



SARA'S REVELATION

Actor Sara Ali Khan opens up about her dream role during a live show event recently

LEISURE P2



'NO AID TO PAK, CHINA'

Republican candidate Nikki Haley vows that if voted to power, she will cut every cent in foreign aid for countries like China, Pak

INTERNATIONAL P10



SHASTRI'S CHOICE

Former India coach Shastri wants Shubman Gill in the playing XI at the Indore Test instead of KL Rahul

SPORTS P12

POLLS TODAY IN NAGALAND, MEGHALAYA

AGENCIES

Kohima/Shillong, Feb 26: The stage is all set for assembly polls in two northeastern states of Nagaland and Meghalaya, Monday.

In Nagaland, over 13 lakh voters will decide the electoral fate of 183 candidates contesting in 59 out of a total of 60 seats. Polling will be held from 7am to 4pm, while counting of votes will be taken up March 2.

The ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) and the BJP are contesting the polls on a 40:20 seat-sharing basis. The Congress, which ruled the state till 2003 and does not have any member in the current House, has fielded 23 aspirants.

Meanwhile, Meghalaya is also set for polling in 59 of the 60 assembly seats where more than 21.6 lakh voters will seal the fate of 369 candidates Monday, as the ruling National People's Party will fight to retain power, while the BJP and Trinamool Congress will attempt to unseat the incumbent government from power.

Chief Electoral Officer FR Kharkongor said preparations for conducting a free, fair and peaceful election have been completed.

Polling will begin at 7am in 3,419 booths and will continue till 4pm. As many as 640 polling booths have been categorised as 'vulnerable' and 323 as 'critical'.



ROBOT FOR EDU: School students pose with a humanoid robot named 'Shiksha' that can teach children up to Class IV, in Bangalore, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

59 migrants killed in Italy shipwreck

Rome: 59 people died, including some children, when a wooden sailing boat carrying migrants crashed against rocks on the southern Italian coast early Sunday, authorities said. The vessel had set sail from Turkey several days ago with migrants from Afghanistan, Iran and several other countries, and crashed in stormy weather near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria. The provisional death toll stood at 59, Manuela Curra, a provincial government official said. Eighty-one people survived, with 20 hospitalised including one person in intensive care, she said. **P10**

Two accused killed in Punjab jail fight

Chandigarh: Two gangsters lodged in Goindwal Sahib Central Jail in Punjab's Tarn Taran district were killed in a fight among inmates Sunday, police said. Both were connected with singer Sidhu Moosewala's killing last year, they said. They were facing other cases as well, Senior Superintendent of Police Gurmeet Singh Chauhan said. One inmate was injured in the fight, he said. All three belonged to the same group, Chauhan added. Shubdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead in Mansa district May 29. **P10**

MOOSEWALA MURDER

CBI arrests Sisodia

FORCED TO ARREST SISODIA AS HE WAS EVASIVE, DIDN'T CO-OPERATE: CBI

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 26: The CBI Sunday arrested Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in connection with alleged corruption in the now-scrapped excise policy relating to the sale of alcohol, in a move that could plunge the national capital into a governance crisis and further widen the political rift between the AAP and the BJP-led Central government.

Sisodia's arrest, one of the highest-profile actions against an opposition leader, comes after that of Satyendar Jain, Delhi's then health minister, in June last year. Both ministers have led what the Aam Aadmi Party describes as the successful transformation of Delhi's education and health services, contributing to the party's popularity and continued electoral success.

Their absence in the government would leave Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal with no heavyweight lieutenant to implement his governance agenda in Delhi.

Sisodia was arrested after nearly eight hours of questioning on various aspects of the excise policy for 2021-22, which the probe agency says suffered from irregularities



Manish is innocent. His arrest is dirty politics. His arrest has angered people quite a lot. People are watching everything. People now understand everything and will give reply to this. It will boost our spirit and our struggle will only get stronger

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP CONVENER

both in its formulation and implementation, allegedly intended to

benefit people with links to the AAP. The CBI investigators were not satisfied with Sisodia's answers, an agency official said, adding he was not cooperating in the investigation and avoided clarifications sought on crucial points.

He gave evasive replies and did not cooperate in the investigation despite being confronted with evidence to the contrary. Therefore, he has been arrested, the CBI said in a statement. Reacting to Sisodia's arrest, Kejriwal said the deputy chief minister was innocent and his arrest was dirty politics. **Contd...4**

Another Kashmiri Pandit shot dead by terrorists in J&K

AGENCIES

Srinagar, Feb 26: Terrorists Sunday shot dead a 40-year-old Kashmiri Pandit man in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district while he was on his way to a local market, in yet another targeted killing of a minority community member in the valley.

Sanjay Sharma, who worked as an ATM guard, was shot in the chest at point-blank range barely 100 metres from his residence in the Achan area of the south Kashmir district at around 11am, police said, adding he was rushed to a hospital by passersby but succumbed to injuries. He was not reporting to duty of late following an earlier spate of terror attacks on his community members, his colleagues said.

"Terrorists fired upon one civilian from minority namely Sanjay Sharma S/O Kashinath Sharma R/O Achan Pulwama while on way to a local market," the Kashmir Zone police said on Twitter.



Jena named new CS

The senior IAS officer will take charge March 1 replacing SC Mahapatra whose tenure is ending February 28

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: In a major decision, the state government Sunday appointed senior IAS Officer Pradeep Kumar Jena as new Chief Secretary of the state.

Jena, a 1989 batch Odisha cadre IAS Officer, has been appointed as Chief Secretary and Chief Development Commissioner, Odisha and Secretary to General Administration and Public Grievances department, as per a notification published Sunday.

At present, Jena is serving as Development Commissioner (DC), Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) and Managing Director of Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA).

Jena, in the past, has held the crucial post of Chief Administrator of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA). During his tenure, many developmental activities were taken place and some parts of the Ratna Bhandar were opened for inspection and repair work. He has also served as ACS Rural Development, Principal



Secretary of Water Resources, secretary of several departments including IT and Energy.

During his tenure as the Energy Secretary in 2018, extremely severe cyclone Phailin hit the South Odisha coast near Ganjam. The cyclone had completely damaged the power transmission and distribution system in Ganjam and neighbouring areas. The work done by Jena was praised by one and all at that time. Incumbent Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra will retire from service February 28, 2023.

Mahapatra, a 1986 batch IAS officer, has been serving as the Chief Secretary since December 2020. Though he was scheduled to retire February 28, 2022, he got extensions for six months twice beyond his normal date of superannuation with Jena waiting for his turn. Jena is scheduled to remain at the top post till December. **Contd...4**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Nobody is watching films these days. They prefer watching CCTV footage for better experience

WEATHER	
BHUB	CTK
MAX 34.2°C	33.6°C
MIN 19.9°C	22.5°C
Humidity 85%	83%
Rainfall Nil	Nil
Forecast: Dry weather most likely	

Congress planning fresh march from east to west

AGENCIES

Nava Raipur, Feb 26: The Congress is considering a Pasighat-to-Porbandar yatra, party general secretary Jairam Ramesh said Sunday after Rahul Gandhi called for taking the "tapasya" of the Bharat Jodo Yatra forward.

Ramesh asserted that there was a lot of enthusiasm and energy among party workers for another yatra after the nearly 4,000-km Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir journey that was undertaken by Gandhi and scores of Congress persons from September last year to January this year.

Ramesh said that an east-to-west yatra, probably from Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh to Porbandar in Gujarat, was being considered but its format could be a bit different

from the Bharat Jodo Yatra. "There is a lot of enthusiasm and energy. I also think personally it is needed but the format of the east-to-west yatra may turn out to be different from the format of the south-to-north Bharat Jodo Yatra," Ramesh said.

It may not have such an elaborate infrastructure that was mobilised for the Bharat Jodo Yatra and may have less yatris, he said. He said it would largely be a padayatra but there are jungles and rivers on this route. "It would be a multi-modal yatra, but mostly it would be a padayatra," Ramesh said. He said that with elections in Karnataka in April, rains from June and again state polls in November, the yatra may have to be undertaken before June or before November.

Outcry over order to remove stray dogs from roads

ODISHA IS HOME TO MORE THAN 17 LAKH STREET DOGS, WHICH IS THE SECOND HIGHEST NUMBER IN THE COUNTRY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: Following the increasing stray dog menace in Hyderabad, the Odisha government too has ordered the removal of all stray dogs from the roads.

This order has led to a public debate as society is divided over the decision of the government. As per the Livestock Census 2019, Odisha has 17,34,339 stray dogs while Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of 20,59,261 street

dogs in the country. The number of street dogs in Odisha increased to 17,34,339 in 2019 from 8,62,520 in 2012 as per the livestock census.

The figures show the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme has failed in Odisha and controlling the stray dogs is going to be a major challenge before the state in a sooner or later stage.

In this backdrop and the Hyderabad incident in which a four-year-old boy was mauled to death by stray dogs in the street, Odisha Animal Resources Development Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain recently asked all chief district veterinary officers to be vigilant and remove such canines from the streets.

This instruction has been welcomed by many. However, dog lovers demanded the roll-

“The solution is sterilisation. Sterilising one female dog can prevent 67,000 births in six years, and sterilising one female cat can prevent 4,20,000 births in seven years

RADHIKA SURYAVANSHI | CAMPAIGN MANAGER, PETA INDIA

back of the order. It is true that cruelty among street dogs has increased with the increase in their population. Commuters are facing difficulty on the streets especially at night, said Odia comedian Raju Das.

"However, we cannot kill them. Steps need to be taken to remove the dogs that are attacking human beings from the streets. But they should be rehabilitated properly," he suggested.

Following the hue and cry, the Minister issued a series of tweets and said his earlier tweet should not be misconstrued. **Contd...4**

The street dogs have the right to live in our society. Considering one incident, if we ask for the removal of all street dogs, it will not be proper. We can remove only the vicious dogs," said Sumitra Das, a dog lover.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India campaign manager Radhika Suryavanshi said the solution is sterilisation. Sterilising one female dog can prevent 67,000 births in six years, and sterilising one female cat can prevent 4,20,000 births in seven years, she claimed.

She said that sterilised animals lead longer, healthier lives and, in the case of males, are less likely to fight or bite.



leisure



PARIS WAS DRUGGED, RAPED AS A TEEN

Paris Hilton, the American media personality, has spoken out about a traumatic event from her adolescence. The 42-year-old reality star and DJ claims she was drugged and raped at age 15 after she and her friends met a group of guys at the Century City Mall in Los Angeles, reports *People* magazine.

J-HOPE TO SERVE IN THE SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY

J-Hope, a member of *BTS*, has become the band's second member to enlist for mandatory military service after Jin. Their label, *BigHit Music*, shared that J-Hope has already applied for the cancellation of his military postponement.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
You will desire absolute freedom in whatever you do today. A lot of entertainment is on the cards for teenagers, like window shopping or going for a movie. Kids may demand a treat from you. Generally, family affairs dominate today.

TAURUS
You will wake up feeling determined and decisive today, says Ganesh. Be careful as your rigid views may make you seem stubborn. You may not be willing to come half way during a conflict and will make a habit of articulating your viewpoint. Tension at the workplace will eat through most of your time today, feels Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will feel blue and out of sorts today. You will feel that you are all alone in the world, emotionally. Your repressed desires and your philosophical streak will come to the fore today and will influence your dark mood, says Ganesh.

CANCER
With Ganesh's grace, whatever you think or perse will be successful. Students will excel and finish pending work. You can display your imagination excellently. In short, a day of happiness and variety.

LEO
Most of your time will be spent at the work place. You will excel in all your tasks today. Professional relationships will be marked by co-operation. You will have cordial relations with your colleagues. It is an auspicious and progressive day for business, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Avoid all kinds of prejudice and do not allow intolerance to enter your mind today, advises Ganesh. In all likelihood, you will look around yourself in search of love and affection. You will do well to keep negativity at bay as otherwise it may cow you down. Ganesh suggests that you marshal all your courage to live as per your convictions.

LIBRA
Ganesh says those of you who are married or in love will experience a good time today. As you spend more time with your life partner by going out for a drive or for dinner, you will come closer to them. Today is a day full of joy, vigor and happiness for you.

SCORPIO
Being a workaholic may divert your attention from your family and you may have to bear the consequences. It's time to sort differences with your spouse. But, all this while, you need to be calm and patient. Watch your words in case of any arguments, warns Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
It's time for invitations and grooving all night long. And even eat like a glutton. But, for a change you are not on a mood to party, though it is unlike you. You reject the idea of socialising and hitting the dance floor. And your friends do not like your changed avatar, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Though less, you will get money from your investments and other resources. Don't ignore pending projects; complete them at the earliest so that you will have clear picture about your requirements and responsibilities, advises Ganesh. Once you are done with them, you will enjoy happy times with your friends and family in the evening.

AQUARIUS
Meeting people from the different walks of life, having a good conversation with them and widening the horizon of your knowledge - this will be the highlight of today for you. At work, you will have a busy day with plenty of meetings, discussions, planning and execution, feels Ganesh. You will fully utilize your energies, but it may also leave you exhausted.

PISCES
Today you will get attention from the opposite sex and this will play an important role in your success in the near future. Due to the favourable alignment of the planets you will receive more than your expectations.

KLF concludes on a high note

India's ancient maritime voyages to Southeast Asia will be recreated by Kartika Purnima in 2025, says Sanjeev Sanyal, member of PM's Economic Advisory Council



Sanjeev Sanyal (R) making a point at the event

Bhubaneswar: Three-day-long Kalinga Literary Festival, an event that hosted over 70 sessions on arts, culture, cinema and politics, came to an end here at a City hotel with a high note with Sanjeev Sanyal, a member of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, promising to recreate India's ancient maritime history of voyages to Southeast Asia by Kartika Purnima in 2025. "The Indian Navy is going to help in building the ship with ancient stitching technology. And we will probably be able to sail to Bali from

Odisha by Kartika Purnima of 2025," Sanyal, also a historian, promised during a session on the concluding day.

The ship will be about 20 meter in length and will have no GPS and would be similar to the ships made in ancient days when India had close ties with Southeast Asia via maritime trade, he elaborated while adding that there will be another attempt to sail from the coast of Gujarat to Oman soon.

Sanyal was speaking about his recently released book *Revolutionaries* that describes India's armed resistance to combat British imperialism.

During the festival, about 20 books were released in English, Hindi and Odia languages in categories spanning history, fiction, mythology and folk cultures.

Eminent flautist Hari Prasad Chourasia, Chipko movement leader Sekhar Pathak, mythologist Ashwin Sanghi, noted Odissi dancers and media personalities participated in the event. PNN

Self-defence is a must for women: Anushka

Mumbai: Anuska Kaushik, who recently starred in the critically acclaimed film *Thar*, is spending her time off learning Wing Chun, a concept-based combat art form from Southern China. This technique is basically for women's self-defense, and the actor emphatically suggested that more women in the country should learn this martial art form.

After being part of projects like *Ghar Waapast* and *Thar*, the actress is all set to entertain the audience with her work in Tigmanshu Dhulia's *Garmi* and Arbaaz Khan Productions' *Patna Shukla*.

Anushka emphasised the importance of martial arts, saying, "I genuinely believe that, like crafts and other curriculum activities, martial arts should be made compulsory in school curricula. It's not only important for girls but also boys. When we talk about issues like crime and how we are unable to

put an end to it, we need to empower our children so that if they are subjected to sexual or physical harassment, they will be able to defend themselves."

She expressed her disappointment that only one woman in her class is learning martial arts form and that she expects women to actively participate in the same. IANS



My remark on working in Pak movies was misread: Ranbir

Mumbai: Actor Ranbir Kapoor has given a clarification on his statement that he would 'love to' work in a Pakistani film. As per reports, Ranbir spoke about it at a recent promotional event for his upcoming film, *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar*. Ranbir said

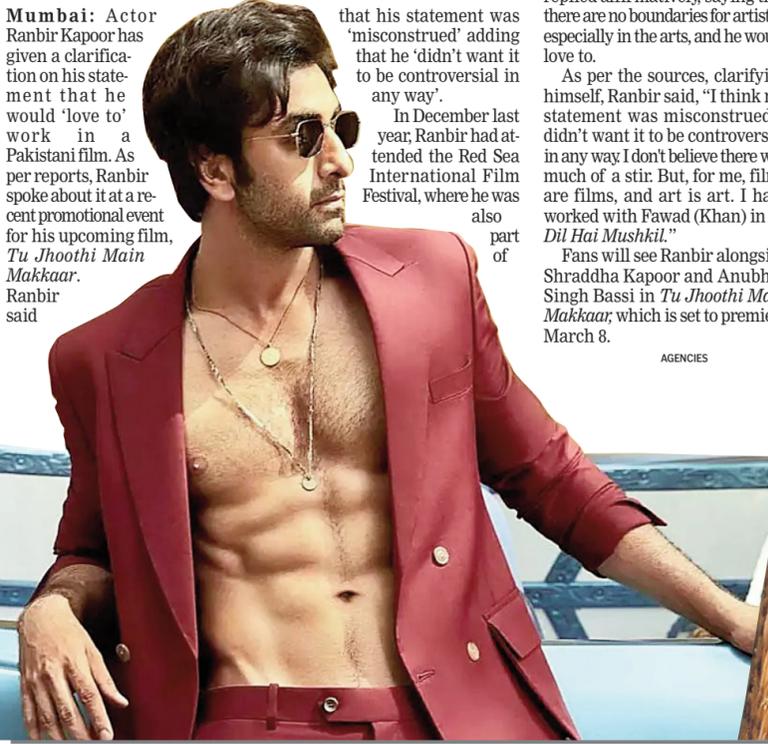
that his statement was 'misconstrued' adding that he 'didn't want it to be controversial in any way'.

In December last year, Ranbir had attended the Red Sea International Film Festival, where he was also part of

a panel. He was asked by a Pakistani filmmaker if he was open to acting in a production if it was set elsewhere. To which Ranbir replied affirmatively, saying that there are no boundaries for artists, especially in the arts, and he would love to.

As per the sources, clarifying himself, Ranbir said, "I think my statement was misconstrued. I didn't want it to be controversial in any way I don't believe there was much of a stir. But, for me, films are films, and art is art. I have worked with Fawad (Khan) in *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*."

Fans will see Ranbir alongside Shraddha Kapoor and Anubhav Singh Bassi in *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar*, which is set to premiere March 8.



AGENCIES

Sara on her dream role

Mumbai: In a short span of her filmography of five years, Sara Ali Khan is seen exploring a variety of genres. The actress is gearing up to feature in films of multiple genres including the psychological thriller *Gaslight*, Dinesh Vijan's next, a rom-com, Homi Adajania's next which is a murder mystery or a period drama like *Ae Watan Mere Watan*. While she is constantly trying to dabble in between several characters and films, the actress opened up about her dream role.

Recently during a live show event, when asked about her dream role Sara expressed her desire to work with content-driven filmmakers in the industry currently, and adding further, she answered, "Honestly, I want to do various kinds of films. An urban young girl directed by Zoya Akhtar, or an emotional family drama directed by Karan Johar, or a period film directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. I mean, I want to do everything."

In the live show event, Sara won the audiences' hearts with her witty and quick answers in rapid-fire rounds.

On the work front, Sara has wrapped up three films last year. Now, she is looking at an even busier 2023.



AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

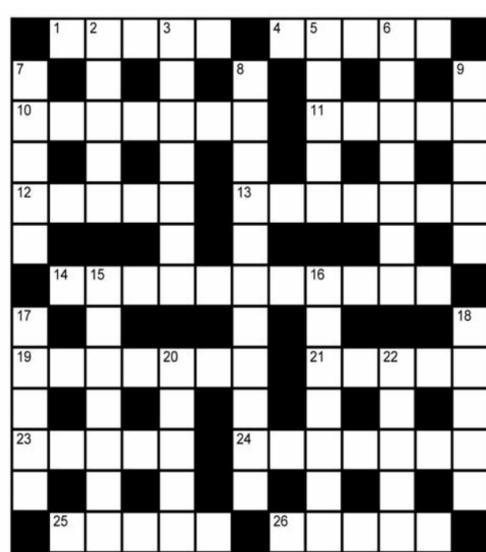


BREVITY



FUN post

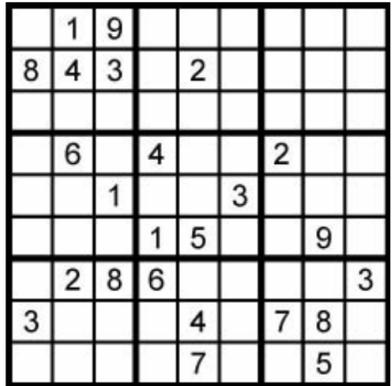
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Garden tool
 - 4 Wine starter
 - 10 Quandary
 - 11 Flow controller
 - 12 Clumsy
 - 13 Play a part
 - 14 Mischievous child
 - 19 Crop
 - 21 Corpulent
 - 23 Tiger teeth
 - 24 Ascots
 - 25 Aquamarine
 - 26 More peculiar
 - 7 Extemporise (2-3)
 - 8 Physician's fear
 - 9 E. African republic
 - 15 Organise
 - 16 Big cat
 - 17 Mine feature
 - 18 Make fun of
 - 20 Literary composition
 - 22 Make happy

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

SWAGGER BRAUN
A M R E E L U
L E A S E G R O W L E D
A T A E F O I
D R E S S I N G G O W N S
U E T O T
F O R U M S B O U G H S
I O J D R
C H A I N R E A C T I O N
T S K T H D O
I M P R E S S E L D E R
O I Y E E L R M
N I C K S T U R E T S

SUDOKU

6 4 2 8 9 3 5 1 7
5 9 1 6 7 2 4 3 8
3 8 7 5 1 4 6 2 9
7 6 4 3 8 9 1 5 2
2 3 9 7 5 1 8 6 4
1 5 8 2 4 6 7 9 3
9 7 6 1 3 8 2 4 5
4 2 5 9 6 7 3 8 1
8 1 3 4 2 5 9 7 6

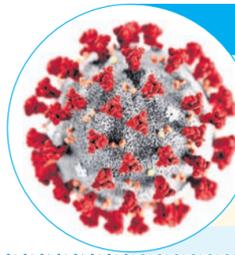
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



TALENT FETED

Veteran singer Debasish Mohapatra being felicitated with 17th Guru Balakrushna Das Samman 2023 during 17th Guru Pranam Utsav at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,96,10,846	65,24,66,051	67,97,693
India	4,46,86,017	4,41,53,099	5,30,769
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

SEX WORKERS' PLIGHT

NHRC seeks report from Chief Secy, DGP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Chief Secretary (CS) and the Director General of Police (DGP) to submit Action Taken Report (ATR) within four weeks in connection with the alleged failure of the state government in addressing the plight of sex workers and their children.

The NHRC directive came while hearing separate petitions filed by Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy.

The rights activist had informed the commission that the state has failed to ensure a dignified life to sex workers across Odisha.

"There are women with children who indulge themselves in sex work for a living and suffer untold miseries. Many of them desire to start life afresh, but they could not due to a host of issues like lack of opportunities,"



Tripathy said. He also said that they suffer from anxiety, depression, stress and other mental traumas due to the stigma attached to the trade. He alleged that the state government is not sincere in addressing the trauma of the sex workers and their dependants. "The government is yet to take a sincere step towards conducting the mapping and survey of women in sex work across the state. Besides, advisories of the NHRC and directions of the Supreme Court of

India (in Budhadev Karmaskar vs State of West Bengal) have not been adhered to by the state," Tripathy alleged.

In August 2020, Tripathy had also moved the NHRC towards the plight of sex workers during Covid-19 pandemic.

He alleged that the governments of state and union territories (UTs) have turned a blind eye to the sufferings of the flesh trade workers as they were deprived of bare necessities of life—food, shelter, and medical facilities—during the pandemic.

Taking cognizance, the NHRC issued an advisory on the Right of Women in connection with the pandemic October 7, 2020.

The governments of state and UTs were asked to provide all basic necessities to women, including the sex workers in distress.

This is the third notice of the NHRC on the issue as the government failed to submit satisfactory ATR over the matter.

Mahapatra new OERC chairman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: Outgoing Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, who is set to retire February 28 this year, will take over as the chairperson of Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC), an official said Sunday.

"The state government is pleased to appoint Suresh Mahapatra, IAS, Chief Secretary and Chief Development Commissioner, Government of Odisha, as chairperson of Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC) with effect from he assumes the office," read the notification by the Energy department.

Mahapatra, a 1986-batch IAS officer, has been serving as the chief secretary since December 2020. Though he was scheduled to retire February 28, 2022, he got an extension for six months beyond his normal date of superannuation. Later, his term as the chief secretary was extended from September 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023.

DCP's tweet leaves commuters in a tizzy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: The DCP Traffic (Bhubaneswar-Cuttack) recently informed people about a list of documents they should carry, and a handful of guidelines they should follow, while driving a two-wheeler in the twin City area to avoid being penalized on the road.

The tweet emphasizes that all the two-wheeler riders should carry with them documents like their driving license, registration certificate of the vehicle, two-wheeler insurance policy, fitness certificate of vehicle and the pollution-under-control-certificate (PUC) while riding a bike.

The tweet, however, has left several confused and they have expressed concerns by replying to it. One of the concerns shown by many is the impossibility of carrying all the documents with oneself all the time. That's why people have requested the authorities to allow verification of digital documents such as those stored in the DigiLocker.

Ayurveda has won people's trust: Das

Balanced diet and healthy lifestyle are the necessary prerequisites to stay fit. But in our country, traditionally trained doctors have been using the principles of Ayurveda since ages to achieve this much-desired combination of diet and lifestyle. And the new generation is now drawn to Ayurvedic medicines as they don't have any side effects. To understand the diverse facets of this new trend, Orissa POST speaks to Odisha Ayurved Bhawan managing director and Ayurvedic practitioner Manoj Kumar Das...



- **Tell us about your childhood?**
- I was born at Jamshedpur and spent most of my childhood there at my grandfather Gokulanand Das's house. Later, I stayed in Cuttack, where also I studied at Railway Settlement High School and Choudwar College.

the best service to the people, who have always appreciated the quality of the medicines produced and tested in our labs. Now, we are marketing these products using modern packaging techniques. It's a matter of pride that our medicines are getting a good foothold not only in Odisha but also in neighboring West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

indigestion, constipation, joint pain and others.

- **How were the initial days of your professional life?**
- I was working in private sector after my higher studies. During that period I came in contact with Justice Radhacharan Pattnaik whose good wishes and advices prompted me to pursue Ayurveda. My family members had also prodded me to work in the Ayurvedic institution founded by my grandfather. And honestly I felt that I was slowly gravitating towards Ayurvedic pharmacy. That's how my professional life began.

■ **How is the demand for Ayurvedic medicines in this age of advanced healthcare?**

■ Ayurvedic principles, since Vedic period, have been providing us with treatments that don't have any side effects for which we can say that Ayurveda is something that offers scientific treatment procedures. Currently, national level exams are being conducted to select students for Ayurvedic courses. Recently, the curricula have been developed for graduate and post-graduate studies (BAMS and MD/MS) in Ayurveda. Initiatives by AYUSH Ministry have also contributed immensely to the development of Ayurveda.

- **Tell us about your future plans?**
- We are aiming at establishing a school for advanced education in Ayurvedic medicines in Odisha. Efforts are on to involve more farmers in cultivation of medicinal plants so that higher pharmaceutical standard is met and in the long run agriculture sector in the state would get a major boost. Simultaneously, it will help spur economic growth.



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Veteran journo Ajit Mohanty dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: Veteran journalist Ajit Kumar Mohanty passed away after battling cancer at All India Institute of Medical Sciences-Bhubaneswar Sunday, family sources said, adding that he was 73.

Mohanty had served leading regional daily *Dharitri* as its reporter.

As the news of his death spread, a pall of gloom descended on the media fraternity across the state. Among others, Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department additional director Santosh Kumar Das and district



I&PR officer (Bhubaneswar) Pathani Rout paid their tribute to the departed soul. Mohanty's mortal remains were taken to Swargadwar for last rites. He was felicitated for his fearless reporting by many organisations.

Efforts on to transform City into nation's edu hub: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday inaugurated a state-of-the-art auditorium at XIM University at its Nijigada, Kurki, Harirajpur campus here. XIM University vice chancellor Fr Antony R Uvari, in his welcome address, said that this beautiful auditorium with 3,000 seating capacity along with a lecture hall with 450 seating capacity and four video conferencing halls with 150 seating capacity each was yet another milestone in the life of the university. "The iconic structure comprises

Shri Naveen Patnaik Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha Sunday, February 26, 2023



CM Naveen Patnaik, Higher Education Minister Rohit Pujari and Pipli MLA Rudra Pratap Maharathy at the event of modern facilities and technology. This fully air-conditioned structure has one of the best acoustics. Designed as an octagonal structure, the auditorium connects different level with ramps and staircases with multiple entry and exits for ease of movement of 3,000 people integrating public convenience facilities and safety as well," said an official of the university.

Acknowledging the remarkable journey of higher education in Odisha and the role of the Xavier fraternity towards the same, Higher Education Minister Rohit Pujari said, "We, under the leadership of our CM, are working towards turning Bhubaneswar into the educa-

tion hub of India through many great steps like Skill in Odisha and 5T Transformational Program while the biggest epitome of higher education in Odisha is Xavier's journey from XIMB in Chandrasekharpur to the new campus of XIM University to the inauguration of the Colossal Auditorium today." Chief advisor to the CM R Balakrishnan addressed the gathering by applauding XIM University and the team behind the conceptualisation of the state-of-the-art auditorium. Among others, Pipli MLA Rudra Pratap Maharathy was present.

Insomniacs at greater risk of heart attack: Study

People who suffer from insomnia were 69 per cent more likely to have a heart attack compared to those who do not have the sleep disorder, according to new research.

Researchers from the Alexandria University in Egypt found that people who slept five or less hours a night were 1.38 and 1.56 times more likely to experience a heart attack compared with those who slept six and seven to eight hours a night, respectively.

"Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder, but in many ways it's no longer just an illness, it's more of a life choice. We just don't prioritise sleep as much as we should," said Yomna E. Dean, a medical student at the University.

Insomnia may include trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or getting good quality sleep.

The study, published online in the journal *Clinical Cardiology*, stressed that "insomnia should be considered a risk factor for developing a heart attack, and we need to do a better job of educating people about how dangerous (lack of good sleep)



can be", Dean said. For their analysis, the researchers conducted a systematic review of the literature that yielded 1,226 studies and of these, nine studies originating from the US, UK, Norway, Germany, Taiwan and China were selected for inclusion.

The team assessed data for 1,184,256 adults. The association between insomnia and heart attack remained significant across all subgroups of patients, including younger and older age, follow-up duration (more or less than five years), male and female sex, and common comor-

RESEARCHERS FROM THE ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY IN EGYPT FOUND THAT PEOPLE WHO SLEPT FIVE OR LESS HOURS A NIGHT WERE 1.38 AND 1.56 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE A HEART ATTACK COMPARED WITH THOSE WHO SLEPT SIX AND SEVEN TO EIGHT HOURS A NIGHT, RESPECTIVELY

THE STUDY, PUBLISHED ONLINE IN THE JOURNAL CLINICAL CARDIOLOGY, STRESSED THAT INSOMNIA SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A RISK FACTOR FOR DEVELOPING A HEART ATTACK, AND THERE IS A NEED TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT HOW DANGEROUS (LACK OF GOOD SLEEP) CAN BE

bities (diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol).

"Not surprisingly people with insomnia who also had high blood pressure, cholesterol or diabetes had an even higher risk of having a heart attack than those who didn't," Dean said. "People with dia-

66 Not surprisingly, people with insomnia who also had high blood pressure, cholesterol or diabetes had an even higher risk of having a heart attack than those who didn't

YOMNA E DEAN | STUDENT AT ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY

betes who also have insomnia had a two-fold likelihood of having a heart attack."

In a separate analysis, the researchers found that disorders of initiating and maintaining sleep—that is, trouble falling or staying asleep—were also tied to a 13 per cent increased likelihood of heart attack compared with people without these symptoms.

"Practice good sleep hygiene; the room should be dark, quiet and on the cooler side, and put away devices. Do something that is calming to wind down, and if you have tried all these things and still can't sleep or are sleeping less than five hours, talk with your doctor," Dean said.

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Panda woos investors for growth of biotech in state

Science and Technology minister Ashok Chandra Panda said that Odisha is devising an innovative strategy by using its core competencies and competitive advantages to accentuate the biotech sector in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: Science and Technology minister Ashok Chandra Panda invited investors and industry leaders for development of the biotech sector in state while speaking at the International Conference Bio-Asia in Hyderabad Sunday. He explained about the initiative of the Odisha government to develop a Biotech Park in Andharua on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar.

Panda informed that the state in its Industrial Policy Resolution-2022 has identified biotechnology as a thrust sector. "All eligible biotechnology ventures will be given adequate government hand-holding with support," he said.



"Bharat Biotech through its anchor tenant M/s Sappigen Biologix has invested more than 500 crore for manufacturing various vaccines in Odisha Biotech Park at

Andharua and has pledged another 700 crore for its expansion," the minister said.

Panda asserted that ecosystem of startups in the state is growing

steadily, marching at an equal pace compared to its contemporaries in the country.

He added that Odisha is devising an innovative strategy by using its core competencies and competitive advantages in institutional systems, human resources, rich natural biodiversities and low-cost production manufacturing capabilities to accentuate the sector in state.

Panda said, "Global Network of Entrepreneurs and Professionals for Odisha (GNEPO), an international body, has signed MoU to facilitate Global Odisha Entrepreneurial Exchanges, to provide a platform for bio-entrepreneurship development in Odisha with global outreach."

"The state government has cre-

ated attractive systems like incentivisation schemes, tax holidays, and capital investment subsidy for bio-entrepreneurs. It is planning to prepare a blueprint on ways to integrate bio-tech for developing new products from available bio-resources," he added.

In the conference Panda discussed with Telangana minister for IT and Industry KT Ramarao the necessity for enhancing education and research in biotechnology.

He said, "Odisha with its structured academic network and research organisations, available human and bio-resources, is committed to contribute to the bio-economy of the state as well as the country by building a substantially capable ecosystem."

Second heritage walk explores City treasures



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: IndiGo Reach, the CSR arm of IndiGo and Inter Globe Foundation (IGF), organised their second heritage walk here Sunday. The walk is part of the 'My City My Heritage' campaign, which aims to raise awareness about the importance of heritage and sets the tone for conversations and partnerships around preservation of heritage both tangible and intangible.

The second walk conducted in the City was led by Kavita Gupta and was curated by Culture, a venture that fosters heritage appreciation. The walk explored historic landmarks like Parsurameswara temple, Mukteswara temple, Sampurna Jaleswar temple, BinduSagar, Ananta Vasudeva temple, Sukasari temple and Baitala temple.

Speaking on the occasion, IndiGo chief executive officer Pieter Elbers said, "Uncovering the rich heritage of Bhubaneswar, through our second 'My City My Heritage' walk was a journey across time and tradition. At IndiGo, we believe in preserving these architectural wonders for future generations to cherish. In fact, we will probably

soon be connecting Bhubaneswar, one of our 78 domestic destinations, to international destinations bringing inbound tourists to explore these architectural marvels. We will continue to demonstrate our commitment to being responsible and contributing back to the community we serve, while enhancing the accessibility through our unparalleled network, connecting people and places."

Inter Globe Foundation Chairperson Rohini Bhatia said, "Bhubaneswar is known for its rich history, intricate architecture, diverse art forms, temples, and historical landmarks. We are extremely excited to explore and showcase this City through our campaign. The foundation has always encouraged people to preserve our cultural heritage, which represents our history and roots, and this campaign will further help raise awareness and promote cultural preservation."

The 'My City My Heritage' campaign aims to explore, document, and spread the diverse heritage and cultural aspects of 10 Indian cities: Prayagraj, Indore, Nashik, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Goa, Kolkata, and Shillong.

CONTINUED FROM P1

Outcry over...

"In the wake of recent incidents of aggressive canine behaviour reported in neighbouring states, Govt of Odisha has taken stock of situation & directed concerned officials to be vigilant in averting such incidents by going for increased sterilisation operations through ABC program," Swain said in his recent tweet.

He said the anti-rabies vaccine should be administered to sterilised stray and pet canines. He advised pet owners to be cautious and hold their pets on a leash whenever they are taken outside their

homes.

In the event of any incident of dog bite, either by a pet or a stray dog, it should be immediately attended by a medical team and steps should be taken by the municipal authorities to restrain the animal for assessment of its health condition, Swain added.

Meanwhile, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation has decided to intensify the animal birth control programme in the city with the help of a private agency. The municipal authority has also decided to implement rules and regulations for pet animals.

Jena named...

The state government has appointed Anu Garg, a 1991 batch Odisha cadre IAS officer, as new Development Commissioner. Garg has been allowed to remain in additional charge of the Additional Chief Secretary, Water Resources department.

Both the appointments of Jena and Garg will come to effect from March 1, 2023. In a separate notification, the government named SC Mohapatra as the chairperson of the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC).

Born January 1, 1964, Jena began his career as the Sub-Collector of Dharmgarh in Kalahandi district in 1991. He also served as the Collector of the coastal Kendrapara district before being appointed the District Magistrate-cum-Collector of Cuttack. Jena earned laurels

from both the state government and the Centre for efficiently handling the Super Cyclone in 1999 as the Collector of Cuttack.

As the director of Agriculture and Watershed Development, he was able to create an impact among farmers. He was the youngest officer to head the twin revenue-generating bodies of Commercial Tax Commissionerate and State Transport Authority (STA), when Odisha was facing a financial crisis in the early 2000s.

He also served at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), helping the state government in formulating a progressive resettlement and rehabilitation policy. As the SRC, Jena dealt with several cyclonic storms. His role during the pandemic was appreciated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

CBI arrests...

"Manish is innocent. His arrest is dirty politics. His arrest has angered people quite a lot. People are watching everything. People now understand everything and will give reply to this. It will boost our spirit and our struggle will only get stronger," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi.

In a statement, the CBI said Sisodia was issued a notice under CrPC section 41A to attend the investigation on February 19.

However, he sought time of one week citing his preoccupation. Accepting his request, he was issued a notice for attending the investigation February 26 for answering various questions evaded by him during his examination October 17, 2022, and further questions relating to his incriminating role based on evidence collected during the investigation of the case, the agency said.

Before leaving for a second round of questioning by the CBI, Sisodia had, earlier in the day, expressed apprehension that he may be arrested.

"I can go to jail several times and I am not afraid. When I left my job as a journalist, my wife supported me. Even today, my family is standing by my side. My workers will take care of my family if I get arrested," Sisodia told reporters at Raj Ghat.

Sisodia, who also holds the finance portfolio in the Delhi Cabinet, was originally summoned last Sunday but he sought deferral of his questioning citing the ongoing Budget exercise, following which, the CBI had asked

him to appear February 26.

This was the second round of questioning of Sisodia after the agency registered a case August 17 last year. He was quizzed October 17 last year.

The Aam Admi Party leader will be put through a routine medical examination by a government doctor before being put in the lock-up where he will spend the night. He will be produced before a designated court Monday.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh described Sisodia's arrest as the height of dictatorship. The day began with Sisodia paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat before arriving at the agency headquarters along with his supporters who were stopped at the barricades raised by Delhi Police.

The concrete and glass CBI headquarters was turned into an impregnable fortress by Delhi Police by raising four layers of barricades and several personnel on the JLN Stadium Road since 1am, officials said.

Media personnel and everyday passersby were stopped at the SCOPE Complex gate, around 500 meters from the CBI Headquarters, to prevent any protests or breakdown of law and order.

Sisodia, who also held the charge of the Excise department, was not mentioned as accused in the charge sheet filed in the case November 25 last year. According to officials, the CBI had not named Sisodia in the charge sheet as the central probe agency kept the probe open against him and other suspects and accused.

BSF officer held following brawl with traffic constable

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: The Commissionerate Police Sunday arrested an official of Border Security Force (BSF) following a brawl between the accused and a constable near the VSS Nagar market under Sahid Nagar police limits here. The accused, Sangram Kumar Biswal, 50, is a resident of Saileshree Vihar area under Chandrasekharpur police limits here.

Biswal who works as Assistant Commandant of the BSF is deployed at Kolkata.

Speaking to media persons, DCP Prateek Singh said that a traffic constable is usually deployed at the spot following complaints of congestion by the local residents.

The complainant, Manoj Kumar Behera who was on duty Sunday morning for traffic control spotted a motor cycle parked before a mutton shop obstructing the road. The constable could not find the owner and tried to capture the photo of the vehicle.

Biswal later came and asked the constable not to take the photo of the vehicle and started arguing with Behera. When the constable

tried to click the photo, Biswal assaulted him. The constable sustained serious injuries and rushed to hospital.

However, some onlookers claimed that Biswal requested the constable not to click the photo and he would leave the place soon. Meanwhile, the constable started verbally abusing the accused. Soon, the BSF official and constable engaged in a brawl in full public glare.

Informed, Saheed Nagar police reached the spot and arrested Biswal after registering a case (85/23) in this regard. He was produced before the court later in the day.



CEANLINESS DRIVE: Members of Sant Nirankari Mission clean the banks of Mahanadi river near Baliyatra Ground in Cuttack, Sunday

Gen Zs, Millennials leading the big quit 2023

With trends like "the big resignation," "the quiet quitting," and the most recent "the big quit," the employment environment has undergone significant change. The situation has gotten more difficult for workers as well as for employers and organisations due to numerous layoffs and a wide range of market instability causes.

As per a recent survey by LinkedIn, 88 per cent of young employees are planning to quit their current jobs. These young employees are millennials and Gen Zs. These young workers are not holding back their aspirations and looking forward to changing their unpassionate and unsatisfactory roles.

Millennials Have no Fear These teenagers don't fear the market anymore. The present economic trends don't threaten them in any way. Following the Pandemic and the unstable employment market, they have begun to develop their skills. They are aware of the benefits of retraining and upskilling.



LinkedIn's report states that 78 per cent of people are confident enough to find another job. Forty-four per cent are learning new in-demand and transferable skills to fit into new roles and positions. The Dire Need of Organisations to Find a Way Out Organisations urgently need to find a solution to the problem of "the big quit 2023." A number of young employees are looking for new jobs or will shortly begin their search. High inflation rates, the desire for financial security, job flexibility, and preserving a work-life balance

are the motivating factors. Start Listening to Your Employees Employee requirements and wants are already being discussed. The organisation needs to start paying attention to their issues. The issues could be with communication, work-life harmony, behavioural problems, underperforming leaders, or incentive programmes. They will look elsewhere for answers if they can't get them at their present job. Inspiring and Direct Leaders Any organisation's assets come

OSLA seeks 'Group A' status for SSB lecturers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 26: Staff Selection Board (SSB) lecturers expressed their regret about the current status of their services during a conference here Sunday and pressed for a hike in their salary.

Although they have been selected through a rigorous recruitment process by the SSB, a statutory body under the State Higher Education Department, they are paid a salary with a grade pay of a mere Rs 4,600.

Furthermore, the SSB Lecturers are even paid less than the Post Graduate Trained teachers of Adarsh Vidyalaya, who get a grade pay of 4,800.

This situation is in violation of Section 9 of the 1974 Act for the Appointment of Faculty and Staff in Aided Private Colleges, which states that fully-aided teachers in aided colleges should receive the

same salary as government teachers. "Odisha State Selection Board Lecturers' Association (OSLA) has appealed to the government to accord SSB lecturers the status of 'Lecturer- Group A' and to start their initial pay scale with grade pay of Rs 5,400 instead of Rs 4,600. The union is advocating for this change as despite being employed to teach in degree colleges, SSB lecturers have not been given the status of "college lecturers" and are not being paid the appropriate salary," said a member of the association.

OSLA is committed to fighting for fair pay and status for SSB lecturers and teachers. They are planning to hold a large rally in the coming days to support their demands. The union believes that the government needs to urgently address this issue, especially as it is striving to improve the quality of education in the state.

employees prefer a flexible work environment. It is essentially a give-and-take relationship between employee and employer. Flexible working doesn't just benefit employees but also yields results by increasing employees' morale and satisfaction at the workplace. Training and Advanced Skill Learning Opportunities Organisations and industry executives have talked a lot about upskilling and reskilling since the pandemic. Young workers are currently studying, upgrading their skills, and developing new ones. Organisations have the chance to guide their staff members to programmes for advanced training and skill development. With such chances for training and skill development, employees may discover the essence of their passion while working. Recognise the Need for Change Following an outdated working module as well as ineffective rules and programs motivates employees and managers to leave.

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Kendrapara prawn gheries causing environmental harm



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Feb 26: A total of 147 villages in this district, declared as eco-sensitive by the Centre are facing environmental threat due to the mushrooming of prawn gheries, sources said Sunday. Toxic and chemical effluents discharged by them are harming the environment and destroying farmlands and contaminating water bodies. The gheries are located in Mahakalpara, Rajnagar and Rajkanika blocks.

These villages were declared as eco-sensitive after the Centre published a notification (No-2180J) in this regard, October 21, 2014.

Among the villages that have got the eco-sensitive tag are Banapada, Bhuinpur, Gogua, Ishanipala, Haripur, Kajalabandha, Kalatunga, Kakatpur, Koriapala, Narsinghpur, Maladiha, Paunsiapala, Ratapanga, Sankhachit, Sasan, Singarpur, Tantiapala, Benakanda, Telanga and Panikha.

Sources said that over 10,000 illegal prawn gheries are in operation in various areas of Mahakalpara, Rajnagar and

2017, the Orissa High Court has issued directions to demolish the prawn gheries. The court even appointed advocate Mohit Agarwal as Amicus Curiae to supervise the demolition of the gheries. However, the apathy of the district administration has only emboldened the prawn farmers to continue their work with impunity.

Taking advantage of the situation, prawn gheries have mushroomed on hundreds of acres of land at Badatubi area under Mahakalpara block close to the coastline. These in future will seriously affect the environment in the 147 villages, sources said.

Environmentalists Lakshmidhar Swain alleged that the gheries are being established in contravention of the guidelines framed by the Forest and Wildlife departments, Coastal Aquaculture Authority and the Central Empowered Committee of Orissa High Court. The prawn feed, medicines and chemical fertilizers used in the gheries are destroying the environment in many villages, he stated.

Local intelligentsia Lakshmikanta Nayak said that the use of low quality motor pumps and aviators have resulted in 11 mishaps in the gheries during the last three years. Other than the deaths, there have been instances of the pumps exploding and causing serious injuries to workers.

When contacted, Kendrapara sub-collector Niranjan Behera said that eviction drive against the prawn gheries has not stopped. The eviction drive has been intensified after the order of the Orissa High Court. Currently, plans are afoot to conduct a survey of the gheries with drones following which those will be demolished, informed Behera.

Rajkanika blocks of the district. However, despite being repeatedly pulled up by the Orissa High Court, the district administration has failed to act against the owners of these gheries. Locals alleged that the district administration's silence on the issue is nothing but violation of Environment Protection Act-1986.

The gheries are also posing a serious threat to human lives. This is because the owners of the gheries are using sub-standard motor pumps and aviators that release toxic smoke. Breathing that smoke can severely damage the lungs and lead to death. Sources said that four persons working in gheries have died due to this problem in the last couple of years.

The death of a labourer identified as Congress Munda of Mayurbhanj district at a prawn gheri in Amarabati village under Talchua police limits, Friday is a case in this point, they added.

Commenting on the issue, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, district convener of the Odisha Suchana Adhikar Abhiyan (OSAA) said that since



MESMERISING PERFORMANCE: Students of Banasingh Government UP School under Sadar block in Dhenkanal district performed a patriotic dance on the concluding evening of the 123rd anniversary of their school, Sunday

55 tagged Olive Ridley turtles return to Rushikulya

TAGGING OF THE TURTLES HELPS SCIENTISTS IDENTIFY THE MIGRATION PATH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Feb 26: Fifty-five Olive Ridley turtles, which were tagged with metallic flipper in the last two years on the Odisha coast, have returned to the Rushikulya river mouth to lay eggs this time, officials said Sunday. The tagged marine reptiles were among 3.20 lakh Olive Ridley turtles, an endangered species, that have nested in the five km-long rookery of the Rushikulya river in the last two days, Berhampur divisional for-



est officer Amlan Nayak said. Mass nesting of the species started near the river mouth from Thursday, he informed.

Tagging of Olive Ridley turtles

will help scientists identify the migration path and places visited by the marine reptiles after congregation and nesting.

"In the last two days, we have detected 55 female tagged turtles, which have returned to the Odisha coast for nesting this time," said Anil Mohapatra, a senior scientist and officer-in-charge of Estuarine Biology Research Centre (EBRC), a regional unit of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Gopalpur.

Last year, at least 12 tagged turtles were detected during the mass-

nesting period at the Rushikulya river beach.

The tagging of Olive Ridley turtles on the Odisha coast was carried out jointly by the ZSI and the state Forest department, Nayak informed. Scientists of ZSI had tagged around 8,500 turtles at the Rushikulya rookery and Gahiramatha marine sanctuary, he said.

"We have collected photographs of the tagged turtles and conducted a detailed study after completing the fresh tagging process for this year," Nayak stated.

MLA Dibya Shankar ties the nuptial knot again

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawaniapatna, Feb 26: Former Minister and MLA from Junagarh Assembly constituency Captain Dibya Shankar Mishra got hitched Sunday with Priyanka Agasti as per traditional rituals at a Pipili-based resort in Puri district.

Priyanka is the daughter of Bhawani Agasti of Dekot village under Golamunda block in Mishra's Assembly segment. Earlier in the day, the couple's engagement ceremony was held at the same venue.

This is the second marriage



for both Dibya Shankar and Priyanka. Only close relatives from the bride and bridegroom's side attended the wedding. While

28 attended the marriage ceremony from the bride's side there were 32 participants from the bridegroom's side

Sources said that Dibya Shankar had earlier married a woman of Jaipatna area in Kalahandi district. Later, he divorced her. He has a son from his first marriage, who is studying abroad.

Notably, Mishra was in the news for wrong reasons when he was the Minister of State for Home. He found himself in a controversial situation over the murder of a Mahaling school teacher Mamita Meher. The opposition members had demanded his resignation over his alleged links with prime accused Gobinda Sahu who later allegedly died by suicide in Kantabanji sub-jail.

7 arrested for stealing oil from IOCL pipeline

The accused had even installed a valve on the pipeline to control the flow of the diesel

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 26: A special team of district police arrested seven persons including a petrol pump owner on charges of stealing around 8,500 litres of diesel worth around ₹26 lakh from the Paradip-Raipur oil pipeline owned by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) at Hatibari under Jujumura police limits in this district, officials said Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Atal Bihari Sahu, a petrol pump proprietor at M Rampur in Kalahandi district and his associates Abdul Amin, Md Sultan, Sheikh Ajmad, Kishore Singh, Chandrasekhar Chand and Sunil Panda. Sahu has been accused of buying the stolen product. Among the other six four are from this district and two from Bargarh.

A tanker (OD-05U-0553), a car (OD-08Q-9041) and pipes were seized in this connection. A case was registered and the accused produced in the court. This was stated here by SP, B Gangadhar while speaking to mediapersons,



Sunday. "Efforts are on to nab the rest of the accused involved in the oil theft," the SP added.

The theft of diesel first occurred, January 27. IOCL officials did not lodge any complaint then, but informed all the police stations located in the vicinity of the pipeline.

On being informed, police kept a close watch on the area. The accused persons again visited the area February 10 and stole diesel from the pipeline. Later, a senior officer of IOCL, Narendra Behera lodged a complaint alleging theft of 8,500 litres of diesel worth ₹26 lakh with the police.

A special team led by Redhakhole SDPO Prasant Meher was formed. The team sought the assistance of cyber experts and got the required leads. It raided various places and arrested the accused persons.

During investigation, it transpired that the accused persons had brought a technician from Uttar Pradesh to cut the pipeline. They had even installed a pressure valve in the pipeline. At night they would open the valve and load the diesel in tankers in only 15 minutes. The accused had also formed a separate sales team to sell the diesel to customers. The second team worked on commission basis.

CS visits Kotia strawberry farm

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Feb 26: Chief Secretary (CS) of Odisha, Suresh Chandra Mahapatra visited the Janiguda-based strawberry farm under Kotia panchayat of Pottangi block in Koraput district Sunday and took stock of the livelihood opportunities it is generating for the local farmers, officials said. Mahapatra met farmer Basna Gemel and asked about the latter's income from strawberry cultivation. He also ate strawberries

cultivated in the farm and appreciated the taste.

Koraput District Collector Abdaal M Akhtar, chief development officer-cum-executive officer of Zilla Parishad Gaurav Shivaji Isalwar, project director Arun Kumar Das of Koraput Watershed Mission, additional project director Ashok Senapati, PD, ITDA Karu Soren, SEO Partha Saru and PA Manjulata Pattnaik and several strawberry farmers were present during Mahapatra's visit.



Physical activities reduce mental disorders

EXERCISES BETTER WAY TO CURE DEPRESSION THAN ANY FORM OF MEDICATION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sydney, Feb 26: Aerobic exercise such as walking, resistance training, pilates and yoga are 1.5 times more effective than counselling or medications for people with mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and distress, suggests researchers including one of an Indian origin.

Researchers from University of South Australia noted that the largest benefits of these exercises were seen among people with depression, pregnant and post-partum women, unhealthy individuals and people diagnosed with HIV or kidney diseases.

The findings that call for exercise to be a mainstay approach for managing depression is based on a study encompassing 97 reviews with 1,039 trials and 1,28,119 participants.

The review has been published



in the 'British Journal of Sports Medicine'. The review specifically showed that exercise interventions that were 12 weeks or shorter were most effective at reducing mental health symptoms, highlighting the speed at which physical activity can make a change.

According to the World Health

Organisation (WHO), one in every eight people worldwide (970 million persons) suffers from mental disorder. Poor mental health costs the world economy approximately \$2.5 trillion each year, a cost projected to rise to \$6 trillion by 2030.

Physical activity must be prioritised to better manage the grow-

Approximately 970 million people worldwide suffer from mental disorders and mental health costs the world economy USD 2.5 trillion which will increase

improvement. High intensity exercises provided greater improvements for depression and anxiety, while longer durations had smaller effects when compared to short and mid-duration bursts," Dr Singh added.

Senior researcher, Professor Carol Maher, said the study is the first to evaluate the effects of all types of physical activity on depression, anxiety, and psychological distress in all adult populations.

"Examining these studies as a whole is an effective way for clinicians to easily understand the body of evidence that supports physical activity in managing mental health disorders," Maher stated.

"We hope this review will underscore the need for physical activity, including structured exercise interventions, as a mainstay approach for managing depression and anxiety," Maher added.

ing cases of mental health conditions, said lead researcher Dr Ben Singh, from the varsity. "Physical activity is known to help improve mental health. Yet despite the evidence, it has not been widely adopted as a first-choice treatment," Dr Singh said.

"Our review shows that physical activity interventions can significantly reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in all clinical populations, with some groups showing even greater signs of

None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell.
SRI AUROBINDO



ISIS 'Brides'

Shamima Begum represents scores of women, including few from India, who have virtually become stateless after the defeat of the ISIS. This British-born national of Bangladeshi parents travelled to Syria as a schoolgirl of 15 years to join that extremist Islamic jihadi organization. Their predicament is pathetic, indeed, as they are stranded in camps far away from their homes. Now they are unwanted supposedly because their re-entry entails great risks for their countries of origin. Despite all the crimes they have committed by joining a ruthless, terrorist organization for whatever reasons, theirs is an inconvenient human rights question now. They cannot be dismissed as part of a cold-blooded gang of murderers nor can they be accepted as naive victims of human trafficking as the lawyers of some of them have sought to portray them. For, they seem to have chosen to embrace the life of a radical religious belief on their own volition. Their plea that they found the reality in the company of ISIS activists contrary to their expectations sounds highly dubious and untenable.

The plight of these women has once again become the focus of international attention after Shamima lost her latest appeal last week against the removal of her citizenship. Public opinion is divided over her case. Some say she should remain barred, while others believe she should stand trial in a British court for joining ISIS.

Shamima was born in 1999 in east London to parents of Bangladeshi origin. She is one of three schoolgirls who travelled in 2015 to ISIS-controlled Syria where she married an ISIS fighter and had two children, both of whom died as infants.

Her British citizenship was revoked on national security grounds shortly after she was found nine months pregnant in a Syrian refugee camp in February 2019. She told the media at that time that she was tired of life on the battlefield and feared for her unborn child. That baby, named Jarrah, ultimately died from pneumonia later that year. Now 23, she is being held at the al-Roj camp, in Syria's northeast, which is home to more than 2,000 people.

She has pleaded with the United Kingdom's government to be repatriated with her family in London. In 2019, a British judge said British citizenship is "not an absolute entitlement for everyone. It can be removed by the Secretary of State, but it should not render the subject stateless." A UK tribunal's ruling in 2019 removing her citizenship was lawful because she "holds" Bangladeshi citizenship by descent through her parents. But, the problem is, Bangladesh itself denied this and said she would not be allowed in the country.

Three Court of Appeal judges ruled in 2020 that Shamima should be allowed back into the UK to challenge the revocation. The case was subsequently taken to the Supreme Court, which ruled in 2021 that Shamima has a right to challenge the decision, but she should do so from outside the UK due to "security concerns."

The irony is Shamima has never held Bangladeshi nationality and has never visited Bangladesh - and officials of Bangladesh said they will not issue her citizenship. She is not the only one. A study by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation in Kings College revealed 52,808 men, women and children travelled to (or were born into) the areas of Iraq and Syria under ISIS control between 2013 and 2018.

But the verdict of the Special Immigration Appeals Commission rejecting Shamima's appeal for citizenship may only strengthen the case of other governments and security agencies, including India, to deny entry of the hapless and seemingly misguided women back home.

Four women from Kerala - Sonia Sebastian alias Ayisha, Raffeala, Merrin Jacob alias Mariyam and Nimisha alias Fathima Isa - and their husbands had travelled to Afghanistan to join ISIS. There has so far been no official comment on the status of these women. But judging by Shamima's case the four women, it seems, will have to wage a protracted legal battle.

There is a symptom of a deep malaise afflicting many parts of the world where religious fanaticism is luring women and men to a life of bigotry and hatred. Solving their issues, however, is not an easy task. These bigots have actively participated in crimes against humanity in the most barbaric fashion. Religious bigotry and hate should never be forgiven by any civilized society.

WISDOM CORNER

- We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same. ANNE FRANK
- One never reaches home, but wherever friendly paths intersect the whole world looks like home for a time. HERMANN HESSE
- Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting. RALPH WALDO EMERSON

WORDSWORTH

Gargalesis

Gargalesis is forceful tickling. Learned men have been arguing about the function of tickling for at least the last couple of millennia and we are no nearer to finding out why it is that when people are tickled they laugh. It can't be that they enjoy it, because they usually don't. In 1999, Christine Harris, a research scientist at the University of California, San Diego, proved that people laugh even when they think they are being tickled by a machine (so it has nothing to do with a person doing it) and that the quality of the laugh was not the same as that provoked by humour. The response is also different when a person is tickled lightly, say by a feather on the sole of the foot or a bug crawling across you. For example, you can't give yourself a heavy tickle, but you can a light one. Because the responses are of different kinds, psychologists have contrasted gargalesis, heavy tickling (which is from Greek gargarismos, tickling) with knismesis, the light tickle of a feather. Though both terms date back to an academic article of 1897, they're extremely rare, and you won't find either in even the largest dictionary.

Garth

If you should find yourself one day in the cloisters of a cathedral or monastery, at least in Britain, you need not be lost for a word to identify the open courtyard it encloses: it's a garth. Strictly speaking, it's a contraction, of cloister-garth. There were once many such compounds, such as apple-garth (an orchard), fish-garth (an enclosure on a river or seashore for trapping or storing fish), church-garth (a churchyard), vine-garth (a vineyard), willow-garth (a field where willows or osiers are grown), stack-garth (a rick-yard, an enclosed space for storing stacks of hay, straw and other produce), and fold-garth (a farmyard). You can work out cabbage-garth for yourself. As you will have gathered, garth was once a very broad term. It could mean almost any patch of enclosed ground used for a specific purpose, such as a yard, garden, field or paddock. It appeared in the northern parts of Britain in the fourteenth century and derives from Old Norse garðr, a yard or courtyard. Through Old English it's related to yard in similar senses, and also to garden. Garth is now rare except in place names, in historical or poetical writing, or in some northern English dialects. The personal name comes from the same source, as it originally referred to somebody who lived near an enclosure, especially a paddock or orchard.

FOCUS BIODIVERSITY

A HIGH-SEAS TREATY MUST



Jennifer Morris

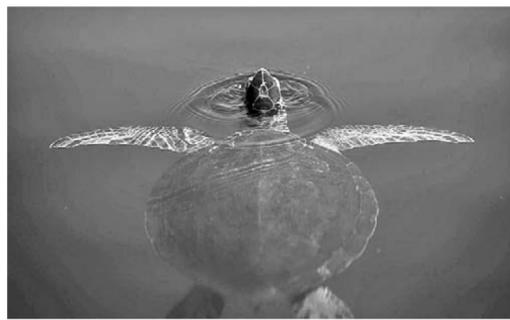
UNLESS WE EMBARK ON A NEW COURSE, OUR CRISES WILL ONLY DEEPEN

Our planet's tightly woven, interconnected natural systems are vital to life and livelihoods. Yet with each passing season, we are witnessing the crushing realities of the climate crisis and biodiversity loss. In its 2023 Global Risks Report, the World Economic Forum warns that six of the top ten risks in the coming decade will stem directly from the loss and degradation of nature. In the face of extreme storms and floods, devastating droughts and wildfires, ocean dead zones, and food scarcity, demands for systemic change have reached a crescendo. Unless we embark on a new course, our crises will only deepen.

Despite the challenge of reaching global agreements in such a fractured world, we have cause for optimism. In late 2022, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) achieved a breakthrough after languishing in relative obscurity for many years. At the COP15 summit in Montreal in December, countries completed four years of negotiations and approved the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the most significant inter-governmental agreement on biodiversity in over a decade.

Under the GBF, governments have committed to protect 30% of the world's land, freshwater, and ocean by 2030; improve the sustainability of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry; and restore 30% of degraded ecosystems. The framework establishes multiple pathways for scaling up solutions within and across borders. It includes down payments, financial commitments, and an implementation plan, and it is already spurring action by corporations, governments, and civil society.

But critical work remains to be done. On February 20, UN member states gathered in New York to finalise a key piece of the ocean-governance puzzle: a new treaty to



The high seas belong both to everyone and to no one. As with many common resources, there is no comprehensive, agreed-upon framework governing conservation and the sustainable use of the ocean outside of national jurisdictions

conserve and sustainably manage marine biodiversity in the high seas.

The high seas cover two-thirds of all ocean and almost half the planet, and are home to up to ten million species - many of them still unidentified. But much of this biodiversity remains out of sight and thus out of mind. As a result, life in this vast expanse is constantly threatened by weak regulation of activities such as shipping and fishing, and by poor enforcement of existing laws.

The high seas belong both to everyone and to no one. As with many common resources, there is no comprehensive, agreed-upon framework governing conservation and the sustainable use of the ocean outside of national jurisdictions. But since the same large pelicans, leatherback turtles, sharks, and whales that we seek to protect on and off our shores spend much of their lives in the high seas, there is an obvious need for more robust global strategies to protect, manage, and monitor these areas.

Marine life does not recognise

legal jurisdictions. For the conservation of migratory species and transboundary ecosystems to be effective, we urgently need a global high-seas treaty, which in turn will contribute to the implementation of the CBD's ambitious new framework. Without it, the CBD will have much less chance of success. That is because, currently, there are no global powers to establish marine protected areas in the high seas. Even though the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea obligates states to assess the impact of activities in their waters, there is no global mechanism for assessing activities in the high seas. Instead, there is a patchwork of assessment mechanisms for different bodies that regulate parts of the high seas, but no minimum standards that ensure quality or consistency.

So, what needs to happen at the summit in New York? For a new high-seas treaty to make a difference, it must achieve multiple objectives. The first is to provide countries with the legal powers to establish and manage a repre-

sentative network of marine protected areas in the high seas, as this is essential to protecting at least 30% of the ocean by 2030.

Moreover, we must dramatically strengthen governance of human activities that affect the high seas, by establishing robust, modern environmental assessment and management standards. And we need to ensure sufficient financial, scientific, and technical support for states that require it.

We will also need a mechanism for sharing the benefits of marine genetic resources fairly and equitably, as well as a voting procedure when all good-faith efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted. Otherwise, one or two countries will be able to block progress even on issues that are supported by the overwhelming majority.

Only through a strong high-seas treaty and bolder action within existing treaty bodies (especially fisheries-management agreements) can we protect the health of the ocean. We must adapt quickly to new activities like deep-sea mining, as well as to increased shipping collisions with large animals and rising waste, noise, and artificial-light pollution. This requires managing the whole ocean in a more comprehensive fashion. With ocean health declining, maintaining the status quo is not a viable option.

The negotiations for the first international ocean treaty in over 40 years, and the first to target the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in the high seas, offer another opportunity to rebalance our relationship with nature. Building on the momentum from COP15 in Montreal, we must now set a course to address the biggest risks facing our planet in the next decade.

The writer is CEO of The Nature Conservancy. PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM EARTHQUAKES

Turkey's deadliest disaster

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake, relatively huge on the Richter scale, struck southeastern Turkey, near the Syrian border, in the early hours of February 6 causing widespread devastation to life and property unprecedented in recent times with the death toll predicted to touch 50,000 in coming days. This was followed by more than 6,000 aftershocks with 40 of them within the deadly 5 to 6 magnitudes range. Two powerful quakes of 7.6 and 6 magnitudes also struck the same region on the same day in the aftermath of the incident. The series of earthquakes killed more than 48,000 people to date, destroyed more than one lakh buildings and left a million people homeless. These earthquakes are estimated to have caused nearly \$84.1 billion worth of damage to property, ranking them the fourth deadliest earthquake on record. The UN, which has been carrying out the biggest relief and rescue operation in the last 75 years, estimated that nearly 2 crore 60 lakh people were in need of immediate help. It was the deadliest natural disaster in Turkey's modern history! The impact was felt as far as Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, and the Black Sea coast of Turkey.

To make matters worse, another powerful earthquake struck southern Turkey and northwestern Syria very recently on 20

February evening, trapping more people under collapsed buildings.

One may recall that in the recent past, two devastating 6.1 magnitude earthquakes rattled Afghanistan and Iran on June 22 last year. Around 5 lakh quakes occur every year around the globe out of which only 100 are catastrophic. The strongest earthquake in history occurred in Chile in 1960 measuring 9.5 on the Richter scale which killed nearly 6000 people. The most devastating quake in India happened on 15 January 1934 in Bihar with an intensity of 8.1 that killed around 30,000 people. The earthquake that shook North America in 1811 was so powerful that the river Mississippi started flowing backward. The most dangerous landslide event triggered due to an earthquake was in China in 1920 which killed around 2 lakh people. A powerful quake struck Peru in 1970 that triggered a deadly avalanche that moved at an alarming pace of 400 km/hr killing 18,000 people. An undersea earthquake near Indonesia in 2004 triggered violent tsunami waves in the Indian Ocean, that killed nearly 2.30 lakh people, and lasted for a record time of 10 minutes. While intensities below 5 in the Richter scale cause little damage to the window sills and furniture, intensities from 5 to 7 could lead to the collapse of houses beyond which bridges and other heavy

structures cave in leading to complete destruction.

Earthquakes occur when there is a sudden movement along the fractures of the tectonic plates that make up our Earth's surface. These plates are in constant motion relative to one another and might subduct, spread, slip or collide along their boundaries called fault zones. As the plates grind together, they get stuck building up enormous pressure. Finally, the pressure becomes so great that they break loose producing tremendous vibration of the Earth's surface. There are three types of tectonic faults: normal fault, reverse fault and strike-slip fault. While in a normal fault, the rock layers above the fault plane move down relative to the layers below, in a reverse fault, the rocks move up relative to the other layers below. However, in a strike-slip fault, the two plates move past each other releasing the built-up strain. The recent Turkey earthquake is speculated to have been caused due to the movement of one such strike-slip fault.

The region in the Middle East happens to be highly vulnerable to earthquakes as the location lies near the junction of three major plates namely, the Anatolian, the Arabian, and the African Plates. The recent earthquake probably occurred in either the East Anatolian Fault or the Dead Sea

Transform. The East Anatolian Fault accommodates the westward extrusion of Turkey into the Aegean Sea, while the Dead Sea Transform accommodates the northward motion of the Arabian Peninsula, relative to the Africa and Eurasia Plates. Unlike along the North Anatolian Plate which produced 11 large earthquakes during the 20th century, the East Anatolian Fault was seismically quiet. This plate has some segments identified as seismic gaps which are actually active fault zones known to produce significant earthquakes that have not slipped in an unusually long time, compared with other segments along the same structure. Hence, an earthquake in this region was long due! Major earthquakes in 836 AD, 1033 AD, and 1754 AD which resulted in 200,000, 70,000 and 40,000 deaths respectively.

Unfortunately, unlike other natural calamities like floods and cyclones, earthquakes cannot be predicted and, hence, an early warning cannot be issued. The only option available is to mitigate its impacts by greater human preparedness, efficient relief and rescue operation, and designing earthquake-proof houses.

The writer is Education Officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhopal.



Nikunja Bhari Sahu

THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE PROBABLY OCCURRED IN EITHER THE EAST ANATOLIAN FAULT OR THE DEAD SEA TRANSFORM

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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Time for truce

Sir, It is high time for New Delhi to act as a good Samaritan by negotiating a peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine. Although India has frequently abstained itself from casting a vote in the United Nations General Assembly and in the United Nations Security Council against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it has been vocal in highlighting the importance of the UN Charter, international law and respect for the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of the states. As per the latest reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 8000 non-combatants have been confirmed dead in Ukraine since the invasion last year. Nearly 18 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, with 14 million people displaced from their homes. Thus, the grim data provides sufficient reasons for not grinding the war further. Building stronger ties with Russia without hurting the sentiments of the West has always been the challenging part of New Delhi's foreign policy. And since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this policy has been put to some of the harshest tests. As India can ill afford to hamper its diplomatic ties with none of the two powerful blocs with whom it shares a bunch of vested interests, it will be intriguing to see how Prime Minister Narendra Modi convinces the Russian President for an armistice. Tushar Anand, PATNA

Koraput strawberry

Sir, The strawberry from Sunabeda in Koraput district has attracted many people in Bhubaneswar's 10-day-long tribal fair. The strawberries from Sunabeda were grown by the Chutikia Bhunjia tribe which is a part of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. The government is giving all kinds of support including educating the tribals about strawberry farming. The farmers are happy and get a good amount of money from the sale of strawberries. The climatic condition and geographic location of Koraput suit these kinds of crops. The strawberries of Koraput have also had the potential to go beyond Odisha as Koraput coffee has already achieved this milestone. The government and local authorities should provide all kinds of help to the tribal farmers to grow strawberries further as the farming is in the initial phase. The government also needs to provide a national and international market for the farmers so that they can sell their produce in huge quantities. Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK

national

of the day quote

Citizens' welfare is the foremost priority of the government and property tax will ensure financial self-sustainability of cities and improvement of public amenities in the union territory

The government is taking proactive steps towards making Kerala a differently-abled friendly state

There was a time when people after forming government in Karnataka would take its money outside. Today, the country's money and resources are honestly directed towards Karnataka's development

SHORT TAKES

Congress leader shot dead

Ramgarh: A 35-year-old Congress leader was shot dead by motorcycle-borne criminals in Jharkhand's Ramgarh, two days ahead of a bypoll in the district, police said. The incident took place around 8 pm on Saturday near an old petrol pump on the Bhurkunda-Patratu road in Saunda area, around 50 km away from the state capital Ranchi, a senior officer said. The deceased was identified as Raj Kishore Bauri alias Bitka Bauri, who was Patratu block representative of Congress' MLA from Barkagaon, Amba Prasad. Bauri was taken to CCL hospital in Bhurkunda where doctors declared him brought dead, the officer said.

Man arrested for molestation

Nagpur: A 26-year-old man was arrested for allegedly molesting four schoolgirls in Nagpur in Maharashtra, an official said Sunday. The accused took a Class II student to a store room after luring her with chocolates and molested her, the Mauda police station official said. "Our probe found he has molested four students. He is the son of a teacher. He has been charged with outraging the modesty of a woman by using criminal force and other offences under IPC and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act," he said.

Flight diverted to Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad: A Delhi-bound flight was diverted to Ahmedabad Sunday morning following a suspected bird-hit soon after the aircraft took off from Surat airport, sources said. The IndiGo flight from Surat to Delhi landed at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport here safely and there were no injuries, they added. The 150-odd passengers and crew members were then flown to Delhi onboard another aircraft, these airport sources said.

Two women crushed to death

Seoni: A speeding truck crushed two women to death and injured three others in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni district, police said Sunday. The accident took place at around 9 pm on Saturday near Kurai on Jabalpur-Nagpur highway, 35 km from the district headquarters, they said. The truck crushed to death a 70-year-old pedestrian woman and a 32-year-old woman riding a motorbike, Kurai police station in-charge Madanlal Maravi said.



To achieve growth, one needs to get on the field. You can't get things done online or through Facebook. A chief minister has to keep ego aside when dealing with the Centre to get funds for development

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

STAGE SET

Indian Air Force will participate in multilateral air exercise 'Exercise Cobra Warrior' at the RAF's Waddington Air Force Base in the UK from March 6 to 24, an official statement said



Maulana Azad missing from plenary ad, Cong apologises

BSP MP Kunwar Danish Ali hit out at the Congress, saying Rahul Gandhi will have to confront and clean RSS elements in his party that are responsible for such a self-goal

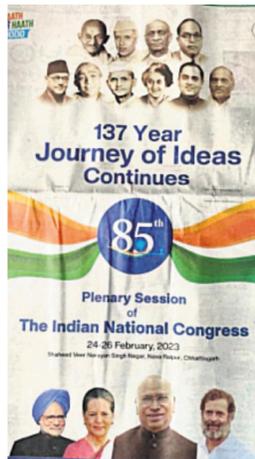
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nava Raipur, Feb 26: The Congress apologised Sunday after an advertisement on its 85th plenary session, which did not feature India's first education minister and freedom fighter Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, triggered a controversy and the party received flak from several quarters.

The party said it was "an inexcusable slip-up", for which responsibility was being fixed and action would be taken.

The full-page advertisement, published in dailies on the third day of the plenary session on Saturday, featured Congress leaders of the past - Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, B R Ambedkar, Subhas Chandra Bose, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, P V Narasimha Rao and Sarojini Naidu.

Sharing the advertisement on Twitter, Congress MP Manish Tewari said, "The @INCIndia has a pantheon of Muslim leaders who struggled against fissiparous tendencies especially within their community that led to creation of Pakistan & dedicated themselves to inclusive idea of India. Someone



wants to airbrush their contribution from annals of History."

Several people hit out at the Congress for leaving out Azad in its advertisement. "Today an ad released by INC did not carry a photograph of Maulana Azad. It was an inexcusable slipup. Responsibility for it is being fixed & action will be taken," Congress

Today an ad released by INC did not carry a photograph of Maulana Azad. It was an inexcusable slipup. Responsibility for it is being fixed & action will be taken

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet.

"Meanwhile this is a most sincere apology from us. He will always remain an iconic & inspiring figure for us & India," he said.

Ramesh also responded to a tweet by a party leader which pointed out that Azad's picture featured on the dais of the plenary session, saying, "Hope all those who took us to task (justifiable as it may have been) for one goof do take note."

BSP MP Kunwar Danish Ali hit out at the Congress, saying Rahul Gandhi will have to confront and clean RSS elements in his party that are responsible for such a self-goal. "How can INC forget Maulana Azad and his contribution? Earlier also, Pranab Mukherjee and Shivraj Patil approved installation of Savarkar's portrait in Parliament," Ali said.

Bangladeshi villagers attack BSF jawans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 23: Two Border Security Force (BSF) jawans were seriously injured and their weapons snatched after more than a hundred Bangladeshi villagers attacked them with sharp-edged weapons in a field along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal Sunday officials said.

"BSF jawans of border outpost Nirmalchar were on duty when they stopped Bangladeshi farmers from bringing their cattle to the fields of Indian farmers. Immediately, more than a hundred villagers and miscreants from Bangladesh entered the Indian side and attacked the jawans with sticks and sharp-edged weapons (Dahs)," a BSF spokesperson for South Bengal frontier headquartered in Kolkata said.

Two jawans were seriously injured in the attack that took place under the Berhampore sector in Murshidabad district, he said. Photos shared by the BSF showed deep gashes on the heads of the jawans and their uniforms soaked in blood.

The spokesperson said the attackers fled to Bangladesh after snatching the weapons of the troops. The BSF later called for a flag meeting with its counterpart Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) so that the weapons of the jawans could be recovered and a repeat of such in-

Photos shared by the BSF showed deep gashes on the heads of the jawans and their uniforms soaked in blood

idents could be prevented, the spokesperson said.

The BSF accused the BGB of taking "no concrete action" to stop such incidents despite them being informed about "many incidents" of Indian farmers' crops being destroyed as Bangladeshis forcibly brought their cattle for grazing on Indian land.

BSF jawans have been attacked several times in the past by "miscreants and their accomplices" in a planned manner, but the jawans did not let their plans succeed, the spokesperson said. Officials said the area of Nirmalchar is very difficult and despite the lack of facilities, BSF jawans guard the border day and night.

The spokesperson said Indian farmers have been complaining about the theft and damage done to their crops by Bangladeshi villagers and hence the BSF has set a forward post to protect them while working in their fields. The BSF has lodged an FIR against the unidentified Bangladeshi attackers at Ranitala police station in Murshidabad.

In a first, Kerala temple inducts mechanical elephant

Most elephants in captivity in the country, including in Kerala, are being held illegally or have been transported to a different state without permission

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 26: Following up on its pledge to never keep or hire live elephants or any other animals, the Irinjadappilly Sree Krishna Temple in Kerala's Thrissur district has become the first in the country to use a mechanical, lifelike elephant for temple rituals.

On Sunday, the temple priests performed 'Nadayiruthal' or ceremonial offering to the deity, of Irinjadappilly Raman, a magnificent, lifelike mechanical or "robotic" elephant.

Irinjadappilly Raman has been gifted to the temple by animal

rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India with the support of award-winning Indian film actor Parvathy Thiruvothu.

Irinjadappilly Raman will help conduct ceremonies at the temple in a safe and cruelty-free manner and thereby support real elephants' rehabilitation and life in forests, ending the horror of captivity for them, PETA India stated.

The inaugural ceremony held on Sunday was followed by a performance by the percussion ensemble led by Peruvanam Satheesan Marar. Subjecting live elephants to the extreme loudness of the timpani is cruel, as it is damaging and distressing for live elephants. "In this day and age, we have access to understanding what animals are forced to endure when humans use them for entertainment. It's high time we made stronger and more impactful strides towards stopping such abuse and letting animals have respectful and dignified lives," said Parvathy. "I'm delighted to support PETA India in



helping Sree Krishna Temple worshippers experience the joy and sanctity of religious functions in an ahimsak, exciting, modern, and conscientious manner."

Head priest of the temple Rajkumar Namboothiri said: "We are extremely happy and grateful to receive this mechanical elephant which will help us to conduct our rituals and festivals in a cruelty-free

MCD RUCKUS: COPS FILE FIR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 26: The Delhi Police Sunday said that they have lodged a case in connection with the ruckus created by the AAP and the BJP councillors in the MCD House.

On Friday Mayor Shelly Oberoi had stalled the recounting of votes for electing the members of the Standing Committee of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) following objections raised by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Soon after this, the AAP and the BJP councillors started fighting with each other.

It was free for all in the MCD House with BJP and AAP councillors trading blows at each other, showing scant disregard for the sanctity of the House. Complaints were made to the Delhi Police by both the parties.

Now after taking legal opinions, the Delhi Police has lodged an FIR under section 160 (Affray) of Indian Penal Code in the matter. The police said that no arrest was made in the case as of now.



Man kills wife, two sons; attempts suicide



In his WhatsApp messages, Rajesh mentioned that he had suffered a huge financial loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 26: A 38-year-old man tried to end his life after killing his wife and two sons, including a four-month-old infant, over financial issues in west Delhi's Mohan Garden area on Sunday police said.

They said the incident was reported from Vipin Garden. The man was identified as Rajesh (38). His 35-year-old wife and sons, the elder aged 5, sustained stab injuries on their necks. After killing his wife and sons, Rajesh inflicted a deep injury on his wrist, the police said, adding that he is undergoing treatment at a hospital.

The accused sent WhatsApp messages to his friends in the early hours of Sunday about his financial woes. His friends alerted his brother, who informed the police around 6 am, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) M Harsha Vardhan said.

The parents of the man, both aged above 75, were present in another room when the incident took place and police are talking to

them, he said. Rajesh runs a general store. Earlier, he used to run a company that was engaged in ISO certification-related work. A case of murder will be registered at the Mohan Garden police station, the DCP said.

According to police, the weapon of offence, a knife, has been recovered from the spot. It is being ascertained whether Rajesh bought the knife recently for this purpose, the police said. Rajesh is undergoing treatment at a hospital. The post-mortem examination of the bodies will be conducted on Monday, they said.

In his WhatsApp messages, Rajesh mentioned that he had suffered a huge financial loss. "He claimed that his ISO certification business was affected after the COVID-19 lockdown as his employees betrayed him and took all his customers from him. He also alleged that several people defrauded him of different amounts like Rs 5,000 and Rs 7,000 on the pretext of getting him a loan," a police official said.



People performing yoga during Raahgiri Day celebrations in Gurugram

PTI PHOTO

ED questions Karim Morani

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 26: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Sunday questioned Bollywood producer Karim Morani in connection with the Rs 200 crore money laundering case related to incarcerated conman Sukesh

Chandrashekar.

Karim Morani is known for films like 'Ra.One' and 'Chennai Express'. There were allegations that Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez was gifted a home by Sukesh Chandrashekar, in which Morani's role was being probed.



The Enforcement Directorate has recently filed its second supplementary chargesheet in which she had been named as an accused.

JAWAN KILLED IN IED BLAST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Narayanpur, Feb 26: A head constable of the Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) was killed after a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Naxalites went off in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Sunday, police said.

The incident took place at around 7 am near Batum village under Orchha police station limits, Narayanpur Additional Superintendent of Police Hemsagar Sidar said.

After receiving information that Naxalites have put up banners in the area, a CAF team had launched patrolling from Orchha police station, located around 300 km from state capital Raipur, he said.

When the patrolling team was advancing through Batum, head constable Sanjay Lakra, belonging to CAF's 16th battalion, inadvertently stepped over a pressure IED connection which triggered the blast, leading to his death, the official said.

The body of Lakra, who was a resident of Jashpur district in Chhattisgarh, was brought to a local hospital, he added.

On Saturday, three police personnel were killed in an encounter with Naxalites in the state's Sukma district.

On February 20, two policemen were killed in a Naxalite attack in Rajnandgaon district of the state.

Pak, other countries funding Khalistan supporters: Mann

The CM said the Punjab Police were capable of handling the issue and only a handful of persons were supporting the pro-Khalistan movement in the state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhavnagar, Feb 26: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Sunday said Khalistan supporters were getting funding from Pakistan and other countries, amid the ongoing turmoil in his state surrounding the recent activities of Khalistani sympathiser Amritpal Singh and his supporters.

Without revealing any concrete strategy to tackle Khalistani elements, Mann, who was in Gujarat, said the Punjab Police were capable of handling the issue and only a handful of persons were supporting the pro-Khalistan movement in Punjab.

“Do you think 1,000 people (who have been seen shouting pro-Khalistan slogans) represent the entire Punjab? You come to Punjab and see for yourself who all are shouting such slogans,” Mann said when asked what he had to say about pro-Khalistan slogans being raised in his state after Singh’s episode. He was addressing a press conference in Bhavnagar city of Gujarat after attending a mass wedding function.

“Only a handful of persons are behind this and they run their shops through funding from Pakistan and other foreign countries,” Mann said.



“Though Rajasthan shares a much larger border with Pakistan, why do drones (sent from Pakistan) land in Punjab and not in Rajasthan? Because their (Khalistani element’s) masters are sitting there (in Pakistan) and they want to disturb Punjab. But we will not let them succeed,” the CM said.

Referring to Khalistani sympathiser Amritpal Singh and his supporters’ act of bringing a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib inside a police station in Ajnala on the outskirts of Amritsar recently, Mann said those who took the Sikh holy book to the police station as a shield cannot be called as ‘waris’ (heir) of Punjab.

The Punjab CM also termed the incident as a minor one and down-

played Singh’s alleged threat of more violence in coming days.

“This is khayali pulao (day-dreaming). Punjab has seen such black days in the past. The Punjab Police are capable of handling them and we will never allow anyone to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere,” he said.

Mann further said thanks to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab, many industries were coming, including Tata Steel and entities from other countries.

“Had Punjab’s situation been so bad, these industries may not have been coming to Punjab today. Even NRIs are coming back and those who planned to settle abroad have now cancelled their plans. Punjab will shine again after six-seven months,” said the CM.

400 MILD TREMORS RECORDED IN 2 YRS ‘Earthquake swarm’ in Guj district

A SWARM IS A SEQUENCE OF MOSTLY SMALL EARTHQUAKES WHICH ARE USUALLY SHORT-LIVED BUT CAN CONTINUE FOR DAYS, WEEKS, OR SOMETIMES EVEN MONTHS AND OFTEN RECUR AT THE SAME LOCATION

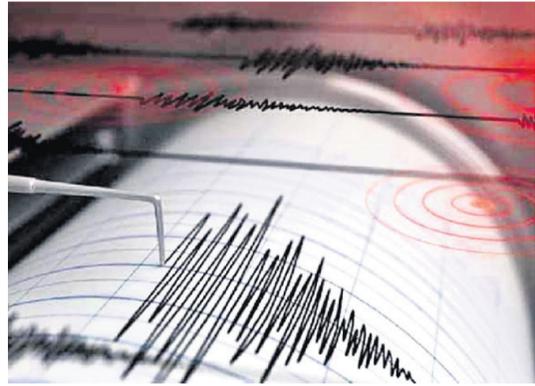
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 26: Gujarat’s Amreli district has been the epicentre of an ‘earthquake swarm’ as it has recorded nearly 400 mild tremors in the last two years, according to officials.

A swarm is a sequence of mostly small earthquakes which are usually short-lived but can continue for days, weeks, or sometimes even months and often recur at the same location.

Residents of Amreli’s Mitiyala village, where many of these 400 tremors were felt, have started sleeping outside their houses as a precautionary measure so that they are not caught unawares in case of any major seismic activity.

Explaining the reason behind the ‘earthquake swarm’ in Amreli district of Saurashtra region, Gandhinagar-based Institute of Seismological Research’s (ISR) officiating Director General Sumar



Chopra told PTI that tectonic setup and hydrological loading are the reasons for the seasonal seismic activities.

In the 48 hours from February 23, Amreli’s Savarkundla and Khamba talukas recorded four tremors in the intensity range of 3.1 to 3.4, making residents worried.

The seismic activity in Amreli has been witnessed just after the recent devastating earthquake in Turkiye that killed more than 45,000 people.

In January 2001, a massive earthquake in Gujarat’s Kutch district killed 13,800 people and another 1.67 lakh were injured. The earthquake had caused severe damage to properties in various towns and villages of the district.

Asked about the recent seismic activity in Amreli, Chopra said this is an ‘earthquake swarm’ event in which small tremors keep

on recurring. This is mostly seasonal.

“In the last two years and two months, we recorded 400 mild tremors in Amreli, out of which 86 per cent were below the intensity of 2, while 13 per cent were between the intensity of 2 and 3 and only in five events, it went above 3 magnitude,” he said.

“Most of these mild tremors are not even felt by the people. Just our machine records them,” he said.

With a caveat that “earthquakes cannot be predicted”, Chopra said the possibility of a major earthquake is low when the ‘earthquake swarm’ is taking place.

“Most of the Saurashtra region including Amreli district falls in seismic zone three, which is categorised as moderate damage risk zone. The main reason is there are no major fault lines in that

area,” he said. The fault line in Amreli is of 10 kilometres. For major earthquakes, the fault lines should be of more than 60 to 70 km, of the ficial said.

Explaining the reason behind the ‘earthquake swarm’ in Amreli, he said the tectonic setup and hydrological loading are the reasons for the seasonal seismic activities.

“There are fractures in the land underneath due to tectonic setup and the hydrological loading during monsoon and sometimes after it causes these mild tremors,” he said.

The hydrologic surface loads are based on the mass of water stored as soil moisture, snow, and in vegetation.

“The highest intensity earthquake of 4.4 magnitude was recorded in 1891 in Amreli, which was 130 years ago,” Chopra said.

In Saurashtra region, the highest intensity earthquake of 5.1 was recorded at Talala in Junagadh district in 2011, he said.

“Unlike Kutch which has major fault lines, Saurashtra does not have major fault lines,” the ISR official said referring to the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that hit Kutch district January 26, 2001.

Meanwhile, Mitiyala resident Mohammad Rathod said due to the fear of tremors, most of the people in the village including the sarpanch, have started sleeping outside their houses at night.

“After Turkiye and remembering the Kutch earthquake of 2001, we want to take precautions,” he said.

13 LEAKS IN 10 YEARS Guj Assembly passes Bill to curb paper leaks

Gujarati youth are under extreme pressure to get a government job for two reasons – for financial security and to find a good bride or groom

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, Feb 26: Thirteen papers have been leaked in the Gujarat government’s competitive exams in the last decade. Thursday, the state Assembly passed The Gujarat Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill 2023, which has stringent provisions like a minimum of 10 years’ imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1 crore for the culprits.



The candidates and their families face social and economic stress when they sit for such competitive exams, the papers of which are leaked and the exams cancelled. January 29, the Gujarat Panchayat Service Selection Board (GPSSB) cancelled the junior clerk exams, after its paper was leaked. Some 9 lakh candidates had filled the forms for 1150 posts.

The following day, January 30, Payal Karsanbhai Baraiya, a 21-year-

old Primary Teacher Certificate holder, consumed poison. She died in a hospital in Bhavnagar February 12.

“She had been preparing for the junior clerk exams for the last six months, for which my parents had put her in coaching classes in Bhavnagar; the exam cancellation means an increase in expenses and stress; whether she will be able to clear the exam or not, will she be able to fulfil her parents’ aspirations, this worry must have led her to take the extreme step,” believes Ashish Baraiya, the deceased’s younger brother.

Ashish added, “We have some agricultural land, but my sister had high hopes of getting a government job which meant social security for her and the family, but the system failed her.”

She is not alone. Many candidates experience similar trauma, stress and depression but may be unable to express it, according to Nikunj Patel, an aspiring candidate from Gandhinagar.

“I am the son of a retired government employee, and my family has spent thousands of rupees on private coaching classes so that I can pass the exams and get a government job,” he explained.

Livelihood of Gujarat salt pan workers at risk

The question is whether these salt pan workers encroached on forest land or whether the Gujarat Forest Department failed to follow the Supreme Court’s 1976 directive and failed to demarcate the forest area

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, Feb 26: The forest department has issued another notice to small salt pan workers in North Gujarat. The reason is that their activities are disturbing wild asses in the Little Rann of Kutch. This notice will snatch away the livelihood of some 1400 families, and the salt industry will face hundreds of crores in losses.

The question is whether these salt pan workers encroached on forest land or whether the Gujarat Forest Department failed to follow the Supreme Court’s 1976 directive and failed to demarcate the forest area after 45 years.

Hiriben, whose age is around



80 years, complains that her father and in-laws were manufacturing salt in Venu village, and now her son and his family are manufacturing salt on the same salt pan, which has been stopped by the forest department for the last 15 days. She worries about how her family will survive and feed their children. She fears a financial loss of around Rs 3 lakh-Rs 3.50 lakh, on which they would have survived an entire year.

In Santalpur, the forest department has just issued notices and stopped workers from manufacturing salt, whereas in Aadesar, they have damaged pumps and borewells that were used to pump water for salt manufacturing. This has caused losses to salt pan workers in this region of Rs 4.5-Rs 5 lakh, according to Ghanshyambhai Zula, the district coordinator for Agariya Hitrakshak Samiti.

Zula claims that none of these families have encroached on forest land because they have been pro-

ducing salt for generations, even before the Indian Forest Act came into existence.

According to the Indian Salt Manufacturers Association, Gujarat has 12000 salt production facilities, of which 1000 are organised. The remaining small players control the entire market and directly employ 5 lakh people, and give indirect work to another 2 lakh persons.

Indian Salt Manufacturers Association president Bharat Raval feels, “The only solution to the problem is that the forest department should complete the forest settlement proceedings, which have been pending for more than 30 years. On the completion of the process, it should demarcate forest areas and create a wild animal sanctuary on the ground under Section 20 of the Forest Act.”

Once the sanctuary is demarcated on land, it will be clear whether there is any encroachment on forest land or not.

Wheat growers fear crop loss as mercury goes up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 26: Parwinder Singh, a farmer from Punjab’s Kapurthala district, like many wheat growers in the state, is fearing loss of crops due to above-normal temperature in the past few days.

Singh, a farmer from Talwandi Mehma, said at this time of the year, “the crop does not need very warm days. If temperatures continue to remain above normal for several days, it can adversely impact the wheat crop.”

While the maximum temperatures in Punjab and Haryana have been hovering above normal limits for several days, minimum temperatures too had registered an increase. But for the past two-three days, the minimum temperatures have been hovering close to normal range.

Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan said, “Sudden rise in temperatures and

their continuation for several days can impact the grain quality and yield.”

However, Kokrikalan said that good thing is that during the past couple of days the minimum temperatures have seen a slight fall and mornings are cooler.

“Still, warm weather prevailing at this stage during the afternoon hours is a major concern,” he said.

Haryana agriculture minister JP Dalal told PTI as of now the situation is not alarming though farmers have been advised to be ready to take measures like light irrigation in case the maximum temperatures keep on rising in mid-March.

“There is no cause for any alarm yet,” Dalal said.

In Punjab and Haryana, which together account for 25 per cent of India’s wheat production, late-sown wheat is in the flowering stage, while the early-sown lot is in the milking stage.

Gurvinder Singh, Director,



Punjab Agriculture, also said there is no need for alarm yet.

“We are advising wheat growers to apply light irrigation as per requirement. Farmers who have the facility of sprinkler irrigation can irrigate their field with sprinkler for 25-30 minutes in the afternoon in case of further rise in temperature,” he said.

He said the farmers who have

facts crop quality, Singh said.

He said last year wheat production in Punjab was 148 lakh metric tonne, which was 14 per cent lower than the preceding year.

“This year we have targeted the production at 167-170 lakh MT,” Singh said, adding the area under wheat crop is 34.90 lakh hectares.

“Last year, there were rains in January and later temperatures increased in February and March. No doubt the day temperatures currently are hovering 2-3 degrees above normal, but night temperatures are near normal, so we are hoping the situation won’t be like last year,” he said.

However, “we have set up teams at district level,” which will give regular advice to farmers, he said.

In case of strong windy weather, irrigation should be stopped to avoid lodging that may result in yield loss, according to the advisory issued earlier this week by Karnal (Haryana)-based ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR).

Drug dealers go online as Punjab cops step up heat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amritsar/Ferozepur, Feb 26: With the BSF and state police mounting pressure, drug traffickers in Punjab are switching to online deals via WhatsApp to sell drugs to addicts.

Dealers now deliver drugs, especially heroin (known as Chitta locally), at pre-decided locations in response to demand messages on WhatsApp in what has emerged as a mobile online drug market in Punjab.

While there has been an attempt to set a narrative that heroin is easily available at grocery (‘karyana’) shops in border areas of Punjab, the evidence on the ground does not corroborate this view. A large section of villagers in Amritsar and Ferozepur districts also confirm that Chitta is not openly available at shops.

A hardware shopkeeper at Serai Amanat Khan village, Angrez Singh reveals that now with changing times, not karyana shops but a large online drug market running on WhatsApp is being used to ply the trade. A message is sent to the trafficker on WhatsApp and the drug is delivered at the decided place on a cash basis. At present, there are no permanent drug sale points which earlier used to be identified and raided by the police.

A tour of the border areas reveals that with the heightened joint efforts of the BSF and state police, Chitta supply lines being run by the merchants of death, who have been destroying lives and livelihoods, are getting choked due to the crackdown. This is also reflected in a substantial increase in the price of drugs due to the reduced availability. One gram of Chitta which was earlier available at less than Rs 1000 per gram, now costs up to Rs 1500 per gram.

In Kals village, half a kilometre from the International Border (IB), a Congress-aligned Sarpanch Major Singh, AAP worker and member of panchayat Harpal Singh, member panchayat Surinder Singh, and ex-

Sarpanch Harmandir Singh unannouncedly say that drugs are in no way available at grocery shops.

They say the general public is now cooperating and providing information to the BSF and the local police about drug traffickers leading to their arrests and seizures. Under the Khemkaran police station, 18.72 kg of Chitta was recovered from December 2022 to February 2023. It is here that the largest drone was recovered with over 7 kg of heroin.

In Rattoke village, about one and a half kilometres from the international border, sarpanch Kulbir Singh and Jaskaran Singh told indianarrative.com that Chitta addicts now have to make greater efforts to get the drug.

The Prem Nagar village Sarpanch Bhag Singh and Numberdar Khazan Singh say, “If police start acting honestly tough, no traces of drugs will be found anywhere within three months.” A young boy aged 17 years died in a neighbouring village after injecting an overdose of some synthetic drug, Bhag Singh disclosed.

In Ferozepur’s Lakha Singhwala Hithad village, Sarpanch Harpinder Singh says “our small village has been blessed as there is no Chitta addict.”

In Killiawale village Sarpanch Karnail Singh is disgusted with drug smugglers who arrange delivery of Chitta by using drones that drop packets in the fields of border villages as a drone can only fly up to a limited distance. The drug carriers, hailing from distant areas, walk into their fields to collect the contraband. After each incident of drone dropping, the BSF starts questioning people. It also then reduces the time period for opening the gates for farmers who have land across the barbed fence.

Ferozepur SSP Kanwardeep Kaur maintains that as many as 799 FIRs were registered and 900 persons arrested in 2022, out of which 100 were big fish. In the month of January 2023, 80 FIRs were registered under NDPS Act.





In view of the threats posed by global warming, people should use less of fossil fuel and concentrate more on deriving power and fuel from other sources

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

TN ON ALERT

The Tamil Nadu health department is on alert after a slight increase in Covid cases in the state. On Saturday, 14 new Covid cases were reported with a Test positivity rate (TPR) of 0.3 per cent when 3,840 samples were tested



of the day quote

Those who took the Sikh holy book Guru Granth Sahib to a police station as a shield cannot be called the 'waris' (heir) of Punjab

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

The BJP and RSS are against minorities and weaker sections of the society ... We (the Grand alliance) will wipe out BJP in 2024 Lok Sabha and 2025 assembly polls

LALU PRASAD YADAV | RID SUPREMO

After fighting his entire life, since the days of Jay Prakash Narayan, against the Congress and 'jungle raj', Nitish Kumar has now sat on the lap of Lalu Prasad, the pioneer of 'jungle raj', and at the feet of Sonia Gandhi. He has become 'avsarwaadi' (opportunist) from being 'vikaswaadi' (pro-development) for his Prime Ministerial ambitions

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER



Participants take part in the 'Vintage for Life - The G20 Vintage Vehicles Drive' in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Internet snapped in Haryana town over 'communal tension'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 26: The Haryana government Sunday ordered suspension of mobile internet and SMS services in Nuh district for three days over apprehensions of communal tension and breach of peace following a call for more protests over the abduction-murder of two men from Rajasthan allegedly by cow vigilantes.

The restrictions "shall remain in force with effect from February 26 to February 28, 2023 (23:59 hrs)," according to an official order. Sources said security has been strengthened in Nuh, where hundreds of people blocked the Nuh-Alwar highway in Firozpur Jhirka on Friday demanding the arrest of the accused in the abduction and murder of the two men from Rajasthan whose charred bodies were found in Haryana's Bhiwani.

"Haryana Government has issued a temporary suspension of mobile internet services (2G/3G/4G/CDMA/GPRS), all SMS services including bulk SMS and excluding banking and mobile recharge, and all dongle services, etc. Provided on mobile networks except the voice calls in the territorial jurisdiction of district Nuh with immediate effect," it said.

It cited "potential cause for communal tension and disturbance of public peace". The temporary suspension has been imposed to stop the spread of disinformation and



Nasir and Junaid, both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, were allegedly abducted by cow vigilantes on February 15 and their bodies were found in a charred car in Loharu in Haryana's Bhiwani the next day

The protest on Friday led to a massive jam on the highway for around an hour but finally police managed to control the situation and got the road cleared

rumours through various social media platforms, such as Whatsapp, Facebook Twitter, etc. On mobile phones and SMS, the order said.

The protest on Friday led to a massive jam on the highway for around an hour but finally police managed to control the situation and got the road cleared. After the protest on the Nuh-Alwar highway, a call was made for a series of protests in Nuh district.

Police on Saturday booked more than 500 people for blocking the highway. Nasir and Junaid, both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, were allegedly abducted by cow vigilantes on February 15 and their

bodies were found in a charred car in Loharu in Haryana's Bhiwani the next day.

The Rajasthan Police has said it has got concrete evidence against eight accused named in the FIR. They are Anil and Srikant from Nuh, Kalu from Kaithal, Kishore and Shashikant from Karnal, Monu and Gogi from Bhiwani, and Vikas of Jind, officials said.

However, the role of Monu Manesar, a member of Bajrang Dal, in the case is still being investigated, officials said. On Wednesday, arrested accused Rinku Saini was produced before a court that sent him to police remand till February 27.

e-Sanjeevani becoming life protection app: PM

In his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' broadcast, Modi said the app is becoming a life protection app for the common man, middle class or those living in remote areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Sunday that e-Sanjeevani app, which facilitates online medical consultations, reflects the power of India's digital revolution, noting that over 10 crore people have benefitted from it so far.

In his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' broadcast, Modi said the app is becoming a life protection app for the common man, middle class or those living in remote areas.

"This is the power of India's digital revolution," he said. He also referred to the recent agreement between India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Singapore's PayNow so as to allow easy money transfer between people of the two countries to underscore the boost in ease of living brought by the country's adoption of digital technologies.

The prime minister spoke to a doctor and a patient to highlight how helpful the app has proved in providing medical consultations.

"This is a big achievement. This is a living example of how the people of India have made technology a part of their lives. We have seen that in the time of Corona, e-Sanjeevani App has proved to be a great boon for the people," he said.

In his address, Modi also highlighted the cleanliness exercises adopted by people in different parts of the country to say that "Swachh Bharat" has become a mass movement. "If we resolve, we can make a huge contribution towards a clean India," he said. Various efforts being made to preserve and promote India's cultural heritage also featured in his address.

Modi said the might of a country increases with the strength of

Man, grandson killed as truck drags scooty

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mahoba (Uttar Pradesh), Feb 26: In a shocking incident of another hit-and-drag case, a man and his grandson were killed after their scooty was hit by a truck that kept on speeding with the two-wheeler stuck under it for a distance.

The incident is said to have taken place on Saturday on NH 86 -- Kanpur-Sagar Highway. Both the man, and his six-year-old grandson died in the incident.

A video of the incident going viral on social media shows the truck speeding on with the two-



wheeler stuck in front and sparks flying out because of the friction even as people and other passing vehicles on the road try to alert the truck driver.

Locals reportedly put stones and boulders on the road to stop the truck.

More videos show the truck surrounded by policemen who are seen trying to pull the scooter out and policemen putting the bodies in an ambulance.

The Mahoba police spokesman said that the man and his grandson had left on a scooty from home for the market and the dumper truck hit it on the way. The police said that the truck has been seized and the driver taken into custody.



The Prime Minister spoke to a doctor and a patient to highlight how helpful the app has proved in providing medical consultations

society, adding interest in Indian sports and toys saw a big increase after they were mentioned in the broadcast. Indian toys have become such a craze that their demand has increased even in foreign countries, he said.

Noting that on Sardar Patel's birth anniversary, observed as Unity Day, on October, 31, three competitions related to patriotic songs, lullabies and rangoli were started, he said over five lakh people from more than 700 districts have participated in them.

The prime minister also played some of the winning entries in the programme, including the ones who received 'Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar'. Modi said, "I hope that all these artists will continue to inspire everyone at the grassroots towards making performing arts more popular."

Rahul takes a swipe at EAM's China remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nava Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Feb 26: In a scathing attack on External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday said his recent remarks on China did not show nationalism but cowardice and that these were in line with V D Savarkar's ideology of "bowing before the strong".

Addressing the 85th plenary session of the Congress here, Rahul Gandhi also claimed that his party leaders and workers were "satyagrahis" while the BJP and RSS people were "satta grahis" (power seekers).

"I want to tell you something about the government's thinking. A few days ago, in an interview, a minister said that China's economy is bigger than India so how can we fight them. When the British ruled over us was their economy smaller than ours," Rahul Gandhi said, without naming Jaishankar. Does this mean that one doesn't take on anyone who is stronger and only takes on those who are weaker, he said.

"This is cowardice. It is (V D) Savarkar's ideology that if someone is stronger than you, bow before them. India's minister is stating that your economy is bigger than us so we cannot stand up to you. Is this nationalism? Is this patriotism?" the former Congress president said.

"What kind of patriotism is this that you beat someone weaker than you and bow before the strong," Rahul Gandhi said. "There is a word for it, Mahatma Gandhi used to talk of satyagraha. Satyagraha means don't leave the



I want to tell you something about the government's thinking. A few days ago, in an interview, a minister said that China's economy is bigger than India so how can we fight them. When the British ruled over us was their economy smaller than ours

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

path of truth. There is a new word for the people of the RSS and the BJP. We are satyagrahis, they are 'satta grahis'. They will do anything for satta (power), they would align with anyone, bow before anyone for power. This is their truth," he said.

The Congress has slammed Jaishankar for his reported remarks. "They are the bigger economy, what I am going to do? I am a smaller economy. Am I going to sort of pick up a fight with a bigger economy? It is not a question of reacting. It is a question of common sense. It is in our interest to stabilise our borders or a situation, it is not out of love, affection or sentiment," Jaishankar had reportedly said.

3 sacked for 'anti-national' activities in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 26: Three government employees, including a school teacher recently arrested for allegedly carrying out several blasts, were dismissed from service for their alleged involvement in anti-national activities, an official said.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration ordered the dismissal of a government middle school teacher Arif Sheikh of Reasi, Junior Engineer (Public Works department) Manzoor Ahmad Itoo of Bandipora and Syed Saleem Andrabi of Kupwara, an orderly in the Social Welfare department, under Article 311 of the Constitution for their involvement in anti-national activities, an administration spokesperson said.

Article 311 of the Constitution provides for dismissal of a person employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State.

"The activities of these employees had come to the adverse notice of law enforcement and intelligence agencies. They found them involved in activities prejudicial to the interests of the state, such as terror-related activities and drug trafficking," the spokesperson said.

Itoo had allegedly played an important role in mobilising people in support of terrorists and also motivated youth to join their ranks, posing a serious threat to the security of the Indian state, he said. According to the spokesperson, Andrabi was found involved in drug trafficking while Sheikh was found involved in planting IEDs on the instructions of terrorists operating from Pakistan.



Huge challenge

The Union Finance ministry is working overtime to recover Income-Tax arrears running into nearly Rs 8 lakh crores to achieve its target before March 31, 2023. The total arrears due are to the tune of Rs 19 lakh crores. But the government has set a reasonable target to recover a minimum of 40% of this amount. Since the Modi government has fixed the target of

spending Rs 10 lakh crores towards infrastructure projects across the country during the next fiscal, the Finance ministry has been asked to recover arrears at a faster pace. The past record suggests that it has been able to recover only 10% of its arrears. The government is now targeting to take this amount to 40%.

No museum named after Veer Savarkar

The Central Government faced some embarrassing moments when questions were asked how many museums have been named after the late Veer Savarkar. The government named 15 museums after many leaders who had made tremendous contributions in the journey of India. But not a single museum was named after Veer Savarkar. It was Veer Savarkar who coined

the term Hindutva. Shiv Sena's Lok Sabha MP from Nashik, Hemant Tukaram Godse, had raised the question with Union Minister G Kishan Reddy. The Shiv Sena MP asked that either there are very few museums in the name of our freedom fighters or none at all. In a written reply from the Ministry of Culture, it was told that there are 15 museums in the country in the name of freedom fighters. But the minister was constrained to admit that none of these museums is named after Veer Savarkar.

PM's uncharted journey

Remember Prime Minister Modi's golden words, "There is always an opportunity in crisis." His calm and composure was first witnessed on October 27, 2013 when bomb blasts rocked Patna during a massive rally as BJP's Prime Ministerial

candidate. Be it earthquake-ridden Gujarat areas or killing of CRPF jawans in Pulwama, he emerged stronger after every crisis. Now Modi sees a role for himself in the global arena by brokering a peace deal in Russia - Ukraine war. It is a feather in India's cap that the country's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval had two meetings with the Russian President Vladimir Putin, another first. Doval had a scheduled meeting with the National Security Advisers of seven nations as part of the regional dialogue on Afghanistan. But the shocker came when Doval was invited for a one-to-one meeting by Putin which lasted for nearly an hour. But another first came when the White House said the USA would welcome any effort that could lead to an end of hostilities referring to the efforts made by Modi. The PM has spoken to the presidents of Russia and Ukraine on multiple occasions and had a bilateral

meeting with Putin in Uzbekistan on September 16 where he said "today's era is not of war".

Three Congress CMs in crossfire

Even as Rahul Gandhi continued with his tirade against India's top businessman Gautam Adani in the wake of the Hindenburg Research controversy, three Congress Chief Ministers - Ashok Gehlot, Bhupesh Baghel and Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu - have maintained their studied silence. Rather, Ashok Gehlot put up a spirited defence of Adani saying all his decisions relating to Adani's investment in the state are above board. After all, the Adani Group has large projects in these states as well and in other Opposition-ruled states as well.

international



I voted for Brexit and I believe in Brexit because it offers vast opportunities for families and businesses across our whole country
RISHI SUNAK | BRITISH PM

SL TO IMPORT 2MN EGGS FROM INDIA

Despite protests by local egg producers and concerns over bird flu raised by health officials, Sri Lanka is to import 2 million eggs from India this week. Procured by Sri Lanka State Trading (General) Corporation, all imported eggs are to be issued for bakery industry at a control price of Rs 40



of the day quote

I welcome news from Papua New Guinea that all hostages have been released and will soon be reunited with their families
PENNY WONG | AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Our drive against militancy, terrorism, drugs and corruption will continue. All of you must remain cautious regarding this matter
SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

would just encourage everyone to go the extra mile to come to an agreement because the benefits are huge. Certainly the deal isn't done yet
LEO VARADKAR | IRISH POLITICIAN

SHORT TAKES

Nepal PM to visit Qatar this week

Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" will visit Qatar later this week on his first official foreign trip since assuming office two months ago. Prachanda will be leading a Nepalese delegation to Doha where he will attend the fifth conference of the Least Developed Countries (LDC), according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Prime Minister previously said he will travel to India on his first foreign visit. The Nepalese delegation will leave for Qatar March 3 and return back March 6.

Voting continues in Nigeria

Abuja (Nigeria): People were still voting across Nigeria Sunday morning, the day after Africa's most populous nation was supposed to have completed presidential and parliamentary elections. Votes were being cast in Benuue, Adamawa and Bayelsa states, while ballots were being tallied in places where voting was complete with preliminary results expected as early as Sunday evening, election observers said. Logistical and security challenges caused widespread delays across the country Saturday leading to frustration among voters, some of whom waited overnight and still hadn't voted by the following morning.

Turkey quake : Over 600 people under lens

Ankara: More than 600 people are being investigated in Turkey over buildings that gave way after the February 6 devastating earthquake. In connection with the tragedy, around 184 suspects, including construction contractors and property owners, had already been arrested, Justice Minister Bekir Bozdogan said in televised remarks Saturday, BBC reported. As per Turkish media, the arrested include a mayor of one of the towns close to where the tremors rocked. The combined death toll in Turkey and Syria has surpassed 50,000.

4 killed in blast

Karachi: A blast caused by an improvised explosive device planted on a motorcycle killed at least four people and left 14 others injured inside a market in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province Sunday morning, police said. The blast took place a day after two policemen were killed and another was injured in Balochistan's Khuzdar district when an improvised explosive device (IED) went off while police personnel were patrolling the area.

59 MIGRANTS KILLED IN ITALY SHIPWRECK

The vessel had set sail from Turkey several days ago with migrants from Afghanistan, Iran and several other countries and crashed in stormy weather near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria



Rescuers arrive at the beach where bodies believed to be of refugees were found

Steccato di Cutro, Feb 26: At least 59 people died, including 12 children, when a wooden sailing boat carrying migrants to Europe crashed against rocks near the southern Italian coast early Sunday, authorities said.

The vessel, which sailed from Turkey and was carrying people from Afghanistan, Iran and several other countries, sank in rough sea conditions near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria.

By Sunday afternoon the provisional death toll stood at 59 but was expected to rise, junior interior minister Wanda Ferro told reporters.

Manuela Curra, a provincial government official, earlier told Reuters that 81 people had survived the shipwreck. Twenty of them were taken to hospital, including one person in intensive care.

As emergency services searched the sea and the coastline in stormy weather, Curra said that survivors had said some 140 to 150 were on board - suggesting that some people were missing.

The boat set sail from the western Turkish port of Izmir about four days ago and was spotted about 74 km (46 miles) off the coast late Saturday by a plane operated by

Italy is one of the main landing points for migrants trying to enter Europe by sea, with many seeking to travel on to richer northern European nations

The United Nations Missing Migrants Project has registered more than 17,000 deaths and disappearances in the central Mediterranean since 2014

The incident reopened a debate on migration in Europe and Italy, where the recently-elected right-wing government's tough new laws for migrant rescue charities have drawn criticism from the United Nations and others

European Union border agency Frontex, Italian police said.

Patrol boats were mobilised to intercept it, but severe weather forced them to return to port, police said, adding that authorities then mobilised search units along the coastline.

A baby aged only a few months was among migrants first found washed up on the beach, according to ANSA news agency.

Emergency doctor Laura De Paoli described finding another dead child, aged seven.

'FALSE PROSPECT' OF SAFETY Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni expressed deep sorrow for

the deaths, and blamed human traffickers who profit while offering migrants "the false prospect of a safe journey". "The government is committed to preventing departures, and with them the unfolding of these tragedies, and will continue to do so, first of all by calling for maximum cooperation from the countries of departure and of origin," she said.

However, the coast off Calabria is not routinely patrolled by NGO ships, which operate in the waters south of Sicily.

That suggests they would have been unlikely to intercept the shipwrecked migrants regardless of Meloni's crackdown.

The head of the Italian Catholic Church, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, called for the resumption of an EU search and rescue mission in the Mediterranean, as part of a "structural, shared and humanitarian response" to the migration crisis.

A spokesman for the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM), in the same vein, appealed on Twitter for the strengthening of rescue operations in the Mediterranean.

Earlier Sunday, Pope Francis, the son of Italian migrants to Argentina and long a vocal advocate for migrants' rights, said he was praying for the shipwreck's victims.

Thousands without power as Calif storms bring rain, snow & cold

REUTERS

Los Angeles, Feb 26: Nearly 85,000 households and businesses were without power in the Los Angeles area on Saturday, as storms continued to pummel parts of California, bringing snow to higher elevations and dumping rain and hail in the flatlands.

Interstate 5, the largest highway leading north out of the city, remained closed at the steep grade known as the Grapevine due to heavy snow, while several more southern points of the freeway in and around Los Angeles were closed due to flooding, the California Department of Transportation said.

In Northern California, San Francisco was expected to experience record cold temperatures on Saturday, and the National Weather Service warned residents of the state capital of Sacramento to avoid travel from Sunday through Wednesday as rain and snow started up again after a reprieve Saturday.

The next set of storms, expected to hit on Sunday, will bring wind gusts of up to 50 miles per hour (80 kph) in the Sacramento Valley, and up to 70 miles per hour in the nearby Sierra Nevada mountains. Yosemite National Park was closed through Wednesday due to severe winter conditions.

A massive low-pressure system driven from the Arctic was re-



sponsible for the unusual conditions, said Bryan Jackson, a forecaster at the NWS Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland. In Southern California, "this is a rare case of a cold, significant storm event," Jackson said.

Nikki Haley pledges to cut foreign aid to Pak, China



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 26: Indian-American Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley has vowed that if voted to power, she will cut every cent in foreign aid for countries like China, Pakistan and Iraq which hate America, saying "a strong America doesn't pay off the bad guys".

The 51-year-old two-term Governor of South Carolina and the former US Ambassador to the United Nations formally launched her 2024 presidential bid earlier this month.

She said that America spent USD 46 billion on foreign aid last year, which is given to countries like China, Pakistan, and Iraq. American taxpayers deserve to know where that money is going and what it's doing, she added.

"They will be shocked to find that much of it goes to fund anti-American countries and causes. As president, I'll put a stop to this fiasco," she said.

According to Haley, the Biden administration resumed military aid to Pakistan, though it's home to at least a dozen terrorist organisations and its government is deeply in hock to China.

She said that the Biden administration restored half a billion dollars to "a corrupt United Nations agency" that's supposed to help the Palestinian people but in fact covars for deeply anti-Semitic propaganda against our ally Israel. She

I will cut every cent in foreign aid for countries that hate us. A strong America doesn't pay off the bad guys. A proud America doesn't waste our people's hard-earned money. And the only leaders who deserve our trust are those who stand up to our enemies and stand beside our friends
NIKKI HALEY | INDIAN-AMERICAN REPUBLICAN US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

added the US has given Iraq more than USD 1 billion over the last few years, even though its government is getting closer to Iran.

She said American taxpayers still give money to "Communist China for ridiculous environment programmes, despite the obvious threat China poses to Americans."

"We give money to Belarus, which is Russian dictator Vladimir Putin's closest ally. We even give money to Communist Cuba — a country our own government has designated as a state sponsor of terrorism," she said, adding that it's been happening for decades under presidents of both parties. Among the Republicans, she comes at the third position after Trump (52 per cent) and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (24 per cent).

Israeli, Palestinian officials meet as more violence erupts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, Feb 26: A Palestinian gunman Sunday opened fire at an Israeli car in the occupied West Bank, killing two Israelis, senior politicians and settler leaders said.

The shooting cast a shadow over a high-level meeting between Palestinian and Israeli delegations in neighbouring Jordan meant to reduce surging violence ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The shooting came days after a deadly Israeli military raid in a nearby Palestinian city, killing 10 people. The military said it was searching for the attacker, who opened fire on a car on the West Bank's main highway and fled.

In an initial move, Israeli Cabinet minister approved a proposal that would impose the death penalty on Palestinian militants involved in deadly attacks.

"On a difficult day in which two Israelis were murdered in a Palestinian terror attack, there is nothing more symbolic that passing the death penalty law on terrorists," said Itamar Ben Gvir, Israel's far-right national security



Violence between Israelis and Palestinians has surged since Israel stepped up raids across the West Bank following a spate of Palestinian attacks last spring

The bloodshed has spiked this year, with more than 60 Palestinians killed in the West Bank and east Jerusalem

minister. West Bank settler leaders called on Israel to withdraw its delegation from the talks in Jordan and crack down on the Palestinians.

Hamas, the Islamic militant group that rules the Gaza Strip, said no summit would stop Palestinians from fighting Israel. Israel said the Prime Minister's national security adviser as well as the chief of the Shin Bet domestic security agency were to attend the talks in neighbouring Jordan.

Putin casts war as a battle for Russia's survival

REUTERS

Moscow, Feb 26: President Vladimir Putin cast the confrontation with the West over the Ukraine war as an existential battle for the survival of Russia and the Russian people - and said he was forced to take into account NATO's nuclear capabilities.

A year since ordering the invasion of Ukraine, Putin is increasingly presenting the war as a make-or-break moment in Russian history - and saying that he believes the very future of Russia and its people is in peril.

"They have one goal: to disband the former Soviet Union and its fundamental part - the Russian Federation," Putin told Rossiya 1 state television in an interview recorded Wednesday but released Sunday. The NATO and the West dismiss such narrative, saying their

objective is to help Ukraine defend itself against an unprovoked attack. Putin said the West wanted to divide up Russia and then control the world's biggest producer of raw materials, a step, he said, that could well lead to the destruction of many of the peoples of Russia including the ethnic Russian majority.

"I do not even know if such an ethnic group as the Russian people will be able to survive in the form in which it exists today," Putin said. He said the West's plans had been put to paper, though did not specify where.

The United States has denied that it wants to destroy Russia, while President Joe Biden has warned that a conflict between Russia and NATO could trigger World War Three, though he has also said Putin should not remain in power. Putin said the tens of bil-

- A CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA & NATO COULD TRIGGER WW III: BIDEN
- PUTIN SAYS RUSSIA BATTLING FOR SURVIVAL
- PUTIN SAYS WEST TRYING TO DISBAND RUSSIA
- RUSSIA TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT NATO NUCLEAR CAPABILITY

ions of dollars' worth of U.S. and European military assistance to Ukraine showed that Russia was now facing off NATO itself - the Cold War nightmare of both Soviet and Western leaders. Ukraine says it will not rest until every last Russian soldier is ejected from Ukraine, including from Crimea which Russia annexed in 2014.

RUSSIA

Putin's existential framing of the war allows the 70-year-old Kremlin chief to gird the Russian people for a much more deeper conflict while it also allows him much greater freedom in the types

of weapons he could one day use. Russia's official nuclear doctrine allows for the use of nuclear weapons if they - or other types of weapons of mass destruction - are used against it, or if conventional weapons are used, which endanger "the very existence of the state."

Putin has signalled he is ready to rip up the architecture of nuclear arms control - including the big powers' moratorium on nuclear testing - unless the West backs off in Ukraine.

On Tuesday, he sought to underscore Russian resolve in Ukraine by suspending a landmark nuclear arms control treaty, announcing new strategic systems had been put on combat duty and warning that Moscow could resume nuclear tests.

Putin said Russia would only resume discussion once French and British nuclear weapons were also taken into account. Russia, which inherited the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons, has the world's biggest store of nuclear warheads. It has more warheads than the United States, France and Britain combined, according to the Federation of American Scientists.



EU slaps sanctions on top Russian officials, banks

Brussels: The European Union agreed Saturday to impose new sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine targeting more officials and organisations accused of supporting the war, spreading propaganda or supplying drones, as well as restricting trade on products that could be used by the armed forces. The EU's Swedish presidency said the sanctions "are directed at military and political decision-makers, companies supporting or working within the Russian military industry, and commanders in the Wagner Group. Transactions with some of Russia's largest banks are also prohibited." Asset freezes were slapped on three more Russian banks and seven Iranian "entities" - companies, agencies, political parties or other organizations - that manufacture military drones, which the EU suspects have been used by Russia during the war.

of the day quote

Services exports are recording a healthy growth rate and going by this trend, the outbound shipments will cross \$300 billion in 2022-23, and tapping global opportunities would help achieve \$1 trillion target by 2030

ABHAY SINHA | DIRECTOR GENERAL, SEPC

India and the UK have agreed to make further progress on the ongoing negotiations for a FTA and also to swiftly organise the next bilateral Economic and Financial Dialogue soon

JEREMY HUNT | CHANCELLOR, UK

As far as the cost increase is concerned, it is not going to be like the earlier BS IV to BS VI (transition), it will be much lower than that, which should be within, I think 3 to 5 per cent

VINOD AGGARWAL | MD & CEO, VECV

SHORT TAKES

No ban on onion exports: Ministry

New Delhi: There is no ban on exports of onion and India has shipped the commodity worth \$523.8 million during April-December 2022, the commerce ministry said Sunday. It said that only the export of onion seed is restricted. "Government has not restricted or prohibited the export of onions," the ministry said in a statement. In December 2022, onion exports rose by about 50 per cent to \$52.1 million. During April-December this fiscal, the exports rose by 16.3 per cent to \$523.8 million. Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal in a tweet Saturday stated that there is no ban on onion exports from India to any country and misleading statements suggesting the contrary is unfortunate. The statement came after a tweet by NCP leader Supriya Sule February 25 on onion exports.

Auctioned mines to start by 2025

New Delhi: Most of the 10 coking coal blocks that have been auctioned to the private sector in the last two years are likely to start production by 2025, according to the Coal Ministry. To augment the output of raw coking coal, a key input in the production of iron and steel, in the country, the ministry has auctioned 10 coking coal blocks to the private sector. "Most of these blocks are expected to start production by 2025," the coal ministry said citing its achievements in 2022. These mines have peak rated capacity (PRC) of 22.5 MT. Domestic raw coking coal production is likely to reach 140 million tonne (MT) by 2030.

AC makers expect 20% sales growth

New Delhi: Early onset of summer along with predictions indicating harsh temperature and an elongated season is making residential air conditioner manufacturers grin from ear to ear, expecting 15-20 per cent volume growth this year. Buoyant by early trends of surge in demand, AC makers are expanding their portfolio by adding products in their lineup based on energy-efficient inverter technology and smart features such as IoT and air purifiers. They have also ramped up production to fill the stocks with their channel partners. Besides, the makers also expect higher sales coming from other cooling products such as refrigerators and air coolers.



India's economic growth appears to be very fragile and it may fall short of what the country needs to meet the aspirations of its growing workforce

JAYANTH R VARMA | MPC MEMBER, RBI

IRAN CURRENCY AT NEW NADIR

Iran's currency fell to a new record low Sunday, plunging to 600,000 to the dollar for the first time as the effects of nationwide anti-government protests and the breakdown of the 2015 nuclear deal continued to roil the economy



HIT HARD BY HINDENBURG

Adani was world's third and Asia's richest man with \$120bn net worth before Hindenburg report but now is ranked No 30 on the world billionaire index with about \$40bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 26: Gautam Adani was the world's third and Asia's richest man a month back but a damning report by a US firm triggered a massive sell-off in shares of his apples-to-airport group, plunging his own wealth by \$80 billion and the tycoon slipping to No 30 on the world billionaire index. Adani's sprawling conglomerate, which spans from sea ports to airports, edible oil and commodities, energy, cement and data centres, is under attack by US short-seller Hindenburg Research, which successfully deflated elec-

tric-vehicle maker Nikola Motors in 2020.

Hindenburg, which held short positions in unidentified shares of Adani Group firms through its US-traded debt and offshore derivatives, January 24 accused the conglomerate of "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud" and using a number of offshore shell companies to inflate stock prices.

The group has denied allegations, calling them "malicious", "baseless" and a "calculated attack on India".

SELL-OFF

Since the Hindenburg report, the group's 10 listed companies have lost Rs 12.06 lakh crore, nearly equivalent to the market capitalisation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) - India's second most valuable company.

Adani Total Gas Ltd - the group's joint venture with France's TotalEnergies for retailing CNG, has lost 80.68 per cent of market value while Adani Green Energy, where the French firm has also



invested, has seen 74.62 per cent loss.

Adani Transmission has lost 74.21 per cent in market value since January 24 while its flagship Adani Enterprises is down close to 62 per cent. Adani Power and Adani Wilmar as well as its cement units, media company NDTV and Adani Ports & SEZ too have lost market value.

Group's founder chairman Gautam Adani, 60, a first-generation entrepreneur, has lost \$80.6 billion in wealth, which was primarily based on valuation of his holding in group companies. He was worth \$120 billion before Hindenburg report but now is ranked No 30 on the world billionaire index with about \$40 billion net worth.

Rival Mukesh Ambani, whom he had overtaken last year to become Asia's richest and the world's

third most wealthy businessman, is now ranked No 10 with \$81.7 billion wealth.

ENRON MOMENT? Former US treasury secretary and former Harvard University president Larry Summers recently likened the crisis in Adani Group to the accounting scandal that exposed US energy major Enron in 2001.

"We haven't talked about it on the show, but there's been a kind of possible Enron moment in India," he had said during Bloomberg's Wall Street Week. "And I imagine with India emerging as the world's largest country, and the (G20) meeting taking place in India, there's going to be a lot of curiosity from all present, about how that's gonna play through and what if any larger systemic implications that's gonna have for India".

The comparison was to Enron Corporation shares plummeting in 2001 following revelation that the company inflated revenues and hid trading losses.

9 of top 10 firms lose ₹1.87L-cr in mkt valuation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 26: Nine of the 10 most valued firms faced a combined erosion of Rs 1,87,808.26 crore in market valuation last week, with HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit amid an overall weak trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tumbled 1,538.64 points or 2.52 per cent amid concerns that the US Federal Reserve might raise interest rates further to curb inflation. Fresh foreign fund outflows also dented investor sentiments.

Barring ITC, all 10 firms, including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, ICICI Bank and Hindustan Unilever, were the laggards.

HDFC Bank's valuation declined by Rs 37,848.16 crore to Rs 8,86,070.99 crore at close Friday.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries fell by Rs 36,567.46 crore to Rs 16,14,109.66 crore.

The valuation of TCS tumbled Rs 36,444.15 crore to Rs 12,44,095.76 crore and that of HDFC Bank tanked Rs 20,871.15 crore to Rs 4,71,365.94 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of ICICI Bank fell by Rs 15,765.56 crore to Rs 5,86,154.58 crore and that of Infosys declined by Rs 13,465.86 crore to Rs 6,52,882.70 crore.

Bharti Airtel's mcap dipped by Rs 10,729.2 crore to Rs 4,22,034.05 crore and that of State Bank of India went lower by Rs 8,879.98 crore to Rs 4,64,927.66 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever slipped Rs 7,236.74 crore to Rs 5,83,697.21 crore. However, ITC added Rs 2,143.73 crore taking its mcap to Rs 4,77,910.85 crore.

Reliance Industries continued to retain the title of the most valued firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, HDFC, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel.

GOING GREEN

IOC lines up ₹2trn for net zero goals

Hydrogen -- the cleanest known fuel that discharges only oxygen and water when burnt -- is being touted as the fuel of the future, but its relatively higher cost than alternate fuel currently limit its usage in industries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 26: India's top oil firm IOC will set up green hydrogen plants at all its refineries as it pivots a Rs 2-lakh crore green transition plan to achieve net-zero emissions from its operations by 2046, its chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) is remodeling business with an increased focus on petrochemicals to hedge volatility in the fuel business, while at the same time turning petrol pumps into energy outlets that offer EV charging points and battery swapping options besides conventional fuels as it looks to make itself future-ready, he said.

The company intends to expand its refining capacity to 106.7 million tonne per annum from 81.2 million tonne as it sees India's oil demand climbing from 5.1 million barrels per day to 7-7.2 million bpd by 2030 and 9 million bpd by 2040.

Refineries, which turn crude oil into fuel such as petrol and diesel, use hydrogen to lower the sulfur content of diesel fuel. This hydrogen is currently produced using fossil fuels such as natural gas. IOC plans to use electricity generated from renewable sources such as solar to split water to produce green hydrogen.

In an interview with PTI, Vaidya



Oil will continue to be a mainstay fuel for the next few years but we are preparing for transition which will involve a combination of green hydrogen, biofuels, EVs and alternate fuels

SHRIKANT MADHAV VAIDYA | CHAIRMAN, IOC

said the company will set up a 7,000 tonne per annum green hydrogen producing facility at its Panipat oil refinery at a cost of Rs 2,000 crore by 2025.

"We are starting with Panipat but eventually all refineries will have green hydrogen units," he said.

This is part of the company's target of achieving net-zero emissions from operations by 2046. "We plan to invest over Rs 2 lakh crore to achieve net-zero," he said.

These investments cover setting up green hydrogen facilities at refineries, improving efficiency, renewable energy capacity addition and alternate fuels.

Currently, IOC's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission, emanating majorly from the company's refining operations, is 21.5 million tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCo2e) per annum. This will rise to 40.44 MMTCo2e by 2030

after considering the expansions planned and taking the emissions of its subsidiaries into account.

The company plans to use natural gas in refineries in place of liquid fuels as well as replace grey hydrogen (produced from fossil fuel) with green one that is manufactured from renewable power.

IOC is also looking at carbon offsetting through ecosystem restoration and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS), among others.

It plans for green hydrogen to account for 50 per cent of its overall hydrogen output in 5-10 years and 100 per cent by 2040.

Vaidya also said IOC plans to raise renewable energy capacity to 12 gigawatts from current 256 MW, and would have electric vehicle charging facilities at 10,000 fuel stations in two years.

The petrochemical intensity - the percentage of crude oil converted into chemicals - is low at 5-6 per cent currently. "We intend to take it up to 10-12 per cent," he said.

The firm's newer refineries at Panipat in Haryana and Paradip in Odisha have the petrochemical intensity of 15-20 per cent, which would be raised to 25 per cent, he said, adding the all-India average being targeted is 10-12 per cent.

FPIs' sell-off spree continues in Feb

Last week, bond yields in the US continued to rise in anticipation of the Fed turning more hawkish in the context of the slow disinflation in the US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 26: Foreign investors have turned cautious and pulled out Rs 2,313 crore from Indian equities so far this month ahead of the release of Federal Reserve's latest meeting minutes.

However, the pace of selling has come down compared to January, when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) took out Rs 28,852 crore.

Prior to that, they made a net investment of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,238 crore in November.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said rising rates in the US might lead to more capital outflows from emerging markets including India.

According to the data, FPIs with-



FOREIGN INVESTORS WITHDRAW ₹2,300CR IN FEB SO FAR

THIS WAS THE WORST OUTFLOW IN THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS

drew a net amount of Rs 2,313 crore from Indian equities during February 1-24.

Also FPIs bought capital goods, IT and healthcare in the first half of February and they sold in oil & gas, metals and power, he added.

On the other hand, FPIs have invested Rs 2,819 crore in the debt markets during the period under review.

Annual General Body meet by SBI Officers' Association

Bhubaneswar: The Annual General Body Meeting of SBI Officers' Association, Odisha, Bhubaneswar Circle was held February 26 at KIIT Auditorium, Bhubaneswar. Around 2,000 SBI officers working in different parts of Odisha attended the meeting. The meeting was inaugurated by Chandershekar Sharma, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Circle. Comrade Rupam Roy, General Secretary, AIBOC and President of State Bank Officers' Federation and R Balaji Chairman, AISBOF attended the meeting. The General Secretaries and the Presidents from all circles of State Bank of India Officers' Association also graced the meeting as distinguished guests. RP Das, General Secretary of SBI Staff Association & Convener of UFBU, Odisha, also attended the meeting as distinguished guest.



BIZ BUZZ



BOI Officers Association organises 42nd AGM

Bhubaneswar: The 42nd Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) of Bank of India Officers Association Odisha Unit was organized at Rail Bhawan, Bhubaneswar February 26. The event witnessed participation from all the officers posted in different corner of the state. The meeting was attended by the General Secretary of the Federation of Bank Of India Officers' Associations Comrade Sunil Kumar, President Comrade Nilesh Pawar, Chairman Comrade Sanjay Das, Advisor Comrade Sunil Lakra. The event was also attended by the First General Manager of BOI NBG Odisha Bikram Keshari Mishra along with the Zonal Heads Malayda Das, UK Rath, Aurobinda Mishra and RC Das.

AI like ChatGPT will be a co-worker, will not replace jobs: TCS

The introduction of platforms like ChatGPT has led to concerns on whether a trained human is needed at all to deliver the work which a technology company offers to clients. Already, there are examples of entire codes being generated through such platforms. One of the reasons for massive layoffs by big tech companies across the world is being attributed to the emergence of such intuitive platforms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

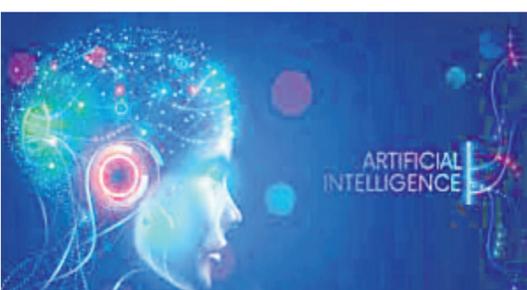
Mumbai, Feb 26: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) feels generative artificial intelligence platforms like ChatGPT will create an "AI co-worker" and not replace jobs.

Milind Lakkad, the chief human resources officer (CHRO) of the country's largest IT services firm that employs over 6 lakh people

said such tools will help improve productivity, but not change the business models for companies.

"...It (generative AI) will be a co-worker. It will be a co-worker and that co-worker will take time for them to understand the context of the customer," Lakkad said in an interview with PTI recently.

The context for a job to be executed will be industry and cus-



tomers-centric, which will continue to come from the human who is being assisted in tasks by such a co-worker, Lakkad explained.

"It is not that jobs will get replaced, but the job definitions will change," he added in the comments

which will assuage concerns about future of jobs in the sector which is one of the biggest recruiters of engineering talent in the country.

Lakkad said the context in which a particular customer works is extremely important, and the need to

Such tools will help improve the productivity, consistency of the work which gets delivered and reduce the need for governance, up the pace of delivery and reduce the need for peripheral functions

MILIND LAKKAD | CHRO, TCS

differentiate its offerings from competition makes it essential for a customer to keep on evolving continuously.

The amount of work to be done by a human being versus the generative AI platforms will vary as per industry as well, he said.

If anything, it will reduce the need for managerial talent but the demand for workers lower down the

hierarchy will continue as they will get crucial skills on the context front, he said.

"It's (generative AI) a good thing to happen for the future, but I think it will be collaboration rather than replacement," Lakkad said, adding that the emergence of such tools will not change the business models.

TCS is using such inputs in "some pockets" already, Lakkad said, adding that a lot of the work will happen in these areas going forward and the entire picture will get clear only in two years' time.

There will be changes in training which will take place as a result, Lakkad said, adding that the company pays a lot of attention to this aspect and typically plans in advance for requirements of the future.

Shastri shoots from the hip

NO USE OF TALENT IF IT CANNOT PRODUCE RESULTS, FEELS FORMER INDIA COACH

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 26: Former India coach Ravi Shastri is against the idea of picking a vice-captain in a home series as he feels it complicates the selection of the best XI when the deputy team leader is not in form. Shastri also hinted that Shubman Gill should replace KL Rahul in the remaining two Tests of the Border Gavaskar Trophy against Australia.

There has been a lot of talk around India vice-captain Rahul's prolonged lean patch. The opener has scores of 22, 23, 10, 2, 20, 17 and 1 in his last seven innings.

"The team management knows his (Rahul's) form, they know his mental state. They know how they should be watching someone like Gill," Shastri said on the 'ICC Review podcast'.

"I always had the belief (to) never appoint a vice-captain for India, more so when we are playing at home. I would rather go with best XI, and if captain has to leave the field, you'd zero in on a player that can take over at the time, simply because you don't need to create complications," Shastri added.

Rahul, who was the designated vice-captain for the first two Tests of the Border Gavaskar Trophy, has retained his place for the final two games but is no longer Rohit Sharma's deputy.

"If vice-captain doesn't perform, someone can take his place; at least the tag is not there. I'm being blunt and brutal; I never



Ravi Shastri wants Shubman Gill (R) in the playing XI in place of the out of form KL Rahul in the third Test against Australia

I have never supported the idea of vice-captain at home. Overseas it may be different, but in home conditions the man in form must play
Ravi Shastri

like vice-captain in home conditions. Overseas, it's different. Here, you want prime form, you want someone like Gill, who's red hot. He will challenge. He has to bang that door down and get into the

side," Shastri asserted.

The former India all-rounder said there is not dearth of talent in India and a player needs to be consistent to keep his place in team. "There's so much talent in India who are knocking the door: It's not just Rahul, there are many in middle-order and bowling line-up as well, there is a lot of depth. Even if you are talented, you have to convert those into results," pointed out the former India coach.

Shastri also pointed out that the WTC final will be different ball game but India will have psycho-

logical edge. India will qualify for the final if they win another game in the four-Test series.

"There will be an impact but conditions will be different, Australia's fast bowlers will be back fully fit and then it is a different ball game. But the psychological dent will make India believe that even in those conditions the can upstage Australia. Hopefully Jasprit Bumrah will be back, (Mohammed) Shami is there and (Mohammed Siraj) has been bowling beautifully. A 4-0 win here will psychologically send a strong signal," asserted Shastri.

More all-rounders, pacers need of the hour: Mithali

A proper coaching plan must be put in place for India to achieve progress in women's cricket

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 26: Women's cricket in India has made huge strides ever since its breakout moment came as being runners-up in the 2017 ODI World Cup in England. Since then, India won the Asia Cup, became runners-up of 2020 T20 World Cup, were semi-finalists in 2018 and 2023 and also bagged their maiden U-19 Women's T20 World Cup trophy earlier in the year.

However, former Indian skipper Mithali Raj feels that for women's cricket to grow in the country, India will have to produce more multi-dimensional players and fast bowlers. Mithali has raised this point in her column which she writes for the ICC.

"All players understand the importance of being multi-dimensional, having more than one facet to their game. Players with only one side to their game are not as desired today. Only players with exceptional talent like Meg Lanning, Smriti Mandhana and a few others who are extraordinary batters can thrive or a Darcie Brown or Shabnim Ismail who can clock 120-plus. Everyone else has developed their skill-set and added to their overall game," Mithali said in her column.

In the Indian team, there are



All-rounder Pooja Vastrakar

multi-skilled players like captain Harmanpreet Kaur, opener Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, and Pooja Vastrakar among others. From the batch of U-19 women's T20 World Cup winning team, there were multi-skilled players like Gongadi Trisha, Sonam Yadav, Mannat Kashyap and Archana Devi.

With Vastrakar being a rare fast-bowling all-rounder, someone like Titas Sadhu or Hurley Gala (U-19 squad) can be groomed for that position along with Amanjot Kaur, who gave an excellent impression of her skills during the women's T20I tri-series.

Then comes the fast-bowling department, which Mithali thinks could be a dominant force in future.

The only way forward today in women's cricket is to have multiple skill-sets. Players with only one facet will find it very difficult to survive
MITHALI RAJ

India's pace bowling department comprising Renuka Thakur, Shikha Pandey and Anjali Sarvani took only 12 wickets in the T20 World Cup. "One of the themes of the tournament has been the rise of fast bowlers, who have really dominated and helped their teams to victory, which is not usually the case with the T20 format where you see batters scoring big fifties and hundreds," Mithali pointed out.

"But for a bigger pool of fast bowlers, National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore will have to get their strategies as well as planning right. Also, they need to get the women's support staff for a fixed period, because India can't afford to have multiple shuffles of coaching staff," Mithali said.

Pramod shines

Victoria (Spain): Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam won gold in men's doubles, while Tarun clinched the top spot in singles defeating Kadam in the final of the Spanish Para-Badminton International tournament here. Competing in the SL3-SL4 category of the Level 2 tournament, Bhagat and Kadam defeated compatriots Tarun and Nitesh 22-20, 12-21 21-9 for the men's doubles final. In singles, Bhagat went down fighting to England's Daniel Bethell 18-21, 8-21 in 46 minutes to settle for silver in SL-3 category.

Boxers lose in final

Sofia: Indian boxers Anamika (50kg) and Anupama (81kg) signed off with silver medals after going down in their respective final round bouts at the Strandja Memorial Tournament here Sunday. Anamika, the reigning national champion, lost by a 1-4 split verdict against China's Hu Meiyi in the lightweight final. Anupama, on the other hand, was beaten by a technically superior Australian Emma Sue Greentree by a 0-5 unanimous verdict. Anamika began aggressively but Meiyi defended well, moving around the ring to take the first round. After a listless second round, Anamika was better in the third but Meiyi had done enough to emerge a winner. In the light heavyweight final, Greentree did not let Anupama settle down and dominated from the start and won the bout comfortably.

3 qualify for Asiad

New Delhi: India's elite runners Man Singh, Belliappa AB and Karthik Kumar clinched the podium positions in the New Delhi National Marathon here Sunday and also qualified for the 2023 Asian Games in September. All three went under the qualifying mark of 2 hours and 15 minutes in an exciting run that went down to the wire much to the delight of cheering fans all along the picturesque route in the heart of the Indian capital. Man Singh, clocked an impressive 2:14.13 to win the coveted gold medal as well as the cash prize of ₹1,50,000. Belliappa (2:14.15s) and Kumar (2:14.19s) bagged the silver and bronze respectively.

Armand sets new WR

Paris: Armand Duplantis of Sweden set a new world pole vault record of 6.22 metres Sunday at an indoor meeting at Clermont-Ferrand in France. Olympic champion Duplantis improved his own record of 6.21m that he set in winning the world title outdoors in Oregon last year and described it as 'almost an out-of-body experience'. Duplantis achieved the new record at his third attempt to the delight of the 4,000-strong crowd. Duplantis, 23, said: "When you have moments like this, when the energy is so high, and you're going down there for the record, it feels like my body never even touched the ground. It felt like I was reaching for the moon." AGENCIES

Krejciakova stuns top-ranked Swiatek to win Dubai final

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Feb 26: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek was stunned by Barbora Krejciakova 4-6, 2-6 in the final of the Dubai Tennis Championships here Saturday night. In the process Krejciakova closed the tournament by beating the top three players in the WTA rankings: No. 3 Jessica Pegula in the quarterfinals, No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka in the semifinals, then Swiatek. The Czech is the fifth woman in the Open era to beat the world's top three at the same event.

"It's a big achievement and I think it's going to give me a lot of confidence that I can play with the best ones," Krejciakova said after the match.

The former French Open champion dominated the final, breaking Swiatek five times. The Pole earned two breaks back in the first set, but Krejciakova then played out a love break and held to love for the set. In the second, she broke for 2-1 and 5-2 and easily held serve to win her sixth singles title.

"I showed my best tennis this week. I was able to play my tennis but also hold the nerves," Krejciakova said. "When you play with Iga, you have to suffer; otherwise you're not going to win because she's everywhere. She plays great shots. She likes to play long rallies. So you have to suffer. I don't mind that if I am winning," Krejciakova signed off



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Barbora Krejciakova poses with the trophy Saturday

Medvedev triumphs

Doha: Daniil Medvedev won the Qatar Open tennis tournament on debut when he defeated Andy Murray 6-4, 6-4 in a final matchup of former No. 1s. Medvedev converted fast starts in each set. He reached 4-1 in the first and 3-1 in the second. Murray fought back but Medvedev stifled him and earned his 17th singles title. "Sometimes we were playing bad and then suddenly both of us were playing amazing," Medvedev said. "I'm happy to win."

Contrasting wins for City, Arsenal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Feb 26: Erling Haaland has already taken one of Sergio Aguero's scoring records for Manchester City. At this rate, surely more will fall.

Haaland, with one of City's goals in a routine 4-1 win Saturday at Bournemouth, made it 27 for the season in the Premier League. That's more than any player has scored in a single campaign for City since the league started in 1992. Aguero had the previous highest total of 26 in 2014-15, part of his record all-time haul of 260 for City in all competitions.

The scary thing about Haaland is that he still has 13 matches remaining in the league. He is closing in on Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah's record haul of 32 in a 38-game season as well as the 34 of Andy Cole and Alan Shearer — achieved back when there were 42 games per season. Haaland scored either side of



Erling Haaland

Julian Alvarez and Phil Foden, with an own-goal by Chris Mepham wrapping up the scoring for City against Bournemouth.

Arsenal earlier won at Leicester 1-0, a result that was reassuring than the scoreline suggested. They stayed two points clear of second-placed City with a game to spare. Gabriel Martinelli scored the 46th-minute winner for the Gunners.

After conceding five goals to Real Madrid in the Champions League in midweek, Liverpool at least tightened up at the back in a 0-0 draw at Crystal Palace.

Australian eves win T20 World Cup

6TH TITLE FOR AUSSIE GIRLS AND 3RD ON THE TROT IN THE SHORTEST FORMAT

AGENCIES

Cape Town, Feb 26: The Australian women's team extended their enviable dominance in world cricket further by winning an unprecedented sixth T20 World Cup trophy with a comfortable 19-run win over a fighting South Africa in the summit clash here Sunday.

Riding on Beth Mooney's unbeaten 74 (53b, 9x4, 1x6) Australia first posted a competitive 156 for the loss of six wickets and then restricted the home team to 137 for six. Mooney's knock proved to be the deciding factor as she single-handedly carried the Australian innings.

Chasing, opener Laura Wolvaardt (61, 48b, 5x4, 3x6) played a valiant lone hand while wickets kept tumbling at the other end for the hosts.

South Africa made a sedate start, losing Tazmin Brits in the fifth over, caught by Tahila McGrath at mid-on. They were reduced to 54 for three in the 11th over and all hopes were fading. However, Wolvaardt and Chloe Tryon (25) added 55 runs



Brief scores: Australia 156 for 6 (Beth Mooney 74 n o, Shabnim Ismail 2/26, Marizanne Kapp 2/35) beat South Africa 137 for 6 (Laura Wolvaardt 61, Ashleigh Gardner 1/20) by 19 runs.

for the fourth wicket to bring the hosts back into the game. However, with Wolvaardt's dismissal in the 17th

over, South African aspirations vanished. Ashleigh Gardner (1/20) was the best bowler for Australia and bowled a miserly spell.

Earlier electing to bat, Australia lost Alyssa Healy (18) early, caught at covers by Nadine De Klerk off the bowling of Marizanne Kapp (2/35) in the fifth over. Then Gardner (29 off 21) joined hands with Mooney

and the pair's 46 runs for the second wicket stabilised the innings.

But Mooney went about her business in blistering fashion and dispatched the bad deliveries to the fence to keep the scoreboard ticking. Even though Grace Harris (10) and skipper Meg Lanning (10) fell cheaply, the dismissals did not bother Mooney.