The largest number of companies, 2.35 lakhs, were taken to the DRTs in the year 2018-19. In all, 6.88 lakh companies have been taken to the DRTs across the country during 2016-17 to 2020-21 period. Though there is no official data available with the Corporate Affairs ministry that how many of these 6.88 lakh companies shut shop due to their failure to repay debt. But official sources say that most of

these companies were either declared bankrupt or may vanish from the radar.

Confusion in Bihar

Three developments in Bihar are worth watching closely; one that the Union home ministry decided to give Z-category security cover to LJP (Ram Vilas Paswan) MP Chirag Paswan; 2) Banner of revolt by Janata Dal (U) Parliament Board chairman Upendra Kushwaha against Nitish Kumar and 3) Bihar BJP leaders suddenly declaring "no truck" with JD (U) after remaining silent against Nitish Kumar. The straw in the camel's back came when Janata Dal (U) decided not to go to Srinagar to participate in the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi. The JD (U) leaders rather went a step further and declared that why should they go there as its Congress Party's internal program. Political pundits are baffled as to what Nitish Kumar is upto after dumping the BJP and joining hands with Congress and RJD to remain in power comfortably. The BJP, meanwhile, is cooking JD (U)'s goose and may engineer some defections when Lok Sabha polls draw near. With the 2024 elections in sight, the saffron party plans to use Paswan against Nitish and unite the two groups of LJP soon.

international



I am not claiming to be blameless in what happened, but fundamentally I was not given a realistic chance to enact my policies by a very powerful economic establishment, coupled with a lack of political support
LIZ TRUSS | FORMER PM, UK

BOBI: WORLD'S OLDEST DOG

Bobi, a purebred Rafeiro do Alentejo, celebrated his 30th birthday last year. The Guinness World of Records announced that he is world's oldest dog on record. The last record was held by an Australian cattle-dog that died at 29 years and five months in 1939



of the day quote

I've often had to say the situation at the front is tough, and is getting tougher, and it's that time again. The invader is putting more and more of his forces into breaking down our defences
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

I make it very clear to Putin that Russia has sole responsibility for the war. Russia has invaded its neighbour for no reason, in order to take parts of Ukraine or the whole country under its control
OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

There is no surprise that Russia is actively looking to leverage the historic economic ties it has in Turkey. The question is what is the Turkish response going to be
BRIAN NELSON | TOP SANCTIONS OFFICIAL, US TREASURY DEPT

SHORT TAKES

Sunak's 'spl gesture'

London: In a "special gesture", British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak joined a UK Cabinet Office meeting here between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and British counterpart Tim Barrow. Sunak highlighted the UK government's support to deepen strategic partnership in areas such as trade, defence and science and technology during the meeting Friday. Doval was in London for an annual bilateral strategic dialogue on his way back from Washington, where he met US counterpart Jake Sullivan for similar talks.

'Jail Bharo' by Imran

Lahore: Pakistan's ousted PM and Opposition's Chairman Imran Khan Saturday instructed his workers and supporters to prepare for the 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' (fill the prison movement) against the federal government for inflicting custodial torture on his party leaders and delay in announcing fresh general elections. It comes days after sedition cases were filed against his party's Senior Vice-President Fawad Chaudhry and former member of National Assembly Shandana Gulzar.

Huge stir in Israel

Jerusalem: Tens of thousands of Israelis braved heavy rain Saturday for a fifth week of protests against judicial reform plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new government that critics say threaten democratic checks on ministers by the courts. The plans, which the government says are needed to curb overreach by judges, have drawn fierce opposition from groups including lawyers, and raised concerns among business leaders, widening already deep political divisions in Israeli society.

49 vehicles collide

Beijing: At least 16 people were killed and 66 others injured after a multi-vehicle collisions occurred in central China's Hunan province, a media report said Sunday. The accidents happened Saturday evening when a total of 49 vehicles collided within 10 minutes on the Xuchang-Guangzhou Highway in the Hunan province's Changsha city.

Shark kills girl in Oz

Sydney: A 16-year-old girl died Saturday after being mauled by a shark in a river in Western Australia's state capital Perth after she jumped in the water to swim with a pod of dolphins. Police said they were called to the scene of the attack Saturday near a traffic bridge in the Swan River, in Perth.

ANTI-GOVT PROTESTS

Iran frees thousands of prisoners

Iran was swept by protests following the death of a young Iranian woman in the custody of the country's morality police last September. Iranians from all walks of life took part, marking one of the boldest challenges to the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution

REUTERS

Dubai, Feb 5: Iran's supreme leader has pardoned "tens of thousands" of prisoners including some arrested in recent anti-government protests, state news agency IRNA reported Sunday, after a deadly state crackdown helped quell the nationwide unrest.

However, the pardon approved by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei came with conditions, according to details announced in state media reports, which said the measure would not apply to any of the numerous dual nationals held in Iran.

State news agency IRNA said those accused of "corruption on earth" - a capital charge brought against some protesters, four of whom have been executed - would also not be pardoned.

Neither would it apply to those charged with "spying for foreign agents" or those "affiliated with groups hostile to the Islamic Republic", state media reported.

According to the HRANA activist news agency, more than 19,600 people have been arrested in the protests, which the authorities accused Iran's foreign enemies of fomenting.

Rights groups say at least 527

More than 19,600 people have been arrested during the protests

At least 527 have been killed in the crackdown, including 70 minors

Four people have been hanged and over 100 shared the same fate

Naturally, those who do not express regret for their activities and give a written commitment for not repeating those activities, will not be pardoned

SADEQ RAHIMI | DEPUTY JUDICIARY CHIEF, IRAN

have been killed in the crackdown, including 70 minors. At least four people have been hanged, according to the Iranian judiciary. Protests have slowed considerably since the hangings began.

In a letter to Khamenei requesting the pardon, judiciary head Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei said: "During recent events, a number of people, especially young people, committed wrong actions and crimes as a result of the indoctrination and propaganda of the enemy.



OPPN LEADER CALLS FOR REFERENDUM

A long-detained opposition leader in Iran is calling for a nationwide referendum about whether to write a new constitution for the Islamic Republic amid nationwide protests shaking the country. Mir Hossein Mousavi's call, posted late Saturday by the opposition Kaleme website, included him saying he didn't believe Iran's current system giving final say to a supreme leader worked any longer. He also called for the formation of a constitutional assembly of "real representatives" to write a new constitution. It remains unlikely Iran's theocracy will heed the 80-year-old politician's call. He and his wife have been under house arrest for years after his disputed presidential election loss in 2009 led to the widespread Green Movement protests that security forces also put down. However, he himself had supported and served in Iran's theocracy for decades.

"Since the foreign enemies and anti-revolutionary currents' plans have been foiled, many of these youth now regret their actions," Ejei wrote.

Khamenei approved the pardons in honour of the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

It would not apply to those "facing charges of spying for foreign agencies, having direct contact with foreign agents, committing in-

tentional murder and injury, (and) committing destruction and arson of state property".

The Norway-based Iran Human Rights group said this week that at least 100 detained protesters faced possible death sentences.

Amnesty International has criticised Iranian authorities for what it called "sham trials designed to intimidate those participating in the popular uprising that has rocked Iran".

RISKING MARINE LIFE Brazil sinks rusting old aircraft carrier

REUTERS

Brasilia, Feb 5: Brazil sank a decommissioned aircraft carrier in the Atlantic Ocean off its northeast coast, the Brazilian Navy said, despite warnings from environmentalists that the rusting 1960s French-built ship would pollute the sea and the marine food chain.

The 32,000-tonne carrier had been floating offshore for three months since Turkey refused it entry to be scrapped there because it was an environmental hazard and the ship was towed back to Brazil.

The carrier was scuttled in a "planned and controlled sinking" late Friday, the Navy said in a statement, that would "avoid logistical, operational, environmental and economic losses to the Brazilian state," it said.

The hull of the Sao Paulo was sunk in Brazilian jurisdictional waters 350 kilometers off the coast where the sea is 5,000 meters deep, a location chosen to mitigate the impact on fishing and ecosystems.

Federal public prosecutors and Greenpeace had asked the Brazilian government to stop the sinking, saying it was "toxic" due to dangerous materials, including 9 tonnes of asbestos used in paneling.

"The sinking of the aircraft carrier Sao Paulo throws tons of asbestos, mercury, lead and other highly toxic substances into the seabed," Greenpeace said.

Putin promised not to kill Zelenskyy: Israel's ex-PM

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tel Aviv, Feb 5: A former Israeli prime minister who served briefly as a mediator at the start of Russia's war with Ukraine says he drew a promise from the Russian president not to kill his Ukrainian counterpart.

Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett became an unlikely intermediary in the war's first weeks, becoming one of the few Western leaders to meet President Vladimir Putin during the war in a snap trip to Moscow last March.

While Bennett's mediation efforts appear to have done little to end the bloodshed that continues until today, his remarks, in an interview posted online late Saturday, shed light on the backroom diplomacy and urgent efforts that were underway to try to bring the conflict to a speedy conclusion in its early days.

In the five-hour interview, which touched on numerous other subjects, Bennett says he asked Putin about whether he intended to kill Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"I asked what's up with this? Are you planning to kill Zelenskyy? He said I won't kill Zelenskyy. I then said to him I have to understand that you're giving me your word that you won't kill Zelenskyy. He said I'm not going to kill Zelenskyy."

Bennett said he then called Zelenskyy to inform him of Putin's pledge.



"Listen, I came out of a meeting, he's not going to kill you. He asks, are you sure? I said 100 per cent he won't kill you."

Bennett said that during his mediation, Putin dropped his vow to seek Ukraine's disarmament and Zelenskyy promised not to join NATO.

Bennett, a largely untested leader who had served as prime minister for just over six months when the war broke out, unexpectedly thrust himself into international diplomacy after he had positioned Israel into an uncomfortable middle ground between Russia and Ukraine.

Israel views its good ties with the Kremlin as strategic in the face of threats from Iran but it aligns itself with Western nations and also seeks to show support for Ukraine.

An observant Jew and little known internationally, he flew to Moscow for his meeting with Putin during the Jewish Sabbath, breaking his religious commitments and putting himself at the forefront of global efforts to halt the war.

RECORD LOWS Brutal cold seizes northeast US

REUTERS

Washington, Feb 5: A dangerous combination of record-setting cold temperatures and powerful winds buffeted the northeastern United States Saturday, creating life-threatening conditions and causing the death of an infant in Massachusetts.

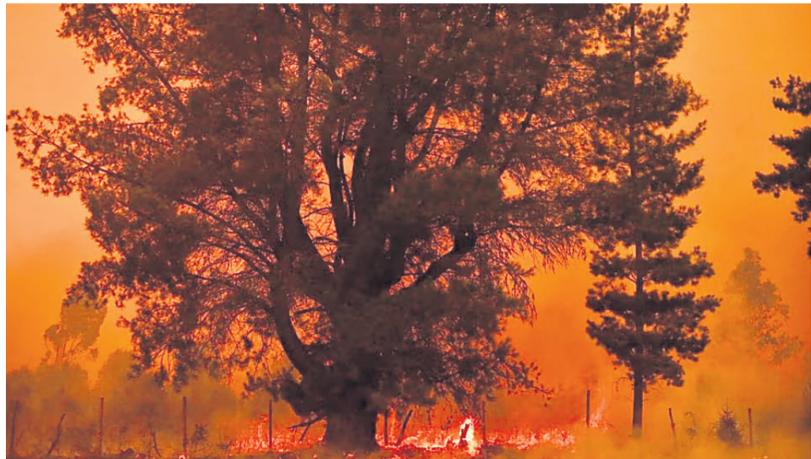
New Hampshire's Mount Washington overnight recorded a wind chill - a measure of how the combined effect of air and wind feels to the skin - of minus 108 degrees Fahrenheit (-78 Celsius), which



appeared to be the lowest ever in the United States. The air temperature at the peak reached minus 47 degrees

F (-44 C), with winds gusting near 100 miles per hour (160 kilometers per hour), according to the Mount Washington Observatory.

In Boston, where officials closed down the public school system Friday due to the impending freeze, the low temperature hit minus 10 degrees F (-23 C), shattering the day's record set more than a century ago, the NWS said. In Providence, Rhode Island, the mercury dropped to minus 9 degrees F (-23 C), well below the previous all-time low of minus 2 degrees F (-19 C), set in 1918.



BURNING BLAZE: Dozens of wildfires blazing though Chile caused the government to extend an emergency order to another region Saturday, as a scorching summer heat wave complicates efforts to control fires that have claimed at least 23 lives so far. More than 1,100 people have sought refuge in shelters while at least 979 people have been reported injured by the raging fires

Musharraf: Kargil architect who brought Pak, India to the brink of war

Pak's ex-military dictator General Pervez Musharraf was the first leader who was sentenced to death for treason in a country with a history of military coup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 5: Pakistan's former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil War, toppled the democratically-elected government in a bloodless military coup in 1999 and ruled the country for nine years during which he survived numerous assassination bids.

Born in a middle-class family of Urdu-speaking Mohajir parents in Delhi in 1943, Musharraf migrated to Pakistan with his family after the Partition in 1947.

Pakistan's last military dictator died Sunday as a forgotten man in politics after spending his final years in self-exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in his country. He died in the Gulf country after a prolonged illness.

During his stint as the head of the Pakistan government, Musharraf allied with America in the war against terror after the 9/11 attacks on the US and cracked down on Islamist groups and banned dozens of radical outfits, a move that angered radicals. He even escaped assassination attempts in later years.

Musharraf, who was appointed the chief of army staff by the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif in 1998, engineered the Kargil War that took place months after Sharif signed a historic peace accord with his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lahore.

After his misadventure in Kargil, Musharraf deposed Sharif in a bloodless coup and ruled Pakistan from 1999 to 2008 in various positions - first as the chief execu-

tive of Pakistan and later as the President.

Musharraf, who announced elections in 2008 under domestic and international pressure, was forced to resign as president following the polls and went into self-imposed exile in Dubai.

In 2010, he formed his own party, the All Pakistan Muslim League and declared himself the party president. He voiced his opinion of actively taking part in Pakistan's politics sometime in the future.

He returned to Pakistan in March 2013 to contest polls after living in self-exile for about five years but was hauled to court in different cases - including the 2007 assassination of former premier Benazir Bhutto, treason under article 6 of Pakistan Constitution and murder of Bugti tribe chief Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti.

In 2006, on the orders of Gen Musharraf, the Pakistan Army killed the former junior interior minister and Governor of Balochistan Bugti and over two

dozen of his tribesmen, leading to widespread unrest in the area and a surge in the Baloch nationalist sentiment in the province.

In 2019, Musharraf was sentenced to death in absentia by a special court which found him guilty of high treason, for imposing a state of emergency November 3, 2007, by keeping the country's constitution in abeyance.

The judgement angered the country's powerful Army which has ruled over Pakistan for most of the period since its existence. It was the first time a former top military official had faced such a sentence for treason in Pakistan. The death sentence was later annulled by the Lahore High Court.

Musharraf, who was living in Dubai since March 2016, was also declared a fugitive in the Benazir Bhutto murder case and Red Mosque cleric killing case.

During his tenure, Pakistan saw some structural reforms - ranging from the economic and social sec-

tors to administrative and political restructuring.

Musharraf visited India for the failed Agra summit in 2001 and made two more visits in 2005 as President to watch an India-Pakistan One-day Cricket match and in 2009 to attend a media event after shedding power.

Musharraf, the second of three brothers, spent his early years in Turkey, from 1949 to 1956, as his father Syed Musharrafaud-din was posted in Ankara.

He fought in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 as a young officer, and also participated in the Indo-Pak War of 1971 as a Company Commander in the Commando Battalion.

Musharraf rose to the rank of General and was appointed as the Chief of Army Staff October 7, 1998, by then prime minister Sharif. He was given additional charge of the

Chairman Joint Chiefs Staff Committee April 9, 1999. Six months later, he toppled the Sharif government and became the head of the state designated as Chief Executive.



of the day quote

India's focus should not be on the trade deficit with China. It should be on our dependence on China for certain critical inputs

SUMAN BERY | VC, NITI AAYOG

The decision to raise the investment ceilings in small savings schemes is aimed at benefiting senior citizens and the middle class who park funds in safe government deposit schemes offering higher returns than banks

TV SOMANATHAN | FINANCE SECRETARY

Within two years, we will have a fully electrified BEV (battery electric vehicle) Range Rover. It's just two years away now

ADRIAN MARDELL | INTERIM CEO, JLR

SHORT TAKES

'RBI may settle for 25 bps hike'

Mumbai: With retail inflation showing signs of softening and the US Fed moderating the pace of increase in its benchmark interest rate, the Reserve Bank is likely to settle for a smaller 25 basis points repo rate hike in its forthcoming bi-monthly monetary policy due later this week. In its December monetary policy review, the central bank had raised the key benchmark interest rate (repo) by 35 basis points (bps) after delivering three back-to-back increases of 50 bps. Since May last year, the Reserve Bank has increased the short-term lending rate by 225 basis points to contain inflation, mostly driven by external factors, especially global supply chain disruption following the Russia-Ukraine war outbreak. RBI's rate-setting panel - Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - will start its three-day deliberations on the next set of monetary policy Monday. The decision will be announced February 8.

Crude steel output grows 5% in 2022

New Delhi: India's crude steel production rose by 5.80 per cent to 124.45 million tonne (MT) in 2022, according to SteelMint. The country had produced 117.63 MT crude steel in 2021, the market research firm said. The production of finished steel was at 110.03 MT, up from over 104.54 MT a year ago, SteelMint said in its latest report. The consumption of finished steel rose to 106.48 MT, as against 98.39 MT in 2021, a year-on-year rise of 8 per cent. SteelMint attributed the increase in output and consumption to "continuous focus of the government on the infrastructure sector."

IREDA, WAPCOS to hit capital mks

New Delhi: The government is targeting to launch the IPO of clean energy lender IREDA and state-owned engineering consultancy firm WAPCOS in the next fiscal, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said. The proceeds from the stake sales would form part of the Budgeted disinvestment kitty of ₹51,000 crore for the next fiscal. "IREDA is lined up for initial public offering (IPO) next fiscal. DRHP for WAPCOS has already been filed," Pandey told PTI. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management manages government equity holding in public sector companies. WAPCOS, an engineering consultancy and construction services firm under the Jal Shakti Ministry, had in September last year filed draft papers with market regulator Sebi for launching an IPO by selling 3.25 crore shares held by the government.



They (banks and insurance companies) are not overexposed to any one company. You are hearing it from the horse's mouth

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

RBI READIES DRAFT BILL FOR NFIR

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth has said that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has prepared a draft Bill for setting up a National Financial Information Registry (NFIR) with a view to improve accessibility and affordability of loans



WAR'S WEIGHT Europe bans Russian diesel, other oil products

EUROPE HAS ALREADY BANNED RUSSIAN COAL AND MOST CRUDE OIL, WHILE MOSCOW HAS CUT OFF MOST SHIPMENTS OF NATURAL GAS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Frankfurt, Feb 5: Europe imposed a ban Sunday Russian diesel fuel and other refined oil products, slashing energy dependency on Moscow and seeking to further crimp the Kremlin's fossil fuel earnings as punishment for invading Ukraine.

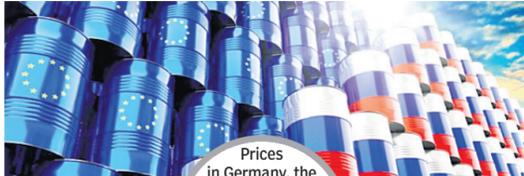
The ban comes along with a price cap agreed by the Group of Seven allied democracies.

The goal is allowing Russian diesel to keep flowing to countries like China and India and avoiding a sudden price rise that would hurt consumers worldwide, while reducing the profits funding Moscow's budget and war.

Diesel is key for the economy because it is used to power cars, trucks carrying goods, farm equipment and factory machinery.

Diesel prices have been elevated due to recovering demand after the Covid-19 pandemic and limits on refining capacity, contributing to inflation for other goods worldwide. The new sanctions create uncertainty about prices as the 27-nation European Union finds new supplies of diesel from the US, Middle East and India to replace those from Russia, which at one point delivered 10% of Europe's total diesel needs.

Prices also could be driven up by reviving demand from China as



Diesel fuel at the pump has been flat since the start of Dec, costing 1.80 euros per litre (\$7.37 per gallon) as of Jan 30

Prices in Germany, the EU's largest economy, fell 2.6 cents to 1.83 euros per litre (\$7.48 per gallon) as of Jan 31

Russia earned over \$2bn from diesel sales to Europe in Dec alone as importers stocked up supplies ahead of the ban

the economy rebounds after the end of draconian Covid-19 restrictions. The price cap of \$100 per barrel for diesel, jet fuel and gasoline is to be enforced by barring insurance and shipping services from handling diesel priced over the limit. Most of those companies are located in Western countries.

It follows a \$60-per-barrel cap

on Russian crude that took effect in December and is supposed to work the same way. Both the diesel and oil caps could be tightened later. "Once we have these price caps set, we can squeeze the Russian price and deny them, deny (President Vladimir) Putin money for his war without a price spike that's going to hurt Western

economies and developing economies," said Thomas O'Donnell, a global fellow with the Washington-based Wilson Center.

The diesel price cap will not bite immediately because it was set at about what Russian diesel trades for. Russia's chief problem now will be finding new customers, not evading the price ceiling. However, the cap aims to prevent Russian gains from any sudden price spikes in refined oil products. Analysts say there might be a price bump initially as markets sort out the changes. But they say the embargo should not cause a price spike if the cap works as intended and Russian diesel keeps flowing to other countries.

The ban provides for a 55-day grace period for diesel loaded on tankers before Sunday, a step aimed at avoiding ruffling markets. European Union officials say importers have had time to adjust since the ban was announced in June.

9 of top-10 firms add ₹1.88L-crore in market value

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: Nine of the 10 most valued firms together added ₹1.88 lakh crore in market valuation last week, with ITC emerging as the biggest gainer.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,510.98 points or 2.54 per cent last week.

Barring Reliance Industries Limited, rest nine firms including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Infosys and ICICI Bank were the gainers from the top-10 list.

The combined market valuation gain of the nine firms was at ₹1,88,366.69 crore.

The market valuation of ITC rallied ₹43,321.81 crore to reach ₹4,72,353.27 crore.

Infosys added ₹34,043.38 crore, taking its valuation to ₹6,72,935.25 crore.

ICICI Bank's market valuation jumped ₹32,239.66 crore to ₹6,02,749 crore and that of TCS zoomed ₹26,143.92 crore to ₹12,74,026.80 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank advanced ₹23,900.84 crore to ₹9,25,188.45 crore and that of Bharti Airtel climbed ₹10,432.23 crore to ₹4,42,015.45 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever went up by ₹7,988.61 crore to ₹6,21,678.35 crore and that of HDFC gained ₹6,503.28 crore to ₹4,92,313.07 crore.

State Bank of India's mcap climbed ₹3,792.96 crore to ₹4,85,900.49 crore.

However, the mcap of Reliance Industries declined by ₹5,885.97 crore to ₹15,75,715.14 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued domestic company, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, HDFC, State Bank of India, ITC and Bharti Airtel.

THEFT ON THE RISE

Crypto hackers stole \$3.8 billion in 2022

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 5: Cryptocurrency hackers stole \$3.8 billion last year, making it the worst year on record for crypto investors, up from \$3.3 billion in 2021.

According to Blockchain analytics platform Chainalysis, October was the biggest single month ever for cryptocurrency hacking, as \$775.7 million was stolen in 32 separate attacks.

DeFi (Decentralised Finance) protocols as victims accounted for 82.1 per cent of all cryptocurrency stolen by hackers - a total of \$3.1 billion - up from 73.3 per cent in 2021. Of that \$3.1 billion, 64 per cent came from cross-chain bridge protocols specifically.

North Korea-linked hackers such as those in cybercriminal syndicate Lazarus Group have been by far the most prolific cryptocurrency hackers over the last few years.

In 2022, they shattered their own records for theft, stealing an estimated \$1.7 billion worth of cryptocurrency across several hacks, the report said.

INDIA ENERGY WEEK

PM to launch E20 fuel

E20 is a blend of 20% ethanol with petrol. Ethanol extracted from sugarcane as well as agri waste is being mixed with petrol to cut India's dependence on imported oil for meeting its energy needs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will Monday launch petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol, unveil a solar and conventional energy powered cooking system and inaugurate the India Energy Week in Banaglore. The India Energy Week (IEW) 2023, being held from February 6 to 8, is aimed to showcase India's rising prowess as an energy transition powerhouse, an official statement said.

"The event will bring together leaders from the traditional and non-traditional energy industry, governments, and academia to discuss the challenges and opportunities that a responsible energy transition presents," it added.

Modi will also launch petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol.

"In line with the ethanol blending roadmap, Prime Minister will launch E20 fuel at 84 retail outlets

of Oil Marketing Companies in 11 States/UTs. E20 is a blend of 20% ethanol with petrol. The government aims to achieve a complete 20% blending of ethanol by 2025, and oil marketing companies are setting up 2G-3G ethanol plants that will facilitate the progress," it said.

The Prime Minister will also flag off the Green Mobility Rally. The rally will witness participation of vehicles running on green energy sources and will help create public awareness on green fuels.

Ethanol is produced by biomass, which means that it doesn't require crude oil. The crops like corn and sugarcane are the primary sources of extracting ethanol. India grows corn and sugarcane in large quantities already. That can enable higher percentages of ethanol in cars in the future.

'Unbottled' Modi will launch uniforms under the 'Unbottled' initiative of IndianOil. Guided by the vision of

E20 FUEL TO BE LAUNCHED AT 84 RETAIL OUTLETS OF OMCS IN 11 STATES/UTS

GOVT AIMS TO ACHIEVE A COMPLETE 20% BLENDING OF ETHANOL BY 2025

The Prime Minister to phase out single-use plastic, IndianOil has adopted uniforms for retail customer attendants and LPG delivery personnel made from recycled polyester (rPET) and cotton.

Each set of uniform of IndianOil's customer attendants shall support recycling of around 28 used PET bottles. IndianOil is taking this initiative further through 'Unbottled' - a brand for sustainable garments, launched for merchandise made from recycled polyester.

Indoor Solar Cooking System The Prime Minister will also dedicate a twin-cooktop model of the IndianOil's Indoor Solar Cooking System and flag-off its commercial roll-out.

IndianOil had earlier developed an innovative and patented Indoor Solar Cooking System with single cooktop. On the basis of feedback received, twin-cooktop Indoor Solar Cooking system has been designed offering more flexibility and ease to the users. It is a revolutionary indoor solar cooking solution that works on both solar and auxiliary energy sources simultaneously, making it a reliable cooking solution for India.

Windfall tax on crude oil, export of diesel, ATF hiked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 5: The government has hiked windfall profit tax levied on domestically-produced crude oil as well as on the export of diesel and ATF, in line with firming international oil prices, according to an official order.

The levy on crude oil produced by companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has been increased to ₹5,050 per

tonne from ₹1,900 per tonne, the order dated February 3, said.

Crude oil pumped out of the ground and from below the seabed is refined and converted into fuels like petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF).

The government has also hiked the tax on export of diesel to ₹7.5 per litre from ₹5, and the same on overseas shipments of ATF to ₹6 a litre from ₹3.5 a litre.

The new tax rates came into ef-



fect from February 4.

The levy on both domestic crude oil and fuel exports is now off the lows it had hit last month.

Tax rates were cut at the last fortnightly review January 17, following softening in global oil prices. International oil prices have since then firmed, necessitating the hike of a windfall tax.

India first imposed windfall profit taxes July 1, joining a growing number of nations that tax super normal profits of energy

companies. At that time, export duties of ₹6 per litre (\$12 per barrel) each were levied on petrol and ATF and ₹13 a litre (\$26 a barrel) on diesel.

A ₹23,250 per tonne (\$40 per barrel) windfall profit tax on domestic crude production was also levied.

The export tax on petrol was scrapped in the very first review.

The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks.

Chinese billionaires rush to Singapore to protect wealth

AMID CONSTANT CRACKDOWN FROM CHINA'S RULING PARTY, SINGAPORE, THE KEY ASIAN FINANCIAL HUB, TICKS ALL THE BOXES FOR RELOCATING TYCOONS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Singapore, Feb 5: Singapore is seeing an influx of ultra-wealthy families from China looking to protect their wealth from a Communist Party that increasingly views them with suspicion.

Beijing's recent crackdowns on tech billionaires and tax-shy celebrities, as well as three years of zero-Covid, have led many rich Chinese

to look for a safe haven. Nervous over the fate of their fortunes, some of the country's mega-rich have since booked tickets to Singapore, insiders told AFP.

Singapore has been ruled by one party for the past six decades, and labour strikes and street protests are banned. Taxes are comparatively low and the population is predominantly ethnic Chinese.

The presence of recent Chinese arrivals is keenly felt in Singapore, with some relocating to luxury homes with waterfront views on Sentosa Island, which also houses a theme park, a casino and a prestigious golf club.

"You cannot imagine the way they spend money. It's crazy," said Pearce Cheng, CEO of AIMS, a firm providing immigration and relocation services.

He recalled attending a client's party where a rare Japanese 'Yamazaki 55' whisky, worth around \$800,000 a bottle, was served.



Cheng's firm also helps find luxury condos, hire chauffeurs and enrol kids in private schools. It once even bought \$61,000 worth of cigars. The new arrivals drive Rolls Royces and Bentleys, and are often spotted at top-tier golf clubs such as the exclusive Sentosa Golf Club, where foreign members pay \$670,000 a year. "Many of them are younger

Chinese, in fashionable designer clothes, and they usually keep to themselves and dine among themselves, which is not surprising," said Benny Teo, managing director of Blazon, a consultancy specialising in golf.

'MY MONEY IS MINE' Relocating to Singapore puts the wealth of China's richest beyond

the reach of Beijing, whose recent high-profile crackdowns have rattled billionaires.

Jack Ma, one of the most recognisable faces in Asian business, lost an estimated \$25 billion when Chinese regulators pulled the plug on a blockbuster IPO in 2020.

Other Chinese tycoons fear the Communist Party could apply similar pressure or even take over their businesses at low prices, an accountant familiar with the situation told AFP.

"Moving to Singapore is about making sure the family wealth is kept safe and can last for several generations," the accountant said.

Singapore is increasingly viewed as a home rather than just a backup plan, another source in the industry said, adding that clients had told him: "At least when I'm here, I know my money is mine."

One of the founders of China's largest hotpot chain, Haidilao, recently set up a so-called family of-

fice in Singapore.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore estimates that the number of family offices, wealth management companies dedicated to individual and group assets, rose from 400 in 2020 to 700 in 2021.

'NEUTRAL ZONE' The outflow is expected to continue even though China's strict zero-Covid policy and curbs have now been lifted, analysts said.

Political tensions between Beijing and Washington are reinforcing the desire of some of China's richest to move abroad.

Singapore is a "very handy neutral zone" where the mega-rich can do business, said Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with CIMB Private Banking.

The city-state has deftly managed its relations with Washington and Beijing, maintaining close security ties with the United States while preserving robust trade links with China.

India focus on slip catching

Head coach happy to get extended time with players and work on developing their game



SHARPENING SKILLS: Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli practice their catching skills in the training session Sunday

AGENCIES

Nagpur, Feb 5: The Indian team is focussing on fielding, especially slip catching, ahead of the opening Test against Australia beginning here February 9, head coach Rahul Dravid said Sunday. The performance of slip fielders has been an area of concern in the past and Dravid said the team are trying to strengthen the slip cordon during the preparatory camp here ahead of the four-match Test series. "Everyone looks in really good

shape. It's nice to get the Test team together again. We had a lot of white ball cricket over the last month or so," Dravid said in a video posted by the BCCI on Twitter. "Some of those boys, shifting from white ball to red ball, it's nice for them to just have that extended period in the nets. The surfaces have been really good as well," Dravid said.

The Indians are conducting their training sessions at the VCA Stadium in Civil Lines with the first Test scheduled to begin

Thursday at the VCA Jamtha Stadium here.

"Special emphasis is being given on fielding. The close-in catching is going to be a really important part of the series. There's a lot of emphasis and focus on close-in catching, slip fielding. When you are on the road all the time and don't get time to build and work on those things," Dravid who himself was a great slip fielder, added.

Dravid pointed out that the extended training session will be good for the squad. "You don't

Hazlewood ruled out of 1st Test

New Delhi: Recovering from an achilles injury, Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood is set to miss the opening Test against India in Nagpur and also remains a doubtful starter for the second game in Delhi. The 32-year-old had sustained the injury on his left leg after bowling in the rain-affected Sydney Test against South Africa last month. "Not sure about the first Test. It's still a few days away but it's sneaking up pretty quickly," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by 'Cricbuzz'. If Hazlewood missed out Scott Boland might get his first overseas Test. Australia are already without Mitchell Starc for the first Test as the pacer is nursing a finger injury.

get time actually to do a camp or you can get an extended period of time where you get to work with players and build up towards the Test series. Just to be able to get this week has been really exciting for the coaching staff," Dravid pointed out.

"Even though this is a short one by my standards, I like to have longer camps where we can work with people. But even then, we're happy to get five days or six days here in Nagpur," Dravid added.

India, who first played for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia in 1996-97, have won the last three series in 2017, 2018-19 and 2020-21. India will certainly try their very best to retain the trophy.

Junior feat motivating seniors

EVES KEEN TO START WELL IN T20 WC AGAINST PAKISTAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Feb 5: The women's IPL (WIPL) auction is just around the corner but India are firmly focussed on their T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan as they aim to emulate the U-19 girls' title-winning feat, insisted skipper Harmanpreet Kaur here Sunday. The WPL action is slated to be held February 13 in Mumbai, a day after India's T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan.

"Before that (the auction), we have a very important game and we are just going to focus on that," Harmanpreet said at the T20 World Cup captains' press conference here.

"The World Cup is more important than anything else. Our focus is on the ICC trophy. These

things will keep coming, and as a player, you know what's important for you and how you need to keep your focus. We are all mature enough and know what is important for us now," she added.

Led by Shafali Verma, the Indian team won the inaugural U-19 T20 World Cup last month and the senior side wants to add another ICC title in India's trophy cabinet.

"After watching the U-19 World Cup, we are motivated to do what they have done. They (juniors) have motivated us to do well, they have done it and we have not done it yet," pointed out Harmanpreet.

"It was a very special moment for all of us and after watching the U-19s it is surely a great inspiration for all of us. At the end of the day, our aim is to motivate more and more girls back home

Top-order holds the key: Mithali

New Delhi: Former skipper Mithali Raj said Sunday that India's chances of winning the Women's T20 World Cup will depend largely on the top-order's form. "India's chances will be largely dependent on the top order. Smriti Mandhana is playing well and is a match-winner," Mithali wrote in her column for the ICC. "Harmanpreet Kaur has looked in good form too but if we have to beat Australia and England you need others batters to come to the party," the legendary Indian batter added. Mithali also stated that the Indian bowlers will also have to put up an improved show.

to take up the sport and the best way to do that is by winning trophies," added the Indian skipper.



Captains of the participating teams pose for a photo-op Sunday in Cape Town

PHOTO: TWITTER

SHORT TAKES

Bronze for Ashu

Zagreb: Asian Championships bronze medallist Ashu clinched the 67kg bronze medal for India in the Greco Roman category on the concluding day of the Zagreb Open Ranking Wrestling Series here Sunday. The 23-year-old grappler added a second bronze to India's tally, defeating Lithuania's Adomas Grigaliunas 5-0. Under-23 world champion, freestyle wrestler Aman Sehrawat, had won the men's 57kg bronze on the inaugural day. Ashu, who had lost Iran's Reza Mahdi Abbasi 9-0 in the qualification round, came back strongly in the repechage bouts, defeating Hungary's Adam Phollec 8-0 and Norway's Haavard Joergensen 9-0 to make the bronze-medal round.

Golden jump

Boston: High jumper Tejaswin Shankar clinched the New Balance Indoor Grand Prix title at the World Athletics Indoor Tour Gold meeting, here Saturday night. CWG bronze medallist Shankar won gold with a jump of 2.26m. In his first competition out of college, the 24-year-old, who won his second NCAA title for Kansas State last year, cleared 2.14m, 2.19m, 2.23m and 2.26m on his first four attempts.

Title beckons Aditi

Nairobi: Golfer Aditi Ashok moved closer to her fourth Ladies European Tour win as she fired Sunday a bogey-free round of 4-under 69 to hold a six shot lead heading into the final round of the Magical Kenya Ladies Open. On the third day of action at Vipingo Ridge, the two-time Olympian had a steady start before rolling in back-to-back birdies on the fifth and six holes. It wasn't long before the Indian star made another birdie on the eighth hole, and she made her final one on 12 to extend her advantage.

Indian eves held

Dhaka: After a great start to their SAFF U-20 Women's Championship campaign, India were held to a goalless draw by hosts Bangladesh here Sunday. The best chance of the match for India came early on, but Bangladesh goalkeeper Rupna Chakma pulled off a great save by palming away Sumati Kumari's shot. Chakma, in the second half also made two superb saves. AGENCIES

Pak threatens to pull out of 50 overs WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Feb 5: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman, Najam Sethi has reportedly told BCCI secretary Jay Shah that his country wants to host the Asia Cup and if the tournament is moved out, Pakistan will not send the team for the men's ODI World Cup in India later this year.

Pakistan was originally allotted the Asia Cup in September this year, but Shah, who is the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) president, had said in October last year that the Indian team will not tour Pakistan for the continental tournament due to diplomatic tensions. The ACC is expected to shift the Asia Cup from Pakistan and decide on the alternate venue in March.

However, a well-informed source in the PCB said Sunday that during the ACC executive board meeting held Saturday in Bahrain, Sethi clarified Pakistan's stance on the Asia Cup to Shah that his country 'will not forgo the hosting rights of either the Asia Cup or the Champions Trophy in 2025'.

"Sethi has made his stance very clear (to Shah) and he went to Bahrain after meeting Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif last Tuesday. Apparently, he has discussed the matter with the PM

Sethi asked the ACC members that when Pakistan was chosen as the host for the Asia Cup and the 2025 Champions Trophy, why didn't the BCCI raise its objection at that time

PCB SOURCE

before going to Bahrain," the source said.

"Sethi was clear that the Asia Cup is a multi-team event and the Pakistan government is willing to give security assurances to the Indian team. So, there is no reason for the BCCI to not send its team to Pakistan in September this year. Sethi also made it clear that if the BCCI cannot get clearance from its government for the Asia Cup, Pakistan will also not travel to India for the (ODI) World Cup," the source added.

The source added that Sethi told the meeting in Bahrain that if India didn't come to Pakistan, then both countries could play their matches in the two multi-team event at offshore venues. The source said that after Sethi's tough stance, it was decided the ACC will meet again in March and the matter will be taken up for discussion again.

OFC eye elusive win against Goa



Odisha FC head coach Joseph Gombau (L) and footballer Aniket Jadhav speak to the media at the Kalinga Stadium, Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 5: Odisha FC (OFC) will look to make it two home wins in a row in the ISL when they host FC Goa at the Kalinga Stadium, here Monday. Last week's 2-2 draw with Chennaiyin FC helped Odisha FC climb to sixth place in the ISL table with 23 points, but they will need the three points against the Gaurs to build on the momentum from the last game. FC Goa, currently ranked fifth with 26 points are on a high after registering two successive wins over Kerala Blasters and East Bengal.

In the first encounter between the two sides this season, OFC playing away, suffered a heavy defeat.

OFC were reduced to 10 men in the 65th minute of the game with Nandhakumar Sekar given marching orders. Hosts Goa took full advantage of the situation and scored three goals after that. In the seven matches played between both the sides, OFC are still winless. FC Goa have won five matches and two have ended in stalemates.

Odisha FC head coach Joseph Gombau is aware how important it will be to win the game if the side are to qualify for the play-offs. "This match is very important for us and we will try our best to get all three points at home. We are so excited to play here in front of our fans. If we win it will be a very big step for us in the league," Gombau said.

That OFC are yet to win a game against Goa is not causing any worry to Gombau. He is aware of this fact, but insisted that it will be a new game Monday. "It will be a fresh start for us and we are not going to look back as to what happened in the past," Gombau asserted.

One of the key players in the squad, Aniket Jadhav, on the other hand, said that for him every game is a learning experience. "I am learning a lot of new things and trying to help the team in every possible way. Rest assured tomorrow we will give our 100 per cent on the pitch. The things that I have learnt, the time has now come to put those in use," Jadhav said.

Meanwhile FC Goa head coach Carlos Pena also made it clear that he is not thinking of anything else other than a win. "Such is our strength that we are hoping for a positive result and all three points," Pena said.

What should worry Pena is Goa's away record this season. They have played eight games and have managed to win only two of those. Pena is hoping that new signing Hernan Santana from Spain will change that record. The Spaniard has been recruited in place of the injured Marc Valiente.

"I am happy that Hernan is with us and is in good shape to help the team. He is a versatile player and that will help us," Pena stated.

Jhulan to mentor Mumbai Indians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 5: Recently retired India legend Jhulan Goswami has been entrusted with the dual role of team mentor and bowling coach by Mumbai Indians (MI) for the upcoming Women's Premier League (WPL) season. Former England women's team captain and the second-highest run-getter in ODIs and Tests, Charlotte Edwards has been appointed head coach of the franchise for the inaugural edition scheduled in March. Former India all-rounder Devieka Palshikar will be the batting coach.

Jhulan, a Padma Shri who retired last year after the series against England, has more than 350 international wickets in a career spanning more than two decades. She is the highest wicket-taker in WODIs and also has the distinction of taking maximum wickets in history of ODI World Cup. Jhulan rose to No. 1 in the ICC Women's ODI bowling rankings in January 2016.

Edwards too had a cricketing career spanning two decades and she led the England side to an ODI and T20I World Cup title triumph. Post-retirement, the 43-year-old has been coaching teams in England and Australia and is an ICC 'Hall of Famer'.

Mumbai Indians, the most successful IPL side, recently bought the Mumbai franchise in the WPL for ₹91.92 crore.

Shooter Adriyan wants to better dad

YOUNGSTER REMEMBERS JOYDEEP'S HEARTBREAK AT THE LONDON OLYMPICS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Feb 5: Joydeep Karmakar, who had missed out on an Olympics bronze in the 50 metres rifle prone event in London 2012, was following the rifle competitions at the Khelo India Youth Games 2022 with a lot of interest here Sunday. His interest was expected as Joydeep is currently the chief rifle coach of the Indian shooting team. But there was a personal reason too for his interest - his 17-year-old son Adriyan was competing at the MP Shooting Academy ranges here.

Adriyan, however, showed no signs of any pressure as he emerged victorious in the tough 50m Rifle 3 Positions (3P) boys competition. He got the better of Rajasthan's Manvendra Singh Shekhawat 16-12.

Looking ahead, Adriyan said his immediate goal is to earn a place in the national team for the Junior World Cup and strive for medals in the international arena. And if possible achieve what his father just missed out at the London



Olympics, a bronze medal. "Yes, that (Olympic medal) is definitely on my mind," Adriyan stated. "I remember a bit about it but he did his best. I just want to go one step further," the youngster said.

Adriyan spoke about the pressures of being the son of such an

accomplished rifle shooter. "Yes pressure will be there but to be honest with you, I have grown used to it. I now know how to separate my game from what people say. When I focus on my shooting, I try to cut off myself from the real world," said the cherubic Adriyan. The 17-year-old, a Class-XI stu-

dent, had been creating ripples in the national shooting circles in recent times. Last April, he finished with a gold in the national selection trials in the 50 m rifle prone event. Incidentally, Adriyan had initially taken to the sport in the 10m air rifle and had been the youngest competitor to qualify for the national shooting championships quite a few years back, but has now gravitated to his father's event.

Incidentally, Adriyan had to hone his skills in the demanding 3P event in somewhat challenging conditions in his father's academy in Kolkata - which does not have a 50m range.

"Yes, I did a fair amount of dry training under my father's guidance at home. Switching between the three positions of kneeling, prone and standing - in quick succession after completing each segment - is quite a challenging job," Adriyan pointed out. "I have certainly picked my father's brains on how to prepare the body for such a routine," added Adriyan.

Mallorca stun Madrid

AGENCIES

Madrid, Feb 5: Real Madrid's hopes of retaining the La Liga title were dented Sunday as the champions lost 0-1 at Real Mallorca, to remain five points behind leaders Barcelona. The Catalans host Sevilla later on and can open up an eight-point lead after a frustrated Madrid fell short against Javier Aguirre's side, with Marco Asensio missing a penalty against his former club. Nacho's 13th-minute looping header into his own net separated the teams in a hard-fought clash, frequently slowed by various fouls from the hosts.

Amid a constant battle between winger Vinicius Junior and Mallorca's players and supporters, the islanders held off Los Blancos to record an impressive victory. Vinicius suffered 10 fouls and Mallorca committed 29 in total.

"I think there's an atmosphere developing around Vinicius that doesn't favour anybody, not the player, not football, not the fans, who in the end get involved with the kid," Nacho told 'Movistar' after the game. "Between us all we have to enjoy football which is a beautiful



Marco Asensio missed a penalty

sport, we have to leave controversies and nonsense to one side," he added. Real Madrid were without goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, hurt during the warm-up, along with the injured Karim Benzema, Eder Militao and Ferland Mendy among other absentees.

Madrid head coach Carlo Ancelotti was also frustrated that his team were playing in the early afternoon after having faced Valencia Thursday night and Madrid started sluggishly. Mallorca took an early lead when Nacho's attempted header sent Dani Rodriguez's in-swinging cross from the left into the goal.