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Modi govt decides to reduce 'disturbed areas' under AFSPA in NE: Amit Shah

Himanta: NE India is witnessing a Golden Era Dr Sarma hails move

NEW DELHI, March 25 (PTI): Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has once again decided to decrease the jurisdiction of "disturbed areas" declared under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in Nagaland, Assam and Manipur.

In a series of tweets, Shah said this decision has been taken on account of significant improvement in the security situation in the northeastern region.

"A historic day for the Northeast! PM @narendramodi led GoI has once again decided to decrease the disturbed areas in Nagaland, Assam and Manipur under the AFSPA. This decision has been taken on account of significant improvement in the security situation in North-East India," he said.

Shah said for the first time in India's history, Modi prioritised security, peace and development in the northeast and as a result of it, the region is now rapidly heading on the path of peace and devel-



opment. He expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister for bringing positive change in the lives of the people of the northeast and connecting the region with the "hearts of the rest of India".

"Congratulations to our sisters and brothers of the Northeast on this mo-

mentous occasion," Shah said.

The AFSPA gives armed forces personnel, operating in disturbed areas, sweeping powers to search, arrest, and to open fire if they deem it necessary for "the maintenance of public order". An area or district (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

GUWAHATI, March 25 (PTI): Assam chief minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for further reducing areas under AFSPA, 1958, in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland.

The continuous prioritisation of historical legacy issues of the Ashta-Lakshmi (eight north eastern) states by the Prime Minister over the last nine years is now yielding rich dividends, Sarma said.

He also expressed gratitude to Union home minister Amit Shah for giving his "undivided attention to the grand aim of achieving a secure and prosperous North East". Shah on Saturday announced that as a result of significant improvement in the security situation the draconian act will be in force in eight districts of Assam instead of nine from April 1, 2023.

Sarma said the North East is witnessing a Golden Era.

"As the on ground security situation improves due to a host of pro people policies- I express my profound gratitude to Adarniya PM @narendramodi ji for further reducing the disturbed areas in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland," he said. "This second reduction, in less than a year is reflective that the governance model led by Hon PM @Narendramodi ji, rests on the twin pillars of decisiveness and (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Rahul could have apologised: Himanta

GUWAHATI, March 25 (PTI): Rahul Gandhi could have apologised or withdrawn the comments for which he was sentenced by a Surat court, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday. A slip of tongue sometimes happens and "we have experienced it too, but we issue a statement apologising, saying it was unintentional. Gandhi could have done the same and the matter would have ended there", Sarma said on the sidelines of a programme here.

Gandhi, however, did not apologise nor withdraw the comments over the last five years which goes to "show that it was intentional and made to abuse the OBC community," Sarma claimed, referring to the Surat court's verdict convicting Gandhi in a defamation case and subsequent disqualification as a Lok Sabha MP.

Other chief ministers in the eastern region, many ruled by opposition parties, have however come out against the disqualification.

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday without naming Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, said the country is witness-

ing a new low in a constitutional democracy.

"In PM Modi's New India, Opposition leaders have become the prime target of BJP! While BJP leaders with criminal antecedents are inducted into the cabinet, opposition leaders are disqualified for their speeches," the fiery TMC Supremo said in a tweet.

Similarly, Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren too on Friday attacked the BJP-led government at the Centre, termin the disqualification 'Aapat Kaal' (emergency) for the nation. "In today's 'Amrit Kaal' Opposition leaders are being coerced and silenced by using every tool of power by BJP and the Centre," Soren said in a tweet. "It is not that he had to apologise to any BJP members or Prime Minister Narendra but he did not do so and showed his arrogance," the Assam chief minister on Saturday said.

"This is a judicial process....a cycle and there is nothing political in it. The decision has been taken after a prolonged judicial process of five years," he said. The chief minister referring to the judgement said, "Karma (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

HT BRIEFS

Appliances distributed

DIPHU: Samagra Siksha, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) distributed aids and appliances to physically challenged children of various educational blocks of Karbi Anglong in a ceremony held at Dimasa Club here on Saturday. A total of 114 children of elementary and 8 children of secondary level received the appliances from executive member (EM), KAAC, Education, Richard Tokbi. The appliances include tricycles, wheel chairs, CP chairs, elbow crutches, rollers, MSIED kit, smart cane, braille kits and smartphones. On the occasion, the EM said Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is providing such aids and appliances to physically challenged children to support them in their education and normal life activities. "It is to help them live independently and to enforce their participation in routine activities like other children," he added. While giving away an appliance to a blind boy Kundan Sahu of Santipur, Deopani, the boy sang a Hindi song praising God. The EM applauded him and said there is talent in him. He is 16 years old and studying in Class 6 at Blind HS School, Guwahati. The programme was conducted by district programme officer, IE component, SSA, Mayadi Hasnu and attended by joint secretary, KAAC and district mission coordinator, SSA, Nirupama Timungpi; assistant district mission coordinator, Nayan Pathak; block mission coordinator (BMC), Lumbajong Block, Robinson Kathar; BMC, Bokajan Block Rita Engtipi and BMC, Langsompri Block, Libron Ronghangpi.

Awareness programme

BOKAJAN: The Gramin Krishi Sewa, Assam Agriculture University- Zonal Research Station, Diphu, Karbi Anglong held an awareness programme with the title 'Climate Change- Adaptation and Mitigation in Agriculture' on the premises of Rongplimlam Club in Rongplimlam, Karbi Anglong. The programme was sponsored by the meteorological department of the govt of India. Resource person Dr KD Singha, chief scientist, Zonal Research Station, Diphu, Karbi Anglong said that the impact of climate change is being seen in Karbi Anglong district. "Temperature has been rising and rainfall has also reduced. In order to mitigate climate change, the govt is protecting the forest cover and planting saplings," he said.

Unwavering commitment, hard work of youth behind India's success as a global Startup Hub: Sarbananda

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, March 25: The Union minister of ports, shipping & waterways and Ayush, Sarbananda Sonowal attended the Uddipana award ceremony as the chief guest held at the Sonowal Kachari Youth Festival & Cultural Festival on Saturday. The Union minister spoke about celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Sonowal Kachari and share it with the wider audience but, at the same time, appreciated the effort by the event for providing a platform for the youth to upscale their talent & help them embark on the entrepreneurial journey in the quest to make India an 'Atmanirbhar' country by 2047.

Speaking on the occasion, the



Union minister, Sarbananda Sonowal said, "We all acknowledge the unwavering commitment and handwork of youth of India is behind India's success as a global start

up hub. As India embarks on its auspicious journey of Amrit Kaal, it's a moment to make new commitments. The young generation of Assam and (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

220 youths take part in week-long youth exchange programme in Guwahati

Guv attends closing ceremony of 14th tribal youth exchange prog

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 25: "Youth exchange programmes go a long way in sharing, fostering and preserving the rich traditions and cultural heritage of the country. This, on one hand strengthens the mutual relations existing among the youth and on the other boosts their self-esteem," said Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria at the closing ceremony of the 14th Tribal Youth Exchange Programme at Don Bosco Institute, in Guwahati's Kharghuli on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that the students exchange event stands as a testament to the noble objective of acquainting attendees with the multifaceted cultural nuances, timeless rituals, folk dances and rich traditions of the country, while providing insights into the dynamic economic landscape of the diverse states of India. This praiseworthy initiative offers a mesmerizing kaleidoscope of India dappled with resplendent colors, leaving the students

awestruck with its sheer grandeur. The Governor also said, "In the greater scheme of nation building, such initiatives hold immense significance as they fuel unity and camaraderie amongst the upcoming generations, paving the way for a brighter future. The tribal people, the custodians of the ethnic culture, always play an indispensable role in safeguarding our heritage and their invaluable contributions have not gone unnoticed."

The Governor further said that India's beauty is in the vibrant and diverse customs and cultures that adorn it. It stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of the people and the richness of the country's cultural heritage. Kataria also expressed hope that the knowledge and friendships forged at this event will lead to a more unified society, thus bringing to fruition the dream of every citizen that is making India Vishwa Guru.

It may be mentioned that the Ministry of Home Affairs, government of India has endorsed Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, govt of India to organise the programme in nine states in India. Assam is one among the states where 220 numbers (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Focus on logistics policy at PM GatiShakti workshop for NE states

GUWAHATI, March 25 (PTI):

The two-day regional workshop on PM GatiShakti National Master Plan - organised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry - concluded here on Saturday, with more than 140 officials and industry players taking part in the session.

The theme for the second day was National Logistics Policy.

States, including Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura, gave presentations on their respective logistics policy, she said.

DPIIT special secretary (Logistics) Sumita Dawra said that these

workshops are facilitating wider adoption of the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan and National Logistics Policy across states and Union territories (UTs), in the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Such initiatives bring more vigour and build synergy among different stakeholders resulting in mutual learning among states or UTs and central ministries or departments, she said.

On the first day, the workshop had focused on ways to strengthen the north-east corridor with adequate multimodal connectivity to economic centres and gateway ports. (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Pijush lays foundation stones for several projects at Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, March 25: The state water resource as well as information and public relations minister Pijush Hazarika visited Nagaon district and also laid foundation stones for a slew of projects under water resource department in Nagaon sadar assembly constituency here on Saturday.

At the very beginning, the minister ceremonially inaugurated a mining project near Nowgong Girls' College in order to clean as well as to mine the river bed of Kolong across the small town. The cost for the project has been estimated at ₹ 2.8 crore, which preliminarily will cover over 3 kilometres from Nowgong Girls' College to Khagarijan. Besides, the minister also laid foundation stone of a new river embankment at Kolong river from Milanpur Baidyaput to Shiyalmari.

While addressing the occasion



here, the minister said the project for mining the river bed of Kolong is just a test and if the project gets success, the government will look to cover over 25 kilometres more in the second phase.

Meanwhile the minister also laid the foundation stone of some other

new river embankments at Kapili river from Tulsimukh to Borkula areas. During his visit, the minister was accompanied by local MLA Rupak Sarma, DC Narendra Kr Shah and other senior officials from the district as well as the state water resource (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Assam govt inks MoU with Flybig to start intra-state flight services

Efforts on to connect Jorhat and Tezpur under same scheme, says CM



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 25: Giving a new momentum to intra-state air connectivity, the government of

Assam on Saturday inked an MoU with Big Charter Private Limited (Flybig) in presence of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at a

function held at Janata Bhawan here. MD Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) Kumar Padma Pani Bora on behalf of the state government and director Sanjay Natavaral Mandavia for Flybig signed the agreement to operate flights between Guwahati-Dibrugarh-Silchar-Guwahati routes on a daily basis.

It may be noted that under the MoU, the flight operations will be started in line with the UDAN scheme of the government of India, as the state government will be operating the flights under viability gap funding.

Speaking on the occasion, chief minister Sarma said that the MoU with Flybig, under which the number of daily flight services will be

enhanced, will add a new height to intra-state air connectivity. The services will give assured connectivity and assured price as the agreement has decided to keep a tab on the pricing as the maximum price has been fixed at ₹ 4,000. The new services will add new momentum to Mohanbari airport at Dibrugarh and Kumbhirgram Airport at Silchar.

The chief minister also said that the state government is studying the feasibility of replicating the same services in Jorhat, Tezpur, etc. CM Sarma also said that it was one of the budget proposals of the state government, as he felt happy to have fulfilled the proposal. He thanked Flybig and ATDC for coming forward to facilitate air services (CONTD ON PAGE-2)

Cong protests in Guwahati over action against Rahul

GUWAHATI, March 25 (PTI): Congress members demonstrated in Guwahati on Saturday, protesting the disqualification of their leader Rahul Gandhi as an MP following his conviction in a defamation case by a Gujarat court. Congress leaders, including legislators, began their 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' march from the MLA Housing Complex but were stopped by the police near the state secretariat.

Posters of Rahul Gandhi and Congress party flags were displayed by the protesters, who were also seen chanting anti-Modi slogans.

As the protestors tried to break through the police barricades, they were shoved into a bus and taken to the

Chachal protest ground, about 5 km from where they began the march.

Among those detained were leader of the opposition Debabrata Saikia, deputy leader Rakibul Hussain and functionaries of the Mahila Morcha, NSUI and other mass organisations of the party.

"Rahul Gandhi was disqualified to prevent him from exposing the illegalities of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gautam Adani in Parliament," Saikia alleged.

The protesters claimed that the BJP destroyed democracy. "We demand that the dignity of Parliament must be restored. Rahul must be allowed to speak in the House," he said.

FM reviews PSBs performance amid stress in US fin systems

NEW DELHI, March 25 (PTI): Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday reviewed the performance of public sector banks (PSBs) on various financial health parameters and their resilience in the wake of the current global financial scenario emanating from the failure of some international banks in the US and Europe.

She urged the banks to remain vigilant about the interest rate risks and regularly undertake stress tests. During the two hours meeting with MDs and CEOs of PSBs, an open discussion was held on the global scenario amid the failure of the Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and Signature Bank (SB), along with the issues leading to the crisis in Credit Suisse.

The meeting was also attended by Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad, Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi and other senior officials, an official statement said.

She also discussed the developing and immediate external global financial stress from both short and long-term perspectives.

During the PSB review meeting, she emphasised that the banks



should undertake due diligence and adhere to the regulatory framework by focusing on risk management and diversification of deposits and assets base.

The finance minister underlined that PSBs must look at business models closely to identify stress points, including concentration risks and adverse exposures, the statement said, adding that she also exhorted PSBs to use this opportunity to frame detailed crisis management and communication strategies.

The chiefs of PSBs apprised Sitharaman that they follow the

best corporate governance practices, adhere to regulatory norms, ensure prudent liquidity management and continue to focus on having robust asset-liability and risk management.

Further, she was also informed by the PSBs that they are vigilant of developments in the global banking sector and are taking all possible steps to safeguard themselves from any potential financial shock.

All the major financial parameters indicate stable and resilient PSBs with robust financial health, it added.

The minister also stressed that PSBs must leverage the full potential of branches opened in International Financial Services Centres in GIFT City Gujarat to identify international opportunities, including prospects related to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).

She asked banks to take focused measures to attract deposits, given the steps taken by the government to reduce the tax arbitrage in some debt instruments and pivot their strengthened financial position to support the credit needs of the growing economy.

The minister asked banks to focus on credit outreach in states where the credit offtake is lower than the national average, particularly in the northeast and eastern parts of the country, and enhance business presence in new and emerging areas like One District One Product (ODOP), e-NAM and drones.

She said PSBs should promote the Mahila Samman Bachat Patra, announced in the Budget, through special drives and campaigns and also focus on increasing brick-and-mortar banking presence in border and coastal areas.

Stocks waver over worries about Deutsche Bank, other banks



NEW YORK, March 25 (AP): Stocks are wavering on Wall Street Friday amid worries about banks on both sides of the Atlantic.

The S&P 500 was 0.3% higher in afternoon trading after slipping for most of the morning, on pace for its second straight weekly gain.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 73 points, or 0.2%, at 32,179, as of 2:53 p.m. Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.1%.

Markets have been turbulent on worries that banks are weakening under the pressure of much higher interest rates.

That's led to rising concerns about a possible recession and heavy uncertainty about what the Federal Reserve and other central banks will do with interest rates going forward.

On Friday, much of the focus was on Deutsche Bank, whose stock tumbled 8.5% in Germany.

Earlier this month, shares of and faith in Swiss bank Credit Suisse fell so much that regulators brokered a takeover of it by rival UBS.

Credit Suisse faced a relatively unique set of longstanding troubles. But the second-and-third-largest U.S. bank failures in history earlier this month have cast a harsher spotlight across the entire banking industry.

Other big European banks also fell Friday, including a 5.5% drop for Germany's Commerzbank, a 5.3% fall for France's BNP Paribas and a 3.5% loss for UBS.

Bank stocks were mixed on Wall Street, including a 1.4% drop for JPMorgan Chase and a 0.9% gain for Bank of

America.

In the U.S., the hunt by investors has primarily been for banks that could face a debilitating exodus of customers, similar to what helped cause the failures of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank.

Investors have zeroed in on smaller and mid-sized banks, the ones below in size of the "too-big-to-fail" banks and seen as greater risks.

First Republic Bank was mostly unchanged.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said that in cases where the government sees a risk to the overall system, it will guarantee deposits for bank customers, even those with more than the \$250,000 insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. That's what regulators did for both Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank.

But Yellen this week also stopped short of a blanket guarantee for all depositors at all banks.

Cash-short banks were still lining up this week to borrow money from the Fed. The Fed said Thursday that emergency lending to banks fell slightly in the past week – to \$164 billion – but remained high.

A big worry is that all the pressure on banks will cause a pullback in lending to small and mid-sized businesses across the country. That in turn could lead to less hiring, a weaker economy and a higher potential for a recession that many economists already saw as likely.

While the job market has remained remarkably solid, other parts of the economy have already begun to weaken under the weight of higher

rates. On Friday, reports on the economy came in mixed. One showed orders for long-lasting manufactured goods were slower last month than economists expected.

A second report, though, suggested the fastest uptick in business activity for almost a year. The preliminary report from S&P Global topped economists' expectations.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said worries about a pullback in lending helped push the Fed to raise rates by only a quarter of a percentage point this week, instead of a more aggressive half point, in its campaign to battle inflation.

Higher rates can undercut inflation by slowing the entire economy, but they raise the risk of a recession.

They also hurt prices for stocks and other investments. For Silicon Valley Bank and other banks, that meant hits to the super-safe Treasury bonds they owned.

The Fed has raised its key overnight interest rate to a range of 4.75% to 5%, up from virtually zero at the start of last year.

It's hinted it may raise rates one more time before holding them there through the end of the year.

Traders are more sceptical, though. The rising possibility of a recession has them betting heavily that the Fed will have to cut interest rates as soon as this summer to release some of the pressure on banks and the economy.

Such speculation has added to an increased drive by investors to pile into anything seen as safe, which together have caused huge, sometimes violent swings in the bond market.

On Friday, yields fell further. The 10-year yield, which helps set rates for mortgages and other loans, fell to 3.38% from 3.42% late Thursday. It was above 4% earlier this month.

The drop has been even more dramatic for the two-year Treasury yield, which more closely tracks expectations for the Fed.

It sank to 3.78% from 3.83% late Thursday and from more than 5% earlier this month.

BNI Anchor's mega business exhibition Anchorage starts in Guwahati



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 25: Anchorage, the Mega Business Exhibition of BNI Anchor was inaugurated on Saturday at Aashii Apsara, Guwahati by Cabinet Minister Ashok Singhal in presence of CMD of Prag News Sanjive Narain; Industrialist Kailash Chandra Lohia; Kulwant Singh Cheema along with Executive Director, BNI Guwahati & Greater Assam Siddharth Garodia. Notably, the 2 Days Mega Business Exhibition is the city's biggest Business Event, with various formats being curated to exchange for lots of business.

Vice President Ankit Jajodia said, "BNI Anchor chapter is always known for its innovation & creativity and by carrying forward the legacy, Anchorage promises to be a bigger & better version till date." Programme Coordinator Sukanta Biswas, Ankeet Jain, Pawan Khatuwala added, "This mega event shall provide a lot of potential for the exhibitors and the visitors to collaborate, connect & generate new business for each other. We are having exhibitors from various categories like – Mutual Fund, Real Estate, Security System, Software, Computers etc. showcasing their numerous products & services. We also have provision for visitors to do individual 1-2-1 sessions with the exhibitors.

HDFC Life launches Life Smart Pension Plus plan



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 25: HDFC Life launched HDFC Life Smart Pension Plus – a plan that enables customers to achieve financial independence after retirement, in the form of a regular and guaranteed stream of income, similar to a 'salary'. The plan has been designed to cater to individuals who want to save and create a financial safety net for themselves while they earn to be able to continue with their current lifestyle after retirement in their golden years. The product offers flexibility to cover oneself as well as one's spouse, decide the premium payment term, frequency of pay-out and a choice to take income immediately or after a few years.

Speaking on the launch, Aneesh Khanna, Head – Products & Segments, HDFC Life said, "The retirement savings gap in India is projected to reach USD 85 trillion by 2050. With rising inflation, increasing healthcare costs and higher life expectancy, it is imperative for individuals to plan for regular income post their earning years.

G20 2nd FWG emphasises on need to manage global inflation and remain vigilant to emerging risks

CHENNAI, March 25 (PTI): The second G20 Framework Working Group which met here over the last two days emphasised on the need to step up efforts to manage global inflation and remain vigilant towards emerging financial risks.

The Framework Working Group meeting which began on Friday was chaired by Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran along with the co-chair United Kingdom Chief Economic Advisor to the Treasury, Clare Lombardelli.

Around 87 delegates from G20 member countries, invitees, representatives from international organisations attended the meeting.

During the two day meet, members discussed and agreed on the way forward for important deliverables for the year including those on macro-economic consequences of food and energy insecurity and climate change, an official release said.



"The discussion on the global economic outlook and risks emphasised on the need to continue efforts to manage global inflation and remain vigilant to emerging financial risks," it said.

The visiting members deliberated on how food and energy prices remain elevated in many economies affecting vulnerable countries.

Ensuring availability and accessibility of critical minerals to facilitate smoother transition as well as generating domestic savings to meet investment needs to boost economic growth was also discussed during the event.

A panel discussion on the 'macro-economic impact of climate change and transition pathways' was organised in collaboration with the United Arab Emirates. The session aimed to develop a collective understanding of the challenges facing countries during the climate transition and initiate a discussion on the macro-economics around climate policy action and transition pathways, the release said.

A financial literacy programme for farmer-producer organisations, farmers and self-help groups was also organised by the Reserve Bank of India, the release said.

Contd. from Page 1...

Modi govt decides to reduce

is notified as a disturbed area under the AFSPA to facilitate the operations of the armed forces. In Assam, the disturbed area notification has been in force since 1990. Officials said as a result of the remarkable improvement in the security situation during the Modi government's rule, the disturbed area tag, imposed under the AFSPA, was removed from the entire state of Assam, except nine districts and one sub-division of one district from April 1, 2022.

Now, it has been limited to only eight districts in Assam. In Manipur, except the Imphal municipality area, the entire state was declared a "disturbed area" in 2004 and it has been in force since then. On April 1, 2022, 15 police station areas of six districts were freed from the ambit of the AFSPA. Now, with the removal of the AFSPA from areas falling under four other police station areas with effect from April 1, 2023, the disturbed area tag was removed from a total of 19 police station areas in seven districts of the state, the officials said.

The AFSPA has been in force in Nagaland since 1995. It was removed from 15 police station areas of seven districts from April 1, 2022. Following a recommendation of a government-appointed committee, the AFSPA was removed from three other police station areas with effect from April 1, 2023, the officials said. With this, the disturbed area tag has been removed from a total of 18 police station areas in eight districts of Nagaland.

Dr Sarma hails move

responsiveness," Sarma tweeted. Thanking Shah, Sarma said "In his steadfastness he has enthused decision making with a solution centric approach." "A vibrant economy, sound security policy and deepened societal harmony has resulted in two back to back mandates from the people of our region," he posted on the micro blogging site. Above all, the Prime Minister has "truly won the hearts of our people and diminished both the physical and mental distance which had once existed between the North East and the rest of Bharat", he said. "We once again express our most sincere thanks for this historic decision," Sarma added.

In Manipur, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act has been withdrawn from four more police stations on the same date, which meant 19 police stations in seven districts of the state have been removed from the disturbed area notification so far, officials there said. The Act was in force in the entire state, except for Imphal Municipality area, since 2004. But from April last year it was withdrawn from 15 police station areas of six districts. In Nagaland, the Disturbed Areas Notification was applicable in the entire state since 1995. On April 1, 2022, it was withdrawn from 15 police stations of seven districts. It will be further withdrawn from three other police stations of another district with effect from April 1, 2023. Civil society groups and rights activists have been demanding the withdrawal of the alleged 'draconian' law from areas in NE states where it was imposed.

Rahul could have

(destiny) has eventually caught up with him." However, he indicated that judicial recourse is open, and Gandhi "can challenge the verdict in the High court or Supreme Court".

Pijush lays foundation

department. Referring to the recent legal developments against opposition Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the minister simply asserted that the law took its turn as per its course. "If it is with me, the same will happen as nobody is above the law," the minister accorded further.

Efforts on to connect

in non-UDAN routes. Additional chief secretary of tourism Manindar Singh gave the welcome address in the programme which was attended among others by tourism minister Jayanta Mallabarua, vice chairman ATDC Dilip Das, principal secretary to the chief minister Samir Kumar Sinha and a host of other dignitaries.

220 youths take part in

of tribal youths from different states took part in the week long youth exchange programme. The function was attended by the additional chief secretary, government of Assam Manindar Singh, regional director of NSS Dipak Kumar, state director Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan Sayed Ali, along with a host of other dignitaries.

Nagaland ULB poll date irks

identity "as given by God". The NSCN-IM then asked, "What does it take to give historical importance to May 16?" After the declaration of Naga independence on August 14, 1947, Naga Plebiscite was held on May 16, 1951, to reaffirm the sovereign will and aspiration of the Nagas as declared on August 14, 1947 to live as a free and a sovereign nation as ever, said the NSCN-IM. This is an irrevocable solemn vow that defines the Naga people's political identity as a nation, the NSCN-IM asserted.

Thus, the notification by state election commission, Nagaland, to conduct ULB election on May 16, 2023, is an affront to the Naga national sentiment, said the NSCN-IM. "Such historic and auspicious day that made the Naga history so unique and revered should not be buried to fulfil local electoral process," the NSCN-IM added.

Unwavering commitment, hard

India should serve as a robust connection between a splendid history and a magnificent future. The potential to succeed lies within you; send for that potential. You must have faith that you can accomplish anything. This self-assurance and ability to turn the impossible into possible remain significant for the youth of the nation, and it's heartening to see that the youth of India comprehends this well. With self-confidence, the youth is progressing forward. I want to appreciate the effort made via this platform to enable youths to upgrade their skill set in order to move ahead in their journey to become Atmanirbhar."

Speaking on the role of youth in nation building, Sonowal further added, "Today's young generation is spearheading a fresh wave of innovation, incubation, and start-ups in India. Through their diligent effort, India has emerged as one of the top three countries in the global start-up ecosystem. Thanks to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, India has witnessed a significant surge in the number of patents filed annually, reaching a remarkable figure of 15,000 from a mere 4,000 in 2014. Setting up 26,000 new startups is an achievement coveted by many nations worldwide, and India has successfully accomplished this feat. The credit goes to the strength and aspirations of the youth of India, who have not only linked their dreams with the needs of the nation but have also aligned them with its hopes and aspirations. The youth of India today possesses a strong sense of ownership towards nation-building, and are driven by the belief that it is their responsibility to lead the way."

The Union minister also handed over Uddipana Award to Mousum Sonowal of Dibrugarh, Panchami Sonowal of Dhemaji, Sania Dekari of Tinsukia, Tanmay Sonowal of Tinsukia, Ditimani Sonowal of Dhemaji for making significant achievement in their respective fields. A book by the title 'Sonowal Sambhar' was also inaugurated by Sarbananda Sonowal. The book is a memorial which was published on the occasion of Sonowal Kachari Youth & Cultural festival. The four day festival is organised by Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council and is being held at Halali Samannay Kshetra, Duliadainjan in Dibrugarh.

The theme of the festival is "Welfare of the Youth and Cultural Heritage" with an aim to highlight welfare activities planned for the protection, education and skill development for youth to become economically independent and become active agents of nation building. With a rich display of cultural heritage of the Sonowal Kachari community, the festival also aims to weave a multi-coloured among different communities of Assam.

Focus on logistics policy

Dawra, during the day, noted that the Assam Logistics and Warehousing Policy, 2022, aims at remodelling the state into a regional logistics hub via developing state-of-the-art infrastructure by incentivizing private investments, encouraging sustainability and climate resilience in the region, besides wider inclusive participation in economic activities, she said. This policy will enable employment opportunities for approximately 15,000 people in the logistics sector, Dawra added.

Manipur Integrated Logistics Policy, 2022, showcased its plan to enhance Ease of Doing Business by trade facilitation through active stakeholder involvement, while the Mizoram presentation laid down a road map, incorporating local connectivity of various economic zones, formation of regulatory framework, development of integrated logistics information system among other matters.

The Tripura policy stressed on creation of aggregation hubs as a centre for storage of perishable and non-perishable commodities, development of truck terminals and driver resting facilities, focusing on the thrust sectors like tea, rubber, agro and allied products, healthcare and education, skill development.

'The industry needs to adopt a multi-faceted approach to address the climate change issue by way of sustainable farming practices'

Climate change threatening tea sector globally: ITA

KOLKATA, March 25 (PTI): Leading planters body Indian Tea Association (ITA) said climate change is threatening the industry globally which is resulting in lower yields and rise in production costs.

A spokesman of ITA said climate change is also threatening the long-term viability of tea industry, which is also causing increasing pest infestations making pesticide residue management surfacing as a major challenge.

To mitigate this, ITA said that the industry needs to adopt a multi-faceted approach to address the climate change issue by way of sustainable farming practices and reduction in carbon footprint.

In this context, the association maintained



the industry involving all the stakeholders to invest in research to come out with miti-

gating solutions. There has also been a decline in rainfall and increase in temperature in the tea cultivating regions for the last several years, ITA said.

According to the association, future projections indicate a substantial reduction in suitability in tea cultivation in areas where the crop is grown.

The other major area where work is needed to be done by the industry is that optimisation in the use of chemical fertilisers and greater use of renewable energy.

In the latest data compiled by Tea Board, production in January 2023 in the country was 13.43 million kilogramme as against 16.22 million kilogramme in the same month of last calendar year.

Speeding truck lands on a paddy field

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, March 25: A container truck overturned at Lakhijan under Bokajan police station in Karbi Anglong. The truck, AS 01 NC 4009, fell into a paddy field by the roadside last evening. The driver and handyman were nowhere and passersby informed Bokajan police who came to the spot and removed the truck from the spot to the police station.

The police suspected that the truck may have met with the accident due to speeding and also the stretch of road is accident prone.

Man luckily survives elephant attack at Boko

HT Correspondent

HAHIM, March 25: Due to the increase of deforestation, man and wild elephant conflicts are increasing all over Assam, as well as in the Boko area, mostly along the Assam-Meghalaya border areas.

Due to scarcity of food, wild elephants have entered the populated areas, mostly the nearby places of reserve forest areas as well. As a result, man and elephants are both engaged in conflicts most of the time and then both sides suffer casualties. Surprisingly, a man Political Rabha (25 years old) survived a wild elephant attack at Mousuwa village (along the Assam-Meghalaya border) under Hahim beat office of Singra Forest Range Office in West Kamrup Divisional Forest Office.

According to Rabha's neighbour, Ajay Rabha on Saturday morning a herd of wild elephants including babies crossed their village Mousuwa and later in the afternoon one male, one female and a baby elephant also tried to cross their village. Meanwhile, they entered a banana garden and started feeding and destroying. "So, along with other villagers, Political Rabha went to chase the elephants. But, the female elephant chased him back and Rabha was almost trampled by the elephant. But surprisingly, Political Rabha survived the attack", added Ajay Rabha. He also added, "We are now used to elephant raids. Most of the time they have entered this area and damaged gardens, houses and other things, many people also died already." Asking about Political Rabha's physical condition, Ajay Rabha said, "He was injured partially, but without any medical check-ups we cannot say about his health condition. He is a very poor guy, so he didn't even visit the hospital despite our request. Now he is taking rest in his house only."

Labour department automatic registration and renewal system launched

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, March 25: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday inaugurated the newly built labour commissioner office known as Shram Bhawan at a programme held at Gopinath Nagar. Synchronizing with the programme, Sarma also launched the automatic registration and renewal system for the labour department. Speaking on the occasion, Sarma said that with the inauguration of the Shram Bhawan, the office of the labour commissioner will get a new momentum to dispose of several claims of the people of the state. He also said that in view of the immense importance of the e-office system, the state government has given new impetus to digitisation and as a result the Assam Secretariat, different directorates and DC offices are getting paperless with the emergence of digital office system. He said that with the introduction of the e-office in the Labour Commissionerate, steps will be taken to introduce the system in district and sub-division offices across the state. Stating that around 99 per cent of the works of Assam Secretariat have become paperless, the chief minister said that other than inquiry matters, all the works are being undertaken digitally.

Sarma also said that for safeguarding the interests of the labourers, there are several acts in force. He said that the Labour Commissionerate should take steps for safeguarding the interests of the labourers. Sarma also informed that under ease of doing business, steps have been taken to promote the interests of the labour fraternity along with promoting the industrial landscape of the state. He said that with the amendment of the labour acts in the state assembly,

IRRI to work with AAU for paddy research

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, March 25: A five-member delegation of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines, led by its director of Human Resources and Organisations Development, Ola Fajobi, who is also the deputy director-general (Institutional Services and Systems), visited Assam Agricultural University (AAU) at Borbhetta here on Saturday.

Fajobi, in his address stated that the IRRI looks forward to work with the AAU in the field of paddy cultivation, education and research.

An AAU official informed that the other members of the IRRI team were: Angelica Valerie De Jesus, HR business partner - Learning and Development, Dr Sudhanshu Singh, director, IRRI, South Asia Research Centre, Varanasi, Priyanka Mathur, HR manager - Talent Management and Dr Virendar Kumar, resident coordinator, IRRI-APART Assam.

The official stated that the delegation held discussions with the university authorities led by the vice-chancellor Dr Bidyut Chandan Deka on various issues relating to rice cultivation in the state.

Dr Deka briefed the team about different high-yielding varieties of rice developed by the AAU to suit the climatic conditions of the re-



Vegetable vendors cry for space at Haflong market, prices soar

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, March 25: Vegetable sellers coming from various districts to sell their products have faced problems at Haflong market due to space constraints on Saturday. The problem rose as the vegetable vendors were not allowed to sell their commodities on the footpath and road side areas where they usually sell the commodities on every market day on Saturday.

But unfortunately on Saturday the authority concerned restricted the vegetable vendors and others coming from other districts to sell their products in the said place and were asked to sell the vegetables in nearby auto stands due to some technical problems.

Other hand the vegetable vendors alleged that in the auto stand auto drivers also resisted them to set up their shops.

The vendors coming from Lumding, Jamunamukh, Lanka with truck loaded vegetables said that due to the problem each vendor has to incur loss to the tune of 30k to 40k, as the vegetables were



loaded on Friday and will be damaged. The vendors also said that they pay ₹ 200/- on every market day to the authority despite the fact that they faced such a problem and regretted the matter which should have been informed earlier to avoid such a loss affecting their livelihood.

Other hand, desperate vegetable vendors have gathered in front of Dima Hasao deputy commis-

sioner's office to raise the issue, but were directed to Haflong, Town Committee to resolve the issues.

Other hand taking advantage of the situation local citizens said that the regular vendors have increased the rates of vegetables like Tomato per kg @60 and even @ 80 which is usually sold @ 20-30 by the vendors coming from outside the district to mention few apart from

other vegetables.

Meanwhile, it is informed by the authority that due to technical issues involving shifting of vendors/sellers from outside the district and to adjust space for local sellers from villages of Dima Hasao, these vendors from other districts have agreed to sell their products tomorrow on Sunday at Lal field and the arrangement is made only for tomorrow.

CRPF dedicates toilet block to people at Diphu

HT Bureau

DIPHU, March 25: A toilet block with septic tank was constructed by 20 Bn. CRPF at Rongchetim Development Committee, near St. Mary's English High School under Ward No. 13 of Diphu town in Karbi Anglong.

The toilet block was constructed under the Civic Action Programme for 2022-23, which was inaugurated by MLA Bidyas-ing Englang here. The inaugural

programme was presided over by commandant (A.OD) (2-I/C) Tilak Raj in presence of president, Rongchetim Development Committee, Chandra Tisso and secretary, Jenseng Englang including village headman and officers, jawans of 20 Bn. battalion CRPF and villages.

The toilet block was handed over to Rongchetim Development Committee for public use.

Under the aegis of IG (OPS)

the 20 Bn. CRPF has carried out Civic Action Programme for the welfare and essential requirement of the needy people of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong by constructing waiting sheds, resting sheds, toilet blocks, installation of bore well, construction of small bridges and installation of solar street lights, conducting free medical camp and providing free medicines, the CRPF statement said.

Assam Rifles celebrates 188th Raising Day



HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, March 25: Battalion of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (East) celebrated the 188th Assam Rifles Raising Day with locals including students / youths to mark the inception of the oldest paramilitary force of India at Haflong, Dima Hasao on March 24.

The Assam Rifles, since its inception from the year 1835 has repeatedly demonstrated its credibility by executing challenging operations with a high degree of proficiency, alacrity and discipline. The untiring efforts of Assam Rifles in combating insurgency as also in guarding the India-Myanmar border has contributed towards peace and tranquility in the north - eastern region. The Haflong Battalion organised pipe band and weapon display at battalion headquarters followed by lectures on 'Know Your Assam Rifles' at multiple locations / villages of the Dima Hasao district. The pipe band & weapon display was organised under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' programme of Centre in which infantry weapons and a pipe band were displayed for the locals.

APEDA sponsored training programme held

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, March 25: Cluster Based Business Organisation, an implementing unit of Assam Agriculture University, Jorhat in association with Horticulture Research Station, Kahikuchi organised a three day long capacity building training programme among Farmers Production Organisations (FPO) at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Nagaon here on Thursday.

The programme was sponsored under the formation and promotion of 10,000 Farmers Production Organisations Scheme across the country by Agricultural and Processed food products Export Development Authority (APEDA), ministry of commerce and industry.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr Kalyan Kumar Sarma, the principal scientist of Zonal Research Station, Shillongani while Dr Pramod Chandra Deka, chief executive officer of the implementing unit, Assam Agriculture University, Jorhat attended the programme as special guest.

Dr Niranjan Deka principal scientist and head, KVK Nagaon, Ranjan P Deka, district agriculture officer, Nagaon, Rajendra Perna DDM, NABARD, Nagaon and Biswajit Chakraborty, deputy registrar, cooperative department, Sanju Adhikary, business development director of APEDA were present in the programme as the resource persons.

GOVT. OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL DIPHU GOVERNMENT COLLEGE DIPHU: KARBI ANGLONG

Website: diphugovernmentcollege.com E-mail: diphugovtc@gmail.com

No.DGC/VI-54/2022-23/1602 Dated, Diphu the 25th March, 2023.

NOTICE

This is for information to all concerned that TDC (Non CBCS) Even Semester Examinations (Special and Backlog papers) for those students who have already filled up their examination forms within the stipulated time, will commence from 31st March, 2023 to 14th April, 2023.

Sd/-

Principal

Diphu Government College, Diphu

Memo.No. DGC/VI-54/2022-23/1602

Dated, Diphu the 25th March, 2023.



Rahul's disqualification from Parliament attracts widespread condemnation

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, March 25: Rahul Gandhi's disqualification as member of the parliament following the verdict of the Surat Court has stirred a wide spread condemnation in Sivasagar district as well.

Debabrat Saikia said that the BJP government wants to restrain Rahul Gandhi from revealing further details of illegal crony capitalistic policy of the government in the parliament and so has disqualified him.

Bharati Saikia, general secretary, Assam Mahila Congress, on Saturday condemned the arrest and said that Himanta Biswa Sharma, while he was in the Congress party blasted the PM Narendra Modi in very offensive terms. But as Sarma joined the BJP in the wake of the alleged Sarada and other scams, he got respite from all such defamation charges.

Dhairiya Konwar, leader of the Rajior Dal in Thowra LAC, said that there is no rule of law in the country now under the autocratic dispensation of the Modi Raj. Ran-

jit Sarmah, senior leader of the Aam Admi Party in Amguri severely criticised the BJP and said that the Assam chief minister, while addressing the election rally in Uttarakhand, spoke about the alleged DNA test regarding Rahul Gandhi's father which easily eluded the reprimand from the law enforcing authority.

Condemning the act, CPI's state secretary Kanak Gogoi demanded immediate reinstating of the Congress leader.

The BJP leaders from the district could not be contacted over phone while filing this report,

Students awarded

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, March 25: Gayatri Das and Priyanuj Nath two ex-students of Holy Child English School, Jamunirhat were awarded with Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Bigyan Sanman by National Human Rights and Crime Control Bureau, Assam for securing 100% marks in Mathematics in class 10th level examination with a total of 97% under CBSE.

ELECTRICAL WORK

E-Tender Notice No. TSK/Elect/121; dated: 23-03-2023. Works tender through E-Tendering System are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN.1. Brief Description of Item:** At Jorhat Town - Electrical works for Replacement of overaged Qtr with Type-II Qtr (8 Units) (Qtr No- T/6, T/7, T/8AB, T/9, T/14AB, TK/11). (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-836). Tender Value: ₹16,93,422/-; Earnest Money: ₹33,900/-; **SN.2. Brief Description of Item:** At Simlaguri Jn.- Renovation of Sub-ordinate Rest House. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-837). Tender Value: ₹8,02,756/-; Earnest Money: ₹16,100/-; **SN.3. Brief Description of Item:** Tinsukia Division- Electrical work for Provision of water recycling plant at Ledo Station along with deep tubewell and pump house augmentation from Tinsukia to LLO. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-838). Tender Value: ₹17,95,081/-; Earnest Money: ₹35,900/-; E-tenders will be closed at 13.00 hrs. on 13-04-2023 and Opened at 15.00 hrs. on 13-04-2023. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 13.00 hrs on 13-04-2023 in website www.reps.gov.in **DRM (Elect)/Tinsukia** **NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY** "Serving Customers with a smile"

RE-DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION OF STATIONS

E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/13 of 2023 (Item No. 1 & 2); dtd. 23-03-2023. E-tenders (Two Packet System) are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN.1. Brief Description of Item:** Re-development and renovation of Diphu (DPU) station. Improvement of facade, provision of world class toilets, waiting hall/room, improvement of Platform Surface, landscaping, development of Parking area, improvement to Passenger circulating area with signage & lighting and other ancillary works etc. in connection with Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (Phase-I). **Tender Value:** ₹15,07,12,703.80; **Bid Security:** ₹9,03,600.00; **SN.2. Brief Description of Item:** Re-development and renovation of Diphu (DPU) station. Improvement of facade, provision of world class toilet, waiting hall/room, improvement of platform surface, landscaping, development of parking area, improvement to passenger circulating area with signage and lighting and other ancillary works etc. in connection with Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (Phase-I). **Tender Value:** ₹8,53,90,467.67; **Bid Security:** ₹5,77,000.00; E-tenders will be closed 15.00 hrs. on 25-04-2023 and opened 15.00 hrs. on 26-04-2023. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. of 25-04-2023 in website www.ireps.gov.in **DRM/Works, Lumding** **NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY** "Serving Customers with a smile"

Editor's pick

Fight for a secular India is the best tribute to Bhagat Singh

By: D. Raja

“The proletariat will win. Capitalism will be defeated. Death to Imperialism!” Read Shaheed Bhagat Singh, wearing a red scarf, from a telegram message that was to be sent to the Third International on the occasion of Lenin's death anniversary in 1930. This gesture made by Bhagat Singh not only underlined the international unity of the communist movement but also highlighted the core of his ideology, around which he wanted to build a free India and a prosperous world.

In his Last Petition to the Governor of Punjab, Bhagat Singh further declared that a “state of war does exist and shall exist so long as the Indian toiling masses and the natural resources are being exploited by a handful of parasites” and that these exploiters “may be purely British Capitalist or mixed British and Indian or even purely Indian”, they must be fought against and defeated. In the context of Bhagat Singh's understanding of society, we must take a look at the reality of our times and draw some lessons from his supreme sacrifice. Inequality and concentration of wealth with a select few have reached unprecedented proportions in recent times and Bhagat Singh, in his own times called them out. Owners of capital are being celebrated as wealth-creators today while the toiling, hardworking masses struggle for two square meals and a roof above their heads. At the same time, these capitalists themselves are creating insecurity in the country at all fronts by engaging in illegal, reckless and immoral profiteering by damaging nature, resources and livelihoods.

The Adani Group's unethical business practices are out in the open now and the government, by showering all benefits and projects to this group has contributed in jeopardizing critical infrastructure, including national defence. Government's stout support and backing to the Adani Group makes it clear that the decline in the living standard of our population and concentration of massive wealth with a few is a corollary to the BJP's adherence to neo-liberal capitalism. We must recall what Lenin said of this dastardly system, “...As long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will be utilized not for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists.” When we are reaching the culmination of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, concerns about the compatibility of capitalism with a sustainable future for humanity are being raised all across the globe. Crises of finance capital is visible in the Adani Group losing its market value and a more than 150 years old investment bank Credit Suisse reaching near bankruptcy. Serious concerns about the survival of life as we know need redressal in the wake of climate change, global warming and sea-level rise.

The inhumane system of exploitation is using all its evil tools to ensure its survival, including capturing governments, dividing people, creating conflicts and wars. Innocent lives are being lost so that the order prevails, where only a chosen few are eating away the collective labor of the society. This is what Bhagat Singh rose in opposition to and gave his life to uphold the cherished ideals of socialism, equality, prosperity and peace. He wanted to “organize the reconstruction of the whole society on the socialist basis.” It is our task to make sense of the world around us through Bhagat Singh's work and take his legacy to its fruition that is by achieving a true rule of the people in our country by a “life of constant struggle, suffering and sacrifice”. Evils of inequality, caste system, communalism, patriarchy and conflict around us are growing, we need to fight and defeat them and claim victory for the people. Struggling for that cherished aim is the true homage to Shaheed Bhagat Singh. (IPA Service)

15th National Conference of IPTA calls for protecting composite culture

The grand old organization of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) concluded its three-day 15th national conference successfully in Daltonganj in Jharkhand deciding to preserve communal harmony, unity in diversity and peace throughout the country. The conference also highlighted that it is the need of the hour to speak out the truth so that the nation's composite social fabrics and constitutional values would remain intact through intensifying art and cultural activities of IPTA at district, state and national levels.

All credit goes to the local people and IPTA activists for making the 15th national conference a grand success. The conference took the pledge that they would march ahead without fear and carry forward the struggle to protect the indigenous art and culture. IPTA activities will be taken to new heights. In fact, the conference boosted the morale of the IPTA artists and activists.

Another notable feature of the conference was that more young people, both male and female artists took part with an enthusiasm which 15th National Conference of IPTA Challenge is to Save Our Composite Culture has consequently led to the accommodation of more young people in the national leadership.

The conference appealed to the artists and cultural activists to work for spreading the messages of unity, equality, peace and comradeship to fight hatred in the current scenario, which has been polluted by the communal elements in the country. The city witnessed cultural festivals for all three-days in the evening in which the ordinary people thronged from nook and corner of the city and witnessed the performing artists.

Among the 600 delegates, alternate delegates, guests and invitees, more than hundred of them took part in the debates, discussion and deliberations during the delegate sessions at the Mrigendra Hall. On the inaugural day on March 17, artists and cultural activists from across the country assembled near Shivaji Maidan, took out a cultural procession marching on the roads of Daltonganj. The march culminated at the same maidan for an open assembly, where the stage was set and named as Nilambar and Pitambar Lok Mahotsav. The conglomeration of artists and cultural activists dressed in traditional outfits drew the attention of curious onlookers.

The open meeting was conducted by a presidium consisting of Srimal Banerjee, Guahar Raza, Dr Arun Shukla, Sukh Dev

Singh Sirsa, T Balan, Amitav Chakravorty, Prem Basin and well-known theatre personality and film maker Dr Prasanna. Dr Prasanna said: “Political leaders are now teaching culture when cultural workers should actually make people aware of the exact crises of the country and the ways to come out of the present situation.”

“Voice must be raised against rising communalism through art forms,” said well-known writer and director of Tribal Research Institute Ranendra while addressing the gathering and added “Ghana andhra rahena nahi hai aur rosh-niek din aana hi hai” meaning that “darkness will not prolong and light has to come”.

IPTA leader Mithilesh said that it is the land of Nilambar and Pitambar. “When politics troubles, action brings it to the level of confidence.” Dr Samik Bandyopadhyay, scholar, a critic of Indian art, theatre and film was present all the three days and guided and gave directions to the conference.

According to Gauhar Raza, “Ideas propagating scientific temperament should be encouraged through art and culture, which would counter the unscientific rumours.” While Nasiruddin asked for highlighting the state of domestic violence and gender issues through cultural activities, Meenakshi Pahwa stressed on making people aware about issues concerning environment and climate change. Till now we have been speaking about pollution only, she said.

Renowned Indian scientist and Urdu poet Gauhar Raza, Meenakshi Pahwa, Vineet Tiwari, Dr Jaya Mehta, Nasiruddin, Deepak Kabir, Ishwar Singh Dost, Nimisha Raju and scores of others conducted workshops and exhibition at Gandhi Memorial Hall. The mode of the workshop was presentation, theme-based one-piece performances, documentary narration and discussion.

Various papers were prepared by incorporating the opinions and suggestions derived from discussions and were presented in the conference by the leaders present at the workshops. Through these, the conference suggested that there should be art forms of IPTA to create awareness among the people of the issues faced by them.

The IPTA organised its cultural festival at Shivaji Park all the three days in the evening in which songs, dance and plays were watched and witnessed by thousands of people of the Daltonganj city with all enthusiasm and appreciation. The cultural evening

featured dances from Bihar, from Bengal and folk art forms and songs from the states of Telangana and Kerala. Troupes from different states presented art forms typical of their respective states.

Besides, Sufi singer Mir Mukhtiyar Ali presented Kalams of various Sufi saints. When singer Neha Singh Rathod started singing Bhojpuri songs, rain started. People kept listening to her despite heavy rains. Seema Ghosh from Bengal was another singer to perform on the same evening. Chaibasa IPTA was also present attending

the grand event. An exhibition showing the journey of IPTA, photographs, cartoons and posters was also organised at the local Town Hall. Many visuals and street plays were performed on the streets of Daltonganj city.

The delegates were divided into commissions which after hectic deliberations came up with reports and placed them before the assembly of delegates. Workshops were held on various contemporary topics. Many of the reports were thought provoking and challenging the changing political, social and economic situation in the country.

The meeting of artists organised seminars on topics like social justice, economic imbalance and communalism, besides scientific temperaments and reasoning, environment and climate change were also addressed by writers and cultural activists. One of the participants, well-known writer Ranendra, at one of those sessions, said in his speech, “Voice must be raised against rising communalism through various art forms.”

One of the commissions' reports said that IPTA must focus on the elements of new science and technology and keeping them as content, dramas, plays, poetry and script writings also are to be updated to counter the communal and casteist forces that use superstition and myths to hoodwink the down-trodden masses.

There must be workshops on science and scientific temper. Repetition of the old things will not do. New songs, new plays with new spirits are the only means and ways to approach the people. Science related plays with inputs from the new scientific technology also could be applied. The contradictions between science and religion must be explained to the masses.

The other commission deliberated on the issues such as challenges faced by farmers, agricultural workers, adivasis and tribals.

They also discussed methods and means to approach them through cultural activities. They also took up economic inequality in society along with communalism, scientific attitude and logic, climate change and gender issues.

Addressing the delegates on the second day of the conference, CPI national council secretary Binoy Viswam MP said that the situation in the country is at a very critical stage. We have to rejuvenate IPTA by bringing more and more young people into the cultural fold.

Binoy Viswam also said that IPTA is a guiding force in this situation. IPTA could use its vast experience in the field of culture, art and literature. It has a greater role to culturally prepare grounds against the current atmosphere of hate, which is being spread rapidly in the society. He added that states have much more important role to wage cultural battles against the fascist forces.

The delegates discussed the activities' report, presentation of resolutions and election of new national committee and office bearers of the IPTA. Various resolutions were passed to protect the environment, for the protection of the indigenous people and marginalised communities and to run movements to protect the environment, to reject the so-called love jihad, to oppose communal politics, against NEP and to oppose foreign universities in higher education. The IPTA national conference was attended by delegates from 21 states. The delegates also participated in various seminars and discussions. A new national committee of 125 members was elected excepting the patrons, and including the office bearers. Among patrons are M S Satya, K Javed Siddiqui, Madhu and also Samik Bandyopadhyay. The chief patron is 93 years old.

The new office bearers comprise of national president, the veteran theatre director Prasanna from Karnataka, national general secretary Tanvir Akhtar and the working president Rakesh Veda, along with secretaries, joint secretaries and vice presidents. Shukendu Mondal was elected as treasurer. Among the decisions were to form committees on media, documentation, and social media.

The reception committee was appreciated by delegates that was led by Jharkhand IPTA state secretary Upendra Kumar Mishra and Shailendra. Dr Arun Mishra, chairman of the reception committee was also praised for the warm reception to the participants. (IPA Service)

Collapse of US banks is reflective of systemic contradiction of capitalism

By: Prabhat Patnaik

There is nothing mysterious about the reasons for the collapse of the Silicon Valley Bank and the Signature Bank in the United States. There is also nothing mysterious about why the entire banking system of the capitalist world has come under a cloud: once some part of the system collapses, the other parts of it get saddled with “toxic” assets, which are nothing else but the liabilities of the collapsed part of the system, and hence become subject to a “domino effect”. The real issue is: how did US capitalism get into a situation where its banking system came under such severe strain? Since the collapse of these banks, especially of the SVB, is not an internal phenomenon but is reflective of a systemic contradiction, what exactly is this contradiction?

The obvious proximate factor behind the collapse of both banks is the rise in interest rates. We shall however confine ourselves here to the case of the SVB alone, since it highlights the systemic contradiction more clearly: the case of the Signature Bank is rather a typical since it was dealing with crypto-currencies that are notoriously unstable.

Any rise in interest rates ipso facto lowers bond prices: the price of a bond is simply the stream of its earnings over its life-time, discounted at the going interest rate; and if the going interest rate rises then the same nominal stream of earnings gives a lower price for the bond. Now, all banks hold a range of assets among which bonds are quite prominent. A rise in interest rates therefore, by lowering bond prices, reduces the value of a bank's assets relative to its liabilities, which puts the bank under strain.

Any effort made by the bank to overcome this strain amounts to an open admission before the world that it is under strain, and acts as a signal for the public to desert that bank; the value of its equity falls and this in turn makes depositors panic who then withdraw their funds from it. This is what causes a run on the bank and brings about its collapse. The thing to note is that when a bank comes under such strain, it faces bleak prospects, no matter what it does: if it does not attempt any corrective measures then it is in effect opting to face a collapse; and if it does attempt some corrective measures then too there are strong chances that it may face a collapse. Its collapse under such circumstances therefore cannot be laid at the door of the bank itself; it has to be explained by macroeconomic factors external to it.

The foregoing argument may suggest that any rise in interest rates would trigger a bank collapse, but this obviously is not true. Interest rate movements decreed by the Central Bank normally occur as small changes at the margin; and in case of a small rise in the interest rate the strain on the banks is manageable. Banks can manage this strain without creating much panic in the “market”. But when the interest rate decreed by the Central Bank is suddenly increased by a substantial margin, then banks are denied the opportunity to manage any asset-liability mismatch in a quiet and orderly manner.

And the US interest rate has been jacked up quite substantially of late. The Federal Funds Rate increased from 0.25 per cent in February 2022 to 4.75 per cent in February 2023. Such a massive increase in such a short time makes it impossible for banks to manage their balance sheets smoothly. The real question therefore is: why has the Federal Reserve Board (the equivalent of the US central bank) been jacking up interest rates in this manner?

The basic answer is that under neoliberalism, the only weapon available for State intervention in the economy is monetary policy. Fiscal policy which for a long period after the Second World War was the primary instrument of intervention, recedes to the background under neoliberalism. Governments are forced by globally mobile finance capital to put a ceiling on their fiscal deficits relative to the GDP; and since any taxation of capitalists and the rich in general is taboo for the same reason, namely that it incurs the displeasure of glob-

ally mobile finance capital, the effort to stimulate activity in the economy takes the form exclusively of lowering interest rates. True, the US has no “fiscal responsibility” legislation and is not constrained, either legally or because of any practical fear of a financial flight (for such a flight can scarcely occur from a safe base like the US), to keep its fiscal deficit in check; but, for the US to increase its fiscal deficit to stimulate activity amounts to creating jobs abroad (since a good part of domestic US expenditure “leaks” out as demand for goods and services produced abroad), while increasing its foreign debt. The US did of course enlarge its fiscal deficit massively during the pandemic, a fact to which some attribute the current US inflation; but that was only under the shadow of a pandemic. For a very long period after the collapse of the housing bubble, the primary instrument used for stimulating the economy was the pushing down of the interest rate to exceedingly low levels, in fact to levels close to zero.

The housing bubble collapsed in 2008. From late 2009, right until 2022, it remained stuck more or less at 0.25 per cent other than a brief interlude between 2016 and 2020 when the Federal Funds Rate was increased by stages to a maximum of about 2 per cent. This extraordinarily long period of extraordinarily cheap money, by reducing the risks for the US oligopolists of raising profit-margin and prices, certainly contributed to the current inflation; but it still did not push the US economy anywhere close to a high enough level of employment.

True, the official US unemployment rate fell to a low of 4 per cent, but there was simultaneously a reduction in the labour force participation rate; the unemployment rate calculated by assuming that the labour force participation rate continued at the same level as in mid-2008, remained high throughout the period after 2008. And when inflation struck, the interest rate was jacked up hugely all of a sudden. The reason for this apparently irrational fluctuation in monetary policy, this yo-yo movement in the interest rate, lies therefore in the fact that under the hegemony of globally mobile finance, there is scarcely any alternative. In short, this apparent irrationality arises not because of any whimsicality on the part of the government; it arises because of the hegemony of global finance.

The adverse impact of such wild fluctuations is aggravated by a second factor. When the interest rate falls and bond prices increase, whether or not this has any stimulating impact on the economy, it does not at least pose any threat to the banking system. An increase in the value of a bank's assets does not undermine it in any way. But when the interest rate rises and bond prices fall, the value of a bank's assets falls relative to the value of its liabilities; this triggers reactions in the “market” that may push the bank into unviability. This asymmetry between the effect on a bank of a fall in the interest rate and that of a rise, acts further to undermine the banking system.

It is not just the American banking system but the banking system of the entire capitalist world that is threatened by the sharp increase in the interest rate that is occurring everywhere as the official policy response to inflation. Even such a well-known bank as Credit Suisse has also of late faced a collapse in its equity prices and is being taken over by its rival UBS.

What is more, the threat to the banking system of the capitalist world has by no means reached a plateau. The Federal Reserve Board was planning earlier to raise interest rates even further for countering inflation; it may go a bit slower now because of the collapse of the two US banks. But it has no option other than raising interest rates as inflation continues to persist, since the only way that inflation is fought under capitalism is by generating unemployment; and this is typically effected these days by a rise in interest rates. As capitalism flounders in crisis, demonstrations by workers all over Europe are further underscoring the dead-end that it has reached in its neoliberal phase. (IPA Service)

Financial institutions like Silicon Valley Bank fund the US weapons industry

By: Corey Payne

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank last week sparked a number of debates.

Was SVB “too big to fail”? Was the Biden administration response a “bailout”? Are the libertarian-leaning tech CEOs hypocrites? Is this a sign that the Fed's interest rate hikes should come to an end?

But one element of the SVB collapse has been lost in all the discussion of naive tech bros and their questionable banking habits: the importance of the bank, of the tech industry, and of finance to the project of US global power.

As Fortune put it, SVB was the “central artery for financing the startup ecosystem.” Nearly all of the bank's depositors were young tech firms backed by speculative venture capital — and the bank's collapse threatened the very survival of both the tech and VC industries. While many have been rightly focused on the potential fallout of the collapse for the US banking system, the geopolitical dynamics of these events have mostly flown under the radar.

The Financial Times reports that “amid fears the government was prepared to let SVB and its uninsured depositors go to the wall, venture capitalists launched a concerted lobbying effort” via their industry group, the National Venture Capital Association (NVCA). The lobbyists argued that the failure of SVB “would not only have big economic repercussions, with companies struggling to write paycheques, but also that an outright failure would have geopolitical ramifications.”

As one participant in the lobbying meetings told the Financial Times: “The theme was: ‘this is not a bank.’... This is the innovation economy. This is the US versus China. You can't kill these innovative companies.” Leaning into the US-China rivalry is not just deft lobbying from NVCA. And posing this as a threat to the “innovation economy” is not simply a reflection of an ideology that sets venture capital-backed start-ups on the new frontiers of capitalism. Indeed, while every facet of the US economy in the twenty-first century — from manufacturing to consumption — is dependent on access to credit, the peculiarities of SVB bring the relationship between this type of finance and the US military-industrial complex into stark relief. On the list of major firms that was set to lose about \$5 billion in SVB deposits (alongside start-ups in the media, software, and pharmaceutical industries) was at least one semiconductor producer and two aerospace and defence firms. One of them, Rocket Lab, has recently been in the news for “weaponizing space,” while the other, Astra, works closely with Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) on a number of projects.

These firms' military ties are not unique. Silicon Valley has a long history of collaboration with the US military. Indeed, the first initial public offering in Silicon Valley was for Varian in 1956, which sold microwave tubes for military uses. In the 1960s, Fairchild Semiconductor, considered one of the pioneers of today's Silicon Valley, started its business through military contracts. These links have evolved to include technologies from microchips to data mining to Apple's Siri. As Silicon Valley historian Leslie Berlin notes: “All of modern high tech has the U. S. Department of Defense to thank at its core.”

But more than that, the venture capital supporting these start-ups has become increasingly enmeshed with military procurement in recent years, as the Pentagon has turned to private financing to direct military research and development.

This is simply the latest form of a decades-old relationship. Starting in the 1990s, private equity became an important player in the merger boom of armaments firms. This merger boom was key in the transition of the defence industry from a medley of hundreds of small- and medium-sized industrial firms into the handful of massive, publicly traded companies that we know today.

This boom was facilitated by the US government, in an effort to increase efficiency and cut costs during the post-Cold War defence drawdown. But if it was the government pushing the mergers, it was the financial institutions that facilitated them — and reaped the rewards.

Searching for profitable investments in the wake of the savings and loan crisis of the early 1990s, many financial institutions turned to the defence industry as a possible boon. Few in the industry expected the post-Cold War drawdown to last, and investors bet that an industry backed by US federal military spending would be a safe investment.

Big banks, such as JP Morgan, provided funding for a number of major mergers, such as Lockheed Martin's \$9.1-billion acquisition of Loral Corporation in 1996. In addition to big banks, the defence industry piqued the interest of a number of private equity groups, and institutions like the Carlyle Group and the Vanguard Group became specialists in investing in military firms. Underwriting the merger boom, these bankers and venture capitalists reaped the benefits of the extraordinary growth in military firm profits in the coming decades, as the United States' wars in the twenty-first century meant a boom in the aerospace and defence sectors.

Today private equity has taken on an even wider role in the armaments industry than in the 1990s, responsible for thousands of investments in aerospace and defence firms. The Pentagon has even established an office dedicated to facilitating the linkages between start-ups with military potential and venture capitalists. Industry leaders thus unsurprisingly see private equity and venture capital as the future of military innovation.

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collapse of Silicon Valley Bank last week sparked a number of debates. Was SVB “too big to fail”? Was the Biden administration response a “bailout”? Are the libertarian-leaning tech CEOs hypocrites? Is this a sign that the Fed's interest rate hikes should come to an end?

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SALIVA: The Next Frontier in Cancer Detection

By: Matias A. Loewy

In the late 1950s, dentist and US Navy Captain Kirk C. Hoerman, then a young man in his 30s, attempted to answer a bold question: Might the saliva of prostate cancer patients have different characteristics from that of healthy people? Could it contain traces of a disease that's so far away from the mouth?

Without wasting more of their own saliva on elaborate discussion, Hoerman and his colleagues from the department of dental research at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes, Illinois, got down to work. They analysed samples from more than 200 patients and healthy controls, and found that the saliva of patients with untreated prostate cancer showed a significant increase in the levels of enzymes called acid phosphatases.

Writing in 1959 in the journal *Cancer*, the researchers then made a prescient reflection: that it may be valuable to observe discrete biochemical changes in tissues distant from the site of tumor origin.

More than 60 years later, the idea that saliva analysis can be used to detect different types of cancer is gaining traction in the scientific community. In the specialised literature, papers containing the keywords "diagnosis," "cancer" and "saliva" grew more than tenfold over the past two decades, from 26 in 2001 to 117 in 2011, 183 in 2016 and 319 in 2021, according to the PubMed database, a search engine for biomedical research articles.

The appeal of this approach is obvious. Although cancer can be diagnosed through tissue biopsy, that requires trained physicians wielding long needles, scalpels, endoscopes or other tools to pry into the body to take samples. Liquid biopsy, which looks for traces of tumor components in fluids such as blood, urine, cerebrospinal fluid, semen or saliva, is a less invasive alternative. Of these, the simplest sample to collect is undoubtedly saliva.

The approach has already paid off: In 2021, the US Food and Drug Administration gave an innovative device designation to a saliva-based oral and throat cancer pre-diagnostic tool developed by the US company Viome. (Such designations are granted to novel medical devices that have the potential to provide more effective treatment or diagnosis of life-threatening diseases.) Based on artificial intelligence and machine learning, the tool analyses a saliva sample for the activity of genes (in particular, messenger RNA) belonging to the bacterial community housed in the mouth. For unknown reasons, this community is modified when a tumor develops on the lips, tongue, throat or surrounding areas.

"For decades, saliva was considered a stepchild of blood," says chemist Chamindie Punyadeera,

who spent a decade working on Viome's saliva diagnostic test. Now at Griffith University in Australia, she is lead author of a 2021 study describing the test's development in NPJ Genomic Medicine. But that view of saliva as an afterthought could begin to change in the coming years as techniques to analyse it advance and a better understanding develops of what information it can hold. "Because saliva can be collected noninvasively, an empowered patient could take multiple samples and become a steward of his or her own diagnostic tests," Punyadeera predicts.

The treasure contained in saliva

Every day, the salivary glands of an average adult produce between 500 and 1,500 millilitres of saliva to aid digestion and preserve oral health. In addition to enzymes, hormones, antibodies, inflammatory mediators, food debris and microorganisms, saliva has been found to contain traces of DNA and RNA or proteins from tumors.

"The goal of saliva diagnostics is to develop rapid, noninvasive detection of oral and systemic diseases," write dental scientists Taichiro Nonaka of Louisiana State University and David T.W. Wong of the University of California, Los Angeles, in an article on saliva diagnostics published in the 2022 Annual Review of Analytical Chemistry. The field is developing rapidly due to the progress of "omics sciences" that analyse large collections of molecules involved in the functioning of an organism – such as genomics (genomes), proteomics (proteins) or metabolomics (metabolites) – as well as methods for analysing large quantities of data. For example, the proteome of saliva – an exhaustive catalogue of the proteins present in this fluid – is already available, and it is known that between 20-30% of the saliva proteome overlaps with that of blood.

But "the study of diagnostics through saliva is a relatively new field," says Nonaka. It wasn't until the last decade, he says, that it became known that salivary glands – parotid, submandibular, and sublingual, as well as other minor glands, in close proximity to blood vessels – transfer molecular information.

Today, in saliva – and also in blood – scientists are beginning to look for and find circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA), which is DNA that is shed from cancer cells when a tumor is present in the body. Multiple studies have identified biomarkers – such as proteins that are produced in higher quantities in cancer cells or genetic changes that occur in tumor cells – that could be used to detect tumors of the head and neck, breast, oesophagus, lung, pancreas and ovary, as well as to monitor the patient's response to therapies.

For example, in 2015 Chinese researchers published that the identification of two fragments of an RNA strand (microRNA) in saliva allowed the



detection of malignant pancreatic cancer in 7 out of 10 patients with the disease. A more recent review of 14 studies involving more than 8,000 participants estimated that breast cancer patients were 2.58 times more likely to have certain saliva-detectable biomarkers – although 39% of the negative test results were in patients who actually had breast cancer. The research in the field is promising, but will require further prospective studies to determine its clinical applicability, Nonaka says.

"A great advantage of liquid biopsies is that they can sweep for up to 50 types of cancers in early stages at once, when they can be surgically treated or are candidates for short, targeted treatments," says biologist Marina Simián, a researcher at Argentina's National Scientific and Technical Research Council at the Nanosystems Institute of the National University of San Martín, in Buenos Aires. Simián is also co-founder of the company Oncolix, which aims for the early detection of breast, prostate and other tumors from a blood sample.

"With today's tools, very few organs are screened for cancer," says Simián. Common screens include ones for prostate, breast, cervix, colon after the age of 50, and the lungs for those who have smoked heavily. And in the world, she says, only half of these people undergo these tests, and in many countries, not even 10%. The hope is to add many more tests that can be done on a single blood or saliva sample.

It is possible that in the future, testing of both

blood and saliva will be the norm. Although there is still a long way to go, Nonaka believes that, except for oral cancers, saliva testing should most likely be supplemented with liquid biopsies in blood or urine, plus other parameters to increase sensitivity and practical utility.

In pursuit of exosomes

One particularly promising type of component to look for in saliva is the exosome. Exosomes are tiny lipid-wrapped vesicles that are present in almost all types of body fluids. They are transporters or messengers that travel from one cell to another – even to those in very distant organs. They carry a cargo of genetic material and proteins, which is taken up by a recipient cell in an organ and plays important roles in cell-to-cell signaling. But exosomes also have an important role in cancer. "They are key players," says Punyadeera. Released by cancer cells, they pass into the blood and from there, can reach the salivary glands. The exosomes are thus dumped into the saliva, from which they can be collected.

Exosomes from tumor cells have a specific composition and are suspected of contributing to the spread of cancer to other organs or tissues. But from a diagnostic perspective, one of their main advantages is that they package and protect the cargo – in other words, they do not mix with the other components of saliva. In this way, they provide "more stable and accurate clinically relevant information for disease detection," Nonaka explains.

For example, for squamous cell oesophageal cancer, scientists have found two signatures or signals in salivary exosomes that allow detection of this disease with a sensitivity and specificity of more than 90%, in addition to providing guidance on prognosis and treatment, as reported in January 2022 in *Molecular Cancer*.

Factors such as the concentration or appearance of exosomes under the microscope can also be revealing. Patients with oral cancer, for example, have exosomes with different shapes and sizes than those found in healthy individuals.

However, the techniques available so far to isolate and study the exosome content of saliva are expensive and laborious. In response to this challenge, a new method known as electric field-induced release and measurement, or EFIRM, has emerged; it integrates electrochemical sensors and magnetic fields to elegantly capture minute amounts of circulating tumor DNA and other molecules – biomarkers – that indicate the presence of cancer. This technique has already shown encouraging results in the early detection of non-small cell lung cancer and could also be used to assess response to treatment.

The US company Liquid Diagnostic LLC, in which Wong has a stake, already offers this technology, having christened it Amperial and promising "the highest specificity and sensitivity for early stage cancers" and at "much lower cost." Those most enthusiastic about the technology propose a world where a routine visit to the dentist saves lives and it is not necessary to draw blood to check if someone is ill. But experts agree that, for that dream to become a reality on a large scale, more studies are still needed.

"To achieve the translation of salivary biomarkers to the clinic, it is necessary, on the one hand, to develop standardised protocols and, on the other, to carry out large multicenter studies in which the influence of different confounding variables such as age, sex or lifestyle is analysed," says dental scientist Oscar Rapado González, of the Health Research Institute of Santiago de Compostela, in Spain, where he is investigating the use of saliva samples for the detection of head and neck cancers, as well as colorectal tumors.

The identification in saliva or other fluids of molecules directly or indirectly related to tumors has potential apart from early detection, says Rapado González. It might make it possible to assess individual risk of developing cancer, predict how a tumor will evolve or monitor the therapeutic response in a noninvasive way, allowing the development of personalised medicine.

"Undoubtedly," Rapado González says, "more research in this field will drive progress toward the applicability of saliva in precision oncology in the coming years." (Courtesy: The Wire)

Tech trends to watch out for in 2023

By: Nishant Patel

Technology has significantly changed how we live and work over the last few decades. However, the relationship between workplace and cultural changes and how technology is used and developed is not one-way. The technology used by professionals and consumers and their expectations of it have undergone significant changes in recent years, particularly since the start of the Covid pandemic.

Technology experts predict that 2023 will be another year of exhilarating and swift evolution in business technology, both in terms of what tools will see new or increased usage and how businesses and sectors will adapt to market changes and challenges. We will dive deeper into some of the biggest technological trends envisaged to emerge in 2023.

1. Composability will keep expanding and transforming. More and more tools will be made available to us as technology develops to aid in the creation of our software solutions. For instance, more assistance with developing databases, web services, and other technologies is anticipated. We also hope to witness more tools that make it simple to combine already existing solutions. There will also be more options for how to put together solutions. For instance, you could create code that produces source code for you automatically. Alternatively, you could create a graphic representation of your solution using code. Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), component-based systems, frameworks, integrated development environments, object-oriented languages, object relational mapping, repositories, services, web services, and extensible markup languages are a few examples of composable technologies.

2. There will be a push for eco-friendly and sustainable technology in 2023. We are all heavy users of technology, using our computers, tablets, and smartphones every day. Where do the components for these

gadgets originate? Cloud-based services like Spotify and Netflix will continue to be operated in sizable data centres that use a lot of energy. As consumers demand energy-efficient goods and services backed by more environmentally friendly technology, the movement to make supply chains more transparent will continue in 2023.

3. Workplaces will have a ton of data to monitor and manage with the rollout of 5G and the integration of the Internet of Things (IoT). Businesses will need a real-time data collection strategy if they want to take advantage of the benefits that real-time analytics/intelligent twins (5G and IoT) can offer.

4. A global race is currently underway to create quantum computing at scale. We can expect computers to operate a trillion times faster than the fastest traditional processors currently on the market thanks to quantum computing, which employs subatomic particles to create new methods of processing and storing information.

Any country that develops quantum computing at scale has the potential to render our current encryption practices useless, making it possible for them to decrypt the encryption used by other countries, businesses, security systems, and other entities. As nations like the US, UK, China, and Russia invest heavily in the development of quantum computing technology, this is a development to keep an eye on in 2023.

5. Any tech leader should be paying attention to Web3. Although it's still early and the practicality isn't clear, I believe there's a good chance it will change much more than finance. In general, decentralized business models and architectures are more robust. Therefore, regardless of blockchain, applying decentralization and open ownership strategies is a good bet. Technology adoption and the digitalization of businesses across all industries continue to be significant global trends. The global technology market will keep expanding exponentially. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

7 ways you can ensure privacy and security on the internet

By: Jubita Maji

There is a lot of wrong information, bad people, bad websites, and cybercrime on the Internet. To ensure privacy and security on the internet, it's important to be aware of different types of internet attacks. For example –

Phishing – Phishing is a cyber-attack involving email. Hackers try to trick email recipients into believing that the message is genuine so they click on the link, hand over their personal information, and bank details, or download malware. Then naturally the email recipients are fooled.

Hacking – Hackers always want to exploit the vulnerability of a private network or system so that they can steal confidential information and data. Until hackers gain full access to the device, exploiting RDP's vulnerabilities can steal the data themselves and sell the data on the dark web.

Malware – Malware is a broad term related to viruses, worms, and other malicious programs that hackers use to steal sensitive information. Malware is any software

intended to harm a computer, server, or network.

Below are steps and suggestions everyone should follow to safeguard their computers and personal information while connected to the Internet, protect themselves from computer crime, and protect their bank account details.

1. Create a strong password that will help you maintain internet security.

2. Keep your operating system and software up to date to protect yourself.

3. Always be cautious of e-mail links and attachments because E-mail is not encrypted: One of the most common methods of spreading viruses, malware, and ransomware is through e-mail attachments and hyperlinks sent through e-mail.

Always be extremely careful when working with attachments or links in e-mails you receive from anyone, even friends and family. Never send confidential information via e-mail, such as passwords, credit card information, etc. E-mail is not encrypted, and if intercepted by a third

party, it can be read.

4. Be aware of phishing scams. 5. Be cautious about your logging: Be careful when logging into an account on a friend's computer. If you log into a computer or network with which you are not familiar, intentionally or unintentionally with a username and password, do not save passwords and other information in that browser.

6. Always think before sharing something, not after sharing: Before sharing something on social networks or anywhere else on the internet, make sure you don't mind if everyone sees it. Everything you share on the Internet should be considered public. If you are thinking of sharing something like this, you should consider it.

7. Protect yourself against malware and viruses: Protect your own computer from viruses by installing an antivirus program on the computer. If you don't want to install antivirus protection, you should always update your computer to new versions of Windows.

(Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)

The questions ChatGPT will not answer for you

By: Kiran Yellupula

While experimental, Artificial Intelligence chatbots like ChatGPT, look like fascinating, useful, free tools instantly answering all queries based on the prompts that users give it, it poses serious security risks that legal regulations don't address. They are disrupting the way we work, live, and evolve as a nation. Are we ready for such national security threats without the necessary safeguards being set in place?

AI opens a new front in cyber arms race Artificial Intelligence (AI) arms race is disrupting our lives. A paradigm shift in technology fuels the battle for supremacy between man, machine, and nations. So, what does it mean to be human? Can machines think? Can machines trump human creativity? Does AI pose an existential risk to humans? Will your brain become vestigial due to a growing dependency on AI? No one truly knows the answers. And, a few who may know the answers aren't going to share, as the stakes are too high.

With the advent of AI systems endowed with perception, cognition, and decision-making, the AI application layer has increasingly turned vast, deeply impacting our lives. For instance, OpenAI's ChatGPT, backed by Microsoft and Google's Bard, are experimental, conversational, AI chat services that use online information to give replies to your 'questions'. But asking questions means providing personal data to the AI bots.

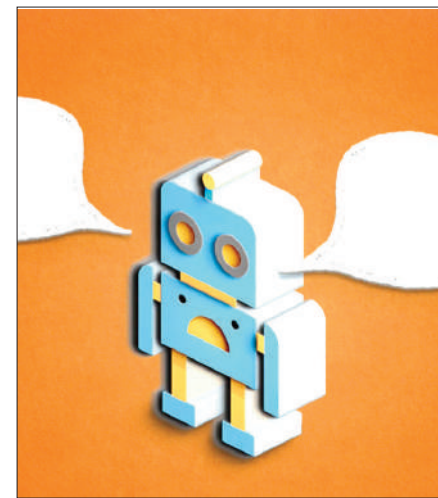
Unregulated risks of global experiments Functionally an advanced search, these AI systems are massive global AI experiments driven by AI bots, without the subjects' explicit consent. The goal of such experimental research is to thrive on user data freely to refine products for profit while claiming to advance AI to benefit humanity. As renowned linguist Noam Chomsky says, "AI could significantly impact people's capacity for independent thought and creation."

Your questions and inputs are used as 'training data' for refining these bots, and the individual outputs become part of collective intelligence. A responsible firm committed to benefiting humanity would not have released an unfinished technology to the public with risks, be it privacy intrusion, plagiarism, non-explainability, algorithmic biases or harm to social info-ecosystems.

The problem is while AI firms say humanity is not far from potentially scary AI, they still release AI technology publicly, even before the rules are laid. This will open the doors to a few Big Tech companies to gain control over our lives and society. Thus, there is a need to protect people from corporates using AI for profit, with no accountability. Employees are feeding sensitive business data as training data into AI-driven ChatGPT, leading to growing security concerns and the risk of leakage of proprietary information or trade secrets – strategy, approach, business models, and tech contains confidential information. Owing to privacy, many companies, including Amazon, Walmart, JPMorgan, Verizon, Goldman Sachs, and KPMG are curbing the use of ChatGPT

by employees and evaluating safer pathways. From New York to China, schools, colleges, universities and regulators are banning ChatGPT amid serious security fears. America's Federal Trade Commission has warned Silicon Valley against false AI claims, urging truth, fairness, equity in the usage of AI tools.

India needs to wake up to the threat and act now. The real challenge facing people is the 'integrity' of the data used by the AI system



and its accuracy, reliability, and consistency. More so, as existing human bias is too often transferred to AI. And, the latest AI bots work well upon having access "lots of data" to mimic your intelligence without revealing how it will be used. Data labelling, network portability, data portability and interoperability of data will help us tame AI-powered systems.

Let's ask: Who owns the content generated by ChatGPT? What can the owner do with the content? Does it infringe copyright? Is it "openly" plagiarised? Can the content generated be copyrighted? Does the content violate intellectual property rights and privacy? Will the platform or owner be liable for risks?

Need for stricter AI regulations The limitations of above questions are, by design, to steer the evolution of AI to benefit a select few. EU Industry Chief has demanded stricter AI regulations. Even OpenAI's Founder, Sam Altman, says relying on chatbots for anything important right now is a mistake. The directive has been largely ignored, which may lead to unintended consequences.

Tech news site CNET used AI for writing articles that were found to have serious errors, denting its publication. Tech publication WIRED doesn't publish stories with text generated or edited by AI, except for new headlines or text for short social media posts, brainstorming story ideas, or using AI more like a search engine. Interestingly, it vowed not to publish stories with text generated by AI, except for headlines or text for short social media posts, story ideas, or using it like a search engine. AI failure also carries high reputational risks. As the incidences are likely to increase, preventing 'data creep, scope creep, and the use of biased training data' will make AI more responsible. AI stakeholders, the policymaking community, and governments

should invest in building social norms, public policy, and educational initiatives to prevent machine-generated disinformation. Mitigation will require effective policy and partnerships across the ecosystem.

Research indicates an over-reliance on AI, which may help generative AI become smart, but humans become dumber by losing their unique knowledge and diversity of thought. When humans start mimicking AI output and stop taxing their brains, it may stunt their ability to think with little unique knowledge, leading to suboptimal collective performance detrimental to innovations. As human choices converge toward similar responses, increasing human accuracy but reducing unique human understanding. While the AI arms race intensifies, India needs to invest more in R&D and swiftly work on the AI systems governance, responsibility, and accountability to protect privacy, safety, and unintended consequences. No laws in the nation prevent AI from infringing on human rights, or scooping the human brain without consent as technology continues to refine itself.

An algorithm has no feelings. Yet, the way the programme 'trains itself', AI can reinforce social biases and prejudices by maximising its designated outcome. Humans must be clear in how we envisage AI to shape our future: Do we want AIs to maximise narrow goals while producing negative externalities? Or, training AI to evolve a smarter planet (eliminating harmful biases)?

Growing self-reliance on AI

Being part of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) floated by G7, India should critically nurture equitable rules for data governance, safety, and trust around AI rooted in collaborative research and set up global Centres of Excellences (COEs) fostering human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and growth. Interestingly, China shuns the US-led GPAI, but is eyeing global AI leadership by 2030. Initiatives like Make AI in India and Make AI work for India will yield limited impact unless the nation balances the trade off with whom it wants to work as a trusted partner or takes bold steps to develop self-reliance like China.

GCHQ, the global cybersecurity agency, warns that ChatGPT and rival chatbots are security threats. Technologies powering ChatGPT may also span geopolitical tools like propaganda, cyberattacks, synthetic biology or autonomous-fighter jets that give huge economic leverage. As AI expands in people's lives even in useful ways, these systems may diminish individuals' ability to control their choices. Yet, if AI isn't kept in check, we may expect an Orwellian future. As the Federal Trade Commission warns, policymakers need to exercise caution in using AI.

So, how can humans future-proof themselves? AI is just a tool, and shouldn't define humankind. We still need thinking, curiosity, adaptability, empathy, judgement, creativity, and skills that oversee, fix, and create these technologies. Living with AI means asking the right questions, questioning answers, and learning to explain why you accept an output. (Courtesy: ORF)

Eric Garcetti sworn in as US Ambassador to India



WASHINGTON, March 25 (PTI): Eric Garcetti, President Joe Biden's close aide, was officially sworn in as the US Ambassador to India by Vice President Kamala Harris, ending over two years of delay to fill one of Washington's most critical diplomatic positions. Garcetti's daughter Maya held the Hebrew Bible during the swearing-in ceremony on Friday, which was presided over by Vice President Harris. Garcetti raised his right hand while Harris performed the ceremony, and family members cheered when the two longtime friends shook hands.

The ceremony was attended by his close family members, including wife Amy Wakeland, father Gil Garcetti, mother Sukey Garcetti and mother-in-law Dee Wakeland. "It feels great. Can't wait to serve," Garcetti, 52, said when asked about his new diplomatic assignment.

"I'm so honoured the vice president did this," he said. Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff also attended the event.

Former Mayor of Los Angeles Garcetti's nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated by President Biden.

The Senate voted 52 to 42 to confirm Garcetti earlier this month after his nomination stalled amid concerns by some lawmakers that he had not adequately handled allegations of sexual assault and harassment against a former senior adviser. India's envoy here Taranjit Singh Sandhu met Garcetti soon after his swearing-in ceremony.

"Congratulations @ericgarcetti on his swearing-in as the Ambassador of America to India," Indian Ambassador to Washington Sandhu tweeted after the meeting on Friday. "As he prepares to depart for India, we discussed some immediate priorities in deepening the bi-

lateral partnership, in line with our Leaders' vision," Sandhu said. He said he looked forward to working with Garcetti.

Garcetti's nomination was not brought to the Senate floor for a vote during the last Congress as the ruling Democratic Party did not have enough support to get him through.

President Biden renominated him to the same position in January this year.

Garcetti supporters argued that geopolitical concerns were too important to leave India without an ambassador.

The US Embassy in India has been without an ambassador since January 2021, the longest stretch in the history of US-India relations that the post has sat vacant since Kenneth Juster, the last US envoy in New Delhi, stepped down after the change of government in America.

Biden has sought to bolster economic ties with India as he looks to counter China's growing influence in the region and shore up support for Ukraine against continued Russian aggression.

India has not explicitly condemned Russia's invasion and has continued to buy cheap gas from Moscow.

Asked when he plans to travel to India, Garcetti said: "Hopefully as soon as I can."

The ceremony in Harris' office also marked a personal moment between two politicians who ascended the California political world together. Harris and Garcetti's relationship spans more than 15 years, during which she served as California's attorney general and later as a US senator for the state, the Los Angeles Times said. He has also spoken about their bond over being mixed race: Harris is of Indian and Jamaican descent and Garcetti is Jewish and Mexican American.

Coroner: 13 dead in tornado that ripped through US South

ROLLING FORK (US), March 25 (AP): A powerful tornado tore through rural Mississippi and Alabama on Friday night, killing at least 13 people, destroying buildings and knocking out power as severe weather that produced hail the size of golf balls moved through several southern states and prompted authorities to warn some in its path that they were in a "life-threatening situation."

The National Weather Service confirmed a tornado caused damage about 60 miles (96 kilometers) northeast of Jackson, Mississippi. The rural towns of Silver City and Rolling Fork were reporting destruction as the tornado continued sweeping northeast at 70 mph (113 kph) without weakening, racing towards Alabama through towns including Winona and Amory into the night.

Sharkey County Coroner Angelia Easton told ABC News that 13 people were killed by the tornado in Mississippi. Rolling Fork is located in Sharkey County.

ABC News early Saturday reported an additional six deaths, including three in Carroll County, two in Monroe County and one in Humphreys County, citing the county coroners and a Mississippi Highway Patrol trooper. The Associated Press was not immediately able to confirm those fatalities.

The National Weather Service issued an alert as the storm was hitting that didn't mince words: "To protect your life, TAKE COVER NOW!" "You are in a life-threatening situation," it warned. "Flying debris may be deadly to those caught without shelter. Mobile homes will be destroyed. Considerable damage to homes, businesses, and vehicles is likely and complete destruction is



possible." Cornel Knight told The Associated Press that he, his wife and their 3-year-old daughter were at a relative's home in Rolling Fork when the tornado struck. He said the sky was dark but "you could see the direction from every transformer that blew."

He said it was "eerily quiet" as that happened. Knight said he watched from a doorway until the tornado was, he estimated, less than a mile away. Then he told everyone in the house to take cover in a hallway.

He said the tornado struck another relative's home across a wide corn field from where he was. A wall in that home collapsed and trapped several people inside. As Knight spoke to AP by phone, he said he could see lights from emergency vehicles at the partially collapsed home.

Rolling Fork mayor Eldridge Walker told WLBTV-TV he was unable to get out of his damaged home soon after the tornado hit because power lines were down. He said emergency responders were trying to take injured people to hospitals. He did not immediately

know how many people had been hurt. A former mayor of Rolling Fork, Fred Miller, told the television station a tornado blew the windows out of the back of his house.

Storm chaser Reed Timmer posted on Twitter that Rolling Fork was in immediate need of emergency personnel and that he was heading with injured residents of the town to a Vicksburg hospital.

The Sharkey-Issaquena Community Hospital on the west side of Rolling Fork was damaged, WAPT reported.

The Sharkey County Sheriff's Office in Rolling Fork reported gas leaks and people trapped in piles of rubble, according to the Vicksburg News. Some law enforcement units were unaccounted for in Sharkey, according to the newspaper.

Rolling Fork and the surrounding area has wide expanses of cotton, corn and soybean fields and catfish farming ponds. More than a half-dozen shelters were opened in the state by emergency officials.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said in a

Twitter post Friday night that search and rescue teams were active and that officials were sending more ambulances and emergency assets to those affected.

"Many in the MS Delta need your prayer and God's protection tonight," the post said. "Watch weather reports and stay cautious through the night, Mississippi!"

This was a supercell, the nasty type of storms that brew the deadliest tornado and most damaging hail in the United States, said University of Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Walker Ashley. What's more is a night-time wet one which is "the worst kind," he said.

Meteorologists saw a big tornado risk coming for the general region, not the specific area, as much as a week in advance, said Ashley, who was discussing it with his colleagues as early as March 17. The National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center put out a long-range alert for the area on March 19, he said.

Tornado experts like Ashley have been warning about increased risk exposure in the region because of people building more.

"You mix a particularly socioeconomically vulnerable landscape with a fast-moving, long-track nocturnal tornado, and disaster will happen," Ashley said in an email.

Earlier Friday a car was swept away and two passengers drowned in southwestern Missouri during torrential rains that were part of a severe weather system. Authorities said six young adults were in the vehicle that was swept away as the car tried to cross a bridge over a flooded creek in the town of Grovespring.

Indian-Americans rally in support of India at San Francisco Consulate



WASHINGTON, March 25 (PTI): A large number of Indian-Americans waving the tricolour held a peace rally in front of the Indian Consulate in San Francisco to express solidarity with India following the vandalism at the facility by Khalistan supporters early this week. A group of pro-Khalistan protesters on Sunday attacked and damaged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco. Raising pro-Khalistan slogans, the protesters broke open the makeshift security barriers raised by the city police and installed two so-called Khalistani flags inside the Consulate premises. Two consulate personnel soon removed these flags.

Scores of Indian-Americans drove from in

and around San Francisco and waived the tricolour to show solidarity with India on Friday.

"The attack on India's consulate by fringe elements was disturbing to not only Indian-Americans but the whole world community. We wanted to show our solid support and solidarity hand in hand with India," Satish Vale, a technology professional and community worker, said. Indian-American community members condemned the destructive activities of separatist Sikhs, who were also present there in small numbers.

Local police were present there in sizable numbers to prevent any untoward incident. Some of the separatist Sikhs chanted pro-Khalistan slogans, but they were outnumbered by a large gathering of Indian Americans who chanted "Vande Mataram" and waved the Indian national flag along with that of the US.

Indian-Americans chanted slogans in favour of India. "It was truly heartening to see people of all backgrounds (Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims) and ages show up to show solidarity with India against violence perpetrated by Khalistan terrorists who damaged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco," said Gauging Desai from Friends of India.

"I am also disappointed that none of the bay

area elected officials has condemned this act of violence against India," Desai said.

"Good to see pro-India supporters reestablish vibrant enthusiasm, otherwise, it is alarming to see Khalistani extremism taking root in the US," Khanderao Kand from Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) said. The ISI-sponsored radicalisation roots of this violence need to be investigated, and stopped by the FBI, Kand said. Ritesh Tandon, one of the key organisers said: "I am very proud that 150+ people from the Sikh community, Bohra Muslims, and all other communities of India participated in a solidarity rally for the Indian consulate general in San Francisco."

"I strongly condemn the attack on the Indian embassy, San Francisco, that occurred last weekend and continued into Wednesday," he said. It is sad to see that the San Francisco government failed to provide security to diplomatic officials, he added. "As far as I know no arrests have been made, despite the violence," Tandon said. "I like to call for a prompt investigation into this unacceptable targeting of diplomats and diplomatic facilities. We remind the governments of San Francisco and the US of its responsibility under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations to protect foreign diplomats in the US," he added.

UK's King Charles honours Queen Elizabeth II's pallbearers

LONDON, March 25 (PTI): Britain's King Charles III on Saturday recognised in a special Demise honours list the eight pallbearers who carried the late Queen Elizabeth II's coffin at her funeral last year. The British soldiers, who were selected to be pallbearers from the King's Company of 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards — known as the Queen's Company previously — have been awarded the silver Royal Victorian Medal.

They were named as recipients of honours as part of a special set of Demise awards under the Royal Victorian Order (RVO) in recognition of their service to the Queen, who died aged 96 last September.

The RVO is bestowed by the British monarch and unlike other royal honours, it is not on the advice of the Prime Minister, as a special recognition of those who serve the monarch and the royal family. It dates back to the 19th century and was founded by Queen Victoria in 1896. Lance Sergeant Alex Turner, Lance Corporal Tony Flynn, Lance Sergeant Elias Orłowski, Guardsman Fletcher Cox, Guardsman James Patterson, Lance Sergeant Ryan Griffiths, Guardsman Luke Simpson, and Guardsman David Sanderson carried the coffin as millions of around the world watched the funeral on September 19, 2022.

New Yorkers cautious ahead of Trump's likely indictment in hush money case UN head says survival depends on how people manage water

NEW YORK, March 25 (PTI): New Yorkers are voicing mixed feelings amid the possibility of Donald Trump's indictment, with some expressing confidence that law enforcement agencies will be able to maintain order in the city while others are apprehensive of how the situation will unfold if criminal charges are brought against the former US president.

A grand jury is weighing whether to indict Trump, 76, over hush money payments made to a porn star to keep quiet about an alleged affair during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Barricades have come up at several points near the courthouses in Lower Manhattan as well as outside the office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg where police personnel are manning the premises as it was expected that Trump could be indicted by a Manhattan grand jury this past week.

"Barricades are being set up around Manhattan Criminal Court — as our nation awaits an announcement on whether President Donald J. Trump will be INDICTED despite having committed NO CRIME," a Trump email said.

The area outside the courthouses were a de-



serted look Friday as the week wrapped up without the grand jury indictment that could charge Trump. While Trump has called on his supporters to protest against the indictment, there were no demonstrators outside the courthouses as the week concluded.

There are expectations that the grand jury could meet Monday, when pro-Trump supporters, as well as protesters, could gather again in lower Manhattan, along with hordes of camera persons and journalists, intently waiting for the possible indictment and keeping an eye on its aftermath.

On Friday it was business as usual in and outside the court premises as New Yorkers went

about their business, tourists stopped by the imposing court stairs to click pictures, newly-wed couples posed for photos after their marriage ceremonies in the court and police and a handful of media persons stood nearby monitoring developments.

Parimal Prasad, part of a marriage party that came out of the courthouse, said Trump should be indicted and "treated just like any other citizen." "If the court finds him guilty, he should be behind bars," he said. Prasad said he is not too concerned about the possibility of violence and protests if and when Trump is indicted "because the law enforcement agencies will take care of that." Another resident, who did not wish to give his name, said Trump's indictment is "long-overdue" and voiced hope that "things will be safe" in and around the city.

Benjamin, a student at New York University, who lives across the road from the criminal courthouses, said he has noticed a "lot of hysteria" over the past few days about Trump.

"I've lived in the area for about four years and have never seen this much preparation around the courthouses," he said.

UNITED NATIONS, March 25 (AP): Humanity's survival depends on how people manage water, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Friday at the end of a three-day conference on global water resources during which developing nations made urgent calls for help with cleaner drinking water and better sanitation. "All of humanity's hopes for the future depend, in some way, on charting a new course to sustainably manage and conserve water," Guterres said in his closing remarks.

This includes rational use of water for agriculture and more aggressive action against climate change, he said, and water "needs to be at the center of the global political agenda." The U.N. World Water Development Report, issued on the eve of the conference, says 26% of the world's population —



2 billion people — don't have access to safe drinking water and 46% — 3.6 billion people — lack access to basic sanitation. U.N. research also shows that almost half the world's people will suffer severe water stress by 2030. The conference included many verbal pledges to improve water supplies, but fewer detailed commitments translating ambition into improved daily life for ordinary people.

"We have such beautiful, ambitious policies, but in a way they are unfeasible," said Lina Taing, senior researcher at the global think

tank United Nations University. She said when it comes to getting people clean water and sanitation, "we know that we are completely off track." Taing said the world needs to increase its actions "four times." Throughout the conference, water-stressed nations, particularly those in the developing world, told U.N. members of their need for international aid to provide their people with drinking water and sanitation systems.

"Waging a war on two fronts simultaneously, to address water issues and climate change, is no mean feat, especially for a small island nation like Kiribati which has very limited resources at its disposal," said Teburoro Tito, U.N. representative from the island nation of fewer than 200,000 people in the middle of the Pacific. He said Kiribati was particularly ill-equipped to respond to natural disasters.

New Zealand tells China its concern on lethal aid to Russia

BEIJING, March 25 (AP): New Zealand foreign minister Nanaia Mahuta has expressed concern to China over any provision of lethal aid to support Russia in its war against Ukraine during a meeting with her Chinese counterpart. Her press office on Saturday detailed Mahuta's cautionary remarks in Beijing, days after Chinese President Xi Jinping concluded his trip to Moscow, a warm affair in which Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin praised each other and spoke of a profound friendship. Mahuta's four-day trip, which began Wednesday, was the first made by a New Zealand foreign minister to Beijing since 2018 but it came at an awkward time as Xi visited Moscow the same week to give Putin a diplomatic boost after the International Criminal Court said it wants to put him on trial for alleged war crimes. On the Ukraine war, Mahuta reiterated her government's condemnation of Moscow's "illegal invasion" to her counterpart Qin Gang.

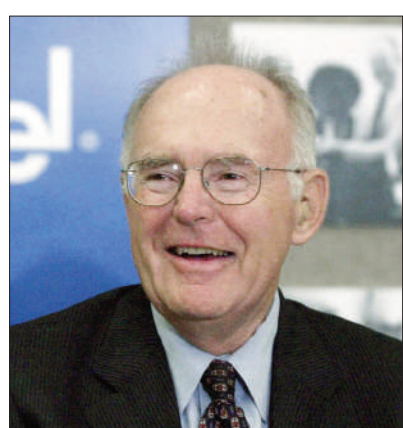
SAN FRANCISCO, March 25 (AP): Gordon Moore, the Intel Corp. co-founder who set the breakneck pace of progress in the digital age with a simple 1965 prediction of how quickly engineers would boost the capacity of computer chips, has died. He was 94.

Moore died Friday at his home in Hawaii, according to Intel and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

Moore, who held a PhD in chemistry and physics, made his famous observation — now known as "Moore's Law" — three years before he helped start Intel in 1968. It appeared among a number of articles about the future written for the now-defunct Electronics magazine by experts in various fields.

The prediction, which Moore said he plotted out on graph paper based on what had been happening with chips at the time, said the capacity and complexity of integrated circuits would double every year.

Strictly speaking, Moore's observation



referred to the doubling of transistors on a semiconductor. But over the years, it has been applied to hard drives, computer monitors and other electronic devices, holding that roughly every 18 months a new generation of products makes their predecessors obsolete.

It became a standard for the tech in-

dustry's progress and innovation.

"It's the human spirit. It's what made Silicon Valley," Carver Mead, a retired California Institute of Technology computer scientist who coined the term "Moore's Law" in the early 1970s, said in 2005. "It's the real thing."

Moore later became known for his philanthropy when he and his wife established the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, which focuses on environmental conservation, science, patient care and projects in the San Francisco Bay area. It has donated more than USD 5.1 billion to charitable causes since its founding in 2000.

"Those of us who have met and worked with Gordon will forever be inspired by his wisdom, humility and generosity," foundation president Harvey Fineberg said in a statement.

Moore was born in California in 1929. As a boy, he took a liking to chemistry sets. After getting his PhD from the California University of Technology in

1954, he worked briefly as a researcher at Johns Hopkins University. His entry into microchips began when he went to work for William Shockley, who in 1956 shared the Nobel Prize for physics for his work inventing the transistor. Less than two years later, Moore and seven colleagues left Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory after growing tired of its namesake's management practices.

The defection by the "traitorous eight," as the group came to be called, planted the seeds for Silicon Valley's renegade culture, in which engineers who disagreed with their colleagues didn't hesitate to become competitors.

The Shockley defectors in 1957 created Fairchild Semiconductor, which became one of the first companies to manufacture the integrated circuit, a refinement of the transistor.

Fairchild supplied the chips that went into the first computers that astronauts used aboard spacecraft.

In 1968, Moore and Robert Noyce,

one of the eight engineers who left Shockley, again struck out on their own. With USD 500,000 of their own money and the backing of venture capitalist Arthur Rock, they founded Intel, a name based on joining the words "integrated" and "electronics."

Moore became Intel's chief executive in 1975. His tenure as CEO ended in 1987, though he remained chairman for another 10 years. He was chairman emeritus from 1997 to 2006.

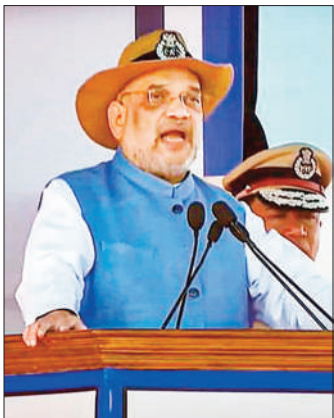
He received the National Medal of Technology from President George H.W. Bush in 1990 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush in 2002.

Despite his wealth and acclaim, Moore remained known for his modesty. In 2005, he referred to Moore's Law as "a lucky guess that got a lot more publicity than it deserved."

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Betty, sons Kenneth and Steven, and four grandchildren.

Victory over Left-wing extremism looks imminent, says Amit Shah

'The security vacuum in Bihar and Jharkhand was on the verge of extinction'



JAGDALPUR, March 25 (PTI): Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the fight against Left-wing extremism (LWE) seems to be in the final stage of victory in the country and the supreme sacrifices made by the CRPF personnel while battling the menace has a big role in it.

Speaking at the 84th Raising Day event of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), he said security forces have put up a strong fight against the LWE in the last nine years and achieved success on all fronts.

Highlighting the role of CRPF in the fight against extremism, he said the credit of wiping out hindrances in the path of development in Maoist-hit areas goes to the CRPF personnel.

"The fight against Left-wing extremism seems to be in the final stages of victory and the supreme sacrifice made by your family members has a huge contribution in it. The victory saga will be written in golden letters remembering their sacrifices," Shah said, addressing the relatives of martyred personnel present on the occasion.

"As I am in Bastar today, I want to tell you that our security forces have fought strongly against LWE in the last nine years and achieved success on all fronts. They have not only attained victory in pushing them (LWE elements) to the back foot, but also facilitated development to reach to tribals..." he said.

"Extremists were hindrances in the construction of schools, roads, hospitals and fair price shops and installation of mobile towers. As a home minister I wanted to say the credit to wipe hindrances to these development works in Maoist-hit areas only goes to the CRPF personnel," he added.

Shah said the CRPF has also displayed an example of organisational skill by establishing coordination with the local police and carrying out joint operations

against the activities of naxalites. To check inter-state movement of naxalites, the CRPF constituted joint task forces in coordination with the police of different states, set up joint camps and established security in tri-junctions areas, he added.

The union minister also claimed that the security vacuum in Bihar and Jharkhand was on the verge of coming to an end and it became possible due to the CRPF and the local police (involved in anti-Maoist operations there).

Incidents of LWE violence declined by 76 per cent in the country as compared to 2010 and at the same time loss of lives (of civilians and security personnel) also went down by 78 per cent, he added.

Hailing the role of CRPF in peaceful conduct of elections, he also said democracy can only survive when it is protected in a dedicated manner.

Noting the role of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), he said the two agencies have been acting strongly to stop funding to LWE.

Highlighting the measures taken by the Central government in the interest of the central armed police forces (CAPFs), Shah said the Modi government has been focusing on modernization of CRPF.

He said the Modi government is committed to providing facilities to security forces and standing with them in their pain.

Shah said that people of the country expect that the force will continue to fight diligently till the LWE is wiped out from the country.

He noted that the CRPF's annual celebration is being held for the first time in an LWE-affected area and that too in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh.

The event was held at Karanpur camp of the 201st battalion of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), an elite unit of the CRPF, which is located around 20 km away from Jagdalpur, the headquarter of Bastar district.

Bastar division, which has been struggling with the LWE for the last over three decades, comprises seven districts - Bastar, Kanker, Kondagaon, Sukma, Dantewada, Narayanpur and Bijapur.

The CRPF is extensively deployed in the south Bastar region that comprises Sukma, Dantewada and Bijapur districts, which have witnessed several major Maoist attacks and counter-offensive operations by security forces led by the CRPF.

Lalu Prasad's MP daughter Misa Bharti appears before ED

NEW DELHI, March 25 (PTI): RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's MP daughter Misa Bharti appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Delhi on Saturday for questioning in the railways land-for-jobs linked money laundering case, officials said.

Bharti, 46, is a Rajya Sabha MP of the Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD). Her brother and Bihar deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav deposed for questioning before the CBI in Delhi on Saturday in the same case.

Both the central agencies had recently initiated action in the case, with the CBI questioning Lalu Prasad and his wife and former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi



and the ED carrying out raids against the RJD chief's family.

The Enforcement Directorate, after the searches, said it seized "unaccounted cash" of ₹ 1 crore and detected proceeds of crime worth ₹ 600 crore.

It said the investigation was un-

Plea in SC challenging automatic disqualification of lawmakers

Members of Parliament are the voice of people and they uphold the right to freedom of speech and expression of millions of those who have elected them

NEW DELHI, March 25 (PTI): A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the "automatic disqualification" of lawmakers upon their conviction and being sentenced to a jail term for two years or more according to section 8(3) of the Representation of the People Act.

The plea, filed by a Kerala-based social activist, said the immediate reason for approaching the apex court was a recent development related to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's disqualification as a member of Parliament from the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency, after he was convicted by a court in Gujarat's Surat in a 2019 criminal defamation case. The petitioner, Aabha Murallidharan, has sought a declaration that the automatic disqualification under section 8(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 is ultra vires the Constitution for being "arbitrary" and "illegal".

The petition has claimed that an automatic disqualification of people's representatives of elected legislative bodies restrains them from "freely discharging their duties cast



upon them by the voters of their respective constituencies, which is against the principles of democracy". "The present scenario provides a blanket disqualification, irrespective of the nature, gravity and seriousness of the offences, allegedly against the concerned member, and provides for an 'automatic' disqualification, which is against the principles of natural justice since various convictions are reversed at the appellate stage and under such circumstances, the valuable time of a member, who is discharging his duties towards the public at large, shall be rendered futile," the plea, filed through advocate

Deepak Prakash, said. Regarding Gandhi's disqualification, the plea said the conviction has been challenged, but in light of the operations of the present disqualification rules under the 1951 Act, the stage of appeal, the nature of the offences, the gravity of the offences and the impact of the same over the society and the country are not being considered, and in a blanket manner, an automatic disqualification has been ordered.

It said members of Parliament are the voice of people and they uphold the right to freedom of speech and expression of millions of their supporters who have elected them. "All that the petitioner and the petition wish to establish is that the right under Article 19(1)(a) enjoyed by a member of Parliament is an extension of the voice of millions of his supporters," it said. The plea said the provision ignores the first schedule of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) on "classification of offences", which can be categorised under two headings -- cognisable and non-cognisable and bailable and non-bailable. The plea said the grounds for

disqualification ought to be specific with the nature of offences as specified under the CrPC and not in a "blanket form", as is currently in force according to section 8(3) of the 1951 Act. It said the apex court had, in the case of Lily Thomas versus Union of India, declared as ultra vires the Constitution section 8(4) of the 1951 Act, which said the disqualification of a lawmaker on conviction shall not take effect until three months have elapsed from the date or, if within that period an appeal or application for revision is brought in respect of the conviction or sentence, until that appeal or application is disposed of by a court.

The plea alleged that the Lily Thomas verdict is being "blatantly misused for wreaking personal vengeance by political parties".

The petition said if the offence of defamation under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which attracts a maximum punishment of two years in jail, is not removed singularly from the sweeping effect of the Lily Thomas judgement, it will have a "chilling effect on the right of representation of the citizens".

PM's effigy burnt during Cong protest against Rahul's disqualification



WAYANAD (KERALA), March 25 (PTI): Wayanad on Saturday witnessed strong protests, including the burning of an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi by Congress workers and its youth and student wings, over the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi as an MP who represented the constituency.

Congress leaders, including MLA T Siddique, who were part of the protest march to the office of BSNL in Kalpetta in Wayanad, were by force removed from the site and carried away by the police to their bus.

Besides them, several Youth Congress (YC) and KSU leaders were also arrested and removed from the protest site.

The leaders and workers of the party and its youth and student wings, after marching to the BSNL office had sat down on the road in front of it, which led to the blocking of traffic movement, according to visuals aired on TV channels.

Some YC workers were also seen climbing over police barricades into the BSNL office compound.

derway to unearth more investments made on behalf of Prasad's family and their associates in various sectors, including real estate, at various places.

The alleged scam pertains to the period when Prasad was the railway minister in the UPA-1 government at the Centre.

It was alleged that during the period 2004-09, various persons were appointed to Group D positions in various zones of the Indian Railways, and in lieu, the persons concerned transferred their land to the family members of Lalu Prasad Yadav, the then minister of railways, and A K Infosystems Pvt Ltd, a beneficiary company in this case.

Contrast between govt and judiciary doesn't mean hostility: Rijju

'One can't exist without the other. Court must have proper decorum and conducive atmosphere'

MADURAI, March 25 (PTI): Denying any clash between the government and judiciary as speculated in the media, union law and justice minister Kiren Rijju on Saturday contended that differences were inevitable in a democracy but they should not be construed as confrontation.

The minister inaugurated the Chief Judicial Magistrate court, Mayiladuthurai, in the presence of Chief Justice of India Justice DY Chandrachud, Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin and Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court Justice T Raja here.

"We have differences, but it doesn't mean there is confrontation. It sends a wrong message across the world. I want to make it clear that there is no problem between different organs of the State. There are signs of robust democratic actions, which are not a crisis," he emphasised.

Pointing to some media reports of alleged differences between the government and the Supreme Court or the legislature and judiciary, the union minister said, "we must understand that we are in a democracy. There are bound to be certain differences in terms of some outlook but you can't have conflicting positions. This doesn't mean confrontation. We are the largest democracy in the world."

The Centre would support the Indian judiciary to be independent, he said, and called upon the bench and the bar -- being two sides of the same coin -- to work together to ensure that the court complex is not divided. "One can't exist without the other. Court must have proper decorum and conducive atmosphere."



He further said, "Everybody can't think alike."

"We are not ruled by a dictatorial king, so the difference of opinion can't be termed as a crisis in Indian democracy. We can criticise each other but when it comes to national interest we must be one," he stressed.

His ministry was involved in developing a common core vocabulary where Indian languages will have certain common usages, purely technical in nature, soon, to ensure that common people receive orders in their respective languages.

Lauding the courts in Tamil Nadu for their excellent performance during the pandemic in delivering justice to the people, he said judicial infrastructure in Tamil Nadu was comparatively better than in many States in India.

Recently, he visited Puducherry and found

that the kind of work being done to improve the judicial infrastructure was possible only when the judiciary and government worked together in understanding the issues and tried to solve them.

Talking about fund allocations, he said last year the government had allotted ₹ 9,000 crore for district and other courts in the State, and his department was pushing hard for utilisation of funds so that more could be sought.

"In some States, I realised that requirement of court and understanding of government has some shortcomings," Rijju said.

The government would like the Indian judiciary to go completely paperless in the near future.

"With the coming of technological support, everything can be synchronised so that the judge will not have to postpone cases for want of evidence, or bunch cases and other issues. Works are under process and I could sense we are going towards a major solution (for pendency)," he said.

There may be separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary but that did not mean they shouldn't work together, the Law Minister asserted.

"We should work as a team to identify and ensure that challenges like pendency of cases are tackled," he said, adding, "In India, every judge is handling 50-60 cases every day. If I had to deal with so many cases, the mental pressure would be tremendous. That is why sometimes there is constant criticism that judges are unable to deliver justice, which is not true."

Cong says it will launch 'Jan-Andolan' across country

NEW DELHI, March 25 (PTI): The Congress on Friday announced a nationwide agitation against Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha, alleging that the government acted with lightning speed to "gag" him, and called for taking forward the opposition unity in a systematic manner.

Soon after Gandhi's disqualification by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the Congress leadership got into a huddle at the party headquarters and deliberated on the way forward.

Top Congress leaders, including former AICC chief Sonia Gandhi, party president Mallikarjun Kharge, general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, K C Venugopal, Jairam Ramesh, Rajiv Shukla and Tariq Anwar, and senior leaders P Chidambaram, Anand Sharma, Ambika Soni, Mukul Wasnik, Salman Khurshid and Pawan Kumar Bansal among others attended the meeting where the party decided to take this forward into a "Jan Andolan".

Congress general secretary Ramesh said, "We will go all over the country as Rahul Gandhi was deliberately disqualified for raising his voice against the Modi government on the Adani issue, on the government's foreign policy and the clean chit given to China for incursions at the border."

Ramesh said the BJP was rattled with the success of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, which, he said, became a movement.

The Congress leadership has welcomed the statements of support of all opposition leaders, he said, and asserted that "we should now take the issue of opposition unity forward in a systematic way". "It was noted today that many opposition parties have condemned the action taken unilaterally with such lightning speed to disqualify Rahul Gandhi," he said.

"Yes, there was a consensus that we should now take the job of building opposition unity in a systematic way. Every day Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge has been meeting floor leaders of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. So we are coordinating in Parliament and now coordination has to be outside Parliament," he said.

"It is also heartening to note that parties which were not part of this floor coordination have now issued public statements condemning this action of disqualification of Rahul Gandhi," Ramesh said.

The Congress' state units and frontal organisations will launch programmes across the country and they will begin from Monday with a countrywide agitation, he said.

"We will go all over the country saying that Rahul Gandhi has been deliberately disqualified as he has been raising his voice against the Modi government on various issues, including demonetisation, GST, foreign policy, and the government's intentions and policies," Ramesh said.

Countdown for OneWeb India-2 mission begins

The lift off of the 43.5 metre tall rocket is scheduled today at 0900 hrs from Satish Dhawan Space Centre

SRIHARIKOTA, March 25 (PTI): The countdown for the launch of 36 satellites on-board LVM3-M3/OneWeb India-2 mission has commenced, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said on Saturday. Network Access Associates Ltd, United Kingdom (OneWeb Group Company) has signed an agreement with ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd to launch 72 satellites into Low-Earth orbits (LEO). The first set of 36 satellites for OneWeb Group company was launched on October 23, 2022.

OneWeb is a global communication network powered from the space, enabling connectivity for governments and businesses. The company which has Bharti Enterprises as a major investor, is implementing the constellation of low earth orbit satellites.

In a notification on Saturday, ISRO said, "LVM3-M3/OneWeb India-2 mission. The countdown has commenced."

According to OneWeb, Sunday's launch would be the 18th launch and third this year and it



would be completing the first generation of LEO (Low Earth Orbit) constellation. For ISRO this would be the second launch in 2023 after the successful launch of SSLV-D2/EOS07 mission in February.

OneWeb said, "17 launches completed. One pivotal launch remains - OneWeb Launch 18. As we launch another 36 satellites with our colleagues at ISRO and NewSpace India Ltd this weekend (March 26), we will reach 616 satellites in-orbit more than enough satellites to launch global services later this year."

It could be helpful to boost immunity or strength or to address the symptoms of a disease: Prof Sood India to discuss its indigenous medicinal knowledge in G20 summit

NEW DELHI, March 25 (PTI): In a bid to bolster the fight against future pandemics, India's top scientific advisor Prof Ajay Kumar Sood has urged G20 countries to collaborate in developing vaccine platforms by cooperating with each other in the pre-competitive research and development phase.

In a video interview with PTI, Sood, who will chair the Chief Scientific Advisors' Roundtable (CSAR) of G20 countries next week, said India will also present its traditional systems of medicine and seek to harness the knowledge of indigenous communities of different countries.

Making a strong pitch for collaboration among G20 nations in drug development, Sood, the principal scientific advisor to the government, said there is enormous scope for cooperation in the pre-competitive research and development space.

"Once it reaches a certain level of maturity, of course different countries will have their take. But pre-competitive R&D (research and development) space is what we think should be something where we should work," he said.



Sood identified emerging technologies for environmental surveillance as another area for cooperation.

"This is something which has to be done by all countries. A lot of it is happening but there are many other countries which will need a helping hand. So, we should be ready to take everyone along," he said.

Pre-competitive collaboration involves two or more companies operating within the same industry coming together to address a shared problem or pain point that doesn't impact direct business competition or contribute to unfair advantage.

"When there is a pandemic, you can't live in isolation. We have seen it in

Covid, all countries will have to fight it together and it has to be eradicated or controlled at all places. If it does not, then it will linger on and that is what you are seeing for Covid," Sood said.

He said the CSAR meeting in Uttarakhand's Ramnagar from March 28-30 will also focus on harnessing the benefits of traditional knowledge in healthcare.

"Traditional medicine has a very important role to play but it should be put in scientific context. All that work has to be done. When you have traditional medicines, how can we put it on a platform where it meets the acceptance of science," he said.

Sood said India has a very rich tradition of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani and all of them have a role to play. It could be to build up immunity or strength or to address the symptoms of a disease, adding "...whatever you think, it is possible". "We should not try to limit ourselves to only what we call modern medicine," he said, making a strong pitch for diversity in various systems of medicine. Sood also talked about harnessing the knowledge repositories of indigenous communities in G20 coun-

tries for the benefit of humankind. "These are very, very old traditions. The goal should be, what we call traditional knowledge, it is really tested over centuries. It is very important that we take this traditional knowledge along with the other streams," Sood said.

Sood said the Ayush ministry is working on scientific validation of traditional systems of medicine. "The Ayush ministry is doing that. This work was coined a few years back -- ayurvedic biology -- to address the issue of scientific validity. I am sure that in other countries there are parallel efforts. Because these tribal, traditional things are also very important and we need to learn from them," Sood said. The three-day meeting in Ramnagar will focus on four broad themes -- Opportunities in One Health for better disease control and pandemic preparedness; Synergising global efforts to expand the access to scholarly scientific knowledge; Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in science and technology (S&T); and an Institutional mechanism for inclusive, continuous and action-oriented global S&T policy dialogue.

Satwik-Chirag duo enters semi-final of Swiss Open

BASEL, March 25 (PTI): Dynamic Indian doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has entered the semi-finals of the Swiss Open Super Series 300 badminton event defeating the Danish pair of Jeppe Bay and Lasse Mohede in three hard-fought games.

On Friday night, the Indian pair fought off the challenge in 54 minutes, winning 15-21, 21-11, 21-14.

The victory came after a hard-fought 84-minute quarter-final battle and now they will face the Malaysian pair of Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi late on Saturday night.

Satwik-Chirag are the only Indian contenders left in a tournament where the likes of PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen suffered early defeats.

The Indian pair didn't have a great start as they lost the first game easily at 15-21. The duo did pull things up in the middle of the game, reducing the deficit to just one point as they trailed 15-16.

However, the Danish pair won six consecutive points to wrap up the first game with ease.

Mané scores on return to action with Senegal

CAPE TOWN March 25 (AP): Sadio Mané put his World Cup disappointment behind him by scoring on his return to international action as Senegal swept past Mozambique 5-1 in African Cup of Nations qualifying.

Mané darted behind the defense to poke home a pass by Youssouf Sabaly with his left foot for the reigning African champion's second goal in Dakar on Friday.

Mohamed Salah netted Egypt's opener in a 2-0 win over Malawi.

And there was also a successful return for Ivory Coast striker Sébastien Haller, who scored to help his country beat Comoros 3-1 in his first international since his comeback after receiving treatment for testicular cancer. Mané smiled as he celebrated his goal with teammates, who had to do without their star player at the World Cup last year after he was injured just before the tournament. Without Mané, Senegal was knocked out by England in the round of 16 at the World Cup.

THE KIWIS MADE 274 BATTING FIRST AT EDEN PARK

New Zealand beat Sri Lanka by 198 runs in 1st one-day match

AUCKLAND, March 25 (AP): Harry Shipley took 5-31 as Sri Lanka was bowled out for 76 on Saturday to lose the first one-day international against New Zealand by 198 runs.

New Zealand made 274 batting first on a drop-in pitch at Eden Park and Sri Lanka was dismissed for its lowest-ever ODI total against New Zealand, its fifth-lowest in all one-day internationals.

Sri Lanka lost its first two wickets at 14, its third at 20 and its fourth and fifth at 31 as its innings unraveled inside the first 10 overs.

When a break was taken after 14.2 overs to honor victims, rescuers and recovery workers involved in Cyclone Gabrielle which battered New Zealand's North Island on Feb. 14, Sri Lanka was 49-7.

Wickets continued to fall steadily and when Sri Lanka was all out after only 19.5 overs, it was for the second lowest one-day international total at Eden Park. Angelo Mathews, who was playing his first ODI in two years, was one of only three Sri Lanka batsmen to reach double figures.

Sri Lanka's first wicket fell to a runout in the sixth over. Shipley took his first wicket in spectacular style when his angled delivery to opener Pathum Nissanka



jagged back through the batter's shot and uprooted his leg stump.

He also dismissed Kusal Mendis (0), Charith Asalanka (9), Chamika Karunaratne 11 and captain Dasun Shanaka for a first-ball duck. Shipley was playing

his first match for New Zealand in New Zealand after making his debut in India late last year.

"It was pretty cool, not what I was expecting to do when I came to the ground," Shipley said. "The batters said there was enough

there and the score we had on the board was going to be tricky so that gave us confidence to go out there and do that."

Shanaka said his team went out to bat confident that New Zealand's total was "chaseable" at Eden Park which is noted for its short boundaries.

"The way we started, I thought it was going to be a very good game," he said. "The way Shipley bowled, the movement he got and the bounce was responsible for the things that happened tonight so credit should be given to him."

New Zealand wouldn't have been confident when its innings ended at 274, not a massive score by Eden Park standards. Finn Allen top-scored with 51 and Rachin Ravindra made 49 on debut as New Zealand posted what seemed a moderate total.

South Africa-born opener Chad Bowes, on debut at 30, struck the first ball of the match and his international career for four to announce that intention. But after reaching 108-2 in the 19th over, New Zealand lost three wickets for 44 runs, its momentum slowed and couldn't be entirely recovered. After Allen, whose fifth ODI half century came from 47 balls, several New Zealand batters made starts but couldn't go on to produce innings which carried New Zealand to a higher total.

Manu Bhaker wins India's sixth medal, China claims sixth Gold

BHOPAL, March 25 (PTI): Olympian shooter Manu Bhaker clinched the 25m pistol bronze medal at the ISSF Pistol/Rifle World Cup to take India's medal tally to seven, including a gold, here on Saturday.

Bhaker, the multiple World Cup medal winner, had shot 290 in the precision round on Friday and entered the second day of the competition well placed for the rapid round.

In the rapid round on Saturday, she again shot three superb series of 98, 99 and 97 to aggregate 294 and advance to the ranking round placed third.

Another Indian, Esha Singh, who had shot 292 in precision, scored 289 in rapid to aggregate 581 and advance to the ranking round placed eighth.

In the ranking match 1, Bhaker qualified for the medal round as the third qualifier with an aggregate of 14 points, along with Germany's Doreen Vennekamp (14 points), while Esha was eliminated.

Two shooters from ranking match -- China's Ziyue Du and Yaxuan Xiong -- qualified for the medal round with 12 points each, to make up the quartet vying for the top position. In a tough medal match, Bhaker was no match for Doreen (30 points) and Ziyue Du (29 points) who won the gold and silver, while the Indian could aggregate only 20 points to finish her campaign with a bronze.

This is the first medal in the ongoing World Cup for Bhaker, who had failed to impress in her favourite event, air pistol, on the opening day of the competition, finishing 16th with 568 points.

China continued their domination in the tournament, winning a sixth gold medal out of the eight decided so far. The final competition day comes up on Sunday with two more finals left to be played -- the women's 3P and the men's 25m rapid fire pistol.

Aishwary finishes fourth Du Linshu won the first medal event of competition on day four, defeating Hungary's Istvan Peni 16-10 in the men's 3P gold medal clash. Seasoned Swiss 3P specialist Jan Lochbihler won the bronze when he edged out home favourite Aishwary Tomar in the top eight ranking round.

He finished the 40-shot round with a score of 407.4 while Aishwary, courtesy three five-shot series in the 40s in the final standing position, finished with a score of 405.5.

Du topped the round with 410.7 while Istvan was second with 408.2. The Indian had earlier topped the 60-shot qualification round with a score of 591.

China now has 10 medals -- six gold, two silver and two bronze. India is placed second with the lone gold won by Sarabjot Singh in the men's 10m air pistol and one silver and four bronze medals.

KASA Golden Baby Football League begins



HT Bureau
DIPHU, March 25: The Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) has organised KASA Golden Baby Football League for Under-10 and Under-12 children, the competition which kicked off at KASA stadium here on Saturday.

The tournament is recognized by All India Football Federation and Approved by Assam Football

Association. Executive Member (EM), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Ritesh Engli inaugurating the competition said Football is a beautiful game that everyone wants to enjoy.

"The children playing in this competition today will become the future players of Karbi Anglong. Wishing an enjoyable game to all children here," he said.

The inaugural programme was attended by KASA general secretary, Dr Pankaj Teron; assistant general secretary, Prodeep Ronghang and football secretary, Horen Engti.

Till Saturday in Under-12 there are 8 teams and Under-10 are 7 teams participating in the competition. A total of 135 players have registered their names with 16 coaches.

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Jakve Asong (NGO), district nodal agency for Mission LIFE is organising a poster making competition with the theme 'Sustainable ecosystem' on 26th March, 2023 at KPH, Taralangso, Diphu. In this regard all eco-clubs under Jakve Asong, district nodal agency requests for your participation in the competition.

Competition will start from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Kindly please note:

Participants will have to bring their own requirements for making a poster. TA will be provided to the participants as well as to the teacher accompanying the students.

For more details please contact:

Ronard Bey
Co-ordinator (Eco Club)
Karbi Anglong District Nodal Agency
Contact No.6001585977.

Afghanistan beat Pakistan for first time in a T20

SHARJAH, March 25 (AP): Afghanistan defeated Pakistan in a Twenty20 for the first time on Friday after the latter was restricted to 92-9.

Pakistan, without five rested frontline players including captain Babar Azam, struggled on a slow and low pitch at Sharjah Cricket Stadium against the Afghans, whose six bowlers shared all nine wickets.

Afghanistan overcame falling to 45-4 in the 10th over to cruise home at 98-4 and win by six wickets with more than two overs to spare.

Mohammad Nabi raised Afghanistan's first victory over Pakistan in five attempts over the past decade with a straight six over long off.

"Pleasure to win, as we've always lost against them by small margins," Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan said. "Wearing Afghanistan colors and leading the team in a win is a proud achievement. We never know the wicket... (but the) mindset was... to adjust accordingly."

Afghanistan has a chance at a first series win in the remaining two T20s on Sunday and Monday.

None of the Pakistan batters could accelerate on a two-paced pitch and mostly fell to soft dismissals.

In the absence of formidable

openers Babar and Mohammad Rizwan, replacements Saim Ayub and Mohammad Harris couldn't gauge the low bounce and fell within the batting powerplay while attempting extravagant shots.

Abdullah Shafique was pinned by Azmatullah Omarzai for 0 and Tayyab Tahir, one of four making their Pakistan debut, lobbed a return catch to Rashid Khan.

When Azam Khan was also out for a duck on debut, Pakistan was 41-5 in the eighth over.

Pakistan was in danger of its lowest T20 total of 74 in 2012 against Australia at Dubai but Imad Wasim top-scored with 18. "Sometimes this can happen due to youngsters being nervous, but they need to be given chances," interim captain Shadab Khan said. "As professionals, we can't give excuses regarding conditions, we have to learn from the loss here."

Unorthodox spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman took 2-9 and Fazalhaq Farooqi 2-13.

Pakistan fast bowling debutant Ihsanullah got two wickets in his first over with short-pitched deliveries.

Afghanistan was soon four down, but Nabi, 38 not out, and Najibullah Zadran, 17 not out, got them over the finish line.



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