

Gita is a life code and spiritual beacon for the Humanity; putting the teachings of Gita into practice is important: President Murmu

New Delhi (KCN): The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, graced the International Gita Seminar in Kurukshetra, Haryana today (November 29, 2022). She also launched the 'Mukhyamantri Swasthya Sarvekshan Yojana'; and Haryana e-



ticketing projects for all public road transport facilities as well as laid the foundation stone for a Medical College and Hospital in Sirsa through virtual mode.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that Shrimad Bhagavadgita is a global book in true sense. It has been translated into many languages. This is the most popular book of India. The number of commentaries that have been written on Gita would hardly have been written on any other book. Just as Yoga is India's gift to the entire world community, Gita is the spiritual gift of India to the entire humanity. The Gita is a life code and spiritual beacon for humanity.

The President said that Gita teaches us to work hard and not worry about result. Working hard without self interest is the right path in life. Life becomes meaningful in doing work, renouncing both inaction and desire. To be alike in happiness and sorrow, to accept gain and

UK summons China's ambassador after arrest of BBC journalist

LONDON(KCN): Britain on Tuesday summoned the Chinese ambassador in London for a rebuke after the arrest and alleged assault of a BBC journalist covering Covid protests, government sources said.

Zheng Zeguang was called into the foreign



loss with equal sense, not to be affected by



honour or dishonour, and to maintain balance in all circumstances - is very useful message of Gita.

The President said that Shrimad Bhagavadgita is a book that promotes fervour in adverse circumstances and communicates hope in depression. This is a life-building book. She urged the organizers of the International Gita Mahotsav to make continuous efforts for pro-



motion and dissemination of the message of Gita. She emphasized that putting the teachings of Gita into practice is more important. The President said that she was happy to launch the health survey scheme and Open Loop Ticketing System and lay the foundation stone for Medical College and Hospital in Sirsa. She said that these initiatives remind us of the saying in the Gita 'sarva-bhuta-hite rata?' which means those engaged in the welfare of all beings deserve the grace of God. She appreciated the Government of Haryana for these people-welfare initiatives.

office after the incident involving Ed Lawrence in Shanghai, which Foreign Secretary James Cleverly on Monday called "deeply disturbing". Lawrence was hauled away by police late Sunday while filming

a protest against Covid CONTINUED ON: P-7

Teachers Stir rocks house

Bhubaneswar: The ongoing protest of teachers over their three charter demands has disturbed the House proceedings for the second day on Tuesday.

As Opposition Congress and BJP members created ruckus in the House from the beginning of the day, Speaker BK Arukha adjourned the House for several times including the last one till 4PM without transacting any business.

As soon as the House assembled for the day at 10.30 AM, Opposition Congress members first rushed to the well of the Assembly and raised slogans against the State Government.

Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati stood up on a chair to know the response of the State Government on Speaker Shri Arukha's ruling on the teachers strike which entered the third day, today.

Speaker Shri Arukha appealed to the Opposition members to go back to their seats and raise the issue during the zero hour but the Opposition remained adamant on their demand. Later, BJP too joined the protest.

As the House witnessed ruckus, the Speaker first adjourned it at 10.33 AM till 11.30 AM. The House reassembled at 11.30 AM

after the adjournment but was again adjourned at 11.33 AM till 11.45 AM due to protest from the Opposition members. The Speaker then

said the government is well aware of the teachers' problem. He said on Monday the S&ME Secretary had a discussion with the leaders of the striking teachers and

due to teachers' protests. We want a debate in the assembly on teachers' issues but School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash is busy campaigning for



convened an all-party meeting to resolve the issue and adjourned the house for ten minutes till 1155 hours.

When the House met at 1155 AM after third adjournment on Tuesday, Congress Legislature Party leader Narashingha Mishra, party MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati and Santosh Singh Saluja drew the attention of the Speaker about the ongoing agitation of the primary teachers and criticized the Government for not responding to the demands of the teachers.

Responding to the Speaker's directive, Science and Technology Minister Ashok Panda in the absence of the School and Mass Education Minister,

on Tuesday the State Chief Secretary will hold a discussion with the teachers. Shri Panda further said the teachers' demands are linked to some other departments also and the Government is looking into all these aspects.

The Opposition however, continued their slogan shouting despite the reply of the Minister. Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati said they will not allow the house to run as long as the demands of the teachers are not fulfilled.

Speaking to media persons outside the assembly, BJP Chief Whip Mohan Majhi slammed the State Government over the teachers' stir in the State Capital.

"Schools are locked

the Padampur by-poll," Shri Majhi said.

On the other hand, BJD MLA Sashi Bhushan Behera requested the agitating teachers to call off the protest. "The Government is well aware of the plight of the teachers. So, I request them to call off the protest and return back to their homes," he said.

Thousands of Primary teachers from across the state under the banner of United Primary Teachers Federation are resorting to an indefinite dharna at the Mahatma Gandhi Marg since Sunday on their three-point charter of demands which included abolition of the contractual system, introduction of seventh pay scale, grade system and old pension system.

5L Loan for WSHG

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday announced interest-free loan upto Rs 5 lakh for the women self-help group (WSHGs).

Till now, the State Government was providing interest-free loan upto Rs 3 lakh to the SHGs.

The announcement will be implemented retrospectively from April, 2022 and this move would benefit around 70 lakh women associated with six lakh self-help groups.

Describing this as a revolutionary step, the Chief Minister said that through this enhancement, the Mission Shakti groups can establish themselves as Small and Medium Enterprises. The lakhs of SHGs can take big loans to start big business, he said.

He said that women are playing pivotal roles in the transformation of Odisha. Today's de-

cision will play a major role in empowering them and strengthening the local economy, Patnaik said.

Stating that the goal of the state government is to make Mission Shakti members as small and medium entrepreneurs, the Chief Minis-

would be able to establish themselves as successful entrepreneurs.

As per the promise made by the state government, businesses worth Rs 4000 crore to the Mission Shakti groups in the last 3 years, the CM said.

Rs 3 lakh to encourage the Mission Shakti groups, Patnaik said that the state government has provided Rs 500 crore of interest to the bank accounts of four lakh SHGs in this programme.

Describing Mission Shakti as an innovative initiative towards women empowerment, the Chief Minister said that it has brought together 70 lakh mothers of the state through 6 lakh Self Help Groups. To take the movement further, the state government has set up a separate Mission Shakti department and all SHG programs are being implemented through this



ter said that his government has taken initiatives to provide loans of about Rs 50,000 crore to Mission Shakti groups in the next five years.

He hoped that the Mission Shakti groups

In addition to this, loans worth over Rs 17,000 crore have been provided to the SHGs in the last five years, he added.

Stating that the Odisha government has been providing interest-free loan facilities up to

department, he said.

It is worth noting that on June 1, 2020, Mission Shakti Department was established and all the SHG programs of the state were brought under one department.

Books on 'Deba and Debi temple of Barbil' unveiled

Barbil(KCN): The book titled "Deba and Debi Mandir of Barbil", contains over 100 pages on the Hindu temples in Barbil of

Barbil .Writer Rajkishore told the book talks about the temples of Barbil area, their significance and the tales associated

Barbil and out of Barbil, the book will serve as an authentic introduction and will help people get to know about the history behind the

concerned temples with colourful photo and realistic description. Along with pandit Raj Kishore Panda, Braja Kishore Panda



Keonjhar district in Odisha. This book is written by writer Raj Kishore Dash who had earlier written several books like Tulashi, Bandhan and Banam. Calling it an authentic introduction to the ancient temples of

with them. At the book launch, attended by several other intellectual the chief guest Purna Chandra Kar thanked Rajkishore for his work as an lawyer and for working outside the box. He too said that for the people of

temples and will help in increasing religious interest among people. The book narrated on 33 temples and 14 puja mandap of the city after due discussion with the surrounding residents and committee of the

and Padmshri Tulashi Munda were also present as guest of honour in the unveiling ceremony. Sushil Pradhan concluded the ceremony with vote of thanks. Pratap Das and Bini Kar coordinated the meeting.

State Eyes 6 L Cr In Mio

Bhubaneswar(KCN): The State Government is expecting to receive intents worth more than Rs 6 lakh crore during the Make in Odisha (MIO) Conclave, 2022. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will inaugurate the third edition of Odisha's biggest business extravaganza MIO here at Janata Maidan on Wednesday evening. The Conclave will continue till December 4.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday afternoon, Industries Minister Pratap Keshari Deb said that over 11,600 registrations were received by the Government to participate in the Conclave. Principal Secretary Industries Hemant Sharma moderated the Media Meet. Principal Secretary Information & Public Relations & RD Sanjay Kumar Singh was present in the Meet.

"We are expecting to receive investment intents from about 100 big industries. This year, we are also expecting that we will receive more investment than what we have received in past two editions," the Minister said.

In the 2016 edition, the State received over 120 investment intents valued at over Rs. 2 lakh crore while in 2018, the State received investment intentions valued at over Rs. 4 lakh crore. So, in this edition, the State is expecting more than investment intents of Rs 6 lakh crore. Organised by the Government of Odisha, the most awaited global investors' summit of the year will see the gathering of several titans from across various industries, investors and other delegates looking to explore Odisha's investment potentials and maximize them. As part of the Conclave several sessions on various sectors will be held. One among six key focus sectors is Textiles and Apparels. With the purpose to showcase the opportunities and potential of Odisha in the Textiles, Apparels and Technical Textiles sector, there will be two sectoral sessions held on December 2, 2022 to promote the Textiles and Apparels sector.

The first session on "Textile and Apparel" will look at boosting the emergence of Odisha as the textile hub of Eastern India. The second panel discussion on "Sourcing of Handlooms and Handicrafts" will look at promoting and capitalising the global market potential of Odisha's traditional handlooms and handicrafts. Following the sectoral sessions, a fashion show, organized by Boyanika in collaboration with NIFT, will take place on 3rd December 2022 to showcase the handlooms, textiles and apparels from Odisha. The Government of Odisha has made all possible efforts to make this Conclave a grand success, said Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Principal Secretary, Handloom, Textiles and Handicrafts Department. "I urge investors in the apparel and textile including technical textiles sector to come to Odisha and see the ecosystem and the investor friendly policy support for potential investors," he said. Shovan Krishna Sahu, Director of Textiles & Handloom, said, "With leading industry players from apparel, made-ups and technical textiles segments and representatives involved across the value chain of Textiles manufacturing attending and participating in the deliberations, the sessions will witness the State Government's commitment to the development of the sector."

The conclave will ignite to fill the gap between raw material production in the State to the finished product i.e. farm to fashion in coming years.



The organizers have successfully managed to line up 124 speakers and schedule 38 events spanning all the Conclave days.

"This is a massive initiative by the Government where 22 Departments have come together to plan and execute the Conclave," Mr. Deb said.

As a build-up to the Make in Odisha Conclave 22, in the last three months, the Chief Minister has led Government delegations on roadshows to various metros across New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad in India as well as in Dubai.

Senior State Government officials have also held roadshows at Coimbatore, Jamshedpur, Ahmedabad and Lucknow, he said.

Getting a huge response from all these roadshows, the Conclave will see participation from corporate India.

Some of the eminent corporates expected at the Conclave are L N Mittal, Executive Chairman, Arcelor Mittal, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman, Aditya Birla Group, Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta Resources Limited, Sajjan Jindal, Chairman, JSW Group, Naveen Jindal, Chairman, JSPL, T V Narendran, CEO&MD, Tata Steel.

Other than that, representatives from partner countries of Japan, Norway and Germany will also grace the occasion.

DoWR Connects Youth

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Anu Garg, Additional Chief Secretary Water Resources has said that, "Youth, with their high levels of potential and motivation, are best suited to becoming the agents of change for a new, sustainable world. She was addressing the Day Long event organized by the Department of Water Resources Odisha and UNICEF, which was conducted with youth of Youth4Water on 'Meet & Greet: Connect + Network + Collaborate: Ideation and achievement sharing session with youth on pani, swachta & climate change' with 30 youths of Odisha, on 29 November 2022 at Rajiv B h a w a n , Bhubaneswar.

At the outset, she said that the Youth4Water campaign has increased engagement in "newer" areas such as adapting to climate change; mainstreaming gender; and engaging the youths in an optimistic manner. This campaign provides platform for youth to become thought and action leaders. Our future lies in the hands of the youths of the nation. Water & Climate Change challenges need both policy & on-ground solutions. The role of students, & youth in general, becomes very crucial in both. Young people have power to engage with policy makers as well as bring in behavioral changes in the society through grassroots level actions." Youth4Water campaign, through a wide array of activities, aims to join youth, capacitate them and entuse them to become leaders of change for Water Conservation, Climate Resilience and WASH in Odisha.

In this context, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in these fields is a key thrust area in the campaign. Over the past one year, Youth4Water has reached out to thousands of youths through online orientation sessions and value adds to partner activities on innovation. In this session, the winners of Youth4Water Innovation Awards were awarded with certificates by Shrimati Garg, ACS DoWR. Furthermore, the youths brainstormed with the policymakers on how they can contribute to make Odisha water secure. This session was an enriching event for the youths of the state who have been actively engaged in the campaign to become positive change agents. The youths discussed why voices of youth are important and how they can

communicate messages to the masses in simpler language. A youth group came up with an innovative idea on 'digitization of prescriptions in hospitals' to promote a greener environment. They showcased their idea in form of a skit. On the occasion, Shipra Saxena, WASH Specialist at UNICEF India said, "We must amplify messages on climate change & make lives of children & youths better. UNICEF firmly believes in bringing decision makers and influencers together with young people to not only put a spotlight on issues that matter young people the most but also generate additional opportunities for child-focused actions and initiatives."

Dr. Yannam Deepak, a youth participating from Youth4Water said, "Youths are torchbearers for climate action and our voices need to be amplified to raise awareness within the community.

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Spouse shot dead, relatives doubt villagers behind the murder

Barbil(KCN): Two of Keonjhar district from a short range as

Lakshmidhar grocery shop ,out of which two were on motor cycle. However, the reason for the shooting remains unclear while Bolani police is still investigating the incident. As per information that two of the assailants returned to the BRPL road on a bike while the other two ran away through the hills in front of the house. Two of his relative Benudhar Apat and Dayanidhi Apat accused villagers for the incident. According to Dayanaidhi ,they remain aloof from the villagers because of some political reason and the entire villagers are against him after the election. He suspects that the people of the village may be behind the murder. However dead bodies are taken to Barbil CHC for autopsy.



spouse were shot dead by dacoits in Lasarda village under Bolani police station

per information. As per information, at about 8.30pm four dacoits reached near

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Directed by Madhur Bhandarkar, India Lockdown set to premiere on ZEE5 on 2nd December

Kolkata (KCN, Prerna Kothar): ZEE5, India's largest home-grown video streaming platform, is set to premiere its latest original film 'India Lockdown' on 2nd December. Directed by Madhur Bhandarkar, the ZEE5 Original Film stars Shweta Basu Prasad, Aahana Kumra, Prateik Babbar, Sai Tamhankar and Prakash Balewadi in lead roles and Pictures, India Lockdown had its global premiere at IFFI Goa on 21st November and received an overwhelming response. Shot in 2021, the film narrates four parallel stories of plays the role of Mehrunissa, a sex worker in Kamathipura in Mumbai who is forced to adapt to the changes brought about by the lockdown and experiment with new ways of doing her wings cut. Prateik Babbar as Madhav and Sai Tamhankar as Phoolmati are migrant workers who lose their bread and butter in the pandemic and are left to starve or to walk back home as trains and local transports of India Lockdown? Amit Agarwal, the founder of Adarsh Telemedia, hosted the Kolkata Premiere of India Lockdown for his friend and director Madhur Bhandarkar. Amit in the past has backed films like M.S.



Bhandarkar, the direct-to-digital movie, is the first Hindi feature film on covid pandemic and its repercussions on the people of India. Written by Amit Joshi and Aradhana Hrishitaa Bhatt in a cameo. Produced by Dr. Jayantilal Gada of PEN Studios, Madhur Bhandarkar's Bhandarkar Entertainment and Pranav Jain's P J Motions disparate characters who are catapulted into an unforeseen dramatic situation instigated by the lockdown due to the corona pandemic. As seen in the trailer, Shweta Basu Prasad business online. Aahana Kumra plays Moon Alves, a pilot who is used to soaring high in the sky but is suddenly grounded for months together and who for the first time realizes what it is like to have her are shut. And lastly, Prakash Belawadi as Nageshwar, an aged man who is stuck in a different city than his daughter at a critical time of her life. Scared and helpless, will all of them survive the uncertainty Dhoni - The Untold Story and has produced films like Simran starring Kangana Ranaut and Astra (Bengali). 'India Lockdown' is all set to premiere exclusively on ZEE5 from 2nd December 2022

Knowingly or unknowingly, two movements are paralyzed, Panchayatraj and SHG

Two movements in India are hijacked first and then paralyzed to keep poverty as it is and to



carry out sustain scrupulous capitalists' economic policies.

1. Decentralization of political and economic power through three-tier Panchayat Raj where the power narrated in state list and union list are to be given some more power and authorities to panchayats especially mines, forest and revenue, should have come to panchayat by now to the list of Panchayat Raj for decentralized people friendly development.

2. Self Help Groups, (SHGs) with their own registered social banks should have in their own control on savings, accumulated capital and on the staffs, for planning, implementation and development of their own business so that the individual poor member would have turned out just from wage earners to owner of small units of business and enterprises, being part of a supply chain of any of the local raw material or produces available in their localities.

These two movements and empowerment process were started and fought by civil society organizations from the day of independence. In 73rd constitutional amendment Panchayati Raj came in to force and SHG came in to force under NABARD's initiative in 1986-1987 and under Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) by government of India in 1999. In 1993 Reserve bank Of India allowed SHGs to open savings bank accounts in the bank.

Today, I see panchayats the constitutionally elected body with few schemes, are left with, without work or minimal work for five long years. They are believed to be unused mass or appendix of political process of India. Still, larger mass of the country believes, including students of political science and law that, assemblies of states and parliament are only the right bodies for legislation as well

as execution.

Panchayats are not realized as right bod-

ies to identify local issues and problems and to address the issue by them.

The decentralized planning is no more taking place as expected. Nitiyog at state and central level are the point of attention of the elites and economic stalwarts. NGOs too are planning centrally without bringing mass into planning process. The tools of Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning Approach is no more used. Whereas, there was a time when NGOs were taking lead in engagement of mass, the target groups for problem identification and alternative selection for expected development interventions for people friendly cost-effective solutions. Now computerized digital and numeric planning is taking place above the heads and levels of panchayats and it is considered to be scientific and civilized planning. Dr BR Ambedkar one of the champions of Indian Constitution, unlike Gandhi, was sceptic about role of panchayat and spaced it in directive principle of state policy not in the prerogatives. But the Nation has realized the contribution of vulnerable man and women in contributing in Panachayati Raj System.

As Bible say "snake is given instead of demand of fish"

SHG was a concept for capital formation, investment, multiplication and diversification. Forward linkages and background linkages with the concept cooperative movements in SHGs and SHG federations was the nationwide initiative from 1980s or few years before that in India. (This movement could change the politico economic face of poor mass of grassroots of some of the third world countries like Bangladesh and Kenia). Research and market studies of corporates were adopted by NGOs, SHGs and it's federations and cooperatives and stared taking its benefits by adopting its findings.

In the name of matching grant, legal activity, support system, SHGs and federation's ac-

Dwit David Philip

counts are opened in formal banks and brought under the

control by bankers. Later government, and civil society organizations who were concerned for socio-political and economic empowerment of poorest of the poor, like CARE, Pradan, SEBA, Sebamandir, etc. in the name of institutionalization, brought in and promoted SHG cooperative Acts, movements and formed and promoted microfinance institutions under company Acts. Some of the states like Odisha came out with Self Help Cooperative Act in 2001 later it was dropped. In the name of accelerating and pumping capital and increasing investment capacity for business, group size of SHGs were reduced to three to five instead of ten to twenty-five as before.

After some time, the microfinance institutions kept themselves concentrated only on collection of interests and capital. Their focus on politico-economic empowerment of rural poor by training of members of SHGs and it's leaders, it's businesses development tools, product multiplication, diversification etc. are stopped.

The engagement of bankers, NGOs, NABARD in communicating for banking and act of enterprise literacy, got reduced. The process of concretisation got stopped.

Governments used the socio-political strength of SHGs by alluring the groups with credit linkages. They are used as vote banks. The slipped out from the hands of the civil society organizations.

Today, it is seen that, the SHGs and its members who were expected to threat the companies of different national and international consumable goods, are left just as consumers. SHG members with its groups and federations, were expected to be owner of local

raw materials.

So these two movements were paralyzed deliberately. State and national level politicians are not interested to increase the political and economic power list of Panchayati Raj System and if some are interested but due to less number of like-minded leaders, are unable to initiate the process to increase the list of activities and resources for local Panchayati Raj governance.

The country has witnessed that with the SHGs movements, the panchayats are given many women leaders, who are identified, positioned as SHG leaders and groomed as leaders through saving, credit, accounts keeping and establishing linkage with financial and none financial information. With the recommendation of Balwant Ray Meheta and Ashok Meheta committee on Panchayat raj, women reservation up to 50% was enacted in many states. The expectation was materialized even in the remote tribal pockets by SHGs and SHG movements. Today, the rural poor with diverted SHG movements and limited power of panchayats, the intention of decentralization democratic governance with participation of vulnerable poor and marginalized men and women i.e. Swaraj as per Gandhi jii is denied. Now the poor in India the 20-30% population of India are just the voters without power and without contributing and determining the governance and exercising real economic power.

Few corporates and politicians in center and states are significantly influential to the legislatures, then the poor mass of India located at grass roots level which is turning into tears of wage earners of villages and slum dwellers of cities instead of mass empowering legislation.

The Author is a Writer & Social Activist

Letter to Editor

Vande Bharat to hit global tracks in futur

It is indeed delightful and a matter of pride for all indians to know that the Indian railways is planning to export semi high speed Vande Bharat trains by 2025-26 to Europe, South America and East Asia and to make these 'made in India' trains export ready, railways aim to clock 10-12 lakh kilometres on 75 Vande Bharat trains over the next few years. According to the railways the ecosystem to export trains has to be created over the next two to three years. The department is already on its track to manufacture 475 Vande Bharat trains in the next three years and once these run successfully there will be confidence in global markets about the product.

Vande Bharat Express trains have already grabbed national and international attention for its speed, quality, durability and are economical. Quicker acceleration, hitech CCTV, automatic sliding doors with retractable coach footsteps and contemporary passenger amenities like onboard infotainment, GPS based passenger information system and zero discharge vacuum-based bio-toilets plus various other facilities make it passenger friendly.

The trains are modelled like the famous German ICE 3, Japanese Shinkansen and the Italian Pendolino trains. It has been designed to suit the Indian conditions. At present five sets of Vande Bharat Express trains are being operated by the railways. The railways are planning to launch ten new Vande Bharat trains by Independence Day next year which will be connecting forty cities in India. Vande Bharat trains are definitely going to redefine our rail travelling.

M PRADYU
KANNUR

Letter to Editor

AI becoming a boon in cardiology

Researchers found that clinicians who most frequently followed an Artificial intelligence (AI) tool's recommendations were twice as likely to diagnose low ejection fraction (EF) perfectly, a sign that the heart is not functioning as well as it should. AI is poised to revolutionise medicine. AI can fill in any gaps in prior clinical experience. Promoting early detection, timely treatment, and proper referral procedures in primary care can be greatly aided by this. It is evident that those that are able to employ AI effectively can increase their diagnostic precision and deliver superior patient care. Since AI is still in its infancy, the tools developed will undoubtedly advance in the coming years to assist physicians in determining whether a patient has a cardiac condition or a problem with their heart's function. Most patients approach the doctor when they have symptoms like heaviness in the chest or difficulty in breathing - AI will diagnose heart conditions before the symptoms start prompting early treatment as per study. AI Technology will help doctors diagnose patients way before symptoms start and this will help in future according to research. With recent developments, the widespread use of electronic health records, and the capacity to apply machine learning to this large data store, it is now conceivable to employ AI to enhance the precision of diagnoses and fine-tune treatment regimens. AI systems will be easy for busy caregivers to use.

Vijaykumar H K
Raichur

Sound limiter in West Bengal government functions and political gatherings are a myth

Noise causes pollution which is very distressing to

Saikat Kumar Basu

people, two eminent citizens Dr. Abirlal Mukherjee and Dr. Devkumar Bose were the first to say this on the streets. In the early 1990s, these two prominent people toured various puja mandaps in Kolkata and campaigned against noise pollution and the crackling sound of microphones. Many mocked them but none of them lost faith or despaired.

The chairman along with a few officers of the board opened the control room during the puja and urged the people to call the control room of the board if anyone is embarrassed by the noise pollution. A new era has begun in the discharge of duties of the Pollution Control Board. On April 1, 1996, Hon'ble Justice Shri Bhagwati Prasad Banerjee delivered a historic judgment on the issue of noise pollution control. Then everything is in a running history.

Shri Bhagwati Prasad Banerjee in implementing his judgment in 1997 ordered that whoever uses a microphone in a free zone must install a sound limiter so that the sound limit never goes beyond the tolerable limit. Webel of the state government has been given the responsibility in this regard. The High Court order of 1997 has been echoed several times in judicial orders regulating noise pol-

lution. But administratively that order has not yet

been implemented. Recently, the highest level officials of the Environment Department and Pollution Control Board have been arranging the purchase of sound limiters and the organizers of various festivals are being asked to install sound limiters with microphones. But the surprising thing is that there is no inquiry as to whether sound limiter is installed in the microphones used in all the fairs or festivals which are celebrated by government initiatives all over West Bengal.

If it is mandatory to install sound limiter in the case of private events, then it is natural to ask why sound limiter should not be installed on microphones in government fairs or political gatherings or meetings. In such a situation, our request is to immediately issue a government notification saying that microphones with sound limiters must be used in all fairs or festivals organized by the government.

All political parties need to be called and made aware of their responsibilities and duties in complying with the Noise Pollution Control Act. It should be remembered that the law is equal for all. If sound limiters are used in government functions and political gatherings, then naturally there will be a favorable situation in implementing the law in private initiatives as well.

The Author is a Canada based indian Journalist & Environmental Activist

Workshop on Melioidosis awareness, Diagnostics and Research

Bhubaneswar(KCN): In the form of sporadic occurrence in India, Melioidosis has now grabbed the attention of the medical community through its presence in Odisha too. The disease which is endemic in neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka,

of alcohol consumption, and exposure to rice paddy fields remain at highest risk of getting the disease. Urban dwelling people with minimum levels of soil exposure like gardening can also get the disease, opined Dr. Rashmiranjan Mohanty, Addl Prof. General Medicine, AIIMS Bhubaneswar. Widespread construction activities, and Norwester wind (Kalabaisakhi) are also associated environmental factors of acquiring the disease by inhalation routes. The disease, without an accurate diagnosis and treatment, can be fatal in more than half of the cases, said Prof P.R Mohapatra, DEAN-Head Pulmonary Medicine. Dr Prakash Sasmal, Addl Prof. General

Surgery Department sharing his experience added that over the last one decade of diagnosing and treating more than two hundred cases of melioidosis have been found here at AIIMS, with more than half of the cases from Khorda district.

The KMC Manipal team headed by Prof. Chiranjay Mukhopadhyay, the founder of



Caused by environmental Gram-negative bacterium, Burkholderia pseudomallei. The bacterium inherently present in the soil can be acquired by inoculation, inhalation and ingestion, with most of the cases presenting during monsoon and post monsoon, informed experts from different specialties in a hands on workshop on Melioidosis awareness, Diagnostics and Research jointly organized by Microbiology Department, AIIMS Bhubaneswar and KMC Manipal as part of the Pre-Conference Workshop series of 45th Annual Conference of Medical Microbiologists (MICROCON-2022).

Melioidosis has baffled medical community in having myriad manifestations presenting acutely with high fever, pneumonia, visceral abscesses culminating in life threatening sepsis to indolent presentations of persistent low-grade fever, lymphadenitis and thus has earned a moniker of "great mimicker", informed Dr Bijayini Behera, Addl Prof, Department of Microbiology, AIIMS Bhubaneswar. Patients with poorly controlled diabetes, hazardous level



Indian Melioidosis Research Forum. The Workshop was attended by participants from several states of the country. They were offered hands-on training on laboratory diagnosis of Burkholderia pseudomallei by various conventional, molecular and point of care serological methods, adhering to requisite biosafety precautions.

Gujarat polls: Time to rebuild Mahatma Gandhi's land by ending BJP's misrule, says Congress

NEW DELHI: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi Tuesday slammed the BJP for its 27 years of "misrule" in Gujarat and said it is time to rebuild Mahatma Gandhi's land.

Calling upon the people to reject the BJP in the upcoming assembly polls, Kharge attacked the ruling party over inflation and unemployment while alleging that it has "betrayed" farmers.

Gandhi, on the other hand, hit out at the state government over reported deaths due to spurious liquor in Junagarh.

"In 'dry state' Gujarat, people died again yesterday due to spurious liquor! On one hand, there is a show-off liquor ban, on the other people are dying due to poisonous liquor and drugs. Instead of employment, the government is giving poison. This is the BJP's 'Gujarat model'! The land of Gandhi-Sardar has been inebriated," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. ALSO READ | Are you 100-headed like Ravan? Mallikarjun Kharge asks PM Modi With the tweet, he used the hashtag '#RejectBJP' to urge people not to vote for the party. There were media reports about two deaths in Gujarat's Junagarh due to spurious liquor. In July, 42 people lost their lives in Gujarat's Botad district after consuming hooch.

Hitting out at the BJP in Gujarat, Kharge asked, "Why is every section of Gujarat -- youth, farmers, women, small businessmen, Dalits, tribals, and the backward classes -- are suffering." Gujarat demands answers and accountability for the last 27 years of BJP rule, the Congress national president said. He alleged that the income of the people of Gujarat is less than the national average and also claimed that due to the BJP, seven crore Gujaratis have a debt of Rs 4.5 lakh crore.

"The CAG has warned that Gujarat is getting trapped in a debt cycle. The BJP has given nothing but economic burden and social hatred to the people of Gujarat," Kharge said.

READ HERE | Cong backed perpetrators of violence; BJP established permanent peace in Gujarat post '02: Amit Shah

"Now is the time for a change! To root out the BJP's 27-year misrule in Gujarat! The time has come to rebuild the Gujarat of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Morarji Desai, Balwantraji Mehta and Chimanbhai Patel! The Congress will come, will bring happiness to the people of Gujarat," he said in a series of tweets.

Kharge also alleged that Gujarat suffered badly during the Covid period.

There is a huge shortage of health workers with 90 per cent of posts in community health centres vacant.

Privatization initiated by the BJP is making healthcare unbearable for lakhs of people of Gujarat, he claimed.

Claiming that Dalits and Tribals in Gujarat are exploited Kharge accused the BJP of "protecting criminals".

The Una incident, in which Dalits were publicly beaten up under the protection of the administration, shook the conscience of every Indian.

Tribals were not given rights and Panchayats Extension to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) was not implemented, he alleged.

ALSO READ | Congress sacrificed two prime ministers in terror fight: Kharge counters PM Modi "Demonetisation, wrong GST and lack of help during the Corona period have broken the back of every section of Gujarat. People's life has become difficult due to the constant tremors of inflation. GST has been imposed on flour, pulses, milk, pencils, medicines and from treatment. Betrayed farmers of Gujarat, MSP hike was low. Modi Ji had promised the farmers of the country that he will give cost plus 50 per cent MSP. This turned out to be the biggest betrayal of the farmers. The farmers of Gujarat are also fed up with the rising prices of fertilizers, diesel, GST, electricity and inputs," the Congress leader said in a series of tweets in Hindi.

England census: Christians a minority; non-religious grow

LONDON: Fewer than half the people in England and Wales consider themselves Christian, according to the most recent census — the first time the country's official religion has been followed by a minority of the population. Britain has become less religious — and less white — in the decade since the last census, figures from the 2021 census released Tuesday by the Office for National Statistics revealed.

Some 46.2 per cent of the population of England and Wales described themselves as Christian on the day of the 2021 census, down from 59.3 per cent a decade earlier. The Muslim population grew from 4.9 per cent to 6.5 per cent of the population, while 1.7 per cent identified as Hindu, up from 1.5 per cent.

More than 1 in 3 people — 37 per cent — said they had

NATO commits to future Ukraine membership, drums up aid

BUCHAREST: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg reaffirmed the military alliance's commitment to Ukraine on Tuesday, saying that the war-torn nation will one day become a member of the world's largest security organization. Stoltenberg's remarks came as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his NATO counterparts gathered in Romania to drum up urgently needed support for Ukraine aimed at ensuring that Moscow fails to defeat Ukraine as it bombards energy infrastructure.

"NATO's door is open," Stoltenberg said. "Russia does not have a veto" on countries joining, he said in reference to the recent entry of North Macedonia and Montenegro into the security alliance. He said that Russian President Vladimir Putin "will get Finland and Sweden as NATO members" soon. The Nordic neighbours applied for membership in April, concerned that Russia might target them next.

"We stand by that, too, on membership for Ukraine," the former Norwegian prime minister said. "At the same time, the main focus now is on supporting Ukraine, ensuring

no religion, up from 25 per cent in 2011. The other parts of the U.K., Scotland and Northern Ireland report their census results separately. Secularism campaigners said the shift should trigger a

rethink of the way religion is entrenched in British society. The U.K. has state-funded Church of England schools, Anglican bishops sit in Parliament's upper chamber, and the monarch is a "defender of the faith" and supreme governor of the church.

Andrew Copson, chief executive of the charity Humanists U.K., said "the dramatic growth of



tion is from the state itself," he said. "No state in Europe has such a religious set-up as we do in terms of law and public policy, while at the same time having such a non-religious population." Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, one of the most senior clerics in the Church of England, said the data was "not a great surprise," but was a challenge to Christians to work

harder to promote their faith. "We have left behind the era when many people almost automatically identified as Christian, but other surveys consistently show how the same people still

seek spiritual truth and wisdom and a set of values to live by," he said. Almost 82 per cent of people in England and Wales identified as white in the census, down from 86 per cent in 2011. Some 9 per cent said they were Asian, 4 per cent Black and 3 per cent from "mixed or multiple" ethnic backgrounds, while 2 per cent identified with another ethnic group.

that President Putin doesn't win, but that Ukraine prevails as a sovereign nation in Europe."

In essence, Stoltenberg repeated a vow made by NATO in Bucharest in 2008 — in the same sprawling Palace of the Parliament where the foreign ministers are meeting this

vows to aid Ukraine 'for as long as it takes'

Even so, Ukraine will not join NATO anytime soon. With the Crimean Peninsula annexed, and Russian troops and pro-Moscow separatists holding parts of the south and east, it's not clear what Ukraine's borders would even look

mania — which shares NATO's longest land border with Ukraine — is likely to see NATO make fresh pledges of non-lethal support to Ukraine: fuel, generators, medical supplies, winter equipment and drone-jamming devices. Individual allies are also likely to announce



week — that Ukraine, and also Georgia, would join the alliance one day. Some officials and analysts believe this move — pressed on the NATO allies by former U.S. President George W. Bush — was partly responsible for the war that Russia launched on Ukraine in February. Stoltenberg disagreed. "President Putin cannot deny sovereign nations to make their own sovereign decisions that are not a threat to Russia," he said. "I think what he's afraid of is democracy and freedom, and that's the main challenge for him."

ALSO READ | NATO

like. Many of NATO's 30 allies believe the focus now must be on defeating Russia. During the two-day meeting, Blinken will announce substantial U.S. aid for Ukraine's energy grid, U.S. officials said. Ukraine's network has been battered countrywide since early October by targeted Russian strikes, in what U.S. officials call a Russian campaign to weaponize the coming winter cold. "We are all paying a price for Russia's war against Ukraine. But the price we pay is in money," Stoltenberg said Tuesday, "while the price Ukrainians pay is a price paid in blood."

The meeting in Ro-

fresh supplies of military equipment for Ukraine — chiefly the air defence systems that Kyiv so desperately seeks to protect its skies — but NATO, as an organization, will not, to avoid being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia.

The ministers will hold a working dinner with their Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba, on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, they will also address ways to step up support for partners who officials have said are facing Russian pressure — Bosnia, Georgia, and Moldova.

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Four workers injured while fixing electric pole in Odisha



ANGUL: In a tragic incident, four workers were injured while they were fixing an electric pole under 33kv line at Matia Sahi in Angul town. The injured were identified as Mangulu Tudu(32), Anil Tudu(28),

Bisala Hansada(33) and Bahasan Tudu(19). According to report, a total of 13 labourers were working in Matia Sahi for the installation of electric poles. The incident occurred as there

were no shut down of 33kv line while the work was going on. The injured were taken to Angul district head quarter hospital for treatment. Out of the four, three sustained serious injuries and were referred SCB

Medical College, Cuttack. CDMO Trilochan Pradhan said the workers belong to the state of Jharkhand. There is no FIR registered in Angul police station so far, according to IIC,Prabhat Kumar Tripathy.

Signed between East Coast Railway (ECoR) and Angul-Sukinda Railway Limited

Angul (KCN): Operations and Maintenance (O&M) agreement of Angul-Sukinda Rail Line project has been signed between East Coast Railway and

Station (Angul District) and Baghuapal Station (near Sukinda in Jajpur District) in Odisha.

This new Rail-Line will provide a direct link between Iron-Ore rich areas of Odisha (Joda-Barbil) to Steel and Sponge iron industries in Angul region. It also provides a shorter and congestion free alternative route between Coal Mining Belt of Talcher to Coal Based Thermal Power Plant in Kalinga Nagar Industrial areas (at Sukinda). This new line will be in close



Angul-Sukinda Railway Limited (ASRL) at ECoR headquarters, Rail Sadan, today in presence of ECoR General Manager Shri Roop Narayan Sunkar.

Managing Director of ASRL Shri Dilip Kumar Samantaray and Chief Commercial Manager (Freight) Shri H. L. Luang signed the memorandum. All Principal Heads of the Departments of ECoR along with Additional General Manager Shri Sharad Kumar Srivastava and officials from Stake holders were present on the occasion.

Angul-Sukinda Railway Limited, a SPV has been incorporated by Ministry of Railway through Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. (RVNL) for Construction and Maintenance of 98.70 K.M. Broad Gauge (B.G.) Single Railway Line between Budhapank

proximity to the Steel Plants in Angul region, NALCO and a cluster of Industries located in Kalinga Nagar areas of Odisha. The project line will also reduce the distance between Rourkela (Steel Plant) and Dhamara / Paradeep Ports. Dispatch of finished products of Steel Plants from Kalinga Nagar complex to destinations in Mumbai and Delhi via Talcher-Sambalpur-Jharsuguda will also be shorter and cheaper via the new alignment as compared with the route via Kharagpur. The 98.70 kms long project was sanctioned in 1998-99 and was incorporated in 2009. After the process of Land Acquisition and other technical solutions, the project of about 2440 Crores has been targeted to be completed by December 2022.



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Vistara: A long-cherished Tata-SIA dream that turned into reality in 2015

NEW DELHI: Back in 1994, Tata group and Singapore Airlines (SIA) made efforts to set up a joint venture airline in India. Six years later, they again tried to enter the country's aviation market, this time by teaming up to acquire stakes in Air India. However, the two attempts did not take-off. Finally, they realised their dream as Vistara

the two legendary brands, Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, decided to fulfil a long-cherished shared dream to bring forth a distinguished flying experience to air travellers in India.

"With its strong historical ties with aviation, the Tata group had long wished to re-enter the aviation sector, after Tata Airlines was



renamed Air India and eventually, it was nationalised.

On Tuesday, Tata group announced the merger of Vistara with Air India.

The name 'Vistara' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Vistaar' which means 'a limitless expanse'.

Vistara, which is now the country's second largest airline in terms of domestic market share, operated its first flight on January 9, 2015, from Delhi to Mumbai.

In October, Vistara had a market share of 9.2 per cent.

At present, Vistara connects 43 domestic and overseas destinations, operates more than 260 flights daily.

It has a fleet of 54 aircraft and close to 4,500 employees.

According to the airline's website, in 2013,

renamed Air India and eventually, it was nationalised.

"Both, the Tata group and Singapore Airlines were also firm believers in the growth potential of the Indian aviation sector and hence tried to enter the market in the past; first, in 1994 by setting up a joint venture to start an airline in India and then in 2000, teaming up to purchase stakes in Air India," as per the website.

After the restrictions on foreign investments in the airline space was lifted in 2012, Tata group and Singapore Airlines again sought approval for a tie-up and obtained the clearance in October 2013.

And in November 2013, TATA SIA Airlines Ltd -- the holding company of Vistara -- was incorporated.

Privatisation isn't only solution to power distribution woes: NTPC chief

NEW DELHI: Privatisation is not the only solution to problems being faced by many power distribution utilities or discoms in the country as many state-owned entities are running efficiently and making a profit, NTPC Chairman and Managing Director Gurdeep Singh said on Tuesday.

(discoms). There is not only one solution to a problem (of discoms)."

About the addition of renewable energy and phasing out coal-based thermal power plants, he opined that coal is going to stay while the NTPC will do everything to increase non-fossil fuel-based electricity generation.

"Our (NTPC's) growth is going to be more and more on the renewable side but we should never forget that we (NTPC) are a national utility. Our prime responsibility is that power is available and affordable and within that (framework) how we can make it much cleaner and greener. I think this is the only mantra which



really keeps guiding us," he stated.

He stated that the NTPC still supplies one-quarter of the electricity in the country.

"I keep telling my team that we have gone up in this (supply proportion). How we can go up in the renewable component in that (our supply proportion). But that does not mean that we are going to shut down any coal-based plants," he added.

He also stated that he has no hesitation to share that even decommissioning the coal-based plant is still a little far away.

"But we will have to do that. There is no other way. But we should not be in a hurry. What we have to do is to bring flexibility and what we should be working at is that how can we reduce emissions...we have to always keep our feet on the ground while having ambitions to fly high," he said.

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RBI to launch pilot for retail digital rupee on December 1

BENGALURU: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday said the first pilot for retail digital rupee will be

Currency (CBDC) is a digital form of currency notes issued by the RBI. Earlier, releasing the concept note on

The retail digital rupee will be in the form of a digital token that represents legal tender. It would be issued in the same

digital rupee token and architecture will be tested in future pilots, based on the learnings from this pilot, the RBI said.



launched on December 1. The pilot will cover select locations in a closed user group comprising participating customers and merchants.

The central bank commenced the first pilot in the wholesale segment on November 1, 2022. Central Bank Digital

CBDC, the RBI said with the advent of cutting-edge technologies, digitalisation of money is the next milestone in monetary history. Advancement in technology has made it possible for the development of a new form of money - CBDC, the RBI said.

denominations that paper currency and coins are currently issued. It would be distributed through banks.

Users will be able to transact with the digital rupee through a digital wallet offered by the participating banks and stored on mobile phones / devices.

Transactions can be both Person to Person (P2P) and Person to Merchant (P2M). Payments to merchants can be made using QR codes displayed at merchant locations.

The retail digital rupee will offer features of physical cash like trust, safety and settlement finality. The pilot will test the robustness of the entire process of digital rupee creation, distribution and retail usage in real time. Different features and applications of the

The pilot will initially cover four cities- Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru and Bhubaneswar and later extend to Ahmedabad, Gangtok, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Kochi, Lucknow, Patna and Shimla. The scope of pilot may be expanded gradually to include more banks, users and locations as needed, the RBI added.

Eight banks have been identified for phase-wise participation in this pilot. The first phase will begin with four banks- State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank and IDFC First Bank in four cities across the country. Four more banks - Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank will join this pilot subsequently.

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Rupee falls 3 paise to close at 81.71 against US dollar

MUMBAI: The rupee slipped 3 paise to close at 81.71 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday as rising crude oil prices in the

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.33 per cent to



international market weighed on forex market sentiment.

However, a firm trend in domestic equities and a weak American currency overseas capped the losses in the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened strong at 81.58 but later slipped into negative territory.

During the session, it touched an intra-day high of 81.57 and a low of 81.74 against the greenback.

The local unit finally settled at 81.71, registering a decline of 3 paise over its previous close of 81.68.

106.33. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures surged 2.33 per cent to USD 85.13 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 177.04 points or 0.28 per cent to end at a fresh closing peak of 62,681.84, while the broader NSE Nifty gained 59.10 points or 0.32 per cent to record 18,621.85.

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UK summons China's ambassador after arrest of BBC journalist

Continued from page-1

restrictions, one of many that have rocked China in recent days.

The BBC said he was assaulted by the Shanghai police before being released several hours later.

The government in London also this month expressed concern after reports emerged of Beijing operating undeclared police outposts in foreign countries including Britain.

And a senior Chinese diplomat was summoned to the foreign office last month after his consulate colleagues in Manchester, northwest England, were accused of beating up a Hong Kong pro-democracy protester.

The incidents have fuelled political pressure in Britain on the new government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to get tough with China. But Sunak is treading a fine line between defending freedoms and antagonising the world's second-biggest economy.

In a speech Monday evening, he said the so-called "golden era" of UK-China relations trumpeted by former prime minister David Cameron was "over".

But Sunak also called for "robust pragmatism" in dealing with Britain's competitors, disappointing critics who want him to go further in confronting Beijing.

Separately on Tuesday, the UK ousted Chinese nuclear firm CGN from construction of its new Sizewell C nuclear power station, which will now be built only with French commercial partner EDF.

49 per cent players willing to opt out of national contracts for T20 leagues: FICA Report

CHENNAI: In sports, teams go through transition all the time. But it is not often a sport itself goes through such a transitional phase. Cricket is at such a place now. While franchise-leagues dominating world cricket is not a new theory and has been anticipated for quite a few years, it seems like we are closer to the prediction becoming reality than ever.

Between now and till the end of May, as many as five domestic T20 leagues are set to take place in prominent countries — Lankan Premier League, Big Bash League, SA T20, International League T20, Pakistan Super League and the Indian Premier



League — with The Hundred and Caribbean Premier League to follow. And the success of some of these tournaments over the next couple of years could very well be the endgame. The Federation of International Cricketers' Association's (FICA) report

indicates the same. According to the report, as many as 49 per cent of male cricketers say that they would consider rejecting a national contract for a bigger domestic contract. While the likes of Trent Boult and Martin Guptill have recently asked out of the contract with New Zealand Cricket, that close to half the athletes willing to do the same feels like the tip of the iceberg.

EXPLAINER: Politically, not too correct in this World Cup

An already political World Cup for the reasons already explained on these pages faced yet more questions on the eve of Iran vs US, one of the most politically loaded games there is (late on Tuesday). Here's a detailed look at all the politics at this World Cup, how it has reached this stage and what the next few

days holds... to ask political questions to England coach, Gareth Southgate. Faced with having to answer political questions before Iran's game against Wales, he said: "Why don't you ask the other coaches?" Queiroz asked. "Why don't you ask Southgate: 'what do you think about England and the United States that left



What happened before Iran v. US? Two days before the match, some social media handles of the US football federation doctored Iran's flag for a time period. They claimed they did it to stand in solidarity with the protesters in Iran following the death of Mahsa Amini. In retaliation, Iran wanted FIFA to expel US from the World Cup. Did the US team say anything? In the pre-match press conference, US coach Gregg Berhalter apologised. However, that wasn't the end of it. Iran's journalists (the context is their players have been asked a lot of questions about the protests back home from journalists from other countries as the players have seemingly supported these protests by refusing to sing the national anthem and so on) decided to question both Berhalter and captain Tyler Adams. Berhalter was asked about the presence of a vessel in the Persian Gulf. Adams was asked about 'representing a country that has so much discrimination against black people'. What did Adams say? "... there's discrimination everywhere you go. One thing that I've learned, especially from living abroad in the past years and having to fit in in different cultures and kind of assimilating to different cultures, is that in the U.S. We're continuing to make progress every single day." Any other thing that has happened? Iran coach Carlos Queiroz actually asked English media

Afghanistan and all the women alone?" Players of almost all western European nations have been asked about the rainbow armbands (federations decided to wear them to stand in solidarity of the LGBT community in Qatar but backed out after FIFA threatened sanctions). Germany protested in a unique way by placing a hand over their mouths but didn't repeat that in their second match against Spain. Did Germany say why they stopped? Nope. But Ilkay Gundogan, who has a Muslim heritage, said he was 'proud' that Qatar is hosting the World Cup. It's significant because he's one of the first from a western country to express these views. "My point of view is now the politics are finished. Qatar is very proud, very proud to host it, also first muslim country, I come from a muslim family, the muslim community is proud, now it is about enjoying and celebrating football," he said. What's in store in the next few days? There will likely be another round of wire play after the match between Iran and US. But Serbia v. Switzerland is another hot button match. At the 2018 event, these two sides clashed. Swiss goal-scorers Granit Xhaka and Xherdan Shaqiri celebrated with a double-eagle celebration. It's a nationalist symbol in Albania. This relates to historical political tensions in the Balkans and it didn't go down well in Serbia.

That the international schedule is getting skewed with every FTP could have a significant role to play in it as well.

And it does not come as a surprise. Freelancing could be the future for many cricketers, especially for those who don't represent a financially wealthy cricketing body. As many as 82 per cent of the current players are not in the traditional market with just contracts at home — 42 per cent are hybrid (home and overseas) and 40 per cent are in the free agency market (with no contracts at home). For example, Singapore's Tim David, who now plays for Australia, has taken part in as many as seven overseas leagues in a year. Afghan trio — Mohammed Nabi, Rashid Khan and Mujeeb Ur Rahman — play in six. New Zealand's Glenn Phillips played as many as 59 domestic league matches in 2021 alone.

That said, the interesting statistic as per the

report is this. Despite the 49 per cent willing to forgo national contracts, 80 per cent seem to favour contract security over playing in different competitions. And it seems like this stems from the lack of say they have in their rights as a player. There are concerns over late and non-payment from the leagues as well. 54 per cent of the players feel insecure or very insecure about their cricket employment and 46 per cent say their relationship with the board is poor or very poor. 44 per cent believe they do not have a clear voice in the future direction of the game.

This brings the focus on the rights and employment concerns of the players with the governing bodies. 13 per cent say they have been made to feel uncomfortable by their respective boards for being a member of a players' association. And this is at a time when many cricketing bodies do not have an actively participating players' association.

In India, while the domestic pay of players has gone up, they seem to have fared negatively when it comes to domestic contracts, role of players' association in negotiating the contracts and player welfare development programmes in players' welfare assessment. However, with BCCI being the richest and most powerful cricketing body, the way IPL will evolve over the next few years is going to be the central point around which the transition of cricket unfolds.

As New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson said recently ahead of a bilateral series, which was scheduled to be played after a high-octane T20 World Cup, it is a moving landscape. And it's going to be important to learn and understand how it looks over the next few years.



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