



WILD RUMOUR

The news about actor Urvashi Rautela joining the cast of Kantara 2 is untrue, say production house sources

LEISURE P2



GRIM SITUATION

Russian forces continue to shell Ukrainian cities amid a grinding push to seize more land in the east of the country

INTERNATIONAL P10



REAL MADRID TRIUMPH

Real Madrid win the Club World Cup for a record 5th time defeating Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia in the final

SPORTS P12

4 HCs GET NEW CHIEF JUSTICES

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 12: Four judges, including two who will retire later this month, were Sunday appointed as chief justices of high courts.

Justice Sonia Giridhar Gokani, the senior-most judge of the Gujarat High Court, was appointed its chief justice. Once she takes oath, she will be the only woman chief justice of a high court at present. India has 25 high courts.

Another woman judge, Justice Sabina, is functioning as the acting chief justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court.

TWO WILL RETIRE LATER THIS MONTH

However, Justice Gokani will demit office February 25 upon attaining the age of 62. She has been drawn from the judicial service of Gujarat. Besides being the senior-most judge, the appointment of Justice Gokani as chief justice will bring a sense of inclusion and facilitate a representation for judges drawn from the services in the office of chief justice, the Supreme Court Collegium had said last week while recommending her name.

The Collegium had asked the government to immediately appoint her as the chief justice following the elevation of Justice Aravind Kumar, the high court chief justice till now, as a judge of the Supreme Court. He was elevated to the top court Friday.

Justice Jaswant Singh, the senior-most judge of the Orissa High Court, was appointed as the chief justice of the Tripura High Court. Justice Singh is due to retire February 22.

The office of the Tripura High Court chief justice has been lying vacant for some time following retirement of Justice Indrajit Mahanty.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What kind of govt is this? I bought a truck load of hay and they cancelled the cow hug day!

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	36.6°C	34.6°C	
MIN	16.4°C	18.5°C	
Humidity	57%	60%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Mainly clear sky



PRECIOUS FIND: A villager shows lithium stones in J&K's Reasi district, Sunday. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has for the first time established 5.9 million tonnes of inferred resources of lithium in the Salal-Haimana area of Jammu & Kashmir

Good judgement brings good post

The Centre Monday appointed six new faces as governors besides carrying out a rejig of the gubernatorial posts in seven states

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 12: Justice S Abdul Nazeer has been appointed as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, a month after retiring from the Supreme Court. The incumbent, Biswa Bhushan Harichandan, has been shifted to Chhattisgarh.

Justice Nazeer, who retired January 4, has been part of several path-breaking verdicts, including those on the politically sensitive Ayodhya land dispute, instant 'triple talaq', demonetisation and the one that declared 'right to privacy' a fundamental right.

Elevated as an apex court judge February 17, 2017, Justice Nazeer was part of several Constitution benches which delivered judgments on issues ranging from the demonetisation of currency notes of ₹1,000 and ₹500 denominations in 2016 to the reservation for Marathas in admission and government jobs and the fundamental right of freedom of speech



Justice S Abdul Nazeer

and expression of high public functionalities.

He was the lone minority judge in the five-judge Constitution bench which had in November 2019 cleared the way for the construction of a Ram Temple at the disputed site at Ayodhya and directed the Centre to allot a five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for a mosque.

The Ram Janmabhoomi temple-Babri Masjid was a long-drawn dispute between the two commu-

nities which the Supreme Court finally decided November 9, 2019.

The Justice Nazeer-led five-judge Constitution benches delivered two separate verdicts this year, including the one which by a majority of 4:1 validated the legality of the Centre's 2016 decision to demonetise the ₹1,000 and ₹500 denomination currency notes, saying the decision-making process was neither flawed nor hasty.

Meanwhile, according to a Rashtrapati Bhavan spokesperson, President Droupadi Murmu has accepted the resignations of Bhagat Singh Koshyari and RK Mathur as the governor of Maharashtra and the lieutenant governor of Ladakh respectively.

Ramesh Bais, who was the governor of Jharkhand, has been appointed governor of Maharashtra, the official said.

It was not immediately known what reasons prompted Mathur's resignation. **Contd...4**

Keonjhar's DD Autonomous College gets varsity status

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 12: Dharanidhar Autonomous College, popularly known as DD College in the mineral-rich Keonjhar district, has finally been accorded University status by the state government.

After the proposal got the approval of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, a formal notification in this regard has been released by the Higher Education department.

"In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) and (2) of Section 32 of the Odisha University Act, 1989 (Odisha Act 5 of 1989), the state government do hereby alter the territorial jurisdiction of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, Baripada, Mayurbhanj by establishing a new University called the Dharanidhar University at Keonjhar, Odisha with effect from the date of notification in the Odisha Gazette," the notification of the Higher Education department said.

Last week, the state government had upgraded Vikram Deb (Autonomous) College in Jeypore to an affiliating university in Koraput. In a video, CM Naveen Patnaik said, "It is happy moment as Dharanidhar College is now converted into university."

ANTI-NATIONAL COMMENTS ROW

ABVP students create ruckus in UU seminar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Tension ran high on the campus of Utkal University here Sunday after some members of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) disrupted a seminar alleging anti-India comments by Surajit Majumdar, Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). The seminar organised by city-based Citizens' Forum on 'Indian Constitution & Education' was going on at PG Council Hall of the varsity.

Majumdar was delivering a speech at the event when two ABVP workers suddenly interrupted and rushed to the podium asking the organisers to stop the seminar. Both the groups subsequently engaged in a scuffle on the campus premises.

Two separate complaints were lodged by the organisers and the ABVP workers at the Saheed Nagar Police Station over the issue. The convener of the Citizens' Forum Pradeep Kumar Nayak in his complaint alleged that the forum was organising the seminar after getting the required permission. He also said that when Majumdar was delivering his speech, at around 11.45am, two youths identifying themselves as



members of ABVP/RSS suddenly rushed towards the guests hurling verbal abuses. They asked the organisers to immediately stop the seminar, alleged Nayak. The organisers requested the protesters to raise their objections during question answer session, but to no avail.

"They without giving any heed to our requests called more youths of their organisation to the spot. Later, they started physically attacking me and Professor Surendra Jena of Surajmal Saha College in Puri. They also threatened to kill us and used slangs against us," alleged Nayak. Nayak also claimed about sustaining injuries due to the assault by ABVP workers.

Meanwhile, the ABVP cadres accused Majumdar of presenting many misleading facts about the Constitution of India along with anti-national comments and casteist remarks at the seminar. **Contd...4**

US downs unknown object in Canada sky

AGENCIES

Washington/Toronto, Feb 12: A US F-22 fighter jet has shot down an unidentified cylindrical object over Canada, a day after another similar object was downed near Alaskan waters and a week after the American military brought down a suspected Chinese surveillance balloon off the South Carolina coast.

The object was shot down Saturday over Yukon territory in north-west Canada, according to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The Pentagon said that the object was first observed in Alaska the night before, and military officials closely tracked it.

The decision to shoot down the object was taken following a phone



2ND IN 2 DAYS

Ladakh to host India's first frozen-lake marathon

AGENCIES

Leh/Jammu, Feb 12: India's first ever frozen-lake marathon at Ladakh's Pangong Tso, world's highest saltwater lake, at a height of 13,862 feet will be held February 20.

The army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) have been roped in to implement a proper action plan for the event, a senior government official said Sunday.

The 21-kilometre marathon, with Lukung as its starting point, will end at Maan village. Seventy-five selected athletes from India and abroad are participating in the run, giving them an opportunity to make a bid for a Guinness world record for the world's highest frozen-lake marathon, officials said.

The marathon is being called the Last Run to highlight the issue



of climate change, they said.

It is being organised by the Adventure Sports Foundation of Ladakh (ASFL) in collaboration with the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Leh, the Tourism Department and the Leh district administration.

All necessary arrangements have been worked out for the success of this challenging event being organised with a message of sustainable development and carbon neutral Ladakh. All stakeholders are on board. The Indian Army and the ITBP were also roped in to exe-

THE LAST RUN

The marathon is nicknamed 'The Last Run' to give a message to the world about the rapid melting of Himalayan glaciers due to climate change, which may render parts of Pangong Tso lake unfit for a race of this kind in the years to come

In the past, countries such as Norway and Russia have hosted similar races, but none have been at an altitude of 13,862 ft

cute a proper action plan. District Development Commissioner, Leh, Shrikant Balasahab Suse, told PTI. Spread along the border of India and China, the 700 square metre Pangong Lake records a temperature of minus 30 degrees Celsius during the winters, freezing the salt water lake.

"Tourists mostly visit Ladakh during the winter for Chadar Trek (in Zaskar) and snow leopard sightings, and we are expecting that the frozen-lake marathon will help promote tourism in other parts, especially in the Changthang region," Suse said.

The select group of 75 athletes includes 50 from outside Ladakh. Four international runners besides local athletes, who have represented the region at national level, are taking part in the marathon. "We have devised a standard operating procedure (SOP) which will be strictly followed," he said.

Suse invited people to come and watch the event. In a short video, ASFL founder Chamba Tsetan said the event was named as the 'Last Run' to give a message to the world about the rapid melting of Himalayan glaciers due to climatic change.

leisure



CHRIS MARTIN CALLS RIHANNA 'BEST SINGER OF ALL TIME'

Coldplay frontman Chris Martin is looking forward to watching Rihanna's Super Bowl halftime performance and has described her as "the best singer of all time." "You have to be an idiot not to recognise that she's the best singer of all time," he said.

JONATHAN MAJORS WANTS TO SHARE SCREEN WITH ROBERT DOWNEY JR.

Actor Jonathan Majors enters the MCU as the next major villain portraying Kang the Conqueror in *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania*. Looking ahead at *Avengers: The Kang Dynasty*, Majors recently revealed he would like to share the big screen with Robert Downey Jr. reprising his role of *Iron Man*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
A romantic link is about to be presented to you as a surprise, shining and smiling. Ganesha advises you to be prepared in your best dress and to practice some romantic talking. You never know what the evening has in store for you.

TAURUS
Spontaneity yet sincerity will be the ruling emotions of the day. Keep your eyes and ears open, advises Ganesha, as trouble might be headed your way. Make it a point to read the print well before you sign any legal contract today. Prevention is better than cure, reminds Ganesha.

GEMINI
You will be in the mood to pursue your heart's many desires today. You will want to spend more time with your family and your children. You need to translate desires into action by better balancing your schedule, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will have enthusiasm for swift action. Variety adds spice to life. So you may change job or trade. Ties with superiors will be good. Ganesha says this is the time for challenges.

LEO
You will spend the day with your family and friends today and feel closer to them. You will try to help others, as always. You will like to guide someone if your own situation is comfortable today. You will be able to fulfill the expectations placed upon you by someone and will garner a lot of well-wishes, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You are born with a talent for business. Your organisational skills too are flawless. Ganesha advises you to use all your creativity, innovative ideas and ability to motivate others to make progress in your business. Ganesha says you may freely express yourself and make full use of your sharp judgement.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that today will be a day where you will want to look good and feel good too. You will be able to attract people with your speech and your impressive personality today at social gatherings. Your social stature will also rise today. Romantic liaisons may take a serious turn today. Ganesha's blessings are forever with you.

SCORPIO
According to Ganesha, your family and friends top your priority list today. Life looks hunky dory on personal as well as professional front. Apart from business developments, romantic relations are on the bloom. And this is evident from your blushing cheeks. Creative indulgences may give a new dimension to your life!

SAGITTARIUS
You feel like going back to carefree, childhood days. You even practice that by taking an impromptu pleasure trip, in the outskirts of the city. And bumping into an old pal, reliving your past is like an icing on the cake. As Ganesha says, golden moments are best undescribed and you too, by the end of the day, are speechless for this wonderful day!

CAPRICORN
You will walk down the memory lane, cherish those lost moments and later on feel an urge to meet or contact old friends, says Ganesha. Expectations of your near and dear ones, however, may seem burdensome.

AQUARIUS
Your will finally end today and you will enjoy the fruits of your hard-work. You are very good at considering all the pros and cons of every situation/project, drawing a plan on paper and distribution of responsibilities, however, execution of those plans is a problem area for you. Be practical to be successful, assures Ganesha.

PISCES
You will come up trumps against your competition today. This will make you enthusiastic about your future prospects. You shy away from the spotlight usually, but today you will find yourself thrust into the role of a leader, as you take on new assignments.

19TH DHAULI-KALINGA MAHOTSAV CONCLUDES

Buddha Samman conferred on vocalist Shyamamani Devi



Eminent classical singer Shyamamani Devi being honoured

Bhubaneswar: The 19th Dhauri Kalinga Mahotsav, organised by the Department of Odia Language, Literature & Culture and Orissa Dance Academy in association with Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi and Art Vision came to an end here, Sunday.

On the concluding day, the Ruchi Buddha Samman was presented to renowned Odissi vocalist Shyamamani Devi while Guru Gangadhar Pradhan Smruti Samman Award was conferred on composer and singer Guru Bankim Sethi, Odissi dance Guru Niranjan Rout, noted mardala exponent Guru Satchidananda Das, noted Mardala Exponent and Mayurbhanj Chhau exponent Guru Sadasiba Pradhan.

The last day of the event also saw *Jagannathstakam*, a Odissi presentation by Orissa Dance Academy in association with other established institutions like Soor Mandir, Nupur, Rudrakshya Foundation, Nrutya Naivedya. This beautiful invocation

was a salutation to the Holy Trinity. The presentation was choreographed by Guru Aruna Mohanty to the music of Agnimitra Behera. The rhythm was done by Guru Dhaneswar Swain while the voice was given by Rupak Kumar Parida and Nazia Sayeed.

The second item of the concluding evening was Kathak dance by the students of Samskritiki Shreyaskar, Kathak Academy led by Debashree Bhattacharya and Sohini Debnath, two senior most disciples of Guru Rani Karnaa. The last presentation of the evening was Odissi and Mayurbhanj Chhau by Shubhashree Mukherjee and Group. They presented GAIA-Mother Earth, an Odissi-Chhau production based on a folk tale meant to inspire love and respect towards Mother Earth and to exhort men not to destroy the natural environment. The dance was choreographed by Ileana Citaristi to the music of Shantunu Mohapatra.

Urvashi not joining cast of Kantara 2

Mumbai: The news about actress Urvashi Rautela joining the cast of Rishab Shetty's *Kantara 2* are reportedly "baseless and untrue."

Urvashi Saturday had announced on social media with a picture with Rishab stating that she will be seen in the second installment of the film.

A source close to production has come up with the clarification stating that all these rumours are baseless.

A source close to the production house has revealed: "All the rumours around Urvashi Rautela cast in *Kantara 2* are totally baseless and untrue."

"Recently, Urvashi Rautela just happened to be on the same premises as Rishab Shetty, where she requested to meet the *Kantara* fame actor and he politely obliged. She posted the picture clicked with him with a cryptic caption, giving rise to these completely false rumours," it added.

Kantara stars Rishab as a Kambala champion who is at loggerheads with an upright forest officer, Murali (played by Kishore). The story is set and filmed in Keradi in coastal Karnataka.



Kangana sings Jyothika's glory

Mumbai: Actor Kangana Ranaut responded to a tweet in which Jyothika had mentioned the actor as her favourite in Hindi film industry. She then shared that she was watching Jyothika's performance from the 2005 film for the Tamil sequel. The actor added it was 'impossible to match up to her brilliance'.

Kangana Ranaut is currently filming *Chandramukhi 2*, the Tamil sequel to the 2005 film starring Rajinikanth and Jyothika. The actor took to Twitter to respond to a 2019 video in which Jyothika, who originated the role of Chandramukhi, shared in an interview that Kangana was her favourite Hindi film actor: Kangana

added that she had been re-watching the original for her performance and stated it was 'impossible to match up to her brilliance'.

She re-shared the video of Jyothika from 2019 and wrote, "That's encouraging, as a matter of fact I am watching Jyothika ji's iconic performance in *Chandramukhi* almost every day because we are shooting the climax it's nerve-wracking, how astonishing she is in the first part!! it is practically impossible to match up to her brilliance."

Directed by P Vasu, the original horror comedy features Jyothika as a woman with a dissociative identity disorder, while Rajinikanth plays the psychiatrist who sets out to help her. The Tamil hit, which won several awards, also starred Prabhu, Nayanthara and Vadivelu.



When Pran refused a Filmfare award

IN THE 70s, THE ZANJEER ACTOR REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE AWARD AS HE BELIEVED THE DESERVING ARTISTE (GHULAM MOHAMMAD) WAS WRONGLY DENIED AN AWARD FOR THE MUSIC OF PAKEEZAH

Mumbai: Sunday marked 103rd birth anniversary of Pran and it can be recalled when he refused to accept a Filmfare award for *Beimaan*. *Beimaan* got the award for best music that year, and Pran believed Ghulam Mohammad should have received it instead for *Pakeezah*.

Having begun his career in 1940 with Dalsukh Pancholi's *Yamla Jat*, Pran built a strong career over decades. He was widely appreciated for his onscreen portrayal of villains, and was equally loved for his off-screen persona.

In the 70s, he refused to accept a Filmfare award because he believed the deserving artiste (Ghulam Mohammad) was wrongly denied an award for the music of *Pakeezah*.

According to a report Pran refused to accept the Filmfare award for Best supporting actor (for *Beimaan*) as he felt that Ghulam Mohammad should have got the award for the Best music award. The best music award was given to Pran's film *Beimaan* that year.

That year, *Beimaan* bagged seven Filmfare nominations. These in-

cluded nominations for best director, film, actor, music, lyricist, male playback singer and supporting actor: The film ended up with six of those awards. Interestingly, films such as *Shor* and *Anandata* also released the same year, along with *Pakeezah* and *Beimaan*.

Pran was well-known for standing up for justice and what he felt was right - he was one of the few film stars who protested against the Emergency, championing the cause of democracy along with Dev Anand, IS Johar and Shatrughan Sinha.

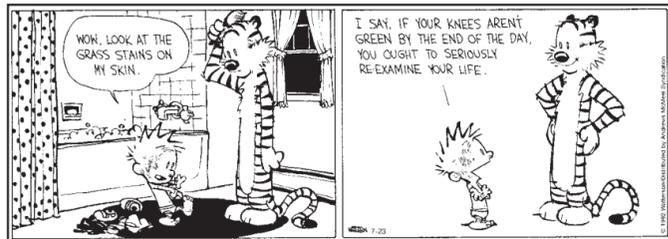
In 2013, Pran was awarded with the Dadasaheb Phalke award when 100 years of Indian cinema were being celebrated. He was unable to personally receive the award, and Information and Broadcasting minister Manish Tewari presented the award to Pran by making a visit to his Mumbai residence.



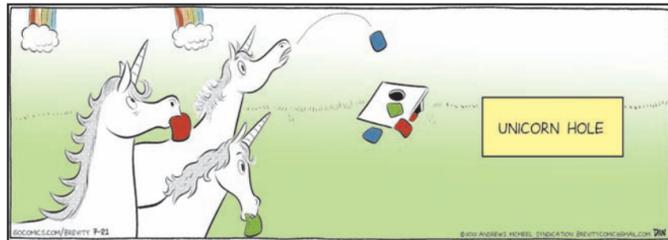
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

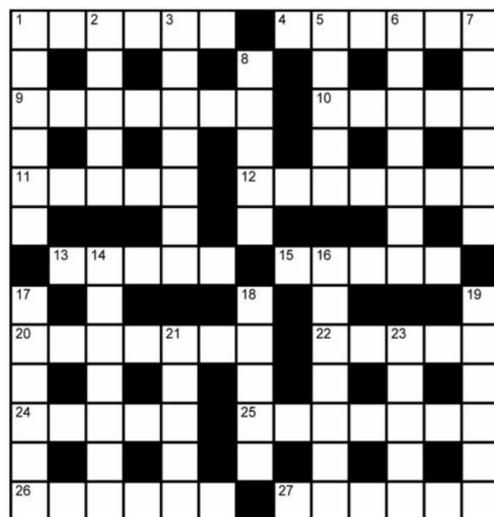


BREVITY



FUN post

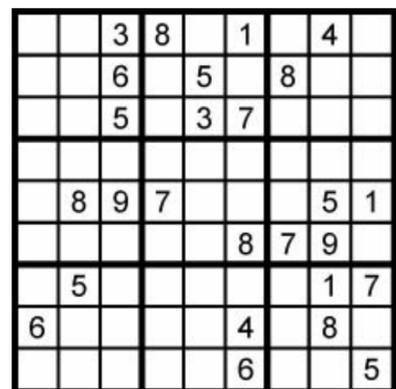
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- Speak indistinctly
 - Acquire
 - Birds of prey
 - Stole material
 - Classical theatre
 - Professor's address
 - Correct school assignments
 - Arm joint
 - Heyerdahl's transport (3,4)
 - Faux pas
 - Plant life
 - Sidestepped
 - Brownish-orange horse
 - Adage of yore (3,3)
 - Panther relative
 - Fundamental
 - Pergolas
 - Required
 - Religious text
 - Ill will
 - Stuffed toy (3,4)
 - Small boats
 - Prima donnas
 - Grassland
 - Vacuous
 - Withers
- Down**
- Vanity object
 - Flowering tree

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



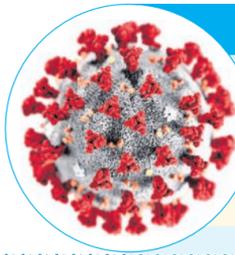
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



BUDDING ARTISTS

Children take part in an art competition organised by 'Kasturi' at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,75,87,006	65,00,26,847	67,82,362
India	4,46,84,118	4,41,51,525	5,30,750
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Woman devotee among three dead in Puri mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Feb 12: Three persons, including a woman devotee, died and at least 16 others suffered injuries in a series mishap involving a motorcycle, an SUV and an auto-rickshaw near Muduli Square on Puri-Konark Marine Drive Road here, Sunday.

According to eyewitnesses, the mishap occurred around 9.30am when the motorcyclist heading to Puri from Konark lost control over the vehicle after one of its tyres burst. "One of the tyres of the motorcycle burst near Muduli Square following which the biker lost control over the vehicle and rammed into an auto-rickshaw carrying devotees of Andhra Pradesh to Puri after they visited Konark Sun Temple," said an eyewitness.

Soon after, the auto-rickshaw hit the SUV ferrying tourists to Konark from Puri, the eyewitness pointed out.

The auto-rickshaw driver, identified as Rajesh Reddy of Penthakata Dhobakhal area of Puri, and a woman devotee, Amulu of Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor, travelling in the three-wheeler were declared 'dead on arrival' at Puri district headquarters hospital (DHH).



The mishap occurred around 9.30am when the motorcyclist heading to Puri from Konark lost control over the vehicle after one of its tyres burst

Another man, who was among three critically-injured being shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, died midway. His identity was yet to be ascertained. Marine Police recovered the

mangled vehicles and handed over the bodies of Rajesh and Amulu to their family after autopsy.

The injured were being treated at the DHH when the last report came in.

GOVT PREPARED FOR BOARD EXAMS: MIN

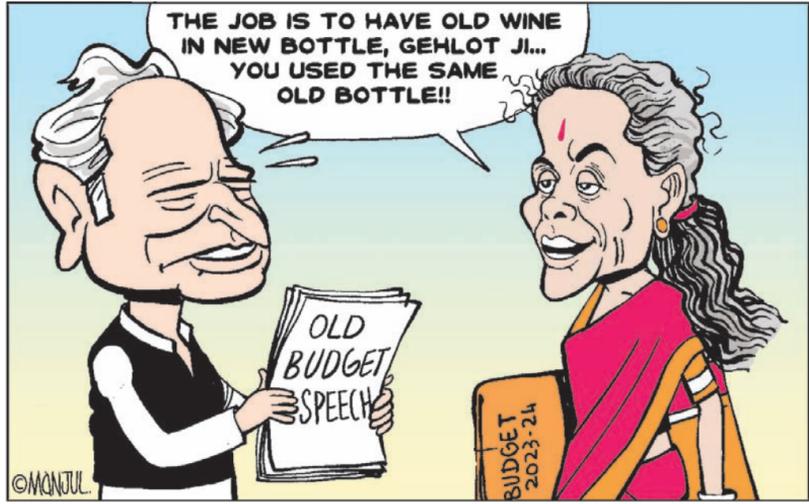
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The School and Mass Education (S&ME) department is fully prepared for the smooth conduct of Class X and XII examinations, department minister Samir Ranjan Dash said Sunday.

Dash said, "The S&ME department has made all necessary arrangements and put everything in place for the smooth conduct of Class X and XII examinations. Preparations are also in place for Class XI exams starting from February 20."

The Board of Secondary Education (BSE) has released the detailed timetable for Summative Assessment-II of Class X. The matriculation examination will be held between March 10 and March 20, 2023.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



OHRC member Justice Raghubir Dash resigns

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Upset over the appointment of a professional 'junior' as the chairperson of the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC), Justice Raghubir Dash has resigned as a member of the statutory panel.

The development came barely two days after the state government appointed Justice Satrugana

Pujahari as chairman of the rights panel. In his resignation letter addressed to Governor Ganeshi Lal, Justice Dash wrote, "The newly-appointed chairperson of OHRC is the right person with the ability to raise the reputation of the institution to the next level by his tireless efforts to protect the interests of the victims of human rights violations."

"However, my conscience, as well as a sense of self-respect, dis-

suades me from continuing to hold the office of a member of the OHRC under the chairperson who, as a judge of the High Court of Orissa, was junior to me," he added.

Justice Dash was a judge of the Orissa High Court from January 2013 to February 2016 while Justice Pujahari was appointed to the court in 2014. The new OHRC chairperson was transferred to Madras High Court in 2017 only to return

to Orissa HC again in November 2018. In 2019, Justice Dash was appointed as the acting chairperson of OHRC. His tenure at the rights commission was scheduled to end in December this year. He was also the chairman of the commission of inquiry probing the missing Ratna Bhandar keys of Srimandir in Puri. The state government had February 10 appointed Justice Pujahari as the chairman of the OHRC.



Governor Ganeshi Lal during the concluding day of 17th Toshali National Crafts Mela at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The 17th Toshali National Crafts Mela at Janata Maidan here, which began February 1 and concluded Sunday, saw a footfall of over 20 lakh and a business of over Rs 18 crore till February 11, an official said.

Organised by state's Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts depart-

CURTAINS DOWN ON TOSHALI FAIR

ment, the mega event witnessed as many as 400 artisans and weavers from across the country showcasing their products at 560 stalls.

"While 250 artisans from outside Odisha were sponsored by the development commissioner

(Handicrafts) under National Handicrafts Fair Scheme, 50 weavers from different parts of the country were sponsored by the development commissioner (Handlooms). As many as 150 artisans and 110 weavers of the state were sponsored by the Directorate

of Handicrafts and Directorate of Textiles and Handlooms respectively," said an official.

This year's theme pavilion 'Handlooms: Tradition & Trends' was a crowd puller.

The fair has always drawn people from across the state and out-

side for its array of handloom and handicraft products, it was learnt.

The annual event aims at offering an open forum to artisans and weavers from across the country to showcase their products and also nurture the traditional handloom and handicrafts.

Governor Ganeshi Lal attended the concluding day of the fair.

AYUSH docs demand job regularisation

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: As a mark of protest against the state government's alleged indifference to their demand for regularisation of jobs, state's AYUSH doctors wore black badges Sunday.

Speaking to media, president of State RBSK AYUSH Doctors' Association Prabhakar Mohanty said though their job portfolio is no way inferior to that of the MBBS doctors, the government is yet give them equal position.

"Be it Covid pandemic or any health emergency, we have been rendering our services with dedication and commitment. We have extended our services to the patients in most remote parts of the state. But the government is yet to recognise us at par with MBBS doctors," he said.

Mohanty further said, "We took up our demand for regularisation of our jobs with the officers of the Health department. But the government has expressed its helplessness on the plea that the Centre has stopped the assistance for us."

Micro quakes preventing large-scale event in India: Experts

Micro tremors have been helping release tectonic stress and protecting India from a devastating event, experts said and asserted that the country has seen a paradigm shift towards effective response and mitigation.

They said India is well-prepared to deal with the fallout of large-scale earthquakes as it has a dedicated, well-equipped and trained force in the form of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

The impact of a large-scale earthquake can also be reduced if people and institutions strictly comply with the bylaws and codes to build resilient structures, they said.

"The triple junction on India's western side near the border with Pakistan is continuously releasing stress due to the occurrence of micro-level earthquakes. There are a few earthquakes of magnitude 4 and 5 as well," said OP Mishra, director at the Ministry of Earth Sciences' National Centre for Seismology.

A triple junction is a point where three tectonic plates meet and interact. These are important areas of geological activity and can be

sites of significant seismic and volcanic activity.

The movement of the plates can cause significant build up of stress and strain in the Earth's crust that is eventually released in the form of earthquakes.

"Triple junctions are rigid and compact and withstand a lot of stress. If it breaks, the entire stress is released, causing a lot of damage," Mishra explained.

There are two triple junctions in Turkey. One of them is where the Arabian Plate, the African Plate and the Anatolian Plate meet. The breaking of this junction led to the massive earthquake that devastated Turkey and Syria, leaving more than 25,000 dead, he said.

"Since there had been no small earthquakes in this region, a lot of stress accumulated there. Turkey saw several powerful earthquakes within 24 hours because the couple zone area was quite big and it took time to break away," Mishra said.

A couple zone is a region where two tectonic plates horizontally slide past each other. "India is located in a seismically



active region but we are lucky that we have a lot of micro earthquakes occurring every day. So the store-up energy is being released," the scientist said.

He added that the impact of a large-scale earthquake can be reduced if people and institutions strictly comply with the bylaws and

codes to build resilient structures. According to experts, the resonant frequency of a building can play a critical role in determining the level of damage it experiences during an earthquake.

Buildings have natural frequencies of vibration, also known as resonant frequencies, which are

determined by their mass, stiffness and size. The ground motion during an earthquake can excite these natural frequencies, causing the building to vibrate at its resonant frequency.

If the frequency of the ground motion matches or is more than the resonant frequency of a building, the structure will experience significant amplifications of the ground motion, leading to more intense shaking and potentially causing significant damage.

"The frequency of the buildings in the affected region in Turkey was less than the frequency of ground motion. Hence, the structures collapsed like a pack of cards," Mishra said. India is divided into four seismic zones based on the potential for earthquake activity in each region.

According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences, 59 per cent of India's land mass is prone to earthquakes. Zone V is seismically the most active region, while Zone II is the least. Around 11 per cent of the country's area falls in Zone V, 18 per cent in Zone IV and 30 per cent in Zone III and the remaining in Zone II.

The zones are used to guide

building codes and construction practices. Mishra said the ministry is further unifying the country's seismic hazard zonation map through seismic microzonation studies. At present, 30 cities with a population of five lakh and above and falling under seismic zones III, IV and V are being covered under the project.

On India's disaster preparedness and response, experts said the country has a dedicated, well-equipped and trained force - the NDRF - which has the wherewithal to reach the right place at the right time.

"The NDRF and the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) under the overall guidance of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is also carrying out capacity development of the entire country and reaching down to the community level with the help of all stakeholders, including public enterprises, private organisations and NGOs," said Major General Manoj Kumar Bindal, former executive director at National Institute of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs.

NABA MURDER

Tests on Gopal to reveal his motive behind crime

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The Narco test of dismissed ASI Gopal Das, accused of murdering former Health Minister Naba Das, was conducted at the Directorate of Forensic Science Lab (DFSL), Gandhinagar in Gujarat Saturday.

As per reports, Gopal's blood pressure and blood sugar were checked and other necessary tests were conducted before taking him for the Narco test. During the test, a chemical loosely known as 'Truth Serum' was injected into the subject intravenously to let him slip into a subconscious state. After that, the probe agency asked several questions to get answers.

Gopal also underwent two polygraph tests earlier. However, Gopal's revelation about his intention behind the murder is still a mystery.

Gopal was taken to Gandhinagar by a team of the Crime Branch of Odisha police which is probing the sensational murder case. Crime Branch ADG Arun Bothra and DSP R C Dora are monitoring the



probe in the case.

He was taken to Gujarat specifically to get the 'right' version of his motive behind the crime.

Gopal has maintained 'personal enmity' and differences with the Minister Naba Das as the reasons for the extreme step he took January 29. Narco-analysis test was required as he kept changing his statements earlier.

The narco-analysis test was conducted on the dismissed police official Saturday after a thorough medical examination and two

rounds of polygraph tests of the accused in last two days. While the first round of polygraph test of Gopal was conducted at the Directorate of Forensic Science Lab in Gandhinagar Thursday, another round was carried out Friday.

However, details of the findings during polygraph and narco-analysis tests are yet to be revealed by the investigators. The veracity of claims made earlier that Gopal was on medication for bipolar disorder is being being verified, while the CB sleuths have reportedly got the sequence of events January 29 that led to the crime, the sources claimed.

The CB which had taken Gopal to Gujarat February 8 is likely to bring him back Sunday. It has taken him on remand for five days for detailed investigation and tests following permission from the court.

Though Gopal had reportedly confessed to have killed the minister, the CB is yet to ascertain why he did so. In order to ascertain the motive behind the crime, the investigating agency conducted the tests.



UP IN ARMS: AAP workers scuffle with police as they march towards BJP party office from Master Canteen in a demonstration over alleged Adani Group scam in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

Good judgement brings good post

Continued from P1

Mathur has been facing stiff opposition led by noted education reformist Sonam Wangchuk in the three-year-old Union territory.

The President appointed Governor of Arunachal Pradesh Brig BD Mishra (ret'd) in his place, the spokesperson said.

The President also appointed Lt Gen Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik (ret'd) as governor of Arunachal Pradesh, the spokesperson said.

Lt Gen Parnaik (ret'd) served as commander of the Army's prestigious Northern Command, and it was during his tenure that bodies of two soldiers were mutilated by the Pakistani forces in Poonch sector in 2013.

Four BJP leaders, including two from Uttar Pradesh, were also appointed as new governors.

According to the spokesperson, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, C P Radhakrishnan, Shiv Pratap Shukla and Gulab Chand Kataria have

been appointed as governors of Sikkim, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh and Assam respectively.

While Acharya is a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council, Radhakrishnan is a two-time Lok Sabha member of the BJP from Coimbatore. He was the man behind forging the BJP-led NDA alliance in 1999.

Former minister of state for finance Shukla was the BJP's candidate in Rajya Sabha and retired in 2022, whereas Kataria is the sitting Leader of Opposition in Rajasthan Assembly. Kataria had served as the home minister in the previous Vasundhara Rajee government. Other than Bais, Mishra and Harichandan, the other transfers included the shifting of Anusuyi Uikye from Chhattisgarh to Manipur, La. Ganesan from Manipur to Nagaland, Phagu Chauhan from Bihar to Meghalaya and Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar from Himachal Pradesh to Bihar.

KHURDA RD-BOLANGIR RAIL LINE

Forest clearance issue resolved

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The long-pending forest clearance issue of Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project was resolved due to the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister of Environment & Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav. 68 kilometres railway section of ongoing Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project between Dasapalla and Purunakatak, i.e. from 112 to 180 kilometres has now been given Forest Clearance.

The project will connect Bolangir, Sonepur, Phulbani, Boudh, Nayagarh and Khurda districts and will build up another rail link between western and coastal Odisha.

Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project was sanctioned in 1994-95.

The project was being delayed for many issues including court cases and forest clearance. Till now, 115 Kilometres stretch of rail line out of 301 kilometres has been commissioned. (90 kilometres from Khurda Road to Nuagaon) and 25 kilometres from Bolangir to Jharatarabha). Nuagaon-Daspalla from Khurda Road end & Jharatarabha - Khambeswarpali from Bolangir end is targeted for commissioning during the current financial year. Slow progress of the project was due to delay in handing over of required land & forest clearance. Forest clearance & working permission was pending for 1469 acres of forest land in between Dasapalla & Purunakatak (112-180 kilometres).

The 15.5 kilometres stretch railway section between Nuagaon and Dasapalla has been targeted to be

completed by March 2023, has 57 minor & 3 major bridges along with 15 Road Under Bridges (RUBs) and 4 Road Over Bridges (ROBs). Similarly, Jharatarabha-Khambeswarpali-Sonepur (11.40+10.30=21.70 kilometres) is targeted to be completed by March 2023. Work is in progress except in between Buguda & Purunakatak. Overall target for the project is December 2025 subject to availability of 97.59 acres of private land, 262.75 acres of government land and Stage-I forest clearance from 112-180 kilometres.

Union Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw is giving priority for the Development of railway infrastructure of the region along with various project works. Khurda Road - Bolangir Rail Line project is one of the focus projects of the Prime Minister.

Workshop on sustainable tourism initiatives held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Odisha Tourism organised a 2-day workshop on "Green Investment in Tourism" at IITM Campus, Bhubaneswar Sunday for the officers of Odisha Tourism.

The workshop was organised in association with Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management, Bhubaneswar to share the plans and strategies to attract and facilitate investors for development of niche tourism products and promotion of sustainable tourism initiatives.

The workshop was inaugurated by OTDC Chairman Lenin Mohanty, Director Tourism Sachin R. Jadhav, Nodal Officer and Head IITM Bhubaneswar Md Sabir Hussain, Additional Secretary Tourism BM Bhuyan and Additional Secretary Tourism ANS Laguri by lighting the ceremonial lamp.

Thanking the tourism officials, stakeholders and IITM's role in training and capacity building, Mohanty highlighted

the efforts made by various cadre officers working in Odisha Tourism who efficiently facilitated tourists during the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup, organised trips for more than 2000 senior citizens under Baristha Nagarik Tirtha Yatra Yojana and their proactive measures to extend superior quality hospitality to visitors of the state in recent times.

In his welcome address, Tourism Director Sachin R Jadhav highlighted the initiatives taken by Odisha Tourism to increase the night stay of high-paying tourists in various tourist destinations of the state that aid in economic development. He stressed on the role of tourism officers to attract and facilitate investors for development of green tourism products as well as sustainable yet luxury accommodation facilities. Further, he thanked the role of IITM for facilitating capacity building initiatives that has helped in expanding the domain expertise of the officers of Odisha Tourism.

ABVP students create ruckus in UU seminar

Continued from P1

"The ABVP workers, university alumni and students present at the seminar voiced their protest. So, Professor Majumdar, some non-students and leader of All India Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisations (AIFUCTO) and Professor Surendra Jena suddenly got angry and started verbally abusing and shoving off the protesting ABVP workers, university alumni and students," ABVP alleged in a press note. The ABVP workers later staged a sit-in protest demanding action against the organisers and Professor Majumdar. Police have initiated investigation into the matter after registering two separate cases (59/23 and 60/23) based on the complaint filed by the opposing groups. "Today there was a heated argument between ABVP members and some persons when a meeting was underway in PG Council Hall. The argument was turning violent but police reached in time and intervened. Immediately, the mischief creators were brought to the PS and police have registered two cases following the incident. Police are vigilant and maintaining peace in the university.

US downs unknown object in Canada sky

Continued from P1

The object was "cylindrical" and smaller than the suspected Chinese balloon shot down last weekend, Canadian Defence Minister Anita Anand said. Saturday's incident follows the downing of another unidentified object Friday over Alaska and the shooting down of a suspected Chinese surveillance balloon February 4 by a US F-22 fighter jet. According to Pentagon Press Secretary Brig Gen Pat Ryder, North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), detected the object over Alaska late Friday evening.



RADIO CONFERENCE: Dignitaries during the state level Radio Shrota Sammilani and ASPO Pratibha Samman Samaroh at Shatabdi Bhawan in Cuttack, Sunday

3 of family found dead in Koraput

PNN & AGENCIES

Koraput, Feb 12: Three members of a family, including a child, were found dead in their residence Sunday in Koraput district, police said.

The three bodies from the house locked from the inside were recovered and sent for post-mortem examinations, a senior officer said. Their house was at Toyapat village under the Laxmipur Police Station limits.

The body of Linga Bisoi was found hanging from the ceiling

of a room, while his wife's body was on the sofa and that of their 4-year-old boy on the floor, the officer said.

The police suspected that Bisoi killed his wife and child before ending his life.

"Now, we would not be able to make any comment on the possible reasons behind their death. We are trying to ascertain the cause. We will comment after the post-mortem and preliminary investigation reports come," Laxmipur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sweta Padma said.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Balangir, I, Baram Sahu, Father- Shyam Sundar Sahu, Mother- Snehamayee Panigrahi, R/o. Palace Line, p.o./p.s./Dist. Balangir do hereby declare that I want to change my surname from Sahu to Panigrahi. Henceforth, I will be known as Baram Panigrahi instead of Baram Sahu for all purposes.

Can clouds of Moon dust combat climate change?

A group of US scientists this week proposed an unorthodox scheme to combat global warming: creating large clouds of Moon dust in space to reflect sunlight and cool the Earth. In their plan, we would mine dust on the Moon and shoot it out towards the Sun.

The dust would stay between the Sun and Earth for around a week, making sunlight around 2 per cent dimmer at Earth's surface, after which it would disperse and we would shoot out more dust. The proposal, which involves launching some 10 million tonnes of Moon dust into space each year, is in some ways ingenious – and if it works as advertised from a technical perspective, it might buy the world some vital time to rein in carbon emissions.

Unfortunately, but also unsurprisingly, the story of Moon dust reflection isn't as simple as it seems.

Why Moon dust? Proposed measures to cool Earth by reducing the amount of sunlight reaching the surface are often called "solar geoengineering" or "solar radiation management". The most-discussed method involves injecting a thin layer of aerosol particles into Earth's upper atmosphere.

However, tinkering with the atmosphere in this way is likely to affect rainfall and drought patterns, and may have other unintended

consequences such as damage to the ozone layer.

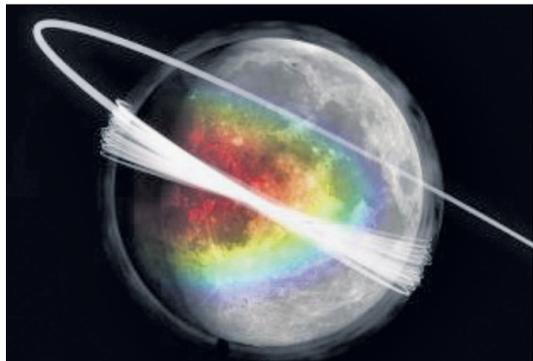
Moon dust in space should avoid these pitfalls, as it would leave our atmosphere untouched.

Others have suggested deflecting sunlight with gigantic filters or mirrors in space, or swarms of artificial satellites.

Moon dust looks pretty good compared with these ideas: Moon dust is plentiful, and launching dust clouds from the Moon's lower gravity would require substantially less energy than similar launches from Earth.

So, what's the problem? Too slow, too clumsy

One of solar geoengineering's core selling points is supposed to



be speed. Reflecting sunlight is at best a way to rapidly stave off

short-term catastrophic warming impacts, buying time for re-

newable energy transitions and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Global injection of aerosols into the atmosphere, for instance, may require development of special aircraft. This is certainly no trivial task, but definitely doable in the next decade or so.

Moon dust ambitions would be much slower. There are several major engineering and logistical hurdles to overcome.

At minimum, we would need Moon bases, lunar mining infrastructure, large-scale storage, and a way to launch the dust into space. No human has even set foot on the Moon in more than 50 years.

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Leopard count on the rise in Dhenkanal's Koi reserve forest

Forest department taking steps to protect the animals from poachers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Feb 12: In good news for animal lovers and wildlife enthusiasts, the leopard population is increasing in Koi reserve forest of Dhenkanal district, sources said Sunday. A tiger census conducted last year pegged the leopard count at seven but this year the number has increased to nine, they added.

The forests in Dhenkanal district are rich in bio-diversity. They were once home to the Royal Bengal Tigers. The tigers have ceased to exist a long time ago and their absence is now being filled up by the leopards. The Koi and Kandhara reserve forests under Hindol range in the district bordering Satkosia jungle has become the principal

habitats of these big cats. There are around 10 villages around the jungle and all the residents said that they have heard the purring of the leopards.

However, snares laid by the poachers to hunt wild animals are posing serious threat to the survival of these wild animals. There is always the possibility of the leopards getting trapped and dying.

Forest department officials have intensified patrolling and security cover in the jungle after reports of the increase in leopard population came to the fore. They said that the actual numbers of the animals can only be ascertained through another census.

The leopards have been seen moving in the Koi reserve forest most of the times which is on the

fringes of Satkosia jungle. The movement of the animals has been caught in trap cameras installed on trees by the Forest department.

Recently, a leopard which had run away from the core area of the forest got trapped in a snare and eventually died. A few days back another of the same species died due to illness, villagers said.

The back to back deaths of the two leopards have sparked concern among the Forest officials. They are taking a host of measures in Koi and Kandhara reserve forests to protect the leopards from the wrath of the poachers and other threats.

When contacted, DFO Prakash Chand Gogineni said that the Forest department is also planning to increase the population of herbivorous animals. This is because the leopards will need food. Only a rise in the number of herbivorous animals can help in increasing the leopard count, Gogineni informed and added that plans are afoot to grow more foliage in the jungle. Gogineni stated that a watch tower will be set up soon in the core area to track the movement of the leopards.

This apart, patrolling will be intensified and more trap cameras will be installed in the core forests area. The help of the Soil Conservation department will be sought to dig up a pond that will provide water to the leopards. Moreover, local residents will be sensitised to protect the wild animals, added Gogineni.

Review meet held in Anandapur College



POST NEWS NETWORK

Anandapur, Feb 12: 'Mo College' chairperson Akash Dasnyak recently graced a review meeting by his presence at Anandapur Degree College under 'Mo College Abhijan'.

Addressing the meeting, Dasnyak shared his thoughts on various ways to stay connected with the Alma Mater post education and how to participate actively to develop the entire educational structure to provide more opportunities to the upcoming generations.

He also discussed the vision and mission of 'Mo College Abhijan' as well as how one can contribute both intellectually and financially to the institution.

Principal of Anandapur Degree College, Dr Narayan Mishra welcomed Dasnyak on the dais and spoke briefly on the institution's alumni association.

'Mo College' co-ordinator Raghudipta Nayak coordinated the meeting while alumni association president Ram Chandra Sur and more than 45 alumni, 40 staff members and over a hundred students attended the event making it another successful meeting under 'Mo College'.

Poacher held in Kuldiha sanctuary

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilgiri, Feb 12: Acting on tip-off, Forest department officials nabbed a poacher during a raid at Rathakatha pond area in Kuldiha wildlife sanctuary under Nilgiri sub-division of Balasore district, in the wee hours of Sunday.

The accused was identified as Basant Madhei, 28, a resident of Betakata village under Kesipur panchayat. A country-made gun was seized from his possession. However, two of Basant's accomplices managed to flee the spot. A case was registered in this connection and Basant has been pro-



duced in court, officials said.

The breakthrough came after Kuldiha ranger Anant Kumar Jena was tipped off about the entry of a group of poachers inside the Kuldiha wildlife sanctuary. A team of officials led by Jena immediately raided the place and nabbed Basant.



DRAMA FEST: Artistes enacted a scene from a play 'Ulta Bharat' staged on the concluding day of Rashtriya Nat Mela at Bhima Bhoi Kala Mandap in Sonepur, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Floating bridge vessel stuck in Chilika lake

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balugaon, Feb 12: More than 100 passengers along with two buses and 10 bikes were left stranded in the Chilika lake for a lengthy period after a floating bridge vessel got stuck near Satapada in Puri district, sources said Sunday. They added that the vessel which was going to Janhikuda from Satapada got stuck a kilometre from the shore after it developed a technical snag.

After the information became public, Chilika Development Authority (CDA) officials reached the spot and undertook repair work of the vessel. Rescue of the stranded passengers were also undertaken by the local authorities, officials informed.

This is not the first time that such an incident has happened in Chilika. A passenger boat carrying nearly 20 devotees to Maa Kalijai shrine got stuck January 14 in the middle of Chilika lake because of thick fog.

Dream comes true for locals with passenger train services in Nilgiri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilgiri, Feb 12: With the electrification process in its last phase, the much awaited dream of Nilgiri folks is soon to materialise as they will get train services in their locality in a few days. The elation of the public knows no bounds as the laying of tracks is going to be completed after constant efforts of Member of Parliament (MP) Pratap Chandra Sarangi.

Gopinathpur, a place three kilometres away from Nilgiri had an inoperable railway track for the last 70 years. Despite the failed efforts of two previous MPs, Sarangi on getting elected met Piyush Goyal, Railway Minister of that time and proposed for passenger train services for Nilgiri. After the change in the Cabinet, Sarangi again pro-



posed for the same to the new Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Acknowledging the seriousness of the matter, the Prime Minister's nod came soon after Vaishnaw drew his attention.

Some high level officials of the Railways and Union Ministers Bishweswar Tudu and Vaishnaw vis-

ited the place and inaugurated the project. The Kharagpur railway division also worked hard to complete the work on time. Witnessing the last phase of work at the station and platform, railway employees are working tirelessly to get the project completed on time so that the train services start.

Waste materials harming Daringbadi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, Feb 12: The heavy rush of travellers from many parts of Odisha and even from outside the state during the winter months sees this town witness a rapid increase in the volume of solid wastes. Daringbadi is often fondly called the 'Kashmir of Odisha' and is a very popular destination among tourists.

From September to March, the Odisha government organises ecotourism programmes for travellers across globe, which also includes accommodation and other facilities.

Reportedly, while visiting the attractive spots nearby, some of the travellers and locals noticed garbage dumps inside the Nilgiri forest. Among the things found were empty liquor bottles, plastic containers, chicken bones and many other varieties of trash.

Local self help groups (SHGs) are



collaborating with the Odisha government to take care of popular tourist spots like Daringbadi. They also collect money from visitors to this place. However locals have now become apprehensive about how the money is being spent after coming across the garbage dumps.

Sources said that the block development officer has asked sarpanchs of the areas from where the garbage dumps have been found to take stock of the situation. They have also been asked to come up with plans for disposal of garbage in a proper manner. Locals have demanded that entire Daringbadi be made plastic free.

Jamkani coal mining operation begins in Sundargarh district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Feb 12: Mining at the Jamkani coal mines in this district has started as issues related to compensation for affected families for the project, have been resolved, an official informed Sunday. The issues were resolved through discussion among the local people, the district administration and officials of Vedanta which has been allocated the coal mines, he added. "The issues related to compensation for affected families were discussed in a healthy atmosphere, following which a consensus was reached. The mining operation started Friday," the official stated.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

Sundargarh Sadar MLA Kusum Tette, additional district magistrate (ADM) Abhimanyu Behera, sub-collector Dasharathi Sarabo, Vedanta Mines CEO V Srikanth and several other company officials were present at the meeting.

More than 1,500 residents of Mendra, Jamkani, Girishma and Jharpalang villages attended the meeting. "The issues are now resolved with the company agreeing to pay additional ex gratia to the displaced families and give priority in providing employment to them. The mining operations started Friday," Behera said.

The dispute originated when Vedanta acquired the mines with a reserve of 114 million tonne of coal, from another company. The people, who had earlier received compensation, started demanding an additional amount, which has been met by Vedanta, the ADM said.

Vedanta has proposed to utilise coal from Jamkani mines for its power plant at Jharsuguda.

Earth has lost one-fifth of its wetlands since 1700

A MAJOR NEW STUDY PUBLISHED IN NATURE SUGGESTS THAT THE FIGURE IS CLOSER TO 21% - AN AREA THE SIZE OF INDIA - UNLIKE 50% AS FEARED IN PAST

Like so many of the planet's natural habitats, wetlands have been systematically destroyed over the past 300 years. Bogs, fens, marshes and swamps have disappeared from maps and memory, having been drained, dug up and built on.

Being close to a reliable source of water and generally flat, wetlands were always prime targets for building towns and farms. Draining their waterlogged soils has produced some of the most fertile farmland available.

But wetlands also offer some of the best natural solutions to modern crises. They can clean water by removing and filtering pollutants, displace floodwater, shelter wildlife, improve our mental and physical

well-being and capture climate-changing amounts of carbon.

Peatlands, a particular type of wetland, store at least twice the carbon of all the world's forests.

How much of the Earth's precious wetlands have been lost since 1700 was recently addressed by a major new study published in *Nature*. Previously, it was feared that as much as 50% of our wetlands might have been wiped out. However, the latest research suggests that the figure is actually closer to 21% - an area the size of India.

Some countries have seen much higher losses, with Ireland losing more than 90% of its wetlands. The main reason for these global losses has been the drainage of wetlands for growing crops.



This is the most thorough investigation of its kind. The researchers used historical records and the latest maps to monitor land use on a global scale.

Despite this, the new paper highlights some of the scientific and cultural barriers to studying and managing wetlands. For instance, even identifying what is and isn't a wetland is harder than

for other habitats.

The defining characteristic of a wetland - being wet - is not always easily identified in each region and season. How much is the right amount of wetness? Some classification systems list coral reefs as wetlands, while others argue this is too wet.

And for centuries, wetlands were seen as unproductive waste-

lands ripe for converting to cropland. This makes records of where these eco-systems used to be sketchy at best.

The report shows clearly that the removal of wetlands is not spread evenly around the globe. Some regions have lost more than average. Around half of the wetlands in Europe have gone, with the UK losing 75% of its original area.

The US, central Asia, India, China, Japan and south-east Asia are also reported to have lost 50% of their original wetlands. It is these regional differences which promoted the idea that half of all the world's wetlands had disappeared.

This disparity is somewhat hopeful, as it suggests there are still plenty of wetlands which haven't been destroyed - particularly the vast northern peatlands of Siberia and Canada.

An ecological tonic

Losing a wetland a few acres in size may not sound much on a global or even national scale, but

it's very serious for the nearby town that now floods when it rains and is catastrophic for the specialised animals and plants, like curlews and swallowtail butterflies, living there.

Fortunately, countries and international organisations are beginning to understand how important wetlands are locally and globally, with some adopting "no-net-loss" policies that oblige developers to restore any habitats they destroy.

Whether the total global loss of wetlands is 20% or 50% doesn't really matter. What does matter is that people stop looking at wetlands as wastelands, there for us to drain and turn into "useful" land.

As the UN recently pointed out, an estimated 40% of Earth's species live and breed in wetlands and a billion people depend on them for their livelihoods. Conserving and restoring these vital habitats is key to achieving a sustainable future.

THE CONVERSATION

FOCUS SOCIETY

TRUST IN SCIENCE



Building trust in science and combating misinformation requires viewing the public as part of the solution, rather than as a potential obstacle to overcome

scientific breakthroughs – from AI, gene-editing tools, and mRNA vaccines for viruses and cancer to nuclear fusion and new Alzheimer’s treatments – that could drastically change our daily experience.

Trust takes time to build, and often lags behind progress. It requires transparency and widespread participation from stakeholders across all levels of society. When the benefits of a scientific discovery are not widely shared, or when the risks are not fully disclosed and debated, trust can evaporate in a flash. Discussions about science and technology therefore must not be limited to scientists. Participation by civil-society groups, policymakers, and regulators is necessary to hold scientists accountable and ensure that discoveries are used for the public good, rather than for narrow interests.

At the New York Academy of Sciences, we have long joined efforts to make science more accessible and better understood. In the 1980s, we held one of the first conferences on AIDS. Today, we continue to bring together the brightest scientific minds for evidence- and research-based debates about the key issues of our time. In doing so, we always reach out to the wider public, with an eye toward bridging the knowledge gap.

Our task is not solely to communicate science better – though that certainly matters. Equally important is creating opportunities for participation in discussions about how science is conducted and about the social, cultural, political, and ethical implications of scientific discoveries. Building trust in science and combating misinformation requires viewing the public as part of the solution, rather than as a potential obstacle to overcome.

The writer, a former chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, is President and CEO of the New York Academy of Sciences.

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From the growing presence of artificial intelligence in our daily lives to novel medical therapies, progress in science and technology affects us all – mostly in positive ways. But the pace of change brought by science can lead to bewilderment and fear, especially among those who have little familiarity with the culture of scientific research.

Scientific discovery is a complex process that often involves years of trial and error, as well as debates about statistical significance, causality, and other technical matters. It is this complexity that partly explains why science is not better understood by more individuals; it also partly explains why skepticism of science exploded to new heights. Consider the conspiracy theories and anti-vaccine disinformation that proliferated during the COVID-19 pandemic. True, such developments also reflect growing distrust of government and institutions and acute political polarisation in many countries. But these problems feed on the meaty scientific skepticism and misapprehension that arise (especially) during what are arguably black swan events like COVID-19. Even trying to ascertain the degree of the dynamic is fraught, with firm measures hard to come by and not clearly correlating to vaccine or climate-change skepticism. A recent report from the Pew Research Center reveals that only 29% of adults in the US say they have a great deal of confidence in medical scientists to act in the best interests of the public, down from 40% towards the end of 2020.

Doubts about the legitimacy of science cannot be addressed without acknowledging that science has not always been used for good. From the Tuskegee syphilis study to the well-paid experts who attested to the safety of tobacco, history provides myriad examples of harm caused by those claiming the mantle of science. But these cases are not representative of the entire scientific enterprise. Most scientists do what they do because they are dedicated to ad-

vancing the frontier of human knowledge.

While the anti-vaccine movement long predates COVID-19, the pandemic breathed new life into it partly because scientists were trying to make sense of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its impact publicly and in real time. The discovery that the virus could be transmitted by asymptomatic carriers and was mostly airborne marked a turning point.

Most people then rightly welcomed the arrival of lifesaving vaccines, which they saw as a testament to the scientific community’s agility, expertise, and social value. Though the new vaccines were delivered in record time, they also were merely the latest chapter in a long saga of miraculous breakthroughs dating back to the vaccines against smallpox and polio.

But now that a growing number of people have refrained from immunising their children, polio and other preventable scourges have been making an alarming – albeit still limited – comeback. Odder still, many who have resisted COVID-19 vaccines have been willing to turn to untested, unfounded remedies. Unfortunately, this is what happens when people come to see all of science as a black box. When science-based recommen-

dations evolve to account for new findings – including those that falsify earlier findings – the doubters see incompetence and cover-ups where they should see the scientific method at work.

In the face of new situations, it is standard practice for scientists to test their theories continuously and update their advice to reflect new facts. Even a broad consensus among the scientific community does not imply absolute certainty. Three years after the start of the pandemic, SARS-CoV-2 still has not revealed all its mysteries. Researchers continue to gather evidence on its mutations and lasting effects, including the phenomenon of “long COVID.”

From medicine and genetics to physics and technology, most scientific advances are the result of decades of hard, often tedious, work in laboratories. Progress is incremental, coming one experiment at a time. Clearly, this rigorous, methodical process needs to be better explained as part of a broader, ongoing conversation about the impact of science and technology on our lives and societies.

But better communication is not enough. Laboratory researchers, social scientists, and other leading thinkers must also engage in the ethical debates about

Don’t Hug Cows

Lovebirds primarily refer to a pair of a species of birds known for their amorous attachment to each other. But, the word is also used to describe a fascinating aspect of human relationship when a man and a woman become besotted with love for each other. Eventually, of course much sooner than later, that love may wander on to some other partner but we shall deal with that aspect of love another time. Now that Valentine’s Day is celebrated February 14 and it epitomises this concept, the date in the calendar is now globally embraced as much for the emotional bonding of love by both the young and the old as also for furthering commercial efforts. An almost “love” industry has thrived over the years for this occasion. Very similar to the ‘Bol Bom’ or Kaunriya march which is very foreign to Oriya culture but has taken roots because of the business links. The flourish with which these days are celebrated makes cash register machines ring almost ceaselessly for days leading to the events. There is nothing wrong in it till politics gets injected into it. In today’s India, ‘love’ is definitely a foreign sentiment that could possibly have a minority angle to it. Not to forget that St. Valentine also is a Christian figure!

Valentine’s Day acquired a political dimension from the day the BJP came to power in India and Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014. BJP activists found the concept remarkably easy and interesting to beat up since it involved mostly the young who, anyway never wish to be under the glare of scrutiny. It fitted nicely with the BJP’s politics of skewed Hindootva that seeks to pick non-essential battles that are pointless and irrelevant. Hindootva propagandists have made minority-bashing a virtue in order to mobilise majority Hindu votes and capture political power. Hindoo religious symbols and aspects of Vedic Culture have been given a twist to suit political ambitions. Their hatred against the minorities also seems not genuine but simply aimed at garnering votes. This may have been the prime reason why slaughter of cows and beef eating was converted into a political weapon to target Moslems and whip up communal passion of majority Hindoos. So many lives were lost and yet so many votes could be cornered.

Similarly, Valentine’s Day has in the recent past been used by the BJP to attack young men and women expressing their love for each other.

However, such politicization has, it seems, not found favour with most people which has forced the BJP to tone down its rhetoric against such celebration of love. A great example is the announcement made by the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Dept of Animal Husbandry and Dairying) February 6, 2023 to celebrate February 14 as the ‘Cow Hug Day’. It went on to claim that “In view of the immense benefit of the cow, hugging with cow will bring emotional richness hence will increase our individual and collective happiness. Therefore, all the cow lovers may also celebrate February 14 as Cow Hug day keeping in mind the importance of mother cow ...” Barely three days later this appeal was withdrawn and no reasons served amidst the incredible amount of jokes and lampooning on social media. For anyone watching the current play, this back footing is a clear sign of times changing.

Interestingly, an agency for the protection of cows - the Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) - set up in 2019 by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, introduced a new course called “cow science.” Two years later it was forced to indefinitely postpone the exam after the curriculum was widely criticised for its unscientific claims about the animal.

Although no one may be able to predict what and how such reactions can be linked to casting of votes in future elections or the impact these will have on other issues of similar character, yet such roll backs are not to be brushed aside, however small they may seem now. And the tide after tide of social media bashing of the government also indicates change.

The current group in power seems to be in grave trouble for its inept handling of the economy and the snowballing financial market scam in which the closest ally of the Prime Minister, Gautam Adani, is allegedly involved. Hence, it is only natural that religious sentiments will be whipped up to relegate economic issues to the background. Unfortunately for them, since February 14 Cow Hug was not stirring the pot with enough strength, a new idea had to be quickly hatched and media attention drawn on to it with force. A recently retired Supreme Court judge, hailing from the majority-in-minority community, was appointed as a Governor. His good deed was he had pronounced a positive judgement favouring Demonetisation just before retirement. This appointment intends to silence the so called ‘secular and liberal’ part of the population, draw attention away from Adani and set things right again.

How it will work out can be seen in the coming days.

WISDOM CORNER

“A thousand words will not leave so deep an impression as one deed.”
HENRIK IBSEN

“It’s all papers and forms, the entire Civil Service is like a fortress made of papers, forms and red tape.”
ALEXANDER OSTROVSKY

“When people all around us are slaughtered in the name of a temple (and masjid) I hear echoes from those times long past.”
GIRISH KARNAD

WORDSWORTH

■ Ansible

This word for an interstellar instantaneous communications device hasn’t broken out of the specialist science-fiction linguistic area in which it was created, though in that field it’s one of the better-known terms. It was invented by Ursula K Le Guin. She tells the story of its invention in *The Dispossessed*, published in 1974. The same name and concept turns up in several of her books. A method of communication across galactic distances that circumvents Einstein’s theory of relativity is a useful plot device, avoiding part of the suspension of disbelief that is required with the faster-than-light transport of physical objects. The idea has been used by other SF writers, notably James Blish with his *Dirac* communicator; Orson Scott Card, Elizabeth Moon, Vernor Vinge and other writers have borrowed the word itself. It’s not clear where Le Guin got the name from: some people have read a message into its being an anagram of lesbian; that would be relevant to *The Left Hand of Darkness*, which deals with androgyny and issues of sexuality, but it doesn’t fit *McCann’s World* and it hasn’t been confirmed as her inspiration. A Usenet message posted by Dave Goldman in 2001 said that he asked her about her inspiration and reports that she told him that she got it from answerable.

■ Wittol

Way back in medieval times there was the English cokewold, which eventually became our modern cuckold. The first bit is also the source of our cuckoo, with -old attached as a suffix giving a pejorative sense. Some clever wordsmith of the fifteenth century took the old word and changed the first part into wete, the quality of awareness or knowledge, so making wete-wold. Wete is our modern wit in slight disguise. So the idea behind wittol – as it was later written and said – was of somebody who knew he was a cuckold, but especially somebody who was untroubled by the situation. This was not a state of affairs that most spectators thought reasonable or likely, so the word later took on a sense of a half-witted person, a fool. It was not accidental that William Congreve entitled a character in his play *The Old Bachelor* Sir Joseph Wittol. Shakespeare borrowed the adjective in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “I know him not; yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money; for the which his wife seems to me well-favoured”. The word has pretty much gone out of use, and can only be found in very old books.



Nicholas B. Dirks

MOST SCIENTISTS DO WHAT THEY DO BECAUSE THEY ARE DEDICATED TO ADVANCING THE FRONTIER OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

SPECTRUM UTTAR PRADESH

A difficult economic scenario



Shivaji Sarkar

DESPITE PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT PROMISES IT MAY NOT BE EASY FOR THE MOST POPULOUS STATE TO MAINTAIN ITS FINANCES

Investment is pouring into the largest state of Uttar Pradesh. The figures are mindboggling. In the run-up to the Global Investors Summit, which began February 10, the state claims receiving ₹1.68 lakh crore through Nivesh Sarathi portal. This is in addition to ₹1.88 lakh crore supposed to have poured in between 2018 and 2021. MoUs worth ₹1.25 lakh crore more are reported to have been signed by the Yogi Adityanath government in its bid to mop up ₹10 lakh crore. Yes, Yogi is helping PM Modi in building up a \$5 trillion economy by making UP itself a \$1 trillion one. It will create 5.5 lakh jobs, claims UP. But kharif losses and high poverty are a drain on the state’s finances.

The mega shows have a pattern in UP since the mid-1990s. There are promises galore. Even at the summit’s inauguration, Reliance Chairman Mukesh Ambani promised ₹75,000 crore as part of his on-going investments in the state. So did Kumar Mangalam Birla, who said the Birla Group had invested ₹40,000 crore in the state and may put in another ₹25,000 crore. However, actual figures may vary. In 1990s, then CM Mulayam Singh Yadav announced figures of ₹54,000

to ₹57,000 crore a number of times being invested through the MoUs. The real figures were always far less.

On job scenario, UP has been trailing. Unemployment moved up from 2.1% in July 2017 to 21.5% in April 2020, at the peak of the pandemic, according to a survey conducted by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). Now it has come down to 4.33% after fluctuating during January-December 2022. The figures show a gradual rise despite state government steps such as coming out with a new MSME policy. Small businesses have been hit disproportionately hard by the continuing power crisis, with several having to shut operations during outages, causing production losses, and others with power backup forced to bear increased costs during the second half of April, when cuts were more frequent and prolonged, say industry executives.

The GST also hits them. The high fuel and power rates have adverse impact on the sustenance of smaller units. As cost of production rises, they have to work on thin margins. It also affects employment potential as there is cut in manpower. For this purpose, the state is trying to boost the real

estate sector. Ayadityanath says that to promote the sector, it has charted out plans to buy 43000 acres of land for ₹7.3 trillion – robbing Peter to pay Paul. This deprives farmers of land and triggers new job seekers. The state is planning to build about 6.4 million new housing units. The state government, however, claims that 4.5 lakh jobs have been provided to youth in the last five years in the government sector; and many more in the private sector. It refutes the CMIE figures.

In UP, the number of unemployed persons – those without jobs but willing to work – has risen from about 40 lakh in January-April 2017 to nearly 56 lakh in May-August 2021, as per CMIE. There is also pressure on the rural and agriculture sector as the post-pandemic situation has hit them hard. Kharif production has also suffered. The government is keen on bridging the gap and is showcasing projects such as rapid rail and metro, though in most UP cities the metro is running at a loss with poor ridership. Now a section in the government admits that instead of high-investment metro they could have gone for trams. The state has acute poverty –

37.79% of its population is extremely poor. Another 44.47% is malnourished – the highest in the country after Bihar and Jharkhand. This is being reflected in the growing demand for MNREGA jobs. Due to lack of recovery in other states, they could not migrate. In many districts like Jhansi, Lalitpur in the arid Banda region, the demand has quadrupled, and more are flocking for jobs. The district officials say that till a few months back there were about 8000 job seekers and now it has swelled to around 31000. This indicates a difficult economic scenario.

Despite private sector investment promises it may not be easy for the most populous state to maintain its finances. The state has public debt of 32.5%. With not much state enterprises left, depending on the private sector is its compulsion. Its police force lags in investigations due to lack of funds. Private investments may look good but can hardly support the functioning of the state.

The writer is Professor, Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

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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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Massive solar storm

Sir, According to space and weather experts, a recent development regarding the appearance of two new sunspots on the sun has sparked a wave of concern, with the expectation that a global blackout can be hitting the earth anytime soon. The National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA) has recently issued a warning about an upcoming solar storm, which can cause major electricity and signal blackouts soon. This comes as two unstable sunspots are visible on the side of the sun which is facing the earth. According to experts, a solar storm sparked by a massive solar flare explosion on the earth can cause electricity and internet blackouts in certain areas, and can also lead to loss of radio and GPS signals in several areas. The warning issued by the NOAA states that there is a high chance of an M-level solar flare eruption and a mild chance of an X-level solar flare eruption. If an X-class solar storm hits the earth, then the level of devastation can be massive. It is expected that the solar storm will hit the earth soon, likely to cause disruptions. In the recent few weeks, the earth has already suffered many solar storm-related blackouts in the Pacific areas, causing inconvenience.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Batting artist

Sir, Rohit Sharma’s priceless innings in the Nagpur Test match against Australia in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy was a revelation. Once not considered an “ideal” test match batsman, the Indian captain played one of his best, if not the best, innings of his career to steer India to a position from where they could not lose the match. The 35-year-old took minimal risks and played every ball on merit. It was a slow track; run scoring was difficult except for Rohit Sharma. Calm and composed, one has rarely seen a knock of this kind on any pitch in India or abroad from Rohit Sharma’s blade. One can say that the 212-ball innings was a scientific innings from a batting artist. The responsibility of not being a captain can bring the best out of some players, and Rohit Sharma seemed to play to his full potential on Friday.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

national

of the day quote

A special task force will be formed under the Special Operations Group to curb paper leaks which have been a point of clash in the state

There is neither freedom of speech inside Parliament, nor outside. If someone speaks the truth, writes about it, shows it then they (BJP) send him or her behind the bars

India will have to present scientific evidence on the efficacy of its traditional systems of medicine to improve its global acceptance

SHORT TAKES

Rape victim consumes poison

Lakhimpur Kheri: A gangrape victim allegedly consumed poison inside a police station, alleging that the police were not taking action against the accused. The woman was hospitalised after the incident. Her condition is now stated to be stable. Meanwhile, officials at Kheri police station claimed that the rape complaint was found to be fake which is why a closure report was earlier filed in the court. The incident was reported on January 17, 2022, and police filed a closure report in June last year. Thereafter, the survivor approached the court and got the case reopened.

Three die in blast

Chennai: Three people died and seven people were injured in an explosion at a firecracker godown in Vaniyambadi, Tirupattur district of Tamil Nadu. Police said that the explosion took place in the firecracker godown and investigation is on regarding the cause of the explosion. The police added that seven people were rescued from the burning godown, the situation of those who survived is not clear. Police said that the identity of the three, who died in the accident, has yet to be ascertained.

PM to inaugurate 'Aero India 2023'

Bangalore: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate Monday India's biennial aerospace exhibition - 'Aero India' - that will showcase the country as an emerging hub for manufacturing of military aircraft, helicopters, equipment and new-age avionics. The five-day exhibition at the Yalahanka Air Force Station complex on the outskirts of Bangalore will see the participation of 809 defence companies and delegates from 98 countries, officials said.

Just tune in, radio's charm persists on simplicity, accessibility

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: "You had your time, you had the power, you've yet to have, your finest hour, radio..." Thirty-nine years after Queen's cult song "Radio Ga Ga" rocked the airwaves, listeners are agreed the best may still be around the corner for that much loved, so familiar and evolving with the times 'audio device'. Quite simply, the radio.

It was sometime in the 1960s. Nemichand Barola was about 10. And remembers vividly melodious tunes from Radio Ceylon playing from a radio in a tiny paan shop in his hometown Ajmer adding to lazy afternoon vibes.

Some six decades later, Barola, now a retired school principal, still prefers radio over television and

turns to it for an odd little melody from his younger days and the essential news broadcast from an All India Radio channel. "Radio doesn't disturb me when I am writing or doing any work, it is not possible with TV or mobile phones. I don't have to stop my work to listen to the radio," Barola said.

It's his connect from his yesterday to his present, the great societal leveller that binds cities to villages, rich to poor. Once a lifeline to keep in touch with music trends, cricket matches, and the news in distant corners of the country and still a mainstay for many.

On the eve of World Radio Day on Monday, it is the simplicity reach and accessibility of the medium that still connects the likes of Barola to the old-worldly charm of the radio in an age of innumerable



The Adani Group controls 13 ports and terminals that represent 30 per cent of India's ports capacity and 40 per cent of the total container volume. It is no surprise that this growth trajectory has accelerated since 2014

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

QUAKE HITS ASSAM

An earthquake of 4 magnitude hit the central part of Assam Sunday, an official bulletin said. There was no immediate report of any loss of life or damage to property, it said



EXPUNCTION ROW Congress targets BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Congress Sunday said "blatant partisanship" was witnessed in the expunction of remarks of its leaders and suspension of its Rajya Sabha MP, and alleged the BJP-led government wanted to establish an "authoritarian dominance" in Parliament by "terrorising" the Opposition.

Senior Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi claimed the BJP does not want Parliament to run through consensus, collaboration and concordance, but through "clash, chaos, and conflict".

The "autocratic and dictatorial face" of the BJP and the ruling dispensation was in full show in each House of Parliament in the "undemocratic and unparliamentary" expunction of several remarks of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, and in the suspension of Rajani Patil from the Rajya Sabha, he said.

The BJP government, he alleged, is moving towards establishing an "authoritarian dominance in Parliament by terrifying, terrorising, tormenting, and tyrannising the Opposition". Alluding to the expunction of words from Gandhi and Kharge's speeches in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha respectively while participating in a debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address last week, Singhvi said not a word stated therein justifies the use of the power of expunction.

"There is no use of unparliamentary language, no expletives, no debasement of any institution, no objectionable or abusive word or phrase." There is absolutely nothing



Rahul asked to respond by Wednesday

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha Secretariat has asked Congress MP Rahul Gandhi to respond by February 15 to notices given by BJP members regarding his remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the House. In a letter to Rahul Gandhi, dated February 10, the secretariat has asked him to furnish his reply on breach of privilege notices against him by BJP MPs Nishikant Dubey and Pralhad Joshi -- also the parliamentary affairs minister -- by February 15 for the Lok Sabha speaker's consideration. Following Rahul Gandhi's speech in Lok Sabha on the 'Motion of Thanks on the President's Address' on Tuesday, in which he commented on the Hindenburg-Adani issue, Dubey and Joshi had moved the notices against him.

ing which is remotely defamatory or indecent or unparliamentary or undignified in those addresses," he said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here.

The Rajya Sabha MP said the Speaker and the Chairperson are constitutional office holders and the custodians and defenders of freedom of speech inside the Houses "which is a fundamental pillar of our democracy, especially within the temple of democracy viz Parliament.

Without their robust shield, the spirit of healthy parliamentary discussion and debate will perish, Singhvi said. Unless free, frank and fearless discussion is allowed to take place within the two Houses of Parliament, democracy is fun-

damentally and irreversibly imperiled, he stressed.

"Expunction is not justified by any reading of the relevant Rules, like Rule 380 qua Lok Sabha and similar Rules in Rajya Sabha dealing with expunction. None of the tests therein are even applicable, much less met," he said. This government and the ruling party's approach show that this is the most "curb, control and command freak" government in the history of this nation, he alleged. Singhvi also lashed out at the government over the suspension of Patil on Friday, calling the action disproportionate, excessive and actuated purely by political malice at the behest of this government.

Pak-based handlers pushing drugs into J&K: Police

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Feb 12: Pakistan-based handlers are pushing drugs into Jammu and Kashmir to spread drug addiction among youth, police said Sunday after arresting drug peddlers from Baramulla district.

Police said in a major breakthrough, four drug peddlers were arrested in Baramulla and a huge consignment of contraband, along with cash, was recovered from their possession.

"Based on specific information regarding smuggling of narcotics in the area of Kamalkote Uri, a police party led by incharge PP Kamalkote under the supervision of SDPO, Uri, Showkat Ali established a special checkpoint at Sultan Daki Kali Mitti.

During checking, a vehicle (Tata Sumo) bearing registration No. JK05D-3680 with four persons on board was intercepted and tried to flee but was stopped by the alert police party," police said.

"During search of the said vehicle, cash amount of Rs 25,39,000 and 1.17 kg of Brown Sugar like substance was recovered."

The four accused persons identified as Naseer Ahmad Bhatti, Reyaz Ahmad Khanday, Fayaz Ahmad Khanday, and Mohd Pazeer, all residents of Madiyan Kamalkote Uri, were arrested and taken to the police station.

"During preliminarily investigation, it was learnt that under a well hatched conspiracy, Pakistan based handlers are pushing drugs inside J&K through such smugglers to spread drug addiction among youth of J&K. Further investigation into the case is going on," police said.

Koshyari exits as Maha Governor



A Rashtrapati Bhavan spokesperson Sunday said President Droupadi Murmu has accepted the resignation of Koshyari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 12: The Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and the Congress Sunday welcomed the exit of Bhagat Singh Koshyari from the post of Maharashtra Governor, with NCP chief Sharad Pawar saying the state is now relieved, but the decision to replace him should have been taken much earlier by the Centre.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut also expressed similar views, while Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole said the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party will learn how costly this (decision to replace Koshyari after much delay) would prove for it in the forthcoming elections.

A Rashtrapati Bhavan spokesperson on Sunday said President Droupadi Murmu has accepted the resignation of Koshyari. Ramesh Bais, who was the governor of Jharkhand, has been appointed governor of Maharashtra, the official said.

Koshyari, who has been in the

line of opposition fire over his remarks on Chhatrapati Shivaji, said last month that he had conveyed his desire to quit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and that he would like to spend the remainder of his life reading, writing and in other activities.

Koshyari, 80, took charge as Maharashtra governor in September 2019 at the time of a political turmoil in the state following Shiv Sena severing its ties with the BJP.

He had administered the oath of office to Devendra Fadnis as the chief minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar as the deputy chief minister in a shock early morning ceremony but that government lasted only three days.

When the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi was in power, he had several run-ins with the government on a range of issues, including the appointment of 12 members to the state legislative council from the gubernatorial quota, which he never approved. The MVA had accused him of acting in a partisan manner.

Baby branded with hot iron rod to treat cough

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Porbandar, Feb 12: A two-month-old baby girl was hospitalised after she was allegedly branded with a hot iron rod by a "self-styled doctor" to treat her for cough in Gujarat's Porbandar district, police said Sunday.

The quack was arrested Sunday and an FIR was registered against him and the child's mother, Deputy Superintendent of Police Surjeet Mahedu said. The baby has been admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of a government hospital. She is under observation and her condition is reported to be stable, he said.

"The baby suffered from cough and phlegm a week ago and her parents tried a local cure at home, but she did not get relief. Thereafter, the child's mother took her to one Devrajbhai Katara," Mahedu said. Katara allegedly branded the baby with a hot iron rod on her chest and stomach. When she did not get relief, the parents took the child to Bhavsinhji General Hospital in Porbandar and the matter came to light, he said.

Based on a complaint by the infant's father, an FIR was registered against Katara and the baby's mother under Indian Penal Code Section 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by means of any instrument likely to cause death) and other

THE QUACK WAS ARRESTED SUNDAY AND AN FIR WAS REGISTERED AGAINST HIM AND THE CHILD'S MOTHER, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE SURJEET MAHEDU SAID

THE BABY HAS BEEN ADMITTED TO THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT OF A GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL. SHE IS UNDER OBSERVATION AND HER CONDITION IS REPORTED TO BE STABLE

provisions, the official said.

The condition of the baby, who was admitted in the ICU of the hospital in Porbandar, was stable, he said. Dr Jai Badiyani from the general hospital told mediapersons that the baby was brought to the medical facility on February 9 with breathing complications.

"She was put on oxygen support in the ICU. During the treatment we found that she was branded on chest...This increased her complications," he said. Earlier this month, a two-and-a-half-month-old girl died in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol district after allegedly being branded with a hot iron rod more than 50 times by an exorcist, police had said. Another case where a 3-month-old girl was branded with a hot iron rod had also come to light in Shahdol, they said.



Villagers remove snow at Rangrik Monastery after snowfall in Lahaul-Spiti

PTI PHOTO

'Post-retirement appointment of judges a threat'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 12: After the appointment of S. Abdul Nazeer as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, the Congress said Sunday that 'it was a threat to the judiciary'.

Congress leader and eminent lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi quoted Late Arun Jaitely, former law and Finance minister, who in 2013 had said, "pre-retirement judgements are influenced by post-

retirement jobs and its threat to judiciary," Singhvi said, "We share the same sentiments... it's a threat to the judiciary."

He said, "It is not about any particular person as I know him personally but in principle we are against the appointment of judges post-retirement." Singhvi said, "The BJP's defence that it had happened earlier also can't be an excuse and the issue remains the same." Jairam Ramesh, Congress MP

and General Secretary in-charge Communications, shared the video clip of Arun Jaitely and said, "Adequate proof of this in the past 3-4 years for sure." This is the second appointment after Ranjan Gogoi, who headed the Ayodhya bench and was nominated to the Rajya Sabha.

Justice S. Abdul Nazeer, who was part of a five-member Supreme Court Bench in the Ayodhya case, retired in January.

Scientists develop flood-resistant rice variety

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Pondicherry, Feb 12: The Agriculture institute in Karaikal, Pondicherry has developed a new rice variety that can tolerate floods. The rice variety was developed with the support of the Department of Biotechnology, Central government.

The rice variety, KKL(R)2 was developed by a team of researchers led by Dr. S. Thirumeni, Head of the Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, at the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru College of Agriculture and Research Institute.

During samba/thalady season, the paddy crop is affected in rain and short-term submergence leads to the destruction of these crops. The institute has been working on the development of water submergence-tolerant rice varieties.

Dr S. Thirumeni said, "The new variety KKL(R)2 was developed by crossing ADT 46 and Swarna Sub 1 through the 'Marker Assisted Backcross Method' three times."



news channels and music streaming services, say experts.

"Radio is a very convenient and easy medium that can be accessed by anyone anywhere. You don't require internet connection, you

don't require electricity to operate it. And you don't need to sit in front of it to listen," said Jainendra Singh, retired broadcaster and additional director at All India Radio.

The days of transistor sets are

long over but the means of listening to radio have increased with the introduction of smartphones, audio platforms that customise playlists, FM radio in automobiles and devices such as Sony's music streaming 'box' Caravan'.

In rural areas and economically marginalised sections, a large number of people rely on basic mobile phones that come with an in-built radio feature: a real gamechanger, according to Arti Jaiman of community radio station 'Gurgaon Ki Awaaz'.

"During the lockdown, when people were short on money to recharge their phones for the internet, they turned to their basic phones and listened to educational programmes free of charge on the radio," she said.

While Barola's love for the radio comes from an era when the vi-

sual medium hadn't reached the masses, 25-year-old media professional Falak Afshan from Hyderabad says radio was her first love because of its refined mix of chaste Hindi and Urdu.

"I started with All India Radio to improve my Hindi and Urdu, which eventually became second nature. Also, my father loved to listen to music on the radio, so be it Mehdi Hasan's ghazals or Usha Uthup's songs, something would always be playing," Afshan said.

Listeners from two different eras, Barola and Afshan are but few of an increasing number of Indians who are connected by the undeniable charm of the radio. The persistent attraction of the radio is evident from the latest Economic Survey which noted that FM radio has flourished in the last few years.



SP, BSP play Ramcharitmanas, caste census card for votes

According to analysts, political parties in the state have intensified their efforts to tilt the voters of the OBC community in their favour

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 12: The Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh including the Samajwadi Party are trying to gain momentum in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and are raising several issues such as the recent controversy over Ram Charit Manas and the caste census issue to take on the ruling BJP. BJP's allies Nishad Party and Anupriya Patel's Apna Dal (S) are also in favour of the caste census. However, the ruling party is not able to come forward more openly on the issue because of its political compulsions.

If political pundits are to be believed, the Samajwadi Party is attempting to strengthen its hold over the OBCs and Dalits, who have tilted towards the BJP. Since the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has been consistently trying to bring back OBC and SC/ST voters into its fold. Even several leaders who were associated with the BSP's Dalit movement are inducted into the Samajwadi Party. This includes names such as Swami Prasad Maurya, Ramachal Rajbhar, Indrajit Saroj and Lalji Verma. Besides this, while Akhilesh



Yadav is raising the demand for the caste census, leaders from his party are vocal against

Brahminism. Akhilesh Yadav wants to defeat the BJP by uniting Dalits and OBCs in his favour.

Rajpal Kashyap, the President of Samajwadi Party's Backward Class cell, says that his party has been demanding the caste census for a long time, to which the BJP government is "not paying attention". BSP chief Mayawati says that like SC and ST, the demand for conducting caste census of OBCs has gained a lot of momentum in the whole country, but the Centre's "refusal to do so is affecting the entire society and their future in the same way, like it is hurting them due to non-filling of their backlog in jobs". Sanjay Nishad of Nishad Party, a coalition partner of the BJP gov-

ernment in the state, said, "I believe that there should be a caste census. But the discrepancy of castes done by the previous governments is wrong." BJP's Backward Class Morcha President Narendra Kashyap says that the Opposition "does not want to do any work". It may be noted that the politics of Uttar Pradesh has been confined around the OBC community for the past decades. Since the formation of Narendra Modi's government in 2014, a large section of this class is with the BJP and the party is also trying to retain their faith through its Hindutva politics.

Delhi mayor poll now Feb 16 after 3 failed attempts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Delhi LG VK Saxena has given his nod for convening the next session of the MCD House February 16 for election to the post of mayor, official sources said Sunday.

The government had sent the proposal to hold the House session on February 16 and Saxena has accepted it, they said. Three successive meetings of the House were adjourned in the last one month amid ruckus and commotion over the decision to give voting rights to aldermen without electing the mayor, deputy mayor and members of the standing committee of the civic body.

After the civic polls in December, the House was first convened on January 6 but was adjourned following acrimonious exchanges between members of the BJP and AAP. The second municipal House held on January 24 was briefly adjourned after the oath-taking ceremony, and was later adjourned till the next date by the pro tem presiding officer.

After that, the House was adjourned on last Monday again for the third time, a month after the first municipal House.

The civic body in Delhi had 272 wards across its three corporations - NDMC, SDMC, and EDMC - which existed from 2012-2022, before being reunified into a sole MCD, which formally came into existence May 22 last year. The municipal House in Delhi on February 6 failed to elect a mayor following a ruckus over the decision to allow aldermen to vote in the mayoral poll, even as AAP alleged a "planned conspiracy" by the BJP to stall the process.

Delhi cops, Truecaller to join hands in a bid to thwart cyber frauds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Delhi Police is all set to sign an agreement with caller ID verification platform Truecaller to help people identify verified numbers and protect themselves from cyber frauds and scams involving the impersonation of officials from government agencies.

In addition to educating Delhiites and holding a joint awareness campaign against cyber frauds, Truecaller will also display official numbers of the Delhi Police representatives on the app's government directory services, police said.

"During the Covid pandemic, Truecaller helped us a lot as a lot of scammers and fraudsters used the pretext of selling oxygen cylinders, medicines and other essentials associated with treating the deadly virus were reported. So, our officials had identified the numbers of fraudsters and alerted Truecaller which displayed those unverified numbers as spam," Suman Nalwa, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Public Relations Officer), told PTL.

"Now we are signing a MoU with them following which, they will verify all the official contact numbers of the Delhi Police since fraudsters have many times posed as officials of the force and extorted money from the public by displaying picture of senior officers on their WhatsApp profile," she said. This will help users identify verified numbers and protect them

from frauds and scams involving the impersonation of government officials, Nalwa said, adding that all verified numbers of the Delhi Police will have a green badge and a blue tick mark, with a government service tag highlighting that it has been verified for users.

Pragya Misra, Director of Public Affairs, Truecaller, told PTL, "We are very excited about our partnership with the Delhi Police that will create much wider awareness in the community on ways to stay safe that will benefit citizens significantly and improve their digital safety."

This will help Delhiites protect themselves and alert them in case these numbers continue to remain active, the force said.

Earlier this week, a 22-year-old Indian based in Italy was arrested for allegedly posing as the Vice President of India by creating a fake WhatsApp account using Jagdeep Dhankhar's picture as his profile display to dupe people and seek favours from senior bureaucrats.

The accused, Gagandeep Singh, who is living in Offanengo, Italy since 2007 with his family, got the idea of impersonation after watching several YouTube videos.

In another case, three men who posed as officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Crime Branch of Delhi Police, were arrested for allegedly extorting Rs 1.8 crore from a retired commandant of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force by threatening to post an obscene video of him on social media platforms.



AAP workers raise slogans during their protest over Adani row, near AAP headquarters in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Air quality panel tightens curbs on use of DG in capital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Friday said diesel generator (DG) sets of capacity up to 800 kilowatt can be permitted for industrial and commercial operations in Delhi-NCR from May 15 only after their conversion to the dual fuel system (gas and diesel).

However, their operations will continue to be restricted during the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) period, it said.

With effect from May 15, "any use of DG sets of capacity up to 800 kW shall be permitted for industrial and commercial sector in the entire NCR, only subject to their conversion to dual fuel system (70 per cent gas and 30 per cent diesel) in areas where gas infrastructure and supply is available", the Centre's air quality panel said in a statement. It observed that uncontrolled use of DG sets is a matter of concern.

"A large number of DG sets operating in Delhi-NCR without adequate emission control measures, even during the periods other than the ban under GRAP, cause heavy air pollution and are thus a major contributing factor for deterioration of air quality in the region. Therefore, regulating the use of DG sets even for the periods when there is no ban or restrictions imposed under GRAP is the need of the hour," it said.

ROAD ACCIDENTS

Study group to analyse 10 'black spots' in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Delhi Traffic Police has set up a study group comprising officials from the transport department to analyse 10 "black spots" in the national capital and offer remedial solutions, officials said.

The group is supposed to submit its report by next week to the stakeholders that include road-owning agencies like the public works department (PWD) and the National Highways Authority of India



(NHAI). "The group is studying 10 black spots that have seen majority of accidents. The members of the group are visiting the spots

physically and seeing the problems that exist there and make them more prone to accidents. The black spots include Outer Ring Road, Ring Road, Rohtak Road, GTK Road, Najafgarh Road and Peeragarhi," an official said.

According to another official, they are analysing reasons such as whether there is a problem with road engineering, signage, encroachment or any other issue that are making these stretches accident prone.

"We are not only analysing these

but are also talking to traffic inspectors and the personnel deployed there to understand the problems plaguing these areas. The report will also offer solutions to the issue," he said. The report will be submitted to the Delhi government and the Centre.

According to the Delhi Police, the city witnessed 1,206 fatal road accidents in 2021, in which 1,239 people were killed. The number of such accidents increased by 3.6 per cent in 2021 as compared to 2020 (from 1,163 to 1,206 fatalities).

BJP IN UP NOW EYES SUFI ROUTE TO WOO MUSLIMS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 12: The BJP in Uttar Pradesh will now take the Sufi route to win over Muslims voters. Sufism is the mystical Islamic belief in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine affection.

According to an estimate, Muslim population accounts for a sizeable chunk in around 30,000 of the over 1.6 lakh polling booths in the state.

These 'qaumi chaupals', will be similar to 'gram chaupals' that were organised by the BJP before 2022 Assembly elections to connect with the beneficiaries of the various welfare schemes

initiated by the Centre and the state government. UP BJP minority cell chief Kunwar Basit Ali said that the party has been reaching out to all sections of the society. Sufis are essentially associated with dargahs (shrines), contrasting with the Wahabi Muslims who regard dargahs as places of idol worship, which is forbidden in Islam.

The BJP is already making a conscious effort to win over Pasmanda (backward) Muslims, months after PM Narendra Modi pitched for expediting the process of ensuring welfare measures reach the socially oppressed rung among the Muslims.

UP: 22 river cities to be part of 'DHARA 2023'



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 12: Twenty-two river cities from Uttar Pradesh will be a part of 'DHARA 2023', a first-of-its-kind two-day international conference being held in Maharashtra on strategies for managing the urban rivers.

The event will showcase developments, best practices from across the country including, and the need for urban river management plans.

The 22 cities part of the River Cities Alliance (RCA) from Uttar Pradesh include Varanasi, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Farrukhabad, Mirzapur, Mathura, Vrindavan, Bijnor, Moradabad, Agra, Bareilly, Etawah, Ghaziabad, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Kannauj, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Jhansi, and Ayodhya. DHARA 2023, will be held in Pune, a member of the RCA, and begins Monday according to an official release, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) are organising the event DHARA 2023 (Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers). DHARA

2023 will offer alliance members a marketplace of solutions in urban river management that they can take back to their cities and put into practice.

Case studies from throughout the nation on innovative river-related strategies and techniques for managing urban rivers, including groundwater management, flood control, lake and pond rejuvenation, and decentralised used water management, will be showcased.

Principal Secretaries of different Indian states as well as experts in urban river management from Denmark, the US, Japan, Israel, the Netherlands, and Australia will showcase international best practices in the sessions.

DHARA 2023 has strong synergies with the Urban 20 (U20) initiative under the ambit of India's G20 Presidency. One of the thrust areas of U20 is to promulgate urban water security. Healthy rivers have a vital role to play in enhancing the overall water security of the city.

One of the major achievements of the NIUA-NMCG collaboration is the establishment of a "River Cities Alliance (RCA)" of 95 river cities across India.

UP TO HAVE ITS OWN DAL LAKE IN PRAYAGRAJ

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj, Feb 12: Lawayankala, located a few kilometres from Sangam in trans-Yamuna area in Prayagraj, will soon emerge as the best example of river tourism on the Ganga.

Lawayankala is dotted with island-like cropping of rocks and sand bases mid river and has a sizeable number of Gangetic dolphins.

A proposal to invest Rs 75 crore has been made by an investor Tanmay Kishore Agarwal at the ongoing Uttar Pradesh Global Investors' Summit-2023 for developing Lawayankala like the Dal Lake of Kashmir.

Tourists here will not only be able to enjoy boat rides but also stays complete with yummy snacks and food on board houseboats soon. "The 'Ganga Dweep' is envisioned



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

as a river tourism project on an island in Gangapur and Dhupur Kachhar areas of Lawayankala in Prayagraj.

A Vedic tent city on the island, houseboats, floating jetties, boats and catamarans will be part of the

project to showcase the Ganga dolphins and life along the holy Ganga," said investor Tanmay Kishore Agarwal who belongs to Prayagraj.

The initiative will focus on spirituality, meditation, Ayurvedic and Yoga practices apart from hosting

A proposal to invest ₹75 crore has been made by an investor Tanmay Kishore Agarwal at the ongoing Uttar Pradesh Global Investors' Summit-2023 for developing Lawayankala like the Dal Lake of Kashmir

high-end Vedic weddings to spiritual discourses on river cruise that will take the holy experiences to a new level, he added.

"To promote Yoga, a meditation centre will be opened here and another centre will be set up for Ayurvedic treatments. We also plan to install gentle sound systems

here through which tunes of devotional songs will be heard throughout the day," he said.

The project would also provide direct employment to around 50 people, said Tanmay, who has submitted the investment intent form online through the state government designated 'Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency'. Regional tourism officer, Prayagraj, Aparajita Singh said her department has received a number of projects for cruises and other such initiatives.

"We will look into the details of all proposals and assess them on their merit. Only those which meet the norms of not causing environmental pollution and adhere to set guidelines of the state government regarding cuisine to serve and other aspects would be given a go ahead," she said.



We have been advocating that regional parties wherever they are strong should unitedly fight against the communal forces. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also wants that all opposition parties should fight the elections jointly and uproot the BJP-led government at the Centre

MAN HELD FOR ATTACK

A man was arrested Sunday for allegedly attacking the residence of Union Minister V Muraleedharan in Thiruvananthapuram last week, police said



of the day quote

I have been coming to Kolkata for the last 45 years when I was with the Congress Youth. At that time Calcutta was one of the dirtiest cities. Today that has changed and the credit goes to Mamata Banerjee, the municipal corporation and the corporators



GHULAM NABI AZAD | DEMOCRATIC AZAD PARTY CHIEF

The three-cornered fight that is unfolding in the tiny but politically crucial state of Tripura will help the Left-Congress alliance in the upcoming assembly elections



SITARAM YECHURY | CP(M) GENERAL SECRETARY

The Eknath Shinde-BJP government is legitimate and will remain in power



DEVENDRA FADNIS | MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM

Congress ignored growth in border areas: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dausa (Rajasthan), Feb 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday addressed the Congress of underestimating the valour of the armed forces and said its governments did not carry out development work in border areas, fearing the enemy could exploit the new roads to advance into the country.

He was addressing a BJP rally here, soon after a ceremony a few kilometres away to inaugurate the first phase of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, which he said would bring pace to development in Rajasthan as well.

Modi also accused the Congress government in Rajasthan, where assembly polls are due this year-end, of lacking vision and hindering the state's development, and said its plans and announcements remained just on paper.

Modi said Rajasthan would have progressed better if it had the double-engine government of the BJP, referring to the possibility of his party being in power both at the Centre and in the state. "Congress governments did not carry out development work in border villages and areas because they were scared, and they have said in parliament that what will happen if the enemy comes on the roads made by us,"



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, MoS VK Singh and others during the inauguration of the Delhi-Dausa-Lalsot section of Delhi Mumbai Expressway, in Dausa

Modi said at a BJP rally in Dausa district.

"The Congress has always underestimated the valour and bravery of our soldiers. Our forces know how to stop the enemy at the border and give them a befitting reply," he said. The prime minister said his government has created a network of roads and rail in border areas in the last nine years.

Before addressing the rally, Modi inaugurated the first phase of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway. The PM pressed the button of a remote to mark the foundation laying/inauguration of four projects worth more than Rs 18,000 crore.

He said the 246-km Delhi-Dausa-Lalsot section will reduce the travel time between Jaipur and Delhi to half and will bring new tourism and employment opportunities to the youths in Rajasthan.

Modi said when the government invests in highway projects, ports, railways, optical fibre, and opens medical colleges, it gives strength to traders, small shopkeepers and industries. "Investment on infrastructure attracts more investment."

Built at a cost of more than Rs 12,150 crore, this first completed section of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway will provide a major

Congress governments did not carry out development work in border villages and areas because they were scared, and they have said in parliament that what will happen if the enemy comes on the roads made by us

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

boost to the economic development of the entire region. The PM said those who travel to Delhi for work can now come back to home in the evening after finishing their task. The PM said that rural haats are being developed around the expressway where the local artisans can sell their article.

He said the expressway will benefit the Sariska National Park, Keoladeo National Park, Ranthambore National Park as well as cities like Jaipur and Ajmer. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal Khattar addressed the inauguration programme through a video link. While Gehlot joined the programme from the chief minister's residence in Jaipur, Khattar addressed the event from a function held in Nuh district.



People outside the Badrinath temple after snowfall, in Chamoli district

SHORT TAKES

11 cows die

Sambhal (Uttar Pradesh): About two dozen stray cows were run over by a train after they were allegedly pushed towards a railway track by farmers in Sambhal. Eleven cows died on the spot, while several others sustained grievous injuries. This incident was reported from Lahraon village on Saturday. The cows were possibly hit by a speeding Dehradun Express, which departed for its onward journey after a delay of an hour after the incident.

Student ends life

Mumbai: An 18-year-old student of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, located in Powai area, allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the seventh floor of a hostel building located on the campus on Sunday, police said. The deceased, who hailed from Ahmedabad, was a first-year student of the B.Tech (Chemical) course. The incident came to light after security guards on the campus spotted the youth lying in a pool of blood, a police official said.

Girl raped

Aligarh: A 12-year-old girl was allegedly raped inside a banquet hall in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh district where she had come to attend a wedding, police said. The incident took place in Mahuakhera police circle and the alleged accused who is yet to be identified, fled after committing the crime. The girl, later narrated her ordeal to her family. She was taken to hospital and local police have launched an investigation into the matter.

Four injured

Hathras: Four persons have been injured during celebratory firing at a wedding in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district, police said. According to police sources, a person started firing at the wedding procession and four band workers -- Taufiq, Firoz, Pappan and Sahil -- were injured. The four victims have been sent to Aligarh for treatment.

NIA arrests two terror suspects

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Sunday said two terror suspects who were planning to leave for Afghanistan were arrested in a case related to activities of the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) aimed at radicalising and provoking the youth to indulge in acts of terrorism in the country.

6-year-old boy takes father to hosp in cart

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Feb 12: A six-year-old boy pushed a wooden cart to carry his ailing father to a government hospital for treatment, the incident pointing fingers on yet another instance of alleged negligence in providing ambulances to the poor families in remote areas of Madhya Pradesh.

The matter came to the fore Saturday after some locals spotted the boy along with his mother pushing a wooden cart and recorded it on the social media. The incident was reported in Baliari town of Singrauli district where the family waited for an ambulance for more than one hour, however, delay in the arrival of the vehicle prompted the clueless boy to take his father to hospital in a wooden cart.

In a viral video, a boy dressed in a t-shirt and blue denims, is seen trying to control the movement of the cart, which he pushed around for three kilometres, while his mother was seen pushing it from the opposite end.

After the video of the incident surfaced on social media, Singrauli district administration took cognisance of the matter and ordered an inquiry in the matter later on Saturday evening.

"It has learnt that due to non-availability of an ambulance, the patient had to be taken to the hospital by his wife and innocent son. The Chief Medical Officer and civil surgeon have been directed to find out the reason for non-availability of ambulances," Singrauli's Additional Collector D.P. Burman told the press.

These kinds of incidents where people would be seen taking patients to hospitals or their bodies back to their homes and even pregnant women have been coming to the fore from different parts of Madhya Pradesh, especially in rural areas.

Notice to Gehlot's OSD in phone-tapping case

The notice comes days before Delhi High Court is scheduled to hear the Delhi Police Crime Branch's application seeking vacating of an interim order staying coercive action against Sharma

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Feb 12: Delhi Police has served a notice on Lokesh Sharma, the OSD to the Rajasthan chief minister, asking him to appear on Monday for questioning in a phone-tapping case going back to the July 2020 political crisis.

The notice comes days before Delhi High Court is scheduled to hear the Delhi Police Crime Branch's application seeking vacating of an interim order stay-



ing coercive action against Sharma. Hearing on the Crime Branch application and a petition by Sharma -- the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot -- seeking quashing of the FIR against him is scheduled for February 20.

On March 25, 2021, the Delhi Police registered an FIR against Sharma for criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust and unlawfully intercepting telegraphic signals (telephonic conversation) on a complaint lodged by Union Minister Gajendra Singh

Shekhawat, the BJP MP from Jodhpur.

An interim order to stay coercive action against Sharma was passed on June 3, 2021, after he approached the high court seeking quashing of the FIR. According to sources, this is the sixth notice to Sharma under Section 41.1 (A) of the CrPC.

Sharma has appeared for questioning twice -- on December 6, 2021, and May 14, 2022 -- and submitted reasons for not being able to appear on three other dates. Last month, the Crime Branch moved an application in Delhi High Court seeking vacating of the interim order on the grounds that Sharma has been misusing the interim protection and delaying the investigation.

The phone-tapping controversy dates to the July 2020 political crisis in Congress-ruled Rajasthan.

Docs use WhatsApp to deliver baby

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Feb 12: With snowfall ruling out the possibility of airlift, a pregnant woman who had a history of labour complications in the remote Keran in Jammu and Kashmir was assisted by doctors in delivering a healthy baby over a WhatsApp call. "On Friday night, we received a patient in labour at the Keran PHC (primary health centre) with history of complicated delivery with eclampsia, prolonged labour and episiotomy," Block Medical Officer of Kralpora Dr Mir Mohammad Shafi said.



An air evacuation was required to take the patient to a hospital with maternity facilities as Keran remained cut off from the rest of Kupwara district during the winter. Continuous snowfall on Thursday and Friday prevented the authorities to arrange an air evacuation, forcing the medical staff at the Keran PHC to look for an alternative way to assist in the delivery.

A gynaecologist in Kralpora sub-district hospital, Dr Parvaiz, guided Dr Arshad Sofi and his paramedical staff at the Keran PHC over a WhatsApp call on the procedure to deliver the baby. "The patient was induced (into labour) and after six hours a healthy baby girl was born. Currently both the baby and the mother are under observation and doing fine," Dr Shafi said.



Participants participate in a bullock cart race, at Karve village in Karad

PTI PHOTO



Gehlot gets a breather

If the BJP high command reported to have given a breather to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan until the Assembly polls in November-December 2023, the Congress too has finally given up its plan to replace Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. The BJP has been unable to find an OBC leader capable of facing poll year challenges to replace Chouhan. Rahul Gandhi tried hard to bring a solution to the ongoing bitter battle going on between Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot. On the contrary, a tripartite meeting among the

three leaders ended virtually in a fiasco. Sachin Pilot has been left high & dry.

China behind Adani fiasco?

The Hindenburg Research Report and subsequent short selling may have caused a bloodbath in the stock market for Adani Group stocks. But there is a flip side of the story besides Opposition demands to constitute a JPC or a panel led by a Supreme Court judge to investigate the matter. Adani Group is under attack from all across but it is being dubbed that China is behind the entire conspiracy as the Group is harming Chinese interests. Investments made by the Group in Australia, Sri Lanka, and Africa and even in Israel's Port of Haifa has turned out to be a counter strategy to contain China which was trying to encircle India with its investment and loans to these regions. Adani Group had big investment plans to the tune of \$150 billion in the next 5-10 years under which the group was likely to

invest in green energy, data centers, airports, and healthcare among others. Israel handed over the Port of Haifa to the Adani Group for development which was a jolt for China. Winning the contract was a big setback for China as with this the company is set to enter the European market. Haifa Port's geographical location is such that it will be a hub for both Europe and Asia. In 2019, Adani Group got a coal mine project in Queensland in Australia in 2021 which was delayed due to environmental clearance and legal battles were a big loss to China. Footprints of Adani Group are increasing across the globe at the cost of China making them desperate.

Rahul fires salvo at Irani

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Women & Child Development Minister Smriti Irani may be political rivals. But the two had a rare encounter in the Lok Sabha when she replied in detail pointed questions relating to her ministry by the

Wayanad MP. Irani had defeated Rahul Gandhi in 2019 Lok Sabha polls and since then the two leaders witnessed a sore relationship in Lok Sabha and outside. But Rahul Gandhi posed several pointed questions with regard to anganwadi centres in the country and also status in Kerala including in his Wayanad constituency. Since the Lok Sabha was adjourned due to ruckus, Irani gave detailed replies in response to unstarred questions. Rahul Gandhi wanted to know the measures being taken to strengthen the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme in aspirational districts, particularly in Wayanad district in Kerala and details of anganwadi centres proposed to be upgraded to Saksham Anganwadi Centres in Kerala and in the country. Smriti Irani gave a detailed reply.

Rane to contest LS polls

The grapevine has it that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi wants, that of the 18 Union Ministers hailing from Rajya

Sabha, at least 10 of them should contest Lok Sabha polls in May 2024. Modi is also keen that of the 92 BJP MPs from Rajya Sabha at least 25-30 should enter the electoral fray. The prominent names emerging from the BJP's closet from Maharashtra include MSME minister Narayan Rane and Minister of State Ramdas Athawale. The third term Rajya Sabha MP and Leader of the House Piyush Goyal who is holding several key portfolios is also from Maharashtra. But he has also been working as a back-room boy during the Lok Sabha polls and his services are vital for the polls in 2024 in Delhi. However, 8 other Union Ministers belonging to other states that may be pitched for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls are Sarbananda Sonowal (Assam), Parshottam Rupala and Mansukh Mandaviya (Gujarat), Dharmendra Pradhan (Odisha), Jyotiraditya Scindia (Madhya Pradesh), V Muraleedharan (Kerala) and couple of others. Among the MPs who may be pitched include Sushil Modi (Bihar), Saroj Pandey (Chhattisgarh), Neeraj Shekhar (UP) and others.

international

of the day quote

The leading principle of the balance (of power) is that the elected government that has the responsibility, which people have mandated through their vote, must also have the authority

It's about helping in times of need. We want to make it possible for Turkish or Syrian families in Germany to bring close relatives from the disaster region

The US would welcome any effort that could lead to an end of hostilities in Ukraine that are in keeping with President (Volodymyr) Zelensky's objectives and his leadership, his determination of what is acceptable to the Ukrainian people

SHORT TAKES

Christodoulides wins Cyprus President poll

Nicosia: Former foreign minister Nikos Christodoulides was elected as the new President of Cyprus in a runoff election Sunday. His rival, veteran diplomat Andreas Mavroyiannis, conceded defeat. With 99.5% of ballots counted, Christodoulides had 52% of the vote to Mavroyiannis' 48%, according to the official results. Christodoulides' campaign was a unifying force, eschewing ideological and party divisions. His message resonated with a wide swath of voters.

SL:14 pilot whales stranded on beach

Colombo: A pod of 14 pilot whales were stranded on Kalpitiya beach in northwestern Sri Lanka, said the country's Wildlife department. Sri Lanka's Navy, Police and the Wildlife department put the whales back in the sea following a rescue operation, said the Wildlife department on Saturday, adding that three of the stranded whales have died. Whale beachings are not uncommon in Sri Lanka, Xinhua news agency reported. In 2020, more than 100 whales were stranded on a Sri Lankan beach, and three pilot whales died following the mass beaching.

South Korea, US hold counter-drone drills

Seoul: South Korea and the US staged combined counter-drone drills at a US air base in a southwestern city last week, US military photos showed Sunday, as Seoul seeks to reinforce readiness following North Korea's drone incursions late last year. Posted on the Pentagon's Defense Visual Information Distribution Service Friday, photos showed the drills taking place at Kunsan Air Base in Gusan, 275 kilometers south of Seoul, Tuesday, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Raisi to visit China

Beijing: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will visit China for a three-day trip starting Tuesday at the invitation of his counterpart, Xi Jinping, China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying made the announcement Sunday. She did not elaborate on Raisi's itinerary. The two leaders met last September in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, when Xi underscored China's support for Iran. China is a major buyer of Iranian oil and an important source of investment in the Mideast country.



Today, Bangladesh has got the recognition of a developing country. But, we want to advance more. Bangladesh will never look back again, rather it will continue marching to be a smart, developed and prosperous country
SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

TEA CRISIS LOOMS IN PAK

Ahead of Ramazan, the price of black tea (loose) in Pakistan has swelled to Rs 1,600 per kg from Rs 1,100 in the last 15 days as around 250 containers are still stuck at the port that arrived from late December 2022 to early January, local media reported



DEADLY EARTHQUAKE

Turkey detains contractors as deaths pass 33K

AGENCIES

Antakya, Feb 12: Turkish justice officials targeted more than 130 people allegedly involved in shoddy and illegal construction methods as rescuers extricated more survivors, including a pregnant woman and two small children, six days after a pair of earthquakes collapsed thousands of buildings. The death toll from Monday's quakes that hit southeastern Turkey and northern Syria stood at 33,179 Sunday and was certain to rise as search teams locate more bodies in the rubble. Authorities said more than 92,600 other people were injured in the disaster.

As despair also bred rage at the agonizingly slow rescue efforts, the focus turned to who was to blame for not better preparing people in the earthquake-prone region that includes an area of Syria that was already suffering from years of civil war. Even though Turkey has, on paper, construction codes that meet current earthquake-engineering standards, they are too rarely enforced, explaining why thousands of buildings slumped onto their side or pancaked downward onto residents.

Turkish Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag said Sunday that 134 people were being investigated for their alleged responsibility in the construction of buildings that failed to withstand the quakes, according to Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency. Bozdag has vowed to punish anyone responsible, and prosecutors have begun gathering samples of buildings for evidence on materials used in constructions.

The quakes were powerful, but victims, experts and people across Turkey are blaming bad construction for multiplying the devastation

Authorities at Istanbul Airport Sunday detained two contractors held responsible for the destruction of several buildings in Adiyaman, the private DHA news agency and other media reported. The pair were reportedly on their way to Georgia. One of the arrested contractors, Yavuz Karakus, told reporters Sunday: "My conscience is clear. I built 44 buildings. Four of them were demolished. I did everything according to the rules," the DHA news agency reported.

Two more people were arrested in the province of Gaziantep suspected of having cut down columns to make extra room in a building that collapsed, the state-run Anadolu Agency said. A day earlier, Turkey's Justice Ministry announced the planned establishment of "Earthquake Crimes Investigation" bureaus. The bureaus would aim to identify contractors and others responsible for building works, gather evidence, instruct experts including architects, geologists and engineers, and check building permits and occupation permits.

The detentions could help direct public anger toward builders and contractors, deflecting attention away from local and state officials who allowed the apparently substandard constructions to go ahead.



Contestants show off their happiness vibe during a competition to elect the three main Carnival characters - Chuta, Pepino and Chola - in La Paz, Bolivia. The trio of Carnival royalty must be adept at spreading happiness and never tire of dancing

Russia continues to shell Ukraine

Ukrainian and Western officials have warned that Russia could launch a new, broad offensive there to try to turn the tide of the conflict as the war approaches the one-year mark

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, Feb 12: Russian forces over the weekend continued to shell Ukrainian cities amid a grinding push to seize more land in the east of the country, with Ukrainian officials saying that Moscow is having trouble launching its much-anticipated large-scale offensive there.

One person was killed and one more was wounded Sunday morning by the shelling of Nikopol, a city in the southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region, Gov. Serhii Lysak reported. The shelling damaged four residential buildings, a vocational school and a water treatment facility. In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, one person was wounded after three Russian S-300



missiles hit infrastructure facilities overnight, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said.

The Russian military said they hit armored vehicle assembly workshops at the Malyshev machinery plant in the city.

Ukrainian forces also downed five drones — four Shahed killer drones and one Orlan-10 reconnaissance drone — over the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions Saturday evening, Kyiv's military reported.

Overall, Russian forces carried out 12 missile and 32 air strikes in Ukraine over the past 24 hours, as well as over 90 rounds of shelling

from multiple rocket launchers, Ukraine's General Staff reported in its daily update.

The attacks come as Russian forces push to take over more land in the eastern industrial heartland of Donbas, comprised of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

A US-based think tank noted that it is also Russia's pro-Kremlin military bloggers who question Moscow's ability to launch a broad offensive in Ukraine.

They "continue to appear demoralised at the Kremlin's prospects for executing a major offensive," the Institute for the Study of War said in its latest report.

Netanyahu pledges more action against Palestinian attackers

REUTERS

Jerusalem, Feb 12: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Sunday promised a stronger Israeli response in dealing with a spate of Palestinian attacks in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, as pressure swelled within his right-wing government to employ more severe tactics. His remarks came two days after a car ramming attack in the Jerusalem outskirts killed three Israelis and two weeks after a lone Palestinian gunman killed seven people outside a synagogue, adding to rising anxiety in Israel over security

Tensions are also high in the West Bank, where Israeli forces have carried out hundreds of arrests in recent months

Itamar Ben-Gvir, Netanyahu's far-right national security minister, said however that police had already begun a major enforcement campaign in East Jerusalem that would include measures from handing out traffic tickets to demolishing houses of Palestinian attackers. Ben-Gvir, an ultranationalist firebrand who takes a hard line against Palestinians, was met at the scene of Friday's ramming attack by an angry crowd who demanded action.

Speaking in Cairo, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Palestinians were facing a "lethal assault," and repeated a pledge to pursue action against Israel before International Criminal Court.

Ben-Gvir told reporters ahead of the cabinet meeting that he was determined to carry out an operation in East Jerusalem similar to a large-scale military campaign Israel launched in the West Bank during a Palestinian uprising 20 years ago.

US holds drills in SCS amid tensions with China

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Feb 12: The US Navy and Marine Corps are holding joint exercises in the South China Sea (SCS) at a time of heightened tensions with Beijing over the shooting down of a suspected Chinese spy balloon.

The 7th Fleet based in Japan said Sunday that the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier strike group and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit have been conducting "integrated expeditionary strike force operations" in the South China Sea. It said

exercises involving ships, ground forces and aircraft took place Saturday but gave no details on when the began or whether they had ended. China claims virtually the entire South China Sea and strongly objects to military activity by other nations in the contested waterway through which \$5 trillion in goods are shipped every year.

The US has also been strengthening its defense alliance with the Philippines, which has faced encroachment on islands and fisheries by the Chinese coast guard and nominally civilian but govern-



SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR, IT SENDS SHIPS SAILING PAST FORTIFIED CHINESE OUTPOSTS IN THE SPRATLY ISLANDS, PROMPTING FURIOUS PROTESTS FROM BEIJING

ment-backed fleets. The US military exercises were planned in advance.

They come as already tense relations between Washington and

Beijing have been exacerbated by a diplomatic row sparked by the balloon, which was shot down last weekend in US airspace off the coast of South Carolina.

The US said the unmanned balloon was equipped to detect and collect intelligence signals, but Beijing insists it was a weather research airship that had accidentally blown off course.

The incident prompted Secretary of State Antony Blinken to abruptly cancel a high-stakes trip to Beijing last weekend aimed at easing tensions.

'Chinese century' is not likely to be a reality in decades

CHINA REGISTERED THE LARGEST DECLINE IN COMPREHENSIVE POWER OF ANY COUNTRY IN THE 2023 ASIA POWER INDEX

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing/New Delhi, Feb 12: The age of uncontested US primacy is over — it most certainly is — but rather China's halting progress to become America's equal, as per an article by independent think-tank Lowy Institute in its fifth edition of Asia Power Index.

China draws power from its central place in Asia's economic system. The United States draws its power from its military capability and unrivalled regional defence networks. Whether this uneasy cohabitation between unequal superpowers results in a settling point or outright conflict is an open question.

But what is clear is that a "Chinese century" is no longer the most likely scenario. China is now

less likely to pull ahead of its rival by the end of the decade. If it does so in future decades, China will not enjoy an advantage anything like the United States did in the past, Lowy Institute said.

The Index offers little evidence of a more multipolar distribution of power in the region. In fact, a widening gulf separates China from the region's next most important players. Japan and India have each suffered setbacks causing them to entirely drop out of a special category of major powers in the Index, Lowy Institute said.

The "grand concert of powers" view of the Indo-Pacific — inspired by the 19th century European tradition — in which the region coalesces around a single military and strategic counterweight to deter



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

China's ability to dominate the Indo-Pacific is looking decidedly shaky. The annual Asia Power Index — launched by the Lowy Institute in 2018 — measures resources and influence to rank the relative power of states in Asia. The project maps out the existing distribution of power as it stands today, and tracks

shifts in the balance of power over time. Key findings in the 2023 Asia Power Index include China's isolation exacted a heavy toll on its standing in 2022 but the country emerges more militarily capable than ever.

The portrait that emerges is this: China's overall power still lags the

United States but is not far behind. Yet the biggest surprise over the course of five editions of the Index has been China's inability to close or meaningfully narrow the gap to equal, let alone surpass, the United States in its comprehensive national power.

As much of the world lifted or relaxed strict measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, China is only now emerging from tough zero-Covid policies that sharply curtailed its global and regional connectivity. This saw the connective tissue of its relationships with its neighbourhood — people exchanges, business links and cultural ties — atrophy.

In parallel with this trend, China's economic linkages with the world became less robust. While China attracted more than \$200

billion of foreign capital investment in the three-year period to 2021, this had fallen to just \$120 billion in the three years to 2022. The country's global outward investment flows also declined by around 30 per cent.

China's global exports remained strong, but the country's demand for imports of goods and services weakened due to relatively tepid economic growth in 2022.

As a result, China's Economic Capability — a measure of core economic strength and ability to use the economy to geopolitical advantage — is at its lowest level since 2018, with the United States again leading on this measure.

China is steadily improving its Military Capability — closing the gap with the United States from 27 points in 2018 to 23 points in 2022.

business

of the day quote

We fully support India's efforts in promoting multilateralism and a rules-based trade system

JAN CHRISTIAN VESTRE | TRADE AND INVESTMENT MINISTER, NORWAY

Currently, we believe that we can comfortably grow our dark store count by around 30-40 per cent over the next 12 months

ALBINDER DHINDSA | CEO, BLINKIT

We are looking to tap growth opportunities in the rural areas with rise in demand for aspirational products like sports utility vehicles and feature-rich models

TARUN GARG | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, HYUNDAI MOTOR

SHORT TAKES

OIL sees highest quarterly profit

New Delhi: State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) reported its highest ever quarterly net profit in the third quarter ended December 31 on the back of a rise in oil and natural gas prices. Net profit of Rs 1,746.10 crore, or Rs 16.10 per share, in October-December compared with Rs 1,244.90 crore, or Rs 11.48 a share, in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement. OIL earned \$88.33 for every barrel of crude oil it produced and sold in the third quarter of the current fiscal, up from \$78.59 a barrel realisation in the year-ago period. For the nine months ended December 31, 2022, profit after tax recorded growth of over 120 per cent to Rs 5,022.12 crore from Rs 2,257.30 crore in the year-ago period.

Nayara Energy profit rises 2%

New Delhi: Nayara Energy, India's second largest private oil refining and fuel marketing company, saw its net profit rise by a marginal 2 per cent in the third quarter ended December 31 as the company undertook a month-long maintenance shutdown and windfall tax impacted margins. Net profit of Rs 869.8 crore in October-December compared with Rs 850.3 crore profit in the same period a year back. Revenue from operations dropped to Rs 24,757.7 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal from Rs 32,412.9 crore a year back. For the first nine months of the current fiscal, Nayara reported a net profit of Rs 6,226.9 crore on a turnover of Rs 1 lakh crore. It had a net profit of Rs 1029.9 crore on a turnover of Rs 1.19 lakh crore for the full 2021-22 fiscal year.

Over 17,400 techies lost jobs in Feb globally so far

Approximately 2.5 lakh tech employees have been sacked globally so far and more job cuts are likely coming in days to come amid recession fears

many workers in India receiving pink slips amid deepening global macroeconomic conditions.

In 2023 so far, around 340 companies have laid off more than 1.10 lakh employees worldwide, and there appears to be no respite from job cuts.

Major companies which commenced layoffs this month include Yahoo, BYJU's, GoDaddy, GitHub, eBay, Autodesk, OLG Group and others. In January, close to 1 lakh of them lost jobs globally, dominated by companies like Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Salesforce and



In 2023, around 340 firms laid off over 1.10L workers

In January, close to 1 lakh of them lost jobs globally

In 2022, over 1K companies sacked 1,54,336 employees

others, according to layoff.fyi, a website that tracks job cuts glob-

ally. More than 3,300 tech employees lost jobs daily on an average by

more than 288 companies worldwide in January alone.

After firing 11,000 employees in November last year, Meta (formerly Facebook) is reportedly planning to reduce headcount further in its "year of efficiency".

Aviation giant Boeing is slashing 2,000 jobs in finance and HR verticals this year and the company out-sources about a third of those jobs to Tata Consulting Services (TCS) in Bangalore.

In 2022, over 1,000 companies laid off 154,336 workers, as per the data by layoffs tracking site Layoffs.fyi.

M-cap of six of top-10 firms lose ₹49,231cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The combined valuation of six of the 10 most valued firms eroded by ₹49,231.44 crore last week, with FMCG major Hindustan Unilever taking the biggest hit.



Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 159.18 points or 0.26 per cent.

While Bharti Airtel, ITC, ICICI Bank and HDFC twins were the other laggards from the top-10 pack, TCS, SBI, Reliance Industries and Infosys posted gains.

However, the combined market valuation gain of the four firms at ₹5,840.35 crore was less than the total loss suffered by the six companies.

The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever plummeted by ₹15,918.48 crore to reach ₹6,05,759.87 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bharti Airtel tanked by ₹12,540.63 crore to ₹4,29,474.82 crore and that of ITC plunged by ₹11,420.89 crore to ₹4,60,932.38 crore.

ICICI Bank lost Rs 6,863.37 crore to stand at ₹5,95,885.63 crore.

The mcap of HDFC Bank dipped by ₹1,255 crore to ₹9,23,933.45 crore and that of HDFC fell ₹1,233.07 crore to stand at ₹4,91,080 crore.

From the gainers' pack, TCS added ₹19,612.52 crore, taking its valuation to ₹12,93,639.32 crore.

State Bank of India's (SBI) mcap jumped ₹7,585.92 crore to reach ₹4,93,486.41 crore.

The valuation of index heavy-weight Reliance Industries climbed ₹4,938.8 crore to ₹15,80,653.94 crore and that of Infosys increased ₹3,703.11 crore to ₹6,76,638.36 crore.

In the ranking of the most valued Indian firms, Reliance Industries retained its top spot, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, SBI, HDFC, ITC and Bharti Airtel.

Domestic market ownership touches all-time high in Dec

Equity ownership of domestic investors rose for 5th qtr in a row and showcases the rising dominance of local investors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 12: The equity ownership of domestic investors, including institutions and high net worth individuals, touched an all-time high of 24.44 per cent in December quarter, making it the fifth consecutive quarterly increase.

Retail investors' ownership in the market stood at 7.23 per cent in December 2022, marginally down from 7.34 per cent in September 2022. But in rupee terms, the same increased to Rs 19.94 lakh crore from Rs 19.48 lakh crore in the previous quarter, registering an increase of 2.35 per cent.

In September 2022, the share was 24.25 per cent, according to data collated by market information major Prime Database, based on the shareholding patterns of 1,832 of the total 1,857 companies on NSE for the quarter to December 2022.

Net inflows from domestic institutional investors (DIIs) stood at Rs 27,134 crore during the quarter, as against net inflows from foreign institutional investors (FIIs) at Rs 47,349 crore, resulting in their shareholding marginally increasing to 20.18 per cent in December 2022, from 19.98 per cent in September 2022, massively down from 23.30 per cent in March 2015, when the combined share of DIIs, retail and HNIs was only 18.47 per cent.

The widest gap between FII and DII holding was in March 2015 quarter, when DII holding was 55.45 per cent lower than FII holding.

The FII to DII ownership ratio has also declined to an all-time low of 1.32 in December 2022 from 1.33 as of September 2022.

Over a 13-year period, since June 2009, the FII share has increased from 16.02 per cent to 20.18 per cent while DII share increased from 11.38 per cent to 15.32 per cent.

On the other hand, total institutional investor share (FIIs and DIIs) reached 35.50 per cent in December 2022, up from 34.99 in September 2022.

Share of domestic mutual funds rose for the sixth quarter running



and reached an all-time high of 8.09 per cent in December 2022, up from 7.97 per cent in September 2022. This was after 5 quarters of consecutive decline from March 2020 when it was 7.96 per cent to June 2021 when it was 7.25 per cent.

Share of insurance companies as a whole also increased to a 5-year high of 5.65 per cent in December 2022 from 5.57 per cent in September 2022. LIC continues to command the lion's share of investments in equities among insurers; at least 70 per cent share or Rs 10.91 lakh crore. LIC's share across 268 companies where its hold is more than 1 per cent, increased to 3.95 per cent in December 2022 from 3.87 per cent in September 2022.

Share of DIIs as a whole thus increased to an all-time high of 15.32 per cent in December 2022 from 15.01 per cent in September 2022. In rupee terms, their holdings went up to Rs 42.28 lakh crore, an increase of 6.07 per cent sequentially.

On the other hand the share of retail ownership (those investing less than Rs 2 lakh) has declined marginally to 7.23 per cent in December 2022, from 7.34 per cent in September 2022. But in rupee terms, the same increased to Rs 19.94 lakh crore in the reporting period from Rs 19.48 lakh crore in the previous quarter.

In rupee terms, the holding of FIIs stood at Rs 55.70 lakh crore in December 2022, an increase of 4.98 per cent from Rs 53.06 lakh crore in September 2022.

FIIs are the largest non-promoter shareholders in the domestic market. The top 10 companies by market capitalisation accounted for 90.62 per cent of overall FII holding.

The share of the government (as promoter) in NSE firms also rose to a 4-year high of 7.99 per cent in December 2022 from 6.87 per cent in September 2022 boosted by the out-performance by public sector banks.

ROBUST RISE

PSU banks' profit surges 65% in Q3

ALL 12 PSU BANKS EARNED A PROFIT OF ₹29,175CR IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Public sector banks (PSBs) have logged a robust profit growth of 65 per cent to ₹29,175 crore during the third quarter ended December 2022, with Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) emerging as the top performer in terms of percentage growth in profit.

The Pune-headquartered lender recorded a 139 per cent jump in profit to ₹775 crore at the end of December 2022, according to quarterly results declared by the PSBs.

BoM was followed by Kolkata-based UCO Bank which posted a profit of ₹653 crore, 110 per cent higher than its earning in the third quarter of the previous fiscal.

Two other lenders whose profit growth was higher than 100 per cent were Union Bank of India and Indian Bank.

The Mumbai-based Union Bank of India witnessed a 107 per cent rise in net profit at ₹2,245 crore, while Chennai-based Indian Bank reported a 102 per cent increase at

BoM tops chart with 139% surge

UCO came second with 110% rise

Union Bank witnessed 107% growth

Indian Bank reported 102% increase



₹1,396 crore for the October-December period of 2022.

All 12 PSBs cumulatively earned a profit of ₹29,175 crore in the third quarter of the current financial year, as

against ₹17,729 crore in the same period a year ago, recording a jump of 65 per cent. For the first nine months of the current financial year, PSBs have earned a cumulative profit of ₹70,166 crore as compared to ₹48,983 crore in the year-ago period, an increase of 43 per cent.

The PSBs had earned a cumulative profit of about ₹15,306 crore in the first quarter, which increased to ₹25,685 crore in the September quarter and ₹29,175

crore in the three months to December.

In percentage terms, the first quarter growth was 9 per cent over the same period of the previous financial year, which climbed to 50 per cent in the second quarter and 65 per cent in Q3.

With regard to the Capital Adequacy Ratio, BoM at 17.53 per cent was the highest among PSBs, followed by Canara Bank at 16.72 per cent and Indian Bank at 15.74 per cent as on December 31, 2022.

BoM and State Bank of India (SBI) were in the lowest quartile as far as gross non-performing assets (NPAs) and net NPAs were concerned.

The gross NPAs reported by BoM and SBI were at 2.94 per cent and 3.14 per cent of their total advances, respectively, as on December 31, 2022. The net NPAs for these lenders came down to 0.47 per cent and 0.77 per cent.

Foreign investors' exodus continues in Feb

FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INVESTORS TAKE OUT ₹9,600 CRORE FROM EQUITIES IN FEB TO DATE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Foreign investors continue to desert Indian stock markets as they pulled out over Rs 9,600 crore this month so far on costlier valuation of domestic equities compared to other emerging markets.

The outflow comes following a net withdrawal of Rs 28,852 crore by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in January. This was also the worst outflow in the last seven months, data with the depositories showed.

Prior to that, they made a net investment of Rs 11,119 crore in



December and Rs 36,238 crore in November. "I expect this flow (outflow) trend

to continue until there is more clarity on the Adani issue, markets stabilize further and FPIs see

more concrete signs of recovery in the Indian economy," Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, said.

According to the data, FPIs withdrew a net sum of Rs 9,672 crore from equities in February 1-10.

On the other hand, FPIs have invested Rs 2,154 crore in the debt markets during the period under review. So far this month, FPI flows were mixed for emerging markets. India, Thailand and the Philippines witnessed outflows, while South Korea, Taiwan, and Indonesia attracted foreign investment.

Tata Steel to merge seven subsidiaries by FY24: CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The merger of 7 subsidiary companies with Tata Steel is expected to be completed in 2023-24 fiscal year, its CEO and managing director TV Narendran said.

In September 2022, Tata Steel board had approved a proposal to merge six of its subsidiaries into itself for greater synergies, higher efficiency and reduce costs.

"We had already announced (merger of) 6 companies earlier. (Merger of) one more Angul Energy we announced recently," he told PTI in reply to a question on the timeline for the merger.

However, the completion of the merger depends on the regulatory processes including NCLT clearances, post which the process is expected to be completed in the next financial year, the CEO said. "We are dependent on the speed at which we can go through our reg-



ulatory requirements," he added.

Besides Angul Energy, the six subsidiaries to be merged with Tata Steel are Tata Steel Long Products (TSPL), The Tinplate Company of India, Tata Metaliks, TRF, Indian Steel & Wire Products, and Tata Steel Mining and S&T Mining Company.

When asked about plans of merging recently acquired NINL into Tata Steel, the CEO said there are no such immediate plans.

Narendran also said Tata Steel will first work to complete the merger of these 7 entities before it plans for merger of more subsidiary companies into itself.

Importance of buying travel insurance when going abroad

Travelling to a foreign land is one of its kind experience; one gets to explore new cultures, cuisines, places, and much more. Travelling gives a new perspective, adds new elements to one's personality, and helps attain meaningful lessons. Travelling abroad requires meticulous planning right from visa to tickets, from accommodation to itinerary etc.

One crucial component while planning a foreign trip is 'travel insurance,' which people often tend to take lightly. However, good travel insurance covers you against various exigencies that you may encounter on your trip and ensures that you enjoy a worry-free vacation. Below you can find various benefits of travel insurance and what it covers.

Protects the insured against medical emergency

The idea of meeting any medical emergency in a foreign land is every bit scary; getting stuck in

such a situation in an unknown place not only spoils the trip but also marks a heavy dent in your pocket. This is where your travel insurance plan will come to your aid. Travel insurance covers medical expenses that you have to incur if you fall ill, it also covers in-patient and out-patient hospitalisation expenses, and medical repatriation cost is also covered. If you have to undergo any emergency surgery or treatment, your travel insurance will cover that too. Apart from medical exigencies, the policy also covers accidents.

Covers flights delays

If due to any reason your flight gets delayed beyond the mini-

mum hours mentioned in your policy, then the policy covers you for various expenditures that you had to undergo due to the delay. These expenses include refreshments, meals, or other such necessary expenses. You will have to submit the respective invoice while filing for reimbursement.

Coverage against delay or loss of checked-in luggage

Losing your bag while you are travelling is one of the worst things that might happen, it not only hampers your travel plan but also impacts your budget big time. The other major issue that might crop up is baggage delay. Imagine, you have landed in the new city and are all set to start exploring the new place; but, to your sheer distress, your baggage has not arrived yet. It may take anywhere between a few hours to a couple of days before you get your baggage. Your travel insurance plan will cover you against such events; the policy reimburses you for the money that you spent to buy essential things, because of the delay in the arrival of the luggage.

Loss of passport

Nothing can be scarier than losing your passport in a foreign land as it is the singular most important document when one is overseas. It leads to a few additional complications and costs. Travel insur-



Aditya Sharma, Chief Distribution Officer - Retail Sales, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

Jemimah, Richa sink Pak

INDIA START T20 WORLD CUP ON A ROUSING NOTE BEATING PAKISTAN BY 7 WICKETS

AGENCIES

Cape Town, Feb 12: Experienced batter Jemimah Rodrigues (53 n o, 38b, 8x4) produced a master class of an innings as she and youngster Richa Ghosh (31 n o, 20b, 5x4) held their nerves under pressure to guide India to a seven-wicket win over arch rivals Pakistan in their opening match of the Women's T20 World Cup here Saturday. The two put on an unbeaten stand of 58 runs for the fourth wicket as India chased down a challenging target of 150 with six balls to spare.

Shafali Verma (33, 25b, 4x4) and Yastika Bhatia (17) gave a good start to the Indian run chase, putting on 38 runs in 5.3 overs. The power play yielded 43 runs for one wicket.

Shafali was going strong as she took the attack to the opposition bowlers. But her dismissal in the 10th over with Sidra Ameen taking a fine catch near the boundary off the bowling of Nashra Sandhu set India on the back-foot.

One-down Jemimah survived a close stumping call as India reached 67 for the loss of two wickets at the halfway mark. Much was ex-



Jemimah Rodrigues is all pumped up after India's win against Pakistan, Sunday; (Right) Radha Yadav was the most successful bowler for India



PTI PHOTOS

pected of skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (16), but she disappointed. India needed 83 runs from the last 10 overs and despite the fall of crucial wickets, the good start and batting depth kept India in the hunt. But the run rate kept climbing for India as they needed 47 from the last five overs.

With Jemimah and new batter Richa getting the boundaries often, the equation became 28 runs from three overs. Richa then turned the match on its head as she hit three successive boundaries in the first three balls of the 18th over bowled

Brief scores

Pakistan 149 for 4 (Bismah Maroof 68 n o, Ayesha Naseem 43 n o, Radha Yadav 2/21) lost to India 151 for 3 in 19 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 53 n o, Shafali Verma 33, Richa Ghosh 31 n o) by seven wickets.

by Aiman Anwer. Needing 14 from the last two overs, Jemimah struck three fours in the penultimate over to end the match in a jiffy.

Earlier, Pakistan posted 149 for 4 after electing to bat, their high-est T20 World Cup total. The in-

nings was held together by skipper Bismah Maroof (68 n o, 55b, 7x4) and Ayesha Naseem (43 n o, 25b, 2x4, 2x6). The two put on 81 runs for the fifth wicket after Pakistan were in a spot of bother at 68 for four.

For India, left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (2/21) was the most successful bowler while Deepti Sharma and Pooja Vastrakar got one wicket each.

Harmanpreet complimented Jemimah and Richa, saying they played really well. The skipper added that successfully chasing a challenging total had given her team a lot of confidence.

Aditi finishes 3rd

Rabat (Morocco): Indian golfer Aditi Ashok gave it all but just could not find the magic with the putter as she managed 1-under 72 in the third and final round to finish a creditable third in the Lalla Meryem Cup here Sunday. Aditi, who began the final round at 6-under, finished at 7-under, a week after winning the Magical Kenya Ladies Open. Sweden's Maja Stark, who was in fine form despite one bogey on either side of the course won the title by four shots over countrywoman Swede Linn Grant.

Squash team lose

Chennai: The Indian team went down 0-2 to Pakistan in the men's final of the HCL 21st Asian Junior Team Squash Championship 2023 here Sunday. In the clash between the top-seeded Pakistan and the second-seeded home team, the former came out on top with Noor Zaman and Muhammad Hamza Khan securing the wins. While Zaman had to work hard to beat Krishna Mishra in four games 12-10, 9-11, 13-11, 11-9. Khan overpowered Paarth Ambani in straight games 11-7, 11-5, 11-4.

Unadkat released

Mumbai: Pace bowler Jaydev Unadkat has been released from the Indian squad for the second Test against Australia so that he can play in the Ranji Trophy final for Saurashtra, the BCCI said Sunday. The 31-year-old Unadkat will add more firepower to Saurashtra, who will take on Bengal in the Ranji Trophy final beginning February 16 at the Eden Gardens. Saurashtra defeated Karnataka by four wickets while Bengal trounced Madhya Pradesh by 306 runs in the semifinals that ended Sunday.

WPL auction today

Mumbai: Prolific batters Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur and teen sensation Shafali Verma are expected to spark bidding wars when they go under the hammer during the inaugural Women's Premier League auction, here Monday. All the three are expected to get more than Rs 1 crore. Among the overseas names, Alyssa Healy, Beth Mooney, Elyse Perry, Nat Sciver, Megan Schutt and Deandra Dottin are some of the big names expected to enjoy a big pay day.

Impressive feats

Astana: Jyothi Yarraji and Jeswin Aldrin won a silver medal each in women's 60m hurdles and men's long jump by smashing their own national indoor records on the concluding day of the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships here Sunday. Yarraji improved upon her earlier national indoor record she set Saturday - 8.16s - during the heats, as she clocked 8.13s Sunday to finish behind Japan's Masumi Aoki (8.01s). Aldrin, on the other hand, produced a best jump of 7.97m to finish behind Lon Yu Tang (8.02m) of Chinese Taipei in the final. He had jumped 7.93m in qualification Friday, which was his earlier national indoor record. AGENCIES

Odisha notch up 2nd successive win



Rahul Mukhi (17) of Odisha celebrates with teammates after scoring against Goa at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Odisha trounced Goa 4-1 in a match of the Santosh Trophy football tournament at the Kalinga Stadium here Sunday. This was the second successive win for the hosts in the competition and brightened their chances of qualifying for the knock-out stages.

Even though the scorline suggests that it was a one-sided game, it was not the case. Goa also had their moments in the game and had their forwards been a bit more opportunistic in front of the opposition goal, the game could have been a closely fought affair.

The goals for Odisha were scored by Bikash Kumar Sahoo (11th), Chandra Mohan Murmu (28th), Rahul Mukhi (79th) and Anand Oram (90+6 added on time). Both

Mukhi and Oram took the field as substitutes. The only goal for Goa was scored by Mohammed Faheez (45th) from the penalty spot.

Odisha were dominant also in the initial stages of the game and they rightly took the lead when Bikash scored off a combined move down the middle. The Odisha players caught the Goa defence napping with their speedy movements and inter-change of positions.

At half time Odisha led 2-1, but after resumption Goa had two clear cut chances to restore parity, but the players muffed those up. The visitors had to pay the penalty as Odisha scored twice late in the game to achieve an emphatic margin of victory.

In another game played on the day at the Odisha Football Academy ground, Punjab edged out Maharashtra 4-3.

5th Club World Cup triumph for Real

SPANISH GIANTS WIN TITLE FOR A RECORD FIFTH TIME DEFEATING AL HILAL

AGENCIES

Rabat (Morocco), Feb 12: Real Madrid lifted the Club World Cup for a record fifth time with a pulsating 5-3 win over Al Hilal at the Prince Moulay Abdellah stadium here late Saturday evening. Vinicius Junior and Fede Valverde struck twice each, while Karim Benzema also scored on his return from injury in Madrid's spectacular victory over their Saudi Arabian opponents. Carlo Ancelotti's side, who qualified as Champions League winners last season, had far too much attacking quality for their opponents to handle.

Madrid's emphatic triumph secured their second piece of silverware of the season, after winning the European Super Cup in August. It also provided welcome respite from their La Liga campaign, where they sit eight points behind rivals Barcelona, who also beat them in the Spanish Super Cup final in January.

"We are very happy, for the eighth time Real Madrid are champions of the world. It was what we had to do," Ancelotti told *Telesinco*. "We're happy, it was a good game. I think we were good up front, with Vinicius, Karim, Valverde, who got two, and up the field the team had mobility and quality," Ancelotti added.

The 35-year-old Benzema created the opening goal for Vinicius

Oz may include Kuhnemann for second Test against India

SPINNER 'SHOCKED' AFTER GETTING TO KNOW ABOUT HIS SELECTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: Uncapped Australia left-arm spinner Matt Kuhnemann, who is flying in for Mitchell Swepson, has a 'live chance' to make his debut in the second Test against India starting here February 17 if the visitors opt for three spinners, coach Andrew McDonald has said.

Kuhnemann, 26, will be joining the touring party in place of leg-spinner Swepson who will make a pre-planned return home for the birth of his first child. Swepson, however, is set to return to India ahead of the third Test.

"He's (Kuhnemann) a live chance to play in the next 'Test match,'" McDonald was quoted as saying Sunday by 'Cricinfo'. "If we play three spinners then we clearly want back-up here and available in the squad if that's the way we want to go," McDonald added.

Kuhnemann doesn't have international experience under his belt, having scalped just 35 wickets at 34.80 in 13 first class matches.

Kuhnemann was 'shocked' to get the news. "Got a phone call yesterday (Saturday) morning when walking out for the warm-ups. Was pretty shocked," Kuhnemann said after Queensland's Sheffield Shield match against Victoria.

"I was just lucky enough that



Head may replace struggling Warner

Sydney: Smarting from a humiliating defeat in the series-opening first Test against India in Nagpur, Australia may replace struggling David Warner with off-spin all-rounder Travis Head in the second match, Australian media reported here Sunday. Australia's aspiration to win the Border-Gavaskar Trophy suffered a big blow after the visitors lost the Nagpur Test by an innings and 132 runs. Warner made one and 10 in the two innings he batted. "Sources close to the Australian team confirmed those discussions were continuing after Warner's double failure in the first Test," reported the Sydney Morning Herald.

against South Africa at the MCG last December. "We're hopeful. It's been six weeks now. I think he's actually got his final X-ray or scan today. He does allow us different options to the way that we want to structure up," McDonald said.

Pacer Mitchell Starc, who missed the first Test, has arrived here after recovering from a finger injury he also sustained in Melbourne. "(Starc) will have a rest day today (in Delhi) and then he'll train tomorrow on his own," McDonald said.

my passport was in my bag. I watched every day (of the first Test) just being such a fan. These series are so good to watch. Todd Murphy was exceptional and sort of watched how (Ravindra) Jadeja bowled. So I am just really excited to get over there (India)," Kuhnemann added.

Meanwhile, McDonald is hopeful about Cameron Green's availability for the second Test. The young all-rounder is recovering from a broken finger he suffered



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Real Madrid players and coach Carlo Ancelotti celebrate with the trophy Saturday

with a short pass to send the Brazilian winger through on goal. After a frustrating spell in Spain because of racist abuse from the stands and opponents targeting him on the pitch, Vinicius was able to enjoy himself here, netting in both of Madrid's matches and crowned player of the tournament.

"We are delighted with him (Vinicius) because he keeps improving, he's much more effective," Ancelotti told reporters. "He scores in almost all the games and

makes the difference in all of them." Valverde rifled the second goal home through defender Ali Albulayhi's legs, leaving goalkeeper Abdullah Al-Mayoof unsuspected. Former Porto striker Moussa Marega pulled one back for the 2021 Asian Champions League winners, sliding a shot past Andriy Lunin, who should have done more to keep it out.

Vinicius set up Benzema early in the second half with a stunning cross using the outside of his boot and the French forward made no

mistake from close range. Uruguayan midfielder Valverde netted his second goal after a slick combination with defender Dani Carvajal, finding his form and goals again after a dip in form.

Benzema was elated at having won the Club World Cup a second time. "It always feels good to have a goal against your name during such a crucial game," the Frenchman said. "I just wish that we carry the same form forward when we go back to La Liga," Benzema added.

Fit-again Sindhu raring to go

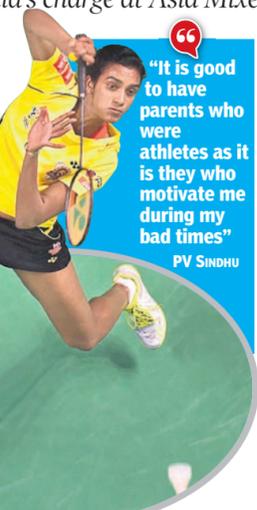
Star shuttler to lead India's charge at Asia Mixed Team Championships

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 12: Completely recovered from a stress fracture on the left foot that kept her away from the circuit for five months, a fit-again Indian shuttler PV Sindhu is confident and sounding positive ahead of the ongoing season.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, said her injury has 'completely healed' and is aiming to go full throttle this year. Sindhu was sidelined with injury after winning the Commonwealth Games women's singles gold in Birmingham in August and made a comeback at the year's first event - Petronas Malaysia Open 2023 - where she lost a three-gamer in the opening round to Carolina Marin of Spain.

Sindhu however, said Sunday she is 'happy with my footwork, skills and strokes' on her return to



"It is good to have parents who were athletes as it is they who motivate me during my bad times" PV SINDHU

competitive action in Kuala Lumpur. "I'm completely alright now. Physically and mentally I'm completely fine. Injuries happen but it's important to keep your body healthy and come back stronger

every time. I am confident, positive and learning from my mistakes," the 27-year-old told Badminton World Federation (BWF) website.

"My parents were athletes too. The support and motivation they give me keep me going during low moments," added the shuttler.

Sindhu, who bagged three titles - Syed Modi India International, Swiss Open and Singapore Open last year - hopes to replicate her success at the HSBC BWF World Tour this season. "I hope it will be, I can do it," said the World No.9 shuttler. "You also have to be 100 per cent but I'm completely recovered now. It takes time to get into that rhythm and play tournament matches. I'm on track," asserted the double Olympic medallist.

Along with Lakshya Sen and HS Prannoy, Sindhu will spearhead India's challenge at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships starting Tuesday in Dubai. India, who did not make the knockout stages at the previous edition in 2019 in Hong Kong, have been drawn in Group B alongside hosts UAE, frontrunners Malaysia and Kazakhstan.

Rashford stars in Man U victory

AGENCIES

London, Feb 12: Marcus Rashford extended his hot streak with the late goal that inspired Manchester United's 2-0 win Sunday against old rivals Leeds. After Rashford scored to spark United's comeback from two goals down in Wednesday's 2-2 draw with Leeds, he tormented the Yorkshire club once again. Rashford netted with 10 minutes left at Elland Road to make it four successive Premier League games with a goal for the England forward. He has scored in eight of his last nine appearances in all competitions.

Following Alejandro Garnacho's frustrated reaction to being substituted Wednesday, the Argentine teenager made amends as he came off the bench to seal United's hard-fought victory five minutes after Rashford's goal.

Man U's win was just their second in their last five league games, although they have now lost just once in their last 17 matches in all competitions. On the other hand Leeds are without a win in their last nine Premier League games.

Double crown for Kabir, Aahan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Odisha player Kabir Hans won the double crown at the Utkal Open Tennis Tournament-2023 which ended Sunday here. Kabir won both the men's singles and doubles titles.

In the men's singles final Kabir defeated Aditya Satpathy 6-3, 6-2. It was a dominating show by Kabir who did not allow his rival to settle down at all. Kabir broke the service of Aditya four times in the match and emerged a comfortable winner.

The men's doubles was equally lop-sided with Kabir and his partner Shimon Shastri trouncing the duo of Aditya and Satirtha Patnaik 6-0, 6-0. It seemed that Aditya had exhausted all his energies while playing in the singles as he looked distinctly tired in the final of the doubles. The result was that they failed to win a single game in the match and just handed over the title in a platter to Kabir and Shimon.

Aahan also won a double crown in the tournament by bagging the



Winners and finalists of the different segments at the Utkal Open tennis tournament pose with dignitaries

women's singles and girls' under-14 titles. In the women's final Aahan defeated Krishna Raj 6-1, 6-0 while in the girls' final she trounced Avipsha Dehury 6-2, 6-1.

The boys' under-14 title was won by Sai Swastik Mohanty who defeated Aditya Bikram Acharya 6-3, 5-7, 10-2. After the first two sets were shared, the super tie-breaker was implemented and the player to reach 10 points first emerged victorious.