



GLOBAL GLORY

R'Bonney Gabriel, a fashion designer and the first Filipino American to win Miss USA, has been crowned Miss Universe

LEISURE P2



PROTESTS IN ISRAEL

Tens of thousands of Israelis demonstrate against PM Netanyahu's judicial reform plans

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA SWEEP SERIES

Virat Kohli's epic knock helps India decimate Sri Lanka by 317 runs and sweep the 3-match ODI series

SPORTS P12

Stampede-like situation in Srimandir; 2 injured



PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, Jan 15: Just a day after a stampede on Badamba-Gopinathpur T-Setu bridge in Cuttack district claimed a woman's life and seriously injured eight others, at least two devotees fell unconscious and were rushed to hospital after they were trapped in a stampede-like situation inside Srimandir here Sunday, police said.

The two, a woman from Hatagadia Sahi in Puri district and a minor girl from Pithapur area in Cuttack district, were admitted to the district headquarters hospital here. The condition of both the devotees was stable, hospital sources said.

The incident took place as a large number of people congregated near the Lion's Gate before it was opened for devotees. The opening of the temple door was a little bit delayed Sunday morning

as the Makar Sankranti rituals took a lot of time on the previous night, a temple official said.

The two devotees fell down when the crowd inside the temple rushed to witness the Lord's 'Mangala Arti' (day's first arti) as soon as the Lion's Gate opened. Meanwhile, Puri District Collector Samarth Verma visited the temple and enquired about the health condition of the injured devotees in the district headquarters hospital.

The incident came a day after a woman was killed and eight others seriously injured in a stampede as a large number of people congregated on Badamba-Gopinathpur T-Setu bridge in Cuttack district on the occasion of Makar Mela.

Notably, as many as eight school girls had fallen unconscious on the 'Baisi Pahacha' (stairs) of Srimandir likely due to the heavy rush of devotees ahead of New Year, December 26.

68 die in Nepal plane crash

Five Indians reportedly from Uttar Pradesh were among the 15 foreign nationals onboard the Yeti plane

REUTERS

Kathmandu, Jan 15: At least 68 people were killed Sunday when a domestic flight crashed in Pokhara in Nepal, the country's Civil Aviation Authority said, in the worst air crash in three decades in the small Himalayan nation.

Hundreds of rescue workers were scouring the hillside where the Yeti Airlines flight, carrying 72 people from the capital Kathmandu, went down.

Local TV showed rescue workers scrambling around broken sections of the aircraft. Some of the ground near the crash site was scorched, with licks of flames visible. The crash is Nepal's deadliest since 1992, the Aviation Safety Network database showed, when a Pakistan International Airlines Airbus A300 crashed into a hillside upon approach to Kathmandu, killing all 167 people on board.

The plane made contact with the airport from Seti Gorge at 10.50am (0505 GMT), the aviation authority said in its statement. Then it crashed.

Police official Ajay KC said res-



Rescue operation underway after a Yeti Airlines' passenger plane crashed into a gorge while landing at the Pokhara airport, Sunday

cue workers were having difficulty reaching the site in a gorge between two hills near the tourist town's airport.

Half of the plane is on the hillside, said Arun Tamu, a local resident, who told Reuters he reached the site minutes after the plane went down. The other half has fallen into the gorge of the Seti river. Khum Bahadur Chhetri said

he watched from the roof of his house as the flight approached.

"I saw the plane trembling, moving left and right, and then suddenly it nosedived and went into the gorge," Chhetri told Reuters, adding that local residents took two passengers to a hospital.

The government has set up a panel to investigate the cause of the crash and it is expected to re-

port within 45 days, the finance minister, Bishnu Paudel, told reporters.

SERIES OF CRASHES

Nearly 350 people have died since 2000 in plane or helicopter crashes in Nepal - home to eight of the world's 14 highest mountains, including Everest - where sudden weather changes can make for hazardous conditions.

A HISTORY OF MISHAPS

Sunday's incident was the third deadliest crash in the Himalayan nation's aviation history fraught with numerous air mishaps partly due to its sudden weather changes and airstrips located in hard-to-access rocky terrains

The only incidents with more casualties took place in July and September 1992. Those crashes involved aircraft of Thai Airways and Pakistan International Airlines and left 113 and 167 people dead, respectively

The last major air accident in Nepal May 29, 2022 had claimed 22 lives, including four members of an Odia family. Nearly 350 people have died since 2000 in plane or helicopter crashes in Nepal

The European Union has banned Nepali airlines from its airspace since 2013, citing safety concerns.

Those on the twin-engine ATR 72 aircraft included three infants and three children, the Civil Aviation Authority's statement said. The 15 foreign passengers included five Indians, four Russians and one Irish, two South Korean, one Australian, one French and one Argentinean national.

The five Indians, reportedly from Uttar Pradesh, were identified as Abhisekh Kushwaha, Bishal Sharma, Anil Kumar Rajbhar, Sonu Jaiswal, and Sanjaya Jaiswal.

Contd...4

SHORT TAKES

SC to hear plea on Joshimath today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday a plea seeking the court's intervention to declare the crisis in Uttarakhand's Joshimath as a national disaster. According to the cause list of January 16 uploaded on the apex court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala would hear the petition filed by Swami Avimuktেশ्वरानंद Saraswati. Joshimath, the gateway to famous pilgrimage sites like Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and international skiing destination Auli, is facing a major challenge due to land subsidence. The top court had January 10 refused urgent hearing of the plea.

Oppn parties set to oppose EC's RVM

New Delhi: Most of the Opposition parties have decided to oppose the Election Commission's proposal on remote electronic voting machine (RVM) as it is sketchy and not concrete, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said Sunday, a day before the poll panel showcases an RVM prototype to representatives of parties. He made the remarks after a meeting of Opposition parties facilitated by the Congress that was attended by leaders of the JD(U), Shiv Sena, CPI, CPI(M), National Conference, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), Revolutionary Socialist Party, Indian Union Muslim League, as well as Independent Rajya Sabha MP and former Congress leader Kapil Sibal.

MP techie nabbed in interstate job racket

Bhubaneswar: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has arrested another accused involved in the high profile interstate job racket considered as one of the biggest such rackets in the country till now. The arrested accused identified as Arpit Panchal hails from Jaora city of Ratlam district (near Ujjain) in Madhya Pradesh. A team of EOW sleuths with the help of their Madhya Pradesh counterpart carried out raids at different spots and arrested the accused Arpit from Ratlam, January 10. The EOW Sunday produced Arpit before the Bhubaneswar SDJM court that sent him to judicial custody.



NECK TO NECK: England players try to stop Akashdeep Singh of India during FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 at Birsamunda Stadium, in Rourkela, Sunday

INDIA PLAY OUT GOALLESS DRAW AGAINST ENGLAND

IN AN EARLIER POOL D MATCH, SPAIN BEAT WALES 5-1

AGENCIES

Rourkela, Jan 15: India played out a goalless draw against England in an entertaining pool match to remain in contention for a direct quarterfinal berth in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here Sunday.

In an evenly contested Pool D match, both the sides failed to score despite getting ample chances to force a result at the jam-packed Birsamunda Stadium.

England got eight penalty corners as against India's four. But the home team's penalty corners defence was impeccable.

England and India are now on four points each from two matches and who tops the pool and qualify directly for the quarterfinals will be decided January 19 when India play Wales while England take on Spain, both the matches to be played at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

If two teams are on equal points

and have won same number of matches, the side which have better goal difference will be ranked higher. England now have a goal difference of plus five after beating Wales 5-0 in their opening match as against plus two of India, who had emerged 2-0 winners against Spain. It was England who dominated in the first quarter as they got five penalty corners one after the other. But India defended the PCs quite well as Manpreet Singh was the first to rush out and close down the angle.

Mandeep Singh won India's first penalty corner towards the end of the first quarter but Manpreet's stop was not the best one, forcing captain Harmanpreet Singh to abort his dragkick.

As soon as the second quarter

started, Wallace Zachary's hit from inside the Indian circle came off Krishan Bahadur Pathak high and England got their sixth PC but again wasted it.

England kept on entering the Indian circle and got their seventh penalty corner but first rusher Amit Rohidas was quick enough to fend off the strike. It was end-to-end stuff for a few minutes before Harmanpreet earned a penalty corner for India,

the second of the match, but he fluffed it.

After Nilam Sanjeep Kess made a last minute clearance in the Indian 'D' in the 24th minute, Hardik Singh attempted a fierce reverse shot from the top of England circle, only to miss the target by a whisker.

Contd...4

Odisha tops with 55% growth in mobile gamers

BHUBANESWAR RECORDS WHOPPING 1,652% JUMP IN THE NUMBER OF GAMERS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 15: At a time when players from across the length and breadth of the country are taking to online mobile gaming with gusto, Odisha has topped the states registering 55 per cent growth in number of mobile gamers. Interestingly, Bhubaneswar alone recorded a whopping 1,652 per cent jump in the number of mobile gamers.

Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Himachal Pradesh have seen the highest increase in mobile gamers in 2022 compared to 2021, according to India Mobile Gaming Report (IMGR)-2022 released Sunday by gaming platform Mobile Premier League.

Punjab, ranked second among

states that saw the highest increase in gamers, is home to Mohali which is the best performing city in India, registering a whopping growth of 7,130 per cent in 2022 compared to 2021. In terms of games, Ludo Dice, Snakes and Ladders, Carrom, Fruit Dart, Block Puzzle and Poker were some of the top games played by gamers across different Indian cities.

Last year, India became the largest consumer of mobile games in the world, recording over 15 billion downloads, as per a report by Lumikai, a gaming-focused venture capital fund.

India's gaming market was worth USD 2.6 billion in the financial year 2022 and it will reach USD 8.6 billion by 2027 with a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27 per cent.



Tier 2 and 3 cities, which witnessed explosive growth in mobile gaming, among other internet leisure activities, have rapidly ascended to the top, unseating gaming hubs such as the metro cities like Mumbai and Bangalore. Unlike last year, which saw Delhi take the pole position in terms of user growth, metros don't occupy any spot in the top 10 gaming cities on

- Last year, India became the largest consumer of mobile games in the world, recording over 15 billion downloads
- India's gaming market was worth USD 2.6 billion in the financial year 2022 and it will reach USD 8.6 billion by 2027

the list. This growth is testament to the extensive popularity of mo-

mobile gaming beyond the big cities, the report said.

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the top destination for mobile gamers, followed by Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar and West Bengal. In Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Ghaziabad and Allahabad have the highest share of gamers.

Thirty six per cent of the total gamers in UP hail from these cities. This is the second year in a row that Lucknow has earned recognition for its gaming prowess - last year's IMGR revealed that growth in Lucknow outpaced all metros, the report said.

Maharashtra, in the second spot, counts Pune as the number one gaming city. Pune registered 20 per cent more gamers than Mumbai, which is placed second. Thane, Nagpur and Nashik are also in the top five, the report said.

Contd...4

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



As soon as his film started, the audience got up and left. Now, he's claiming the film got a standing ovation

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP			
MAX	30.8°C	29.8°C	
MIN	16.4°C	17.0°C	
Humidity	53%	64%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	
			Forecast
			Mainly clear sky

leisure



MARGOT ROBBIE SAYS SHE LOVES TO TRAVEL BY TRAIN

Acclaimed actress Margot Robbie might be the star of the new movie *Babylon*, but she'd rather hang out on the London Underground, the metro train service, in London. The Los Angeles-based Aussie actress has revealed she loves the , reports *The Mirror*.

BAY DENIES KILLING PIGEON ON FILM SET

Transformers director Michael Bay is fighting back against a widely-seen report that said he was charged in Italy for killing a pigeon during production on the 2019 Netflix film, *6 Underground*. The filmmaker called the report 'false, reckless, and defamatory', and says he was never charged with killing an animal, reports *Variety*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
A new acquaintance will make you feel happy today. You must remember that things don't have to be expressed explicitly; a word or a song from deep within can make a bigger impact. Ganesh says today is the right time to do something which will be more rewarding in the long-term.

TAURUS
This day, your heart is likely to rule your head. You will be driven by your moods feelings and sentiments. Most of the decisions will be based on your emotions, instead of your reason and experience. Ganesh urges you not to allow your emotionality to enter your professional activities.

GEMINI
You will feel the need to pursue your passions today. You will give more time to your family and will spend as much time as possible with your children and will bestow your love and affection on them. You will be in an imaginative and romantic mood today.

CANCER
Sometimes acting a little eccentric and adopting an approach that you usually don't helps you redefine your style, says Ganesh. Go ahead and do that today! Although you will be open to adapt and bring in some revolutionary changes, you will make sure to follow a proper pattern.

LEO
Forget the weather. Today, the only thing shining bright are your chances of spending some quality time with your near and dear ones. Going along these lines, Ganesh wonders how long has it been since you last did the same. So, make the most of this lucky day. Chances are that you shall make new friends, who might turn out to be very supportive in the future.

VIRGO
A mixture of the desirable and undesirable is on the cards today. Sentimental people will tend to think of you as a little immature. However, your sense of humour will be as robust as ever and you will never fall short of jokes. Ganesh advises you to pursue spiritually enriching activities in order to properly channelise your abilities.

LIBRA
The whole point of being a Libran is that you always have the tendency to be two separate things put together on a pair of scales that somehow balance. Ganesh feels that today, you'll bring to the scales the stability of being your own master and servant. It's a fine balance to maintain. But only you are capable of doing that, thanks to your extremely high-power status today.

SCORPIO
Your stars indicate splurging of money today. And this time, you do it for your near and dear ones. After all, what is money without friends and family? You may even go out of your way to make them happy by entertaining them with outings and celebrations.

SAGITTARIUS
Staying away from home, for a long business trip may be painful. But, when you strike great deals, it's worth it. Besides good returns from business, Ganesh also has many other surprises in store for you. Be hopeful!

CAPRICORN
You love the people around you unconditionally and such emotions will be more visible now than ever. Today, you will want to keep yourself surrounded with your loved ones, make them happy and have a good time, says Ganesh. Your honesty and sincerity will give depth to your existing relationships.

AQUARIUS
If you're stuck indoors today, make the most of it. There's always carrom, checkers, chess and partying! Shake yourself a bit, and you'll come up with creative ways to spend a leisurely day. You'll find that either way, life is wonderful, says Ganesh.

PISCES
In spite of the hardships that you will encounter on your way, your high spirits, enthusiasm and innate confidence will overcome all obstacles. And no matter how troubled the day starts, it ought to end on a cheerful note, says Ganesh.

Shehnaaz wants silence while talking to media

Mumbai: Shehnaaz Gill was seen silencing a few people as she interacted with mediapersons on the set of her new chat show.

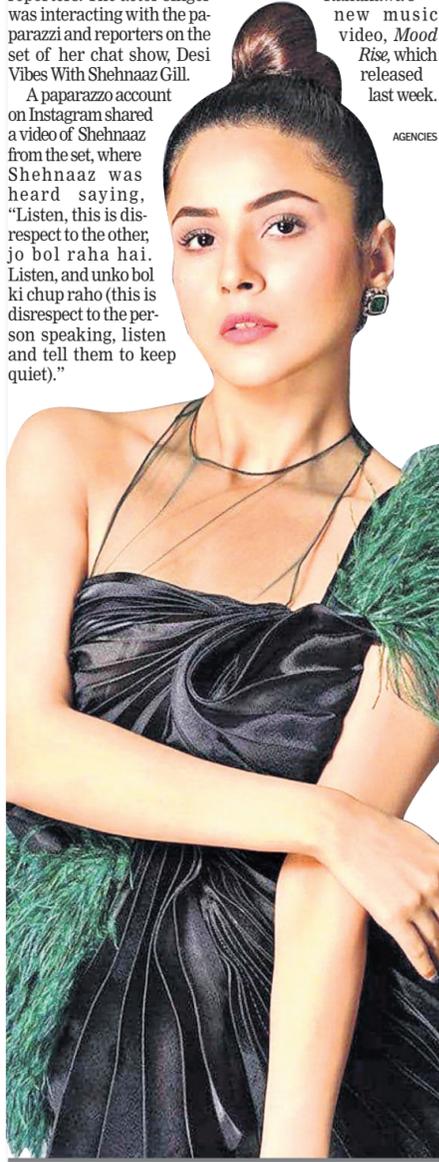
She silenced a few reporters in order to be able to answer the person she was talking to. She asked them to maintain silence as a mark of respect to the person speaking at the moment. However, one of her fan pages claimed she silenced her team members and not the reporters. The actor-singer was interacting with the paparazzi and reporters on the set of her chat show, *Desi Vibes With Shehnaaz Gill*.

A paparazzo account on Instagram shared a video of Shehnaaz from the set, where Shehnaaz was heard saying, "Listen, this is disrespect to the other; jo bol raha hai. Listen, and unko bol ki chup raho (this is disrespect to the person speaking, listen and tell them to keep quiet)."

A person commented on the video, "Well it's true, when someone is talking learn to respect and hear them first. Respect you girl!" Another said, "Proud of her."

A fan of Shehnaaz wrote, "She did the right thing, you should be quiet while others speaking." "People love her. This Real side she is not sugarcoating anyone," said another.

Shehnaaz recently featured in singer Guru Randhawa's new music video, *Mood Rise*, which released last week.



AGENCIES



Rashmika's prep to play blind girl

Mumbai: Rashmika Mandanna, who plays a visually-impaired character in her next film *Mission Majnu*, recounts the painful preparation she underwent for the role.

Talking about why she took on the challenge, Rashmika says, "As an actor, I have never done that. Again, this is a retro sort of film so I had to wear those costumes and at the same time, I had to take training for the visual aspect. I wondered how I would pull this off because it was so new for me."

But the process of acting while not using her eyes was a difficult one. Rashmika recalls, "I am this person who has to speak looking in the eye. I can't look at anyone else while having a conversation. But in the whole film, I can't look at Tariq (Sidharth's character). This is so hard to do, I thought. I don't come from a background of studying acting. I have to live those moments to feel it. But this was a challenge," she shares.

Before she faced the camera, Rashmika had to undergo special training to understand the body language and awareness of visually-impaired people.

Mission Majnu is a spy thriller directed by Shantanu Bagchi. The film also stars Parmeet Sethi, Kumud Mishra, Rajit Kapur, Arjan Bajwa, and Sharib Hashmi. It will be released on Netflix January 20, 2023.

AGENCIES

Miss USA Gabriel new Miss Universe

Louisiana: R'Bonney Gabriel, a fashion designer, model and sewing instructor from Texas who competition officials said is the first Filipino American to win Miss USA, was crowned Miss Universe Saturday night.

Gabriel closed her eyes and clasped hands with runner-up Miss Venezuela, Amanda Dudamel, at the moment of the dramatic reveal of the winner; then beamed after her name was announced.

The second runner-up was Miss Dominican Republic, Andreina Martinez.

In the Q&A at the last stage of the competition for the three finalists,

Gabriel was asked how she would work to demonstrate Miss Universe is "an empowering and progressive organization" if she were to win.

"I would use it to be a transformational leader," she responded, citing her work using recycled materials in her fashion design and teaching sewing to survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence.

Nearly 90 contestants from around the world took part in the competition, organizers said. Miss Curacao, Gabriela Dos Santos, and Miss Puerto Rico, Ashley Carino, rounded out the top five finalists.

Last year's winner was Harnaaz Sandhu of India.

PTI



Vijay Sethupathi's dig at Hindi-language audience

Mumbai: Tamil superstar Vijay Sethupathi, who will be soon seen essaying the role of a cop in the upcoming streaming series *Farzi*, took a dig at the Hindi-language audience, saying he isn't taken seriously until he works with the big talents of the Hindi film industry.

The actor, who has cultivated a new fan base and audience, courtesy of OTT and his films such as *Super Deluxe*, *Vikram Vedha*, 96 or the more recent *Vikram*, is working with top star Shah Rukh Khan in the Atlee's *Jawaan* and with Katrina Kaif in *Merry Christmas*.

actor said, "Whoever asks me that I am doing a Hindi project, I have to say I am working with Shahid then only they say, 'oh wow, okay'."

He added: "So, I have to say I am

working with Shah Rukh sir, I am working with Katrina Kaif, then only they respect me. So, it depends on the artist who I'm working with."

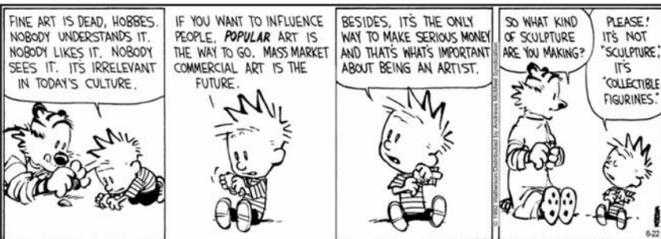
Farzi, which marks Vijay's foray into the streaming space, has been created and helmed by Raj & DK of *The Family Man* fame.

IAN5

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

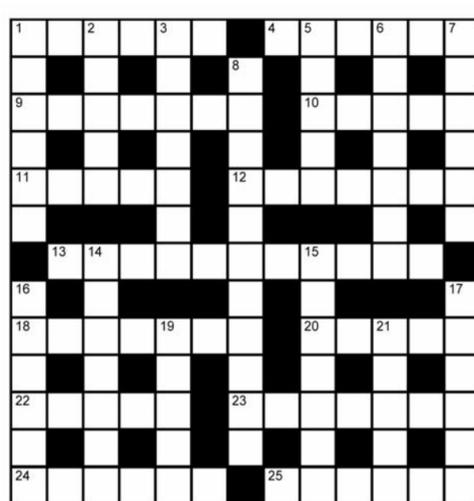


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

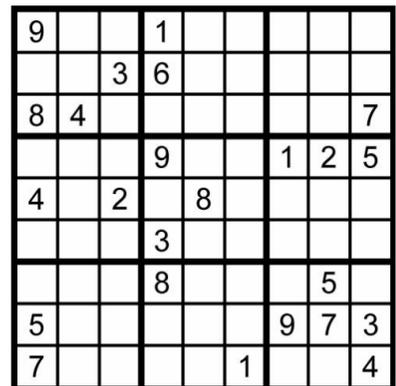


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- Across**
- 1 Scream
 - 4 Chess move
 - 9 Building material
 - 10 Enthusiastic approval
 - 11 Tedium
 - 12 Taste sensation
 - 13 Rising in a profession (2-3-6)
 - 18 Pupil
 - 20 Strong point
 - 22 Values
 - 23 Rich
 - 24 Stressful
 - 25 Entices
- Down**
- 1 Group of seven
 - 2 Synthetic fabric
 - 3 Love or hate, e.g.
 - 5 Hippodrome
 - 6 Party item
 - 7 Coaches
 - 8 Enlightenment
 - 14 Domestic fowl
 - 15 Calibrate
 - 16 Livelihood of mind or spirit
 - 17 Position in society
 - 19 Industrial center of the Ruhr
 - 21 Log Z's

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.

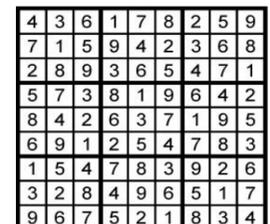


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

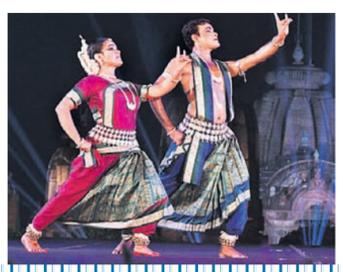


SUDOKU



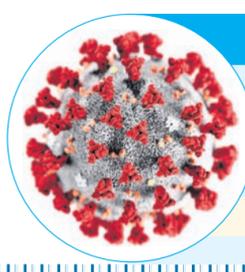
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



FROZEN IN MOTION

Artistes perform Duet Odissi on the second day of Mukteswar Dance Festival on temple premises in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,13,20,754	64,24,04,967	67,30,360
India	4,46,81,040	4,41,48,165	5,30,726
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



Moment of glory for state, Naveen at FEST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday inaugurated the second edition of .Fest at the Idco exhibition ground here in Unit III.

Inaugurating the festival, the Chief Minister said that this is a moment of glory for Odisha as we are celebrating hockey with the country and world. "We are hosting the hockey World Cup for the second time and hosting the 16 countries participating. Bhubaneswar .Fest is an extension of this celebration of hockey. So let's celebrate it," he added.

On the occasion, City Mayor Sulochna Das, Bhubaneswar Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, SSEPD Minister Ashok Chandra Panda, Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera, BDA VC Balwant Singh and others were present.

The festival, which is a combination of international food festival, night flea market and Bhubaneswar Live musical concert, started with performances by leading artists of the country.

In the food festival, organisers will present food and cuisines from 16 countries. This apart, in the night flea market the lime-light is given to regional artists to showcase products, startups, and performers.

At the festival's musical concert Bhubaneswar Live, renowned singer Guru Randhawa mesmerised the audience with his popular chartbuster songs such as Nakshara Tera Ni, Ban Jaa Tu Meri Rani, Lagdi Lahore Diya,

Naach Meri Rani and some other songs such as Gori Naal Ishq Mita, Jina Mera Dil Lutteya, Nachenge Saari Raat

The audience went mad when Randhawa came out to the stage to perform with fans. Disha Patani, the Bollywood actress, Kpop group Black Swan performed after that.

When the K-pop group Blackswan performed and the main attraction was Odisha's Shriya Lenka who also performed Rangabati with her group including Gabi, Leia, and Fatou.

For the festival, expecting heavy footfall at Idco ground, Commissionerate Police had earmarked four places for parking of vehicles which included Capital High School, Hindi High School, Kendriya Vidyalay grounds and the Football Arena inside the Capital High School.

As many as 10 platoons of police along with six ACP-rank officers, 19 inspectors, and 52 sub-inspector and ASI-rank officers were deployed at the ground for safety and security of the spectators and artists during the event. This apart, five platoons of traffic personnel were deployed at the spot to ensure smooth movement of traffic.

Similarly, Saturday saw the commencement of City Trails, an initiative aimed to boost tourist footfall in the state. The trails will continue till February 12 and will consist of three segments - Food Trail, Nature Trail and Museum Trail. The activities are aimed at enabling the citizens to get a holistic essence of Bhubaneswar city culture and heritage, which will propel the tourism industry.



IN MOOD FOR CELEBRATION: Hues from the inaugural event of the City festival

OP PHOTOS

EOW nabs MP techie in inter-state job racket

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Sunday produced before the Bhubaneswar SDJM court an accused it had arrested in the high profile inter-state job racket considered one of the biggest such rackets in the country. The accused was identified as Arpit Panchal, who hails from Jaora city of Ratlam district (near Ujjain) in Madhya Pradesh.

A team of EOW sleuths, with the help of their Madhya Pradesh counterpart, had carried out raids at different spots and arrested accused Arpit from Ratlam, January 10. He was later presented before a local court and brought to Bhubaneswar on transit remand. The Bhubaneswar SDJM court sent the accused to judicial custody.

"The arrested accused Arpita Panchal, a Bachelor in Engineering in Information Technology, forms



the part of one of the biggest organized job fraud of the country. The arrested accused in conspiracy with other inter-state fraudsters has duped, as an approximation, at least 50,000 job seekers youth across the country in respect of the amount that run in crores," informed EOW sources.

■ The accused fraudsters used some four fake websites resembling government websites to dupe gullible job aspirants from Odisha

■ With various job postings, they duped at least 12,000 job seekers from the state in the last two years

■ The fraudsters used to collect amounts varying from ₹3000 to Rs 50, 000 from each candidate promising them jobs

conversant with at least four computer languages and is an expert in creating and designing websites.

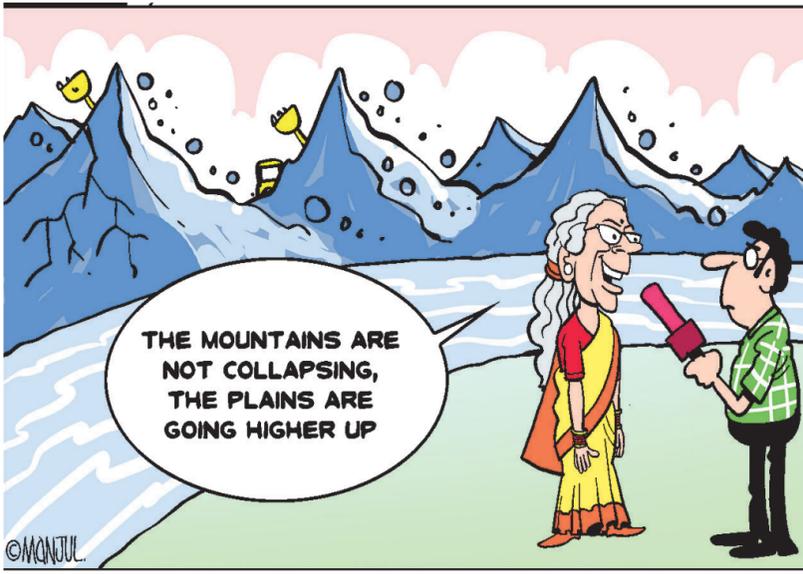
"He, in connivance with Zafar Ahmad, who had earlier been arrested in the case and other fraudsters created and designed at least 9 websites which looked like government websites advertising various government jobs," revealed EOW sources.

The fake websites created by Arpit included www.jssy.com (Jiban Swasthya Suraksha Yojana), www.mssy.in (Rajya Janakalyan Gramin Swasthya Sansthan), www.bjsry.in (Bharatiya Jana Swasthya Suraksha Yojana), www.cgss.in (Kshetriya Gramin Janakalyan Swasthya Sansthan), www.bsya.com, www.musy.com, www.gmbss.in, www.gsmsss.in and www.cspyin.

The accused fraudsters were using four of the fake websites resembling government websites to dupe gullible job aspirants in Odisha. They published various job postings in these websites and duped at least 12,000 job seekers of Odisha during the last two years. They used to collect amounts varying from ₹3000 to ₹50, 000 from each candidate.

Notably, prime accused Zafar was arrested by the EOW from Uttar Pradesh in December last year.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



'Startup Mela will create new gen of entrepreneurs'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Minister Pratap Keshari Deb Sunday inaugurated 'Startup Mela 2023', an initiative of Startup Odisha aimed at showcasing the state's startup ecosystem and inspiring youths towards entrepreneurship. Present at the inaugural event also were MSME department principal secretary Saswath Mishra and Startup Odisha executive chairman Omkar Rai.

Wishing success to the Mela, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said in a written statement, "I am happy that Startup Odisha has been recognised by Government of India as Top Performer. Startup Mela is a great platform that will motivate our students, innovators, and startups to demonstrate Odisha's entrepreneurial zeal, and will inspire the startup culture at the grass-roots and institute level."

In his inaugural address, Minister Deb said, "Odisha has a green backdrop, adequate resources, facilities and most importantly sound technical labor. In all probability it will be the next industrial hub of the country in another five to seven years. We need to cash in at the right moment. We cannot remain a service state. We want entrepre-

The inaugural day had some interactive sessions for students and featured hackathon and roundtable discussion with incubators

neers in Odisha. The aim of this Mela is to create a new breed of entrepreneurs."

Delivering the opening comments, Omkar Rai said, "We have also for the first time come up with the concept of Brand Ambassadors from carefully chosen academic institutions. These ambassadors will not only be innovators themselves but also act as a bridge between Startup Odisha and academic institutions. When we launched our fund of fund program with commitment of ₹100 crore from Government of Odisha, we received an overwhelming response from the investor community, and we are going to have over ₹1,200 fund of funds, which will be jointly operated by the state government and seven Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) fund managers."

Targeted at students from schools across the state, the inaugural day of the two day event also had a host of interactive sessions.

Constituent Assembly feared misuse of Governor's office

In the course of the nation setting out to firm up its foundation as a sovereign republic, the Constituent Assembly was elected to frame the Constitution of India.

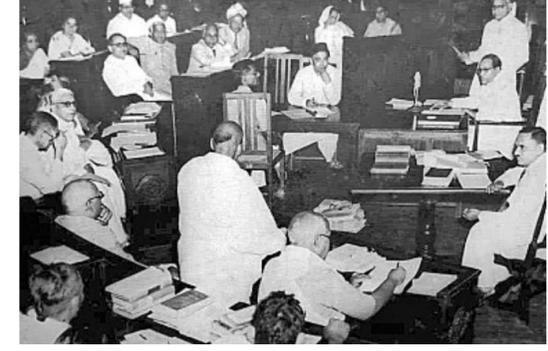
It was May 31, 1949, that the debates pertaining to the role of Governor took place in the Constituent Assembly.

Biswanath Das, the Prime Minister of Odisha Province in British India, who later became the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, anticipated the political clamour of present times - that a Governor nominated by the Centre is not acceptable to a state ruled by a different party.

Das had said: "The view that a person from his province should not be appointed a Governor, I strongly hold, and I tell you if that policy is adopted, we will simply bring the Governor into disrepute."

BR Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, had insisted that the Governor need not to be a merely ornamental entity.

He had clarified that although Governors will have no functions, they will certainly have duties to perform. Ambedkar had pinpointed two duties: "One, that he has to retain the ministry in office. Because the ministry is to hold office during his pleasure, he has to see whether and when he should exercise his pleasure against the ministry.



"The second duty which the Governor has, and must have, is to advise the ministry, to warn the ministry, to suggest to the ministry an alternative and to ask for a reconsideration."

KT Shah, known for his active role as a member of the Constituent Assembly, had held that "the Constitution should make it imperative upon the Governor to use its power in accordance with the Constitution and the law, that is to say, on the advice of his ministers as provided for in the subsequent clauses and in other parts of the Constitution."

It was extensively debated whether the Governor should be appointed by the President or should be elected. In order to eliminate

the possibility of creating a parallel state leadership, it was decided that the President will appoint the Governor.

Speaking on the now-contentious office, BG Kher, who went on to become the first 'premier' of Bombay State, had said: "A Governor can do a great deal of good if he is a good Governor and he can do a great deal of mischief if he is a bad Governor; in spite of the very little power given to him under the Constitution."

In a situation of a clash, PK Sen, member from Bihar, had said: "The question is whether by interfering, the Governor would be upholding the democratic idea or subverting it. It would really be a surrender of democracy. We have

in letter and spirit, the Governor's role is to assist the Chief Minister for the smooth functioning of the state

It goes without saying that the Governor should not only not undermine the dignity of the Constitutional post, but must also abide by Constitutional morality while discharging his/her duties

decided that the Governor should be a Constitutional head. He would be the person really to lubricate the machinery and to see to it that all the wheels are going well by reason not of his interference, but his friendly intervention."

With respect to acting on the aid and advice of the Cabinet, Ambedkar had said that according to the principles of the new Constitution, "The Governor is required to follow the advice of his ministry in all matters. Therefore, the real issue before the House is not nomination or election, but what powers you propose to give to your Governor."

There happen to be no explicit Constitutional provisions that specifically empower the Governors to seek information directly from the officials.

seek any information from the council of ministers and the Chief Ministers. However, this Article drew much opposition in the Constituent Assembly.

HV Kamath, a member of the Constituent Assembly, had put forth a strong argument against making it an obligation for the Chief Minister to submit all information called by the Governor. He had said: "This is sort of putting the cart before the horse. I think with nominated Governors in the states, it should be left to the Chief Minister or the Premier of the state to decide which matter he would like to put before the Governor."

The final word on the debate was Ambedkar's, whose central argument was that the Governors will not have the power to overrule the decisions of the council of ministers.

It may thus be concluded that the Governor is by default empowered to delay or obstruct the decisions of the state government.

In letter and spirit, the Governor's role is to assist the Chief Minister for the smooth functioning of the state. It goes without saying that the Governor should not only not undermine the dignity of the Constitutional post, but must also abide by Constitutional morality while discharging his/her duties.

KAVYA DUBEY, IANS

State govt incentive to PMAY beneficiaries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: "In order to encourage early completion of houses by the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (Grameen) beneficiaries, the state government will provide Rs. 20,000/- and Rs. 10,000/- as incentive for completing houses within 4 and 6 months respectively," Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department, SK Lohani said Sunday.



The beneficiaries will also get additional support out of MGNREGA. Each beneficiary gets wages for 90 man-days in plain areas and 95 man-days in hilly areas. They are also getting additional Rs. 12,000 for construction of Individual Household Latrine (IHHL) under Swachh Bharat Mission Scheme.

Hence, each beneficiary effectively gets Rs. 1, 72,000 in plain areas and 1, 82,000 in hilly areas, if he is able to complete the house within 4 months, he said.

Selection of eligible beneficiaries is an important aspect in successful implementation of Pradhan

Mantri Awas Yojna (Grameen). Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department has taken all precautionary measures to ensure that no ineligible household is selected during selection of 8.17 lakh PMAY (G)-Normal and 1.42 lakh PMAY (G)-Special houses, Lohani added. "Cooperation from people of all walks of the society is highly solicited," Lohani said.

Following steps are being taken for sanction of 8.17 lakhs PMAY (G)-Normal Houses and 1.42 lakh PMAY (G) - Special Houses:

The provisional list of beneficiaries will be displayed in the concerned GP office, schools, AWCs and other important places of the village from January 16 to January 24 for public scrutiny. If any ineligible household's name is found in the list, public can file objection against the particular ineligible household. On receipt of the complaint, necessary action will be taken on due inquiry.



STREET FEST: Denizens participated in Patha Utsav held at Rath Road in Old Town area of Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Patha Utsav enters Ekamra constituency

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Patha Utsav, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) initiative to keep up festive environment throughout the entire FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, took place at Old Town, Rath Road Sunday morning. The audience converged at the point were quite happy to name the Patha Utsav as second Rukuna Ratha Yatra.

The inaugural session filled

with energy and enthusiasm in the presence of Minister of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Ashok Panda, Jati MLA Suresh Ch. Rautray, Bhubaneswar Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, Deputy Mayor Manjulata Kanhar, Olympian Anuradha Biswal, all coporators of the locality, BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange and other officials.

Speaking to the media Rautray

said, "It gives me immense pleasure to see the 100th Patha Utsav, which was earlier being repeatedly organised near Ram Mandir and now finally arrived at the Ekamra constituency. Youth in abundance have congregated here to enjoy dance, music, friendship, brotherhood and the spirit of Bhubaneswar."

Awareness by Udvab seva foundation, Muruja and Jhota by different Self Help Groups (SHGs), exercise by Jumba groups, dance by

Prince Group, Yoga Groups, awareness by BMC sanitation wing on Swachha Survekshan 2023, health checkup camps, body building exercises, yoga, drum orchestra, Olly image on road by SHGs and local NGOs filled the atmosphere with energy and ecstasy.

BMC had drafted three Patha Utsavs to be held Sunday mornings during the course of the Hockey World cup, two of which had earlier been held at Janpath and Sikharchandi Square.

KIMS to upgrade knowledge base of doctors

Bhubaneswar: Continuing its philosophy of 'healthcare with a healing touch', City-based Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), a constituent of KIIT-Deemed-to-be-University, would take its role further in spreading messages on the management of medical emergencies to the primary

health centres (PHCs) and community health centre (CHCs) in the coming days. As part of the 5th CME for the ongoing silver jubilee celebrations of the KIIT-DU on "Clinical pearls in the management of medical emergencies" for the first time at KIMS, doctors from various PHCs and CHCs across the

state were given an opportunity to learn how to treat trauma and emergency cases and the experts, through their valued talks, tried to enlighten the participants on how to work efficiently and correctly to treat the victims during the first few minutes and hours as it's called the 'golden hour' in medical parlance.

CONTINUED FROM P1

68 die in Nepal...

The journey to Pokhara, Nepal's second largest city tucked under the picturesque Annapurna mountain range, from the capital Kathmandu is one of the Himalayan country's most popular tourist routes, with many preferring a short flight instead of a six-hour-long drive through hilly roads.

Pokhara Airport spokesman Anup Joshi said the aircraft crashed as it approached the airport, adding that the plane cruised at 12,500 feet and was on a normal descent. The weather Sunday was clear.

Flight tracking website FlightRadar24 said on Twitter the Yeti Airlines aircraft was 15 years old and equipped with an old transponder with unreliable data. It added that the last signal from the transponder was received at 0512 GMT at an altitude of 2,875 feet above mean sea level.

Pokhara Airport is located at about 2,700,200 feet above mean sea level, according to FlightRadar24.

The ATR72 of European plane-maker Airbus is a widely used twin engine turboprop plane manufactured by a joint venture of Airbus and Italy's Leonardo. Yeti Airlines has a fleet of six ATR72-500 planes, according to its website.

ATR specialists are fully engaged to support both the investigation and the customer, the company said on Twitter. Airbus and Leonardo did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

On its website, Yeti describes itself as a leading domestic carrier. Its fleet consists of six ATR 72-500s, including the one that crashed. It also owns Tara Air, and the two-

gether offer the widest network in Nepal, the company says.

Odisha tops with...

In Rajasthan, capital city Jaipur leads the way, with over 200 per cent more gamers than Jodhpur which is the second highest in the state. They are joined by cities like Udaipur, Alwar and Kota.

Bihar's massive growth in the number of gamers is fueled by mobile gaming's popularity in its capital city Patna as well as in Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Darbhanga and Bhagalpur. The number of gamers in the capital city is more than twice of that in the rest of the four top cities combined.

At the number five spot is West Bengal. Kolkata, Midnapore, Murshidabad, Howrah and Darjeeling are the biggest gaming cities in the state. Altogether they command over 30 per cent of the state's total mobile gaming population, according to IMGR 2022.

Enhanced internet penetration and the availability of safe e-sports and gaming platforms have worked wonders to contribute to this rise.

India play out...

India pressed and earned their fourth PC but England were able to clear after a scramble inside the circle. It was then the turn of Varun Kumar to try his luck but his shot failed to cause any harm.

India were the dominant side in the second quarter but could not score as the two sides failed to break the deadlock at half time. David Condon had a try in the 37th minute but went wide. But India were unlucky not to have taken the lead the next minute as Hardik's double shot was saved by England goalie.

The match was spiced up and it was the turn of England to get a golden chance as the Indian defence allowed Sam Ward to take a reverse shot from a one-on-one situation with goalie PR Sreejesh but it went wide. India responded quickly and it was Mandep who had a glorious chance to score in the 41st minute as he got a free hit just near the top of England 'D' but he missed the target.

The full capacity crowd of 21,000 thought India had taken the lead in the last minute of the third quarter which was contested evenly after the ball landed into the English goal but the umpire ruled that it had already hit an Indian leg.

India were one man down in the last few minutes of the match and England pressed for the winner but failed to breach the home team's defence. England got a PC in the last minute but wasted it.

BJEM School celebrates its 50th Foundation Day



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Buxi Jagabandhu English Medium (BJEM) School, Bhubaneswar celebrated its 50th Foundation Day 'Inception-2023' Saturday.

The celebration began with sacred rituals of Puja and Havan. To commemorate the memorable day, a cultural carnival, Prabhat Pheri, was held on the theme of cultural heritage of Odisha and Maharashtra.

The energy and passion of the students put up in the project per-

formances as a part of 'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat' were applauded by all. Around 1000 students from lower Nursery to Class XI participated in the programme.

Attending the celebration as the chief guest, Raghunath Mishra, Chairman of the school managing committee lighted the ceremonial lamp and offered floral tribute to the portrait of Buxi Jagabandhu.

He reminded the gathering how the school has completed 50 eventful years and now has been blessed with such a beautiful surrounding with wonderful facilities.

The Principal Sandhya Jena highlighted how the school since its humble beginning has been leaving meaningful impact on the social, economic and educational lives of the community.

Pratap Kumar Jena, Manager, SMC paid his respectful tribute to the founders and appreciated their indomitable efforts and tireless work for the school with a vision.

Gracing the occasion, Ashwini Tiwari, the vice-Chairman of the school, felt immensely proud to be a part of the school as the school has the unique feature of respecting dissimilarities and value patterns. He congratulated all with the remark that the school has been justifiably transmitting values and Education for All.

Sangram Keshari Nayak, the Additional Manager, SMC, expressed his delight and enlightened the students with an inspiring speech.

Pallabi Mohapatra, the Vice Principal proposed the vote of thanks to all the stakeholders for their collaborative efforts to make the celebration a grand success.

Road Safety Week at Nexus Esplanade Mall



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15: Nexus Esplanade organised Road Safety week recently with the theme "Save Yourself to Save Your Family" at mall premises in association with Rapido.

The event was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Traffic KK Panigrahi.

Speaking at the event, Panigrahi highlighted the importance of road safety and asked the people to abide

by the traffic rules. Centre Director of the Mall, Parth Pratim Nayak also shared his views on road safety and added his team wants to reach out to more customers through such initiative.

On this occasion, the Mall management organised a question-answer session on Road Safety. The customers took active participation in the session and got answers to their queries. Later every participant was given away a helmet and T-shirt from Rapido.

Marriage provides health benefits – and here's why

The New Year is traditionally a time when many people feel a renewed commitment to create healthy habits, such as exercising regularly, drinking more water or eating more healthfully.

It turns out that when it comes to health, married people have an edge, especially married men. But surely the act of walking down the aisle is not what provides this health advantage.

So what exactly is at play? As a team, we study how relationships affect health. One of us is a nursing professor who studies how social support influences health behaviours.

One is a social health psychologist who explores how stress affects couples' relationships and health, and one is a social psychologist who researches how relationships influence health behaviour changes.

Together, we examine how part-



ners influence each other's health, taking gender into account in this equation.

Health benefits of marriage, for men and women. It's important to note that most marriage and health studies have been limited to married men and women.

But more recent studies are examining these relationships in partners who have the same gen-

The social integration, or the extent to which people participate in social relationships and activities, can greatly influence health – from reducing the risk of hypertension and heart disease to lowering one's risk of death or suicide

While single adults undoubtedly have very meaningful close relationships too, a healthy marriage by nature provides more opportunities for closeness and socialization

der identity, the same biological sex and who are gender diverse.

One theory that seeks to explain the link between marriage and health is the act of self-selection.

Simply put, people who are wealthier and healthier than average are more likely not only to get married but also to find a partner who is wealthier and healthier than average.

Men and women with poorer health and wealth than average are less likely to marry at all.

While this may be part of the story, marriage also provides partners with a sense of belonging, more opportunities for social engagement and reduced feelings of loneliness.

This social integration, or the extent to which people participate in social relationships and activities, can greatly influence health – from reducing the risk of hypertension and heart disease to lowering one's risk of death or suicide.

Another important connection between marriage and health involves the body's inflammatory process.

Research links loneliness and lack of close relationships with inflammation, or the body's way of reacting to illness, injury or disease.

Though inflammation is needed for healing, chronic inflammation is associated with heart disease, arthritis, cancers and autoimmune diseases.

While single adults undoubtedly have very meaningful close relationships too, a healthy marriage by nature provides more opportunities for closeness and socialization, supporting the link

between marriage and inflammation.

When you dig deeper, gender seems to play a role as well. One study related to marital quality, gender and inflammation found a connection between lower levels of spousal support and higher levels of inflammation for women, but not men.

In another study, if couples used negative communication patterns, such as one partner making demands while the other partner withdraws, women but not men experienced heightened inflammation.

Marriage and longevity. Married men and married women live, on average, two years longer than their unmarried counterparts. One reason for this longevity benefit is the influence of marital partners on healthy behaviours.

Study after study shows that married people eat better and are less likely to smoke and drink excessively. All of these healthy behaviours help explain why married people tend to live longer.

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Stockyard construction increases pollution woes in Jajpur district



before the National Green Tribunal. The green body heard the matter and directed the district administration to conduct a probe and submit a report before it.

A different kind of problem then reared its head. Some workers at the Manpur siding apprehended that the case filed before the NGT might render them jobless. So they resorted to agitation to stall the probe ordered by the NGT. They were successful in doing that as till date the report has not been placed before the NGT.

However, the recent construction of a stockyard has reignited the pollution problem. Locals alleged that it has been set up close to the Manpur over-bridge in violation of all government norms.

The road close to stockyard is the lifeline of the residents of Dhuligad panchayat and is used by hundreds of students, patients going to Danagadi hospital and carry out their other chores. However, travelling on the road is a nightmare.

People alleged that the Railways had earlier planned to build the stockyard at Tomka. However, it was shifted to Dhuligad panchayat as a revenge act against the local residents who had protested against pollution. The agitation then had created a law and order situation resulting in the death of two persons.

When contacted, SPCB regional officer, Pramod Kumar Behera said that the railway authorities have received a no-objection certificate (NOC) for construction of the stockyard. However, they will only be allowed to operate the stockyard only after adopting necessary measures to prevent pollution.

has been destroyed.

People pointed out that in the last couple of years more than 100 people have died due to kidney, tuberculosis and liver-related diseases due to pollution.

The matter came to the fore after Dhuligad sarpanch Manas Rana submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister's Office, Member Secretary, State Pollution Control Board (SPCB), Jajpur Collector and the regional officer of SPCB. In the memorandum, Rana has demanded closure of the railway siding or its relocation.

Rana has blamed the consultancy agency in charge of loading and unloading for pollution in the area. The claim is not unfounded as the regional officer of the SPCB in Kalinganagar had pulled up the officials of the railway siding for pollution in August, 2018.

Despite being censured, work at the siding went on unabated with pollution norms being flouted with impunity. Frustrated, the residents filed a petition complaining about air and water pollution

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Jan 15: Air and water pollution arising out of work in the railway siding in Kalinganagar locality is drastically affecting the lives of people living in Dhuligad panchayat under Danagadi block in Jajpur district. Despite their best efforts, the people have not been able to counter the ill-effects of pollution. To compound their problems, the construction of a stockyard at the railway siding has doubled their problems.

Locals alleged that the entire area has turned toxic due to pollution arising out of work in the railway siding. The villagers living close to it are the worst sufferers. Forget any preventive measures; the railway authorities do not even sprinkle water on a regular basis in and around the siding to prevent the emission of dust. They have also not set up high walls or constructed drains and effluent treatment plant (ETP) to counter pollution. Locals also pointed out that all the green cover in the area



ROOTED TO TRADITION: Artistes from Sri Lanka performed a folk dance at the Sambalpur Lok Mahotsav-2023 held at the PHD ground in Ainthapali of the town, Sunday

BNP OPENS FOR TOURISTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, Jan 15: The Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP) under this block in Kendrapara district reopened Sunday for tourists after completion of crocodile census. Tourists were barred from visiting the sanctuary as it was closed to conduct the headcount of the crocodiles. The survey was conducted January 9 to 11.

Reports said that the population of estuarine crocodiles has increased marginally at the Bhitarkanika National Park. A total of 1,793 crocodiles were sighted in and outside the water bodies of Rajanagar Mangrove Forest Division (Wildlife).

A total of 22 teams under supervision of wildlife expert Dr Sudhakar Kar were engaged for counting the crocodiles this year. They found three estuarine crocodiles each measuring more than 20 ft and 14 reptiles that were between 16 and 18 feet long in the Kanika range.

Frequent fish deaths in Bata river raise pollution concern in Paradip

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, Jan 15: A stretch of Paradip's Bata river flowing near Balijhara is witnessing mass fish deaths again.

A large number of dead fish are floating on the river giving out foul smell and creating an unhygienic environment in surrounding villages and colonies, said a local resident Anata Jena. In the morning the number of dead fish was fewer, but it eventually grew towards the noon, he added.

Kou, Mullet, Kantia, and Magur varieties are among the dead fish found on the river. After the news spread, Twinkle Mohanty from the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) rushed to the spot and collected samples.

According to the initial testing results, this has happened as a result of reduced oxygen (dissolved oxygen)



levels in the river water. For further testing, dead fish and water sample will be sent to a lab in Bhubaneswar. According to a local official Pushkar Chandra Behera, the cause of the fish die-off will come to the fore once the report arrives.

Bata river originates in Paradip's Udayabata and flows through Udayachandrapur, Balijhara, and further before meeting Koudia River. On either side of this river, there are several urban and industrial areas. As a result, the river

has become narrow and is in a very critical condition. Reservoirs close to Balijhara and Bijaychandrapur are used to store water.

Polluted water from drains and other kinds of garbage from urban areas are all dumped in this water. Apart from that, the river is full of 'Kolikati dala' or algae. The algae overgrowth or algal bloom consumes oxygen and as a result, lack of oxygen makes it impossible for aquatic life to survive. The board informed that due to this reason the oxygen level has depleted leading to the fish kill.

According to sources, this river has been witnessing mass fish deaths every year in July and August since 2016. This year, fish are dying even in winter. One can easily guess the pollution levels in Paradip from this incident, said an environmentalist Prabhat Chadra Swain.

Woman kills self over domestic dispute



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 15: A woman died by suicide by hanging herself over alleged domestic dispute at her Lochapada Ramakrushna Nagar residence under Nimakhandi police limits, Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as Kumilata Panda, 52, wife of Prafulla Panda, a businessman in this city. On being informed, police reached the spot and launched an investigation. Police said that the couple was staying at their Ramakrushna Nagar residence while their two sons are working outside the state.

Kunilata's death became public when Prafulla, who runs a departmental store at the New Bus Stand locality, returned home for lunch Sunday afternoon. He found the collapsible gate of his house locked. After pressing the door bell a number of times, Prafulla tried to call his wife on mobile. However, all the calls went unanswered.

Suspecting something amiss, Prafulla broke the gate and entered the house. To his utter dismay and shock he found his wife hanging from the ceiling fan. Prafulla then informed the police.

When contacted, police said that the body has been sent for post-mortem and the actual reason behind the woman's death can be ascertained only after the report is available.

Grandparents held shooting obscene video of minor

Thakurmunda: Grandparents of a minor girl have been arrested for allegedly making an obscene video of the latter and then uploading it on social media platforms, under this police limits in Mayurbhanj district, sleuths said Sunday. Police have registered a case and rescued the girl and arrested the couple. The accused grandparents have been identified as Ramachandra Soy, a teacher by profession at Badamahuladiha Sevashram School and his wife Jyotshnarani. Police said that victim is a native of Sosa police limits and was staying with her grandparents at Dangapani village after the death of her mother. She is a student of Class-VII. Police said that Ramachandra used to allegedly molest the girl on a regular basis while his wife would make videos of her husband's dastardly act. After shooting the videos, she used to send those to Ramchandra over WhatsApp. However, while sending one such video, she sent it by mistake to another person. Later, the video went viral on social media platforms. The local villagers informed the sarpanch about the development and later, the girl's aunt lodged a complaint at Thakurmunda police station, January 13.



TESTING SKILLS: Women of tribal community aim at their target at an archery competition organised by Maa Dharitri Adivasi Youth Club at a tribal village in Kharinasi panchayat of Mahakalapara block of Kendrapara district on the occasion of Makar festival, Sunday

Odisha-WB border dispute on Subarnarekha resolved

Sand mining to be done on basis of new norms

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Jan 15: The dispute between the Odisha and West Bengal governments over sand mining on the Subarnarekha riverbed finally has been solved after officials from Balasore and Paschim Medinipur district in the neighbouring state reached the spot and conducted an inquiry, sources said Sunday. A team led by additional district magistrate (ADM) Sucharu Bal of Balasore district met worked jointly with officials led by ADM Suman Subhra Mohanty from West Bengal conducted the probe jointly, Friday.

The Balasore ADM was accompanied by Jaleswar tehsildar Subhendu Sahu, revenue inspector (RI) Debaranjan Mohanty and officials Sagar Baske, Saroj Bhanja, Prapat Bhanja, Subal Parida, Niranjan Singh, Radhagobind Panda. Officials of both the sides conducted the measurement from Sadarghat in Bilashpur to Sunakanika and from Bilashpur to Gobarghata on the riverbed to identify and demarcate the borders between the two states.

The demarcation of the border for sand mining on Subarnarekha riverbed was done as per an order given by National Green Tribunal four years back. The inquiry and measurement of the area has paved the way for sand mining in a proper and legitimate manner.

Sources said, social activist Sudarshan Das had filed a writ petition (173/2018) before the principal bench of NGT in New Delhi highlighting the border problem plaguing the riverbed, sand mining and subsequent pollution arising out of it. The NGT gave an order in this regard and directed the two districts to demarcate the border between the two states.

The then Jaleswar tehsildar and the block development officer of Dantan in West Bengal conducted measurements in various phases and demarcated the border. As part of this exercise, 34 pillars were installed on the demarcated area from Odisha side while 42 pillars were installed by West Bengal.

During the measurement this time, the pillars installed four years back were taken into consideration, the two ADMs Bal and Mohanty said. They added that a report regarding the demarcation of the border will be submitted before the NGT.

Notably, the NGT had suggested some rules to the Union Government on sand mining in the border areas in 2020. These rules are part of the Regulating and Monitoring of Sustainable Sand Mining Policy-2020. The concerned district collectors have been asked to oversee sand mining in their areas.

Special arrangements for differently-abled

BIRSA MUNDA STADIUM IN ROURKELA CATERS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL HOCKEY LOVERS, SAYS OFFICIAL

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, Jan 15: The Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium here which is the world's largest hockey arena as per the International Hockey Federation (FIH) certification has special facilities and seats for differently-abled persons so that they can watch matches without any inconvenience, an official said Sunday. However, it should be stated here that most international stadiums across the world have facilities for the physically challenged.

The stadium has been named after legendary tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda. It was completed in just 15 months ahead of the hockey World Cup, while the vil-



lage was built in nine months, the official informed. The stadium will play host to 20 matches.

In order to make the arrangements friendly, special emphasis has

been placed to build a ramp that leads to the lift, taking the physically challenged hockey fans to the floor having access to the stand on the first tier, Sports Secretary

of the Odisha government, R Vineel Krishna said.

"A differently-abled person can enter the stadium from any gate. We have made it universally accessible for them. The stadium has about 100 seats allocated for them," Krishna stated.

Besides arrangements for differently-abled people, the stadium aims to provide a classic match experience for all fans visiting the venue. The gallery seating is designed in such a way that there will not be any vision block for fans irrespective of where they are seated in the stadium, Krishna said. He added that fans will never miss the live action.

The sports secretary said that the Odisha government has followed

all norms and protocols. The stadium has been divided into two levels - the lower bowl and upper bowl.

For fans travelling to the stadium in vehicles, there are six spacious parking lots within a 100-metre radius of the stadium.

The pathway from the parking lot to the stadium has been designed in such a way that the fans will enjoy their walk to the stands and witness the beautiful art which encapsulates the true spirit of hockey. There are signages put around everywhere for better navigation up to their seats, an official said.

The new stadium is a prime example of the commitment towards making events inclusive for all, Krishna added.





A smile acts upon the difficulties as the sun upon the clouds - it disperses them.

THE MOTHER

Three-Front War

It has been a tough week for academic freedom in the United States. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis packed the board of a liberal arts college with allies determined to transform it into a conservative ideological bastion. Kenneth Roth, the former head of Human Rights Watch, was denied a fellowship at Harvard's Kennedy School, allegedly over HRW's criticism of Israel's human-rights record. And Hamline University in Minnesota came under fire after an adjunct professor was dismissed for showing a centuries-old image of the Prophet Muhammad in an art history class.

To advance their core mission of generating and transmitting knowledge, institutions of higher education rely on funds from three main sources: the state, the market, and their students and alumni. The key is to maintain a balance among all three; depending on any of them too heavily poses a distinct threat to academic inquiry.

Start with the state, which has a long history of constraining academic freedom. During the US Red Scare that followed both world wars, faculty were driven out of institutions solely for their ideological beliefs. While the explicit targeting of faculty is rare today, continued dependence on government funding means that universities – especially public institutions – remain vulnerable to efforts by politicians to influence budgets, curricula, personnel decisions, and much else.

Republicans think this is a winning political issue. They argue that educational institutions, especially universities, are hotbeds of liberal indoctrination. In a 2021 speech entitled "Universities Are the Enemy," for example, future US Senator JD Vance argued that universities pursue not "knowledge and truth," but "deceit and lies," and called his alma mater, Yale Law School, "genuinely totalitarian" in its hostility to conservative views.

But far from protecting academic freedom, Republicans have sought to prevent the dissemination of ideas with which they disagree. DeSantis has been a leader in the effort to ban "divisive" lessons about race, following a moral panic about "critical race theory" in schools. Last year, he signed into law the Stop Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees (Stop WOKE) Act, which forbade teaching that "espouses, promotes, advances, inculcates, or compels" several ideas related to race, including the view that discrimination to achieve diversity is acceptable. It also sought to prevent anyone from feeling "guilt, anguish, or other forms of psychological distress" on account of their race or sex.

Last November, a federal judge ordered a temporary injunction against the higher-education sections of the Stop WOKE Act for violating professors' First Amendment right to free speech – a victory for academic freedom. But DeSantis is not giving up; he now aims to achieve his ideological goals by other means. By appointing six conservatives to its 13-member board – including a dean at the conservative Hillsdale College – he hopes to transform the New College of Florida into the "Hillsdale of the South."

But the state is hardly alone in suppressing academic freedom. Good university leaders educate their private donors – including industry partners and philanthropists – on the importance of staying out of academic decisions. But there is no doubt that donor pressure can shape an institution's decision-making.

The denial of Roth's fellowship appears to be a case in point. While university officials have not publicly explained their decision not to approve his fellowship, scholars claim that HRW's alleged "anti-Israel bias" was the main consideration. HRW, which Roth ran for nearly three decades, has faced a powerful backlash from Israel's defenders, including over a 2021 report asserting that in some areas, the "deprivations" inflicted by Israel on the Palestinians "are so severe that they amount to the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution."

Roth would not be the first person to lose out on a university position over Israel. In 2020, the University of Toronto rescinded an offer to Valentina Azarova to direct its law school's human-rights programme, in response to donor pressure over her past criticisms of Israel. The university was ultimately censured by the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Donor pressure was also behind the decision by the University of North Carolina's board of trustees to reject the journalism department's recommendation to offer tenure to Nikole Hannah-Jones in 2021. Conservative donors apparently took issue with her involvement in the 1619 Project, a New York Times initiative focused on examining the political, social, and economic legacy of slavery in the US.

Student tuition – which has more than doubled in the last two decades – reduces universities' reliance on public and private donors. But overreliance on it generates its own risks, with institutions increasingly treating their students as customers. The result has been to submit to demands by students not to be exposed to material that they deem offensive.

Enter the Hamline University controversy. The adjunct professor, Erika López Prater, did everything right, issuing a trigger warning in the syllabus and providing context before showing the 14th-century depiction of the Prophet Muhammad – a Persian masterpiece long beloved by Muslims, many of whom do not hold that all representations of the Prophet are forbidden.

Students complained anyway, and the university's "associate vice president of inclusive excellence" labeled Prater's actions "undeniably ... Islamophobic." It is apparently easier to undermine a faculty member in the name of ensuring that every student feels heard than to defend a clearly legitimate pedagogical decision.

The return of repressive state laws undoubtedly poses a grave threat to academic freedom. But as the Harvard and Hamline cases show, the excessive influence of private donors and students can be just as insidious. In all three instances, feelings of offended minorities limited the content of higher education.

Such grievances need to be aired and discussed, and threats against minorities should of course never be tolerated. But if academic discourse and campus debate are shut down every time a person feels offended, how can universities possibly examine controversial topics? Without intellectual freedom – one of the great achievements of American civilisation – they can't.

The writer is Professor of International Law and Political Science at the University of Chicago.

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WISDOM CORNER

All men's miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone. BLAISE PASCAL

It's one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself, to forgive. Forgive everybody. MAYA ANGELOU

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need. KAHILIL GIBRAN



Shivaji Sarkar

THE YEARNING FOR MAKING UTTARAKHAND THE 'URJA PRADESH' HAS LED TO RECKLESS DEVELOPMENT



Tom Ginsburg

If academic discourse and campus debate are shut down every time a person feels offended, how can universities possibly examine controversial topics?

FOCUS JOSHMATH

HIMALAYAN APATHY

Heaven is literally falling to greed. It is not just Joshimath, but even Tehri Garhwal, Karnaprayag, and Mussoorie too are sinking and so may be many other parts at the crest of the Uttarakhand Himalayas. The ₹12,000 crore Char Dham all-weather road project spurring real-estate is gobbling it up all.

Latest reports say that still earth-movers are digging around Joshimath and other areas even as over 4000 people have been evacuated and most houses are crumbling. Unfortunately, tragedies do not stop the road to hell. In 2013, the Uttarakhand government had sought ₹21,000 crore for ruthless reconstruction post the Himalayan deluge. This seems to be the catalyst for the present disaster.

The Tehri district is the latest to report cracks and land subsidence. An IIT Roorkee team is studying Karnaprayag. Chamba in the Tehri is the worst hit with houses crumbling. Seepages at the Tehri Dam are common, reports SP Rai of National Institute of Hydrology. Now a road from Mana to Lipulekh through the sensitive hills with rare virgin forest is the latest danger.

In June 2013, after the Kedarnath tragedy this writer had cautioned: "In all there are 244 hydel projects (HEP) of various sizes that are planned to be constructed in the state. Some of these are already on stream. Others are coming up. Pancheswar dam being planned in Tanakpur is likely to be bigger than Tehri and biggest in India. Does that mean more disasters are awaiting the region?" Unfortunately it is so. Nobody listened to the cries even of former minister Uma Bharati for not dislodging the image of presiding deity Dhari Devi, before the 18 June 2013 cloudburst. The CAG reviewed 42 hydel projects in 2009. It noted that over 200 more projects were coming up – almost at every five to seven km. The yearning for making Uttarakhand the "Urja Pradesh" has led to reckless development. Ravi Chopra, former head of High-Power Committee for Char Dham roads mentions that a bypass around Joshimath



The Himalayas all around are crumbling. Dams and roads benefit the industry-real estate mafia damaging the sensitive geology

was opposed by the townspeople. The 10-metre-wide road all around the state weakens the hills with digging, blasting, removal of green cover and aquifers.

Pristine Joshimath, the gateway to heaven, Satopanth, from where Yudhisthir went to Swarga; the peeth of Adi Shankaracharya; winter camp of Lord Badrinath, as per a legend may be enunciating the end of an era. Policy failure and greed to generate thousands of crores of profits has led to a disaster evolving for decades and hastened by rapid activity of hydel tunnelling, road constructions and puncturing aquifers, ill-suited for a delicate fragile region.

Ancient wisdom ordained for least activity around tenuous hills that is shaken with the mildest vibration. No wonder even the British resorted to the least activities and built lighter toy trains where possible. They avoided wanton destruction that the swadeshi gold diggers have delved into. The broad-gauge railway being extended beyond Rishikesh could have been avoided. The prophecy of the Nar and Narayan hills merging with the Badrinath temple vanishing seems coming true. It predicts the submergence of the temple with the Alaknanda and other rivers either vanishing or changing course. The Himalayan shrines may have contributed to wanderlust and development of the livelihood of the lo-

cal. In itself it has culturally been supposed to be a sustainable but not large economy. Religious trekking from Rishikesh upwards added to the adventure and charm of the pilgrimage. It was for the spirit and not fun. Post-Independence, road constructions started threatening the fragile region with more landslides. With each decade, greed sharpened and the massive Tehri dam was built even against the wishes of scientists and ministers. These shrines were considered sacred not only for their spirituality but as a constant reminder to a tectonically sensitive zone that controls the subcontinental climate.

Joshimath is an example of how common man suffers for a pittance. Yes, Joshimath, facing literally a Himalayan disaster has been a thriving economy with a bank investment of ₹900 crore! That is the total debt the entire sinking town owes. Surprising for a population of about 30,000 serving pilgrims and tourists to Badrinath, the Valley of Flowers, Hemkund Sahib and the ski rink Auli. The rink itself cost ₹83 lakh and today earns ₹4.5 crore a year, but is termed a hazard. The 10-metre-wide Char Dham road decays hills amid severe devastation with felling of large number of trees, destruction of aquifers, shrubs and fauna habitats. Queer is the norm for planting trees. Trees felled on the hills are replaced with planting trees in Jharkhand or

elsewhere in the country. The official files do a wonderful ecological balancing. In 2010, a HNB Garhwal University study said tunnel boring machine punctured an aquifer on December 24, 2009 releasing millions of litres of water daily from NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnugad 520 MW hydel project. The researchers warned of the mishap's potential for "initiating ground subsidence". It was forgotten till December 2022 when the looming nightmare became a reality around Joshimath. This punctured aquifer gushing out water is the cause for Joshimath sinking, confirms Garhwal Commissioner Sushil Kumar.

In February 2021, around 200 people went missing as Dhauliganga and Rishibhanga rivers flooded Tapovan head race tunnel. Warnings of 1930 Swiss scientists, 1976 Commissioner MC Mishra on haphazard constructions and the Supreme Court appointed committee of 2013 for seismically sensitive Main Central Zone advice against hydel projects were ignored. The Char Dham project of the Border Road Organisation was being touted as a defence project, though it was not so earlier, has only aggravated the situation.

In 'Incidents of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF)', a UNDP and European Commission study, mentioned that such floods are happening regularly. Notable incidents occurred in 1997, 2000 and 2005 in the Sutlej basin and in 1970 and 1978 in Alaknanda and Bhagirathi basins. In 2000 and 2005 it hit Pong Dam, in Himachal Pradesh, severely damaging roads, habitations and bridges. Incidents of GLOF are reported in Sikkim, Ladakh, J&K, Himachal and Arunachal.

The Himalayas all around are crumbling. Dams and roads benefit the industry-real estate mafia damaging the sensitive geology and livelihood. If unchecked it may have disastrous consequences and even desertify the cradle of civilisation, the Ganga valley. The country must rise to stop this.

The writer is Professor, Indian Institute of Mass Communication. ©NFA

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

Sympathy for the algorithm

With hindsight, 2022 will be seen as the year when artificial intelligence gained street credibility. The release of ChatGPT by the San Francisco-based research laboratory OpenAI garnered great attention and raised even greater questions.

In just its first week, ChatGPT attracted more than a million users and was used to write computer programmes, compose music, play games, and take the bar exam. Students discovered that it could write serviceable essays worthy of a B grade – as did teachers, albeit more slowly and to their considerable dismay. ChatGPT is far from perfect, much as B-quality student essays are far from perfect. The information it provides is only as reliable as the information available to it, which comes from the internet. How it uses that information depends on its training, which involves supervised learning, or put another way, questions asked and answered by humans.

The weights that ChatGPT attaches to its possible answers are derived from reinforcement learning, where humans rate the response. ChatGPT's millions of users are asked to upvote or downvote the bot's responses each time they ask a question. In the same way useful feedback from an instructor can

sometimes teach a B-quality student to write an A-quality essay, it's not impossible that ChatGPT will eventually get better grades.

This rudimentary artificial intelligence forces us to rethink what tasks can be carried out with minimal human intervention. If an AI is capable of passing the bar exam, is there any reason it can't write a legal brief or give sound legal advice? If an AI can pass my wife's medical-licensing exam, is there any reason it can't provide a diagnosis or offer sound medical advice? An obvious implication is more rapid displacement from jobs, compared to past waves of automation, and more rapid restructuring of surviving jobs. And the jobs that will be automated out of existence will not be limited to the low-skilled and low-paid. Less obvious is who is safe from technological unemployment. What human traits, if any, will an AI be unable to simulate? Are those traits innate, or can they be taught?

The safest jobs will be those requiring empathy and originality. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings and emotions of others. It creates the interpersonal compassion and understanding that are fundamental to social interactions and emotional well-being. It is especially

valuable in circumstances and periods of difficulty. That's why empathy is valued in religious leaders, caregivers, and grief counselors.

It is possible to imagine that, with the help of facial-recognition software, an AI can learn to recognise the feelings of its interlocutors. But it can't obviously share their feelings in the same way that my wife, in her empathic moments, shares my feelings. Add that to the list of reasons why an AI can't replace my wife, my doctor, or my rabbi.

There is no consensus about whether affective empathy can be cultivated and taught. Some argue that affective empathy is triggered by mirror neurons in the brain that can't be artificially stimulated or controlled. Empathy is just something we experience, not something we can learn. It follows that some of us are better wired than others to be caregivers and grief counselors.

Other researchers suggest that this emotional response can indeed be taught. There is even a training company for medical clinicians called Empathetics, Inc. If true, it may be possible that more people can be prepared for automation-safe jobs where affective empathy is required.

But if humans can learn affective empathy, then why can't algorithms? The idea that jobs requiring affective

empathy will remain safe from automation assumes that people can distinguish true empathy from the simulation. Originality means doing something that hasn't been done previously, for example, creating a painting, composition, or newspaper commentary wholly unlike what has come before. Originality is distinct from creativity, which involves combining pre-existing elements in novel ways.

Another OpenAI product, DALL-E, is able to generate sophisticated images from text descriptions. This has created some consternation among artists. But are its responses, derived using a large dataset of text-and-image pairs, original artwork? It is questionable whether they are original in the sense of portraying an aesthetically pleasing image unlike any seen before, as opposed to combining existing visual elements associated with existing text. Artists who trade on originality may have nothing to fear, assuming of course that viewers can distinguish original artwork from the rest. Again, there is no consensus on whether originality is inborn or can be taught. The answer, most likely, is: a bit of both.

The writer is Professor of Economics at University of California, Berkeley. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Barry Eichengreen

IF HUMANS CAN LEARN AFFECTIVE EMPATHY, THEN WHY CAN'T ALGORITHMS?

Right to rehabilitation

Sir, Though land encroachment in India is problematic, encroachers need to be handled with sympathy and empathy, like the recent Supreme Court verdict did. It stayed the evacuation of more than 4,000 families, following a state high court order, in Uttarakhand's Haldwani. These families were living there for many years, some more than 70 years. As usual, after they occupied a piece of Railway land one by one, the authorities did precious little to move them in a time bound manner. But when the Railways badly wanted the land, all hell broke loose. The top court order has infused some hope in the residents. But the final court order is yet to come; it has posted the case to early next month for further hearing. The bigger question is how and why the land encroachers were allowed to settle by forming full-fledged colonies. Even encroachers are human beings, and they have the right to be heard and the right to relief and rehabilitation if displaced. So, it will be very interesting to see how the Supreme Court balances the interests of the encroachers without jeopardising the developmental plans of the railways.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Future of healthcare

Sir, The increasing rise in chronic illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, particularly in industrialised nations, has dramatically increased the demand for smart healthcare solutions in recent decades. Hospitals are looking for innovative strategies to improve the services provided in a more cost-effective manner while maintaining the quality and safety as a top priority as patient demands keep rising. The concept of a "smart hospital" is currently popular in healthcare, driven by information technology and AI. Consequently, smart hospitals make extensive use of modern technologies. A wide range of emerging technologies, including telemedicine, genomics, augmented/virtual reality, 3D printing, precision medicine, robots, and artificial intelligence, can be effectively incorporated into healthcare delivery from the perspective of the supply chain. Smart hospitals provide seamless technology integration to support the delivery of healthcare in order to provide the connected care that patients expect from top institutions. Smart hospitals use AI and analytics to translate data from devices and workflows into useful insights using their connected infrastructure. Factors such as technological advancements, increased healthcare spending, a sedentary lifestyle, more awareness, and a high acceptance rate of new technologies are driving the growth of global smart hospital market.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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national

of the day quote

The Punjab government will dedicate more than 400 new 'Aam Aadmi Clinics' to the people on January 27, raising their strength to 500 in the state

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

Never before have Punjabis suffered so much. Snatching, robberies and extortions are affecting the common man. Industry is migrating out of the state. All development work has stopped. Even the promises made to people, including ₹1,000 per month to women and jobs to youngsters, have not been fulfilled

SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL | SAD CHIEF

There are social disparities in our society, but equality is our cherished ideal and an aspiration that is deeply reflected in the Constitution and is, in fact, one of the pillars of the Constitution

ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN | KERALA GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

BSF shoots down drone

New Delhi: The Border Security Force (BSF) has foiled another Pakistani attempt to smuggle drugs and weapons to India, by shooting down a drone in Punjab's border region, officials said Sunday. The BSF fired 7 rounds at the drone after its movement was detected late on Saturday night in Kalia village of Tarn Taran district, alongside the India-Pakistan border. A search operation has been launched in the area. This is the second instance this month where a drone arms drop attempt was prevented by the BSF.

Three shot dead in Bhind

Bhopal: A former village sarpanch, and two of his relatives, were shot dead at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district on Sunday, by his opponent in the panchayat elections and his supporters, police said. The incident occurred the former sarpanch (one of the deceased), along with his two nephews, were on their way to their farm in Pachera village on a motorcycle. According to the police, a group of people, who were supporters of the opposition candidate for gram panchayat elections held recently, cornered them and opened fire on them.

23 injured in jallikattu event

Chennai: At least 23 people were injured in a jallikattu event being held in Avaniapuram of Tamil Nadu's Madurai district on Sunday. Thirteen of the injured were admitted to Madurai Rajaji Government Medical College. The jallikattu, considered one of the most popular bull-taming events, was being held on Sunday early morning and coincided with the Mattu Pongal.

Three booked

Thane: Offences were registered against three shopkeepers for allegedly selling banned nylon kite strings in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said Sunday. During checks carried out by Tuljip police, it was found that three shopkeepers had stocked and sold nylon kite strings at their establishments for Makar Sankranti festival, an official said. Offences under section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code have been registered, he said.



The perpetrators responsible for the recent terror attack on a village in Rajouri district will have to pay a heavy price for their heinous action

MANOJ SINHA | J&K LG

MAMATA MAY VISIT TRIPURA

Ahead of the upcoming Tripura Assembly elections, West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee is likely to visit the Bengali-dominated state by the month-end



Terror infrastructure intact: Army chief

Pointing to the attempts to smuggle arms and drugs into Jammu and Punjab border regions using drones, General Pande said counter drone jammers are being used against such activities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Jan 15: The Indian army is maintaining a strong defence posture along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and is ready to deal with any contingency, Chief of Army Staff, General Manoj Pande said Sunday.

In his address at the Army Day celebrations here, which is happening for the first time outside the national capital, he said the northern border region has been peaceful and steps have been taken to maintain peace through established protocol and existing mechanism.

Referring to the situation along the western border, the Army Chief



Army Service Corps (ASC) Tornados team performs during the 75th Army Day celebrations at Govinda Swamy Parade Ground in Bangalore PTI PHOTO

said the ceasefire continues at LOC and there has been a substantial reduction in violations. However, the terror infrastructure still remains on other side of border. "Our counter insurgency mechanism is effectively foiling the infiltration bid from Pakistan," he added.

Pointing to the attempts to smuggle arms and drugs into Jammu and Punjab border regions using drones, General Pande said counter drone jammers are being used against such activities. The Indian Army with other security forces is committed to foiling these attempts, he told the gathering.

"Our focuses are also on building goodwill and carry out developmental projects through which we can bring the local population into the mainstream. As part of it, the influential youth are being given opportunities to fulfill their dreams in their profession field of their choice and sports," General Pande said. Alluding to the security situation in the North East, he said there is improvement in the situation.

The army has played a significant role in minimising violence. Many insurgent groups have entered into peace agreement with the government or dialogues in that direction are underway. According to him, there is an increase in development in these regions and the Army will continue its efforts to empower people and help them prosper in the remote areas.

On reforms in the Indian Army in light of the geo-political situation, Pande said last year, changes were visible in the global security environment. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has clearly proved the importance of disruptive and dual use technologies. "Information warfare, cyber and space war have emerged as the new domain of warfare. The gray zone warfare too has proved that in the future war and conflict, non-kinetic warfare will be equally important as the kinetic warfare. Because of this, the battle field is becoming more complicated, fierce and dangerous," he underlined.

Being an important component of the comprehensive national power, it is the responsibility of the Indian Army to be ready, General Pande said. In line with Narendra Modi's call for 'Atma-Nirbhar Bharat', the Army chief too emphasised upon indigenization. General Pande said that India is standing at the threshold of a new era where one can see the country's increasing dominance in the international forums, economic development and progress.

BSP to go solo in Assembly, LS polls



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 15: BSP chief Mayawati Sunday ruled out an alliance with any party for the assembly polls in various states and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

She also made a strong pitch for the use of ballot papers in elections. Key states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana would go to polls this year, besides some northeastern states.

Speaking to reporters here on her 67th birthday, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said, "I would like to make it clear that in the assembly elections of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan and in the Lok Sabha elections, which will be held next year, the BSP will not forge a coalition with any party and will contest the polls on its own strength."

Mayawati said it became necessary for her to make the announcement as the Congress and some other parties, as part of a "conspiracy", are allegedly trying to create an impression that they will be forging an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party.

"In electoral alliances forged once or twice in Uttar Pradesh and other states, barring Punjab, their (allies) votes were not transferred to us, due to which the BSP suffered losses," she said.

"Hence, our party has decided to contest the assembly polls and Lok Sabha polls on its own," she said.

The BSP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) had forged an alliance

in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Of the alliance partners, the BSP was the biggest gainer with 10 seats. Akhilesh Yadav's SP won five seats and the smallest of the partners, Rashtriya Lok Dal, couldn't open its account.

Mayawati exuded confidence that her party's vote base is intact. "As far as the vote base of the BSP is concerned, it has not eroded. But sometimes there are other sections such as OBCs, minorities and upper castes who get misled due to poll promises. The party had to suffer losses in the last elections," she said.

The BSP chief said electronic voting machines (EVMs) should be replaced with ballot papers. "There are doubts in the minds of people regarding EVMs and there is an apprehension that they may be prone to glitches," she said.

"The CEC (chief election commissioner) and the Centre should come forward and hold elections using ballot papers. It will become clear how many voters are with them and how many voters are with us," she said.

BJP'S TWO-DAY MEET BEGINS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: A two-day national executive meeting of the BJP will begin from Monday here that is likely to endorse an extension of tenure for party national president J P Nadda and deliberate on its strategy for assembly and general elections.

Nadda's three-year term as the national president ends this month. He is likely to lead the party till the 2024 Lok Sabha elections are over. Before the start of the national executive meeting on Monday, the party has organised a road show for Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Patel Chowk to the NDMC convention centre, the meeting venue.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party general secretary Vinod Tawde said that several important issues facing the country will be discussed at the meeting. There will be discussions on political and economic resolutions, he said.

Underlining that the meeting is being held at an important juncture, Tawde said, "Elaborate discussions will be held on the upcoming assembly elections in states, the BJP's 'pravas yojana' for weak Lok Sabha seats and strengthening booth level teams."

In a way this meeting will finalise the party's future course of action of the BJP, he said. Before the national executive, a meeting of the party's national office bearers, state unit presidents and various organisational secretaries will be held at the BJP headquarters here.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president JP Nadda, several Union ministers and chief ministers of the party-ruled states will attend the meeting. Tawde said a grand exhibition will be held at the sidelines of the BJP's national executive based on six themes including service works of the party.

It will also showcase India as 'Vishwa Guru', initiatives like governance-first, empowering the deprived, inclusive and strong India and conserving the age-old icons like building the Ram temple at Ayodhya, and the rise of Sanatan Dharma across the globe.



Tourists enjoying at Solang valley in Manali

PTI PHOTO

Oppn parties set to oppose EC's RVM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Most of the Opposition parties have decided to oppose the Election Commission's proposal on remote electronic voting machine (RVM) as it is "sketchy" and not "concrete", senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said Sunday, a day before the poll panel showcases an RVM prototype to representatives of parties.

He made the remarks after a meeting of Opposition parties facilitated by the Congress that was attended by leaders of the JD(U), Shiv Sena, CPI, CPI(M), National Conference, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), Revolutionary Socialist Party, Indian Union Muslim League, as well as Independent Rajya Sabha MP and former Congress leader Kapil Sibal.

CPI General Secretary D Raja said all the parties that were at the meeting will also attend the Election Commission's prototype demonstration and raise critical concerns. Singh said the Nationalist



labour, the number of migrant labour is all not very clear. Therefore, we all have unanimously made up our mind to oppose the proposal of RVM," he said.

Singh said the EC has asked the parties to give their reply by January 31, and so those parties that attended the meeting will meet again on January 25 and send their reply either jointly or separately but with a clear view that they 'don't support RVM'.

CPI General Secretary D Raja said all the parties that were at the meeting will also attend the Election Commission's prototype demonstration and raise critical concerns

At the same time there have been numerous concerns about the trust on EVM machines and all those concerns which have been documented after a detailed discussion with computer science experts, professionals and cryptographers will be raised, he said.

Singh noted that the civil society had given a memorandum to the EC in May 2022 but the poll panel had not even responded to them.

"We shall discuss all these issues on January 25," he added. Responding to a question, Singh said all parties that had expressed concern over EVMs and RVMs were invited.

Man attacked with toilet cleaner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: A quarrel over a dog littering the area led to a resident of Delhi's Uttam Nagar pour toilet cleaner on the pet owner causing minor injuries to him, police said Sunday.

Two persons have been arrested in connection with the incident and the victim is stated to be stable, they said. Around 10 pm on Saturday, the Uttam Nagar Police Station received information that some acidic substance was allegedly thrown at a person following which a team rushed to the spot.

Police said that the owners of a house in the locality got into a quarrel with a person walking his dog alleging that the animal was littering the space in front of their house.

This led to a quarrel following which the toilet cleaner was flung at the person, a senior police officer said, adding the toilet cleaner bottle was seized from the house of the accused. "A case was registered based on the medical examination report and two accused were arrested in the matter," he added.

FIRE INCIDENTS CLAIMED 82 LIVES IN 2022 IN DELHI

ACCORDING TO DATA, 17,231 FIRE-RELATED INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE BETWEEN 2019 AND 2020 WHICH CLAIMED 100 LIVES WHILE 843 WERE INJURED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The national capital witnessed over 16,500 fire-related incidents that claimed 82 lives and left more than 700 people injured last year, the Delhi Fire Service said Sunday.

According to data accessed by PTI, the city's fire service received 16,518 fire-related calls in 2022 of which 722 were reported non-fatal while 82 were fatal. Atul Garg, director of the Delhi Fire Service

(DFS) said in the year 2022, the fire department received more than 16,500 fire-related calls in which 82 people died and 722 were injured.

Most of these fire incidents took place in factories, commercial buildings and slum clusters, he said. It was observed that many of these factories and commercial spaces where fires were reported did not have a "No Objection Certificate" from the fire department, or their fire-safety systems

were non-functional, Garg said. Out of the total calls, a maximum of these fire-related calls were received between April and June during the summer season while fewer such incidents were reported in winter, he said. According to the data, 17,231 fire-related incidents took place between 2019 and 2020 which claimed 100 lives while 843 were injured.

While 15,158 fire-related calls were received between 2020 and 2021, 14,268 calls were received in 2021 and 2022 of which 55 calls were reported to be fatal while 392 were non-fatal. In 2022, the highest number of fire-related incidents took place in April (3,139) followed by 2,234 in May and 2,192 in June, it stated.



Among the major fire incidents that claimed the maximum number of lives was reported in May last year. In March, seven people were killed after a fire broke out in

shanties in northeast Delhi's Gokulpuri area in the early hours of the morning. Thirty shanties were gutted in the fire out of the total 60 shanties that were affected.

On May 14 last year, 27 people were killed and 12 were injured as a massive blaze ripped through a four-storey building in outer Delhi's Mundka. The fire had started from the first floor of the building that housed the office of CCTV cameras and router manufacturing and assembling company.

More than 30 fire tenders were pressed in to douse the fire. Police had to resort to DNA profiling to identify the charred bodies. In October 2022, the charred body of a 19-year-old man was recovered from the second floor of a shop after a major fire broke out in east Delhi's Gandhi Market, whereas, in December, 20 cars parked at a multi-storey parking lot in west Delhi's Subhash Nagar were gutted in the fire.



Maha triple whammy: Climate extremes, floods & rising sea

Environmental degradation perpetrated in Maharashtra has ominous signs for future



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Jan 15: A piqued Mother Nature has shown her wrath at the environmental degradation perpetrated in Maharashtra on several occasions in the past, with ominous signs of more calamities slated for the future.

It was nine years ago - July 30, 2014 - when Malin village, standing on a hillock around 620 m above sea level in Pune district, overnight turned into a slushy graveyard for scores of people after torrential rain.

At least 151 villagers were buried alive at the dead of night and it was the driver of a bus plying in the neighbourhood who rubbed his eyes in sheer disbelief - the tiny village he viewed everyday on his journey had suddenly disappeared from the landscape...!

As disaster teams rushed to mount a massive rescue operation, one of the prime causes that emerged for the devastating landslide was the enormous environmental damage wreaked in the vicinity, particularly the indiscriminate chopping of many trees.

Experts said that Malin was situated on the eastern slope of a hill running north-south with gradients ranging from 10-40 degrees and some farming activities conducted there.

"Forests can help stabilize such hill slopes by holding the soil together, enhancing infiltration, reducing run-off of water and ren-

dering it safe but here it did not happen," said environmentalist Stalin D, Director of the NGO Vanashakti.

The disaster was preceded by heavy rain that lashed the area for over 24 hours and without sufficient forest cover, the hill-slide buried scores in their sleep, shocking the nation the next morning - with many lessons for the long-term.

"The slope was made unstable by deforestation, poor agriculture methods used for the rice and in recent years, even wheat farming, for which levelling and terracing of the slopes was done, rainwater seeped to a critical depth where the topsoil layer shifted due to gravity and the slope gave away with fatal consequences," explained Stalin.

Another recent affront were the massive unprecedented floods that submerged large areas for days in the regions of western Maharashtra like Sangli, Kolhapur and Satara, first in August 2019 and a repeat in September 2021, in the sprawling Krishna River basin, with its ramifications felt even in Karnataka.

A Maharashtra government's 10-member experts panel identified the main culprits - cyclones, cloudburst and persistent downpour - and pointed fingers at other topological factors like inadequate drainage from the regions, saturated subsoil and unbridled development activities on the flood plains, blocking the natural drainage channels, river damming

and diversions and destruction of natural flood barriers.

these resulted in unseen havoc in the three districts and some surrounding areas in western Maharashtra. There have been abnormal rains like in Mumbai which caused the record Great Floods (July 2005), followed by Sangli, Kolhapur and Satara floods (August 2019 and July 2021), and the severe droughts of 2002-2003 and 2011-2012 in parts of the state," said expert Dr Rahul Todmal of Vidya Pratisthan's ASC College in Baramati (Pune).

A water resources expert and Advisor to the Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh governments, Barrister Vinod Tiwari said that unless the brutalisation of the environment is ended, the consequences will be of unimaginable proportions to peoples' lives and properties, whether in the mountains of the Himalayas, coastal areas like Mumbai or the hinterlands like western Maharashtra.

"The plans to link the major rivers in India and a similar move to connect the rivers in Maharashtra are still floundering. They have the potential to control floods, empty excess water to the scarcity regions and enable all-round development," said Tiwari.

Dr Todmal warns that the increased frequency of natural disasters pose a threat to the very existence of the most intelligent species called 'Human', whose activities in the past two centuries have irritated nature to such an extent that it has now launched 'a mission to wipe us out'.

The government said that annual rainfall showing the highest increasing trends in Mumbai, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur and Solapur and the maximum decreasing trend in Latur and Bhandara will be witnessed in the 2030s.

The entire state will see extreme rainfall events with longer dry spells, plus the number of dry days would increase from 3-9 days in the next decade.

Coupled with these, the Arabian Sea level could go up by 24 cms-66 cms in the coastal areas in sync with the projections for global sea level increase, greater heights of waves, wind speeds, more storms and surges.



FOR A CAUSE: Participants run during Mumbai Marathon 2023, in Mumbai, Sunday.

PTI PHOTO

1,023 farmers ended lives in Marathwada in 2022

Over the past few years, the region has seen drought-like conditions in some years and excess rain in others, which has compounded the difficulties of crop growers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aurangabad, Jan 15: The Marathwada region of Maharashtra reported 1,023 farmer suicides in 2022, up from 887 in the previous year, an official from the divisional commissioner's office said.

The region comprising Jalna, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Hingoli, Nanded, Latur, Osmanabad and Beed districts had recorded one farmer suicide in 2001.

So far, 10,431 growers have ended their lives in the region's eight districts since 2001, show figures from the divisional commissionerate.

Between 2001 and 2010, the maximum 379 farmer suicides were reported in 2006. In the 2011-2020 decade, the highest number of farmer suicides at 1,133 was reported in 2015, the data showed.

Out of the 10,431 farmers who

ended their lives since 2001, 7,605 had received aid as per the government norms, an official said.

Over the past few years, the region has seen drought-like conditions in some years and excess rain in others, which has compounded the difficulties of crop growers, according to activists and officials.

The irrigation network in the region is also not being used to its full capacity, they said.

Vinayak Hegana, who runs a counselling centre for farmers in Osmanabad in collaboration with the district administration, stressed on the need to work on a micro level while doing an analysis of farmer suicides.

"Policies are being prepared at the top, but the implementation on the ground can be improved," he said.

Earlier, most farmer suicides



were reported between July and October but the pattern has changed. "We see the numbers growing between December and June," he said.

On the policies to curb the numbers, Hegana said, "Finding lacunas in these policies and making them better should be a continuous process and there should be a group of people who can work on this."

When contacted, Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council Ambadas Danve said, "Though there have been multiple loan waivers for farmers,

the figures (of suicide) are growing. When we waive their loans, we also have to see to it that their crop yield also gets good returns."

Danve also highlighted the concerns over substandard seeds and fertilisers being sold at high rates. "These are harmful to the farming sector," he said.

"The quality of these farm resources should be up to the mark, which is most important," Danve added.

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Abdul Sattar could not be contacted for response in the matter.

Himanta to be deciding factor in upcoming polls

Apart from allies, the Assam Chief Minister enjoys excellent relations with people in the Opposition too

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, Jan 15: At one time, Himanta Biswa Sarma was the Health Minister in the Sarbananda Sonowal-led government in Assam. Along with that Sarma was also leading the North East Democratic Alliance with regional parties of the Northeast - a constituent of the NDA at the Centre.

The BJP was then trying hard to find ways to conquer other states, notably Tripura and Meghalaya, after their thumping victory in Assam in 2016. Sarma came to know about a big leader in Tripura whose child was suffering from a complex illness. He jumped in to help that leader and arranged for the treatment of the child.

A few months later, that leader became an important player in forming the first BJP government in Tripura, ending 25 years of Left rule in that state.

In the 2018 elections in Meghalaya, the BJP and Conrad Sangma's National People's Party (NPP) fought separately. The BJP could not do well in that state and finally managed to win only two seats after fighting on 47 seats. But it was Sarma's magic that allowed the BJP to enjoy power in that state

with the NPP.

This time, the BJP and Conrad Sangma's party are engaged in a fight over a number of issues, but political pundits believe that it is Himanta Biswa Sarma who will have the final word in the alliance between the two parties. He and Conrad Sangma enjoy a cordial equation that has already proven effective in partially solving the long-pending boundary dispute between Assam and Meghalaya.

In the last assembly election in Tripura, Sarma was the party in-charge of the BJP for the polls. It is widely believed that the Assam Chief Minister's strategy was extremely useful in fighting Manik Sarkar's team in that state. Sarma is known to have been a very good negotiator in the past.

When in the Congress, he was the key manager for the party in the Rajya Sabha polls, where many leaders from the BJP, All India United Democratic Front switched sides overnight to vote for the Congress candidate.

Sarma's high negotiating skills took many people by surprise in the 2017 Manipur election where the BJP was behind with eight seats than the Congress in the poll result, but dramatically formed the government in that hilly state. Though the Congress was very critical of this development, it was Sarma's canny moves that helped the BJP to capture power in Manipur.

Apart from allies, the Assam Chief Minister enjoys excellent relations with people in the Opposition too.

After unravelling cases, cops at this PS unwind with music

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Jan 15: Inside a police station, criminals are supposed to 'sing' or confess to their crimes, but at Pune's Lashkar Police Station it is the cops who are doing the singing -- as a way of destressing.

The police station, located in Pune city's Cantonment area, is perhaps the first in Maharashtra to have a dedicated 'music room' equipped with a karaoke system, speakers and sound mixers.

After a hard day's work, staff members relax in this room, singing hit yesteryear songs of Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammad Rafi, Kishore Kumar, and others.

"After the COVID-19 pandemic abated, to destress our staff, we conducted a musical therapy session with the help of Dr Santosh Borade, a music therapist. He encouraged the staff to sing or croon whenever time allows, and underlined that music has a healing effect and removes stress," said senior inspector Ashok Kadam.

On Dr Borade's suggestion, they have a small speaker and mic at the police station.

"Since our police station is always under the pressure of bandobast duty and has the responsibility to maintain law and order, the staff needed such a mode of relaxation," said Kadam.

Once they got a mic and speaker, the singing bug bit many of the police station personnel.

The officials then thought they should procure some high-end equipment such as a karaoke system, mixers and singing mics. A local gurdwara helped them get the equipment.

"Today, we have around 15 police personnel including police officials, constables and even a peon



After a hard day's work, staff members relax in the music room, singing hit yesteryear songs of Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammad Rafi, Kishore Kumar and others

who sing on a regular basis in the music room," said Kadam.

When they learnt about the initiative, senior officials including the police commissioner and joint police commissioner gave the police station staff encouragement.

Sub-inspector Vinayak Gujar always loved singing, but the hobby took a backseat because of the job. Now he exercises his musical chops every day after duty hours.

"Some fifteen of us gather in the music room after 7 pm and sing," he said.

Sometimes even local music enthusiasts join them for a jam session, Gujar said.

"They have started thinking of us as artists and not cops," he

quipped. Police head constable Rahisha Shaikh makes it a point to sing for some time after finishing the day's work. "Believe me, it is so relaxing and rejuvenating," she said.

The evening musical sessions, according to inspector Kadam, have had another positive effect besides acting as a stressbuster: the bonding between staff members has increased. It is the time when officials and personnel come together and sing together.

The work output too has increased and the staff does not crib if they are assigned any extra official work, he said.

"The important outcome of the initiative is that the personnel who generally do not share their personal problems have now started opening up with senior officials and even started giving inputs in investigations," Kadam added. What 'genre' the cops prefer? He said they mostly sing old, ever-green melodies of Lata, Kishore, Rafi, Suresh Wadkar and others.

"We have around 15 staff members who sing regularly and they have mastered more than ten songs each. They can now perform at any stage," he said proudly.

1-horned rhinos dodge poachers in Kaziranga

This the first time since 1977 that not a single rhino was poached in world's largest reserve for the endangered species

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 15: No rhinos were poached last year in the world's largest reserve for the endangered great one-horned rhinoceros in Assam, in what authorities said was the first time since 1977.

Filled with elephant-grass meadows, swampy lagoons, and dense forests, the Kaziranga National Park in northeast India is home to 2,200 rhinos, or two-thirds of their world population. It has attracted British royalty as well as cricket stars, but poaching had become a big concern.

Poachers killed more than 190 rhinos in Assam between 2000 and 2021 but none was killed last year, according to data shared by Assam Police with Reuters. The last time there was no poaching was in 1977.

A record 27 rhinos were killed in Assam each year in 2013 and 2014, the data showed, as poachers sought to sell their horns for thousands of

dollars in East Asia where they are prized as medicine and jewellery.

Assam Police said 58 poachers were arrested last year, five injured and four killed.

"We need to keep the pressure on the poaching gangs," said Assam's special director general of police, Gyanendra Pratap Singh, who heads a task force to tackle poaching.

"We have to ensure that the graph of poaching stays flat at nil for a few years" until that becomes the norm, he said.

Authorities also plan to boost efforts to investigate those receiving poached rhino horns in other states and countries, he added.

Despite the poaching in Assam, the world population of the one-horned rhino has soared to around 3,700 from just around 200 at the turn of the 20th century, according to the global conservation group WWF. Apart from India, they are also found in Nepal.



of the day quote

There has been a radical change in the Shiv Sena which used to launch agitations for the rights of the sons of the soil... Now we organise job fairs to address the issues of the sons of the soil, especially the youth

AADITYA THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

A strategy is being prepared to eradicate the drug menace in the state and a drive would be launched

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM

As far as I can see, one of BJP's purposes (by implementing CAA) is to reduce the role of minorities and make them less important and, in a direct and indirect way, increase the role of the Hindu majoritarian forces in India and to that extent undermine the minorities

AMARTYA SEN | ECONOMIST

SHORT TAKES

Supriya's saree catches fire

Pune: Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Supriya Sule's saree accidentally caught fire during an event in Maharashtra's Pune on Sunday. In a statement, Sule later said that she is safe and there was no reason to worry. The Baramati MP was at an event in Hinjawadi to inaugurate a karate competition, when her saree caught fire while she was garlanding a small statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

172 stranded workers rescued

Srinagar: The Indian Army after hectic efforts succeeded in evacuating 172 workers stranded at the Zojila Tunnel construction site in J&K's Ganderbal district. An Army statement said Sunday, "Yesterday in a major avalanche occurrence near Sarbal Nilagrar workers of the construction company got stuck. Avalanche rescue teams of Army and Ganderbal police got into action & after hours of gruelling effort finally all 172 workers were brought to safety."

Rly officer held

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday arrested an Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM) of Indian Railways and a private person in connection with a bribe case of Rs 50 lakh. According to sources, a few more persons are likely to be arrested in this connection. The accused were identified as Railway official Jitender Pal Singh and Hari Om (private person).

Man arrested

Meerut: A man, who shot a 17-year-old girl in the Mavana area of Meerut for rejecting his marriage proposal, has been arrested. According to the police, the girl suffered a bullet injury under her left shoulder. She has been admitted to a hospital where she is undergoing treatment. The police have identified the accused as Rajan Kumar, who is pursuing a course in mechanics from an industrial training institute in Hastinapur.

Guard dies

Lakhimpur Kheri (Uttar Pradesh): A man died after he came in contact with an electrified farm fence, used to keep away stray wild animals near Mohammad forest range in the Maheshpur area of Lakhimpur Kheri. The victim was a guard at the farm and his body, found by locals, has been sent for autopsy.



Signing MoUs does not mean companies are coming to Uttar Pradesh. The ministers of the BJP government did not go abroad to bring investment, they went abroad only to visit those places

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

PM FLAGS OFF VANDE BHARAT TRAIN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday flagged off Vande Bharat Express connecting Secunderabad with Visakhapatnam via video conferencing, saying that it will link the shared heritage of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh



Cracks widen at many places in Joshimath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun/Joshimath (U'khand), Jan 15: Two more hotels were dangerously leaning towards each other while wider cracks have appeared near Auli ropeway and in other areas of land subsidence-hit Joshimath Sunday.

Also, the flow of water increased from a suspected underground channel burst in JP Colony in the Marwari area of the town after a temporary decline a couple of days back. Muddy water has been percolating down from it constantly since January 2 but experts are not sure about its origins.

Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha said a constant vigil is being maintained on the pace of water percolation in the area which has been fluctuating. The process of demolishing two adjacent hotels Malari Inn and Mount View which were declared unsafe was still underway. Around 100 metres from the site, two more hotels - Snow Crest and Comet - have tilted dangerously towards each other and have been vacated as a precautionary measure.

"The gap between the two hotels was around four feet earlier but now it has narrowed to just a few inches with their roofs nearly touching each other," Puja Prajapati, daughter of Snow Crest owner, said. Wider cracks have appeared near the Joshimath-Auli ropeway whose operation was suspended



over a week ago when land subsidence aggravated.

The 4.5 km ropeway, considered one of Asia's largest, connects Joshimath located at 6000 ft with the skiing destination of Auli at an altitude of 9000 feet. A crack around four inches wide and 20 feet long has appeared near the walls in the ropeway premises, ropeway engineer Dinesh Bhatt said.

A hotel owner in Singdhar ward said the cracks in the area widened on Saturday night. The water flow from an unknown source in the Marwari area has increased from 190 Litre Per Minute (LPM) to 240 LPM. It had decreased from 550 LPM in the beginning to 190 LPM on January 13.

Many houses were damaged in varying degrees in the land subsidence areas while water from the aquifer was constantly flowing down

with great force. Amid widespread concern over the fate of the sinking town, the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking the court's intervention to declare the crisis in Joshimath as a national disaster.

According to the cause list of January 16 uploaded on the apex court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala would hear the petition filed by Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati.

Several state-run institutions including ISRO have been directed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Uttarakhand government not to interact with media or share information on social media on the Joshimath situation without prior approval.

Tension in Bangalore university campus

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Jan 15: The authorities have issued directions for students and staff, and the general public not to wander in the Jnanabharthi campus after two leopards were spotted there.

The campus road connecting to Nagarbhavi residential locality is closed between 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. every day. Other connecting roads have also been closed and strict directions have been given in this regard.

Two leopards were spotted in the Jnanabharthi campus which is spread across 4.5 square km and has forest like areas, bushes and thick vegetation.

Thousands of people flock to the sprawling campus for greenery for morning and evening walks and the sighting of leopards has caused panic and tension. The res-



idents of neighbouring localities of Jnanabharthi campus are also concerned over the development. CCTV footage of leopards prowling in the campus in day and night time have gone viral on social media.

The wildlife activists are maintaining that the spotted animals are not leopards, they might be big wild cats.

The forest officials have taken a serious note of the development and no leopard was spotted during the preliminary searches. They are also verifying the footage of leopards in the campus to check their authenticity.

Bharat Jodo Yatra resumes after break

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

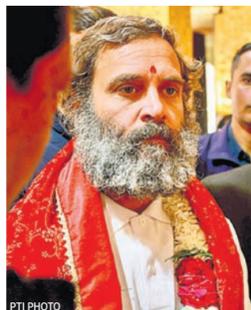
Jalandhar, Jan 15: Hundreds of people including the late singer Sidhu Moosewala's father joined the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra as it resumed from the Khalsa College Ground here on Sunday after remaining suspended for 24 hours in respect of Congress MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary.

Chaudhary died on Saturday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the yatra. He was cremated at his native Dhaliwal village in Jalandhar on Sunday. Rahul Gandhi also attended the cremation. He also offered prayers at Devi Talab temple in Jalandhar before resuming the march around 3 pm.

As the march began, singer Sidhu Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh walked with Rahul Gandhi for some distance. They walked hand-in-hand and hugged each other. Later, Rahul Gandhi in a tweet shared his photo with Balkaur Singh and said he saw amazing courage and patience him.

"Today in Jalandhar, famous Punjabi singer and Congress leader, Late Sidhu Moosewala's father, Balkaur Singh ji attended the yatra. I saw amazing courage and patience in him. There is pride in his eyes for his son, and immense love in his heart. I salute such a father!" he said in his tweet in Hindi.

The Congress party also put out a tweet, saying, "Today in



CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI VISITS DEVI TALAB MANDIR DURING THE PARTY'S 'BHARAT JODO YATRA' IN JALANDHAR

RAHUL GANDHI OFFERED PRAYERS AT DEVI TALAB TEMPLE IN JALANDHAR BEFORE THE RESUMPTION OF THE MARCH

AS THE MARCH BEGAN, SINGER SIDHU MOOSEWALA'S FATHER BALKAUR SINGH WALKED WITH RAHUL GANDHI FOR SOME DISTANCE

#BharatJodoYatra, Balkaur Singh Sidhu ji, father of famous Punjabi singer Late Sidhu Moosewala, along with @RahulGandhi ji gave a befitting reply to forces spreading hatred, fear and violence." Later, two youths presented Rahul Gandhi with a portrait of Moosewala.

Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead in Punjab's Mansa district in May last year.

Cold wave set to intensify further

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Frosty winds whipped the plains of north and northwest India Sunday, bringing minimum temperatures down to the range of 3 to 5 degrees Celsius in many areas. It is going to turn even colder until western disturbances provide some relief starting Thursday.

At minus 4.7 degrees Celsius, Fatehpur in Sikar district of Rajasthan recorded the lowest minimum temperature over the plains of northwest India. Punjab's Faridkot shivered at minus one degree Celsius.

The Met Office said cold wave to severe cold wave conditions prevailed in parts of Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi and west Madhya Pradesh on Sunday.

Many parts of northwest and southeast Rajasthan recorded a minimum temperature in the range of 1 to 3 degrees Celsius. Parts of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and southwest Uttar Pradesh recorded their minimum temperature in the range of 3 to 5 degrees Celsius, it said.

Churu, located near the Thar desert, recorded the season's lowest minimum temperature of minus 2.5 degrees Celsius, according to the data available on the India Meteorological Department (IMD) website.

The mercury fell to 4.7 degrees Celsius at the Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's primary weather station.



A cold wave saw the minimum temperature drop to 2.6 degrees Celsius at Jafarpur, 3.8 degrees Celsius at Lodhi Road, 3 degrees Celsius at Ayanagar, and 3.2 degrees Celsius at Ridge in the national capital.

The data available on the IMD's website showed that the Ujwa automatic weather station (AWS) in southwest Delhi logged a minimum temperature of minus 0.1 degrees Celsius.

However, a senior IMD official said the AWS "is not working". Delhi saw an intense cold wave spell from January 5 to January 9, the second longest in the month in a decade, according to IMD data

January 5 to January 9, the second longest in the month in a decade, according to the IMD data.

It has also recorded over 50 hours of dense fog this month so far, which is the highest since 2019.

In Punjab, Amritsar recorded a minimum of 1.6 degrees Celsius. Ludhiana, Patiala, Pathankot, Bathinda and Gurdaspur experienced cold weather conditions at 4.9, 4.2, 8, 1 and 3.7 degrees Celsius respectively. Union Territory Chandigarh, the common capital of Punjab and Haryana, recorded 6.7 degrees Celsius.



Bull tamers try to get hold of a bull during Jallikattu at Avaniyapuram near Madurai

PTI PHOTO

Threatening calls to Gadkari traced to Karnataka jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Jan 15: The caller who made threatening calls to the Nagpur office of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and demanded Rs 100 crore is an inmate of a jail in Belagavi city of Karnataka who was sentenced to death by a court in a murder

case in the past, police said Sunday. The caller, who had claimed he was a member of the Dawood Ibrahim gang, has been identified as Jayesh Pujari. Prime facie, he made the call using a mobile phone from the jail, a senior officer said.

A crime branch team of Nagpur Police led by an assistant inspec-

tor reached Belagavi late Saturday night. The team is likely to request the jail administration to allow them to question Pujari on Monday, he said.

At least three threat calls were received on the hotline number of Gadkari's Public Relations office in Khamla area in Nagpur between 11.25 am to 12.30 pm on Saturday; fol-

lowing which security was strengthened at the home and office of the Nagpur MP who belongs to the BJP. "Pujari was sentenced to death by a court in a murder case. He is a dreaded goon who managed to escape from jail in 2016. Later, he was arrested by the Karnataka police," the police officer said.



Akalis may rejoin NDA

The Shiromani Akali Dal is preparing to rejoin the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) sooner than expected. The Akali Dal had quit the NDA and Union Cabinet in September 2020 in protest against three farm bills. The SAD said that the 'Modi govt is being stubborn and insensitive towards the issues of farmers, Sikhs and Punjabis.' After a prolonged

agitation, the Modi government withdrew the three farm bills in December 2021. It was speculated that Harsimrat Kaur Badal who held the Food Processing ministry portfolio, will be re-inducted into the Cabinet. But BJP's hardliners in Punjab were against the move and said it's time to come out of the shadow of the Akalis. The BJP and Akalis contested the Punjab Assembly polls separately and paid a heavy price as AAP swept the polls. Informed sources say that US-based billionaire Darshan Singh Dhaliwal, who was deported from the Delhi airport in October 2021, played a key role in the BJP-Akali Dal patch-up bid. Dhaliwal may have been deported back to the USA from the Delhi airport itself as he funded 'langar' to agitating farmers in Delhi, but the Modi government honoured him with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. It is said that Dhaliwal is now playing a key role in the patch-up bid between BJP and Akalis.

PM's biopic before 2024 polls

If reports emerging from Mumbai are any indication, a biopic on the life and works of Narendra Modi is being planned before the Lok Sabha polls. A Mumbai-based producer Mahaveer Jain, who is considered close to the PM, is working on the project with leading actors and a producer. Jain has already made two films on Modi, the last being, 'Mann Bhaiji', described as an 'untold story of Modi's life'.

first glimpse of the biopic may be witnessed in Karnataka which will go to polls in May this year. Reports emanating from the state suggest that veteran Congressman, PC Siddaramaiah, could soon be seen both offline and online. A biopic is being planned on the 75-year-old leader and former Chief Minister. Siddaramaiah has not revealed anything more about the impending biopic on his life. But his confidantes signaled that the project is on track.

Modi vs Vajpayee

BJP leaders were somewhat taken aback when Rahul Gandhi decided to pay homage to late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Samadhi on December 26. Some sarcastic comments were made by the BJP spokespersons following this visit. But it didn't cut much ice as Rahul

Gandhi explained later to the media that Vajpayee never believed in the politics of hate and vendetta. Yashwant Sinha joined in the controversy soon saying that Modi undermined the achievements during the six years of Vajpayee's rule and listed them in an article in a leading English newspaper. This was followed up by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who remembered the good old days of the NDA. 01 during the Vajpayee era. While participating in the anniversaries of departed BJP stalwarts, Nitish praised Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Arun Jaitley and others. Nitish Kumar lamented the lack of magnanimity and liberality in the BJP leadership at present. A few days later, he offered tributes to Jaitley on his birth anniversary and, once again, became nostalgic about his friendship with the stalwart. Asked to compare the BJP regimes at the Centre then and now, Nitish gave a wicked smile and said, 'let it go'.

international

of the day quote

I appreciated the release of detailed information, which we request they (China) continue to share. Asked for the sharing of further sequences and cooperation on understanding the virus origins

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | DIRECTOR GENERAL, WHO

Shehbaz Sharif tested us in Punjab and now it's his turn to prove whether he enjoys a majority in the National Assembly or not

IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

There is no political, historical, and even more, moral justification for killing civilians and attacking the infrastructure that ensures the survival of a population

NATALIA GAVRILITA | PM, MOLDOVAN

SHORT TAKES

UAE to invest \$30bn in S Korea

Seoul: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has decided to invest \$30 billion in South Korea's industries, South Korea's presidential office said Sunday, as the two countries seek to expand economic cooperation. The investment decision was announced as South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol met his UAE counterpart, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, in Abu Dhabi during a four-day state visit, Yoon's office said

England to ban single-use plastic

London: The UK said it will ban single-use plastic cutlery and plates in England from October as part of a drive to reduce plastic pollution and protect the marine environment. Under the new rules, retailers and restaurants also won't be able to sell single-use plastic plates, trays and balloon sticks or some types of polystyrene cups and food containers, Environment Secretary Therese Coffey said Saturday in a statement.

More docs found at Biden's houses

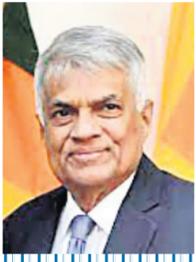
Washington: More classified documents have been found at the Delaware residences of President Joe Biden, the White House said. With this the total number of classified documents found at Biden's residences in Delaware and his private office in Washington DC has increased roughly to about two dozen. The Department of Justice has appointed a special counsel to investigate into the issue.

Pakistan's Punjab Assembly dissolved

Lahore: Pakistan's Punjab Assembly Saturday evening stood dissolved after Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman refused to sign an advice of Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. Elahi on the "wish" of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chairman Imran Khan Thursday had sent the advice to dissolve the assembly. As the governor did not sign the dissolution summary, it stood dissolved 48 hours from the time the CM sent it to governor as per the Constitution.

Ex-Afghan lawmaker shot dead in home

Kabul: Gunmen shot dead an Afghan former lawmaker and one of her bodyguards in the capital Kabul in a night-time attack at her home, police said Sunday. Mursal Nabizada had been a member of parliament in the US-backed government that was overthrown by the Taliban in August 2021.



India is in the best position to act as a bridge between the developing countries which are facing a debt crisis and the G20

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA

CHINA, HK RESUME RAIL LINK

China resumed Sunday high-speed rail services between Hong Kong and the mainland for the first time since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, as it dismantles travel curbs after Beijing scrapped quarantine for arrivals a week earlier



Israelis rally against legal reforms

PM BENJAMIN NETANYAHU, NOW IN HIS SIXTH TERM, WANTS TO REIN IN THE SUPREME COURT, WHICH MEMBERS OF HIS RELIGIOUS-NATIONALIST COALITION ACCUSE OF OVERREACH AND ELITISM

REUTERS

Tel Aviv, Jan 15: Tens of thousands of Israelis demonstrated in three major cities Sunday against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's judicial reform plans, with organisers accusing him of undermining democratic rule weeks after his reelection.

Bestriding a religious-nationalist coalition with a solid parliamentary majority, Netanyahu, now in his sixth term, wants to rein in the Supreme Court in what he has described as a restoration of the balance of the three branches of government.

Critics say the proposed reforms would cripple judicial independence, foster corruption, set back minority rights and deprive Israel's courts system of credibility that helps fend off war-crimes allegations abroad. Among those opposed are the Supreme Court chief justice and the country's attorney-general.

After President Isaac Herzog appealed to polarised politicians to "lower the temperatures" of the debates, organisers of the demonstrations - held under chilly winter rain - sought to strike a note of national unity.

"We Are Preserving Our Shared Home," read one demonstrator's placard. Netanyahu was guilty of a "legal putsch," said another. Israeli media put the number in attendance at some 80,000, with



Some 80,000 people took to streets in three major cities

thousands more at protests in Jerusalem and Haifa.

Social media footage showed a small number of Palestinian flags on display, in defiance of Netanyahu's far-right allies. One of these, National Security Ministry Itamar Ben-Gvir, told Kan TV he wanted such flags removed but was awaiting the opinion of the attorney-general before ordering any crackdown by police.

The 73-year-old Netanyahu Friday signalled flexibility on the reform plan, saying it would be implemented "with careful consideration while hearing all of the positions". Polls have diverged on public

views of the reforms. Channel 13 TV last week found 53% of Israelis were opposed to changing the court appointments' structure while 35% were in support. But Channel 14 TV Thursday found 61% in favour and 35% opposed.

Critics of the Supreme Court say it is overreaching and unrepresentative of the electorate. Its proponents call the court a means of bringing equilibrium to a fractious society.

There have been calls in the past to reform Israel's justice system, which was given greater clout in the 1990s and has been seen since by critics as being too interventionist in the process of lawmaking. But the sweeping changes sought by Netanyahu's justice minister have raised an

MOVING AHEAD ON REFORMS: PM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday his government plans to charge ahead with an overhaul of the country's judicial system, despite fierce criticism from top legal officials and protests against the changes that drew tens of thousands of people. Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption, has made the legal changes the centerpiece of his new government's agenda and the surging opposition to them is presenting an early challenge for the Israeli leader. The overhaul would weaken the power of the Supreme Court, granting legislators the ability to pass laws the court has struck down with a simple majority, as well as give the government greater power over the appointment of judges and limit the independence of government legal advisers. The proposed changes have sparked an outcry from the Supreme Court's top justice, who in rare criticism called the overhaul an "unbridled attack on the justice system." The country's attorney general has also spoken out against the plan, as have many of her predecessors.

alarm among opponents who see them as a death knell to Israel's system of checks and balances and in turn, its democratic fundamentals.

WINTER STORMS

US declares state of emergency for Calif

A PARADE OF ATMOSPHERIC RIVERS HAVE WREAKED HAVOC ACROSS THE STATE IN RECENT WEEKS



REUTERS

California, Jan 15: US President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for California Saturday as storms have pounded the Golden State since December 26, killing at least 19 people and bringing floods, power outages, mudslides, evacuations and road closures.

Biden ordered federal aid to supplement state, tribal and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe winter storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides, the White House said in a statement.

The president's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Merced, Sacramento and Santa Cruz counties, it said.

Biden also approved an emergency declaration for Alabama on early Sunday after at least nine people died in tornadoes that destroyed homes and knocked out power to tens of thousands in the US Southeast.

At least five tornadoes touched down in central Alabama Thursday, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Jessica Laws. Biden's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in the counties of Autauga and Dallas.

als in the counties of Autauga and Dallas.

A new weather system packing rain, snow and strong winds moved into storm-lashed California. While next week should bring some respite, the first of two systems expected to hit California over the US holiday weekend pushed onshore Saturday, unleashing more heavy rain, the National Weather Service said.

More than 24,000 utility customers were without power as of Saturday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us. The storms have dropped half the average annual rainfall on the agricultural Central Valley and as much as 15 feet (4.5 m) of snow in the mountains.

Flood advisories were in effect across the state Saturday, and thousands of residents were under evacuation orders and warnings.

A neighborhood in the Santa Cruz County community of Felton in central California flooded for the second time in a week and the third time since the turn of the year.

Residents banded together, helping one another with shovels and squeegees to clean out garages and driveways.



A contingent of Indian women peacekeepers, the country's largest single unit of female troops in a UN mission since 2007, arrived in Abyei to begin its deployment with the United Nations Interim Security Force

Women's rights not priority: Taliban

AGENCIES

Kabul, Jan 15: Amid the ongoing violation of the rights of Afghan women under the Taliban regime - banned from universities, as well as, from working in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid said in a statement that overturning restrictions against women is not a priority for the group, reported Khaama Press.

The Taliban said Saturday that it would not permit any act that violate Islamic law, and the concerns regarding restrictions on women's rights will be dealt with according to the established rule of the group in the country.

Taliban chief spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid said in a statement, "The Islamic Emirate tries



to regulate all matters in accordance with the Islamic Sharia,

and the ruling government cannot allow act against the Sharia in the country," reported Khaama Press.

The latest action by the Taliban to ban women from working in NGOs sparked protests by female university students and women activists in several regions of the country, as well as brought condemnations, globally.

Some foreign governments, including those of the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, the European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), OIC, and other international aid organisations, strongly condemned the action and urged the Taliban caretaker government to lift the ban and permit Afghan girls and women to pursue their education and continue working with NGOs, Khaama Press reported.

World's coldest city touches -50°C

REUTERS

Yakutsk, Jan 15: Temperatures have plunged to minus 50 degrees Celsius (-58 Fahrenheit) this week in Yakutsk during an abnormally long cold snap in the Siberian city known as the coldest on earth.

Located 5,000 km (3,100 miles) east of Moscow on the permafrost of the Russian Far East, residents of the mining city often see the thermometer regularly drop well below minus 40.

"You can't fight it. You either adjust and dress accordingly or you suffer," said Anastasia Gruzdeva, outside in two scarves, two pairs of gloves and multiple hats and hoods. "Just dress warmly," she said. "In layers, like a cabbage!"

Andrew Tate case: Romania tows luxury cars, other assets

The most infamous personality on internet known for the phrase "which colour is your Buggati", is now unable to protect his \$3.9 million empire

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bucharest, Jan 15: Romanian authorities descended on a compound near Bucharest Saturday to tow away a fleet of luxury cars and other assets worth an estimated \$3.9 million in the case investigating Andrew Tate, the divisive social media personality who is detained in the country on charges of human trafficking.

Romania's National Agency for the Administration of Unavailable Assets said in a state-

ment that it removed a total of 15 luxury cars, 14 designer watches and cash in several currencies. The total value of the goods, the agency said, is estimated at 3.6 million euros (\$3.9 million).

About a half-dozen masked law enforcement officers and other officials descended on the compound Saturday to take away the goods. The fleet of automobiles included a blue Rolls-Royce, a Ferrari, a Porsche, a BMW, an Aston Martin and a Mercedes-Benz. Tate, 36, a British-US citizen



who has 4.5 million followers on Twitter, was arrested December 29 in Bucharest along with his brother Tristan and two Romanian women on charges of being part of

an organized crime group, human trafficking and rape. On Tuesday, all four lost an appeal after a court upheld a judge's Dec. 30 move to extend their ar-

rest from 24 hours to 30 days. A day later, Tate lost another appeal that challenged assets seized by prosecutors in the case so far.

Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT, said it had seized 15 luxury vehicles in the case, and identified more than 10 properties and land owned by companies registered to the Tate brothers.

"If prosecutors can prove they gained money through illicit activities including human trafficking, the assets could be used to cover the expenses of the investigation and compensation for victims," said Ramona Bolla, a DIICOT spokesperson. The agency said victims were lured by pretenses of love, and

later intimidated, kept under surveillance and subjected to other control tactics while being coerced into performing in pornography.

Tate, a former professional kickboxer who has reportedly lived in Romania since 2017, was previously banned from various prominent social media platforms for expressing misogynistic views and hate speech.

After the assets were moved Saturday, a post appeared on Tate's Twitter account, which read: "Anyone who believes I'm a human trafficker is genuinely a moron," and that "anyone smart enough to understand the American System is unfair would be mind blown by the injustice of the Romanian System."

of the day quote

The domestic automobile industry is scaling up efforts to enhance localisation of electronic components in order to curtail dependence on other countries, especially China

SUNJAY KAPUR | PRESIDENT, ACMA

We aim to roll out products based on multiple clean technologies while also reinforcing internal combustion engine based model range to cater to all kinds of emerging customer requirements in the country

MASAKAZU YOSHIMURA | MD, TOYOTA KIRLOSKAR

I am happy that in 2022 India became one of our fastest growing markets in terms of volumes—clocking the best-ever sales since our entry in 2007—and growth rates for all our brands here. I am pretty confident that India will continue to surprise us in 2023 as well

JEAN-PHILIPPE PARAIN | SENIOR VP, BMW

SHORT TAKES

Google goes to SC over NCLAT order

New Delhi: Google has approached the Supreme Court, saying its appeal before NCLAT against CCI order, on abuse of dominant position in the Android mobile device ecosystem, would become a "fait accompli" as the appellate tribunal has refused to put a stay and listed hearing of its plea almost 10 weeks after the tech giant is required to comply with the remedial directions. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has "failed to appreciate the consequences of denying interim relief" as Google will have to implement changes to the status quo of 14-15 years and its entire business model by January 19, 2023. This (the CCI order) "requires Google to modify its existing contracts, introduce new licence agreements, and alter its business model and commercial arrangements with thousands of device manufacturers and app developers," submitted Google in its petition before the apex court.

Demat accounts rise 34% to 10.8cr

New Delhi: The number of demat accounts rose to 10.8 crore in December 2022, a surge of 34 per cent on yearly basis, on attractive returns from the equity markets, ease of account opening process and increased financial savings. Also, the incremental account additions of such accounts were higher in December in comparison with the preceding three months, however, below the financial year 2021-22 (FY22) average run-rate of 29 lakh. The incremental additions of such accounts were 21 lakh in December 2022, compared to 18 lakh each in October and November and 20 lakh in September, according to an analysis by Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Lalit Modi names his son successor

New Delhi: Former IPL Chairman Lalit Modi Sunday announced his son Ruchir Modi as his successor beneficiary from his family's side in the KK Modi Family Trust with immediate effect. In a social media post, Modi who has been involved in a legal tussle against his mother Bina Modi and sister Charu over a property dispute in the family, also announced his son as the head of his branch of the family. Modi, who pioneered the T20 league Indian Premier League (IPL) -- now the richest cricket league in the world, is wanted in India after leaving the country in 2010 for London after being charged of tax evasion.



We should aim to provide electricity to the county at just price as 80 per cent of our supplies is directed towards coal-based power plants

PRAMOD AGRAWAL | CHIEF, COAL INDIA

SILVER JUBILEE FOR TATA INDICA

Indica, which kick-started Tata Motors' passenger vehicle division, has completed 25 years in Indian market. Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, Ratan Tata, shared a nostalgic post and captioned it, "Twenty-five years ago, the launching of the Tata Indica was the birth of India's indigenous passenger car industry. It brings back fond memories and has a special place in my heart for me"



Mcap of 7 of ten most valued firms jumps over ₹1trn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most valued firms jumped ₹1,07,224.82 crore last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest gainers. Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 360.81 points or 0.60 per cent.

While TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, HDFC and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the gainers, Reliance Industries Limited, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel faced erosion from their market valuation.

The valuation of TCS rallied ₹59,349.81 crore to ₹12,34,637.11 crore, the most among the top-10 firms. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys jumped ₹22,997.16 crore to ₹6,32,684.95 crore.

Meanwhile, Hindustan Unilever's valuation climbed ₹10,514.42 crore to ₹6,16,004.09 crore and that of HDFC gained ₹4,904.87 crore to ₹4,78,922.89 crore. LIC added ₹3,668.5 crore taking its mcap to ₹4,50,782.59 crore.

The mcap of HDFC Bank surged ₹3,624.89 crore to ₹8,92,754.89 crore and that of ICICI Bank climbed ₹2,165.17 crore to ₹6,09,305.82 crore. However, the valuation of Reliance Industries tanked ₹47,290.7 crore to ₹16,69,280.55 crore.

Bharti Airtel's market valuation declined by ₹17,373.86 crore to ₹4,25,982.59 crore and that of State Bank of India dipped ₹490.85 crore to ₹5,35,521.33 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 companies, Reliance Industries remained the most valued domestic firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, HDFC, LIC and Bharti Airtel.

FPIs withdraw ₹15K-cr in Jan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: Foreign investors offloaded around ₹15,000 crore worth of Indian equities in the first two weeks of January amid risks of Covid in some parts of the world and recession worries in the US.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been adopting a cautious stance towards Indian equity markets for the past few weeks.

According to the data with the depositories, FPIs have made a net withdrawal of ₹15,068 crore from the Indian equity markets during January 2-13. Only two of the 10 trading days in January to date saw net purchases.

This came following a net inflow of ₹11,119 crore in December and ₹36,239 crore in November.

In addition to equities, FPIs have offloaded debt securities to the tune of ₹957 crore during the first two weeks of January.

1 MN BARRELS A DAY

India buys Russian oil like never before

INDIA'S APPETITE FOR RUSSIAN OIL SWELLED EVER SINCE IT STARTED TRADING ON DISCOUNT AS THE WEST SHUNNED IT TO PUNISH MOSCOW FOR ITS INVASION OF UKRAINE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: India's import of crude oil from Russia increased further in December 2022, topping 1 million barrels per day for the first time ever as Moscow remained its top oil supplier for the third month in a row, according to data from energy cargo tracker Vortexa.

Russia, which made up for just 0.2 per cent of all crude oil India imported in the year to March 31, 2022, supplied 1.19 million bpd in December.

This was higher than 909,403 bpd crude oil India imported from Russia in November and 935,556 bpd in October 2022. The previous record for most crude oil imports from Russia was in June 2022 when India bought 942,694 bpd, according to Vortexa.

Russia, which in October 2022 for the first time surpassed traditional sellers Iraq and Saudi



Arabia to take the No 1 spot, now makes up for 25 per cent of all oil imported by India.

The imports peaked as a price cap was agreed upon by the EU on Russian seaborne oil. Russian oil is available at much lower than \$60 per barrel cap agreed, sources said.

India is the world's third-largest oil-consuming and importing nation. It imports 85 per cent of its crude oil needs. Crude oil is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel at refineries.

According to Vortexa, an energy intelligence firm, India imported 803,228 bpd of oil from Iraq in December and 718,357 bpd from Saudi Arabia. The United Arab Emirates overtook the US to become India's fourth largest supplier, selling 323,811 bpd oil in December 2022. The United States supplied 322,015 bpd, down from

405,525 bpd in November 2022. According to S&P Global Commodity Insights, India is aiming to pursue an oil import policy that will witness robust inflows from both the US and Russia in the foreseeable future, while stepping up efforts to diversify the crude basket even further to cushion the impact of any supply shock going ahead.

"Although the Russia-Ukraine war has given an opportunity to the country's refiners to bring in plentiful volumes of crude at discounted rates from the largest non-OPEC supplier, but that has not led to a fall in market share of the US, as India looks to bolster its energy ties with Washington," it said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar December 7 told the Rajya Sabha that Indian refiners will continue to look for the best

SCENARIO BEFORE THE WAR

Prior to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, more than 60 per cent of the Indian crude basket was made up of Middle Eastern crudes, with the remainder made up of North American crudes at around 14 per cent, West African crudes at around 12 per cent, and Latin American crudes at around 5 per cent, with Russian grades accounting for only about 2 per cent.

Since the war began, West African crudes have become more expensive for Indian refiners because they are mostly Brent-linked and are being pulled in by European refineries that are running low on Russian crudes. According to S&P Global data,

deals in the interest of the country. "We do not ask our companies to buy Russian oil. We ask our companies to buy oil (based on) what is the best option that they can get. Now, it depends on what the market throws up," he had said while replying to clarifications sought by MPs on his suo moto statement on foreign policy.

The companies will go after sources that are more competitive, Jaishankar had added. "Please do understand it's not just

the share of US crude in the Indian crude basket increased from 5-6 per cent in April to around 10 per cent in November last year. In the last quarter of 2022, the US displaced Kuwait to become the fifth-largest oil supplier to India.

As per Vortexa, India imported just 36,255 barrels per day of crude oil from Russia in December 2021, compared to 1.05 million bpd from Iraq and 9,52,625 bpd from Saudi Arabia.

There were no imports from Russia in the following two months, but they resumed in March 2022, soon after the Ukraine war broke out in late February.

We buy oil from one country. We buy oil from multiple sources, but it is a sensible policy to go where we get the best deal in the interests of the Indian people, and that is exactly what we are trying to do," he had said.

The Indian government has been vehemently defending its trade with Russia, saying it has to source oil from where it is the cheapest. The government has previously indicated that oil companies will continue to buy oil from Russia outside the price cap.

States get ₹2K-crore to scrap old vehicles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The Union government will give an additional ₹2,000 crore to states under the Special Assistance for Capital Investment scheme to incentivise them to scrap old vehicles and also provide tax concessions to individuals for it.

The government in 2022-23 Budget had introduced the 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' scheme with an outlay of ₹1.05 lakh crore. Under the scheme, financial assistance is being provided to state governments in the form of 50-year interest free loan for capital projects.

Now, the Centre has earmarked an additional ₹2,000 crore under the scheme to encourage states to scrap condemned government vehicles or those vehicles which are older than 15 years, besides providing tax concessions to individuals for scrapping old vehicles.

Incentive for scrapping of old vehicles has been added to the scheme and an amount of ₹2,000 crore has been earmarked for scrapping state government vehicles which are older than 15 years, waiver



of liabilities on old vehicles and providing tax concessions to individuals for scrapping of old vehicles.

With the inclusion of road transport sector, the total outlay under the scheme has increased to ₹1.07 lakh crore, from ₹1.05 lakh crore announced in the Budget.

So far, the government has approved ₹77,110 crore under the scheme, out of which ₹41,118 crore has been released to states.

The scheme aims to encourage states to undertake capital expenditure and has earmarked ₹80,000 crore for it. Besides, states are encouraged to push reforms like privatisation or disinvestment, digitisation, urban reforms, optical fibre cable projects and building rural roads.

Amendments to competition law likely in Budget session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 15: The government is expected to propose amendments to the competition law after taking into consideration various suggestions of a Parliamentary panel, in the upcoming Budget session of Parliament, according to a senior official.

Besides, discussions are going on with respect to amendments to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) as well as the Companies Act, 2013.

The official also said that the corporate affairs ministry is examining a Parliamentary panel's suggestions on having a new digital competition law.

A bill to amend the competition law was introduced in Parliament August 5 last year and was later referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance. The panel tabled its report on December 13 last year and the ministry will now be coming up with an amendment bill after taking into consideration various recommendations of the committee. The senior official said the bill



to amend the competition law is expected in the Budget session of Parliament.

The introduction of a 'Settlement and Commitment framework to reduce litigations' and incentivising parties in an ongoing cartel investigation in terms of lesser penalty to disclose information regarding other cartels were among the proposals in the bill that was introduced in August last year.

In its report, the Parliamentary panel recommended various changes to the bill to amend the competition law, including bringing cartels under the scope of settlements as a "pragmatic recourse".

The Budget session of Parliament will commence from January 31

with President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

The session will have 27 sittings and will continue till April 6 with a month-long recess to examine the budget papers. The first part of the session will conclude February 14 and after a break, reconvene March 12.

In another report on 'Anti-Competitive Practices by Big Tech Companies', the Parliamentary panel, December 22, proposed a new digital competition law, ex-ante regulations and creation of a category of systemically important digital intermediaries to curb anti-competitive practices in the digital market.

Is ChatGPT tech world's new Frankenstein?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 15: As the world goes gaga over artificial intelligence (AI)-driven chatbot called ChatGPT -- that writes poems and essays and makes humorous comments like your friendly buddy, the conversational AI has opened several frontiers for real-life use cases going forward, only if handled with care.

According to OpenAI, the company behind chatGPT, they have trained an AI model which interacts in a conversational way.

The dialogue format makes it possible for ChatGPT to answer follow-up questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.

ChatGPT is a sibling model to "InstructGPT", which is trained to follow an instruction in a prompt and provide a detailed response, according to OpenAI which was acquired by Microsoft for \$1 billion.

HOW IT WORKS?
The company trained the model using 'Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback' (RLHF), using the same methods as InstructGPT, but with slight differences in the data collection setup. "We trained an initial model



using supervised fine-tuning; human AI trainers provided conversations in which they played both sides - the user and an AI assistant," says OpenAI.

The teams gave the trainers access to model-written suggestions to help them compose their responses.

"We mixed this new dialogue dataset with the InstructGPT dataset, which we transformed into a dialogue format," the company informed.

To create a reward model for reinforcement learning, it took conversations that AI trainers had with the chatbot.

"We randomly selected a model-written message, sampled several alternative completions, and had AI trainers rank them. Using these reward models, we can fine-tune the model using 'Proximal Policy Optimisation'. We performed several iterations of this process," explained OpenAI.

WHAT ARE ITS LIMITATIONS?
ChatGPT sometimes writes plausible-sounding but incorrect or nonsensical answers.

According to the company, fixing this issue is challenging, as during RL training, there's currently no source of truth and training the model to be more cautious causes

it to decline questions that it can answer correctly.

Also, supervised training misleads the model because the "ideal answer depends on what the model knows, rather than what the human demonstrator knows".

ChatGPT is sensitive to tweaks to the input phrasing or attempting the same prompt multiple times. For example, given one phrasing of a question, the model can claim to not know the answer, but given a slight rephrase, can answer correctly, according to OpenAI.

The model is often excessively verbose and overuses certain phrases, such as restating that it's a language model trained by OpenAI.

"These issues arise from biases in the training data (trainers prefer longer answers that look more comprehensive) and well-known over-optimisation issues," the company admitted.

"While we've made efforts to make the model refuse inappropriate requests, it will sometimes respond to harmful instructions or exhibit biased behaviour. We're using the Moderation API to warn or block certain types of unsafe content, but we expect it to have some false negatives and positives for now," it added.

'CRYING IN OFFICE'

Sacked Amazon India employees break down

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 15: As Amazon announced to lay off 18,000 employees globally including nearly 1,000 in India, reports have surfaced that some of the impacted employees broke down and were left "crying in the office" when they heard they have been asked to go.

On Grapevine, a community app for Indian professionals, an Amazon India employee posted sad scenes at offices, including people crying after the announcement of layoffs.

"About 75 per cent of my team is gone. Although I'm in the remaining 25 per cent, I don't feel motivated to work anymore. They are firing people in cabins. People are crying in the office," posted the employee.

Corporate Chat India also posted the screenshot of the user, saying "Atmosphere at Amazon India as layoffs take place".

The layoffs impacted both freshers and experienced employees at Amazon India offices in Bangalore, Gurugram and other places. The company has mostly shut down



businesses which are in early stages of development.

Last week, the Labour Commission Office in Pune sent a summons to Amazon regarding mass layoffs and voluntary separation policy.

The letter to the IT employees' union asked for a joint discussion on January 17 over the alleged layoffs by the company in India.

Earlier this month, Amazon confirmed it is laying off around 18,000 employees and several teams will be impacted, especially Amazon Stores along with People, Experience and Technology (PXT) organisations.

Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said in a statement that they were not done with the annual planning process as earlier mentioned, and "I expected there would be more role reductions in early 2023".

Reid praises defensive work

Coach considers clean sheets in the first 2 games of the WC, a great achievement

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, Jan 15: India could not beat England in a crucial hockey World Cup match but head coach Graham Reid said Sunday that having back-to-back clean sheets was a achievement for the team which was 'leaking' goals recently.

India played out a goalless draw against England in their second Pool D match but still remained in the hunt for a direct quarterfinals qualification.

"We have been leaking goals since the Tokyo Olympics but now we have got back-to-back clean sheets. It is huge positive we have gained from this match," Reid said at the post-match press conference. "Yes, we did concede conceded too many penalty corners but at the same time we defended them very well," he added.

India conceded 25 goals while scoring 17 against Australia in a five-match series before the World Cup. The hosts had also kept a clean sheet against Spain, winning 2-0 in their World Cup opener. In from midfielder Hardik Singh



The number of penalty corners we conceded is indeed a matter of concern and we will try to make amends from the next game

GRAHAM REID | HEAD COACH

a concern if you concede that many penalty corners. We are going to try and make amends," Reid said.

"We have to try and do better inside the opposition circle. But I am very pleased with the commitment of the players. It was a high-skilled hockey played by both the teams, it was a telling match and both came off exhausted," the Indian coach added.

was injured in the final minutes of the final quarter against England as he went down clutching his right hamstring. He was later helped off the field.

Reid was questioned about the player's injury: "It looked pretty bad when he came off but I have got an update and it is not that bad as we originally thought. We will have an

update on that, we will see as we have a few days in our hands," Reid stated.

India conceded eight penalty corners and earned four. However, England could not score off a single penalty corner due to solid defensive work by the Indians. "At this level, when you are playing fast-paced hockey, it happens. It is always

"England and Netherlands are very similar and they attack very quickly and they would push a lot of people forward and they create opportunities, but we defended very well. I think our keeper did not touch the ball from the penalty corners," Reid pointed out.

India play their final Pool D match Thursday against Wales at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

India will have to score as many goals as they can against Wales and the forwards have to utilise the chances that come their way. Both England and Spain have scored five goals each against Wales. If India can score more than England, it will help them in topping the group and reach the quarterfinals directly. (See standings)

POOL D STANDINGS							
Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Points
England	2	1	1	0	5	0	4
India	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Spain	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Wales	2	0	0	2	1	10	0

Tirkey hoping India's medal wait ends

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 15: Hockey India president and legendary Odia player Dilip Tirkey said India can win a World Cup medal this time after a hiatus of 48 years but for that the home side needs to make maximum use of penalty corners.

India have not won a World Cup medal since winning gold in 1975, but Tirkey, one of the finest defenders of his time and former captain, said the hosts under Graham Reid can stand on the podium in the ongoing mega-event at home.

"We have fielded the Indian team expecting to win a medal this time. We would want India to be in the medal tally. They are currently playing really well," Tirkey stated.

"But modern hockey has changed a lot. Penalty corners have become very important. When the penalty corner conversion clicks, most of the time the team wins. We have very good drag-flickers and I hope they click in the tournament and win a medal for India. (Captain) Harmanpreet Singh has been doing very well for India as a drag-flicker though he was not at his best against Spain. I am hoping others step up," Tirkey added.



Dilip Tirkey (left) with Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik and Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang at Rourkela OP PHOTO

player (412 matches) was asked if India can beat the likes of defending champions Belgium and World No.1 Australia. "The team fought against Australia very well in the (five-match) series, they had competed very well," Tirkey pointed out.

"Belgium are also one of the best sides in the world. But India are now in a position to fight against any team in the world on a particular day," Tirkey added.

Tirkey said that the World Cup in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela will set the benchmark for future host countries of the marquee tournament. "When Kalinga stadium hosted the 2018 World Cup final, I thought it was the best stadium. But when I came here and saw it (Birsamunda stadium) is simply magnificent. I think there is no better stadium (than this)," Tirkey said.

Spain rout Wales

AGENCIES

Rourkela, Jan 15: Marc Reyna and Marc Miralles struck a brace each as Spain outplayed Wales 5-1 in a Pool D match to register their first win in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here Sunday. Reyna sounded the board in the 16th and 38th minutes from field efforts, while Miralles scored in the 32nd and 56th minutes. Skipper Alvaro Iglesias (22nd) was the other goal getter for the winners. Wales' lone goal was scored by James Carson in the 52nd minute.

While Spain recorded their first win in the tournament, it was the second loss for Wales on the trot and the latter are more or less out of the tournament.

Spain had earlier lost 0-2 to hosts India in their tournament opener, while Wales were defeated 0-5 by England. Spain will take on England in their final pool match January 19 in Bhubaneswar, while Wales will face India.

Spain literally toyed with the Wales defence and could have added quite a few more goals had

they been opportunistic in front of the opposition goal. The forwards missed at least three sitters with an open goal in front of them.



Marc Reyna of Spain celebrates after scoring against Wales PTTI PHOTO

Kohli, Gill tons sink Sri Lanka

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 15: Virat Kohli (166 n o, 173b, 13x4, 8x6) lit up the dead rubber with an epic knock, his third century in four innings, as India annihilated a clueless Sri Lanka with a record 317-run win in the third ODI to sweep the series 3-0 here Sunday.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (42, 49b 2x4, 3x6) and Shubman Gill (116, 97b, 14x4, 2x6) shared a fluent 95-run opening partnership before Kohli propelled India to a daunting 390 for five with his 74th international hundred and 46th in the 50-over format.

Sri Lanka succumbed to the high quality fast bowling of Mohammed Siraj (4/32) and were bowled out for 73 in 22 overs, highlighting the gulf between the two teams. It was the biggest margin of victory by runs in the history of men's ODIs. Mohammed Shami (2/20) and Kuldeep Yadav (2/16) chipped in with a couple of wickets each.

The night well and truly belonged to King Kohli. The 34-year-



Virat Kohli

old, who had ended a nearly three-year wait for an international hundred in the Asia Cup last year, showed that he is back to his best.

Kohli is now only three short of equalling Sachin Tendulkar's

BRIEF SCORES

India 390 for 5 (Virat Kohli 166 n o, Shubman Gill 116) beat Sri Lanka 73 all out in 22 overs (Mohammed Siraj 4/32) by 317 runs

record of 49 ODI centuries. Kohli's conversion ratio is remarkable as he got to his 46th ton in 259 innings while Tendulkar had taken 452 innings to get to 49 centuries.

Before Kohli took over, Gill had played some high quality strokes en route to his second ODI hundred. With that effort, he repaid the faith of the team management which had picked him to open ahead of Ishan Kishan, who came into the series with a double hundred under his belt.

The last 10 overs saw India smashing 116 runs with Kohli going ballistic after his century. It was raining sixes from his bat post the milestone and one over long on had shades MS Dhoni's helicopter shot that left Kohli with a big smile. Most of his maximums came in the cow corner region.

Pak should follow India's path: Ikram

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 15: International Hockey Federation (FIH) president Tayyab Ikram said Sunday that Pakistan should 'follow India's model' to come out of the slump it has endured in the sport in recent years. Pakistan, the most successful team in World Cup history with four titles, did not qualify for the ongoing edition in India.

"Pakistan is an important stakeholder in world hockey. If you see in recent tournaments, the Pakistan-India match is still the world's best property," Ikram, who was born in Pakistan, but now based in Macau said Sunday at a press conference here.

Ikram asserted that the world body is always ready to help Pakistan. "There is always assistance from the global governing body. I remember I was involved in the launch of the Indian hockey project, the India specific project of the FIH. I will be happy to launch

Pakistan is an important stakeholder in world hockey. If they get back in fray, it will be better for the game

TAYYAB IKRAM | FIH CHIEF

such a project for Pakistan but there should be willingness from their side. They should join the journey," Ikram pointed out.

"We don't have to go far, 2010 and 2022. If you don't need to really follow many different models, just follow the one that Hockey India implemented," Ikram added.

India won a bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics. This does not happen in two days. So, it is the way. We have a great experience to share with best practice if you are willing to take it," the FIH chief further said.

Ikram also said that the FIH was doing a study on tweaking of penalty corner hit rules to provide more safety to the defending players.

SHORT TAKES

Deepika, Atanu back in business

Kolkata: Making a comeback about a month after becoming a mother, three-time Olympian Deepika Kumari made the top 16 cut by finishing ninth in the first open archery selection trials for the Asian Games, World Championships and World Cups, here Sunday. Deepika shot a total of 2,597 points out of a maximum 2,880 in the eight rounds of 70-metre distance in the women's recurve section. Deepika's husband and India No.1 Atanu Das, who was sidelined from the national squad last year, finished second with a score of 2,749 to make the top-16 in the men's recurve section. B Dhiraj topped the pool with 2,767 points, while former Olympians Tarundeep Rai, Pravin Jadhav and Jayanta Talukdar also made the cut.

Points shared

Guwahati: FC Goa dropped points after opening the scoring in the ISL for the first time this season as they were held to a 2-2 draw by bottom-placed NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) here Sunday. The goals for FC Goa were scored by Edu Bedia and Guarrotxena (penalty) while the hosts hit back with both goals coming from penalties as Gil converted those. FC Goa had the opportunity to reclaim fifth place on the table with a win, but will continue to remain sixth after what turned out to be NEUFC's first draw of the season - and only the second time they picked up points from a game. FC Goa have now failed to win on the road for the sixth straight game and their chances regarding qualifying for the playoffs look slim indeed.

AGENCIES

HOCKEY FEVER GRIPS BHUBANESWAR, ROURKELA



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- 1 A large crowd watches singer and Hockey World Cup mascot Oly perform at Ollys Land inside the Kalinga Stadium
- 2 England and Indian players fight for the ball during the World Cup game which ended in a goalless draw, Sunday
- 3 An Indian fan waves the Tricolour ahead of the India-England game at Birsamunda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela
- 4 A fan gets her face painted with colours of the Tricolour outside the Birsamunda Stadium in Rourkela
- 5 An English and Indian player jump to counter a high ball during the Pool D game played Sunday

OP PHOTOS AND AGENCIES