



Bombay HC seeks state govt's response on BJP leader Subramanian Swamy's PIL

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TALATHI RECRUITMENT EXAM: CONGRESS HITS OUT AT STATE GOVT FOR TECHNICAL GLITCH IN MAHARASHTRA



An examination to recruit talathis (revenue department employees) in Maharashtra scheduled on Monday was delayed due to technical reasons, prompting the opposition Congress to criticise the state government over it.

Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra assembly Vijay Wadettiwar said such "irresponsible behaviour" of the state government cannot be tolerated.

The Congress leader further said the

state government would be responsible if a candidate gets frustrated and takes the extreme step. A statement issued by the TCS, which is responsible for conducting the exam, said, "As per the technical team, there was a central hardware issue which has impacted the exam start time in all the exam centres for Talathi recruitment exam 2023 today." Wadettiwar later said the state government should have opened examination centres in every dis-

trict. Instead, it set up only four centres, forcing aspirants to travel long distances to appear for the exam.

"The candidates, who took so much effort and spent sleepless nights and arrived in cities where the exam centres are located, today morning found their exam was on hold," he said. "Such irresponsible behaviour of the state government cannot be tolerated. If a candidate gets frustrated and ends his or her life, the

state government will be responsible for it. The government has not even made any alternate provision for conducting the exam," the Congress leader claimed. Wadettiwar further said the state government has charged Rs 1,000 per candidate as exam fee. "What will happen to them (candidates) now. If the government decides to hold the talathi recruitment exam on some other day, it should not charge the exam fee again," he said. **PTI**

Food, sleep, fear and sex rules human lives

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

आहार निद्रा भय मैथुनं means Food, sleep, fear and sex are four vital factors that rule a human life. These are Vedic principles. They are like the codes of conduct of human lives. If one follows these norms then they will lead a meaningful life. If we follow the rules of the situations then there will be no question of sorrow. Similarly, this conditioned-living being, has come in this material world for enjoyment and physical happiness. Proper observance of diet, sleep, fear and sex is necessary. Only by following these rules can one attain the true state of accomplishment.

'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि' Means the unity of Atman (the individual self or

soul) with Brahman (universal consciousness or the Absolute). By knowing this spiritual state, human life becomes extensive. The aim of human life should be self-realization. And Vedas are the guide in this context. Meaning - Food, sleep, fear and sex are equally natural for humans and animals. There is some difference between humans and animals, here comes the belief to limit these natural instincts. Only human beings have religion and the people without religion are like animals. For example, animals have no shame or fear of having sex in the open no matter where they are. They do not have any inhibitions about their conducts.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Food, sleep, fear and sex rules human lives

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According to Shri Krishna, there are three types of food - Satvik, Tamasik and Rajasi. Food is made according to the sattvic, rajas and tamas qualities of nature.

Most of such bodies suffer with some or the other ailments, if you have control or hunger and cravings, your body in spite of having ailments can spiritually uplift you.

Generally, people who are attached to the body mind are so engrossed in materialism that it is almost impossible for them to understand that the Supreme Soul can be a person.

Lord Shri Krishna has told that the purpose of diet is to increase the age, to purify the life, and to give strength to the body. Rice, wheat, vegetables, milk and butter, dishes made of milk, all these foods are very dear to a person with seven guans. He also stated in Bhagavad Gita that God accepts Satvik food given with devotion. According to Shri Krishna, there are three types of food - Satvik, Tamasik and Rajasi. Food is made according to the sattvic, rajas and tamas qualities of nature. Wise people can understand that to have sattvic qualities one should take a sattvic diet. The diet inculcates and influences your life-style.

आहार, The food that increases age, strength, health etc., which is fluidic, smooth, mixed with ghee, long lasting and the food that gives strength to the heart, that food is sattvic (Ethical). But the food is very hot, spicy, bitter and salty which causes irritation and that generates Rajo gun. Your food intake decides your tendency (प्रवृत्ति). Many of us have no control on our food intakes, when our stomach is overloaded with heavy meals, our brain and both go lethargic. Lethargic body can never think of attainment or spiritual elevation. Most of such bodies suffer with some or the other ailments, if you have control or hunger and cravings, your body in spite of having ailments can spiritually uplift you. When a person spiritually awakens, they attain peace of mind. They become one with their body, mind and soul. When nothing scares or attracts them, or when they don't easily get influenced away by human emotions, that's when a person attains spirituality. The spiritual state of mind can guide a person towards greater contentment.

निद्रा A good peaceful sleep without any dreams is like Samadhi (a state of deep meditative contemplation which leads to higher consciousness). There is mention of many goddesses in the Vedas, one of them is the form of "Nidra Devi". Nidra Devi is considered as the "goddess of sleep". Generally, people who are attached to the body mind are so engrossed in materialism that it is almost impossible for them to understand that the Supreme Soul can be a person. Such worldly persons cannot even imagine that there is such a mystical body which is eternal and eternally blissful. According to the worldly concept, the body is perishable, ignorant and extremely painful.

भय If you eat good, your body and mind is at peace, if your mind is at peace, you will get good sleep. If your sleep is sound, you will be charged to deal with life. Sleep disturbances develop anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders are among the most common psychiatric disorders with a lifetime prevalence. The interplay between sleep and fear brings a lot of abnormality in life. There's a close relationship between sleep and mental health. Living with a mental health problem can affect how well you sleep, and poor sleep can have a negative impact on your mental health. To overcome the fear, you need to have food, sleep in order.

मेथुनं, Sex, this is a very private impression. Even to hold the hand of a partner you will look around and check nobody watching you. Fear rules relationships in many aspects. Fear is an inevitable part of life, so is intimacy. Intimacy is essential in a relationship because it forms a basis for connection and communication. It ensures that each person feels understood, allows them to be themselves, and ensures that each person gets the care and comfort that they need. Sometimes, people experience a fear of intimacy, often caused by various situations. It can be challenging to feel intimacy when you are always arguing with the other person. Feelings of resentment, anger, and lack of trust can make it more challenging to feel connected and close to that person. It's hard to feel comfortable and keep yourself balanced when you struggle to articulate your feelings and needs. When the balance between intake, sleep gets disturbed one gets terrible. A terrible person can be enslaved with unwanted emotions. If you balance four sutras, Food, Sleep, fear and Sex, then there are probabilities of living a good life. And good mental status can lead you to devoutness.

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Letters to the Editor

Gatari Amavasya

Amavasya is observed on the Amavasya, or no moon day, in the month of Ashada, as per the Marathi calendar in Maharashtra. The next month is the Shravan month and many people give up drinking alcohol and non-vegetarian foods for the next 40 days. Amavas is the last day in a traditional Marathi month. This year,

Gatari Amavasya was celebrated on July 16.

Since most people do not eat non-vegetarian foods and do not indulge in drinking alcohol during the Shravan month, many people make full use of the last day in Ashada month, which is the Gatari Amavasya. Some people drink all through the night of Gatari with friends and relatives.

People across the state of Maharashtra celebrate Gatari with great enthusiasm and fervour by eating and drinking to their heart's content and have a great time with their family and friends. Gatari Amavasya falls on a no-moon night, and people are generally awake to celebrate the special day ahead of Shravan month.

Gatari is generally associated with partying and consuming non-vegetarian foods, accompanied by hot drinks.

It is to be noted that Gatari is a celebration of happiness and joy. Ashadh Amavas is the beginning of the holy Shravan month and the last day of Ashadh month.

Jubel D'Cruz

Nepotism must be eradicated!

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently made a clear statement that the daughter, son or relative of party leader will not get a ticket in BJP. BJP is raising voice across the country against nepotism. Modi had earlier criticized nepotism in opposition parties. The same rule will now be applied to the BJP as well. Others should also get a chance. With Modi's decision, the young male and female workers in party, who have always been neglected will have scope in getting candidature. Likewise, internal disputes over the nepotism will be ended forever. Moreover, corruption in politics will be decreased. If the country is happy, the family is happy. Best decision!

Sudhir Kangutkar

Customer interest decisions

Since 2022, the rising graph of inflation and increasing interest rates have been suffering the general public. RBI has tried to give some relief to this. While taking a home loan, banks and financial institutions present two options of interest rates to the customers "Fixed" and "Floating" Customers or home loan borrowers choose one option. But, both the above interest rates are only for a certain period of time. Because, these interest rates change frequently according to the repo rate of the RBI.

However, banks are quick to implement interest rate hikes, but when the repo rate comes down, banks and financial companies are not as quick.

An additional charge is levied from time to time on the interest rate by the customer. But, why should the home borrower pay this fee? How many banks inform customers when interest rates increase? Or take customer interest into account. Increased interest rates are implemented immediately. But, for low interest rates, customers have to stay awake or go to the bank.

Loan interest rates have increased by 250 basis points since 2022. According to the new order of the Reserve Bank, the facility of getting fixed or floating interest rates at any time is likely to provide some relief to the customers.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

Personality development and etiquette impression

It's the ability to choose better words to express yourself more clearly. Why is it important? Others' perceptions of you may change as you become more communicative. Reviews that first impressions are formed within seconds of seeing somebody—before we even speak—these impressions are lasting. If the impression is good, it has a halo effect, and any performance after this is enhanced by the initial positive perception of the person. If the first impression is bad, any performance after this, no matter how good, is tainted with the initial perception. This knowledge is compelling as it means that we can create a better impression, by paying attention to how we look and act as soon as we approach our destination. We should focus more on this, instead of what we're going to say. Introverts rejoice!

By now, most of us have heard of experiential learning and we have a general idea that it includes things like internships, research, and study abroad, but beyond that, and being a degree requirement for all undergraduates at UGA, why should we care? Put simply, experiential learning is the process of gaining knowledge and skills through direct, hands-on experiences. It is also reliant on the reflection on those experiences. Experiential learning gives an individual the opportunity to actively engage with their environment and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Building leadership

capability should rightfully be prioritized on the business agenda. However, context is key. What good leadership looks like at the individual level is arguably irrelevant if it is devoid of the organizational context and challenges. Successful leaders aren't empowered by their position in the company org chart. It's their leadership capabilities that give them the ability to achieve their business goals. Emotional intelligence (otherwise known as emotional quotient or EQ) is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict. This ability to express and control emotions is essential, but so is the ability to understand, interpret, and respond to the emotions of others. Some experts suggest that emotional intelligence is more important than IQ for success in life.

Impromptu speaking is a speech that a person delivers without predetermination or preparation. The speaker is most commonly provided with their topic in the form of a quotation, but the topic may also be presented as an object, proverb, one-word abstract, or one of the many alternative possibilities. A group discussion is a discussion between a group of participants on a given subject. A group discussion typically forms a part of the selection process used by organisations and educational institutions. The candidates talk about the given topic to

present facts, opinions and conclusions.

A right question is any question that enlivens you, comes from a place of honest curiosity, and, as Berger notes, helps you to organize your thinking around what you don't know. Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions. The term may also be applied to any machine that exhibits traits associated with a human mind such as learning and problem-solving. The ideal characteristic of artificial intelligence is its ability to rationalize and take actions that have the best chance of achieving a specific goal. A subset of artificial intelligence is machine learning (ML), which refers to the concept that computer programs can automatically learn from and adapt to new data without being assisted by humans. Deep learning techniques enable this automatic learning through the absorption of huge amounts of unstructured data such as text, images, or video. Artificial intelligence, the ability of a computer or a robot controlled by a computer to do tasks that are usually done by humans because they require human intelligence and discernment.

- C.K. Subramaniam

Columnist

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com

No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own.)

City

Wadar community to hold talks with Maha govt with their demands; also threaten to hold statewide protest if demands not met



More than 500 members of the Wadar community gathered in Murlund on Sunday to demonstrate in support of their demands for the youth to be given equal access to education and employment.

The community has planned a statewide agitation and awareness drive called "Me Wadar Maharashtra," in which the community will be told about their rights and demands.

Babanna Kushalkar, Mumbai president of Me Wadar Maharashtra, said, "The majority of our community has been

into stonemasons, stone cutters, splitters, and carvers since tradition. This government has taken away our jobs from us, and our traditional work is taken over by migrant workers, who are given priority by this government."

"Whether it is the promenade, road construction, or building construction—even the Raigard fort was built by our community," he continued, "our community has made significant contributions to the development of this city and Maharashtra for many years, but this government has ignored all of our contribu-

tions. All new tenders are mostly given to Gujaratis and Marwadi businesses."

"The Wadar community has been facing injustice since 1961," **Somant Dhanawde**, organizer and president of the Bhandup region, told Afternoon Voice. "Our caste, which comes under the Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT), is deprived of the reservation; our youth are unemployed due to a lack of opportunities given to us."

Another complaint the community has is that their children are not being admitted to school because "our community is mostly a nomadic tribe, and some people have no proper documentation or ancestral history." The school and college authorities harass us for basic education needs."

The organizers have threatened the government with a statewide protest if their demands are not fulfilled.

Customs dept seizes over 250 kg of hashish washed up on seven beaches in Ratnagiri district in 6 days

The Customs department has seized more than 250 kg of hashish washed up on seven beaches in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district in six days, an official said on Monday.

The contraband was seized between August 14 and August 19 from Karde, Ladghar, Kelshi, Kolthare, Murud, Burondi and Borya beaches and Dabhol creek in the district, the official said.

The Customs department suspects that the contraband, which originated from Afghanistan and Pakistan, had either fallen or was dumped by foreign vessels for the purpose of smuggling, he said. In the first seizure, sleuths of Dapoli Customs division were patrolling at Karade beach on August 14 when they found 10 suspicious packages collectively weighing about 12 kg, and a test confirmed the content was hashish, the official said.

Similarly, on August 15, 35 kg of the contraband was found



between Karde and Ladghar beaches, and the next day, 25 kg hashish was recovered from Kelshi and 13 kg from Kolthare, he said. On August 17, more than 14 kg of the contraband was found at Murud, 101 kg between Burondi and Dabhol creek, while 22 kg was seized from Borya beach, the official said. "We have recovered more than 250 kg of the contraband from seven beaches in six days from last Monday to Saturday and our search operation is still underway," Dapoli Customs assistant commissioner Shrikant Kudalkar said. **PTI**

Bombay HC seeks state govt's response on BJP leader Subramanian Swamy's PIL challenging Pandharpur Temples Act

The Bombay High Court on Monday sought the Maharashtra government's reply on a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy challenging the Pandharpur Temples Act.

In the petition filed in February this year, Swamy claimed the Maharashtra government had taken over the administration of the Pandharpur town's temples in an arbitrary manner.

A division bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Arif S Doctor on Monday directed the government to file its affidavit and posted the matter for hearing on September 13. As per the plea, the state government through the Pandharpur Temples Act, 1973, had abolished all hereditary rights and privileges of ministrants and priestly classes for the governance and administration of the temples of Lord Vitthal and

A container collides with five cars on Mumbai-Pune Expressway leaves two killed, four injured



Two persons were killed and four injured when a container truck overturned, jumped the divider and collided with five cars on Mumbai-Pune Expressway on Monday, police said.

The accident occurred in Khopoli area of Raigad district around 9 am, when the container truck was heading to Mumbai from Pune, an official said.

The heavy vehicle overturned, jumped the divider and collided with five cars travelling

towards Pune, he said. Of the occupants of these cars, a man and a woman were killed, while four women were injured in the accident, the official said.

As per the preliminary probe, driver of the container truck was speeding and lost the control of the vehicle, causing it to overturn and collide with the cars, he said. A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against the driver, the official added. **PTI**



Rukmini in Pandharpur in the state's Solapur district.

The law enabled the state government to control its administration and management of funds, the plea said. On Monday, another person Bheemacharya Balacharya, who claimed to be part of the Dharma Rakshak Trust, sought to intervene in the matter. The HC, however, found his intervention unnecessary and rejected his application. Swamy

in his PIL said he had written to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in July 2022 saying the temple affairs related to religious offerings and customs were "heavily mismanaged" and that this would have an adverse impact on Hindu religious sentiments and fundamental rights of the believers. "In the present case, it was in perpetuity and therefore it is unconstitutional," the PIL claimed. **PTI**

Nation

SC agrees to hear Tamil Nadu govt's plea of Cauvery water-sharing dispute



government of Tamil Nadu has filed an application in the Cauvery River water-sharing dispute case. "This is an urgent plea for the release of Cauvery water for August as per the Cauvery Water Management Authority order. The court has to constitute a bench," he said while urging to list it at the earliest also for hearing. To this, the bench said, "Today itself I will constitute a Bench."

The matter has been a controversial issue between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu for decades and they have been locked in a battle over the sharing of water from the Cauvery River, which is a major source of irrigation and drinking water for millions of people in the region. ANI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to constitute today itself a bench to hear the Cauvery River water-sharing dispute where Tamil Nadu has sought direction to Karnataka to release 24,000 cusecs of water daily for standing crops.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said it will constitute a bench to hear the case today itself after senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Tamil Nadu, sought an urgent hearing of the case.

Rohatgi sought an urgent hearing of the case saying the

DCW issues notice to Delhi Police demanding arrest of government official accused in assault case

Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has issued a notice to the Delhi Police demanding the arrest of a senior Delhi government official, who has been accused of sexually assaulting his friend's daughter over the course of several months, resulting in her pregnancy. DCW chief Swati Maliwal on Monday said the accused is a Deputy Director of the Women and Child Development (WCD) Department.

"In Delhi, a government officer in the post of Deputy Director



in the Women and Child Development Department has been accused of sexually abusing a girl child. The police haven't arrested him yet. Issuing notice to Delhi Police. If the one whose job was

to protect daughters turns into a predator, then where will the girls go! Must be arrested soon!" Maliwal posted in Hindi on the microblogging platform, X, formerly called Twitter. ANI

SC indicated that it would lay foundation to summon govt officers



The Supreme Court on Monday indicated that it will lay down some guidelines for the summoning of government officers by the courts. The top court made these

remarks while hearing a matter related to an Allahabad High Court order whereby two senior officers were directed to be taken into custody for non-compliance with the court's directive.

Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, told the court that the government had come out with a draft Standard of Procedure (SOP) for the appearance of government officials before courts in litigation. A bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said that it has gone through the Centre's draft proposal. The court also said that there must be a bifurcation of matters which is pending and the ones in which adjudication is complete. ANI

2021 toolkit case: Activist Disha Ravi urged Delhi High Court seeking modification of bail condition



Climate Activist Disha Ravi, who is an accused in the 2021 toolkit case, has moved the Delhi High Court seeking modification of bail condition of seeking prior judicial permission of the trial court before travelling abroad. The petitioner submitted that the applicant was always cooperative during the investigation and the continuation of said condition is no longer necessary or justified to safeguard the interest of prosecuting agency.

The counsel appearing for Delhi Police opposed the plea and submitted that merely because a bail condition is found to be inconve-

nient to the applicant, it cannot be a ground to modify and the investigation of the present case is not yet completed. The bench of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma on Monday after noting submissions, reserved the order and said the order will be passed today itself around 4 pm in the matter.

The petitioner further stated that on previous occasions, she has been granted permission to travel abroad and she never misused the liberty. The investigation of the present case has been put on hold by Apex Court and the Look Out circular (LOC) is already open against the applicant/accused. ANI

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal mentioned that temporary employees of MCD will be regularised

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday assured that all temporary employees of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) would be regularised. He was addressing a programme organised by the MCD, where he

handed over appointment letters to 370 newly regularised employees. MCD employees are getting salaries on time for the last two months and the civic body's tax collection has also increased because it is being led by an honest dispensation, Kejriwal said. PTI

Chandrayaan 3 mission: ISRO shares new pictures of moon lander

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) on Monday released fresh pictures of the Vikram lander of the Chandrayaan 3 mission, determining the landing site on the moon. In a post shared on microblogging site X, two days before the

landing, the ISRO shared images of the moon's far side area captured by the Lander Hazard Detection and Avoidance Camera (LHDAC). "This camera that assists in locating a safe landing area -- without boulders or deep trenches -- during the descent," the ISRO posted. ANI

World

Pakistan's Churches Vandalism: 19 churches gutted, says human rights report



A total of 19 churches were fully gutted and 89 Christian houses burnt down in recent violence targeting the Christian community in Jaranwala in Faisalabad, according to a fact-finding report of the Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP). The HRFP report stated that in

the August 16 Jaranwala mob attack on churches and Christians, a total of 19 churches were burnt fully while two churches and some prayer rooms/community halls were also affected.

It further said over 400 houses were affected in total with 89 Christian houses including those

of pastors and priests being completely gutted while 15 houses were partially destroyed. The report stated that over 10,000 Christians had hid in sugar cane and other fields, during the first nights of attack.

The HRFP said its report was based on direct information and evidence through the fact-finding mission trip to the sites of the incident, interviews of victims, families, local residents, church leaders, neighbourhoods, journalists, police officials, local authorities, political workers and different stakeholders. The HRFP team met in person with more than 150 victims and families and church leaders who shared their stories about victimizations and religious persecutions, losses and immediate needs to help them urgently and for longer time, the report stated. ANI

17 Indian Youths detained in Libya returned home after six months



The Embassy of India in Tunisia said they had successfully repatriated 17 Indians from Punjab and Haryana on August 19, who were detained in Libya since February this year. On their social media account X (formerly known as Twitter), Indian Embassy in Tunisia said, "The Embassy of India to Libya successfully repatriated 17 Indian Nationals from Punjab and Haryana (on 19 August 2023), who were detained in Libya since February 2023. The Indians safely reached India on 20 August 2023 by Gulf Air

flight at 2030 hrs."

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney, on Monday, who had played a role in facilitating the evacuation said that 17 youth mostly hailing from Punjab and Haryana were evacuated from Libya after Tripoli jail released them last month. They were in Libya for the past six months because of travel agents who duped them on the pretext of sending them to Italy. They were in Libya for the past six months because of travel agents who duped them on the pretext of sending them to Italy. ANI

F-16 aircrafts: Ukraine President Zelenskyy visits Netherlands, Denmark; hails "historic" agreement of aircraft



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the "historic" supply of F-16 aircraft by the Netherlands and Denmark which is expected to help Kyiv's counter-offensive against Moscow, CNN reported on Sunday. The Netherlands and Denmark will be pro-

viding Ukraine with long-anticipated F-16 aircraft after the US approved sending the aircraft to Kyiv allowing Ukrainian pilots to begin training on the fighter jets.

F-16s are single-engine, multi-role jet aircraft, meaning they can be used in air-to-air or ground-attack missions. Notably, Kyiv has

urgently been calling on its Western allies to provide F-16 jets, as its slow-moving counteroffensive is hampered by Russian air superiority, according to CNN. Speaking at a joint press conference with Zelenskyy at Eindhoven airport in the Netherlands, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said that his country would "commit to delivering F-16 aircraft to Ukraine once the conditions for such a transfer have been met." Zelenskyy hailed the agreement as "historic" and "the most important" one yet. ANI

Former US president raised tax issue, said "would impose reciprocal tax if voted to power"

Former US president Donald Trump has once again raised the issue of high taxes in India on certain American products, in particular the iconic Harley-Davidson motorcycles, and has threatened to slap reciprocal tax if he is voted to power in the 2024 presidential elections. During his first term as the US presi-

dent, Trump described India as a "tariff king" and in May 2019, terminated India's preferential market access -- Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) -- to the United States alleging India has not given the United States "equitable and reasonable access to its markets." The 77-year-old former president, who is facing a se-

ries of court cases and indictments, is leading the Republican presidential primaries and accounts for more than half of the GOP votes according to major national polls. In an interview with Larry Kudlow of Fox Business News, Trump said came down heavily on India's tax rates, which he alleged were quite high. PTI

US storm Hilary: Hurricane enters California amid earthquake; heavy rainfall, flood warning



Tropical storm Hilary has entered the United States Southern California causing heavy rainfall and disrupting the lives of many people, The Washington Post reported. Tens of millions of people are under a tropical storm warning, the first of its kind issued for Southern California. Heavy rainfall and "catastrophic flooding" are expected in parts of Arizona and Nevada.

The storm arrived at the time when the earthquake hit the South California region. An earthquake of magnitude 5.1 hit Southern California north of Los Angeles, US Geological Survey said on Sunday (local time).

"Good afternoon Southern CA. Did you feel the magnitude 5.1 earthquake about 4 miles southeast of Ojai at 2:41 pm," USGS Shake Alert said on X (formerly Twitter). ANI

Expression

Biodiverse Habitat on Earth



Vijay Garg

Retired Principal Educational
Columnist Malout Punjab

A recent study has found that soil is home to 59 per cent of all life on Earth, from an insect feeding on the soil surface to a tiny microbe nestled in a soil pore. This discovery crowns soil as the most biodiverse habitat on the planet. The paper estimates that around 2 million species of arthropod (think insects and spiders) inhabit the soil – some 30 per cent of all known arthropod species. There are far fewer species of soil specialists such as enchytraeidae (resembling mini earthworms) and oligochaeta (worms), with only 770 and 6,000 species respectively. That might not seem like a lot, but it still represents around 98 per cent and 63 per cent of these animal groups.

The variety of mammals living in soil is, by comparison, quite limited. Only 3.8 per cent of mammal species are associated with this habitat. On the other hand, 85 per cent of plants have their roots buried in the soil and around 43 per cent of nematode (tiny worms) species call soil their home,

or reside within the plants and animals that inhabit it. However, the number of animal and plant species that live in soil are dwarfed by microscopic organisms.

The researchers estimate that a mind-blowing 430 million species (or more than 50 per cent) of bacteria and 5.6 million species (or 90 per cent) of fungi have made soil their home. But perhaps more important than the raw numbers are the functions that this biodiversity performs. The life within the soil not only helps to produce the food we eat, it also plays a crucial role in holding the soil together and even gives us potential sources for new antibiotics and medicines.

Helping plants grow Small animals, including earthworms and springtails, break down plant material and other forms of organic matter, such as dead insects, and incorporate them into the soil. This process releases the nutrients that most plants rely on to grow. But it's not the only way that soil organisms help plants gain more nutrition. Mycorrhizal fungi (a species of fungi that grow in association with plant roots), for instance, embed themselves in the roots of plants where they extract energy-rich compounds. In return, the fungi help plants expand their reach in the soil, allowing them to access a greater

amount of nutrients.

Other species that are vital for food production include nitrogen-fixing bacteria. They are commonly associated with legumes such as beans and clover. These bacteria convert nitrogen gas from the atmosphere into compounds that the plants can use – an undertaking that can otherwise only be done synthetically, using vast amounts of energy.

As organisms penetrate the soil, whether by burrowing, creating nests or as a means of anchoring themselves, they engineer pathways through the soil and contribute to its structure. Notable examples include termites rearranging the soil to create channels for air and water to filter through, as well as roots and root hairs enmeshing soil. The incorporation of decomposed plant material into the soil serves a similarly crucial purpose. It helps to hold the soil together and creates pores that protect the soil from erosion and increase its capacity to store water. Some of this organic material is also locked away with soil minerals, leading to the storage of carbon. In fact, soils hold three times as much carbon as vegetation and twice as much as the atmosphere.

In many cases, these functions

involve a variety of species.

Having multiple species perform the same function offers a safety net if conditions change, such as during a drought or a flood. Some species are more resilient to these events than others. When conditions change, unaffected organisms within the soil can step in to fulfil the same functions as those that might have suffered – a process ecologists call “functional redundancy”. This improves the ability of an ecosystem, such as soil, to withstand and recover from environmental shocks. Soil biodiversity is also a key reservoir for new drugs.

Soil bacteria have produced most of our antibiotics, including streptomycin, chloramphenicol and tetracycline. Unfortunately, the rise of antibiotic resistance has rendered many early antibiotics ineffective. However, searching through different soils is yielding promising new antibiotics with the potential to kill “superbugs” that are resistant to existing drugs. Soil biodiversity plays an important role in producing the food we eat, sustaining soil health and helping to deliver a range of other services, from sourcing medicines to reducing the impact of floods and droughts.

Entertainment



Virat Kohli, Anushka Sharma enjoy lunch date in Barbados, picture goes viral

Celebrity couple Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma popularly known as "Virushka" are among the most loved couples. Recently Virat shared an adorable picture from their vacation in Barbados, in which he could be seen posing outside a café along with his wife Anushka. The duo could be seen donning casual outfits.

Now, another picture from their Barbados trip has surfaced on social media. In the picture, Virat and Anushka could be seen enjoying their lunch date at the café. Anushka could be seen flaunting her cute smile in the picture, while Virat also flashed a smile. In the snap, Anushka was seen donning a long blue shirt with white slip-ons and matching sunglasses. Virat, on the other hand, wore a blue T-shirt and printed white shorts, and accessorized his look with a green cap. **ANI**

Dia Mirza pens adorable birthday wish for husband Vaibhav Rekhi

Actor Dia Mirza on Monday penned an adorable birthday wish for her husband Vaibhav Rekhi. Taking to Instagram, Dia shared a picture on her stories and wrote, "Happy Birthday Husband. May always laugh loudest and always spread warmth and joy. Thank you for giving us all of you."

Dia married businessman Vaibhav in February 2021, and on May 14, 2021, they welcomed a baby boy named Ayaan. Recently she shared adorable pictures with her son Ayaan. One of the photos features Dia's husband Vaibhav Rekhi with Ayaan enjoying the sunset. Calling themselves "Sunset Ke Divane", she wrote, "May we always chase sunsets. **ANI**



Samantha Ruth Prabhu shares stunning pictures from New York diaries

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu who is in New York to represent India at the 'India Day Parade' on Monday shared a glimpse from her trip. Taking to Instagram, Samantha treated fans with a series of pictures from her New York diaries.

From gyming, enjoying a dinner date with friends and family to exploring the city. Sharing the photos, she wrote, "Something in the New York air." The world's largest 'India Day Parade' outside India kicked off on Sunday afternoon in New York City, with the celebration witnessing huge floats and marching groups comprising members of the Indian-American community.

In the viral pictures, Samantha marched in the parade in boho style ensemble. During her speech at the 41st Annual India Day Parade, she called it an honour to witness such a rich representation of Indian culture and heritage. "It is truly an honour for me to be here today...you have made me realise how rich my culture and heritage is and what I have seen today will last me for a lifetime. Thank you for all the support through the years. Thank you USA for supporting every film of mine," Samantha said. **ANI**