

4 MORE AWARDS FOR 'RRR'
RRR continues to create waves on the global stage as it bags 4 prizes in the Hollywood Critics Awards held Thursday in Los Angeles
LEISURE P2

US FLAGS CHINESE LOANS
Chinese loan to Pakistan and Sri Lanka is a concern for the US as those may be used for coercive leverage
INTERNATIONAL P10

EYEING MAIDEN TROPHY
South Africa eves eye their maiden ICC trophy as they face Australia in the T20 WC final today
SPORTS P12



FESTIVE MOOD: People celebrate with colours ahead of Holi in front of a temple at Barsana in UP's Mathura district. PFI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Maoists gun down 3 cops in Ch'garh

Raipur: Three personnel of the Chhattisgarh police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) were killed Saturday in an encounter with Naxalites in Sukma district of the state. IG (Bastar range) Sundarraj P informed. The face-off took place around 9.00 am between Jagargunda and Kunded villages when a team of DRG was out on a search operation. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel expressed grief over the incident and said the martyrdom of these police personnel will not go in vain. Among the deceased were ASI Ramuram Nag (36), constables Kunjam Joga (33) and Vanjam Bheema (31). Other officials claimed that six Naxalites have been gunned down during the shootout.

CJI concerned over student suicides

Hyderabad: Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud highlighted Saturday the importance of empathy in higher educational institutions and expressed concern over instances of alleged suicides by students. The CJI, who referred to the alleged suicides of a Dalit student at IIT Bombay recently and an Adivasi student at the National Law University, Odisha last year, said his heart goes out to their families. "But I have also been wondering where our institutions are going wrong, that the students are forced to give up their precious lives, in these instances," he said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Last week, you praised the PM only 338 times. Do you want to continue as a minister or...?

Sonia hints at quitting politics

AGENCIES
Raipur, Feb 25: Congress leader Sonia Gandhi indicated Saturday that she may quit politics soon. Talking at the party's three-day conclave here, Sonia said she was happy that her 'innings could conclude with the Bharat Jodo Yatra' which she described as 'a turning point' for the party. It sparked speculation that she may call time on her political career. The Congress however, clarified that Sonia was not quitting politics, but was talking about her end of tenure as party president. However, Sonia had stepped down from the presidency long time back. "What gratifies me the most is that my innings could conclude with the Bharat Jodo Yatra. The Yatra has come as a turning point. It has proved that the people of India overwhelmingly want harmony, tolerance and equality," Sonia said. "It has renewed the rich legacy of dialogue between our party and the people through mass contact programmes. I congratulate all party workers who have worked hard... especially thank Rahul (Gandhi) ji, whose determination and leadership were crucial for the Yatra."



7 from Bengal among 8 killed in 2 road accidents

IT WAS A HORROR RERUN OF SORTS SATURDAY AS ONLY WEDNESDAY 9 PEOPLE HAD LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE STATE DUE TO ROAD MISHAPS

POST NEWS NETWORK
Dharmasala, Feb 25: Road mishaps seem to have become the order of the day in the state. Every day, a number of such accidents are reported from various parts of Odisha. Only a few days back, nine persons had been killed Wednesday in the state in two accidents. Saturday proved to be disastrous again with eight people losing their lives in two separate accident cases. The first of the incidents happened in Jajpur district when seven persons including the driver were killed in a tragic road mishap on National Highway-16 opposite Central Bank in Neulpur under this police limits in the wee hours of Saturday. The mishap occurred after a mini-truck rammed a stationary truck in front of the bank at around 5.00am, police said. Jajpur SP Vinit Agrawal informed that six persons including the driver died on the spot, while one succumbed en route to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. "We have intimated the family mem-



The mangled remains of the Eicher mini-truck which met with the accident

bers of the deceased, who are from West Bengal, and they are on the way to Jajpur," Agrawal said and added that the tragedy may have occurred due to dense fog. The deceased were identified as Karim Sardar, 20, Aminul Ali Sardar, 29, Arif Ali Sardar, 27, Suraj Mandal, 44, Amjad Ali Sardar, 34, Mousam Sardar, 32 and Jhangir Sardar, 32, from Matia police limits in North 24-Parganas of West Bengal. The deceased were travelling in the mini-truck (Eicher-WB-25L-3183) to procure poultry products from Phulnakhara on the Cuttack-Bhubaneswar highway. On being informed, fire personnel from Chandikhole reached the spot and rescued a critically injured person from the carriage of the truck and rushed him to the Barchana hospital. **Contd...P4**

'Notebook' system in state-run schools

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: The Odisha government is planning to introduce a 'notebook' system in state-run schools from the current academic session. It is similar to the diary procedure followed in private educational institutions. This will be done to bridge the communication gap between teachers and guardians. Giving this information here Saturday, state School and Mass Education Minister, Samir Ranjan Dash said that the notebook system will be introduced all across Odisha. The announcement comes a day after the state Budget where the education and skill development sector saw a 10 per cent rise in allocation at ₹ 30,030 crore for the 2023-24 fiscal as compared to the previous budget. "We are planning to introduce notebooks for students in government schools like private institutions do. The notebooks will keep track of homework done by students, the other activities being done by them and also marks of weekly tests," Dash said. "This is the main focus of 'Mo School Yojana'," he added. "Apart from academic activities, the notebook will have information about school holidays, extra-curricular activities of students, programmes being conducted by the school, emergency numbers and contact details of teachers," Dash added. **Contd...P4**

Odisha's debt burden to cross ₹1L-cr in 2023-24

STATE'S DEBT TO GSDP RATIO OF 12.7% IS LOWER THAN THAT OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WHICH STANDS AT 57%

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: With the increase in total size of the annual Budget to ₹2.30 lakh crore, the loan burden of the state is also going to cross ₹1 lakh crore during the 2023-24 fiscal, sources said Saturday. As per the budget estimation for 2023-24, the total debt stock of the state will reach ₹1,12,882 crore by the end of March 2024, which is 13.1 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). The state government's total loan burden remained at nearly ₹87,000 crore by the end of January 2023, which is 11.5 per cent of the GSDP. It is estimated that the debt stock will increase to ₹97,037 crore by March 2023 which is 12.7% of the GSDP. As per public debt status paper published by the Finance department, by March 2023, the total outstanding loan against government of India will be ₹20,827.23 crore, while the open market borrowing will come down to ₹24,058 crore, loan against general provident fund - ₹23,593 crore, NABARD loan - ₹19,098 crore, National Social Security Fund (NSSF) - ₹6,046 crore, and other sources including Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) and CAMPA - ₹3,414 crore. As the government has estimated to borrow another ₹15,000 crore during the up-

coming financial year; the total debt stock will reach ₹1.12 lakh crore, official sources said. Odisha however, has been able to reduce the debt stock from 50.7% of GSDP in 2002-03 to below the prudential level of 25 per cent as recommended by the 13th Finance Commission and prescribed in Odisha Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2005. The public debt raised by the Odisha government is fully utilised for capital investment. Whilst the total stock of debts is increasing over time, it is sustainable, meaning that the government can service its debts without difficulty, sources said. Strong revenue growth is helping to keep interest payments manageable, and within the limits of the FRBM Act. The low percentage of foreign currency debts has lowered Odisha's vulnerability to any exchange rate depreciation.

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	35.2°C	34.2°C
MIN	22.9°C	23.5°C
Humidity	83%	86%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
		Partly cloudy sky

Admission to SOA through SAAT-2023

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN ADMISSION TEST

nirf INDIA RANKINGS 2022 16 th Best in University Category 27 th Best in Engineering Category 18 th Best in Medical Category 10 th Best in Dental Category 09 th Best in Law Category	THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2023 301-400 in Engineering And Technology 301-400 in Computer Science 801+ in Health Sciences 1001-1200 in THE World University Ranking	QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 451-500 in QS Asia University Ranking 2023 1001-1200 in QS World University Ranking 2023 110 in QS Southern Asia University Ranking 2023
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TIMES ENGINEERING RANKING-2022 1 st in Odisha	IGAUGE DIAMOND UNIVERSITY RATING
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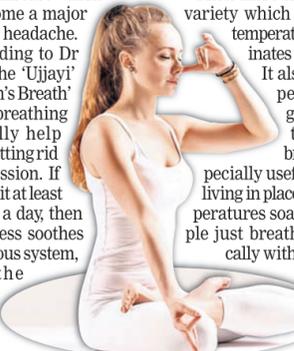
ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY B.Tech BCA M.Tech MCA M.Sc. (Physics) M.Sc. (Math) M.Sc. (Chemistry) Ph.D. Post. Doc.	AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES B.Sc. (Ag.) (Hons) M.Sc. (Ag.) Ph.D. Post. Doc.
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES MBA MBA (Hospital Administration) Integrated MBA BBA (Hons) Ph.D. Post. Doc.	PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES AND BIOTECHNOLOGY B.Pharm M.Pharm M.Sc (Biotechnology) Integrated M.Sc (Biotechnology) Ph.D Post. Doc.
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT BHMCT MBA (Hospitality Management) Ph.D. Post. Doc.	NURSING B.Sc. Nursing P.B. B.Sc. Nursing M.Sc. Nursing Ph.D. Post. Doc.
VETERINARY SCIENCES B.V.Sc. & A.H. Ph.D. Post. Doc.	LEGAL STUDIES BBA LLB (H) BA LLB (H) LLB (H) LLM Ph.D. Post. Doc.

to Apply for admission, visit: www.soa.ac.in
No Application/Examination fees for SAAT-2023

Breathing types that increase longevity

There are several breathing varieties that enhance immunity and prevent ailments

AGENCIES
New Delhi, Feb 25: Breathing is a fundamental and automatic process that sustains life, a process that happens without conscious effort. However, very few people are aware of various breathing techniques that can contribute substantially in increasing longevity and keeping people healthy. Breathing is the bridge between mind and body and if both are in sync, then life in general is stress free. Breath control is achieved by regularly practicing 'pranayama'. As per Dr Narendra Shetty, the chief wellness officer of a big hospital here, there are several types of pranayamas that one can practice depending on specific needs of the body. In modern times, depression is a disease which has become a major cause of headache. According to Dr Shetty, the 'Ujjayi' or 'Ocean's Breath' type of breathing can really help one in getting rid of depression. If one does it at least 10 times a day, then the process soothes the nervous system, calms the mind and increases psychic sensitivity, slows down heart rate and lowers blood pressure. All these aspects can prove fatal for any human being. Then there is the 'Shitali' variety which lowers body temperature and eliminates surplus heat. It also sparks appetite and digestion. This type of breathing is especially useful for people living in places where temperatures soar. "Most people just breathe automatically without knowing its benefits. If 10 minutes in a day are used to breathe properly, it is not only healthy, but also useful for the various arteries and veins that are in our body," said health expert Dr Shashi Goenka. One can also cool down and calm nerves by using the yogic breathing technique known as 'Shitkari'. This process helps in proper digestion and also prevents viral infections that causes fever. The 'Brahmari' type of breathing on the other hand is good for health because it reduces craving. It is a common knowledge that due to craving, human beings intake a lot of things into the body, they should not. **Contd...P4**





END OF AN ERA FOR MAISIE AND RUEBEN

Game of Thrones actress Maisie Williams has announced her breakup with Rueben Selby through a story on her Instagram profile. She then noted that it was "the end of an era" alongside a broken heart emoji. The former couple publicised their relationship in March 2019.

PLAYING WOLVERINE DAMAGED MY VOCAL CHORDS: HUGH

Hollywood hunk Hugh Jackman, who plays the mutant Wolverine in the X-Men and Wolverine films, has said that the role required growls that have affected his vocal range badly. The actor who announced his retirement for the character from the film Logan seems to be reprising the same in Deadpool 3.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may cause some heart-breaks today, so be careful! Apart from this, Ganesha says, your love life is stable and you are ready to make a commitment to your loved one. If you are married, your relationship will become more intense and attachment will strengthen.

TAURUS
Unless you mind your moods and manners today, you are likely to hurt, and lose, a lot of friends, fears Ganesha. Your thoughts and feelings will be unduly unsteady and unpredictable. It may not always be possible to maintain your calm, to stay in control.

GEMINI
You will be able to divide your attention between personal and professional life. Workplace will become pretty exciting during the afternoon. By evening, you will get plenty of opportunities to shower your affection on your loved ones, says Ganesha.

CANCER
In all likelihood, today, you are likely to strike a balance between your professional and personal life, predicts Ganesha. The work will be interesting and stimulating, while your time with family will be peaceful and soothing.

LEO
You will be in the mood to play the role of a guide today. The day will be filled with fun and frolic. There will be many occasions to have a good time, throughout the day. You will experience some mental stress, however, it is likely to be short-lived, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha foresees a strong probability that you will keep your feet firmly planted on the ground in the face of adversity. The afternoon sun may bring some good returns or much awaited results for you. Love and affection will bring tranquility in your family life. There is a distinct possibility of new relationships developing later in the day, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
Ganesha forecasts mostly superficial and thin-skinned issues as the likely cause of your unease and nervousness today. Matters relating to government rules and regulations will be on the table today at your workplace. But evening promises a lighter fare; your fine taste in arts shall receive applause from all quarters.

SCORPIO
There are chances that you may easily get irritated and infuriated today, predicts Ganesha. Keep a lid on your anger or it may lead to irreconcilable differences. Avoid confrontations and unnecessary complications at work as well. You will spend a lot of time in finding out solutions to pending problems.

SAGITTARIUS
When Ganesha says - Perfect - He is talking about your planning skills and implementation. Today, due to systematic planning you will be able to deliver as per expectations and achieve great results. Your intelligent quotient may just impress someone from the opposite sex.

CAPRICORN
Work pressure may take a toll on you today, but you will overcome all impediments and excel in whatever work you undertake, says Ganesha. Support and motivation await you at home as family members will be exceedingly tolerant of your actions and endeavours.

AQUARIUS
Action is your forte, so seize the initiative and you will come out a winner! The afternoon sees you happy, but heavy-duty work may take a toll on you. Relax a bit - listen to music, play with your pet, or simply don your best attire and step out to socialise!

PISCES
You are likely to be sweating today at work, and it is neither the weather nor an ill-fitting suit that is the cause, says Ganesha. You will try your best to get your views across, and the post-afternoon lunch siesta is probably the best time to hammer your point home because that is when your boss will have all the energy to argue against.

Good story matters, not platform: Kriti



Mumbai: *Mimi* actress Kriti Sanon is yet to take a plunge into the OTT world while all others are making debut in digital platform. One of her best films however did release on the medium giving her a taste of the same.

Though she is yet to explore web shows, Kriti is happy with the kind of attention her film, which was to be a theatrical release but went on OTT due to the pandemic, won!

She says, "My biggest validation and biggest success has been *Mimi*, which was my digital debut. It was made for theaters, but it was released digitally. Yet, it gave me all the love and a lot more."

With this, the actress feels like, whatever the medium, the story has been intriguing. She elaborates on the point, saying, "I feel like, honestly, people are watching content everywhere. It doesn't matter where (the medium) you tell the story, it all depends on what story you are telling. So, I am open to telling any great story on any platform."

AGENCIES

KALINGA LITERARY FESTIVAL: DAY 2

Wajahat justifies Godse's villainisation



Bhubaneswar: It was the penultimate day of the three-day long 9th Kalinga Literary Festival, where 24 sessions on globalisation of literature, mythology, cinema, and folk cultures were held along with the 7th Kalinga Art Exhibition.

The negative portrayal of Nathuram Godse, the killer of Mahatma Gandhi, is justified, said

Asghar Wajahat, whose play *Godse@Gandhi.com* inspired the recently released movie *Gandhi Godse - Ek Yudh*, by acclaimed director Rajkumar Santoshi. His play imagines that Mahatma Gandhi survived Nathuram Godse's attack and later had a conversation with him to understand his ideology. Wajahat was speaking at the

Kalinga Literary Festival in Bhubaneswar about why the film received sharp criticism from some quarters. The counterfactual history movie imagines dialogue between Godse and Gandhi and has become a subject of controversy as some have accused the movie of equating Gandhi with Godse.

Wajahat said the movie can be openly interpreted by people of various ideologies and explained that the character of imagination could be much more different in written literature and in performing arts such as cinema.

"Those who are opposing it (the movie) have not seen the movie at all and have formed opinions based on hearsay. Some of the dialogues of the movie actually trash the very belief of Godse", said Wajahat, who also co-wrote the movie's dialogue along with Santoshi.

In the event, a mythological book titled *Mahagatha* by acclaimed writer Satyarth Nayak was released by Odisha Television MD Jagimangal Panda.

PNN



RRR wins four more awards at HCA

Los Angeles: As the Oscar race gets intense, filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli's magnum opus continues to make waves on the global canvas, as *RRR* bagged 4 awards at the Hollywood Critics Association (HCA) Awards.

The film won Best International Film, Best Action Film, Best Stunts, and Best Original Song for the Oscar-nominated track *Naatu Naatu*. The film managed to beat the Tom Cruise-starrer *Top Gun: Maverick*.

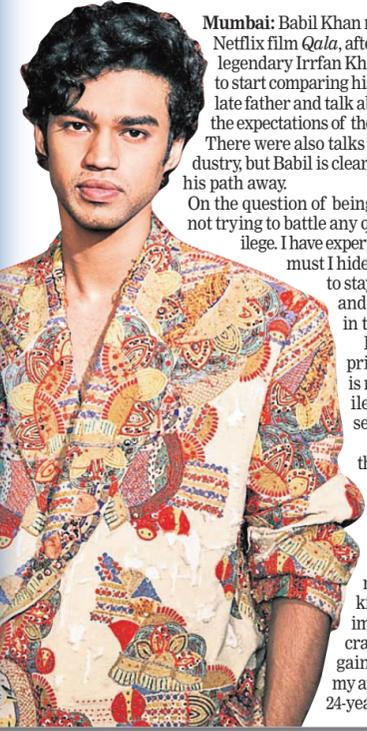
As Rajamouli took to the stage, he was joined by actor, Ram Charan to accept the Best International Film award.

The actor said: "I didn't expect to come up on stage. I was just told by my director to accompany him. Thank you so much for giving us all this love. It's a great response, so we are going to come back with better films and entertain you all. Thank you so much".

With the current momentum and having bagged honours at the Critics' Choice Awards and Golden Globe Awards in Los Angeles this year, all eyes are now set on the film's run at the Oscars, which are set to be held on March 12 at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

IANS

I'm not insecure about my privilege: Babil



Mumbai: Babil Khan made his acting debut with the Netflix film *Qala*, after the demise of his father, the legendary Irrfan Khan. It was high time for people to start comparing his acting skills with those of his late father and talk about whether he will live up to the expectations of the legacy that his father has left.

There were also talks about his privileges in the industry, but Babil is clear about how to not let that steer his path away.

On the question of being privileged, Babil said, "I am not trying to battle any questions that come with privilege. I have experienced privilege in my life, why must I hide from that truth? Instead, I try to stay true to my sense of morality and the values of my upbringing in the use of that privilege."

He also added that, "To use privilege as a shortcut to success is not our way, but to utilise privilege to grow and evolve is essential."

"What I have understood is that life gives you privilege as an opportunity, and the way you put that opportunity into effect is the test of your character. Instead of using my privilege to get work, I use Baba's connections to be around and absorb knowledge from people who are immersed in and masters of the craft; then I apply the knowledge gained from those experiences in my auditions and my work," says the 24-year-old actor.

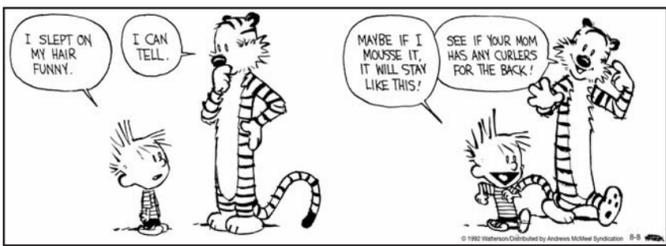
AGENCIES

FUN post

PEANUTS



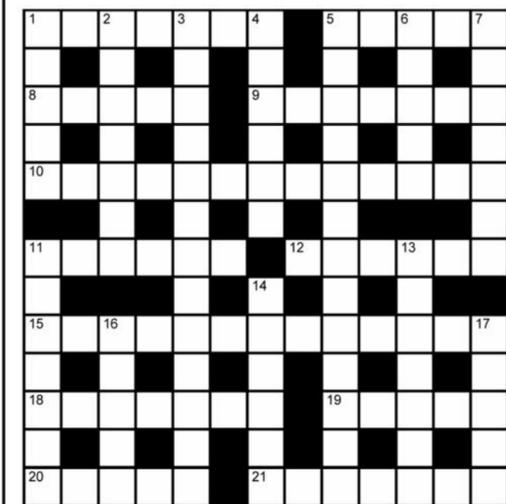
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Walk with a lofty proud gait
- 5 Muscular strength
- 8 Charter
- 9 Uttered noises like a dog
- 10 Lounging robes (8,5)
- 11 Assemblies
- 12 Branches

Down

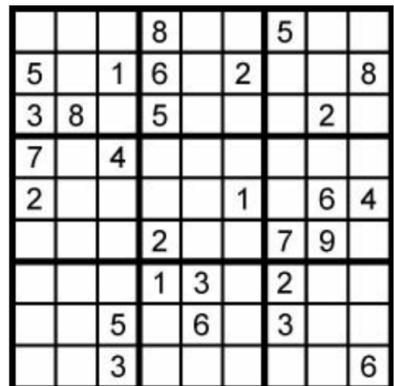
- 15 Series of falling dominoes, for instance (5,8)
- 18 Have a positive impact
- 19 Senior
- 20 Small cuts
- 21 Castle features
- 1 Side dish
- 2 One with non-professional skills

3 Car

- mechanics, to some (6,7)
- 4 Ruler
- 5 Words in a toast (2,2,4,5)
- 6 Permit
- 7 Some nature lovers
- 11 Literary work
- 13 Cookware
- 14 The rich and famous (3,3)
- 16 Gelatin
- 17 Averages

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

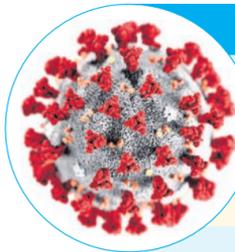
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



BUDGET ANALYSIS

Experts participated in a discussion on 'SC/ST Share in Disaster Management and Climate Budget' in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,95,47,772	65,23,47,917	67,97,455
India	4,46,85,799	4,41,52,945	5,30,764
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Land acquisition process starts for Puri airport

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: The state government has initiated the process to acquire 221.480 acre private land required for setting up of the proposed international airport at Puri.

Revenue and Disaster Management department has issued a notification to conduct Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the airport project.

National Institute of Rural Development and Environmental Science (NIRDES) under Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies (NCCDS) will conduct the SIA in Sipsarubali and Sandhapur villages under Brahmagiri tehsil of Puri district.

According to the notification, the government will acquire 153.370 acre land in Sipsarubali village and 68.110 acre in Sandhapur village.

The NIRDES will conduct gram sabhas in the villages to take people's consent prior to land acquisition. After completing the study, the agency will submit its survey report to the govern-

CONNECTIVITY BOOST



ment within 30 days, it said. According to sources, the state administration has identified about 1,500 acres of land alongside the Puri-Brahmagiri road for the proposed airport.

In 2021, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for construction of Sri Jagannath International Airport. The state has assured all support re-

quired for establishing the airport in a record time.

In his Budget speech, Finance Minister Niranjana Pujari has affirmed that a provision of ₹275 crore has been made for construction of a greenfield Sri Jagannath International Airport at Puri; renovation and expansion of Jeypore Airport in Koraput, and Utkela (Kalahandi), Rangeilunda (Ganjam)

➔ National Institute of Rural Development and Environmental Science under NCCDS will conduct Social Impact Assessment in Sipsarubali and Sandhapur villages of Puri

➔ Govt will acquire 153.370 acre in Sipsarubali village and 68.110 acre in Sandhapur village under Brahmagiri tehsil

➔ NIRDES will take approval of the people prior to acquisition. After completing the study, the agency will submit its survey report within 30 days

and Malkangiri airstrips have been taken up.

In addition, the maintenance of eight state-owned airstrips is being planned. Biju Patnaik Aerospace Academy at Birasal, Dhenkanal, will be transformed into a world-class pilot training centre, with an annual capacity of training 500 pilots, in phases, he said.



ANNUAL MEET: 75th, 76th and 77th Annual General Meet of Urban Cooperative Bank Ltd, Puri was organised in the Holy city, Saturday

Athlete dies in Puri event

POST NEWS NETWORK

Konark, Feb 25: An athlete participating in a three-day Herculean Triathlon held at Ramchandi near Konark-Puri marine drive died under suspicious circumstances, Saturday.

The deceased identified as Nitin Soni, 42, from Rajasthan's Jodhpur fell sick while participating in the swimming competition of the event and was taken ashore by his fellow participants. He was rushed to District Headquarters Hospital in Puri where he was declared dead on arrival. Chandrabhaga Marine police registered an UD case (1/23) and started a probe.

While the reason of death could not be ascertained immediately, it is suspected that he might have died due to cardiac arrest.

Soni was an army major, sources said. The event concluded Saturday.

Manual scavenging: SC seeks report from Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 25: The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to apprise it about the status of implementation of a 2013 law that prohibits manual scavenging and the steps taken to rehabilitate people falling within the definition of manual scavengers.

The apex court has also sought state-wise details about the steps taken towards abolition of dry latrines, the status of dry latrines, and 'safai karamcharis' in cantonment boards and the Railways.

A bench of justices SR Bhat and Dipankar Datta passed the order while hearing a petition seeking directions to implement provisions of Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, and Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

In its order passed February 22, the bench noted that the top court had the occasion to deal with the subject matter earlier and it had then dealt with the provisions of the 2013

Act and had issued several directions.

"... the respondent - Union shall place on record the steps taken pursuant to the judgment of this court, viz-a-viz the status of implementation of the 2013 Act i.e. Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act 2013, including the steps towards rehabilitation of such persons falling within the definition of 'manual scavengers,'" the bench said.

It sought state-wise details about the equipment being

used by municipal corporations to mechanise sewage cleaning.

The bench has sought details about the feasibility of developing internet-based solutions for real-time tracking of sewage deaths and action taken by authorities concerned towards payment of compensation and rehabilitation of families.

The bench, which appointed advocate K Parameshwar as an amicus curiae to assist the court in the matter, has posted the matter for further hearing on April 12.

Museum of Justice matter of pride for country: Governor



Governor Ganeshi Lal, High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar and others during the inauguration of Museum of Justice

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 25: Governor Ganeshi Lal Saturday inaugurated the refurbished Museum of Justice on the premises of Barabati Fort here and hoped that it would enrich future generations.

The Governor said, "The Museum of Justice is a matter of pride for the entire country."

He stressed upon the need for conscious action to uphold righteousness. He also complimented the judiciary for upholding righteousness in true sense.

Chief Justice of Orissa High Court S Muralidhar said, "The record rooms of the High Court and district courts containing old records dating back to 19th Century were the real trigger behind the thought to rejuvenate the High Court



Museum as the Museum of Justice. Many stories of Odisha; the stories of freedom fighters, famous personalities and events lay hidden in these records and the High Court has decided to showcase them in the Museum of Justice."

He also said the museum would rep-

The museum would represent not only the evolution of legal system of the state but the nation as a whole, since Odisha mirrors what is happening elsewhere

S MURALIDHAR | ORISSA HIGH COURT CHIEF JUSTICE

resent not only the evolution of legal system of the state but the whole nation as Odisha mirrors what is happening elsewhere.

The Chief Justice lauded the efforts of Record Room Digitisation Centre, Consultative Committee and all others who had contributed to the refurbished museum, hoping that it would be a place of learning, research, mingling and teaching. Justice Debabrata Dash said, "Odisha has a rich heritage of justice delivery system and the Museum of Justice showcases its glorious history from ancient period." He added that the museum could be possible due to the vision of the Chief Justice.

The first publication of the Museum of Justice containing information on the rejuvenation of the museum was released in the inaugural function.

Students visiting the galleries of the museum said that they found the galleries on the Tribal Justice System, the Mock Courtroom and the Judgments interesting and educative.

The first publication of the Museum of Justice containing info on rejuvenation of the museum was released at the inaugural function

ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳ ବଞ୍ଚି ବିକାଶ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏକ ପ୍ରୟାସ

ମହିଳା ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ସମିତି

DSPL-464

ବଞ୍ଚିର ୫୦-୧୦୦ ଘର କିମ୍ବା ୫୦୦ ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟାକୁ ନେଇ ଏକ 'ମହିଳା ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ସମିତି' ଗଠନ ।

ମହିଳା ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ସମିତିର ଭୂମିକା

୧. ଖାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବା ବଞ୍ଚିର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମସ୍ୟା ଚିହ୍ନଟ କରିବା
୨. ଚିହ୍ନଟ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ ପାଇଁ ଯୋଜନା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିବା
୩. ମାତୃ ଓ ଶିଶୁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସେବା, ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ସେବା, କିଶୋରୀମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟସେବା, ପୁଷ୍ଟି, ପରିମଳ ଓ ସୁଚ୍ଛତା ବିଷୟରେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଜାଗରଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା
୪. ବଞ୍ଚି ବାସିନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସଂକ୍ରାମକ ରୋଗ ଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରଖିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ସଚେତନତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା
୫. ସୁସ୍ଥ ଖାଦ୍ୟ, ସୁସ୍ଥ ସହର, ସୁସ୍ଥ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗଢ଼ିବାରେ ମିଳିତ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିବା ।

ସମିତିର ସଦସ୍ୟା (୧୧-୧୫ ଜଣ)

- ଆଶା କର୍ମୀ
- ଅଜ୍ଞାନତ୍ୱଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ କର୍ମୀ
- ସ୍ୱୟଂ ସହାୟକ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀର ସଦସ୍ୟା
- ସଂପୃକ୍ତ ବଞ୍ଚିରେ ରହୁଥିବା ଆଗ୍ରହୀ ମହିଳା

ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସେବା ଓ ସଚେତନତା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସମିତିକୁ ବାର୍ଷିକ ୫୦୦୦ ଟଙ୍କାର ପାଣ୍ଠି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ।

ଅଧିକ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକେନ୍ଦ୍ର / ଏ.ଏନ୍.ଏମ୍ ବା ଆଶାଙ୍କ ସହ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଜାତୀୟ ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ନିଗନ୍ତ
ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

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Missing woman's body found hanging in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

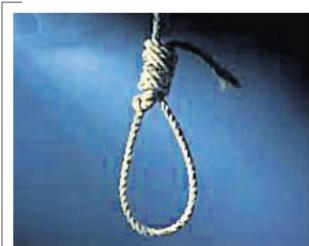
Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: The body of a woman was found hanging Saturday under mysterious circumstances inside an under-construction apartment near Kelucharana Park under Chandrasekharpur police station here. The deceased identified as Juli Behera was the wife of Batakrushna Behera.

Batakrushna reportedly owns a restaurant at Damana Square.

The family have allegedly been witnessing severe financial crunch after Batakrushna's hotel was demolished by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) during the pre-hockey world cup eviction drive in the City. Several small vendors and businessman lost their livelihood due to BMC eviction drive.

The couple used to engage themselves in heated arguments over financial issues.

Police sources claimed that Batakrushna had lodged a missing complaint with Chandrasekharpur



The deceased's husband accused that both his elder brother and sister-in-law are responsible for the suspicious death of Juli

police Friday. The deceased had reportedly left home following a fight with her husband Friday morning.

Some locals residing near Kelucharana Park Saturday morning spotted Juli hanging with iron chain from the ceiling of the bathroom in the under-construction apartment.

On being informed, police reached the spot and brought down the body which was later sent to capital hospital for post-mortem. The body was handed over to the family members after autopsy later in the day.

The deceased's husband accused that both his elder brother and sister-in-law are responsible for the suspicious death of Juli. However, he has not filed any complaint in this regard till the last report came in.

"We have launched an investigation by registering an unnatural death case (15/23) in this regard. We suspect it as a case of suicide on the basis of the circumstantial evidence. However, the post-mortem report will confirm the actual reason behind the death," a senior police official told **Orissa POST**.



CLEANING ACT: An excavator engaged by BDA removing garbage from dumping yard near Sainik School in Bhubaneswar, Saturday (Inset) Dumpers carrying garbage make a beeline outside Rangamatia dumping yard

'Reach Her' launched in City

Bhubaneswar: The Commissionerate Police Saturday launched a special community outreach programme namely 'Reach Her' on the safety and security of working women in the City. The programme was organised at the Aditya Birla Fashion and Retailer unit at Mancheswar Industrial Estate here. Twin city police commissioner, Saumendra Priyadarshi Saturday inaugurated the programme and interacted with various working women who took part in the event.

Int'l Mega Trade Fair begins in City



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: 18th edition of India International Mega Trade Fair (IIMTF) started at Janta Maidan in the Capital city, Saturday. The fair will continue till March 6.

The Exhibition was inaugurated by Housing & Urban Development Minister Usha Devi in the presence of Central Bhubaneswar MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, North Bhubaneswar MLA Sushanta Kumar Rout, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das and CGM, SBI

Bhubaneswar Circle Chandrasekhar Sharma.

Inaugurating the Expo, Minister Devi, said, "Real Estate Sector is booming with the growth of urban development under the leadership of our Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik. CREDAI Bhubaneswar Foundation helps the industry for such growth. I wish all success for the expo."

Pradipta Kumar Biswasroy, President, CREDAI Bhubaneswar; Suryakanta Nanda, Vice President, CREDAI Bhubaneswar; Umesh Pattanaik, Secretary, CREDAI Bhubaneswar; Chidrup Saha, CEO,

G.S. Marketing, and all the members of CREDAI Bhubaneswar were present on the occasion.

Mayor Das said, "It's a great platform to all the developers and the people of Odisha. In Eastern India, Bhubaneswar is now considered as the best hub for Health, Education, IT, Business and Sports. In the recent budget, our government has allocated 700 crore for the urban development."

Speaking on this occasion Biswasroy said, "We are happy to organize such expo in Bhubaneswar. The real estate business volume at Bhubaneswar is not that big in comparison to type-II & III cities in other parts of India. We are hopeful for the vast scope that lies before us. The exhibition has 10 air-conditioned hangers to accommodate all the participants to display their product along with one cafeteria for the visitors. Exhibitors from 9 Countries and 16 states are participating in the expo.

Exhibitors from other countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Dubai, Iran, Malaysia, Thailand and Egypt are the partners to the fair. Indian state partners include Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan and Jharkhand with Odisha being the host partner.

Seminar for non-teaching employees held at Utkal Univ

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: A seminar with the theme 'Skill Development for Non-Teaching Employees' working in different public universities of the state, was held at Utkal University Saturday.

This is one of several unique initiatives taken by the non-teaching employees of Utkal University with the patronage of Vice Chancellor Sabita Acharya.

Acharya, who delivered the introductory speech at the seminar by addressing the importance of skills in life, said that everyone has inborn skills and talents but they need to explore it themselves by taking time.

The VC in her speech encouraged all the participants and thanked the organisers. Registrar Avaya Kumar Nayak spoke about the 'Enhanced Student Focused Administrative Skills' by utilizing the rules and regulations in a positive attitude.

"We all should accept change in life. Technology is now the challenge for us to adopt it, for example E-Office in the universities has been introduced already, and so, accordingly we need to change



our skills. Having a positive mindset to our day-to-day life will help to change," he pointed out.

Comptroller of Finance Goutam Pradhan focused on financial problems and the processes and procedures to solve it. He stressed on the weekly cash book maintenance, preparation of realistic budget, procurement procedures with following basic rules and regulations.

College Development Council director Nigamananda Das enlightened about the role of non-teaching employees in meeting different accreditation standards.

Apart from the above dignitaries, AIUEC Vice President BN Ray, AOUFF president RK Samantaray, all non-teaching staff of Utkal University and more than 250 non-teaching employees from different universities of Odisha participated in the seminar.

No foul play in Tappo's death: CP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: The Commissionerate Police Friday denied the involvement of any foul play in the death of Anand Tappo, the childhood friend of international hockey player, Birendra Lakra. The body of Tappo was found hanging in an apartment in Infocity police station area February 28, 2022.

The family members of the deceased later alleged that he had not committed suicide. Lakra and Tappo's friend, Manjit Tete were responsible for the murder of Tappo.

The aggrieved family subsequently approached the Orissa High Court that directed the Commissionerate Police to investigate the case on the basis of the complaint lodged by the family in connection with allegations of murder: November 24, 2022, police started reinvestigation into the allegations by registering a fresh case (336/2022) on the basis of complaint lodged by Bandhan Toppo.

The Commissionerate Police Friday produced final report in the case before the JMFC court here after the completion of probe.

The investigating officer questioned Lakra and Manjit and other witnesses, examined all circumstantial evidence, post-mortem report from AIIMS and Viscera Chemical Report of SFSL.

CONTINUED FROM P1

8, including...

He was the seventh person to die while being transferred to SCB. Sources said that two iron-ore laden trucks have been left stranded on the roadside of the highway after meeting with an accident, Thursday. Locals alleging that delay in shifting of the two vehicles led to the gruesome mishap staged a road blockade near the accident site on the highway. In the second accident one person was killed after a DJ van ran over a wedding party it was part of, late at night Friday. The incident took place at Bagharian village in Khaprakhol area of Patnagarh. The deceased has been identified as Raja Bariah. Eleven persons were injured in the mishap and the conditions of some are stated to be serious.

Breathing types...

'Brahmari' also improves sleep quality, increases mindfulness and reduces high blood pressure. The 'Bastrika' pranayama helps in burning excessive calories within the body, benefits the respiratory and digestive systems. One of the easiest pranayama is the 'Alternate Nostril Breathing'. Even though the process is simple it goes a long way in relieving the mind from stress and tension - the two silent killers of the modern world. 'Diaphragmatic' breathing also known as belly breathing, is a technique that focuses on deep breathing from the diaphragm. It enhances respiratory and cardiovascular health and boosts the immune system which also means increasing the life span of a human being.

So what do you say? Wouldn't you spend 30 minutes a day doing breathing exercises that can give a boost to your life?

'Notebook...

Dash also informed that teachers will put their remarks regarding the students in the notebook and parents will check the progress of their children.

Meanwhile, the Odisha government has proposed a new scheme 'Mukhya Mantri Medhabi Chhatrabruti Yojana' for meritorious students in the state. Around 10,000 eligible undergraduates will get a stipend of Rs 10,000 per annum under the scheme.



RISING TEMPERATURE: A woman rider covers her face to protect herself from scorching sun in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Sundargarh women strike gold with marigold farming

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Sundargarh, Feb 25: "Earlier we used to grow tomato and horse gram on our land which gave us meager returns. However, the farm returns have now increased after we took up marigold cultivation," said Baijayanti Majhi, a WSHG member from Gurumkela GP under Subdega block of Sundargarh district.

Like Baijayanti, WSHG members from various blocks in the district are growing marigold as the winter crop with necessary assistance from the Mission Shakti department and Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) as well as from the district administration. The unconventional work, in turn, is helping the WSHG members become financially self-reliant.

Marigold farming is being promoted in 6 blocks of the district on a pilot basis. At present, the crop is grown on 1 acre land each in Subdega, Kutra, Rajgangpur, Balisankara, Nuagaon and Kuarmunda blocks. A total of 180 members belonging to 18 WSHGs have been roped into the pilot project.

Chief Development Officer-cum-Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Sundargarh Manoj Satyawan Mahajan said the programme has been launched with the objective of making the district



MARIGOLD FARMING IS BEING PROMOTED IN 6 BLOCKS OF THE DISTRICT ON A PILOT BASIS. A TOTAL OF 180 MEMBERS BELONGING TO 18 WSHGS HAVE BEEN ROPED INTO THE PILOT PROJECT

WHILE THE DIRECTORATE OF HORTICULTURE IS PROVIDING THE REQUIRED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FLORICULTURE, THE ODISHA LIVELIHOOD MISSION IS SUPPORTING THE PROGRAMME FINANCIALLY

a floriculture destination, while taking WSHGs to SME-level and facilitate the economic independence of WSHG members. "Our immediate goal is to cover the needs of the local market. And with increase in production

in subsequent period, we will set focus on bigger markets within the state and neighbouring states," he said.

While the Directorate of Horticulture is providing the required technical assistance for

floriculture in the district, the Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) is supporting the programme financially by extending Rs 2 lakh assistance to each cluster, comprising 3 WSHG Groups.

There is good demand for marigold in Sundargarh, Rourkela and other block headquarters of the district. The WSHG members are selling their produce in the local markets at Rs 40-50 per Kg. Moreover, they are supplying flowers on order to a host of functions like weddings, thread ceremony, and also during various festivals.

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WOMEN POWER: Women technicians repairing the defective meters at the meter testing lab of TPSODL at Ambagarh near Berhampur in Ganjam district before supplying them to customers

Guj man awarded death for Ganjam girl's rape, murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 25: A man was sentenced to death by a fast-track court in Gujarat's Surat Friday for kidnapping, murder and rape of a seven-year-old girl from Odisha.

Reportedly, judge UM Bhatt convicted the accused Muku Chamandal Panchal alias Mukesh Bhai (42) of the crime he had committed at his house 7 December 2022. The court has also declared a compensation of ₹23.5 lakh to the victim's family, said the special public prosecutor Nayanbhai Sukadwala.



As per sources, Ganjam's Shivprasad Swain was staying with his family in Tirupati Society of Surat's Katragam. The accused had kidnapped the minor December 7, while police recovered her body the next day from Mukesh's house after the missing complaint was filed by her parents.

The body was recovered from a gunnysack which was deliberately placed under the bed. The accused first kidnapped the girl after luring her with chocolates and took her to his house, where he raped and subsequently murdered her. The convict had planned to burn the body near a nearby stream. But police recovered the body before he could carry out his plan.

The hearing of the case witnessed the recording of 46 testimonies. Further, the court took only two months to give its verdict. Special public prosecutor Nayanbhai Sukadwala conducted the case proceedings during the judgement.

Body recovered from rly tracks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 25: The body of a youth has been recovered from the railway track at Haldiapadar Friday. The deceased has been identified as Debashis (18), who was a resident of Jahada under Dharakote police limits. The deceased was staying at his uncle's house under Gobara PS and was studying at a nearby college.

Reportedly, police recovered the body from the spot after it got information Friday that a man died on the railway track after falling from the Chennai-Shalimar Express. A case (no 19/23) of unnatural death was registered and the body sent for post-mortem. Police have also contacted the deceased's family using the recovered phone.

The family arrived at the MKCG hospital and identified the body. Primary investigation suggests that the youth fell from the train while trying to deboard after finding himself in a wrong train.

100 VSSs IN THE PIPELINE Agro-forestry plans afoot on 350 ha land in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, Feb 25: The North Ghumusar forest division here in Ganjam district has planned to develop small villages under its jurisdiction through creation of agri-based jungles which in turn will help check migration, a report said Saturday.

The matter came to the fore during a review meeting of various schemes funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on Lalsingh nursery premises in Bhanjanagar, Friday. Presiding over the meeting, divisional forest officer (DFO) Sudarshan Behera said that 100 Vana Suraksha Samitis (VSSs) will be developed during the next financial year.

Behera said that unused land will be put into use through agro-forestry on 350 hectare of land. "To create the jungle, all assistance will be provided to the people. This will help raise the financial strength of the villagers and keep the environment safe," he added.

Moreover, necessary saplings required for creation of jungle will be prepared in the nursery while power supply will be made available to non-electrified villages under elephant corridors either through solar lights or through power cables.

"People are migrating to other



states for work due to many reasons but efforts will be made to bring them back to their villages and provide them work under various schemes. The poverty alleviation scheme Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) will also be implemented in all villages to provide livelihood to the villagers," Behera said.

Plans will be taken up to develop small villages and check dams will be built to provide irrigation facilities to farmlands and water to the villagers. Members attending the meeting proposed to invite two members from two VSSs each to the next meeting and solicit their response.

The DFO said that the actual beneficiaries should be given loan from JICA while those who have

taken loans from several agencies should be excluded.

Meanwhile, efforts are on to install two mobile towers in Banta area to provide mobile network coverage to over 10 villages in the region. This has become possible after the Forest department wrote to Union Telecom Minister Aswni Vaishnav.

People will reap the benefit in coming days while cooperation of the Union minister and the district administration will be sought for installation of similar towers in areas lacking proper mobile network coverage.

ACF Bikram Dev Pattnaik, IFS officer Kumar Behera, Mujagarh ranger Bimbardhar Sahu, Jagannathprasad ranger Umakant Das, Galeri ranger Shibaram Nayak also attended the review meeting.

Scientists model lightning strikes to aircrafts

LIGHTNING STRIKES CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR AIRCRAFT. HOWEVER, STUDYING THIS PHENOMENON IN THE FIELD IS QUITE DIFFICULT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 25: Researchers have developed a unique computational model to simulate how lightning could strike an aircraft.

The insights the researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, have gleaned from this model can help design better lightning protective measures for aircraft.

Lightning strikes can be dangerous for aircraft. However, studying this phenomenon in the field is quite difficult.

Lightning strikes can damage the aircraft surface, lead to temporary disruptions in electrical and electronic systems or even cause permanent damage, and in extreme cases, cause ignition of the fuel-air mixture around the engine, leading to an explosion.

"Usually, an aircraft gets struck by lightning once every 1,000 hours," said Udaya Kumar, Professor at the Department of Electrical Engineering, IISc, whose lab has been investigating this phenomenon in recent years.

"There have been a lot of incidents in the last century where things have been very catastrophic," said Kumar.

The study has been published in the journal Atmosphere.

According to the study, the first step in protecting aircraft from lightning is identifying the most common regions on the aircraft where lightning can attach or hit.

Kumar and his team realised that current approaches to this identification were grossly oversimplified, and set out to develop a more comprehensive computational model, the study said.

In the usual downward cloud-to-ground lightning, leaders - precursors to lightning arcs - are initiated at the cloud, which propagate towards the ground.

However, field data, as well as the model developed, clearly showed that in more than 90 per cent of the cases, the leader discharges are initiated at the aircraft, the study said.

The model developed by the IISc team is applied to two different aircraft geometries: a DC10 passenger aircraft and the SDM fighter aircraft model. It involves extensive computation of the electric field around the aircraft and suitable modelling of the electrical discharges, the study said.

With the model, the scientists were able to obtain estimates of the minimum ambient electric field re-



quired for initiation of lightning leader discharges from the aircraft.

These values, the researchers said, are in good agreement with measured data from instrumented aircraft flown through thunderstorms, such as NASA's Storm Hazard Program.

Moreover, the aircraft is not perfectly parallel to the ground during take-off and landing, and the model is able to simulate how these changes in orientation can affect the electric field, the study said.

The role of atmospheric conditions such as humidity and air pressure are also taken into account in

ITR ESPIONAGE CASE Accused in 4-day police remand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, Feb 25: A day after the arrest of a senior technical official from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Chandipur on charge of allegedly sharing secret security information with a Pakistani agent, police took him on a four-day remand, Saturday.

The accused was identified as senior technical officer Baburam Dey (51) of telemetry department of ITR in Chandipur and a native of Bagpunji village under Jaleswar police limits in the district. Police had applied for five days' remand of Dey in the court of sub-divisional judicial magistrate (SDJM) but the court allowed police only four days of remand. The remand period will expire February 28.

Dey was arrested on charges of leaking confidential defence related information through video calls to a Pakistani spy after being honey-trapped by the woman agent with nude videos. Police have launched a probe to ascertain the involvement of other persons in the spying case. During the probe, police have found that the accused has shared several defence related sen-



sitive information with the Pakistani female agent.

Police after interrogating 14 persons found that sensitive information regarding Indian defence has been leaked from the accused's mobile phone.

Currently, police are searching Dey's house and properties and tracing people who had links with him. Moreover, police are also investigating the source of money found from him and if anyone else is involved in leaking sensitive information from the ITR.

The accused has been booked under offences for breaching the Official Secrets Act with IPC sections 120A and 120B (criminal conspiracy). After reports about Dey's arrest surfaced, family members, relatives and villagers have refused to

buy the claim made by the police. Dey, born in a very poor family, was studying at Srichaitanyadev High School at Bagpunji. His teacher Murali Mohan recollected of having provided him with financial assistance for studies.

Dey's school friend Sudhanshu Sekhar Patra expressed surprise over the treason charges made against him who was a meritorious student during his school days.

A co-villager said that Dey had participated in the consecration ceremony of newly-built Shiva temple in the village. He stayed for about four days in the village and contributed ₹20,000 for the temple. He had also assured to set up a water tank in the village. He said that a simple person like Dey can never be involved in this sensitive case and termed the charges as conspiracy against him.

Two elder brothers of Dey said that they helped him study without thinking of their poverty. Dey after passing HSC from the village school completed ITI from Balasore. Later, he got a job in the ITR. He is the only saviour of our family, they said. They alleged that Dey has been framed and requested the administration for proper justice.

BeMC corporator's daughter abducted

MISCREANTS RANSACK HOUSE, MOLEST WOMEN MEMBERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 25: Armed miscreants ransacked the house of a corporator of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) here and molested the women members in his family Saturday after abducting his daughter two days back.

The matter came to the fore after the corporator lodged a complaint at Bada Bazaar police station. Bada Bazaar police registered a case and formed a team to nab the absconding miscreants and rescue the abducted girl.

Police said that the miscreants abducted the daughter of the corporator; two days back. The corporator during search managed to know about the youth who had abducted his daughter. He con-



fronted the youth's family and asked them about his daughter's whereabouts, Saturday.

Later, six to seven youths armed with sharp-edged weapons barged into his house and ransacked it. They even molested his wife and another daughter and then tried to kill the corporator who was inside the house. However, the corporator had a close shave after he managed to flee the house.



AWARENESS RALLY: An awareness rally on road safety and Motor Vehicle Act underway in Koksara of Kalahandi

9 gm brown sugar seized; couple held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 25: Acting on a tip-off, a team of mobile Excise sleuths seized nine gram of brown sugar from a couple and nabbed them while trading in the contraband at Pathara Square under Gopalpur police limits in Ganjam district, Saturday.

The accused was identified as Suman Bahadur and his wife Bhanu Bahadur. The Excise officials also seized ₹2,500 from the couple which they had earned after selling the brown sugar. The breakthrough came after one of the team members posed



as a decoy customer and tried to buy the contraband from them. It is suspected that Suman procured the contraband outside the district while his wife used to sell it on the roadside, here.

Later, a probe was launched and it was found that Suman had procured the brown sugar from Bhubaneswar. Further probe is on to ascertain the involvement of other persons in the trade.

NOTICE

I, **Sri Ashok Kumar Samal**, S/o. Kangali Charan Samal, Director, A3 Minerals and Metal Export Pvt. Ltd., having its Regd. Office At: Plot No. 648/2103, Sriram Colony, P.O.: Bhaipur, P.S.: Jagatpur, Imam Nagar, PIN - 754021, Dist.: Cuttack, hereby bring to General Public Notice that on Dt.23.02.2023, original of Regd. Sale Deed No. 275 Dt.16.02.2009 executed by Akshaya Kumar Nayak in favour of Smt. Ramamni Sutar relating to Plot No. 4156 Ac.0.045 Dec. and Plot No. 4157 Ac.0.065 Dec. of Mouza Byree and Original ROR of Khata No. 1268/153 of Mouza - Byree in favour of Smruti Ranjan Nayak (which are link deeds of our property) are missed somewhere at our office and I cannot find the same after through search. And finder/s are requested to contact me at above address. I am going to create mortgage on said properties before Punjab National Bank, MCC, Cuttack. If any person has any objection may contact said Bank.

FOCUS BIG FOOD

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH



Threatened by government scrutiny over their exploitative marketing practices, manufacturers of sugary, ultra-processed foods and beverages repeatedly tout self-regulation as a more effective alternative. But both research and experience show that voluntary corporate pledges do not improve public health

mately cancelled following protests by nutrition experts and civil-society groups claiming that the event violated the prohibition on providing “incentives, enticements or invitations of any nature which might encourage the sale or promotion” of breast-milk substitutes.

These types of exploitative tactics are not limited to South Africa or Nestlé. In addition to parent events, companies also increasingly undermine regulations by targeting new mothers on social media. A multi-country study examining the \$55 billion baby-formula industry, commissioned by the WHO, reveals the “shocking extent” of these practices, which include paying social-media influencers and platforms to “gain direct access to pregnant women and mothers at some of the most vulnerable moments in their lives.”

The marketing of unhealthy, ultra-processed foods and beverages creates unhealthy food environments. There is overwhelming evidence that the availability of these foods and beverages, together with the industry’s insidious marketing practices, contributes to morbidity and mortality and impedes policymakers’ efforts to bring NCDs under control.

Governments must take decisive action to reduce the NCD burden. The failure of voluntary pledges shows that there is no substitute for strict, evidence-based regulation of the marketing of ultra-processed foods and drinks. With NCDs on track to become the leading cause of death in Sub-Saharan Africa, the stakes are too high to prioritise the interests of profit-seeking corporate giants over sound public-health policies.

The writer is an Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

of sugar-sweetened beverages.

In the lead-up to the tax, and with childhood obesity on the rise, Coca-Cola announced that it would not market its products to children under 12 and no longer supply outlets on school grounds with fizzy, sugary beverages. Two years after the pledge, a study examining 105 public schools in the country found “some preliminary evidence that voluntary pledges by commercial entities are not sufficient to remove [sugary beverages] and advertisements from schools” and recommended a sales and advertising ban. Government action, the authors concluded, would most likely be far more effective.

Moreover, it is difficult to see how policymakers can trust large food and beverage manufacturers to regulate themselves when these companies routinely flout national laws and regulations. In 2012, for

example, South Africa announced new rules restricting the marketing of baby formula for children under the age of three, in line with the World Health Organisation’s recommendations for regulating breast-milk substitutes. Nestlé has repeatedly undermined these regulations by sponsoring conferences and events on infant and child nutrition.

In 2021, for example, Nestlé teamed up with prominent South African media outlets to host an online forum that the company claimed would benefit “all moms, grandmas, aunts, and guardians of little ones” by teaching them everything they needed to know about infant and child nutrition. Those in attendance stood a chance of winning a R500 (\$28) grocery-store voucher, an effective ploy during a period of skyrocketing food prices. The event was ulti-

Food and beverage giant Nestlé recently updated its “responsible marketing to children practices.” As part of its new policy, which takes effect in July, the company says it will limit the marketing of unhealthy and ultra-processed foods to children under 16 and praises itself for being “one of the first food and beverage companies to voluntarily adopt such strict standards.”

Nestlé’s move is not surprising. When faced with the threat of government scrutiny, companies and industry associations often tout self-regulation as a more effective alternative to protect public health. In fact, the opposite is likely to be true. A recent study by PRICELESS SA and researchers at the University of Witwatersrand School of Public Health, for example, reviews 20 voluntary actions by food and beverage companies in low- and middle-income countries and finds that these measures “often aim to protect industry interests rather than improve public health.”

Africa’s ongoing struggle with chronic illnesses underscores the urgent need for governments to crack down on Big Food, as they did on Big Tobacco. Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and cancer now account for 51% of deaths in South Africa and for roughly 37% of deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa. The number of African adults with diabetes, currently at 24 million, is expected to grow by 129% by 2045.

South Africa’s recent experience offers policymakers useful lessons about the dangers of self-regulation. In 2018, South Africa introduced a tax on sugary beverages called the Health Promotion Levy. While the tax is too low, studies show that it has already had a positive effect, reducing consumption



Koketso Moeti

THE MARKETING OF UNHEALTHY, ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS AND BEVERAGES CREATES UNHEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENTS



Aakar Patel

For all of the pious words we are offered on freedom of expression, the number of demands for takedowns and bans Twitter has received from India have gone from single digits a year to thousands

Timidity is a form of vanity. When you are timid, it means that you attach more importance to the opinions others have of you than to the sincerity of your actions.

THE MOTHER



Rhetoric & Facts

India’s most reputable news agency, the Press Trust of India, reported this week that ‘India ranks 42 in 55 countries on International Intellectual Property Index’. The story praised what was being done on this front in India, but it did not say that India had fallen from 40th place in 2021 and from 25th place (out of 25) in 2014. If we are doing great things in this space why is our rank not improving? This the story did not say.

In the Smart City Index, which began to be compiled globally in 2019, India had four cities that were ranked: Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad. The index monitors health and safety, opportunities, mobility and governance. Bangalore fell from 79th place to 93rd, Mumbai from 78th to 90th, Delhi from 68th to 89th and Hyderabad from 67th to 92nd.

Of course our government will not tell you about this though there will be much talk about how smart our cities have got in New India. Similarly, in The Economist’s Global Liveability Index, two Indian cities made it, Delhi which fell from 110th to 118th and Mumbai which went from 115th to 124th. Mind you many of these indicators come from those places where we want to be seen in a good light, such as Davos. In the World Economic Forum’s Global Economic Competitiveness Index India fell from 40th to 68th. In its Gender Gap Index, India has fallen from 114th to 135th.

We are often told how cheap and great India’s digital network is. What remains unsaid is that India is the world leader in internet shutdowns and more than half of all government enforced internet bans globally happen in the mother of democracy.

In the Rule of Law index, India has fallen from 66th to 75th and when we see what is happening around us — the constant misuse of agencies, the frequency of lynching of minorities, the regularity with which police from BJP states attack Opposition leaders (most recently Pawan Khera and Jignesh Mevani) in other states, the indefinite jailing without bail of dissenters — this does not surprise us. India and the subcontinent in general have always been a chaotic and anarchic place but things appear to be going from bad to worse. And this is true for any number of places that we look.

For all of the pious words we are offered on freedom of expression, the number of demands for takedowns and bans Twitter has received from India have gone from single digits a year to thousands

Have you heard the words ‘ease of doing business’? Yes of course you have. But what you may not know is that India has fallen on the Global Economic Freedom Index (monitoring role of law, government size, regulatory efficiency and open markets) from 120th to 131st. This is because saying something is easy and doing it is difficult. And when there is no accountability from media or any other place about what you say and cannot do, you can keep saying it.

In the Fragile States Index (formerly known as the failed states index) India has slid consistently since 2014. Why? Because the index measures social cohesion, along with the economy and the polity and a strong case can be made out that we have fallen on all of these.

The one index that the government kept harping about was the World Bank’s ease of doing business index. Unfortunately, that was discontinued a couple of years ago after it was found that some countries were fudging the data. India was not among the nations that were suspected but there was another problem that some media pointed out here. The rating was only for two cities and only for listed companies above a certain size. And further, the rating could be gamed if minor changes were made to procedure. With a sharp focus on these minor changes, it was possible to really improve your rating while having no real change on the ground in terms of ‘ease of doing business’. So we rose, till such time as the rating was discontinued.

Now there is nothing to talk about. The list of things we have fallen behind on is quite long and I have compiled it for one of my books and it is troublesome that with each new edition, changes need to be made in the data because we continue to slide on many fronts. I have written about this before, and one reason for that is that the rhetoric that we are fed daily needs to be measured against performance and the facts. That is not happening.

Apart from anything else, what is striking is that the media has no interest in reporting the background to which they give out the news. To say that India is ranked somewhere without giving the necessary background and perspective is to not cover the real story.

SPECTRUM INDIA’S G-20 PRESIDENCY

Promoting tri-sector partnership

In the current series of articles on India’s G-20 presidency, in the run up to the summit later in September this year, we talk today about building partnership between the institutions of state, market and civil society in any country. This is strategically essential for two reasons. One, all institutions, formal and informal, are encompassed by these three sectors in countries across the world. Second, development, which is a top priority for any country, has always involved the interaction of state, market and society, often in antagonistic terms. Since any of this triad cannot be marginalised, what is instead needed is a synergetic partnership between these three actors. India should initiate this partnership during her presidency of the most powerful bloc of G-20.

Before we emphasise on the roles played by state, market and civil society in growth and development of a country, and advocate a partnership among them, let us understand their respective relevance and significance. Also, it is in order that we trace the history of their involvement in the development of a country in relation to the very concept and its actualisation. Various scholars have interpreted the roles of these three agencies in different contexts. The legendary development economist EF Schumacher, way back in 1970s, named ABC of development which meant A - Administrators, B - Business, C - Communicators. In today’s parlance, ABC corresponds to state, market and civil society. The state has the power and au-

thority to, mediate, monitor, and manage the other two sectors. It provides legislative mandate for their work. Market produces goods and services as well as domain expertise. The civil society manifests in various organisational forms like NGOs, campaign organisations, community conclaves, social movements and broadly speaking, represents any space left out by both business and the state. It is supposed to be the watchdog of constitutional, social and political values. The symbiotic relationship between the three sectors is established as the state empowers civil society, facilitates business, while business produces skills, services, expertise and wealth, the civil society becomes the consumer for the business and citizen for the state. At the same time, civil society provides checks on ‘autocracy of the state’ and ‘rapacity of businesses’.

The last 50 years have witnessed several eras of development in which state, market and civil society actors have been attributed different roles. Very broadly, the period of 1960s and 1970s was one of state-led development, which, in other words, called a ‘state developmentalism’. The development ideas and practices focused on supporting post-independence governance through planning, modernisation and technology transfer towards achieving economic growth and a good society based on a stable and modern state. The 1981-2000 period saw a relative retreat of the state in dominant development discourse and practice. The publication of the World Bank report on accel-

erating development in Sub-Saharan Africa and the so-called Washington consensus brought an era of market liberalism, economic reform and structural adjustment which was called LPG in globalised economy. LPG stood for Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. India also followed that model since 1990s. Although country contexts defer, the process of restructuring spread across the world in which states were rolled back and repositioned in favour of market mechanism in the delivery of goods and services. However, the distortions in this framework soon emerged undermining the non-marketable dimensions of human worth, activities and progress and the restriction of service access to those who could pay. Consequently human and social development, schemes for reduction of poverty and rising inequalities were undermined. In order to correct the distortions, various non-state actors from civil society emerged in the development scene. The rise of civil society engagement in the development process brought an Alternative Perspective on Development which advocated participatory, people-centred and environmentally-sustainable development. There was an added priority by the donors of good governance. Donor engagement with civil society continued into the 1990s.

Thus, in the three overlapping eras and perspectives, development discourses and practices have respectively emphasised state-led, market-led and civil society-engaged processes and drivers of de-

velopment. We should recognise that new global and development challenges are emerging as priorities around economic growth and poverty reduction are joined by pressing concerns with tackling disparities, addressing climate change, mitigating conflict and violence and more.

At any rate, a partnership between state, market and civil society is critical and even indispensable to tackle the aforesaid challenges which can be grouped under three rubrics – inequality, sustainability and inclusivity. These challenges necessitate forging new alliances including a partnership between the triad. Some scholars would add ‘professionals’ to this alliance. So P3 – private, public and people (state, market and civil society) partnership becomes P4 with professionals brought in. The partnership also is necessary as the last 50 years have produced a development paradox in which massive increases in global economic growth and technological innovation have coincided with rising inequality and disparity in development outcomes.

A partnership manifested in hybrid forms of governance is likely to ensure fairer global governance, equitable redistribution within a country and across the world and greater social and global justice. Let India take this initiative in forging this partnership around G-20 leadership this year.

The writer is Professor, International Relations, JIMMC.
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WISDOM CORNER

- Trust in dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity. **KAHLIL GIBRAN**
- If you fell down yesterday, stand up today. **HG WELLS**
- Reject your sense of injury and the injury itself disappears. **MARCUS AURELIUS**

WORDSWORTH

Garboil

In origin, this archaic word is linked to the heating water sense of boil rather than the bodily excretion one. But the link is puzzling in one way because etymologists are still unsure what the gar-bit means or where it came from. It’s ancient but according to the records it died out in British English dialect about a century ago. When it was around it meant a brawl, hubbub, hurly-burly or similar confused and noisy situation. Its origin has been traced back through the Old French garbouille to Italian garbuglio, which in turn is from Latin bullire, to boil. Once you know that, the idea of a confrontation that boils into a tumult or fracas is easy enough to understand, even though we’re unsure why Italian added the gar- on the front. As a guess, it might have been to add emphasis rather than extend the sense. The compound disgarboil once existed, meaning “disembowel”. It is long defunct – the Oxford English Dictionary has examples only from the sixteenth century. The meaning may well have been the result of a confusion with another ancient word, disgarbage, because the original sense of garbage was animal offal, often discarded as rubbish.

LOL

Geography class

Teacher: What is the axis of the earth?
Student: The axis of the earth is an imaginary line which passes from one pole to the other, and on which the earth revolves.



Teacher: Very good. Now, could you hang clothes on that line?
Student: Yes, Sir.
Teacher: Indeed, and what sort of clothes?
Student: Imaginary clothes, Sir.



DK Giri

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN STATE, MARKET AND CIVIL SOCIETY IS CRITICAL AND EVEN INDISPENSABLE

Boorish behaviour

Sir, This refers to “PM counters your grave will be dug barb,” **Orissa POST**, Feb 25. The PM’s reaction is triggered by the Congress’ slogan “Modi your grave will be dug” that rooted in the Congress leader Pawan Khera episode of objectionable comments over PM and his deplaning from a Raipur-bound flight. Khera’s apology for his objectionable remarks against the Prime Minister cannot wipe away the degeneration and degradation of political discourse in the country. Leaders of every party have been bitten by the bug to go one notch down in brusque and boorish behaviour. The normalisation of uncivilised conduct has set the bar so low that crossing the line does not prick the conscience. Each new day brings a sickening personal barb being hurled, followed by the routine one-liner that the party distances itself from the comments made. What Khera said is unacceptable and the ruling dispensation is well within its rights to take him on. But the methods chosen and the strong-arm tactics put to use make a mockery of the rule of law. For every instance of unwarranted high-handedness, past episodes are dug up. However, change has to come from the top — when they stop, the rest will too. When they admonish, the rank and file will fall in line. Very soon, all parties will have to mend their ways.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Stop the misadventure

Sir, This refers to “The Forever War,” **Orissa POST**, February 25. As on date it’s quite difficult to say when the war of Russia on Ukraine will stop. It will be premature to coin this first anniversary of the war as World War III. Countries however have taken sides, while some like India have abstained from taking sides. Ukraine is undergoing the worst period in history with loss of lives and property. The Russian invasion cannot be condoned no matter its plea that NATO is coming eastward. The more Ukraine is punished, the more determined will be its leadership and greater number of people and powers will support the country against Russia. The world has faced the COVID pandemic, the horrors of earthquake in Türkiye and Syria and this conflagration. There can never be economic progress and stability in times like this. Russian oligarchy must stop the misadventure. Every small country has the right to chart its own destiny and all countries have to respect this.

Parthasarathy Sen, NEW DELHI

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

OrissaPOST
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national

of the day quote

While mental health has been a rising concern for all, we are witnessing an exponential increase in cases of online distress



PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

Many companies are exploring the possibilities of their expansion in the state and this will propel progress and prosperity in the state thereby creating new job opportunities for the youth



BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

Noida Police has been engaged in fake encounters and police officers will go to jail in future



AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Man held

Mumbai: A man was arrested for allegedly making a hoax call to the police control room about 90 kilograms of "MD", apparently a reference to mephedrone drug, and explosives landing at a port to carry out blasts in JJ Hospital, Bhandi Bazar and Nal Bazar areas of south Mumbai, an official said on Saturday. The call was received at the South Region police control room on Friday afternoon and the accused had said the contraband and explosives had reached the port here on Thursday, the official informed.

Two arrested

New Delhi: The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested two radicalised youths, who were planning to cross the border and get weapons training in Pakistan, an officer said Saturday. The officer also said that the arrest of the two youths has exposed the sinister design of Pakistan-based terror operatives coaxing Indian youth for weapons training in that country. The accused have been identified as Khalid Mubarak Khan (21), a resident of Thane, Maharashtra, and Abdullah alias Abdur Rehman (26), a resident of Kaliakulla, Tamil Nadu.

Army officer held

Rangia (Assam): A senior Army officer has been arrested from the 4 Corps headquarter in Tezpur in Assam in a murder case, a police official said Saturday. The officer of lieutenant colonel-rank has confessed to the murder of the 36-year-old woman, whose body was found inside a sack in Changsari area of Kamrup district on February 15, he said. Kamrup superintendent of police Hitesh Chandra Roy said, "Our team arrested the accused with due permission from the Army authorities on Friday night from Tezpur. He was kept at North Guwahati police station and during interrogation today, he has confessed to the murder."

Bodies found

Junagadh: The bodies of a couple were found from an autorickshaw in the parking area of a government hospital in Gujarat's Junagadh district Saturday. Deputy Superintendent of Police Hitesh Dhandheliya said, "The police control room had received a call that bodies of a couple were spotted in an autorickshaw in a government hospital's parking area. Immediately, police reached the area and after doctor's confirmation of the couple's death, the bodies were sent for post-mortem. A poison bottle was found in the autorickshaw, giving reason to believe that both must have consumed poison and ended their lives."



It is not new for the BJP to divert attention towards communal issues if it is not confident of a victory
SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF

GIRL DIES AFTER FALLING INTO PIT

A 6-year-old girl allegedly died after falling into the pit at an under-construction site within K.R. Market police station limits in Bangalore Saturday. The deceased child has been identified as Maheshwari



Union minister's convoy attacked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dinhata (WB), Feb 25: The convoy of Union minister Nisith Pramanik was attacked Saturday allegedly by Trinamool Congress supporters in Dinhata area of West Bengal's Cooch Behar district.

The ruling TMC dubbed the allegation as "baseless". The attack came within a week after TMC's day-long sit-in near the residence of Pramanik, the union minister of state for home, at Bhetaguri in Cooch Behar, seeking justice for an "innocent Rajbanshi youth who was branded as cattle smuggler and shot dead by the BSF".

"My convoy was not only pelted with stones but also shots were fired. Bombs were also hurled. The entire incident happened in front of the police, and they were just mute spectators," Pramanik claimed.

The minister's convoy was attacked when he was on his way to meet party workers at a programme. When contacted, the union minister said that several BJP activists were injured in the attack.



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TMC supporters showed black flags to him, following which clashes broke out between supporters of the two parties

injured in the attack.

TMC supporters showed black flags to him, following which clashes broke out between supporters of the two parties. TV grabs showed activists of both parties clashing, with police re-

sorting to baton charges to control the situation. BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar said, "If a central minister's car is attacked in this manner, this only proves the dismal (law and order) situation of the state".

Delhi HC puts on hold key MCD panel poll

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 25: In a special hearing on Saturday, the Delhi High Court stayed a notice issued by the newly-elected Mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Shelly Oberoi, directing re-election of the six members of the MCD Standing Committee.

The court said no purpose will be served by conducting fresh elections on February 27. Justice Gaurang Kanth said that prima facie, the notice is in violation of Regulation 51 of New Delhi Municipal Council (Procedure and Conduct of Business) Regulations, 1997, as the returning officer or Mayor is conducting re-elections without declaring the results of the elections conducted on February 24.

The court observed that from a perusal of Regulation 51, it is nowhere reflected that the returning officer or Mayor has the authority to declare an election of Standing Committee as null and void.

"It is not out of place to mention that admittedly, the counting of votes and further duty casted upon the Mayor as in declaring the results of the elections held on February 24 shall culminate into final results," said the court.

On Friday, BJP councillor Sharad Kapoor had moved the Delhi High Court, alleging that Mayor Shelly Oberoi did not stick to the rules of not using mobile phones and pens during voting to elect the MCD Standing Committee members on Wednesday.

Kapoor, in his petition, said that the Mayor "defied every constitutional and statutory norm" and "betrayed the mandate of the Constitution by allowing mobile phones and pens in the election proceedings". The petitioner also sought to declare the February 22 polls as null and void.

The court listed the matter for next hearing on February 27. Following ruckus for the third straight day, the MCD House was on Friday adjourned till Monday morning with Oberoi announcing that re-election to pick the Standing Committee members will be held at 11 am on February 27.



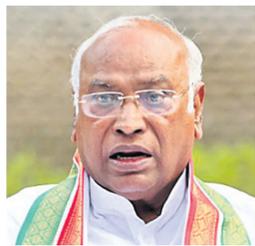
An artisan works on a Kani shawl in Srinagar. These hand-woven shawls, which fetch a good price in high end markets, might become a thing of past as craftsmen do not want their next generation to take to weaving in view of low returns

Can align with like-minded parties: Kharge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur/Purnea, Feb 25: As fresh calls for opposition unity emerge, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Saturday asserted only his party can provide "capable and decisive" leadership to the country and strongly pitched for a Congress-led alliance to defeat the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Kharge also said the Congress was ready to make whatever sacrifices that are required to get rid of the "anti-people and undemocratic" BJP government. Even as Kharge said the Congress was once again looking forward to forging a "viable alternative" by aligning with like-minded parties, reminding that the party-led alliance (UPA) from 2004 to 2014 had effectively served the people, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said the Congress will have to take a "quick decision" on opposition unity.



According to Kumar, who is the JD(U) supremo, the BJP will be restricted to under 100 seats if all the opposition parties, including the Congress, fight the 2024 Lok Sabha polls unitedly. A draft political resolution being discussed at the Congress' 85th plenary session said the Congress should go all out to identify, mobilise and align like-minded secular forces and it should include secular regional forces who agree with its ideology, stress-

We once again look forward to forging a viable alternative by aligning with like-minded parties to defeat the anti-people and undemocratic BJP government. We are ready to strive for the welfare of the people of our country and (will make) whatever sacrifices that are required

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

ing that emergence of any third force will provide advantage to the BJP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). "There is an urgent need for a united opposition to take on the NDA on common ideological grounds."

In his address to the session in Nava Raipur in Chhattisgarh, Kharge said Rahul Gandhi's recent Bharat Jodo Yatra emerged as

a strong voice against the unprecedented challenges that people face today.

"Such challenges include continuing assault on the constitutional values, democracy and social fabric of our country, issues of national security at the border with China, the prevailing atmosphere of hatred and fear, all-time high inflation, record unemployment and the increasing economic inequality," he said.

"In the prevailing difficult circumstances, the Congress is the only party that can provide capable and decisive leadership to the country." From 2004 to 2014, the Congress-led alliance with like-minded parties effectively served the people of the country, he noted.

Nitish Kumar spoke about the prospects of opposition unity while addressing a Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) rally in Purnea in Bihar.

System at fault: Rijiju on pendency of cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Udaipur (Raj), Feb 25: Voicing concern over the rising pendency of cases, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju Saturday said it is "not the fault of the judge but of the system", and the government is taking more steps to address the issue.

"We are moving towards the kind of system that should be there in the country," he said while highlighting efforts to repeal redundant and obsolete laws, improve the infrastructure of courts and equip them with technology.

The minister was speaking at a conference on 'Sustainable Development in India: Evolution and Legal Perspective' organised by the Law Commission of India at Mohanlal Sukhadia University in Udaipur.



It is not a good thing to have so many cases pending in any country or society. It has several reasons... The condition of judges is also bad. One judge handles 50-60 cases in a single day. They dispose of so many cases but the number which comes daily is double

KIREN RIJIJU | UNION LAW MINISTER

The minister said the number of pending cases has crossed 4.90 crore.

"It is not a good thing to have so many cases pending in any country or society. It has several reasons... The condition of judges is also

bad. One judge handles 50-60 cases in a single day. They dispose of so many cases but the number which comes daily is double. The common man asks why the pendency is so high, but it is not known to people how much a judge works. It is

not the fault of the judge, but of the system," Rijiju said. He said that a major solution for reducing pendency is "technology" and the courts are being equipped with technologies across the country in order to make them paperless.

"We are halfway there. Now we are giving the final shape to it. High courts, lower courts, and tribunals are being well-equipped with technologies." It was just because of the success of e-courts phase-II that hearings were conducted through video conference during the Covid pandemic," the minister said.

He said that several high courts have done a good job of conducting hearings through video conferencing. There are several ways to reduce the pendency. The biggest one is technology. The ministry

is doing several things and "in the days to come, we are going to take a few other steps," he said.

He said that work is going on to make the judiciary paperless, which is also important from an environmental point of view. "Everything has to be digital," he added. Talking about sustainable development, he stressed the need for balance in economic growth and the environment.

"The way we are living our lives has become a threat to our existence. The quest of achieving economic growth and the haphazard things that are happening around us is threatening. We have a moral obligation and duty to do justice to planet earth," he said. He also said that India is a global leader in the green energy field.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LAW AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SC asks Centre to convene meeting

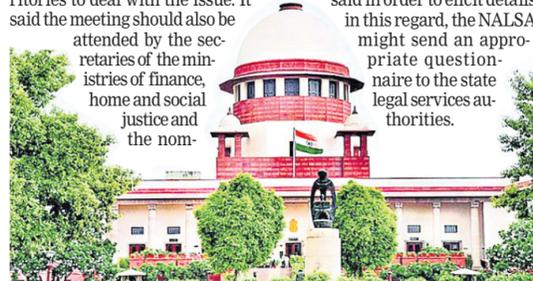
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 25: The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to convene a meeting of the principal secretaries of all states to look into the issues pertaining to the implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, observing that more than 4.71 lakh cases of domestic violence were pending in the country as on July 2022.

Referring to the appointment of protection officers under the Act, the apex court observed that the overall picture presented before it is "dismal". A bench of Justices SR Bhat and Dipankar Datta said having one such officer for one district would be grossly inadequate as each one of them would be handling nearly 500-600 cases.

"In these circumstances, it would be necessary that the Union of India takes an intensive look into this aspect," the bench observed on Friday while hearing a plea seeking adequate infrastructure across the country for providing effective legal aid to women abused in matrimonial homes and creating shelter homes for them.

The apex court directed the secretary of the Ministry of Women and Child Development to convene a meeting of the principal secretaries of all states and Union territories to deal with the issue. It said the meeting should also be attended by the secretaries of the ministries of finance, home and social justice and the nom-



in this regard, the NALSA might send an appropriate questionnaire to the state legal services authorities.

inees of the chairpersons of the National Commission for Women and National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

It said the first meeting should preferably be called within three weeks. The bench also directed that a status report regarding the implementation of "Mission Shakti", an integrated women empowerment programme, be also placed on record.

It said specific information on various aspects, including on the number of one-stop centres proposed in each district, be also placed before it. The top court said the Centre shall provide material indicating how "Mission Shakti" would act as an umbrella scheme for the implementation of the Act.

The bench observed that in pursuance of an earlier apex court order, a study was conducted by the NALSA, which indicated that more than 4.71 lakh cases lodged under the Act were pending in the country as on July 1, 2022. It has posted the matter for further hearing after eight weeks.

The apex court had, in April last year, directed the NALSA to apprise it of the number of cases initiated and pending under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. It had

said in order to elicit details in this regard, the NALSA might send an appropriate questionnaire to the state legal services authorities.

Man apologises for supporting Pak cricket team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, Feb 25: A shop owner at Calangute in Goa was forced to publicly apologise and raise 'Bharat Mata ki jai' slogan after a video, in which he expressed support for the Pakistan cricket team, went viral on social media, a police official said Saturday.

A group of men forced him to apologise and raise the slogan on Thursday, the official said, adding that no complaint has been filed in this connection. This took place following an unedited video released by a travel vlogger, in which the shop owner at Calangute in North Goa is purportedly seen saying that he was supporting the Pakistan cricket team because it was a Muslim area.

The neighbouring country was apparently playing against New Zealand when the video was shot. The video shows the vlogger having a brief conversation with the man. The vlogger asks the shop owner, "Who is playing? Are you cheering for New Zealand?" The man replies, "For Pakistan." The vlogger then asks him why to which the man responds saying, "This is Muslim area."

After this video went viral, a group of people approached the shop owner on Thursday and questioned him for supporting Pakistan. A video of the group forcing the shop owner to apologise also went viral on social media.

The video shows a member of the group telling the man, "This entire village is Calangute. There is no Muslim lane or any other lane. Don't divide the country based on religion." He is then asked to kneel down and apologise to the countrymen. After initial reluctance, the shop owner is seen in the video tendering an apology by kneeling down and holding his ears. The video also shows the group making him raise the 'Bharat Mata ki jai' slogan.

Moral policing hits social harmony in Mangalore

ACTIVISTS IN THE CITY AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL FEEL THE UGLY BEHAVIOUR EXHIBITED BY VIGILANTES MUST BE PREVENTED AT ANY COST TO ENSURE A DIGNIFIED SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE PREVAILS IN THE CITY AND THE WIDER COASTAL REGION OF THE STATE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mangalore, Feb 25: The rising incidents of moral policing in coastal Karnataka, especially in Mangalore, in the last few years have cast a shadow over the port city, once known as a liberal society with a cosmopolitan culture.

Social activists in the region reason that the deterioration in the social harmony happened after the growth of right-wing organisations, which have gained ground in the coastal belt.

They attribute the recurrence of such incidents as a result of the impunity granted to moral policing, political support to the outfits and a passive approach of the ruling BJP.

Moral policing occurs mostly where the Hindutva outfits like Bajrang Dal are strong, which has affected the psyche of the young generation including students.

The most glaring incident in the recent past was reported July 25 last year when Bajrang Dal activists barged into a pub in the city protesting against women partying at the venue. Students were abused and chased away by the protesters.

The attack reminded everyone of the notorious assault on girls at another pub by Sri Rama Sene members in 2009. Observers say in most of the cases registered by the police, the accused go unpunished due to lack of evidence provided by law enforcement agencies.

A top police official, on condition



of anonymity, told PTI they intervene only when complaints are raised about illegal activities in pubs and public places.

Right-wing organisations, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and its youth wing Bajrang Dal, claim that their workers are only trying to protect the culture and tradition of the country and reminding the young generation about dignified behaviour in public spaces.

"The activists carry out such

protests only to protect the culture and dignity of the nation," says VHP leader Sharan Pumpwell. He claims that people belonging to different religions partying and drinking are against the basic tenets of our culture and the activists react only when complaints are received from the public.

Police said arrests are being made in many cases when a complaint is lodged. On several occasions, the victims do not wish to proceed with the cases, they contended.

In 2022, there were 41 moral policing cases in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts, according to Suresh Bhat, activist and member of the Karnataka Communal Harmony Forum and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUC), as detailed in a report titled 'Chronicle of communal incidents in coastal districts of Karnataka'.

Of the incidents, 37 were by Hindu vigilantes while four were by fringe groups of Muslim vigilantes. There was an increase in the number of instances of moral policing too, as in 2021, a total of 37 incidents were reported, while in 2020, only nine such cases were reported.

In such instances of moral policing, couples who belonged to different faiths were either assaulted or handed over to the police by the vigilante groups, even if both the parties had been together wilfully.

Police pointed out that the act of moral policing does not fall under any specific section of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). However, their actions can attract charges under certain IPC sections.

According to police, on moral policing incidents, they have been registering cases under IPC Sections 354 (outraging modesty of woman), 342 (wrongful confinement), 354 (molestation), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 149 (unlawful assembly).

DYFI leader Muneer Katipalla claims frequent incidents of moral

policing occur with the tacit support of the ruling BJP in the state who prefer to remain mute spectators to such activities. These incidents are reflections of the agenda of polarisation, he asserted.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had last year stirred a controversy by his comment on moral policing. "When sentiments are hurt, there will be action and reaction," he said, inviting sharp criticism from the Opposition and social activists.

Last year, several cases of moral policing were reported in the city including the attack on the pub. Right-wing activists had assaulted a Muslim youth for travelling with a girl of a different faith in the city March 5.

Again, August 30, a 19-year-old Muslim student was beaten up and threatened by his college mates for befriending a Hindu girl.

A 27-year-old Muslim youth was dragged out of a private bus at Naguri in the city October 21 and beaten up for travelling with a Hindu woman.

Bajrang Dal district leader Puneet Attavar had openly stated in December last that their activists will confront Muslim youth in the company of Hindu girls during New Year parties.

Police said activists of Hindutva outfits were behind the majority of attacks, while a section of Muslims were also involved in certain cases.

₹1,000 monthly aid for women soon: Stalin

Hitting the campaign trail for the February 27 Erode (East) bypoll on the last day of canvassing votes, the DMK chief said his party never failed to execute its promises or announcements



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Erode (TN), Feb 25: An announcement on the ruling DMK's much touted monthly assistance scheme for each woman head of the family in Tamil Nadu will be made in the forthcoming state budget, Chief Minister MK Stalin said Saturday here.

Hitting the campaign trail for the February 27 Erode (East) bypoll on the last day of canvassing votes, Stalin, also the president of the DMK, said his party never failed to execute its promises or announcements.

The DMK's poll promise of providing Rs 1,000 per month to every woman head of the family will certainly be implemented, he asserted in the wake of severe criticism from Opposition parties who have been questioning the government over the alleged delay in rolling out the initiative.

"The date of implementation (of this scheme) will be announced in the budget in March," Stalin

said while canvassing votes for EVKS Elangovan, the Congress candidate fielded on behalf of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance.

The CM said 85 per cent of the DMK's election promises have been implemented and the rest would be done by the end of this year.

In his address, he spoke extensively about the execution of developmental works and other schemes for the people, mainly the free travel concession to women in state-run buses, free breakfast to the students in government schools and free electricity to the farmers.

Seeking votes for Elangovan, the grandson of rationalist leader EVR Periyar, the Chief Minister recalled DMK founder late CN Annadurai and late party chief M Karunanidhi were associated with the Dravidian stalwart in Erode in 'Kudiyarasu' newspaper.

In some places, Stalin walked across to voters and sought support for Elangovan. The bypoll result will be out March 2.

CPI (M) protests against TN Guv for remarks on Marx

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 25: Members of the Communist Party of India - Marxist staged an agitation here Saturday condemning Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi for his recent remark on German philosopher and economist Karl Marx.

CPI (M) state secretary K Balakrishnan, who led a protest at Saidapet here, warned that his party members would stage black flag protest wherever Ravi visited.

"The Governor's contention that Karl Marx's approach affected India's growth is wrong. We will send him a book on Karl Marx: Ilayorkku Marx Kathai. Let him read it and know about Marx," Balakrishnan told reporters after the agitation in which CPI (M) Politburo member G Ramakrishnan also participated.



The Governor had at a recent event contended that Karl Marx's approach affected India's growth

Releasing the Tamil version of Deendayal Udadhya's books - Dispersions of Thought and Integral Humanism - at a function held at the Raj Bhavan February 21, Ravi highlighted the four prominent Western ideologies - theology, Darwinian's theory, Karl Marx theory, and Rousseau's social contract theory that caused damage to our national growth. On Karl Marx's perpetual conflicts between haves and have-nots, the Governor had said, "as per the theory, 'have nots' has to prevail and this idea spread like a virus. This model created divisions between and within different segments. It triggered perpetual conflict in society."

Earlier, CPI's State secretary R Mutharasan who had led an agitation, here, warned that the CPI would step up its protest and hold statewide agitations February 28 if the Governor failed to rescind his statement.

Continue to support BJP: Yedi's appeal to Lingayats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 25: Veteran leader and former Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa Saturday appealed to the dominant Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, to which he belongs, to continue their support to the ruling BJP in the upcoming Assembly polls, and ensure its victory in the state.

The 79-year-old Lingayat strongman was responding to a question whether the community will continue to support the BJP, even after his retirement from electoral politics.

Yediyurappa said there is no question of him sitting at home and he will tour across the state seeking votes for the party in the Assembly elections.

"I pray to the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community with folded hands, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have given me all kinds of opportunities so far. I'm voluntarily retiring (from electoral politics) as I will be 80-years of age February 27," Yediyurappa said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "So the Veerashaiva-Lingayat brothers without any misunderstanding, should continue to support me as in the past and make the BJP win. This is my request to them."

This statement has come amid attempts by opposition Congress and JD(S) to project that Yediyurappa is being sidelined by the BJP, and thereby garner the votes of the numerically and politically dominant community in their favour.

Veerashaiva-Lingayats are estimated to form about 17 per cent



LINGAYAT STRONGMAN

Veerashaiva-Lingayats are estimated to form about 17 per cent of the state's population, and they form the BJP's strong vote base

Yediyurappa is still considered to be the 'tallest' Veerashaiva-Lingayat leader and continues to hold sway over the community

of the state's population, and they form the BJP's strong vote base.

Yediyurappa is still considered to be the 'tallest' Veerashaiva-Lingayat leader and continues to hold sway over the community.

The four-time CM and eight-time MLA from Shikaripura Assembly segment, Yediyurappa Friday had delivered his farewell speech in the Karnataka Assembly, of which he was a member for decades.

The senior leader, who is now a member of the BJP's top Parliamentary board, Saturday said that he will continue to strive for building and strengthening the party by remaining outside the Assembly, and touring across the state.

"I have the satisfaction and con-

temptment that I have done everything possible for the development of the state. As I have already said in the coming days I will travel across the state to bring BJP back to power, the tour programme will begin in about five to six days. There is no question of sitting at home, hundred per cent BJP will come to power in Karnataka," he said.

Modi and Shah's leadership has given us "elephant's strength," while other parties lack strong leadership, he said, adding "so, good results are certain for the BJP."

Yediyurappa said Shivamogga airport will be inaugurated by Modi February 27, and that his long-cherished dream was becoming a reality.

Intelligence warning on Islamic outfits puts TN Police on alert

Tamil Nadu, according to central agencies, does not have that much of media hype regarding Islamic movements and hence, the Islamists are trying to develop a strong base in the state

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 25: The Tamil Nadu Police is on high alert after inputs from central intelligence agencies on the presence of some Islamic outfits in the state.

After the ban on the Popular Front of India (PFI), some human rights groups were conducting programmes on human rights and police action, and central agencies have warned that such outfits were actually fronts of former PFI cadres who were trying to regroup.

Sources in the Tamil Nadu Police told IANS that these groups were trying to influence educated youths in campuses who are wedded to Islamic ideology. While many are shying away due to the ban inflicted on the PFI, some youths are being targeted by these groups.

The central agencies have warned the state police that some sleeper cells were working in Tamil Nadu supporting the activities of these 'on paper' organisations. Even as these groups are focusing on human rights and against 'po-

lice atrocities', agencies say that they were trying to create a dedicated support base from among the former PFI activists for further action in Tamil Nadu.

According to a senior officer of a central intelligence agency, these organisations are getting funds from outside the country and some hawala operators are being used to deliver the money. Some West Asia-based Tamil Muslims are supporting these movements and the agencies are trying to ascertain the volume of money that is being transferred.

Islamic outfits consider Tamil Nadu as a safe haven as the DMK government in the state is opposed to the Central government and is in confrontation with the Centre on many issues. While Kerala would have been a better hideout, agencies said that these organisations skipped it as the state has been on

the radar of agencies and media earlier vis-a-vis Islamic outfits. Even the PFI's earlier avatar, the NDF was formed in Kerala.

Tamil Nadu, according to central agencies, does not have that much of media hype regarding Islamic movements and hence, the Islamists are trying to develop a strong base there.

With former LTTE cadres forging alliance with international drug smuggling networks like Haji Ali network, the central agencies are trying to get inputs on whether the newly-formed groups are entering into or already entered into any connection with the former.

Several places in Tamil Nadu like Coimbatore, Tiruchi, Namakkal, Kanniyakumari, and Theni are under the scanner of intelligence agencies and police to unearth the activities of these organisations.



After Jammu, K'taka next in turn for good news on lithium

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Feb 25: After the news came that the central government is all set for commercial exploration of rare mineral lithium in Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka is also eagerly looking forward to good news from Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) regarding its lithium reserves in Mandya district.

After the buzz regarding finding of lithium reserves between 2020 and February 2021, there is no significant movement by the concerned authorities in this regard. The new development has once again raised hopes in Karnataka.

Preliminary surveys on surface and limited subsurface by AMD have shown presence of lithium re-

sources of 1,600 tonnes in the pegmatites of Marlagalla-Allapatna area, Mandya district in Karnataka.

Sources explain that apart from Mandya, AMD - a unit of the Department of Atomic Energy under central government - is also carrying out exploration for lithium in potential geological domains in parts of Yadgir district of Karnataka.

However, experts claim that economic viability has to be worked out. If viable, the exploration of lithium will help the country in a big way as the Indian automobile industry is heading towards electric mobility.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Atomic Energy and Space, Jitendra Singh, stated the significance and quantity of lithium resources in

Marlagalla-Allapatna area, Mandya district, Karnataka may be established only after the completion of exploration in the entire area.

Subsequently, plans for commercial exploitation of the lithium deposits can commence after the technical, social and economic feasibility studies in the area, he explained.

Union Minister of Mines Pralhad Joshi said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha that "Preliminary surveys on surface and limited subsurface exploration by the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) have shown presence of lithium resources of 1,600 tonnes (inferred category) in Marlagalla area of Mandya district in Karnataka."

In view of research papers on the

availability of lithium, Revenue officials of Mandya district had conducted an inspection in villages around Srirangapatna in Mandya district in February 2020.

Then, Deputy Commissioner Venkatesh, along with other officials, visited Alapatna near Srirangapatna as there were reports of deposits across a few square kilometres. The authorities went around a few villages and are still awaiting further reports from the Department of Atomic Energy and others.

He said that lithium reserves have been found near Mandya by researchers of the Atomic Minerals Directorate. The reserves have been estimated at 14,100 tonnes in a small patch of land surveyed in Mandya that was published in the Current Science journal.



of the day quote

All efforts to defame and destabilise the country will fail as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the blessings of the people

ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

MPs need to exercise their right to free speech with responsibility as Parliament cannot be allowed to become an 'akhara' (fighting arena)

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

BJP will come back to power in MP and in the country with two-thirds majority. Under the leadership of PM Modi, the country is making progress in every sphere be it health, cleanliness, economy, infrastructure, exports, banking, space and defence

AMIT SHAH | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Death toll rises

Bhopal: The death toll in the accident in which a cement-laden truck hit three buses parked on the side of a road on the Rewa-Satna border in Madhya Pradesh has gone up to 14, which also left at least 60 persons injured, officials said Saturday. The accident occurred around 9 pm on Friday outside a tunnel near Barkhada village and people in the buses were returning from the 'Koh Mahakumbh' in Satna city, they said. Union Home Minister Amit Shah had addressed the event in Satna earlier on Friday on the occasion of Shabri Mata Jayanti. The site where the accident occurred is around 500 km from Bhopal.

Four dead

New Delhi: Four people, including a four-year-old child, were killed after an MCD truck lost control and toppled on them in Central Delhi's Anand Parbat area, said an official Saturday. The deceased were identified as Ramesh (30), Sonam (25), Anuj (4) and Killu (40). According to police, on Saturday at around 1:27 am, a police control room call was received at Anand Parbat police station regarding a truck accident and four-five people being stuck beneath it.

Man killed

New Delhi: A man was stabbed to death while another sustained injuries after they were attacked by armed robbers inside their flat in East Delhi, said an official Saturday. The deceased was identified as Sunil alias Yasin while injured Atul Kumar is undergoing treatment at the hospital. According to police, information was received at Laxmi Nagar police station at about 8.00 p.m on Friday regarding a stabbing incident at a flat in Vijay Block following which a police team rushed to the spot.

Bird flu outbreak in Jharkhand

Ranchi: Nearly 4,000 birds, including chickens and ducks, will be culled in Jharkhand's Bokaro district after a bird flu outbreak was reported at a state-run poultry farm, an official said Saturday. H5N1, a type of avian influenza virus, was confirmed among a protein-rich breed of chicken, 'Kadakhnath', at the farm in the Lohanchal where 800 birds died and 103 had to be culled, he said. "A total of 3,856 birds, including chickens and ducks, have been identified for culling in the affected area -- 1 km radius of the farm," Institute of Animal Health & Production director Dr Bipin Bihari Mahtha said.



Nobody can scare us, we are fearless and will continue to protect democratic principles
PAWAN KHERA | CONGRESS LEADER

CAMPAIGNS START

A week after losing the party name and symbol, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) started a weeklong 'Shivgarjana' and 'Shivsamvad' campaigns in Maharashtra from Saturday to boost the morale of local activists and the masses



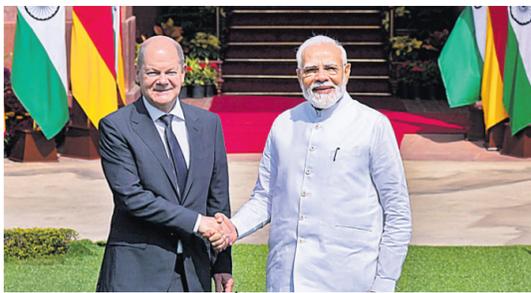
Ready to contribute for ending war: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 25: India has been pressing for resolving the Ukraine "dispute" through dialogue and diplomacy and is ready to contribute to any peace process, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday after holding talks with visiting German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who favoured a "clear stand" in the UN on the issue.

The one-year-old conflict and its consequences including on food and energy security figured in the Modi-Scholz dialogue besides ways to ramp up overall bilateral engagement including in areas of trade and investment, new technologies and climate change. In his statement at a joint press event with Modi, the German Chancellor described the Russian "aggression" against Ukraine as a "major catastrophe" that has negatively impacted the globe and said it is important to state "very clearly where we stand on this subject" including at the UN as international law governs international relations.

On Thursday, India abstained in the UN General Assembly on a resolution that underscored the need to reach "comprehensive, just and lasting peace" in Ukraine and called for Russia to end the hos-



On Thursday, India abstained in the UN General Assembly on a resolution that underscored the need to reach 'comprehensive, just and lasting peace' in Ukraine and called for Russia to end the hostilities

The one-year-old conflict and its consequences including on food and energy security figured in the Modi-Scholz dialogue besides ways to ramp up overall bilateral engagement including in areas of trade and investment, new technologies and climate change

ilities. "Since the beginning of the developments in Ukraine, India has insisted on resolving this dispute through dialogue and diplomacy. India is ready to contribute to any peace process," Modi said in his media statement.

The Prime Minister also said that there has been active cooperation between India and Germany in the fight against terrorism and separatism and countries agreed that concerted action is necessary

to end cross-border terrorism, seen as an apparent reference to Pakistan. The German Chancellor asserted that no one can change borders through use of violence.

"This war violates the fundamental principle to which we had all been agreed for such a long time and that is that you do not change borders through the use of violence," he said. Scholz arrived here Saturday morning on a two-day India visit, a day after the

Oppn, govt trade charges in UP



Adityanath alleged that Samajwadi Party not only nurtured criminals, but also made them MLAs and MPs, and said his government will 'decimate' the mafia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 25: Facing flak over the brazen killing of a prime witness in the 2005 murder of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA Raju Pal, was shot dead outside his residence in Prayagraj on Friday, the police said. One of his gunners, who too was hit in the firing, died later.

An FIR was registered on Saturday against several people, including former MP Atiq Ahmed. The mafia-turned-politician is currently lodged in a Gujarat jail. Atiq was an SP MP from Phulpur parliamentary constituency (in Prayagraj).

When the House assembled for the chief minister's reply to the debate on the Governor's address at 11 am, the SP tried to raise the issue of Pal's killing with chief whip Manoj Kumar Pandey demanding a discussion.

"The way in which a witness and a security personnel have been shot dead in Prayagraj, what is the double-engine government doing?" Leader of Opposition Akhilesh Yadav said.

He said that had the injured had got timely treatment, their lives would have been saved.

spoke for more than two hours in the Assembly while replying to the debate on the motion of thanks to the governor's address.

He alleged that the SP was not just nurturing mafias but making them MPs and MLAs. Chief Minister Adityanath has frequently stressed that reining in mafias and improving the law and order situation had been one of the major achievements of his government since the BJP came to power in the state in 2017.

Umesh Pal, the prime witness in the 2005 murder of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA Raju Pal, was shot dead outside his residence in Prayagraj on Friday, the police said. One of his gunners, who too was hit in the firing, died later.

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He said that had the injured had got timely treatment, their lives would have been saved.

Eight ISIS operatives convicted by NIA court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 25: A special court in Lucknow convicted eight suspected ISIS operatives in a terror conspiracy case, an official of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said Saturday, adding their conviction was a "big shot" in the arm of the agency in its nationwide crackdown on members of the global terror group.

The quantum of punishment will be pronounced by the special NIA court Monday, a spokesperson of the federal agency said. The convicts were also involved in an explosion on board the Bhopal-Ujjain passenger train on March 7, 2017, which had left 10 people injured. The train explosion case is currently under trial, the spokesperson said. The eight convicts were arrested in 2017 in the "Kanpur conspiracy" case pertaining to planning of terror acts. The case was registered under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Arms Act and the Explosive Substances Act.

Principal set ablaze by ex-student dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Feb 25: Five days after she was allegedly set on fire by a former student, the 54-year-old principal of a private pharmacy college succumbed to injuries on early Saturday morning, police said.

Dr Vimukta Sharma, principal of the BM College of Pharmacy, had been battling for life at a local hospital after Ashutosh Shrivastava (24) allegedly poured petrol on her and set her on fire on the college premises on February 20 over a dispute about a marksheet.



Sharma, who had suffered 80 per cent burns, could not be saved despite the best efforts by doctors, said Superintendent of Police (Rural) Bhagwat Singh Virde. The accused, arrested on Monday itself, is in police custody, Virde said. The district administration has invoked the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against Shrivastava, he said.

Shrivastava was earlier booked for attempted murder, but now the charge of murder would be added to the First Information Report (FIR), the police official said. Shrivastava allegedly told police during interrogation that the college authorities were not handing over the marksheet of B Pharm examination which he had cleared in July 2022. But the college management termed this claim as false and alleged that he had criminal tendencies. They also claimed that despite being asked to collect his marksheet repeatedly, he did not collect it.

The principal's dying declaration and other evidence collected by the police was enough to convict him, Virde said.



A squirrel eating khara boondi on a wall in Thanjavur district

PTI PHOTO

Meghalaya to go to polls Monday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shillong, Feb 25: The hustle and bustle of over a month-long election campaign for the February 27 Meghalaya Assembly poll ended at 4 p.m. Saturday.

Voting would be held in 59 of the 60 Assembly constituencies in 12 districts under a heavy security cover Monday. The polling would not be held in Sohiong Assembly Constituency in East Khasi Hills district following the death of United Democratic Party (UDP) candidate H. Donkumar Roy Lyngdoh, who died on February 20 due to illness. Meghalaya Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) F.R. Kharkongor said that movement of polling parties to the 3419 polling stations across 59 Assembly constituencies have started on Saturday.

In South Garo Hills, the first polling party of the Rongcheng polling stations left early morning on Saturday as they had to trek 8 kms to reach the polling station from the last motorable point, the



Voting would be held in 59 of the 60 Assembly constituencies in 12 districts under a heavy security cover Monday. Election Officials said that a large number of Central Armed Police Forces, state armed and state police personnel have taken up positions in all the poll-bound constituencies

CEO said. Kharkongor said that a total of 369 candidates, including 36 women, are contesting the February 27 Assembly elections.

Election Officials said that a large number of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), state armed and state police personnel have taken

up positions in all the poll bound constituencies.

With the direction of the Election Commission, the 443 km India-Bangladesh border with Meghalaya has been sealed to prevent any kind of illegal cross border movement before and during the elections. In all 13 political parties, including four having national status - BJP, Congress, National People's Party (NPP) and Trinamool Congress - are contesting the election.

The BJP and the Congress have put up 60 candidates each, while main opposition Trinamool Congress nominated 56 candidates, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma led NPP fielded 57 candidates, United Democratic Party (UDP) 46, Hill State People's Democratic Party (HSPDP) 11, People's Democratic Front 9, Gana Suraksha Party one, Garo National Council two, Janata Dal (United) three, Republican Party of India two, ARepublican Party of India (Athawale) six, Voice of the People Party 18.

Residents of India's 'lithium village' have a reason to cheer

Kotli Salal hit the headlines after the discovery of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium and became the focus of attention for people across the country

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Feb 25: People of Kotli Salal in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, 75 kilometres from Jammu, are excited at the news of the discovery of vast deposits of lithium, hoping that this will change their fortunes and open new vistas for employment and prosperity.

Kotli Salal hit the headlines after the discovery of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium and became the focus of attention for people across the country. "The teams have left after

conducting surveys for two years. It was done with the help of drilling machines. The samples were sent to Lucknow for testing and now we have got the good news," Rajinder Singh, Naib Sarpanch of Kotli Salal, said.

He said the discovery of lithium in the area is certainly good news for the people as this will open new employment opportunities. "After the NHPC power project was set up at Salal many years ago, this is the second major project that will come up in the area. It will trigger devel-

opment and end unemployment." Reasi district, also famous for being home to the world's highest railway bridge, now sees itself at the cusp of developmental activities with the world's second largest deposits of lithium becoming a potential game changer.

"I can't believe that lithium deposits have been found in our village. My excitement knew no limits when ministers and prominent officials tweeted about the same," a local villager of Salal Himnagar said.

"We are fortunate that such a big discovery has been made in our area. This is not a small project; it will be worth billions. Our village will sparkle due to this. Nobody from Salal Himnagar will



remain unemployed anymore. A mineral that used to be imported from other countries will now be extracted from our village, what can be a bigger thing for me than this?"

Speaking to IANS HL Langleh, Joint Director Geology and Mining J&K, said the investigation was conducted by the Geological Survey of India which presented the report

on February 9.

He said that the report has four stages - G1, G2, G3 and G4. He added the work has been completed for G4 and G3 stages and now G1 and G2 stages will be done for further investigation about the recovery and extraction of lithium.

"The aspect of technology will have to be looked into, whether the technology is available with us right now for recovering lithium," Lageth said.

He said the project for extraction of lithium will open up job opportunities for the locals. "The project will have to pass through several stages including an environmental clearance from the ministry of environment, forest and climate change," he added.

international



Russia's nuclear threat is unacceptable, and use of nuclear weapons should never happen
FUMIO KISHIDA | PM, JAPAN

1ST MARBURG CASE IN SPAIN

Spain has detected its first case of Marburg disease, a deadly infectious disease that has led to the quarantining of more than 200 people in Equatorial Guinea, health authorities said Saturday. Marburg virus can have a fatality rate of up to 88%, according to the WHO



of the day quote

The idea that China is going to be negotiating the outcome of a war that's a totally unjust war for Ukraine is just not rational



JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

We need to understand that the Russian president currently accepts only one form of negotiations, which is that (Ukraine) capitulates unconditionally and he achieves all of his aims



OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

India is an incredibly important global player of increased, not only economic prosperity but diplomatic influence. We're very very pleased with that. We're very proud of the longstanding relationship the UK has of course with India



JAMES CLEVERLY | FOREIGN SECRETARY, UK

SHORT TAKES

SA, Nigeria on FATF 'grey list'

Johannesburg: Global anti-money laundering watchdog FATF Friday added South Africa and Nigeria to its "grey list" of countries for failing to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, in a setback to Africa's two largest economies. The decision of the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) indicates to global banks, financial institutions and investors that these countries are not fully compliant with anti-money laundering and terrorist financing standards. This was despite desperate attempts by South Africa to pass several relevant laws late last year, as well as a high-level delegation sent to the FATF recently to make representations.

Pak's first trans anchor attacked

Lahore: Pakistan's first transgender news anchor, Marvia Malik, recently survived a gun attack outside her residence in Lahore. According to Dawn, Malik was returning from a pharmacy when two gunmen opened indiscriminate fire. The incident took place Thursday night and Malik luckily survived the attack. In her statement to the police, the news anchor claimed that she had been receiving threatening phone calls and messages from unknown numbers for raising her voice for the transgender community. As per the outlet, the anchor stated that to ensure safety she has left her home for now and has shifted outside Lahore. Malik claimed that her activism was a "major factor" behind the assassination attempt.

COMMANDER'S KILLING

IRANIAN MILITARY COMMANDER QASSEM SOLEIMANI WAS KILLED IN A US DRONE STRIKE IN 2020 IN BAGHDAD

REUTERS

Dubai, Feb 25: Iran has developed a cruise missile with a range of 1,650 km (1,025 miles) a top Revolutionary Guards commander said Friday, in a move likely to raise Western concerns after Russia's use of Iranian drones in the Ukraine war.

Separately, Amirali Hajizadeh, the head of the Revolutionary



Guards aerospace force, also spoke of Iran's often repeated threat to avenge the US killing of a top Iranian commander, saying "We are looking to kill (former US President Donald) Trump."
"Our cruise missile with a range of 1,650 km has been added to the missile arsenal of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Hajizadeh, told state TV.

The television broadcast what it

God willing, we are looking to kill Trump. (Former Secretary of State Mike) Pompeo ... and military commanders who issued the order (to kill Soleimani) should be killed

AMIRALI HAJIZADEH | HEAD, REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS (AEROSPACE FORCE)

said was the first footage showing the new Paveh cruise missile.

Hajizadeh said Iran did not intend to kill "poor soldiers" when it launched a ballistic missile attack on US-led forces in Iraq days after Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike in 2020 in Baghdad. "God willing, we are looking to kill Trump. (Former Secretary of

We are looking to kill Trump: Iran

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

G20 fails to reach joint communique



REUTERS

Bangalore, Feb 25: G20 finance chiefs have been unable to reach a consensus on describing the war in Ukraine and are likely to end a meeting in India Saturday without a joint communique, delegates said.

The United States and its allies in the G7 group of nations have been adamant in demands that the communique squarely condemn Russia for the invasion of its neighbour, which has been opposed by the Russian and Chinese delegations, they said.

Russia, which is a member of the G20, refers to its actions in Ukraine as a "special military operation", and avoids calling it an invasion or war.

Host India is also pressing the meeting to avoid using the word "war" in any communique, G20 officials have told Reuters. India, which holds the current G20 presidency, has kept a largely neutral stance on the war, declining to blame Russia for the invasion, seeking a diplomatic solution and sharply boosting its purchases of Russian oil.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said there was no way the group could step back from a joint statement agreed at a G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, last November, which said "most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine" but also acknowledged some countries saw the conflict differently. "Either we have the same lan-

guage or we do not sign on the final communique," Le Maire told reporters Friday.

German Finance Minister Christian Lindner, speaking on the sidelines of the meeting Friday, said the G20 must not fall behind its previous criticism of Russia. "We need absolute clarity, this is a war initiated by (Russian President Vladimir) Putin," he said. Such stand-offs have become increasingly common in the G20, a forum created over 20 years ago in response to past economic crises but which has recently been hobbled by differences between Western nations and others including China and Russia.

A senior G20 source said negotiations over the communique were difficult, with Russia and China blocking proposals made by Western countries. "India wants to stick to the Bali wording," the source said.

The source and several other officials said barring a last-minute surprise, a consensus on the communique was unlikely, and that the meeting was likely to end with a statement by the host summarising the discussions. "In the absence of a consensus, the option for India would be to issue a chair statement," one of the officials said.

Chinese loans to India's neighbours worries US

US SAID THAT IT IS DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT CHINESE LOANS IN INDIA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD - PAK AND SL - MAY BE USED FOR COERCIVE LEVERAGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 25: The US is deeply concerned that the loans being given by China to India's immediate neighbourhood - Pakistan and Sri Lanka - may be used for coercive leverage, a senior State Department official has said.

"Concerning Chinese loans to countries in India's immediate neighbourhood, we are deeply concerned that loans may be used for coercive leverage," Donald Lu, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, told reporters ahead of the India trip of Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The top American diplomat is travelling to New Delhi on a three-day official visit from March 1 to 3. Lu said that the US is talking countries in the region comprising India to take their own decisions and not feel compelled by any outside partner.

Earlier in the day, Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar announced that the Board of China Development Bank (CDB) has approved a \$700 million credit facility to the country.

Responding to a question Lu said that there has been a serious conversation between India and the US on the issue of China.

"We have had serious conversations about China, both before the latest scandal over this surveillance balloon but in the aftermath. So, I fully expect those conversations will continue," he said.

Lu, in response to a question, insisted that Quad is not a military alliance.

"The Quad is not, in fact, an organisation that is against any single country or group of countries. The Quad stands for trying to promote activities and values that support the Indo-Pacific - free and open Indo-Pacific, but Indo-Pacific that's prosperous and supports the values that we as these four countries represent," he said.

Russia-India ties
When asked about India's military relationship with Russia, he



We are talking to India, talking to countries of the region about how we help countries to make their own decisions and not decisions that might be compelled by any outside partner, including China
DONALD LU | ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA), US

said globally Russia is having a really difficult time fulfilling orders for military contracts.

"We see plenty of evidence of that around the world. And if you look at press reporting, I think you can see the Indians are also wondering whether Russia will be able to provide for

its defenses," Lu said.

Lu strongly refuted the allegations that India avoids the use of war when it comes to Russia.

"India uses the word 'war' all the time," he asserted. "You heard Prime Minister Modi say, in August, now is not the era for war. You heard External Affairs Minister Jaishankar say in September, at the UN, that we need this war to end through diplomatic means and along the principles of the UN Charter, reinforcing territorial integrity and sovereignty," he said.

"And then, in November you heard the Indian Defense Minister say the threat to use nuclear weapons by Russia is totally unacceptable and at odds with the basic tenets of humanity. So, I don't particularly see a reluctance to use the word 'war'. I think they use it all the time," Lu said.

Pakistan halts clearance of bills, salaries

Islamabad: The cash-strapped Pakistan government has directed the accountant general to cease the clearing of bills, including salaries, owing to the current economic crisis, according to a media report today. The Ministry of Finance and Revenue also instructed the Accountant General of Pakistan Revenues (AGPR) to halt the clearing of all the bills of the federal ministries/divisions and attached departments until further notice. The News International quoted official sources as saying, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, which fell to a critically low level of \$2.9 billion a few weeks ago, have now risen closer to \$4 billion, even as the country eagerly waits for the \$1.1 billion tranches of funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Nepal's ruling alliance in trouble

POLITICAL TURMOIL GRIPS NEPAL AS 8 PARTIES ENDORSE NC CANDIDATE PAUDEL AS NEW PRESIDENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Feb 25: Ram Chandra Paudel is set to become Nepal's next president after he was backed by eight political parties Saturday but the development may bring down the fragile two-month-old government of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', which could plunge the Himalayan nation once again into political turmoil.

Principal opposition party Nepali Congress' senior leader Paudel was endorsed by eight political parties, including the CPN-Maoist Centre of Prime Minister Prachanda, who sidelined his coal-



tion partner KP Sharma Oli's nominee to support his candidacy.

Paudel will vie against CPN-UML's Subas Nembang in the March 9 presidential election, which may change the power equation in the country. Paudel, 78, and Nembang, 69, filed their candidacies Saturday. With the support from eight political parties, Poudyal's victory in the presidential election is almost certain.

The tenure of the current president, Bidya Devi Bhandari, will end March 12. The presidential election has put a serious question mark on the future of the seven-party ruling alliance.

Tibetans tell relatives abroad not to call them

China rules Tibet with a tight grip, restricting Tibetans' political activities and expression of cultural and religious identity, especially during festivals like Losar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 24: Tibetans in Tibet have told their relatives in exile to refrain from contacting them this week during the Tibetan New Year called Losar, citing fears of being persecuted by Chinese authorities amid increase in surveillance activities and surprise security searches during the politically sensitive time, sources in the region said.

Chinese authorities have clamped down on Tibetans during



Losar, celebrated February 20-26 this year, with cellphone checks and raids in Lhasa, Xigatse and Chamdo, the sources said, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported. Before the holiday, authorities warned

TIBETAN NEW YEAR



against holding events that could endanger national security and said they would take immediate action against them.

A Tibetan living in Dharamsala, India, called his relatives in China's

western Tibet Autonomous Region to wish them well for the Tibetan New Year, but they asked him not to contact them, RFA reported.

China rules Tibet with a tight grip, restricting Tibetans' political activities and expression of cultural and religious identity, especially during festivals like Losar. Tibetans say that Chinese authorities trample on their human rights and are trying to stamp out their religious, linguistic and cultural identity.

Chinese security forces are usually deployed in large numbers in Tibetan-populated areas to monitor crowds gathered for religious festivals and to prevent possible protests during Losar, RFA reported.

The holiday comes just before a politically sensitive anniversary March 10, commemorating the Tibetan uprising of 1959 during which tens of thousands of Tibetans

took to the streets of the regional capital Lhasa in protest against China's invasion and occupation of their homeland a decade earlier.

The failure of the armed rebellion resulted in a violent crackdown on Tibetan independence movements, and the flight of the Dalai Lama and many Tibetans into exile in Dharamsala.

Another Tibetan who now lives in exile but has family members in Lhasa, said even written communication was risky in the current environment, RFA reported.

"Without permission from the government, one cannot print out anything at the moment," he told RFA.

A Tibetan living outside the region who has relatives in Shigatse, about 275 kilometres west of Lhasa, said that his parents sounded very tense when he called and told him to refrain from contacting or sharing messages with them.

business

of the day quote

We have already moved from the 10th largest to the 5th largest economy, and have a young demographic dividend that is being recognised as our biggest asset



PIYUSH GOVAL | UNION COMMERCE MINISTER

I see it as a massive technology tool for increasing productivity. And we in India, as an economy and as stakeholders of the economy, should all adopt AI with open arms



BHAVISH AGGARWAL | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, OLA CABS

SIDBI with support from the RBI will set up a SIDBI Cluster Development Fund with a view to support creation of hard infrastructure for MSMEs in the clusters



SIVABRAMANIAN RAMANN | CHAIRMAN AND MD, SIDBI

SHORT TAKES

Amazon to join ONDC platform

Bangalore: Amazon announced that it will integrate its logistics network (from pickup to delivery) and SmartCommerce services with the government's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform. This will be Amazon's initial collaboration with ONDC as the company continues to explore other potential opportunities for stronger integration between the two in future. "We are excited about the opportunities to mobilise Amazon's industry-leading infrastructure and technology, including logistics, and small business digitisation tools, to help the ONDC accelerate its objectives. We remain committed to being a catalyst for India's digitisation efforts throughout the economy," Manish Tiwari, Country Manager, India Consumer Business, Amazon India, said in a statement.

Ericsson to slash 8% of workforce

London: Swedish telecom gear-maker Ericsson is laying off about 8 per cent of its workforce, around 8,500 employees, to cut costs in the ongoing global macroeconomic conditions, the media reported. According to an internal memo sent to employees, the company said the headcount reduction has been conveyed to employees in several countries. "We see a potential to simplify and become more efficient throughout the company, especially when it comes to structural costs," a company spokesperson told Bloomberg. The telecom networking company earlier laid off at least 1,400 employees or 10 per cent of its workforce in Sweden after negotiating with unions.



As we look towards the future, I am eager to deepen our ties in the technology sector. The United States is advancing an approach called friendshoring to bolster the resilience of our supply chains

JANET L. YELLEN | TREASURY SECRETARY, US

GOOGLE LAYS OFF 100 ROBOTS

Alphabet, Google's parent company, recently laid off 12,000 workers and even 100 robots that cleaned its cafeterias at its headquarters. According to a Wired report, Alphabet's 'Everyday Robots' project -- an unit under Google's experimental X laboratories -- has been shut down by Google CEO Sundar Pichai



G20 MEET IMF flags debt restructuring woes

THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19 AND WAR HAS PUSHED MANY NATIONS INTO DEBT DISTRESS, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN SMALL STEPS ON DEBT RESTRUCTURING SIDE

REUTERS

Bangalore, Feb 25: Group of 20 (G20) nations have some disagreements over restructuring debt for distressed economies, the chief of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Saturday, adding that banning private cryptocurrencies should be an option.

India's G20 presidency comes as its South Asian neighbours Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan are seeking urgent IMF funds due to an economic slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

China, the world's largest bilateral creditor, urged the group of big economies Friday to conduct a fair, objective and in-depth analysis of the causes of global debt issues as clamour grows for lenders to take a large haircut, or accept losses, on loans.

"On debt restructuring, while there are still some disagreements, we now have the global sovereign debt roundtable with consideration of all public and private creditors," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva told reporters after chairing the roundtable with Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"We just finished a session in which it was clear that there is a commitment to bridge differences for the benefit of countries."

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said there were no "deliverables" from the meeting, which was mostly organisational.

Further discussions of the panel, which includes major bilateral creditors including China, India and the G7 countries, several debtor countries, are planned around the



time of the IMF and World Bank spring meetings in April.

"We certainly had that agreement that this is a useful forum," Yellen told Reuters in an interview. "We look forward to participating in it."

CRYPTO RESTRICTIONS

Apart from restructuring debt, regulating cryptocurrencies is another priority area for India, which Georgieva agreed with.

"We have to differentiate between central bank digital currencies that are backed by the state and stable coins, and crypto assets that are privately issued," Georgieva said.

"There has to be very strong push for regulation... if regulation fails, if you're slow to do it, then we should not take off the table banning those assets, because they may create financial stability risk."

Yellen said she had not suggested the "outright banning of crypto activities, but it was critical to put in place a strong regulatory framework."

Urgent action needed to strengthen int'l financial architecture: IMF MD

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva Saturday said there is an urgent need to strengthen the international financial architecture, especially in the area of debt resolution and Global Financial Safety Net at a time when global growth is set to slow in 2023. Terming India a relative bright spot, she said, it is an important engine of growth for the world economy, representing about 15 per cent of global growth in 2023.

India's remarkable progress on Digital Public Infrastructure provides a strong basis to secure robust and inclusive growth over the medium term, she said at the first G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting under India Presidency here. "With global

growth set to slow in 2023 and remain below its historical average, too many people in too many countries are struggling to make ends meet—a point that I highlighted in my recent blog on policy priorities for G20. The international community, therefore, has a responsibility to come together to find solutions for the most vulnerable members of our global family," she said.

This calls for urgent action to strengthen the international financial architecture, especially in the area of debt resolution and strengthening Global Financial Safety Net, she added. Global Financial Safety Net is a set of institutions and mechanisms that provide insurance against crises and financing to mitigate their impact.

WHITE GOLD

Demand for lithium batteries to surge more than 5-fold

India has now joined the Lithium superpower club, with the discovery of 5.9 million tonne of lithium in Jammu and Kashmir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 25: From smartphones to laptops, from medical equipment to electric cars, lithium-ion batteries are providing portable electricity across electronic gadgets and power tools, and their demand is only going to surge.

Called "White Gold", Lithium is a soft, silvery-white alkali metal that is highly reactive, incredibly light, and low in density. Though it had a diverse range of applications throughout history, in recent years, it has become a critical component of lithium-ion batteries due its reactivity, lightness and ability to be recharged.

The global lithium market size was valued at \$6.83 billion in 2021 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12 per cent from 2022 to 2030, according to Grand View Research.

Electrification of vehicles is projected to attract a significant volume of lithium-ion batteries, thus anticipated to drive the market over the forecast period. Government subsidies for EVs, along with investments in this space, are acting as an additional booster to the growth of the market.

According to public-private alliance Li-Bridge, the global demand for lithium batteries is ex-

pected to surge more than five-fold by 2030.

Global lithium production totalled 100,000 tonne (90.7 million kg) in 2021, while worldwide reserves stand at about 22 million tonne (20 billion kg), according to the US Geological Survey.

In 2022, reserves of lithium in Chile amounted to an estimated 9.3 million metric tonne, the largest worldwide. Australia comes in second, with reserves estimated at 6.2 million metric tonne in 2022. The US had total lithium reserves of approximately one million metric tonne.

The US holds major significance in battery production after China, which makes it one of the key lithium-consuming countries in the world. According to Grand View Research, the consumer electronics application segment is estimated to register the fastest CAGR of more than 15 per cent in terms of revenue, from 2022 to 2030.

The segment is projected to grow owing to the increasing sales of electronic devices, such as mobile phones, laptops, cameras, portable radios, speakers, and MP3 players, which make use of Li-ion batteries.

Lifetime Achievement Award '23 conferred on OSL founder



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 25: Veteran industrialist and Founder of Orissa Stevedores Limited (OSL) Mahimananda Mishra was bestowed with the prestigious "Lifetime Achievement Award 2023" for his exceptional contribution to the growth of Shipping & Maritime Industry of India and Odisha for over 4 decades.

The acclaimed award was presented by Gopal Krishna, Former Secretary, Ministry of Shipping, Govt of India during an event at 8th Edition of East Coast Maritime Forum 2023 concurrent with Eastern Star Awards 2023 organised by Exim India Shipping Times February 24 at The Lalit Great

Eastern, Kolkata.

The OSL Group once again was conferred with "Stevedores Company of the Year" for 2023. Chandan Mishra, Director, OSL Group and Team received the award on the occasion. Many senior officials of OSL Group were present at the event.

The event felicitated industry stalwarts who had transformed society, made outstanding contributions to improving the community, set benchmarks in entrepreneurship, and demonstrated exemplary leadership qualities. It was under his leadership that he pioneered Odisha's first ever riverine jetty at the prime port city of Paradeep which was a new dimension to the transport sector

with the use of multi-modal transport system.

Speaking on the recognition, Shri Mahimananda Mishra, Founder, Orissa Stevedores Limited (OSL) said, "I wholeheartedly dedicate this awards to all my colleagues, staff, workers and their family members. This award has been possible only for their hard work, dedication, devotion and above all personal sacrifices for the sake of the organisation."

In the long servicing history, OSL Group has been handling cargo and providing end-to-end logistic solutions to the major corporates of India and abroad such as IFFCO, Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), TATA Steel Limited, Reliance, JSW, IMFA, Vedanta, NALCO, Jindal Stainless and ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel etc.

OSL Group has been receiving several awards for the last several years in different categories and fields which is the recognition of OSL's efficiency, potential, capabilities and achievements. Last year, OSL as the industrial behemoth was awarded as the "Best Logistic Company of the Year" and "Best Stevedores Company of the Year" in the 7th Edition of 'East Coast Maritime Forum 2022' held in Kolkata.

BIZ BUZZ

CREDAI prez speaks on state Budget

Bhubaneswar: Swadesh K Routray, President, CREDAI Odisha lauded the state Budget announced February 24 and said that the state Budget for the year 2023 which was presented by Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari is the last full fledged budget of the government in its 5th term. It's a budget of 2.30 lakh crore reflecting 15% increase than that of last year. Remarkably, out of the total budget allocations, 35% given to social sector, 34% given to economic sector. Much importance has been given to infrastructure development. This shall for sure have a positive impact on housing and employment. For infrastructure development, there's provision of ₹7.19 crore and ₹9.08 crore for urban development with 9% increase than that of last year. As we see Odisha is growing into the choicest state in India, this budget shall certainly create opportunities to boost housing, social justice and employment facilities.



SBI MD visits Governor of Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Managing Director of SBI Ashwini Kumar Tewari and CGM of Bhubaneswar Circle Chandershekar Sharma paid a courtesy visit to Ganesh Lal, Governor of Odisha. During the discussion, Tewari has committed that the bank will ensure all people-centric programmes of centre and state governments to reach to the targeted beneficiary of the state. Sharma has also reiterated to make and retain SBI as the first choice bank of the state and has also committed to increase customer connect and further improve customer service in future days. MD of SBI is in the capital city to participate in Compliance Conclave "Anuvartan 2.0" being organised by the bank. All compliance Heads of Circles and independent verticals had participated in the conclave where necessity of regulatory compliance and increasing compliance culture were discussed. Delegates were addressed by Tewari; DMD & Group Compliance Officer RumaDey; CGM Compliance UN Narayan Maya and inaugural address was given by Chandershekar Sharma, CGM, SBI Bhubaneswar Circle.



Paytm offers lightning fast UPI payments

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 25: Paytm Payments Bank has become the only platform to exclusively offer UPI LITE payments, which enables faster real-time transactions with a single tap on the Paytm app.

Paytm UPI LITE will never fail even during peak transaction hours, even when banks have success rate issues, the company said in a statement. It aims to make digital payments more accessible to people across the country.

UPI LITE, enabled by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), aids users to carry out multiple small value UPI transactions without using a PIN.

Using Paytm UPI LITE, users can carry out quick and seamless transactions of value up to ₹200 at a time at a lightning fast speed.

"It provides superfast, convenient and hassle-free transaction experience as users don't have to enter a PIN every time they make a payment. Moreover, users can transfer UPI balance back to the same bank account anytime, without any charges," said the company.



With this, only one money transfer entry is made in the user's bank account, which declutters bank statements as customers will daily receive an SMS from the bank containing a history of all UPI LITE transactions made during the previous day.

To drive adoption, the company said it is offering ₹100 cashback to users for activating UPI LITE and adding ₹1,000 as balance.

Currently, nine banks support Paytm UPI LITE -- Canara Bank, Central Bank of India, HDFC Bank, Indian Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India, Union Bank of India, and Utkarsh Small Finance Bank.

Paytm Payments Bank is a leader in UPI Peer to Merchant (P2M) payments as the largest acquiring and beneficiary bank as well as a leading remitter bank.

India ranks 42 out of 55 countries on International IP Index

BY ANALYSING THE IP LANDSCAPE IN GLOBAL MARKETS, THE INDEX AIMS TO HELP NATIONS NAVIGATE TOWARD A BRIGHTER ECONOMIC FUTURE MARKED BY GREATER INNOVATION, CREATIVITY, AND COMPETITIVENESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 25: India ranks 42nd among 55 leading global economies on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index released by the US Chambers of Commerce, according to which India is ripe to become a leader for emerging markets seeking to transform their economy through IP-driven innovation.

"As India's size and economic influence grows on the world stage, India is ripe to become a leader for emerging markets seeking to transform their economy through IP-driven innovation," Patrick Kilbride, senior vice president of the US Chamber of Commerce

Global Innovation Policy Center who publishes the annual report said Friday.

According to the report, which covers everything from patent and copyright laws to the ability to monetize IP assets and the ratification of international agreements, India has maintained continued strong efforts in copyright piracy through the issuing of "dynamic" injunction orders.

India not only has generous R&D and IP-based tax incentives, but also has a strong awareness-raising efforts regarding the negative impact of piracy and counterfeiting. It is a global leader on targeted administrative incentives for the creation and use of IP as-



sets for SMEs, it said.

"India has taken steps to improve enforcement against copyright-infringing content and provides a best-in-class framework to

promote better understanding and utilisation of IP assets. However, addressing long-standing gaps in its IP framework will be critical to India's ability to create a new model

As India's size and economic influence grows on the world stage, India is ripe to become a leader for emerging markets seeking to transform their economy through IP-driven innovation

PATRICK KILBRIDE | SENIOR VP, US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

for the region and India's continued economic growth," Kilbride said.

However, the report said the 2021 dissolution of the Intellectual Property Appellate Board, combined with the long standing issue of an under-resourced and over-

stretched judiciary, raises serious concerns about rights holders' ability to enforce their IP rights in India and to resolve IP-related disputes.

Carriers to licensing and technology transfer, including strict registration requirements, said noting that there is limited framework for the protection of biopharmaceutical IP rights.

Following a decade of steady, incremental, improvement in IP systems worldwide, a deluge of proposals under consideration by US and international policy leaders, including at multilateral organisations, threatens to compromise hard-won economic gains, a media release said.

Handscomb recalls past chat Head to keep being aggressive



Peter Handscomb plays a shot on the backfoot during one of the Tests against India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Feb 25: Australia's middle-order batter Peter Handscomb has recalled how former India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane helped him combat spin bowling in the sub-continent.

During the IPL in 2016, Handscomb shared the dressing room with Rahane. The two had a chat where the Indian spoke about how to use the feet and wrist to open up the leg side while playing spinners.

"He was playing these shots off his back foot through midwicket which I thought were ridiculous," Handscomb told Sydney Morning

Herald.

"I was like, wow I need someone to teach me that. So we spoke about getting his front leg out of the way and being able to manipulate the ball from there.

"That helps your back foot become a scoring zone, and then if they overpitch, you can hopefully score off the front foot as well. Then all their good balls you just find a way to defend."

After scoring an unbeaten 72 off 142 balls in the first innings, Handscomb, like many of his teammates, got out for a duck while attempting a sweep shot in the second essay of the second Test at Kotla.

"India personally outplayed me in that situation. They gave me my scoring gap, but without the reward, so it was just going to be a single, but tempted me to hit the ball there.

"And I fell for that and tried to manipulate the ball there when, had that been my third ball of the first innings, I would have just tried to defend, because I was still trying to understand the pitch and what was going on.

"For me, it's just about being stronger and starting again. I probably walked out there thinking 'I'm still on 72 not out, I can just pick up where I left off', and you can't think like that."

Handscomb, who has been to India about eight times including when he was an academy scholar, feels tours are important in getting the hang of the conditions in the sub-continent.

"I'd have sessions where no matter what the bowler was bowling, I had to hit every ball on the leg side, and then the next day and every ball had to go on the off side, and every ball had to be played off the back foot, or every ball off the front foot," he says.

"It was learning what I could and couldn't do in subcontinent tours with no repercussions. I get to try all this. It's just so different to back home, where bounce is key for spin. So tours are crucial."

Despite conceding the Broder Gavskar Trophy after losing the first two Tests, Handscomb said the Australian camp is positive.

"The feeling around the group is one of trust in each other's games, which is very hard to come by. We'll definitely take the positives out of Delhi. We still had a first innings lead, we'd done well there, we'd started well in the second innings and then it all just happened really fast and we didn't stop it at any stage.

"The challenge is if there's a moment where we have lost two or three quick ones, it's being able to stop the flow for a second and let us all just take a step back, have a breath and then continue on with the game, and hopefully stem the flow of wickets that way."

As a good player of spin bowling, Handscomb was always in line to be a part of the India tour but the batter wants to be "on every Australian tour from now".

"But I also understand I came into this tour because I was a good player of spin, and there's batters who have done better in English conditions who could come into the fold. Those are the discussions we have, we're all open and honest about it. I still want to be a part of it though, and I'll be doing everything I can to stay in," he added.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 25: Travis Head has backed himself to keep being aggressive against the Indian spinners in the third Test beginning in Indore March 1. Members of the Australian team stayed back in the capital following the loss at the Kotla on day three of the second Test Sunday.

With David Warner back home due to an elbow fracture, Head will open alongside Usman Khawaja in Indore. The southpaw was dropped for the first Test in Nagpur.

"It was something that I didn't expect coming here," Head said in a media interaction here on not making the playing XI in Nagpur.

"The conversations were robust. Everyone has different opinions. I respect the coaching staff and selectors and I have a really strong relationship with them. I think that's what made the conversations the way they went, because there's respect that goes both ways and we were able to voice our opinions.

"And I woke up the next morning and I'm still on tour playing for Australia. I still get to do what I love to do. I'd love to be competing and playing but there's another way I can support the guys the best I could and prepare the best way I could for another opportunity. I still feel like I'm in a great space. It's just one week that didn't go my way."

Head, opening for the first time in his Test career, gave a good account himself in the second innings and put the Indian spinners under pressure on day two.

However, his wicket on day three morning led to a dramatic Australia collapse as they lost nine wickets for 52 runs. Head said gained a lot of confidence out of his 43 in the second innings at the Kotla.

"They're extremely skilful bowlers, but I was really pleased with the way I was going forward and back and watching length and a few of the things I'd worked on. It was a small sample piece but over here small sample pieces can be a little bit of gold."

With Australia 0-2 down in the four-match series, bouncing back will be a massive challenge and Head acknowledged that.

"I think the communication and the relationships that we've built is why this team has been so strong and why this team has stayed together for a period of time. We're always gonna have moments that aren't the greatest or isn't the best we want it. Those things happen. We accept them but we've also got to find a way to get better at it, to try and limit them as much as we possibly can because no one wants them.

"But it's a challenge for us over the next couple of weeks, when we find ourselves in moments, how can we draw it back. When it's a full stadium and there's noise going and wickets falling, how we can draw that back."

Skipper Pat Cummins has gone back home to be with his ill mother and will be missing the third Test. Head said it was more important for Cummins to be in Australia given the circumstances.

ANOTHER TALE FOR VIRAT-DHONI TALE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 25: MS Dhoni was the only person who reached out to Virat Kohli when the latter was going through a lean patch last year. Kohli has overcome that phase and last month scored his third hundred in four ODIs.

The Indian superstar had ended a long wait for his first hundred in close to three years with a ton in the Asia Cup T20 tournament in September.

Kohli shares a strong bond with Dhoni and that reflects in the manner in which he talks about India's World Cup-winning skipper.

"What is interesting is that throughout this phase apart from Anushka, who has been the biggest source of strength for me because she has been with me throughout this whole time and she has seen me very closely as how have I felt, things that I have gone through, the kind of things that have happened..."

"The only person who, apart from my childhood coach and family...genuinely reached out to me has been MS Dhoni," Kohli said on the RCB podcast.

Kohli shared the dressing room with Dhoni for 11 years between 2008 and 2019 and calls the charismatic cricketer from Ranchi his 'captain forever'.

"He reached out to me and you can rarely get in touch with him. If I call him on any random day, 99 percent he will not pick up (the phone), because he just does not look at the phone.

"So, for him to reach out to me...twice it has happened now and one of the things that he'd mentioned in the message while

Look you play to win tournaments. A lot was made of it (not lifting an ICC trophy as skipper). I captained in the 2017 Champions Trophy, I captained the 2019 WC side, I captained India in the (inaugural) WTC final. So, after three ICC tournaments... We lost the last (2021) T20 WC. We didn't qualify. We reached the finals of 2017 Champions Trophy, semifinals of the (2019) WC, final of WTC, and I was considered as a failed captain VIRAT KOHLI

reaching out to me was that: 'when you are expected to be strong and looked at as a strong individual people forget to ask how are you doing?'

"So, it (Dhoni's words) hit home for me because I have always been looked at as someone who is very confident, mentally very strong, who can endure any circumstances and find a way and show us the way.

"Sometimes, what you realise is that at any given point of time in life as a human being you need to take a couple of steps backwards, understand how you are doing, how your wellbeing is placed," Kohli added.

When Kohli suddenly quit Test captaincy following the tour of South Africa in the January 2022, he had revealed that Dhoni was the only one who had messaged him.



'Invincible' Oz stand between SA and fairytale



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Feb 25: South Africa will get their fairytale finish at home if they find a way to halt the Australian juggernaut in the Women's T20 World Cup final here Sunday.

South Africa showed commendable fighting spirit to upset England in the semifinal but they will need to stitch together a perfect game to topple the mighty Australia, who are the record five-time champions and are in their seventh successive final.

South Africa have made rapid strides over the past 12 months

and after making the semifinals of the ODI World Cup last year, they entered their maiden final of an ICC event here on Friday.

In Laura Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits, a former world junior javelin champion whose Olympic dream was shattered in 2012 due to a car accident, South Africa have one of the best opening pairings in the tournament.

They both go into the final in top form and are vital to the team's chances against Australia who managed to beat India in the semifinals despite not playing their best game.

All-rounder Marizanne Kapp is

another important player for South Africa and produced a much needed cameo in the semis. Skipper Sune Luus thinks she has the world's best bowling attack at her disposal and why not when you have the express pace duo of Shabnam Ismail and Ayabonga Khaka in your ranks.

The crowd will be fully behind South Africa and the home team will look to feed off them like they did Friday. Australia had comfortably beaten South Africa in the group stage but they will be wary of them in the title clash.

Australia, who by far have been the most successful side in women's

cricket history, look good to extend their dominance.

They have all bases covered and no total is safe when they are chasing. India needed only 39 off the last five overs but Australia did not give up and gave their 100 per cent on the field to wrest the game in their favour.

Champion outfits find a way of winning even when things are not going their way and the Meg Lanning-led side is known for that.

South African opener Britz was asked about Australia's undisputed rule over the game after the famous win over England Friday.

"I'm a bit too straight forward,

so I'm trying to work on that because I like to say things as they come - but the end of the day cricket is a very funny game and Australia might be the top but at the end of the day, you play the ball you don't play the players, and I think that's what we did in this England side.

"We didn't play England that we always lost to and it's a constant reminder that I heard I was never in that. You know the semifinals when they lost is the first semi-final I've ever been in and the first time against England so we'll take it as it comes but very excited to go to the final," said the opener.

Mumbai begin camp for WPL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Feb 25: The Mumbai Indians on Saturday began their camp for the inaugural season of the Women's Premier League (WPL), here. The team started their first practice session under the watchful eyes of the coaching team.

"It's been brilliant. It's been great to get the team out here. Obviously, our own venue and to see the players, it's been brilliant for me. Heard a lot about these players and to finally get them into the nets and watch them in action it's been fantastic," said Charlotte Edwards, head Coach, Mumbai Indians.

Apart from Edwards, Mumbai's support staff for the WPL comprises, Jhulan Goswami (team mentor and bowling coach), Devika Palshikar (batting coach) and Lydia Greenway (fielding coach), while Trupti Chandgadkar Bhattacharya is the team manager.

Amongst the biggest names in the Mumbai Indians team are India



captain Harmanpreet Kaur, England vice-captain Nat Sciver-Brunt and India's fast-bowling all-rounder Pooja Vastrakar alongside New Zealand's leg-spin all-rounder Amelia Kerr and West Indies captain Hayley Matthews.

Mumbai Indians will play their first match against Gujarat Giants March 4 at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai.

MI launch jersey



MUMBAI: Mumbai Indians Saturday unveiled the official playing kit that their team will be donning in the inaugural season of WPL. Designed by prominent fashion designer Monisha Jaisingh, the iconic MI Blue & Gold colour scheme, gets a dash of coral, inspired by the remarkable coastline of Mumbai, the spectacular sunset and the powerful energy from the rays of the sun.

ANAMIKA, ANUPAMA ENTER STRANDJA MEMORIAL FINALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sofia (Bulgaria), Feb 25: Reigning national championships silver medalist duo of Anamika and Anupama secured monumental victories to storm into the finals of the Strandja Memorial International Boxing Tournament here Saturday.

Going up against Wassila Lkhadiri of France in the 50kg category, Anamika had a cautious start to the bout but showcased immense grit to make a fightback in the second round.

The Indian utilised her quick movement to dodge the two-time EUBC Championships bronze medalist's punches while attacking smartly to gain control of the contest.

Dishing out a dominating performance in the third round, Anamika defeated her French opponent 4-1 to advance to the finals. She will face Hu Meiyi of China in the final Sunday.

Like her national teammate,

Anupama had to be at her razor-sharp best in her clash against the 2022 World Championships bronze medalist Jessica Bagley of Australia.

In what was a closely-contested bout between two pugilists of supreme technical ability, it was the Indian who got the better of her opponent with her attacking intent and confident approach.

Displaying stellar strength and landing accurate punches, Anupama managed to keep the Australian at bay and ekeed out an impressive 3-2 victory by split decision. She will take on Emma-Sue Greentree of Australia in the final of the 81kg category.

In the other semifinal bouts, S Kalaivani, Shruti Yadav, and Monika suffered identical 0-5 defeats. While Kalaivani lost to Saidakhon Rakhmonova of Uzbekistan in the 48kg category, Shruti went down fighting against Christina Desmond of Ireland in the 70kg category.