



Shruti's revelation

Actor Shruti Haasan says she used a fake name to not associate with her illustrious parents' fame

LEISURE | P2



Three years of war

Ukraine hosts European leaders to mark three years of all-out war with Russia, while top US officials stay away

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Sensex tanks 850 pts

Falling for fifth straight session, equity benchmark BSE Sensex plunges over 850 points to drop below 75,000 level

BUSINESS | P11



Eves suffer defeat

The Indian women's hockey team waste chances galore to lose 2-4 to reigning Olympic champions Netherlands

SPORTS | P12

Survival hope of 8 T'gana tunnel workers dims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Feb 24: After being trapped for more than two days under debris and muck, the chances of survival of the eight persons in the SLBC tunnel following a partial collapse appear bleak, even as every effort is made to reach them.

Despite relentless efforts by Indian Army, Navy, NDRF, and other agencies, no breakthrough has been achieved so far in the rescue operations as the teams had to navigate through thick muck, tangled iron rods, and cement blocks to reach the accident spot in the tunnel to extricate the persons who have remained trapped for over two days inside the tunnel after a section of it collapsed in the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) project in Telangana's Nagarkurnool district on Saturday morning.

A team of 584 skilled personnel of Army, Navy, Singareni Collieries and other agencies along with central and state disaster response teams, have conducted tunnel inspections seven times, official sources said adding gas cutters to cut the metal rod are continuously working.

Sniffer dogs were also brought in to locate those in-



side the tunnel. However, due to the presence of water, they were unable to move forward.

Minister Jupally Krishna Rao Monday said the chances of their survival are "very remote", and rescuing the trapped individuals would take at least three to four days, as the accident site is filled with muck and debris, making it a daunting task for the rescuers.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Tough times for the airline! The minister has come prepared - with his own seat



SHORT CUT: A passenger tries to board an overcrowded train through its emergency window at Patna railway station, Monday, as several trains were cancelled amid rush ahead of the holy dip on 'Maha Shivratri' at the ongoing Prayagraj Mahakumbh

PTI PHOTO

Top court comes to consumers' relief

In what has come as a relief for the common man who is duped day in and day out by companies placing misleading advertisements for their healthcare products, the Supreme Court Monday made a terse observation on the lacunae in the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 that failed to provide a mechanism for redressal of consumer grievances. While hearing a petition filed by Indian Medical Association (and others) in connection with vague advertisements put up by pharmaceutical companies, the top court told the amicus curiae that it will direct creation of some dedicated phone lines, 'or something', so that people can file complaints. Nevertheless, the court's pro-active stand is likely to herald a new chapter in consumer empowerment in the country

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: Hearing a petition filed by Indian Medical Association (IMA) in 2022 pertaining to misleading medical

advertisements, the Supreme Court Monday emphasised on the importance of the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, 1954 and the need for a mechanism under it to enable citizens to file complaints.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Drug and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 was of vital importance. It said a machinery has to be set up for the citizens who wanted to file complaints over misleading advertisements.

The bench said it would consider the aspect March 7, 2025.

It also dealt with the issue concerning compliance of Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1954 by Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Union territory of Puducherry. The top court had August 27 last year stayed a notification issued by the Ministry of Ayush, which omitted Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1954 that prohibits misleading advertisements of Ayurvedic,

Siddha, and Unani drugs. The bench was informed that in Karnataka, no prosecution was initiated in 25 cases of alleged misleading advertisements due to lack of material particulars.

"According to us, these are only excuses given by the state of Karnataka. They have their own police machinery, cyber cell. It is very easy for them to find out the sources of these advertisements, provided there is a will on the state's part to do so," the bench observed.

It asked Karnataka government to ascertain the wrongdoers and place a compliance report before it within a month.

Senior advocate Shadan Farasat, assisting the court as an amicus curiae, said as far as Kerala was concerned, there was proper implementation of the Rule in the state.

While hearing the matter February 10, the SC had slammed several states over the "failure" to act against illegal advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani drugs.

UN votes for withdrawal of troops by Russia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Feb 24: The UN General Assembly Monday approved a Ukrainian resolution demanding an immediate withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine on the third anniversary of the invasion.

The vote in the 193-member world body, whose resolutions are not legally binding but are seen as a barometer of world opinion, was 93-18 with 65 abstentions. The European-backed resolution was approved ahead of a vote on a dueling US proposal that calls for a swift end to the war but never mentions Russia's invasion of Ukraine February 24, 2022.

Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Mariana Betsa said her country is exercising its "inherent right to self-defense" following Russia's invasion, which violates the UN Charter's requirement that countries respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations.

INDIA ABSTAINS
India, however, abstained from the draft resolution that called for de-escalation, an early cessation of hostilities and a peaceful resolution of the war against Ukraine.

Youth kills lover over failed affair

POST NEWS NETWORK

Soro, Feb 24: In yet another incident of tragic end to a failed love affair, a youth allegedly murdered a woman in broad daylight at Lingapada under Soro Municipality in Balasore district Monday. The victim was identified as Jyotirmayee Rana, 25, daughter of Manoranjan Rana of the village.

According to sources, the accused, Biswaranjan Kuanr, had been harassing Jyotirmayee after she refused his marriage proposal.

The victim was working for a private company in Bangalore but had returned home two months ago. When she was alone at home Monday, her throat was slit in a gruesome attack. When her family members returned, they found Jyotirmayee lying in a pool of blood. They rushed her to Soro Hospital, where doctors declared her dead. Soro police reached the spot and began an investigation.

Jyotirmayee had filed a complaint at Soro police station two days ago against a young man from Chudamani village, under

MAN SLAPS WIFE TO DEATH OVER CURRY

Dhenkanal: A woman died after her husband thrashed her on her ear lobe following an argument over preparing chicken curry at Dhananali, Munda Sahi under Gondia police limits in Dhenkanal district Sunday night. The deceased was identified as Kuni Pingua, 30, wife of Jena Pingua, 40. Police said the couple got into a heated argument when Kuni refused to prepare chicken curry for dinner. The dispute escalated, as Jena allegedly struck Kuni with a forceful slap on her left ear, causing her to collapse and die on the spot. The couple has three children - two sons, and a daughter. Gondia police reached the spot and registered a murder case (75/25) and arrested Pingua. The body was sent to district headquarters hospital in Dhenkanal for post-mortem. "The accused will be produced in the court Tuesday," Gondia police station inspector-in-charge (IIC) Shantanu Pradhan said.

Basudevpur police limits, for harassing her. It is suspected that the man, enraged by her rejection, committed the murder. Soro police has registered a case (162/25) in this regard. The accused, however, was at large till the last reports came in.

Ensure speedy justice to KIIT victim: Nepal NHRC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal has urged its Indian counterpart to investigate the unnatural death of a 20-year-old girl student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) here and ensure speedy justice to her.

The alleged death by suicide of B Tech student Prakriti Lamal and the subsequent attack on protesting Nepalese pupils at KIIT and their eviction from the campus created a furore, prompting the Nepal government to intervene in the matter. Nepal NHRC, in a press release, said it has written to the

NHRC of India requesting it to probe the suspicious death of the woman, who hailed from Kathmandu, and provide speedy justice to the students who were allegedly beaten up and mistreated at KIIT.

It urged India's NHRC to ensure security for Nepalese students and ensure that they can study in a fear-free environment, besides bringing the university officials and individuals involved in the incident to book.

Based on the complaints received, the commission also sought information from the Nepal Embassy in India about the incident and the condition of the students, the release said.

Retired hens revitalise Cyprus olive groves

REUTERS

Akaki (Cyprus), Feb 24: In a back-to-basics approach, organic farmers in Cyprus have recruited hundreds of retired hens to fertilise olive groves in a pilot project they say boosts yields, counters disease, and helps to manage food waste.

Saved from slaughter after their egg-laying years, hens peck and poop to their hearts' content among olive trees at the organically certified Akaki Grove, on the green foothills of the Troodos mountains west of Nicosia.

Setting a classic example of increasing productivity through organic farming, farmer and grove owner Elena Christoforos

and soil engineer Nicolas Nieten have launched the Kot-Kot project. They collect food waste donations to feed hens, which in turn provide natural fertiliser for olive trees producing oil high in inflammation-busting polyphenols.

"We provide them with an old hens' home, they come here and retire," said Christoforos, surrounded by clucking chickens while emptying bins of food waste donated by school-children.

Hens reduce the presence of pests such as olive fly, a scourge for olive farmers in the Mediterranean, by pecking at larvae while simultaneously clearing surface weed cover.

Their droppings enrich the



Organic farmer Elena Christoforos stands amidst retired farm hens at a farm in Akaki, Cyprus

PHOTO: REUTERS

soil, and feeding them with food waste reduces the amount of methane-producing organic matter going into landfill.

The hens can enjoy a long retirement among the olive trees, living for 8-10 years despite only laying eggs until the age of 2.

"The goal here is to create a biodiverse, self-sustained ecosystem that can sustain really high temperatures and long droughts. So when I bring animals into the system by eating ground cover and pooping, it speeds up the cycle," Nieten said.

Nieten, who holds the world record for producing olive oil with the highest polyphenol content, said olive tree growth and yields had improved markedly since the hens arrived.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Ganesha sees a wonderful time ahead for you. Today, you will meet many people who will prove reliable and trustworthy in the future. You aim to think and work perfectly. For that, says Ganesha, you will have to remain your practical and head-on-shoulders self.

TAURUS
Today, you will strike a great balance between your professional and personal life, predicts Ganesha. You will save your money from being swindled by others. You may be lagging in the race to catch up with your goals, but will not be disappointed by what you achieve. It is an auspicious day to undertake business deals and start new projects, feels Ganesha.

GEMINI
Today, you will have a tendency to remain possessive about your personal belongings, says Ganesha. You are likely to join personality development courses to achieve your ultimate goals. An unpleasant occurrence is likely to throw you off guard. But remember, there is hope when there is life.

CANCER
Today, you will use money to fulfil your needs. If there is anything that according to you needs changing, you will throw some money to get it changed. Your loved ones will celebrate your financial gains and spend some more of it in the process.

LEO
You may not have a halo around your head, but that most certainly does not deter you from playing the spiritual card today, says Ganesha. On this auspicious day, it is through religious scriptures that you satiate your desire to attain the intangible. Spend some time meditating on the finer aspects of life; you will be amazed at the answers such contemplation can throw up.

VIRGO
Something you achieve in a most unexpected manner will make you very happy today. But your happiness may possibly be marred by getting agitated about the problems you are facing. You may expect new funds for new projects, says Ganesha. Your business will flourish today.

LIBRA
A wistful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesha. This day, just like 'on the summer day that we flew kites', may be the standard when it comes to wanting to have a better future. Ganesha expects a sea of change in your outlook, thanks to your sweetheart's noble gesture today.

SCORPIO
Dear friends and soul mates will bring you much relief and calm today, says Ganesha. Spend as much time as possible with them. Romantic escapades with your beloved will be heaven in itself. Blood relations will stand true and strong in matters of importance, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
You take the path of spirituality for the peace of mind and to stay away from the daily humdrum of life. You will not only seek love, but also spread love around you. In a nutshell, a pleasant day in store for you, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Your outstanding intellectual ability will not only yield exciting results for you, but will also help your close associates who will have progressed a great deal in their career because of your valuable advice, says Ganesha. Scores of problems may come your way, but you will have nothing to worry about. You will deal with each one of them with ease.

AQUARIUS
You have managed to carve a niche for yourself. Today, you may see the tangible benefits of all your past hard work. But business rivals may poke and pinch; even your health may trouble you. However, you will manage to smile and take things in the right spirit, approves Ganesha.

PISCES
An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesha.



PATRICK WISHES HE DIDN'T HAVE HIS LAST NAME

Actor Patrick Schwarzenegger, who is the son of Hollywood legend Arnold Schwarzenegger and his ex-wife Maria Shriver, sometimes wishes he had a different last name as people assume he only got into acting because of his legendary parents.

JUSTIN BIEBER WANTS TO TEACH SON ICE SKATING

Singer-songwriter Justin Bieber, who is enjoying his fatherhood, has revealed that he's not going to waste any time when it comes to getting his 6-month-old son Jack Blues onto the ice skating.



MUMBAI: Shraddha Kapoor's work has always spoken for itself. Ever since she ventured into films, she has delivered several hits and has become one of the finest actresses in Indian cinema. Known for her strong screen presence, she captivates audiences every time she appears on screen. She last starred in *Stree 2*, one of the biggest blockbusters of 2024. In the sequel, Shraddha Kapoor reprised her role, this time revealing herself as the daughter of a vengeful spirit central to the storyline. However, her presence left a lasting impression, adding depth and intrigue to the narrative.

Shraddha broke her silence on her role in *Stree 2*, revealing how she surrendered to the director's vision, trusting the storytelling to make her character impactful despite fewer appearances. Shraddha told an agency, "As always, I surrendered to the director's vision. I mean, no one knows the film or its characters better than him, so who best to take guidance from."

Shraddha stole the spotlight in *Stree 2*. She is currently at the top of her game, delivering consistent hits and breaking records on social me-

dia. With a massive global fan following, she continues to win hearts with her talent and charm. Her record-breaking success with *Stree 2* is proof that she is one of the best in the industry.



Shraddha on her limited screen time in *Stree 2*

AGENCIES

MUMBAI: While many versions of *Mahabharata* has already been released including a cult television classic of the mythological saga which wooed the audiences in the 90s, top actor Aamir Khan too had expressed his keen desire to bring it to life on the silver screen.

Although he reveal any details any confirmation about the cast, insisted



Aamir's update on *Mahabharata*

did not or provide or hint Aamir Khan that he would

initially hesitated with a pause and after thinking for a bit, he answered, "Let's see." Readers would be aware that the excitement for this project has always remained high. Furthermore, fans of Khan are excited to see him venture into this mythological saga too.

MUMBAI: Actress Kangana Ranaut Sunday shared a series of notes on her Instagram story, criticizing films that, according to her, promote divorce. While she did not mention any specific film, her comments sparked discussions among netizens, who speculated that she was addressing the ongoing debate around a recent release, *Mr.*, starring Sanya Malhotra. The film in question, which features a protagonist navigating a difficult marriage, has received support from many Indian

When the host decided to prod further information and asked if the actor would be a part of it too, Aamir

AGENCIES

Fame is transient in real life: SHRUTI

BANGALORE: Shruti Haasan has gradually built a name and recognition for herself through her own merit and hard work, despite being a star kid. Recently, the Coolie actress revealed a time when she preferred to use a fake name to avoid being associated with her illustrious parents.

Speaking with a news portal, the Luck actress said, "Fame is transient in real life. Despite all the glory attached to it, I believe it is temporary."

The actress shared that growing up as the daughter of well-known actors helped her grasp the concept of fame, but it also made her realize that it had nothing to do with her personally. To emphasize her independence, she once adopted a pseudonym, allowing others to see her for who she truly is, rather than just as the child of her famous parents.

Shruti said, "My parents were famous, and I had this identity rebellion. I even used a fake name so that people would treat me as an individual and not associate me with my parents' fame."

She went on to reveal that she now understands it is useless to build a career solely based on fame. Shruti recalled watching her father, Kamal Haasan, put in immense hard work—burning the midnight oil and preparing all night for his roles—just so he could perform well the next day on stage.



COMMENT ON DIVORCE

KANGANA faces backlash

women for highlighting patriarchal norms. However, Kangana expressed concern that such narratives could negatively influence societal perceptions of marriage. Her remarks did not sit well with a section of the internet, leading to backlash on social media platforms.

Several users called out the actress for what they perceived as hypocrisy, questioning her stance on marriage and traditional values. One Reddit user commented, "Why doesn't she get married, have kids, take care of her parents, cook, and not eat out... set an example and fulfill her dharma?" Another user drew parallels between Kangana's criticism and her past remarks about fellow actresses, stating, "She is just scared that another curly-haired girl will usurp the throne. She did the same to Tapsee and now Sanya."



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

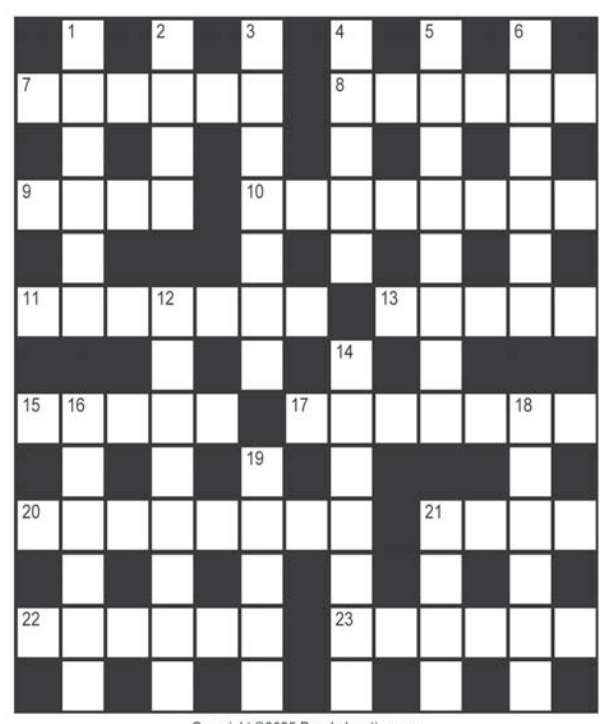


BREVITY



FUN POST

CROSSWORD



- Across**
7 Polished
8 Money back
9 Quarry
10 Understood
11 Sugarcoat
13 Frogman
15 Endeavoured
17 Synthetic fibre
- Down**
20 Movie extras
21 Mantle
22 Unnerve
23 Draw out
- 4 Wine starter
5 Kinship
6 Train leader
12 Time without end
14 Odorised
16 Malacca
18 Damage
19 Coal
21 Golf shot

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

A	C	C	E	D	E	R	U	M	P	U	S
K	A	O	S	P	I	I					
I	M	P	U	L	S	E	P	E	C	A	N
M	R	E	N	E	C	G					
B	R	I	E	F	T	U	R	M	O	I	L
O	U	I									
E	X	C	L	A	M	A	T	I	O	N	
S	E	E	E								
A	F	R	I	C	A	N					
L	O	A	T	P	R	N					
V	I	X	E	N	A	T	T	R	A	C	T
E	E	D	L	E	M	I					
R	E	D	E								

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

People from various walks of life pay tribute to Kantakabi Laxmikant Mohapatra on the death anniversary of the noted poet at an event organised by Utkal Sammilani near Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Monday



downtown

CM proposes Odisha Bhawan in Ayodhya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has proposed to set up an Odisha Bhawan in Ayodhya as a large number of people visit the place seeking Lord Ram Lalla's blessings.

During his three-day visit to Uttar Pradesh, Majhi took a holy dip at the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj and had a darshan of Lord Ram Lalla at Ayodhya Sunday.

"A number of people from Odisha visit Ayodhya for darshan of Lord Ram Lalla. I think an Odisha Bhawan should be built in Ayodhya for the Odia people. I will take up the matter with UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and request him for land in Ayodhya," Majhi said in a post on X.

Accompanied by his wife, an Odisha minister and an MLA, Majhi also visited Dhamek Stupa at Sarnath Monday.

"It is an honour to visit Sar-



nath, a place where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon, a message of peace, wisdom, and enlightenment. I am deeply moved by the efforts made to preserve and showcase this heritage, signifying our timeless values of compassion and knowledge, to visitors from around the world. My heartfelt gratitude to the people who have been instrumental in maintaining this historic site," Majhi said in another post.

The CM also visited the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi and offered prayers. He also attended the closing

ceremony of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam at Kashi.

"The Kashi Tamil Sangamam is not just an event — it is a bridge between the North and South, a celebration of shared traditions and cultural harmony. It reminds us that while our languages, customs, and practices may differ, our core values of love, respect, and spirituality remain the same. This cultural integration is what makes India a truly unique and vibrant nation," Majhi was quoted as saying in a release issued by the Chief Minister's Office.



SUMMER'S HERE: Amid soaring temperatures, a Fire Services personnel sprays water on walkway near the Lion's Gate of Srimandir in Puri, Monday

DRI recovers 1,448 Indian flapshell turtles



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials arrested a man after recovering 1,448 Indian flapshell turtles from his possession at Godipada Toll Plaza late Sunday night, official sources said Monday.

"Acting on intelligence inputs, DRI officials nabbed the man and also seized the vehicle used in carrying the turtles. He has been booked under provisions of Section 50(1)(C), read with, Section 9 and Sl.No.44 of Schedule-I of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972," they said.

Indian flapshell turtles, classified as a Schedule I species, are accorded stringent protection under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. "The DRI remains committed to combating wildlife trafficking and enforcing the laws that protect endangered species," they added.

'Ankita' delivers cub

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barang, Feb 24: Tigress Ankita, one of the major attractions at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here, delivered a cub Monday, official sources said. With this, the tiger population at NZP reached 28. Ankita was born to 'Rishi' and 'Sara' at Nandankanan January 13, 2013.

EOW nabs 'money-doubling' fraudster from Hyd

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The economic offences wing (EOW) of Odisha Police arrested a man for allegedly duping people by collecting deposits with the false promise of doubling their money in 10 months, police said.

The accused, identified as Dhanajaya Sahoo, was arrested in Hyderabad and brought to the state on remand Monday.

A case has been registered against him under various sections of the IPC and the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, police added.

He was arrested following a complaint by Govinda Chandra Sahoo of Jajpur district, who had

deposited money with Mutual Alliance Global Private Limited, a company owned by Dhanajaya.

Investigations revealed that between 2011 and 2021, Dhanajaya established at least five companies — Goodland Happy Home Infra Limited, Goodland Construction Private Limited, PURIFIO Technology Private Limited, Coinex Technology Private Limited, and Mutual Alliance Global Private Limited, where he served as managing director.

Through these companies, he lured investors by promising exorbitant returns, claiming that the deposited funds would be reinvested in real estate mar-

keting, blockchain-based real estate ventures, e-commerce, and online gaming platforms.

In 2020, he founded his latest company, Mutual Alliance Global Private Limited, operating from Chintamaniswar Temple,

According to the probe so far, Dhanajaya collected around ₹5 crore in unregulated deposits from around 200 investors between 2020 and 2021.

The victims were from Cuttack, Khurda, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Keonjhar, and Mayurbhanj districts, police added.

Authorities have seized several incriminating materials from the accused, including a laptop, mobile phone, pen drive, bank account documents, ATM cards, and a passport.

Police also discovered that Dhanajaya had traveled to foreign countries such as Dubai, Thailand, and Germany.

Budheswari area in the City, police said.

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WATCO bags nat'l level e-governance award



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO), under the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department, has been honoured with the prestigious 'Technology Sabha Award 2025' in the Enterprise Application category for its pioneering Water Quality Data Acquisition and Monitoring System, official sources said Monday.

The national-level e-governance award recognises excellence in leveraging technology for public service delivery. The award was conferred during the Technology Sabha event held in Hyderabad from February 21 to 23.

Developed in technical collaboration with NIC, Odisha State Centre, Bhubaneswar, the Water Quality Data Acquisition and Monitoring System is an online, integrated, workflow-oriented platform that combines Government-to-Citizen (G2C) and Government-to-Government (G2G) services with real-time

monitoring.

It aims to provide a comprehensive solution for water quality sample collection, testing, and data surveillance monitoring using web-enabled and mobile app-driven technologies across urban areas of the state.

"The system facilitates real-time quality surveillance, ensuring a safe water supply to every household," they said. WATCO MD Gurucharan Das and senior officers from the organisation presented the award to H&UD department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee. H&UD department Special Secretary Debasis Singh was also present.

While congratulating the WATCO MD and his team, Padhee said that this achievement is a testament to Odisha's commitment to leveraging digital governance for improved public service delivery.

"The Water Quality Data Acquisition and Monitoring System is a significant step forward in ensuring water safety and enhancing citizen satisfaction across urban areas," Padhee added.

IIT-Ramco Cements pact for sustainable construction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Indian Institute of Technology-Bhubaneswar (IIT-B) Monday signed an MoU with Ramco Cements Limited to establish a centre of excellence (CoE) in the area of sustainable construction and climate resiliency.

The agreement aims to conduct high-quality research related to sustainable construction materials and techniques themed on climate resiliency, an official said.

The CoE has been named Ramco Sustainable Construction and Climate Resiliency Centre (RAMSCON).

The research focuses on the development of advanced and

sustainable concrete solutions for durability, efficiency and specialised applications. The agreement is aligned with the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) to improve the sustainability index of the Indian construction industry, the official said.

Speaking on the occasion, IIT-Bhubaneswar Director Shreepad Karmalkar said, "This collaboration will enhance the ecosystem in industry-academia interaction in the field of sustainable and climate-resilient construction."

Officials of the company said the MoU will bring transformation in research and development activities.

Risk of Asteroid 2024 YR4 hitting Earth, Moon low

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 24: The risk of Asteroid 2024 YR4 hitting Earth and Moon in December 2032 is relatively low, said scientists Monday.

The asteroid discovered in December 2024, has been dubbed as the large 'city-killer'. Scientists have reported its enhanced chances of hitting Earth in December 2032.

"The mass of that asteroid is not very high as compared to Earth. So as far as Earth as a whole is concerned, the impact of the asteroid hitting Earth would be negligible," Astrophysicist Professor Varun Bhalerao from IIT Bombay told IANS. But, if the asteroid blows up in the atmosphere, it can create some explosion which will damage a lot of things, the expert noted.

Initially, NASA estimates showed it had a 3.1 per cent

chance of striking Earth in 2032. However, recent observations have reduced this risk to just 0.28 per cent.

Confirming this, NASA in a post shared on social media platform X said: "New data gathered last night (Feb 19-20) dropped the December 2032 impact odds of asteroid 2024 YR4 to 0.28 per cent. Monitoring continues."

"The possibility that 2024 YR4 could impact the Earth in 2032 is really remote. We know that disaster is going to come close to the Earth in 2032 to within one and a half times the distance to the moon as of today," said Davide Farnocchia, a navigation engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in a post on X.

"The probability of impact is only 0.3 per cent we're going to keep updating this impact probability as we collect additional tracking data," he added, stating that the probability might



go down to zero.

Bhalerao explained that scientists measure the orbit of the asteroid to understand how it can impact Earth.

"Earth is a heavy body, so it keeps moving but for asteroids, based on what other objects they pass by, it will make very small deflections in their path. While uncertainty is always

there, as you get closer and closer to the mark, the uncertainty decreases, because now you can update based on your data," the Astrophysicist said.

Amid reports that the Moon can now be a possible target, Bhalerao said "The probability of hitting the Moon is actually a bit smaller, because Moon is physically smaller, and the as-

teroid is not massive enough to do something like that".

"The chance of impact with the Moon is about 1 per cent," added NASA.

So what are the odds of other asteroids hitting the Earth?

"Every time you see a meteor shower, it is asteroid hitting the earth, except they burn up in the atmosphere. They look beautiful. We all enjoy the sight, so our atmosphere is kind of working like a shield to protect us from these things," Bhalerao said.

"Now, no matter how good your shield is, if something is bigger, it can penetrate the shield. And as you go to larger and larger sizes, something the size of a kilometer or so probably is enough to wipe out all life on Earth. Something like that probably killed the dinosaurs, as far as our best understanding goes," he said, emphasising the need to keep monitoring.



China-Russia relations have strong internal driving force and unique strategic value, and are not aimed at, nor are they influenced by, any third party

JAPAN EMPEROR'S 65TH B'DAY Japan's Emperor Naruhito, marking his 65th birthday, stressed the importance of telling the tragedy of World War II to younger generations, pledging to contribute to efforts to promote the understanding of history and the determination for peace as the world this year observes the 80th anniversary of the war's end



of the day quote

Securing a trade deal with what is soon-to-be the third biggest economy in the world is a no-brainer, and a top priority for me and this government

Human rights are being suffocated by autocrats, crushing opposition because they fear what the truly empowered people would do and by voices of division and anger who view human rights not as a boon to humanity, but as a barrier to the power, profit and control they seek

The Chinese military task group were in Australia's exclusive economic zone, the area beyond its territorial waters where a nation has exclusive economic rights. That was not unprecedented, but unusual

THREE YEARS OF INVASION Ukraine showdown looms

European leaders in Kyiv to mark three years of war, but top US officials stay away



REUTERS

Kyiv, Feb 24: Ukraine hosted European leaders Monday to mark three years of all-out war with Russia, while top US officials stayed away in a clear illustration of President Donald Trump's lurch towards Moscow since returning to power. Still reeling from Trump denouncing President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as a "dictator" and accusing him of starting the war, Kyiv said it was in the final stages of agreeing a deal with Washington to provide access to its mineral wealth.

KYIV UNSURE IT CAN DEPEND ON MAJOR ALLY UNITED STATES ANY MORE European leaders rally around President Zelenskyy

This year should be the beginning of a real, lasting peace. Putin will not gift us this peace, nor will he give it to us in exchange for anything. We have to win peace with strength, wisdom and unity - with our cooperation

enky, who said the US leader was living in a "disinformation bubble". Zelenskyy refused to sign an earlier draft in which Washington sought \$500 billion in natural wealth, protesting that Kyiv had received nowhere near that much US aid and that the draft lacked the security guarantees Ukraine needs. Beyond the barbs, US officials opened direct talks with

the Russian side in Saudi Arabia last week, shutting out Kyiv and Europe in a stunning change of policy on the war. Zelenskyy, who has told Europe to create its own army while urging Washington to be pragmatic, welcomed a slew of European and other leaders to a summit in Kyiv to commemorate the start in 2022 of the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two.

FIRST TIME IN DECADES

Israel sends tanks into West Bank



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jenin (West Bank), Feb 24: Israeli tanks moved into the occupied West Bank Sunday for the first time in decades in what Palestinian authorities called a "dangerous escalation", after the defence minister said troops will remain in parts of the territory for a year and tens of thousands of Palestinians who have fled cannot return. Journalists saw several tanks move along unpaved tracks into Jenin, long a bastion of armed struggle against Israel. Israel is deepening its crackdown on the Palestinian territory and has said it is determined to stamp out militancy amid a rise in attacks. It launched the offensive in the northern West Bank January 21 — two days after the current ceasefire in Gaza took hold — and has expanded it to nearby areas. Palestinians view such raids as part of an effort to cement Israeli control over the territory, where 3 million Palestinians live under military rule. The deadly raids have caused destruction in urban areas. Israeli Defence Minister Israel

We will not allow the return of residents, and we will not allow terrorism to return and grow

ISRAEL KATZ | DEFENCE MINISTER, ISRAEL

Katz said he and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the military to "increase the intensity of the activity to thwart terrorism" in all refugee camps in the West Bank. The camps are home to descendants of Palestinians who fled during wars with Israel decades ago. It was not clear how long Palestinians would be prevented from returning. Katz said Israeli troops would stay "for the coming year". Netanyahu said they would stay "as long as needed". Tanks were last deployed in the West Bank in 2002, when Israel fought a deadly Palestinian uprising. The Palestinian foreign ministry called the Israeli moves "a dangerous escalation of the situation in the West Bank", and urged the international community in a statement to intervene in what it termed Israel's illegal "aggression".

SHORT TAKES

One killed, several hurt in B'desh clash

Dhaka: A man was killed and several others injured in a clash Monday between a group of local people and air force personnel at an airbase in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, officials said. The Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the military - in a statement said the "miscreants" attacked the Bangladesh Air Force Base near Cox's Bazar's Samitipara. "Bangladesh Air Force is taking necessary actions in this regard," it said. The ISPR said that "some local miscreants" of the Samitipara area adjacent to the beach resort town "launched a sudden attack" on the airbase after a biker was stopped at a checkpoint as he was crossing the base area without any papers for the vehicle. It said the biker was taken inside the base for interrogation when over 200 people marched towards the base. The security personnel tried to stop them, sparking a clash that left four Air Force personnel injured.

Congo rebel uprising killed 7K this year

Kinshasa: More than 7,000 people have died this year as Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have captured unprecedented amounts of territory in mineral-rich eastern Congo, Congo's prime minister said Monday. Judith Suminwa Tuluka told the UN Human Rights Council that the security and humanitarian situation in the region "has reached alarming levels." The conflict has accelerated in recent weeks, with the rebels taking the key city of Goma in January and Bukavu, another provincial capital, a few weeks later. M23 is the most potent of about 100 armed groups vying for a foothold in Congo's east, which contains trillions of dollars of mostly untapped mineral wealth crucial to the world's technology.

Explosion rocks Russian Consulate

Paris: An incendiary device exploded outside the Russian Consulate in Marseille early Monday, authorities said, on the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. No injuries were reported. A second device that was thrown but did not explode, and a bomb disposal expert was called to the scene. The suspect fled and an investigation has been launched, an official said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to be publicly named by national police policy.

GULF OF TONKIN

China holds live-fire drills after Vietnam marks territorial claims

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, Feb 24: Chinese authorities said they began live-fire exercises in the Gulf of Tonkin Monday, only days after Vietnam announced a new line marking what it considers its territory in the body of water between the two countries. China's Maritime Safety Administration said the exercises would be focused on the Beibu Gulf area, closer to the Chinese side of the Gulf of Tonkin, and would run through Thursday evening. It gave no further details, but the drills follow an announcement last week by Vietnam establishing a baseline used to calculate the width of its territorial waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.



State-run Vietnam News reported that the baseline was in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and would provide "a robust legal basis for safeguarding and exercising Vietnam's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction". Vietnam has not publicly responded to the Chinese drills. China and Vietnam have long had a maritime agreement governing the Gulf of Tonkin, but have been locked in competing claims in the nearby South China

Sea over the Spratly and Paracel Islands and maritime areas. China has been growing aggressive in pursuing those claims, and in October assaulted 10 Vietnamese fishermen near the Paracel Islands, three of whom suffered broken limbs. China claims almost the entire South China Sea as its own, though it has not publicly released exact coordinates of its claim other than a map with 10 dashed lines broadly demarcating what it calls its territory. In addition to Vietnam, China's claims overlap with those of the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, while Indonesia has also figured in violent confrontations with the Chinese coast guard and fishing fleets in the waters around the Natuna Islands.

Daughter seeks govt help to free British couple detained by Taliban

REUTERS

London, Feb 24: A British couple in their 70s who ran education programmes in Afghanistan have been detained by the Taliban administration, their daughter said, urging the British government to do everything possible to secure their release. Barbie and Peter Reynolds, 75 and 79, were detained by the Taliban's interior ministry February 1, their daughter Sarah Entwistle, who lives in central England, said. Speaking to Times Radio Monday, Entwistle said her parents had initially kept in touch via text messages following their detention - assuring their four children that they were fine - before losing all contact three days later. "Our parents have always sought to honour the Taliban, so we wanted to give them the opportunity to explain their reasons for this detention. However, after more than three weeks of silence, we can no longer wait," she said. "We're now



urgently calling on the British consulate to do everything in their power to get us answers and to put as much pressure as they can on the Taliban for their release." Britain's Foreign Office said Monday it was "supporting the family of two British nationals who are detained in Afghanistan," without providing further detail. The BBC, citing official Taliban sources, reported Sunday that two British nationals believed to be working for a non-governmental organisation in the central Afghan province of Bamiyan had been arrested.

Fissures appear in Trump administration

Some US government workers told to justify their jobs to Musk, others told to ignore him

REUTERS

Washington, Feb 24: US government workers who have been buffeted by President Donald Trump's chaotic return to power face more uncertainty Monday, when many of them will be required to justify their jobs to Elon Musk, the chainsaw-wielding billionaire tasked with slashing the federal budget. Musk's demand for the nation's civil-service workers to submit a summary of their work by 11:59 pm Eastern time (0459 GMT) has opened up fissures in Trump's administration. Agencies like the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Communications Commission have told employees to comply. But many others, including the departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Education and Commerce, have ordered workers not to respond.



The Department of Health and Human Services told its workers to cooperate, then later told them to hold off while it figured out how to "best meet the intent" of Musk's unusual directive. Workers at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau also received Musk's email, even though they have been already

ordered to cease working. Musk, the world's richest person, has led a downsizing effort that has laid off more than 20,000 workers and offered buy-outs to another 75,000 across wide swaths of the 2.3-million strong civil service, from bank regulators to park rangers. In some cases, the government has scrambled to re-hire

- Musk demands civil-service workers justify jobs amid budget cuts
Agencies divided on complying with Musk's directive
Mass layoffs impact US economy and government contractors

workers who perform critical functions like nuclear weapons oversight and bird flu response. Trump's administration said late Sunday it would fire 1,600 workers at the US Agency for International Development and put nearly all remaining personnel on leave. Trump has already halted almost all of the agency's funding and operations, throwing global humanitarian relief efforts into chaos. The mass firings have suddenly thrust financial insecurity on workers who had counted on their jobs to provide a secure income.

FIH PRO LEAGUE

Missed chances hurt India eyes

Men lose to Eng in hard-fought contest

Women suffer 2-4 defeat against Netherlands



India suffer defeat as they committed unforced errors in the defence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The Indian men's hockey team fought hard but England skipper Sam Ward's brace handed the hosts a 2-3 defeat in a FIH Pro League match here Monday.

England struck the first blood through Jacob Payton (15th minute) before Ward (19th, 29th) struck twice to stun the hosts.

India's goals were scored by Abhishek (18th) and Sukhjeet Singh (39th).

It was even Stevens between the two sides in the first quarter with both the teams pressing each other for the early goal.

The Indians, however, were guilty of committing unforced errors in the defence, especially skipper Harmapreet Singh, who looked out of sorts.

From one such error, England scored through Payton from a field effort. Abhishek levelled the score three minutes later from a fine field effort.

But England stunned India again a minute later when Ward scored a brilliant field goal after a fine one-two with Payton.

England then secured back-to-back penalty corners in the 24th minute but failed to utilise the opportunities.

The Indians were the dominant side on display as England struggled to get out of the defensive third in the second quarter despite taking the lead.

But the Indian defence crumbled again as Ward scored his second of the day from an unforced error with goalkeeper Suraj Karkera looking clueless.

India secured a penalty corner in the 39th minute, which was denied after England took referral. Seconds later, Sukhjeet deflected in Hardik Singh's hit after he was served by Sanjay's fine pass.

Minutes later, India secured two more penalty corners but wasted both as Harmanpreet looked off colour.

In the 49th minute, Dilpreet Singh came close to scoring but his reverse hit was brilliantly saved by England goalkeeper James Mazerelo. Minutes later, England keeper Mazerelo made a double save to deny Uttam Singh.



Every match, wearing the Indian jersey is an honour: Savita



Goalkeeper Savita Punia completed 300 international caps Monday. The Arjuna Awardee achieved this landmark during India's match against the Netherlands in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Savita now joins Vandana Katarinya as one of only two Indian women to have played 300 international matches. Savita is only the second Indian goalkeeper, male or female, to achieve this feat after the legendary PR Sreejesh. A stalwart of Indian hockey, Savita made her senior team debut at the age of 20 and has since established herself as one of the finest goalkeepers in the world. She played a key role in India's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics. Her experience also proved invaluable in the Rio Olympics 2016 and the 2018 Vitality Hockey Women's World Cup, where India reached the Quarter-Finals. As captain, Savita has led India to remarkable achievements, including a bronze medal at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games and a title-winning campaign at the FIH Nations Cup.

ting it home with a fine reverse hit past second Indian goalkeeper Bichu Devi Kharibam to hand Netherlands 2-1 lead.

Van der Elst then scored from a field effort to extend Netherlands' lead. Udita reduced the deficit, converting another penalty corner in the 42nd minute.

The Indians had their chances, earning two back-to-back penalty corners in the 47th minute but wasted both.

Albers sealed the match for Netherlands, scoring another fine field goal in the 47th minute, her second of the day.

India will again play Netherlands in return-leg match here Tuesday.

Mohun Bagan eye historic double

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 24: Mohun Bagan have etched their name in history, becoming the first-ever team to successfully defend the League Winners' Shield. But they are not stopping there.

After falling short in the ISL final last year with a 1-3 defeat to Mumbai City FC here at the Salt Lake Stadium, the Mariners are determined to complete a historic double by clinching the ISL Cup this time. Coach Jose Molina is focused on the challenge ahead.

"We are trying to win the two matches remaining in the season and even preparing for the Cup, because we cannot think the season is finished just yet. We still have a semifinal, hopefully, a final, and maybe even a

Super Cup later," Molina said, as his team gears up for their next match against Mumbai City FC March 1.

Mohun Bagan's season has been nothing short of extraordinary. With an unassailable 52 points and two games still to play, they have shattered records along the way — first team to surpass 50 points in an ISL season, most wins (16) in a single campaign and a league-record 14 clean sheets, setting a new defensive benchmark.

Goalkeeper Vishal Kaith has been instrumental, keeping the clean sheets, double than his nearest competitor Phurba Lachenpa (7). Kaith also became the first goalkeeper in ISL history to reach 50 career clean sheets.



'Terror threat' puts CT in trouble

The Pakistan's intelligence bureau alert states that terror outfits based out of Pakistan are planning to kidnap foreigners for ransom

AGENCIES



groups" after warnings regarding alleged abduction plots. The report added that the security forces "have deployed high-level protection teams, including rangers and local police".

The Indian cricket team is playing all of their matches in Dubai after the Indian government decided to not send them to Pakistan. In case of India reaching the semifinal and final of the competition, both of the matches will also take place in Dubai with the opposition travelling from

Pakistan.

Security has been one of the biggest concerns when it comes to international sporting events in Pakistan, especially after what happened with the Sri Lanka team in 2009. While the Indian team refused to travel to Pakistan for the event, the PCB claimed it put in extra measures to ensure full security for other travelling teams.

According to reports in local media, a whopping 12,000 police officers and personnel will be deployed during matches in

Lahore and Rawalpindi. The roster will include 18 senior officers, 54 DSPs, 135 inspectors, 1,200 upper subordinates, 10,556 constables, and over 200 female police officers.

Other than security personnel, the PCB has also arranged the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), the country's national carrier, to have special charter flights for fans and the participating teams available. These flights will reportedly operate between Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore to ensure smooth transportation for players and other high-profile guests throughout the tournament.

Meanwhile, the backlash due to the poor show in the Champions Trophy, including the humiliating defeat to India, hit the Pakistan team hard and its support staff led by former fast bowler Aaqib Javed is set to be overhauled, according to a cricket Board source.

Pakistan lost to arch-rivals India by six wickets in Dubai Sunday, after their 60-run defeat to New Zealand in the Champions Trophy opener in Karachi February 19.

IOA forms ad hoc panel to run boxing affairs, BFI terms it "illegal"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Monday constituted a five-member ad hoc committee to oversee the affairs of boxing in the country on the ground that the sport's national federation failed to hold elections on time.

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI), within hours, termed the IOA's decision as "illegal" and said it will file a petition to the Delhi High Court to quash the order.

The IOA said that the BFI did not hold its elections due February 2 and asked the ad hoc panel, to be headed by former Athletics Federation of India (AFI) treasurer Madhukant Pathak, to hold the polls at the earliest.

"IOA has been closely monitoring the administrative affairs of the Boxing Federation of India. As per the governing norms, elections to BFI were to be conducted on or before 02 February 2025. Despite the pre-

scribed timeline, the elections have not been held, resulting in administrative instability within the federation," IOA President PT Usha wrote in an office order.

"In view of the above and in accordance with the authority vested in the IOA, an Ad hoc Committee is hereby constituted to oversee the affairs of the Indian Boxing Federation and ensure the smooth functioning of its activities until the conduct of free and fair elections.

"The Ad hoc Committee shall also be responsible for routine day to day administration of the BFI." The other members of the ad hoc panel are Rajesh Bhandari (vice-chairman), DP Bhatt, boxer Shiva Thapa and Virendra Singh Thakur.

Within hours of the IOA's order to constitute the ad-hoc panel, the BFI responded.

"The BFI strongly condemns the creation of an ad-hoc panel to manage its affairs, calling it illegal and a blatant attempt to



violate the autonomy of a National Sports Federation (NSF). This has also been communicated in a letter by President, BFI to President, IOA," the BFI said in a statement.

"BFI will also be filing a petition for quashing this illegal order before the Hon'ble Delhi High Court immediately. It's pertinent to also mention a verdict of today, wherein the Hon'ble Delhi High Court annulled the IOA's decision to

form an ad-hoc panel for the Bihar Olympic Association."

Usha also said that her office has received numerous complaints from stakeholders, including athletes, coaches and concerned authorities, regarding the non-participation of Indian boxers in various important national/international events in recent months.

"This situation is detrimental to the growth and performance of Indian boxing on the global

stage and necessitates immediate corrective measures."

She said the panel will take immediate steps to address the grievances raised by the boxing community, facilitate athlete participation in the upcoming international competitions, and work towards conducting the BFI elections at the earliest.

"The Ad hoc Committee shall act in a neutral and independent manner, ensuring no conflict of interest. All actions taken must be documented, and records must be maintained for audit and review purposes.

"The Ad hoc Committee shall issue the election notice and schedule as per BFI's Constitution and current regulatory guidelines and appoint a Returning Officer and an independent Election Observer to oversee the election process.

"The Ad hoc Committee shall also be responsible for verification of details of all affiliated state boxing associations and for providing an accurate list

of office bearers of such state boxing associations."

Countering the IOA's contention about not holding elections on time, the BFI said, "It is also important to highlight that the correspondence regarding elections of BFI has already commenced with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) February 2, 2025.

"The fact that IOA has still chosen to intervene is surprising and shocking. IOA did not find it necessary to enquire about the issue with BFI Office or its President before taking such a decision. The IOA has no jurisdiction over the conduct of elections for a NSF's, yet this order has been issued in a manner that clearly questions its intent."

"The BFI claimed that "as per Article 21.5 of the IOA constitution, no decision pertaining to NSF's can be made without prior consultation with the parent International Federation, and approval of the IOA Executive Committee".