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ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଯୋଜନାର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ

- ଗ୍ରାମାଞ୍ଚଳରୁ ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ସୁନିଷ୍ଟିତ ବସ୍ ସଂଯୋଗ
 - ସୁଲଭ ଓ ନିର୍ଭରଯୋଗ୍ୟ ସେବା
- ମହିଳା, ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟକୁ ସଶକ୍ତ କରିବା
 - ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ ଏବଂ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଅର୍ଥ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାକୁ ପ୍ରୋହାହନ
 - ଯାତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ସଡ଼କ ସୁରକ୍ଷାକୁ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ
 - ସ୍ୱଳ୍ଥ ଏବଂ ବୈଷୟିକ ଜ୍ଞାନକୌଶଳ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରିଚାଳିତ ସାଧାରଣ ପରିବହନ

ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ରୁ ବ୍ଲକ ମାତ୍ର 8-ଟଙ୍କା



ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶୁଭାରୟ

> ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର । ଜଗତସିଂହପୁର ଗଞ୍ଜାମ । ନୂଆପଡା । ବୌଦ୍ଧ

୨୧ ଫେବୃଆରୀ ୨୦୨୪



ବାଣିଳ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବହନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

OIPR-38002/13/0082/2324

leisure



BRITNEY SAYS, 'BEING

Pop icon Britney Spears has insisted she is still single, despite being linked to an ex. Opening up about her love life the Toxic singer said, "Being single is awesome," seemingly shutting down rumours that she is back with her felon ex Paul Richard Soliz, reports Mirror.co.uk.

MAISIE HAD IDENTITY CRISIS AFTER GAME OF THRONES

Actress Maisie Williams, who shot to stardom at 12 with her role as Arya Stark in Game of Thrones, said that being part of such a popular fantasy show gave her an identity crisis as she was growing up in the spotlight.





Today you are going to if you plan out the right things, says Ganesha. At the work place it will be business as usual with its highs and lows. But make some good plan for the evening and you will be surprised.

TAURUS

This day your reasoning, speculations and conjectures could be letting you down. You may thus feel dejected because things are not working out the way you had planned and anticipated. Be prepared and forearmed. Move away from whatever you are doing and spend as much time as you can with friends and relatives. Joke and laugh away

A hectic and busy day awaits you. You need to think about how, where and in what proportion to concentrate your energies upon the numerous jobs thrust upon you. You will be able to succesfully complete your tasks in the later half of the day, says Ganesha

CANCER

Your attempt to come out winners after vanquishing vour competitors will shock/confound your rivals. The loved ones will realise your affection. You will clear your way through unfavourable terrain. Your positive approach will win over many admirers. Ganesha's total grace is on you

LEO

You need to tap into your inner resources today. Meetings or important consultations are best concluded before the afternoon. The later half of the day will not be very auspicious for you. A day of mixed results awaits, says Ganesha

Perhaps, your artistic talents will shine out today, says Ganesha, You will be very happy with your personal belongings, which you have preserved for years. Later in the day, you may beautify your house by adding furniture and artefacts

Some things are always remembered with fondness Today may be one of those days when you tend to get wistful and and later in the day, you may strive hard to reconnect with your near and dear ones. Listen to your heart.

SCORPIO

You are likely to have an urge to lead a more active and healthy lifestyle today. You will focus on improving your eating habits and consider your options for exercise, says Ganesha. On the work front, you will realise that learning to eniov work is the best way of getting things done. Dawned with this realisation, you will feel complete and content.

SAGITTARIUS

You are likely to pull up your socks today shoulder the responsibilities that come your way. You may fall short of money due to some unexpected expenses. However, nothing can deter you from taking your sweetheart on a date. Have a

CAPRICORN

Nothing in the world can be as comforting as the support of your family members, and you will have that in plenty today, especially if you're setting out to refurbish your house, says Ganesha. With their support, you can win the world and achieve the impossible, but since everything comes with a price tag — even happiness— get ready to pay for a fat bill; the support of your loved ones won't come cheap.

AQUARIUS

Fame and fortune woo you today! And along with recognitions and rewards you receive encouragement to do even better. Your bosses are pleased, but feel that you haven't really given your 100%. Head on your shoulders and feet on the ground, says Ganesha, is the best policy

PISCES

Contemplating on the source which triggered problems for you recently will be the order of the day. Identifying the source is half the work done: eliminating it is just a matter of initiative and courage, says Ganesha.



Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who is

known for Super Deluxe, Rangasthalam and

others, has spoken about the 'extremely diffi

cult' year of her life. The actress recently

dropped the first episode of her health pod-

cast titled Take 20, on her YouTube channel.

During the episode, the actress opened up

on her struggle with the auto-immune condi-

tion of myositis. Samantha said, "I remember

specifically the year before I had this problem

it was an extremely difficult year for me. I re-

member telling my manager Himank, after that

She continued, "I haven't felt a little relaxed and

a little calm in a very, very long time. I felt,

I can now wake up and focus on my

work and be the best that I can be at

work. But I woke up with this con-

Talking about the motivation

behind this podcast, the Family

Man 2 actress said, "The reason

I wanted to do this podcast

was because after the expe-

rience, the harrowing expe-

rience that I've been through

and well, an autoimmune

condition is lifelong, so

with what I'm dealing with

right now as well, I'd

rather want people be safe

than sorry."

dition.

tough phase finally I feel calm.

SINGLE IS AWESOME'

Mumbai:

Actress Kiara

Advani, who

was last seen

in the film

Satyaprem

Ki $\bar{K}atha$,

has come on

board for the third install-

ment of the ac-

tion-thriller film

LOCAL ROUNDUP

Trikanya trailer: Reflection of women's emotional journeys

Bhubaneswar: Anupam Patnaik-directorial Trikanya had its trailer released at a City hotel.

Tuesday. Apart from director Patnaik, other artistes including Barsha Patnaik, Manoj Mishra, Aman, Sradha Panigrahi, Partha Sarathi Ray, Nishanth Majithia, Sukant Rath,

Nivy, and Sijan Mohapatra were also present at the event.

"The film comprises three unique narratives, each portraying a different facet of women's lives. These stories explore themes of companionship, motherhood, and the complexities of marital relationships.

Each tale unfolds with its own secrets and revelations, offering a glimpse into the emotional journeys of the women at their core," revealed the

Trikanya will hit big screens on Women's Day, March 8, 2024, he

Launching of multi-starrer *Chandrabanshi*

Bhubaneswar: Anasmish Productions' next project will be a multi-starrer, according to the makers.

Mahurat of the movie, titled Chandrabanshi, was held here at Kali Temple in Baramunda area, Set to release during the Raja fes-

tival, the cast of the movie includes

Sidhanth Mohapatra, Akash Das Nayak, Sritam Das, Samaresh Routray, Raj Rajesh, Poonam Mishra, Lipsa Mishra, Jasmine Ratha, Usasi Mishra, Smita, Daitari Panda,Aswin

> and several others. The movie will be directed by Yash and

Tripathy, Piyush Tripathy,

Sunil and produced by Pritam Sahu. "The film, shooting of which will start Wednesday across Odisha, is inspired by the epic Mahabharata but

set in present times," said Pritam.

Earlier, the title track of the movie was released on the Amara Muzic YouTube channel. Swayam Padhi,

Chakraborty, Kuldeep Pattnaik, and Aseema Panda have lent their voices to the songs, while Puspak Parida has written the lyrics. A rap song is written by Kalki Rapper, and Asad Nizam has scored the music.

Anasmish Productions' last three releases are Sesha Rati, Guddu Gangster, and Katak-Sesha Ru A a rambha.

TV actor Rituraj passes away at 59

Mumbai: Actor Rituraj Singh, known for his roles in Badrinath Ki Dulhaniya

SUDOKU

6

4

9

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

6 3 2

2 6

4 5

4

the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any

2

6

5 3

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

and Anupamaa,passed away at the age of 59 in the wee hours Tuesday.

The actor was dis charged from the hospital after he was admitted fol lowing a stomach infection. But, his health condition deteriorated last night, and he suffered a heart at-

Actor Amit Behl told IANS, "Rituraj was admitted in the hospital and was discharged. Last night at 12.30 a.m.

he got a cardiac arrest. He was admitted in the hospital for a stomach infec-_ tion. With a career

spanning over three decades, Rituraj was known for his work in shows

like Banegi Apni Baat, Tehkikaat, Kutumb, Jyoti, Beintehaa. He also featured in web series Made in Heaven and movie Yaariyan 2. IANS

9

2

5

6

8

PEANUTS

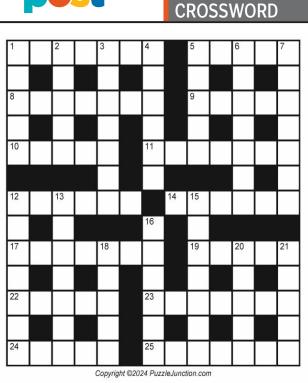


CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY





Kiara

comes on

board for

The film also stars Ranveer Singh, who will be stepping

into the shoes of Shah Rukh Khan for the titular role. SRK

has played the titular character in the first two install-

ments of the film, which were released after a gap of five

Tuesday, the makers of the film took to Instagram and

shared a video welcoming the actress in the film. *Don 3*

is one of the most anticipated films, given the fran-

chise's legacy of almost two decades. Earlier, the cast-

ing of Ranveer as the titular character caused a lot

of buzz, akin to SRK first stepping into the iconic

role, which was first played by veteran actor

Amitabh Bachchan in the 1978 film Don, di-

The shooting for Don 3 is reportedly set

begin in August. Directed by Farhan

Akhtar, the film is produced by

rected by Chandra Barot.

Excel Entertainment.

Across

- 1 Enticed
- 5 Practical joker (3-2)
- 8 Perennial herb
- with aromatic leaves
- 9 Bury
- 10 Mass meeting 11 Dress material
- 12 Giant cane
- 14 Throwing
- competition
- 2 Story line 17 Saintly glow
- Down

19 Strangely

24 Firewood

25 Moving

measure

carefully

23 An impressive

country house

22 Riches

- 1 Three-toed
- animal
- **3** Hunt cry (5-2)
- 6 Immense 7 Maybe

(3-3)

5 Adhere

12 Rock group

4 Plant disease

- 13 Supernatural act
- 15 Sequester
- 16 Trips the light fantastic
- 18 Rotund
- 20 Inhabit 21 Spring chicken
- SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Puri-Konark rly line

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw says PM has sanctioned ₹492 crore for construction of 32-km-long Puri-Konark railway line

DOWNTOWN | P2



Stalemate continues

There is no progress in formation of a new coalition government in Pakistan as top leaders fail to agree on a power-sharing deal

INTERNATIONAL | P8



Capex boost

Fresh round of capital expenditure by corporate sector likely to fuel next leg of growth, says Reserve Bank of India's bulletin

BUSINESS | P9



Stunning feat

Eight-year-old Ashwath Kaushik becomes the youngest-ever chess player to beat a grandmaster

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 21 2024

Game change in C'garh

DEFEATED AAP CANDIDATE KULDEEP KUMAR EMERGES WINNER IN CHANDIGARH MAYORAL POLL AFTER SC INTERVENTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: The Supreme Court Tuesday declared defeated AAP-Congress alliance candidate Kuldeep Kumar the Mayor of Chandigarh after overturning the result of the controversial January 30 poll where the BJP nominee had emerged an unlikely winner, in an unprecedented intervention to set right a brazen attempt by the returning officer to rig the election. The top court also ordered prosecution of returning officer (RO) Anil Masih, a BJP leader, for "serious misdemeanor" for making an allegedly false statement before the court that he had invalidated eight ballots because they had been defaced.

Exercising its plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to do complete justice, the apex court said the result declared by the RO, a nominated councillor, was clearly contrary to law.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said in such a case, the top court was duty bound, particularly in the context of its jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution, to ensure that the process of electoral democracy is not al-



Mayor-elect Kuldeep Kumar

lowed to be thwarted by subterfuge. The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said the court must step in where exceptional situations develop to ensure that the basic mandate of electoral democracy is preserved.

We accordingly order and direct that the result of the election as declared by the presiding officer (Masih) stands quashed and set aside. The petitioner (Kumar) is declared to be the validly elected candidate for election as Mayor of Chandigarh Municipal Corporation," the bench ruled. The top court said in each of the eight ballot papers, which were invalidated by Masih, the votes were duly cast in favour of Kumar.

The Congress party hailed the

Supreme Court decision on the "farcical election", saying it saved democracy from the fangs of an "autocratic BJP" that resorted to dirty election manipulation. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the "institutional sabotage" is only the "tip of the iceberg in Modi-Shah's devious conspiracy to trample democracy". Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "Masih (the RO for the poll) is just a 'pawn' in BJP's conspiracy to murder democracy, behind which is the 'face' of Modi." The SC has saved democracy in these "difficult times",

The BJP had won the mayoral polls January 30 defeating the comfortably placed AAP-Congress alliance candidate after the RO declared as invalid eight votes of the coalition partners, drawing accusations of tampering with ballots. BJP's Manoj Sonkar defeated Kumar after polling 16 votes against his rival's 12 to bag the mayor's post. Sonkar, however, resigned subsequently, while three AAP councillors defected to BJP. The bench said Masih had evidently put his own mark on these eight ballot papers for the purpose of creating a ground for treating them as invalidly cast.

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal said.

Death before HSC exam sparks row

Bhubaneswar/Bolangir, Feb

POST NEWS NETWORK

20: In a tragic incident, a Class X student was found hanging in the washroom of his hostel in Bolangir district, just a few hours before the commencement of the High School Certificate (HSC) Examination Tuesday, even as his family members suspected foul play in the incident.

The incident took place at Viswatma S Vidyamandir in Khujenpali area of the district. The deceased was identified as Binayak Pradhan, 15, son of Ratra Pradhan from Taliudar village under Loisingha police limits. He was to appear for the examination at Bhagaban Vidya Mandir in Khujenpali. However, hostel inmates found him hanging inside the washroom Tuesday morning. School authorities rushed him to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead, police said. Alleging that Binayak was murdered, his father demanded an impartial probe.

The death of the boy sparked tension in the hospital as his family members and villagers had a heated exchange with the school staff. "We are unable to understand the cause of his death," hostel warden Sambit Kumar said.

"We have launched a probe following a suspected murder complaint by the deceased's family," said Sadar IIC Rajkumar Biswal.

RESOLUTE STAND: Farmers near an excavator modified to shield them from rubber bullets, as they plan to resume their 'Delhi Chalo' march over various demands, including a legal guarantee on the minimum support price for crops and farm loan waiver, at Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border in Patiala district, Tuesday Vaishnaw, Debashish,

Subhasish elected

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, and BJD's Debashish Samantaray and Subhasish Khuntia were Tuesday elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha from Odisha.

Returning Officer Abanikanta Patnaik announced the names of the elected persons after the deadline for withdrawal of nominations ended Tuesday afternoon.

BJP candidate Vaishnaw was re-elected to Rajya Sabha with the ruling BJD's support. Vaishnaw had filed his paper on the last day of the nomination filing process February 15 while two BJD candidates had filed nominations February 13.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Your species might be same but till

we don't ascertain your religions, you

can't stay together

REGISTRATION

CENTRE

Bargarh gets ₹2,149cr projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday inaugurated 62 projects, including the much-awaited ₹1,677.42 crore-Gangadhar Meher Irrigation Project, worth ₹2,149 crore and laid foundation stones for 21 projects worth ₹263 crore in Bargarh district.

Addressing a function organised at Kanapali, Patnaik said Gangadhar Meher Irrigation Project built at a cost of ₹1.677.42 crore will provide irrigation facilities to over 60.000 acre land in the western Odisha district including the agricultural land in Sohela, Bijepur Barpali and Dunguripali.

The CM also inaugurated a 100-bed cancer care centre built at a cost of ₹106.06 crore in the district. He inaugurated the transformed Nrusinghnath Peeth, which

has been redeveloped with an allocation of ₹22.78 crore. These apart, Patnaik also inaugurated 59 development projects for which the state government has spent ₹342.69 crore.

The CM said under the 5T programme, 11 cancer hospitals are being built at an investment of more than ₹1.000 crore.

Moreover, Patnaik laid foundation stones for 21 projects worth ₹263.33 crore on the occasion.

Highlighting the ongoing transform tion work under 5T initiative, Patnaik said the transformation of schools across the state has achieved big success, while Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana has come as a blessing for over 4 crore people of Odisha.

Interest-free loans have been provided to farmers, Mission Shakti women SHGs and youths in the state, while scholarships have been given to college students, he said.

Bhubaneswar hottest

at 37 degrees Celsius

Bhubaneswar: Residents of Capital city

Tuesday experienced an early summer

Celsius – the highest day temperature in the state. The day started with a

built up into a hotter day by noon. The

as the mercury touched 37 degrees

cold and foggy morning which later

Met department confirmed that 15

weather stations across the state

Jharsuguda and Paralakhemundi,

recorded above 35 degrees C. Boudh

remained second in the table with 36

degrees C followed by Bhawanipatna,

which recorded 35.6 degrees C each.



INDIA'S FASTEST GROWING HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN

NOW IN BHUBANESWAR





Frand Inauguration

CHIEF GUEST Shri. Ashok Chandra Panda Ji

shri. Dr. Achyuta Samanta Ji

Hon'ble MP, Kandhamal Constitution

Shri. Susant Kumar Rout Ji

Hon'ble MLA, Bhubaneswar (North)

Hon'ble Minister Science & Technology Public Enterprises Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disability

GUEST OF HONOUR

shri. Amar Patnaik Ji on'ble MP, Rajya Sabha (Odisha shri. Ananta Narayan Jena Ji Hon'ble MLA, Bhubaneswar (Central)

Smt. Sulochana Das Ji Smt. Kabita Swain Ji Hon'ble Mayor, BMC, Bhubaneswar

Hon'ble Corporator, Ward No. 41, BMC, Bhubaneswar

Shri. Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu Ji

FEB | 21 | WED | 2024

Ankura Hospital, Near Sisubhavan Bus Stop, Bapuji Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha - 751009

SHORT TAKES

PM flags off India's longest tunnel in Jammu

Srinagar: The longest transportation tunnel of the country on Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) was opened by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi Tuesday as he flagged off the first electrified trains of the Kashmir valley. "PM Modi was present in Jammu and he virtually flagged off two electrified trains simultaneously," a railway official said. He added that the PM also inaugurated the 48.1-km-long Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan section.

PM lays stone for CUO projects | P2

UNESCO honour for 'banned' Polish dance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Warsaw (Poland), Feb 20: Once banned by rulers dispatched from Moscow, Poland's 18th century stately polonaise dance that nurtured the country's spirit even through the dark years of its partition is now honoured by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

This dance has been performed from aristocratic balls to village celebrations, inspiring composers the likes of JS Bach and Frederic Chopin. It still figures prominently in big national occasions, pre-graduation balls and weddings.

This living tradition was ensconced into the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage December 5 as a 'form of joint celebration', which 'commemorates important moments in family and community life and symbolises cooperation, reconciliation and equality.'

Poland's Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which petitioned for the dance's inclusion into UNESCO's list, said its initiative was met with huge

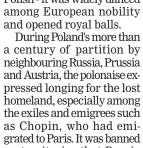
public support. "Thousands of people on Facebook and on other social media were supporting the (UNESCO) entry," Joanna Cicha-Kuczynska, of the



ministry's Department of Monuments Protection, said.

She said there is a huge community, including entire families, that dance the polonaise and pass the tradition on. Performed in pairs, it is led by the first and most prominent pair which improvises various figures, such as raising joined hands to form bridges under which other dancers can pass. This slow-paced procession dance evolved from a folk form called the walking dance.' By the 18th century, under the French name of 'Polonaise' - or Polish - it was widely danced among European nobility

on territories that Russia took over.













Shri. Nikhil Pavan Kalyan Ji, IAS

Hon'ble Director, Rural Development, Odisha















Vaishnaw, 2 BJD leaders elected unopposed to RS

BJD'S DEBASHISH

ELECTED TO THE

WITH UNION

VAISHNAW

SAMANTARAY AND

SUBHASISH KHUNTIA

RAJYA SABHA ALONG

MINISTER ASHWINI

Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw was

re-elected to the Rajya Sabha

with the ruling BJD support.

Vaishnaw had filed his paper on the last day of the nomination

filing process February 15 while



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Returning Officer Abanikanta Patnaik announced the names of the elected persons after the deadline for withdrawal of nominations ended this afternoon. BJP candidate and Railways



WEATHER

CTC 34.7°C 37.0°€ **Max Temp Min Temp** Rainfall

DRY WEATHER

VERY LIKELY



CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I Masi Nag, aged about 54 years, S/o Late Joseph Nag, a resident of Pathan Street, p.o./Dist. Nabarangpur, do hereby solemnly affirm on oath and state as follows: my name has been wrongly mentioned as SITARAM NAG instead of MASI NAG in my Aadhaar card No.- xxxx xxxx 7232 issued by Unique Identification Authority of India, due to my ignorance about its utility. I want to rectify the defective name of self, in the Aadhaar card and issuance a fresh and rectified Aadhaar card in my favour MASI NAG son of JOSEPH NAG. Hence in the Court of Executive Magistrate, Nabarangpur affidavit Dt.15.2.2024. From 15.2.2024 onwards I will known as MASI NAG, S/o Late Joseph Nag in place of SITARAM NAG in all purposes.

I, Urmila Nayak, W/o Achyutananda Samantaray, At-Kodapada, P.O.-Arakhapalli, P.S. Bolagarh, Dist.-Khordha, Pin-752066, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. 333, dt.15.02.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as DALI SAMANTARAY for all purposes.

two BJD candidates had filed nominations February 13.

Though the BJD had the required numbers in the Assembly to win all the three Rajya Sabha seats to fall vacant in April this year, the ruling party had preferred to field only two candidates leaving one berth for BJP's Vaishnaw.

The Naveen Patnaik-led BJD had announced its support to Vaishnaw "for the larger interest of the state's railways and telecom development". In 2019 also, Patnaik had supported Vaishnaw when he got elected to the Upper House of the Parliament for the

In June 2019, the BJD had announced to extend support to Vaishnaw, a former Odisha cadre IAS officer, following a telephone call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Chief Minister

As the three candidates filed their papers for three seats to be vacant, there was no need for an election, the Returning Officer said.

The tenure of three RS members - Vaishnaw, BJD's Prashant Nanda and Amar Patnaik will end in April this year. The election process was made to fill up the three vacancies.

MDRAFM hosts 5-day training

Officers of IP - TAFS (Indian Post & Telecommunications Account & Financial Services), Ministry of Communication commenced at Madhusudan Das Regional Academy of Financial Management (MDRAFM) here, recently. MDRAFM director Ashok Kumar Mohanty delivered the welcome speech. Planning & Convergence Special Secretary Chithra Arumugam, in her address, shed light on the role of Indian post and telecommunication sector in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the country. During the programme, the trainees belonging to different states of the country were shown a thought-provoking documentary video based on the life of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das. Course coordinator Bhanu Mangal Das and additional course coordinator Chandan Mallick elaborated the training module. The programme also included exposure visits to historical monuments of the state.



TEST MARCH: Students arrive at a centre located at Bajrakabati Road in Cuttack to appear for the HSC examination which began, Tuesday

₹492cr sanctioned for Puri-Konark rly line

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Tuesday informed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sanctioned ₹492 crore for construction of the 32 km long Puri-Konark railway line.

He said work will begin for the project soon following acquisition of 217 hectares of the required land.

Vaishnaw said that the new railway line will connect the world-famous Sun Temple at Konark with the Sri Jagannath temple in Puri and it will have vistadome coaches for the passengers to experience the scenic beauty of the marine drive. He said that the Railways



Ministry will seek cooperation of the Odisha government for execution of the project. "We are thinking of providing the passengers the experience of witnessing Sri Jagannath culture while travelling in the train.

he added.

The Railways Ministry, he said, will hold discussions with the sevayats (servitors) and temple administration officials in this regard. The minister also said that at four to five

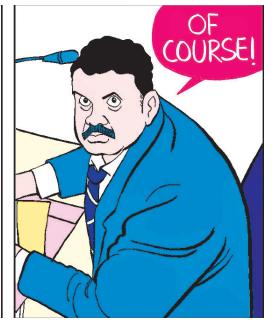
Konark, special tourist hubs will be created for the travelling passengers to understand and engage with the heritage and culture of the area.

Speaking about railways infrastructure in the state, Vaishnaw said that in the last ten years as many as 409 railway bridges and underpaths have been constructed in Odisha at an estimated cost of ₹10,000 crore.

On the occasion, Vaishnaw also released five commemorative postage stamps on legendry poets of the sate and cultural heritage of western Odisha, while also inaugurating 42 branch post offices in 7 western

POLITICKLE by MANJUL





KIIT organises first National Conference on Blue Economy

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 19: To give experts a platform to deliberate on India's blue economy potential, the first National Conference on Blue Economy was inaugurated here at KIIT-DU with the theme 'navigating the marine ecosystem value chain.

Speaking on the inaugural occasion, Science and Technology Minister Ashok Panda highlighted the state government's recently announced biotech policy and how it gives priority to aquatic management, taking into consideration Odisha's 480 km coastline.

'Odisha's rich marine resources, including its mangrove forests, with a budget allocation of 3.50 lakh crore, are pivotal to leveraging the marine economy,"



Panda stated.

Government scientific secretary Parminder Maini underscored the critical timing of the conference, noting that 40 per cent of the global population lives beside oceans, which are vital for energy, food, and support 80 percent of global trade through maritime transportation.

The blue economy contributes approximately 6 trillion dollars to the global economy annually, with India playing a crucial role

in this sector," Maini said, "calling for a concerted effort to safeguard ocean resources and explore potential pathways to achieve a sustainable blue economy," he added.

The conference, a collaborative effort by the Indian Phycological Society, Delhi and the City-based KIIT University is supported by several other institutions like the Institute of Life Sciences, CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology, Bhubaneswar, National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, and the Bhubaneswar City Knowledge Innovation Cluster Foundation (BCKIC).

The event was also attended by MV Ramanamurthy of Ministry of Earth Sciences and Jitendra Kumar, MD of DBT-BIRAC Government of India

PM lays stone for CUO projects

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for various infrastructure projects, including the administrative building, at the Central University of Odisha (CUO) in virtual mode,

The projects will come up at an estimated cost of ₹129 crore.

ised in the presence of CUO vicechancellor Chakradhar Tripathi and Member of Parliament (MP) from Kalahandi constituency Basant Kumar Panda, among others. Speaking on the occasion, MP Panda thanked the prime minister for sanctioning the amount. He said that in the period of Amrut Kaal, the university will achieve more success in future. He further said that the goal of NEP-2020 aims at achieving Indian ethos in education. He urged the students to make a pledge to uphold the unity and integrity of the nation through

Tripathi extended his gratitude to Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan for his continuous effort in the

progress of the university. He said the sanction has been made for construction of various buildings including two academic blocks, one administrative building, one library building and two hostels (boys and girls).

He said that in future various activities are planned to be implemented, including establishment of a Charkha Centre. The unemployed locals will be engaged in preparation of garments using Charka for which special training will be provided to them.



skill centre in Sambalpur

Pradhan opens India's 1st



(SIC) WILL BE A **CATALYST OF PROSPERITY, SAYS** THE UNION MINISTER

PNN & AGENCIES

Sambalpur, Feb 20: Union Minister for Education and Skill Development Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan Tuesday inaugurated the country's first Skill India Centre (SIC) here.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the nation requires a skilled and competent workforce to propel its development journey forward in the 21st century.

He said the new-age and future skills are available at considerably higher cost in global mar-

Realising this, the Centre has decided to democratize access to quality education and establish a level playing field for the aspiring youth, the Union minister said while addressing the youth at the inauguration of India's first Skill India Centre (SIC) here.

The introduction of low-cost courses in the SIC will empower part of the evolving job market.

He said, "By spearheading the skill training programs in newage job roles, we will upgrade the skills set of 'Amrit Peedhi' in demand-driven industries and aim to empower over 1.200 students through this centre.

Pradhan also said, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of empowering youth with new-age skills, Odisha's first Skill India Centre at Sambalpur was inaugurated

The Skill India Centre will equip a vast majority of the young populace with employable skills in demand-driven trades, creating an industryready workforce, encouraging entrepreneurship and strengthening the skilling ecosystem. "It will be a catalyst of pros-

perity," the minister said. The initiative is designed to build the capabilities and knowledge of 'Yuva Shakti' in trades that are high in demand such as Media & Entertainment, Leather, Tourism & Hospitality, and IT-ITeS.

Following this event, the upcoming Skill India Centre in Odisha is scheduled to be inaugurated in Angul, Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Talcher and Deogarh.

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OrissaPOST

Ganjam tops egg production list

District now not only fulfilling its own daily requirements, but supplying eggs to other parts of Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 20: Ganjam has emerged as the top-egg producing district in Odisha, officials informed here Tuesday. This has happened due to attractive sponsorship schemes and incentives provided by the state government. Officials added that Ganjam district, which once needed supply of eggs from outside, to meet its daily requirement, has now turned self sufficient.

Due to the government's incentives more and more people are getting into poultry farming. Confirming this development, chief district veterinary officer (CDVO) Dr Manoj Kumar Sahu, said that eggs and hens are now providing sustainable sources of livelihood to many.

Women self-help groups (SHGs) are also venturing into poultry farming due to government initiatives. The results are there for everyone to see, Sahu said. "Ganiam at present is producing 50 per cent of the total



eggs to other parts of Odisha, but to neighbouring West Bengal and states in the northeast,' Sahu informed

Sources said that Ganjam district has daily requirement of approximately 21 lakh eggs. Earlier daily production veered around the 15-lakh mark. Now it has more than doubled, the sources added.

To boost egg production in the district, the Odisha government launched the 'Mukhya Mantri Krushi Udyog Yojana' and promised subsidy of Rs 50 lakh to encourage youths to take up poultry farming. Now recently the subsidy has been increased to Rs 1 crore.

As part of this initiative, youths who will take up poultry farming with at least 1,000 hens will be given an initial subsidy of Rs 3,03,640. Then as per further requirement, funds will be provided. This initiative has proved to be hugely successful, locals said.

Currently the district has 63 poultry (egg-laying hens) farms where lakhs of hens are being reared. Encouraging women SHGs have also paid off. Currently there are 102 such SHGs rearing approximately

1,000 hens and 216 others who are tending to more than 2,000 hens each. A total of 250 farmers are also into poultry farming rearing more than 1,000 hens each. Two hatcheries have also been established at Bhanianagar and Ankushpur for production of chicks.

Officials said that currently the district has a large poultry population (comprising 4.90 lakh hens) and produces approximately 41 lakh eggs daily. It has enabled the district to supply eggs to other parts of the state.

When contacted, Subhendu Kumar Sahu, president of the 'Ganjam Egg Laying Hen Farmers Association' said that the district has achieved self-sufficiency in egg production. He however, lamented that the government is not taking any initiative to address the health hazards associated with poultry farming. He added that the government should set up a special laboratory to handle various issues associated with poultry farming including the diet of hens.

Life hit due to **Congress bandh**

Bolangir: Several shops and commercial establishments at Kantabanji town in this district remained closed Tuesday due to the 12-hour bandh call given by the Congress to protest against the death threat given to party MLA Santosh Singh Saluja. The Congress demanded immediate arrest of the person who gave the death threat. The bandh which started at 6.00am ended at 6.00pm. However, vehicular traffic movement was not affected. Also schools and other educational institutions remained open as Matric exams started on the day. officials informed, "We are holding a peaceful demonstration demanding immediate arrest of the wrongdoer(s), who has given death threat to our MLA." said a leader of Kantabanii Nagar Congress committee, Banners and posters threatening to kill Saluia surfaced at two prominent places in Kantabanii town Monday morning. In those posters, unidentified person (s) threatened to kill Saluia within the next 15 days. While reacting on this issue. Saluia had said the threat was given for political reasons. He had urged the police to immediately arrest the person. Meanwhile. police have seized the banners and launched a detailed probe.

LAccMI turns saviour , for Belpada students



POST NEWS NETWORK

Belpada, Feb 20: The Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAccMI) bus service launched by the Odisha government has transformed communication in rural areas of the state, benefitting women, schoolchildren and farmers by ensuring timely travel to various parts of the block and district headquarters.

Such an instance came to the fore after Class X students of Parlimal High School under this block in Bolangir district availed a LAccMI bus service to reach their centre at DRMHS well before the scheduled time to appear for their HSC examination

which started. Tuesday

The situation was not the same earlier as students appearing their HSC or any other examination had to face acute transportation problems. At times, they were even forced to hire private vehicles to reach examination centres in time. However, after the launch of the LAccMI service, it has become easy for the students to reach their examination centres on time by paying paltry fare and

without any hassles. The essential student-friendly service has been widely appreciated by educational institutions, parents, teachers and students as well, sources said.

Gahirmatha prepares for nesting of Olive Ridleys

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Feb 20: The Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary personnel have started preparations for providing a tranquil atmosphere for the endangered Olive Ridleys for their smooth sojourn to the sandy beaches to lay eggs.

Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is considered to be the largest rookerv for the endangered Olive Ridlev sea turtle, which is protected under Schedule 1 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and accorded highest protection like endangered tigers.

Sanctuary Ranger Pradosh Kumar Moharana said lakhs of Olive Ridley turtles were seen congregating at a kilometre distance from the sea coast near Habalikhati and Satabhaya.

Anticipating the mass nesting of the Olive Ridleys in March, the Forest personnel have expedited the sea patrolling and launched clean-



ing of the beaches at regular intervals, Moharana said. The Forest personnel are very much optimistic that the mass nesting phenomenon of the endangered marine turtle would occur after the

second week of March. "We expect that the turtles would come en-masse to lay eggs at the golden beach of Nasi-2 island. The mass nesting phenomenon usually occurs during 'Dola Purnima',' the Ranger said adding, "We are hopeful that this time too the mass nesting of Olive Ridleys might occur after March second week.

Meanwhile, the Forest personnel have come across nests of Olive Ridley turtles at the beaches of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary. As many as 829 eggs of Olive Ridleys were collected from the sporadic nesting sites on the beach by the personnel for artificial hatching at the hatchery set up at Babubali, Moharana said.

However, the sea along with beach conditions at Nasi-2 is yet to turn conducive for mass nesting of the Olive Ridleys.

The beach has been eroded earlier at Nasi-2, the favourite nesting place of the endangered Olive Ridley turtles and the beach formation is yet to occur in some parts of Nasi-2.

However, the Forest personnel are hopeful that when the Northern wind will blow the eroded stretches will be filled with sand automatically facilitating an atmosphere conducive for mass nesting.

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Date and Venue:

Saturday, 24th February 2024; 7:00 pm. onwards at Hotel Prateek, Unit 7, Hospital Road, Barbil - 758 035, Odisha For registration, please contact: Debasish Panda, Mobile: 96686 34493. Registration is compulsory.
The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm. No walk-ins will be allowed.



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Publication of Message for Break open of Locker

With reference to above, we herewith informed you that, One of our customer Sri Rabindra Adhikari, S/o: Antaryami Adhikari, At/PO: Surada, Main Road, Ganjam, PIN: 761108, Mobile No.: 9437874601, has availed locker facility from our SBI Surada Branch since 09.11.2015 with locker No. 38, cabinet id: 01. But as per Bank's norm the customer is not operating the locker at-least once in a year since last 4 years. For this we have sent several notices on 06.07.2022, 18.01.2024, 25.01.2024, 30.01.2024, 05.02.2024 regarding payment of pending dues and operating of locker but all notices return to our office with undelivered. Again we have also communicated several times with Mobile No.: 9437874601 but no response received from the customer. So, the Bank will go for break open the locker as per Banks norms, if the customer is not coming within 3 months of publication of this news. All expenses regarding break open of locker will be born by the customer.

This is for your kind information and necessary action. With Regards,

Sd./- Branch Manager

SBI, Surada

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda fitterest (1) Regional Office (Sambalpur Region) 1st Floor, G.M. College Chowk, Christian Para, Sambalpur-768001

POSSESSION NOTICE (Immovable Property)

(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002) Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the BANK OF BARODA under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below. The Borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF BARDDA for an amount stated herein below plus further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment. The Borrower's attention is invited to provision of subsection (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

KHETRAJPUR BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrowers	Description of the Immovable Property	Demand/ Possession Notice Date	Total Dues as on
Mr. Ham Manogi Mishra, 2) Mrs. Poonam Mishra, W/o: Mr. Rajesh Kumar Mishra, Both are residing at Talbhatapada, Near Durga Mandir,	Equitable Mortgage of Land and Building situated at Khata No.: 248/1213, Plot No.: 516/ 2063, Area: Ac.0.070Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, Mouza: Putibandh, Tahasil: Maneswar, PS.: Dhanupali, Tahasil No.: 220, PS. No.: 35, Dist.:	13.12.2023	the second of the second of the second
Sambalpur, in the name of Mr. Rajesh Kumar Poonam Mishra, W/o: Mr. Rajesh Kumar Mis Plot No.: 516(P), North: Plot No.: 517, South:	•	charges and expenses till date of payment	
Place: Sambalpur, Date: 20.02.2024	Aut	horised Off	icer, Bank of Baroda

Voter awareness camps organised in Rourkela



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 20: The city administration is organising camps to create voter awareness for the new as well as the old electorate. The sole aim of the camps is to build a rapport with the voters and seek their suggestions for the smooth and seamless conduct of the polls. Sources said that the administration will organise such camps in this city and Raghunathpalli in Sundargarh district.

The administration is targetting college students mainly as most of them are first-time voters. The administration is demonstrating the utility of EVMs.

Rakesh Das, a student of one of the local colleges said, "I have been listening to all kinds of rumours about EVMs and how they can be manipulated.

PNN & AGENCIES

Since I am a new voter, I was a bit worried. But ever since I participated in the awareness programme all my apprehensions are gone." Many students opined on the same lines and asserted that apprehensions regarding the EVMs 'have vanished completely

Speaking about the awareness programmes, sub-collector Rourkela, Bijay K Nayak said, "We are trying to project how user-friendly the EVMs are. Residents of many localities are participating whole-heartedly in the camps. The college students are very keen to know how the machines function.'

City officials have plans to hold more such inter-active sessions with voters, especially the new ones. In the coming days many more such camps will be organised, the sub-collector added.

6 NABBED OVER HIGHWAY LOOT

Keonjhar, Feb 20: Keonjhar police arrested Tuesday six inter-district criminals and forwarded them to court while investigating a looting incident where the accused had robbed cash after shooting at the occupants travelling in a car. The incident took place Sunday morning near Khireitangiri on NH-49 under Turumunga police station in

"The accused have been produced in court and remanded to judicial custody. We are investigating whether they are involved in any other such cases," inspector-in-charge Dharmendra Kumar Shanti of Turumunga police station, said.

Sources said that Ahmad Hussain (29) was returning to his home in Mayurbhanj district in his car with his driver early morning Sunday. While they were driving through NH-49, six-seven persons in a van and a couple of bikes wavlaid them near the Khireitangiti toll plaza. One of the accused, identified as Sanaullah, then opened fire at the car prompting the driver to stop the vehicle.

'We were lucky. The bullet smashed the back window on the left side. Luckily we were not hit. The man, who had fired on us, then snatched Rs 15,000 from me and all the miscreants fled the spot," Ahmad said in his complaint

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deer have been shifted to Sambalpur Zoo from the Nandankanan Zoological Park in Bhubaneswar as part of an animal exchange programme, Anshu Pragvan Das, divisional forest officer (DFO), Hirakud Wildlife Division said here Tuesday. Among the animals four are males and the remaining ones female, the official added.

Sambalpur, Feb 20: Eight Hog

In exchange for the Hog deer, the Nandankanan Zoo will be given five Sambars (two males and three females) from the Sambalpur Zoo, Das informed. For one month, the Hog deer will be kept under quarantine and after that they will be displayed for visitors to the zoo,



Hog deer is mostly seen in Southeast Asia, US and Australia. Commonly it is also known as 'IndoChina Hog deer'. In India, it's mostly seen in the northern part of the country. It changes the colour of its skin with changes in seasons. Males have distinct antlers and their calls resemble a long whistle. The lifespan of the

Sambalpur Zoo gets 8 Hog deer Hog deer is about 20 years and it is a Schedule -3 animal under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

In December last year, the Hirakud Wildlife Division authorities provided eight blackbucks to the Nandankanan Zoo. The animals are in good health and are a prime attraction for

At present, the Sambalpur Zoo has 18 varieties of animals including leopards, bears, sambars, chousingha deer, blackbucks, pythons, peacocks and other colourful birds, the DFO said. According to the new master plan for the zoo, another 30 varieties of animals are to be introduced in the coming years. Among them are tigers, bisons, wolves and wild dogs.



Timidity is a form of vanity. When you are timid, it means that you attach more importance to the opinions others have of you than to the sincerity of your actions.



THE MOTHER

Biden & Bibi

he tension between US President Joe Biden and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is growing to the extent that the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas may make even the seemingly impossible possible - the formation of a Palestinian state. In fact, reliable reports suggest that a blueprint for this is being readied by the US administration with the help of some Arab countries and Palestinian leaders with the approval of Biden. In view of the obduracy of Netanyahu not to stop Israeli assault on the fleeing Palestinians taking refuge in Rafah, the US President is left with no other course to bring peace in the region at a time when he is seeking re-election. In a fast paced development, the US has proposed 20 February a rival draft United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a temporary ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war and opposing a major ground offensive by Israel in Rafah. Israel, on its part, is continuing with its belligerence and a member of its war cabinet has threatened the country will launch the ground offensive in Rafah, if Hamas does not release its remaining Israeli hostages by the beginning of the holy Moslem month of Ramadan in just under three weeks.

Biden's phone call to Netanyahu a few days back lasting about 40 minutes suggests the US President is following the policy of a bear hug with Netanyahu in public, but tough talk in private. Authentic reports are emerging that Biden is not concealing in private conversation his anger with Netanyahu against whom he has even reportedly used abusive language.

Israel's official version states that the two leaders discussed the hostages taken during the 7 October Hamas onslaught, Rafah, the next stage in the fight against Hamas and touched on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. A White House statement also said the pair talked about hostage negotiations, conditions in Gaza and the prospect of an Israeli military operation in Rafah, the last Hamas stronghold in the enclave, where 1.4 million displaced Palestinians have fled to seek shelter from fighting elsewhere.

However, Biden has been increasingly critical in public. Last week he described Israel's military assault in Gaza as "over the top" and said he was seeking a sustained pause in fighting to help ailing Palestinian civilians and negotiate the release of Israeli hostages, though this is still far short of the ceasefire calls being demanded by the progressives. He also told Netanyahu that Israel should not go ahead with a military operation in the densely populated Gaza border town of Rafah without a "credible" plan to protect civilians.

The conversation came as Netanyahu met with CIA chief William Burns, the war cabinet and the full national security cabinet. But, Netanyahu made it clear that Israel rejects international dictates regarding a permanent settlement with the Palestinians. This kind of arrangement could be reached only through direct negotiations between the parties, without preconditions.

Such a statement itself shows Netanyahu is indeed under pressure and his usual hawkish position appears somewhat tempered. He also said Israel will continue to oppose the unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state. Such recognition in the wake of the 7 October massacre would give a huge reward to unprecedented terrorism and prevent any future peace settlement. This further betrays Netanyahu's nervousness over reports of a blueprint being worked out by the US for the formation of a Palestinian state keeping Israeli leadership in the dark.

One report said the US and several Arab partners - Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Palestinian representatives - are preparing a detailed plan for a comprehensive peace deal between Israel and Palestinians that includes a "firm timeline" for a Palestinian state. An announcement on the blueprint could come in the next few weeks, though the timing is largely dependent on Israel and Hamas being able to reach a deal to pause the fighting in Gaza. This is despite the fear that an Israeli ground offensive in Gaza's Rafah will derail the potential for a peace process.

If Netanyahu ignores Biden again and presses ahead, Biden could express his displeasure by slowing or restricting weapons sales to Israel, changing course at the UN by throwing America's weight behind a ceasefire resolution or coming out aggressively for Palestinian state-hood

Such a volte face by Biden, who has longstanding friendship with Netanyahu, may dash the latter's plan aided and abetted by his Far-Right alliance partners to hound out Palestinians and legitimise Israeli occupation of Gaza. But, Biden has far greater stakes and it seems he is ready to sacrifice his old ally whose vaulting ambition appears to overleap itself.

WISDOM CORNER



The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.

HP LOVECRA

It belongs to the imperfection of everything human that man can only attain his desire by passing through its opposite.

Boredom, anger, sadness, or fear are not 'yours,' not personal. They are conditions of the human mind. They come and go. Nothing that comes and goes is you.

THIS DAY **IN HISTORY**

- 1804: The world's first railway journey takes place in Wales. The first full-scale steam locomotive, built by Richard Trevithick, travelled from the Pen-y-darren ironworks near Merthyr Tydfil to Abercynon.
- 1848: The Communist Manifesto, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, was first published; the pamphlet became hugely influential. "Das Kommunistische Manifest" outlined the sociopolitical worldview today called "Marxism" and was translated from German into over 100 languages.
- 1916: The Battle of Verdun, one of the most devastating engagements of World War I, began.
- 1921: Reza Khan (later Reza Shah Pahlavi) overthrew the Q j r dynasty
- 1965: Malcolm X, who articulated concepts of racial pride and black nationalism in the United States, was assassinated this day in 1965 and became an ideological hero after the posthumous release of The Autobiography of Malcolm X.
- 1972: US President Richard M. Nixon paid a state visit to the People's Republic of China, ending a 21-year estrangement between the communist country and the United States.

FOCUS HOMAGE

WISDOM, COMPASSION, SERVICE



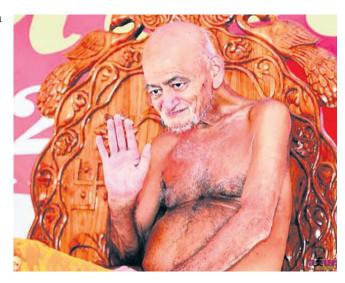
Narendra Modi
IN AN ERA
WHERE
ENVIRONMENTAL
DEGRADATION IS
RAMPANT
WORLD OVER,
PUJYA ACHARYA
JI CALLED FOR A
WAY OF LIFE
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NATURE

ant Shiromani Acharva Shri 108 Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji attained Samadhi and left us all saddened. His life is a spiritually rich epoch graced with profound wisdom, boundless compassion and an unwavering commitment to uplift humanity. I have had the honour of receiving his blessings on numerous occasions. Thus, I feel a deep sense of loss, akin to losing a guiding light that has illuminated the path for countless souls, including myself. His warmth, affection and blessings were not just gestures of goodwill but profound transmissions of spiritual energy, empowering and inspiring all those fortunate enough to have come in contact with him.

Pujya Acharya Ji will always be remembered as a Triveni of wisdom, compassion and service. He was a true Tapasvi, whose life epitomised the ideals of Bhagwan Mahavir. His life exemplified the core principles of Jainism, embodying its ideals through his own actions and teachings. His care towards all living beings mirrored Jainism's profound respect for life. He lived a life of truthfulness, reflecting Jainism's emphasis on honesty in thought, word, and deed. He also led a very simple lifestyle. It is due to stalwarts like him that the world continues to be inspired by Jainism and the life of Bhagwan Mahavir. He stood tall among the Jain community but his impact and influence were not limited to only one community. People across faiths, regions and cultures came to him and he worked tirelessly towards spiritual awakening, particularly among the youth.

Education was an area very close to his heart. His journey from Vidhvadhar (his childhood name) to Vidhyasagar was one of deep commitment to acquiring and imparting knowledge. It was his firm belief that education is the cornerstone of a just and enlightened society. He championed the cause of knowledge as a means to empower individuals, enabling them to lead lives of purpose and contribution. His teachings emphasised the importance of selfstudy and self-awareness as the



The beauty of our land is that for thousands of years, our soil has produced greats who have shown light to others and made our society better. Pujya Acharya Ji stands as a towering figure in this illustrious lineage of saints and social reformers

pathways to true wisdom, urging his followers to engage in lifelong learning and spiritual growth.

At the same time, Sant Shiromani Acharya Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji wanted our youngsters to get an education that is also rooted in our cultural ethos. He often said that it was because we drifted away from the learnings of the past that we were not able to find solutions to key challenges like water scarcity. He also believed that a holistic education is one that focusses on skilling and innovating. He took immense pride in India's linguistic diversity and encouraged youngsters to learn Indian languages.

Pujya Acharya Ji himself wrote extensively in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Hindi. The heights he reached as a saint, and how grounded he was on the earth, is seen clearly in his iconic work Mookmati. Through his works, he gave a voice to the downtrodden.

In the domain of healthcare too, Pujya Acharya Ji's contributions were transformative. He was associated with several efforts, especially in underserved areas. His approach to

healthcare was holistic, integrating physical well-being with spiritual wellness, thereby addressing the needs of the person

as a whole. I would especially urge the coming generations to study extensively about Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji's commitment to nation building. He would always urge people to rise above any partisan considerations and instead focus on national interest. He was one of the strongest votaries of voting because he saw it as an expression of participation in democratic processes. He advocated healthy as well as clean politics, even saying that policy making has to be about people's welfare, not self interest (Lokneeti is about Loksangrah not Lobhsangrah).

He believed that a strong nation is built on the foundation of its citizens' commitment to their duties—towards themselves, their families, society, and the country. He encouraged individuals to cultivate virtues such as honesty, integrity and self-reliance, which he saw as essential for the creation of a just, compassionate,

and thriving society. This emphasis on duties is of great importance as we work towards building a Viksit Bharat.

In an era where environmental degradation is rampant world over, Pujya Acharya Ji called for a way of life which would minimise the harm being inflicted on nature. Likewise, he saw a paramount role for agriculture in our economy, also stressing on making agriculture modern as well as sustainable. His work towards reforming jail inmates was also noteworthy.

The beauty of our land is that for thousands of years, our soil has produced greats who have shown light to others and made our society better. Pujya Acharya Ji stands as a towering figure in this illustrious lineage of saints and social reformers. Whatever he did, he did not just for the present but also the future. In November last year, I had the opportunity to visit the Chandragiri Jain Mandir in Dongargarh in Chhattisgarh. Little did I know that this visit would be my last meeting with Pujya Acharya Ji. Those moments were very special. He spoke to me for a long time, blessing me for my efforts in serving the nation. He expressed joy on the direction our nation is taking and the respect India is getting on the world stage. He was filled with enthusiasm while talking about the work he was doing. Then and always, his gentle gaze and serene smile were enough to instill a sense of peace and purpose. His blessings felt like a soothing balm on the soul, a reminder of the divine presence within and around us.

Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri 108 Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji's void is deeply felt by all who knew him and were touched by his teachings and his life. However, he lives on in the hearts and minds of those he inspired. In honouring his memory, we commit to embodying the values he espoused. In this way, we not only pay tribute to a great soul but also take forward his mission for our country and people.

The author is the Prime Minister of India.

IN JEST THIS

Courage: A trait many of us are lacking



Melvin Durai

I DO NOT KNOW
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POSSESS

Toften admire people who possess great talent in a particular area—talent that I just can't fathom. Quite often it's an athlete, someone like Jamaican legend Usain Bolt, who set a world record by running 100 meters in 9.58 seconds. I once tried running 100 meters as fast as I could and it took me just 9.58 seconds to stop for a water break. It was a very hot day, and it seemed wise to break the race into 25-meter segments. I blame global warming.

Quite often, the person I admire is a singer, someone like Usher, who recently performed during the halftime show at the Super Bowl, the championship for American football. Usher

entertained more than 120 million viewers by not only singing and dancing, but also roller skating. Usher is 45 years old and it goes without saying that I admire any middle-aged man who has the God-given talent and ability to find a 20-year-old double and train him so well.

Quite often, the person I ad-

mire is an actor or actress, someone like Meryl Streep, who has been described as the best actress of her generation. In 2009, she played the role of legendary chef Julia Child in the movie "Julia & Julia" and acted so well that to this day she has to turn down fans who hound her for recipes.

It's easy to admire athletes, singers and actors, because they're usually in the limelight. But it's going to be several months, if not years, before I can fully admire any of them again. You see, my admiration tank is empty. I used it all up on Alexei Navalny.

Navalny is the Russian opposition leader and outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin who was murdered in prison on 16 February. Despite being poisoned in 2020, Navalny returned to Russia the following year, knowing he would be imprisoned and perhaps killed.

I do not know how much courage it takes to do what Navalny did, but it's more courage than most people possess. Navalny was born on 4 June, 1976, and I hope that people around the world will honor him on his birthday, 4 June, by observing "World Courage Day."

On World Courage Day, we would select some of our most courageous citizens, perhaps war veterans or firefighters, and ask them to sit in booths in public places. People would line up to reveal their acts of courage to these "courage mentors."

Mentor: "What courageous act did you perform, young man?" Godfrey, aged 30: "I touched a TIGER!!!"

Mentor: "Very brave of you. Where did this happen?" Godfrey: "U.S. Open. I touched him and then security took me

Mentor: "Oh, you mean the golfer. It was courageous to touch him. Stupid too, but we'll save that for 'World Stupid Day.' What about you, young lady?"

Archana, 24: "I stood up to a tyrant." Mentor: "Vladimir Putin?"

Mentor: "Vladimir Putin?" Archana: "No, my husband.

around."

Mentor: "That takes great courage indeed. What about you, young man?"

James, 35: "I went to the dentist's office."

Mentor: "Very courageous. Did you have any cavities filled?" James: "No, I just went there for a regular cleaning. And I'm going again next week."

Mentor: "So soon?"

James: "Yes, weekly cleanings are what I'm providing through my cleaning service. But the dentist sometimes works late, so it's a little risky. What if he jumps out from behind a door and tries to look at my teeth?"

Mentor: "Very scary. What about you, sir?" Donald, 77: "I publicly chal-

lenged Vladimir Putin."

Mentor: "You challenged him?" Donald: "Yes, I challenged him to a game of golf. Not to brag, but I'm a 2.5 handicap. I can't touch Tiger, but I'm pretty good."

Mentor: "It takes courage to touch Tiger. Just ask Godfrey."

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST

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Mysterious death

Sir, In a shocking turn of events, Alexei Navalny, a prominent anti-corruption activist at the age of 47, was found dead in a Siberian prison last Friday. Over the years, numerous journalists and political activists opposing Putin's regime have been killed mysteriously without explanation. In August last year, private military Wagner group chief Yevgeny Prigozhin was killed when his plane crashed just months after a rebellion. Navalny, who had been a prominent figure in Russian opposition, survived an attack in 2017 with antiseptic green dye causing chemical burns in one of his eyes. In August 2020, he collapsed on a flight over Siberia but was fortunate enough to survive due to an emergency landing in Omsk. German government revealed the presence of chemical nerve warfare agents from the Novichok group in his body after tests conducted by military which led to global accusations against Putin and the Kremlin for these deaths. Despite mounting international pressure and allegations, the Kremlin remains resilient, denying any involvement in murder conspiracies. The stability of Russian autocracy persists and potential shifts may only emerge post-Putin era, as observed changes remain limited amid ongoing challenges, including the situation in Ukraine.

Bishal Kumar Saha, MURSHIDABAD

Pak turmoil

Sir, It was quite obvious that Imran Khan's inswingers and outswingers may not work wonders in the political field. The power of balance in Pakistan is poised on a fragile platform. Sharif, Zardari and Khan constitute a lopsided triangle. All three are high-stakes gamblers in the no limits political casino. The croupier is the army. All three know that this is their last throw of dice. The 2024 Pakistan elections will be remembered as one in which leaders fought to stay out of power, after the results came in. The Sharifs and Bhuttos have turned the "etiquette" into a strained joke. Who is the first - is a question mark. Nawaz Sharif has stepped aside for his brother Shehbaz to become Prime Minister. The Pakistani people suffer forever.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI











WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 21 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR







WHEELS OF PROSPERITY ROLL IN 25 DISTRICTS

disha government's Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative LAccMI) now covers 25 districts of the state, with Chief Minister Naveen launching the affordable bus service in five more districts - Cuttack, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Subarnapur and Kandhamal on February 19, 2024

A fleet of 202 luxury buses will connect 700 gram panchayats (GPs) of these districts, benefitting over 44 lakh people of the region.

As many as 58 buses (46 non-AC and 12 AC) will boost connectivity across 261 GPs of Cuttack and benefit over 18 lakh people. In Sambalpur district, a fleet of 36 buses (29 non-AC and seven AC) will ensure seamless road connectivity across 97 GPs. benefiting more than seven lakh people.

It was a memorable day for Jharsuguda as the CM launched the transformative bus service in the district where as many as 19 LAccMI buses (15 non-AC and four AC) will enhance connectivity across 76 GPs. benefitting over five lakh people. In Subarnapur, 26 luxury buses (21 non-

C and five AC) under LAccMI will benefit over five lakh people in and around 102 GPs of the district. A fleet of 63 buses (50 non-AC and 13-AC)

will boost connectivity across 164 GPs of tribal-dominated Kandhamal district and benefit over seven lakh people of the re-

strengthen the rura gion. The service was launched in Khurda, launched in tribal-dominated Malkangiri (December 14). district on October 12, 2023. It was later ex-

Puri, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Jajpur and Nayagarh on February 16 and in Mayurbhanj, Bolangir, Bargarh, Keonjhar

and Sundargarh on February 12. The affordable bus service was first

tended to Gajapati district (October 20), Kalahandi district (November 1), Rayagada district (November 25), Nabarangpur district (November 30) and Koraput district

Deogarh, Angul and Dhenkanal districts got the LAccMI bus service January 31. The state government aims at providing the affordable bus service in all the districts by February end.







TWOSTATES





WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 21 | 2024 | BHUBANESWAR

Separate agri Budget 2024-25 presented in **Tamil Nadu Assembly**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 20: Tamil Nadu Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, MRK Panneerselvam Tuesday presented the agriculture budget for 2024-25 in the Assembly and announced new initiatives aimed couraging farmers to cultivate traditional paddy varieties that could help fight diabetes.

Eligible farmers who have sup plied sugarcane to sugar mills for the 2023-2024 crushing season will be paid a first-time-ever Special Incentive (SI) of ₹215 per MT over and above the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) announced by the Centre, as against the already given SI of ₹195 per MT, the minister announced.

The government is committed to compensate the state discom Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO) for tariff-free power supply to farmers, by paying it ₹7.280 crore. Panneerselvam said.

Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, two lakh works will be carried out at a cost of ₹7,000 crore, the minister said. The Minister said the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers, herbicides, and pesticides, has led to a decline in overall soil fertility. Recognising the imperative to shift towards sustainable and chemical-free agricultural practices for the well-being of society, he said a new flagship scheme the 'Chief Minister's Mannuyir Kaathu Mannuvir Kaappom Scheme (CMMKMKS) with 22 compoimplemented at an outlay of ₹206

crore during 2024-2025. Chief Minister's scheme to protect lives by preserving living organisms present in the soil.

The objectives of the CMMKMKS

In his budget speech Panneerselvam said ₹42,281,8784 crore (FY-25) has been allocated in the demand under Agriculture and other related departments

- While ₹10,500 crore is for food subsidy, ₹500 crore will be allocated as incentive for the Tamil Nadu government's paddy procurement
- For 2024-2025, ₹16,500 crore has been fixed as target for crop loan disbursement
- Input subsidy to the tune of Rs 208.20 crore will be disbursed shortly to 2.74 lakh farmers towards yield loss due to natural disasters in the southern districts

includes initiatives to encourage sustainable practices, developing special 'climate smart' villages and ensuring soil fertility. Under the 22-point scheme, Panneerselvam said that cultivation of traditional paddy varieties with medicinal properties would be actively promoted.

Referring to the wholesome dietary practices of ancient Tamils, he said: "To promote a healthy lifestyle, the cultivation of traditional varieties with medicinal properties, such as Sivan Samba, known for its diabetes controlling attributes, will be actively promoted. In 2024-2025, these specific seed varieties will be distributed to farmers, to cover an area of 1,000 acres."

Under the 'Nel Jayaraman Mission' to conserve traditional paddy varieties, seeds of varieties including Arupadham Kuruvai, Sivan Samba and Karuppu Kavuni are being produced in state seed farms and distributed to farmers.

During the financial year 2024-2025, 200 MT of traditional paddy variety seeds will be produced in state seed farms for cultivation in the following year in an area of 10,000 acres in all districts for which ₹50 lakh will be allo-

TN TO DEVELOP 'CLIMATE SMART VILLAGES'

Chennai, Feb 20: Tamil Nadu Minister for Agriculture MRK Panneerselvam Tuesday announced that the government would develop special 'climate smart villages', which would demonstrate climate change mitigation technologies to farmers and other stakeholders.

Research on soil microbiome engineering will also be undertaken to enhance soil health and productivity, he said. Presenting the farm budget in the assembly, Panneerselvam said that climate change is likely to present significant challenges to biodiversity, crop yields, and food secuHence, the use of appropriate technologies is crucial to mitigate the effects of climate change and safeguard against crop loss.

"To achieve this, special climate smart villages will be developed, demonstrating climate change mitigation technologies to farmers and stakeholders, besides spreading awareness. A budget allocation of ₹1.48 crore will be made for this initiative," he said. In agriculture, high productivity can be sustained only if soil fertility and standard productivity levels are continuously monitored. Soil quality depends on the amount of organic carbon and beneficial

evaluate but develop microbial



as a "critical living system", he said. To enhance soil health and productivity, research on soil microbiome engineering will be undertaken to not only consortia (group of diverse microorganisms that have the ability to act together in a community) for the decomposition of organic matter, including crop residues.

This will increase soil carbon and convert unavailable nu-

CCTV cameras in

women-only parks

"An allocation of ₹1.39 crore will be made for this," the minister said. In order to facilitate easy access for urban consumers to high quality agricultural produce and valueadded products, one hundred 'uzhavar angadis (farmer outlets)' will be established along the lines of 'uzhavar sandhais (farmers markets)' at an outlay of ₹5 crore from state funds. "Agricultural produce adhering to specified quality norms will be directly procured from farmers. They will be graded, packed, branded and sold through the uzhavar angadis.

TN TO START ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MISSION

The AI Mission will also establish clear protocols for its utilisation. *It will involve professors from leading educational institutions,* executives from the electronics industry, and experts in the field

AGENCIES

Chennai, Feb 20: Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu Monday said that the state would establish an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Mission to develop guidelines for constructively leveraging AI in education, employment, industry, research and medicine.

The AI Mission will also establish clear protocols for its utilisation.

It will involve professors from leading educational institutions in Tamil Nadu, executives from the electronics industry, and experts in the field. The finance minister stated this while addressing the Assembly during the presentation of the budget for the financial year 2024-25.

The minister said that the Chief Minister's Breakfast scheme will be extended to government-aided primary schools in rural areas and an amount of ₹600 crore has been allocated for the same. He said that the Tamil Nadu Government will



introduce a special scheme to incentivise additional employment of women in the State. This scheme will offer a payroll subsidy of 10 per cent of the salary of women, differentlyabled and transgender employees for two years to all new industrial units providing direct employment to over 500 such individuals from Tamil Nadu.

Thangam Thennarasu said that the state will incentivise the creation of high paying jobs in new Global Capability Centres (GCCs) by providing a payroll

Court orders issuing notice to ED on Balaji's discharge plea

discharge plea regarding a money laundering case. D V Aanand, III Additional Judge, City Civil and Sessions Court

ordered issuing notice to the Enforcement Directorate, returnable by March 4. Last week, Balaji had filed a petition

seeking to discharge him from the money laundering case. Later, the court extended Balaji's remand till March 4,

after the former minister was produced before it by the prosecution through video-conferencing from the Central

Puzhal Prison hereThe DMK leader was arrested June 14, 2023 by the ED in connection with the money laundering

case linked to a cash-for-jobs scam when he was the Transport Minister during an earlier AIADMK regime. His

resignation as a Minister from the M K Stalin-led state cabinet was accepted by Governor RN Ravi last week.

CHENNAI: A city court Tuesday ordered issuing notice to the ED on arrested ex-minister V Senthil Balaji's

subsidy of 30 per cent in the first year, 20 per cent in the second year and 10 per cent in the third year for jobs with pay above ₹1,00,000 per month.

He said that the state government would meet the higher education expenses of transgenders. The minister said that this would be implemented through the transgender welfare board and added that an amount of ₹2 crore has been allotted for the purpose. He said that the Government will also meet the hostel fee of transgenders.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Installation of CCTV cameras in the womenonly parks of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi was discussed in a recent meeting and the civic body's horticulture department may soon start working on it, officials said.

"The mayor has given instruction to install CCTV cameras in the women-only parks to provide a safe and secure environment to women and children who visit these parks,' an official said.

It will also help in controlling illegal activities and crime against women that often get reported in public parks, the official added. The MCD's horticulture

department may soon start

working on installing CCTV cameras in these parks being built across its 250 wards, another official told PTI. According to a report by the National Crime Records Bureau, Delhi recorded the highest cases

the 19 metropolitan cities in 2022. The city witnessed a 1.25 per cent year-on-year increase in crime against women to 14.158 cases from 13,982 in 2021, the

of crime against women among

data showed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had in July last year urged Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena to take stock of the rising crime against women in the city and engage the police after a young woman was murdered in a park in south Delhi

"We often get complaints from locals regarding illegal activities, including drug consumption, in public parks. If the MCD



THE CITY WITNESSED A 1.25 PER CENT YEAR-ON-YEAR INCREASE IN CRIME AGAINST WOMEN TO 14,158 CASES FROM 13,982 IN 2021, THE DATA SHOWED

IT WILL ALSO HELP IN CONTROLLING ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES AND CRIME AGAINST WOMEN THAT OFTEN GET REPORTED IN PUBLIC PARKS

installs CCTV cameras in these areas, it will definitely help in curbing the menace," a Delhi Police official told PTI.

Currently, the MCD has 15 to 20 women-only parks operational in the city and the civic body is in the process of building a total of about 250 such parks in each of its wards across the city, an MCD official said.

The corporation is prepare a plan for installing CCTV cameras but may soon come up with a proposal on the matter, an official added

Schools in Delhi told to form panels for surprise bag checks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Schools in the national capital have been directed to constitute committees for surprise bag checking to ensure no student brings any object that may be used to harm other children, according to a circular by the Delhi government's Directorate of Education.

Schools have been directed to ensure that guards at the gates regularly check students' bags and ensure that CCTVs are functional all the time.

According to the Directorate of Education (DoE), some incidents have come to their notice where students got into quarrels and fights in and outside the premises during school hours

All the heads of governmentrun and private schools in Delhi have been directed to make all possible efforts to ensure the safety and security of students in school premises, the DoE circular said

"In order to make schools a safe and secure place for all concerned, it is imperative for all schools to implement a streamlined framework for ensuring good safety practices for students, parents and staff," it said.

"Therefore, all heads of government and private schools are hereby directed to constitute a committee for random/surprise checking of school bags of students in classrooms and ensure



have been directed to ensure that guards at the gates regularly check students' bags and ensure that CCTVs are functional all the time

no student is in possession of any material that may be used

to harm fellow students.' The heads of schools have also been asked to direct all guards at entry gates to regularly check bags for any unwanted or inappropriate articles so that no untoward incident happens

"Heads of schools should also ensure that CCTVs are installed in the school and are functional all the time. Visitors should not be allowed to enter the classrooms and staff rooms," the DoE said. Delhi Parents' Association president Aparajita Gautam welcomed the move by DoE but questioned how long will the norms be followed on the ground. "It is very a good initiative and I welcome it because it is for students' safety. How will the government schools, that do not have sufficient manpower, implement this?" she posed.

Gautam further stated that the Delhi government should bring better measures to ensure students' safety, especially in

government schools. Last week, a class 11 student was stabbed to death by three teenagers for allegedly harassing one of them in south Delhi's Neb Sarai area. The three juveniles, including a class 10 student, have been apprehended. Two knives used in the crime have also been recovered, police said.

Tamil Nadu to launch 'One Village. One Crop' scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 20: The Tamil Nadu government Monday announced in the state's Farm Budget that it would launch a 'One Village, One Crop' scheme to enhance agricultural pro-

The programme will cover aspects such as land preparation, seed treatment and integrated nutrient management.

Presenting the Farm Budget 2024-25 in the legislative assembly, Agriculture Minister MRK Panneerselvam said the Tamil Nadu Millet Mission Scheme (five year scheme from 2023-2024 to 2027-2028) will be continued in the year 2024-25 at an outlay of ₹65.30 crore. Furthermore, he said, a 'One Village, One Crop' scheme will be introduced in 15,280 revenue villages to "catapult production"

This initiative will feature field demonstrations covering land preparation, seed treatment for high-yielding varieties, and integrated nutrient management. Crops including paddy, cholam (sorghum), maize, kambu (pearl millet), kudiraivali (barnyard millet), ragi (finger millet), red gram, black gram, green gram, groundnut, gingelly, sunflower, cotton and sugarcane are covered under the plan. To help farmers distinguish between beneficial and harmful insects, 'Permanent Pest Surveillance Plots' will be established, and effective plant protection measures will be recommended, the minister said.

DDA plants one lakh tulips

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: The Delhi Development Authority has planted one lakh tulips for the first time in its parks across the national capital, an official statement said.

The flowers have been planted in areas like Rohini, Dwarka, Kashmere Gate. Karampura-Rohtak Road, Shalimar Bagh, Mehrauli, GK-I and Vasant Vihar, it said.

"In a first, Delhi outside NDMC is adorned with tulips this spring. The DDA has planted one lakh tulips in its different parks across the city, that are in addition to over four lakh tulips of different hues planted by NDMC in Lutyen's Delhi," the statement said. Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, who had promised to make the national capital a 'city of flowers', has been consistently stressing on beautification, restoration and aesthetic upgradation beyond the NDMC area, the statement said. In a meeting of horticulture de-

partments of various civic bodies December 26 last year, he directed that tulips and other ornamental flowers be planted in other areas under the jurisdic tion of MCD, DDA etc., it stated.

At Baansera, which recently hosted the kite festival, DDA has planted 40,000 tulips apart from 9.000 tulips each at Asita. Mehrauli Archaeological Park and Swarn Jayanti Park in Rohini Sector-10, the statement said. Apart from adorning the city with tulips, the LG has also stressed upon procuring the flower bulbs from local growers in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, instead of procuring it

from abroad, it said. The move aims at cutting down the cost of tulips and would serve to encourage local farmers. The NDMC has set up its first Tulip Propagation Chamber at Lodhi Garden, where the harvested tulip bulbs are preserved and grown for further plantation in the next season, under controlled weather conditions,



POLICE BEEF **UP SECURITY AT DELHI BORDERS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: The Delhi Police directed security personnel deployed at the city's Tikri, Singhu and Ghazipur border points to stay alert and conducted mock drills Tuesday, a day ahead of protesting farmer's proposed march towards the national capital.

The move came a day after the protesting farmers rejected the Centre's proposal to buy pulses, maize and cotton crops through government agencies at minimum support price (MSP) for five years, and announced to continue with their 'Delhi Chalo' agitation Wednesday.

In the fourth round of talks with the farmer leaders Sunday, a panel of three Union ministers proposed that government agencies would buy pulses, maize and cotton at the MSP for five years after entering into an agree-

ment with farmers. Farmer leaders refused the proposal, saying it was not in

favour of farmers Delhi Police officials said security personnel deployed at the three borders were Tuesday

asked to stay on alert. They said commuters might face traffic congestion. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha are spearheading the "Delhi Chalo" march.

Protesting farmers and Haryana police personnel clashedat the Punjab-Haryana border near Amabala February 13.

national



Legal guarantee for MSP will Indian farmers a burden on the budget but ensure that they become drivers of GDP

RAHUL GANDHI

SONIA ELECTED TO RS

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan Tuesday, officials said. It will be the 77-year-old Congress leader's first term in the Upper House after serving five terms as a Lok Sabha MP



should how the party is

Neither the country nor the future of their own children is safe in the

Students today must think beyond competitive examinations to get a government and explore other opportunities, which are now available aplenty JAGDEEP DHANKHAR VICE PRESIDENT







Lucknow: A week after tendering his resignation from the post of Samajwadi Party national general secretary, Swami Prasad Maurya Tuesday resigned from the party's Pradesh Legislative Council and announced formation of a new party. Maurya resigned as the party's national general secretary February 13, accusing the leadership of discriminating against him and not defending him

on the Ramcharitmanas and the Ayodhya temple consecration ceremony. Maurya said that he will form a new party and announce it Thursday in New Delhi. "I got an opportunity to work with you. But after our talks on February 12 and my resignation (as national general secretary) on February 13, no initiative of any talks with me was taken due to which I am resigning from the primary membership of the party," Maurya said in a letter to party chief Akhilesh Yadav.

FROM FARM

PM flags off India's longest transportation tunnel

Srinagar, Feb 20: The longest transportation tunnel of the country on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) was opened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday as he flagged off the first electrified trains of the Kashmir valley.

"Prime Minister Modi was present in Jammu and he virtually flagged off two electrified trains simultaneously -- one from Srinagar to Sangaldan in the down direction and the other from Sangaldan to Srinagar in the up direction," a railway official said.

Over 100 schoolchildren and their teachers took the inaugural trip from each side as special guests. The official added that the Prime Minister also inaugurated the 48.1-km-long Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan section. "This longest tunnel, which is 12.77 km long and known as T-50, falls between the Khari-Sumber section," the official said.

According to the Northern Railway (NR), trains can now run from Baramulla to Sangaldan via Banihal, which used to be the last or originating station earlier. T-50 is supposed to be the most challenging of the 11 tunnels in the Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangadal section.

According to railway officials associated with the project, the tunnel survey work started around 1996 but the tender was awarded in December 2013 so it took around 10 years to operationalise it. "All safety measures have been taken inside the tunnel for emergency situations. An escape tunnel has been constructed parallel to T-50 to evacuate passengers in case of any emergency," an official said.

"At every 375 metres, a connecting passage between the escape tunnel and T-50 has been



J&K's first electric train during its flagging off ceremony, at Srinagar railway station, in Jammu & Kashmir, Tuesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually flagged off the train on the newly electrified Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan route

made so that the passengers can be brought to the escape tunnel and then, carried to their desired destinations in vehicles." he added.

The official said that in order to tackle a fire incident, water pipes have been laid on both sides of the tunnel with an opening valve provided at every 375 metres so that water can be sprayed on a train from both sides to douse the flames.

"Escape tunnels have been created for other bigger tunnels too." he said. According to NR officials, the opening of the Banihal-Khari-Sumber-

Sangaldan section has brought them a step closer to achieving the dream of running a train from the Kashmir valley in the north to Kanvakumari on the southern tip of the country.

"Earlier, eight diesel trains (four each from one side) were operating between Baramulla and Banihal. Today, Prime Minister Modi not only inaugurated the extension of the Banihal route to Sangaldan via Khari and Samber but also flagged off the first electrified trains on the whole route from Baramulla to Sangaldan," the official said.

Now, eight electrified trains have started running between Baramulla and Banihal and four of those have been extended to Sangaldan.

'The four other trains will also be extended up to Sangaldan after a couple of months," the official added. According to experts associated with the project, the first section of the USBRL -- the Quazigund-Baramulla section -- was operationalised by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in 2009. In July 2013, the Banihal-Quazigund section, which included the operationalisation of the 11.2km-long T-80 Pir Panjal tun-

nel, was opened. "Once the complete USBRL opens in the coming months, passengers will enjoy infrastructural marvels, such as the Chenab bridge, the highest railway bridge in the world, and the Anji bridge, which is the first cable-stayed bridge of the Indian Railways," an NR official said, adding that the total length of the USBRL is 272 km and the cost of the project is ₹41,119 crore.

Maha passes Bill to provide 10% quota for Marathas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 20: The Maharashtra legislature Tuesday unanimously passed a Bill providing 10 per cent reservation for the Maratha community in education and govern-

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde tabled the Maharashtra State Socially and Educationally Backward Bill 2024 in the legislative assembly during the day-long special session of the legislature on Maratha quota.

The Bill, which was passed unanimously by the House, stated that the Marathas comprise 28 per cent of the total population of Maharashtra. A substantial number of castes and groups are already placed in the reserved category, getting about 52 per cent of reservations altogether. It would be completely inequitable to place the Maratha community in the Other Backward Class (OBC) category, it said.

The backwardness of the Maratha class is distinct and different from backward classes and, more particularly, OBC in the sense that it is more pervasive in terms of its coverage, it differs in its penetration and further regressive in character, the Bill said.

The Maratha quota Bill also proposed that once the reservation comes into effect, its review could be taken after 10 years. Out of the 52 per cent reservation currently existing in the state, the Scheduled Castes are eligible for 13 per cent, Scheduled Tribes 7 per cent, OBCs 19 per cent, Special Backward Classes 2 per cent, Vimukta Jati 3 per cent, Nomadic Tribe (B) 2.5 per cent, Nomadic Tribe (C) Dhangar 3.5 per cent and Nomadic Tribe (D) Vaniari 2 per cent.

After tabling the Bill in the House, CM Shinde said as many as 22 states in the country have crossed the 50 per cent reservation mark."For instance, Tamil Nadu state has 69 per cent, Harvana 67 per cent, Rajasthan 64 per cent, Bihar 69 per cent, Gujarat 59 per cent and West Bengal 55 per cent. I can mention other states as well. The purpose of the session is to help the (Maratha) community," he said.

"We want to give reservation to the Maratha community without touching the existing quota of the OBCs in the state. The Marathas have been struggling for the last 40 years to get reservation benefits," the CM said. The Bill was later also passed unanimously in the state legislative council. It will now be sent to Governor Ramesh Bais for his assent.

VIKRAM DEV UNIVERSITY

Jeypore, Dist.: Koraput, Odisha - 764001 Date: 19.01.2024

ADVERTISEMENT No. CAD-4211: Applications are invited from the Retired

Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Guest Faculties having requisite qualification with Ph.D./NET for temporary engagement of vacant posts of Associate Professor in Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Economics and Assistant Professors/Guest Faculties in Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Political Science, Economics Philosophy, English and Odia in V.Dev University. Interested persons may apply with their Bio Data and all required documents so as to reach in the office of the undersigned on or before 06.03.2024, failing which their applications will not be considered. For more details, the applicants may visit our University Website www.vikramdevuniversity.ac.in. No TA/ DA will be paid for attending the said interview.

Sd./- Registrar

OIPR-11133/11/0003/2324 V. Dev University, Jeypore

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER. RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, DHENKANAL, KAMAKHYANAGAR E-Mail: rw.kamakhyanagar@yahoo.co.in

e-Procurement Notice No. 23 Road Work/2023-24 Name of the Work Road Works

Total No. of Works 5 (Five) Nos. **Tender Cost** Class of Contractor

Period of Completion

Availability of Tender

Online for Bidding

Last date & time of

Rs.8.47 & 42.37 lakhs (Approx.)

"D", "C" & "B" Class

30 Days

: 17.02.2024 at 11.00 A.M. to

20.02.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.

: 19.02.2024 upto 4.00 P.M.

seeking Tender Clarification Date & Time of opening of : 20.02.2024 at 5.30 P.M.

Other details can be seen from the website http://tendersorissa

Sd./- Executive Engineer

R.W. Division-II, Dhenkanal Kamakhyanagar

Civil Construction Works

Mentioned in column No.6 of

6 (Six) Calendar Months From 21.02.2024 to 01.03.2024

during office hours in website (www.tendersodisha.gov.in)
From 21.02.2024 to 01.03.2024

through online At 11.00 AM on 02.03.2024 in the

15 (Fifteen) Nos.

Rs.308.86 Lakhs

tender call notice

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, PATNA NOTICE INVITING TENDER e-Procurement Online Bid ID No. 04-Patna (KJR/2023-2024)

No.i-621: The Block Development Officer, Patna, Keonjhar on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites online percentage rate tender through 'e the Annexure to this bid notice

Name of works

Period of completion Availability of Bid Document

Period of receipt of bid through

Date of opening Bio

Name & Address of the OIT

Date of Lottery

At 11.00 A.M. on 04.03.2024 in the Office of Panchayat Samiti, Patna (Conference Hall) Digital Signature Certificate of Bidder

The bidder must possess compatible digital signature certificate (DSC) of Class-II or

At/Po-Patna, Dist-Keonjhar Pin-758030,

E-mail Id:ori-patna@nic.in Further details can be seen from the website:www.tendersodisha.gov.in Sd./- (Sri Shiv Shankar Murmu)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA 🥮 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, MALKANGIRI

1st Corrigendum to Identification No. Online Tender 16/RWD-I, MKG/2023-24 dt.08.02.2024 No.O-2557:01. Name of the Work: Road Repair works (Detailed in Annexure). 02. Total Number of Works: 4 (Four) Numbers. 03. Estimated Cost: Rs.11.76 lakhs to Rs.47.90 Lakhs. 04. Class of Contractor: "B", "C" & D" Class.05. Period of Completion: (As per detailed in Annexure), 06. Other details

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

No. of Availability of Tender Identification on-line for bidding
From To & Time of eking tende clarification Superintending Bid Opening: 23.02.2024 21 02 2024 Online Ten-Total 4 15.02.2024 22.02.2024 Engineer, Rural der-16/RWD-I from 11.00 Nos. upto 5.00 P.M MKG/2023-24 5.00 P.M at 11.00 A.M. Malkangiri

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

OIPR-25058/11/0025/2324

Sd./-Sujit Behera Superintending Engineer, R.W.Division-I, Malkangiri

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, RAYAGADA Email: rw_rayagada@yahoo.co.in, Phone No.06856-222188 E-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No.EERWRGD-Online-10/2023-24 No.O-2545:1, Name of the work: Repair to road works for the year 2023-24, 2, Total No. of Works: 02 Nos (Percentage rate tender). 3. Estimated Cost: 12.15 to 12.61 Lakhs. 4. Class of Contractor: "C" & "D". 5. Time of Completion: Specified in DTCN. 6. Mode of submission of tender: Tender should be submitted only in online https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in. 7. Other details: Detailed tender condition

Availability of Tender Procurement Identification online for bidding of opening of Officer Works tender EERWRGD-Executive Engineer, 02 (Two) 19.02.2024 26.02.2024 26.02.2024 Rural Works Division, Online Nos. Rayagada 10/2023-24 Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR-25072/11/0024/2324

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION, RAYAGADA Email: eephd.rgda.od@nic.in, eephdrgda@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) NO.EEPHDRAYAGADA-74/2023-24, DT.17.02.2024

SI. No.	Name of the Work	Bid Identifica- tion No.	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lakh)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion	Availability of Bid docu- ment for Online Bidding	
						From	То
1	Construction of	EEPHDRAY-	16.81	'D' and 'C'	03 (Three		7.00
	panel room at	AGADA-74/				27.02.2024	07.03.2024
	intake Well Site	2023-24, Dtd.		Class	Months)	(11.00 Hr)	(17.00 Hr)
	at Gununur	17 02 2024					

Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Rayagada Email:eephd.rgda.od@nic.in, eephdrgda@gmail.com All amendments, time extension, clarifications etc. will be uploaded in the website only. Bidders

> SD./- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER P.H. DIVISION, RAYAGADA

OIPR-13052/11/0031/2324

Name & Address of Officer Inviting Bid ❖Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in."

should regularly visit the above website to keep themselves updated.

The writer is Joint Secretary and policy expert in the Department of Fisheries,

Enhancing domestic fish consumption STRENGTHENING MARKETING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION UNDER PMMSY



Sagar Mehra

n the vibrant tapestry of Indian cuisine, one dietary component stands out for its nutritional richness and culinary versatility - 'fish'. Beyond its delectable taste, 'fish' holds a profound significance in the Indian context, contributing to rich cultural significance and multiple health benefits. The intricate relationship between fish and Indian culture goes beyond the plate, influencing traditions, health practices, and economic prosperity. Consumption of fish has the potential to positively impact not just individual nutritional status but also contribute to the food and nutritional security of the country.

While globally, India is a front runner in fish production and exports, enhancing domestic consumption is an important area for sustained growth of fisheries sector in the country. Various programmes and schemes have been undertaken by the Dept of Fisheries (GoI) to holistically develop the Indian fisheries sector. One of the key steps is the launch of the flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) on September 10, 2020 with the highest ever total investment of Rs 20,050 crore. PMMSY focuses on undertaking projects for technology adoption, addressing value chain gaps and socio-economic welfare. In addition to various outputs of increasing production and exports, the scheme focuses on creating around 16.5 lakh direct and inneurial models, particularly emoutreach events such as organ direct employment. In its fourth year running, impactful projects worth ₹18.000 crore (90%) have been approved pan India under the PMMSY scheme.

Traditionally, the focus of fisheries projects has been towards increase of fish production. As a cornerstone of transformation, PMMSY scheme focuses on balancing the demand and supply equation by diverting funds towards development of post-harvest infrastructure. As fish production has been consistently increasing to reach a magnificent 174 lakh tonnes under PMMSY, it offers immense potential to boost domestic fish consumption, value addition

and exports Towards this effect, projects approved under PMMSY have ensured that 26,067 fish transport facilities including refrigerated and insulated trucks, live fish vending centres, auto-rickshaws. motorcycles and bicycles with ice box are owned by beneficiaries for accessing markets and consumers conveniently to deliver fresh and quality fish. Most popular being the motorbikes and cycles with ice boxes have ensured convenient and faster access by

small scale farmers to sales points. To ensure more availability of quality frozen and fresh fish 6733 units of fish retail points in form of markets and kiosks are being developed. States like Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Harvana and Telangana have been at the forefront demonstrating increase of fish sales in northern India and well-planned distribution of scheme funds amongst coastal and inland states.

 $575\,\mathrm{cold}$ storage facilities have been well distributed amongst 30 states/UTs indicating post-harvest storage of fish is being done across India. 108 value added enterprises have been sanctioned for processing underlines the commitment for promoting entrepre-

phasising hygienic fish marketing through the establishment of a chain of fish vending kiosks. The proliferation of the valueadded enterprises, particularly in southern India, is also indicative of the export prominence and demand of value-added fish in form of pickles, dry salted fish, fish chips, fish balls etc.

For the last mile connect to ensure that awareness creation, outreach and extension happens in the right way 2494 Sagar Mitras for coastal states/UTs and 79 Matsya Seva Kendraspan India have been approved. The extension services are expected to be instrumental in promoting sectoral schemes and fish consumption as an 'super-food' packed with nutrition.

To benchmark and understand domestic consumption trends, GoI invested in 'A Study of the Fisheries Sector in India - An Overview of Current Demand and Future Prospect' by National Council of Applied Economic Research in March 2023. The study highlights that expenditure on fish in proportion to total food expenditure has more than doubled as compared to that in 2011-12, monthly consumption of fish has increased due to increased demand in urban areas, 77% fish consumed are freshwater species – majorly Rohu and Calta while Sardines and Bhetki are preferred marine fishes. On a promising note, the estimated demand for fish is expected to reach 26 million tons in 2031. Hence such consumer preferencesand indicators thus play a major role in defining marketing and branding strategies.

With the supply chain and distribution infrastructure at a level to handle the increased demand and sales points, the next priority step for GoI is to create awareness amongst consumers on benefits of fish eating through appropriate branding and marketing. Traditionally,

ising fish and seafood festivals with celebrity chefs and webinars with sector experts, celebrating Poshan Maahannually in September, launch of 75 fish recipe books to celebrate India@75 campaign under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, broadcasting of jingles on benefits of fish, installation of outdoor hoardings and digital displays at strategic locations etc. are being continuously undertaken by National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad.

While various digital initiatives, especially on social media platforms, have been undertaken many other initiatives are being planned for extensive outreach, mass marketing and branding. Consumer specific marketing campaigns and strategic initiatives in the Ho-Re-Ca (Hotel-Restaurants-Café) are being planned. Another critical step being prioritised is the policy framework of standards, certification, accreditation and traceability for the sector.

PMMSY thus envisages to craft a robust marketing ecosystem and strategy to bridge the gap between producers and consumers by ensuring a seamless supply chain and increased number of sales points. Consequently, this approach not only fosters overall industry growth but also positively impacts the health and nutrition of the population.

Therefore, importance of fish consumption in India extends far beyond the dinner plate. From fostering better health to driving economic growth and cultural preservation, fish plays a pivotal role in the nation's overall well-being. As India progresses, recognizing and harnessing the full potential of fish consumption will be key to unlocking a healthier, more prosperous future for all.

Government of India.

international



taking advantage of delays in aid to VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

GOV.UK LAUNCHES NEW LOGO

In a move that symbolises a new royal era for the country, the UK government has updated the logo on its official GOV.UK digital services used across all departments for official day-to-day business with the chosen crown of King Charles III







When there is a will, there is a way. It required a political change to finally have the presence here of the . Polish justice minister

COMMISSION VICE-PRESIDENT

As you rightly said recently, an all-out offensive on the city would be devastating for the 1.5 million Palestinian civilians

there who are already on the edge of

HOSSEIN AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN IRANIAN



ensure that wherever the egregious and offensive practices of apartheid occur, these must be called out for what they are and brought to an immediate end

VUSIMUZI MADONSELA SA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS

SHORT TAKES

Greece's PM defends record on rule of law

Athens: Greece's Prime Minister insisted Tuesday that the rule of law in the country was "stronger than ever". despite mounting criticism from press freedom and human rights groups. Kyriakos Mitsotakis blamed political opponents for the criticism of his centre-right government and argued that the "country was at the centre of a slander (campaign)". He hosted Roberta Metsola, the European Parliament president, who is touring European Union capitals ahead of elections to the EU's legislative branch in June.

Oz to double naval warships

Canberra: Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles and Detence industry Minister Pat Conroy Tuesday announced the major overhaul in Navy and said the government is committed to more than doubling the size of the nation's naval warships. With the announcement, Australia's fleet of combat-ready warships will be expanded from the current 11 to 26, Xinhua news agency reported. The government will spend an additional \$7.2 billion over the next decade to accelerate the delivery of the future fleet, which Marles and Conroy said will be Australia's largest since the end of World War II.

UN rights chief slams UK's Rwanda bill

Geneva: The UK's recent legislative moves to facilitate the removal of asylum-seekers to Rwanda run contrary to the basic principles of the rule of law and risk delivering a serious blow to human rights. the UN Human Rights Chief said. The bill would also drastically strip back the courts' ability to scrutinise removal decisions, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said Monday in a statement as quoted by Xinhua news agency report.

Unemployment rises again in South Africa

Cape Town: South Africa's unemployment rate, already the highest in the world, rose to 32.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2023, according to official government figures released Tuesday. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey reported that the number of unemployed working-age people in South Africa rose to 7.9 million after 46,000 more became unemployed in the last three months of 2023, increasing from 31.9 per cent.

STALEMATE CONTINUES

PML-N, PPP fail to agree on power-sharing deal

The fifth round of the meeting, held at the residence of PML-N senior leader Senator Ishaq Dar Monday, saw the participation of prominent leaders from both parties, who have pledged to work together in the interest of the cash-strapped country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 20: There was no progress in the formation of a new coalition government in Pakistan Tuesday as top leaders of the PML-N and the PPP failed to agree on a power-sharing deal in their latest round of talks, indicating deepening fissures in the country's political landscape.

The fifth round of the meeting, held at the residence of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Senator Ishaq Dar here Monday, saw the participation of prominent leaders from both parties, who have pledged to work together in the interest of the cash-strapped

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) delegation comprised senior leaders Murad Ali Shah. Qamar Zaman Kaira, Nadeem Afzal Chan, and others, the Express Tribune newspaper reported Tuesday. three-hour After a

deliberation Monday, the negotiation hit a snag prompting a temporary halt, with both PML-N and PPP agreeing to reconvene at 10 pm Monday. However, the meeting did not take place.

Eventually, at 11 pm, the PML-N concluded their meeting, announcing that discussions with PPP would resume Wednesday. In an informal conversation with



reporters after the first round of the meeting, PML-N leader conveyed a positive trajectory in the ongoing discussions.

"Some things have already been decided on the matter of PPP's inclusion in the cabinet, Tarar was quoted as saying by Geo News. The PPP is reportedly asking for key constitutional positions of President. Chairman Senate, and Speaker of the National Assembly for support former Prime Minister Nawaz

Sharif's PML-N. Sources said

PPP Chairman Bilawal Zardari-Bhutto was playing smartly and trying to bring

PML-N to a point

where it withdrew

from making a coalition government and then launching himself as Prime Minister and form a government with the support of independents of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who have now joined the Sunni

be easy for the 35-year-old former Foreign Minister as PTI has alrejected the possibility of supporting the PPP.

Meanwhile, Bilawal Tuesdav

Ittehad Council. But it will not

said he foresees a "stalemate" in the formation of a coalition government "if someone is not ready to change their stance".

"If someone else wants to change their stance, there can be progress. If they are not ready to change it, I foresee a stalemate," he said, adding that this would not benefit democracy or the parliamentary system. The general elections have

been controversial with several serious allegations of wide-

spread rigging

to alter the re-

Over

days after the

voting, there

is still no clar-

ity on which

party would

sults.

rounds of talks, a decision regarding PPP's inclusion in the **Cabinet remained** elusive form the govern-

> Though independent candidates backed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan won the maximum number of seats in Parliament, PML N and PPP have announced that

they will form a coalition gov-

ernment after the elections resulted in a hung Parliament.

However, despite multiple rounds of talks, a decision regarding PPP's inclusion in the Cabinet remained elusive.

According to sources. the powerful military, which has backed a unity government after the fractured verdict, would have to put down its foot and the PPP would have to join the coalition government with a share in the cabinet.

Otherwise, the process of forming a coalition government would be difficult.

The Parliament should meet for its maiden session by February 29 and it is hoped that the two leading parties -- PML-N and PPP -- would agree on a power-sharing arrangement by that time.

Meanwhile, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (Pakistan) pledged its support for the PML-N Monday.

Imran Khan's party Tuesday demanded Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja's immediate resignation for failing to hold "free and fair" elections after allegations of massive poll rigging emerged.

Raja, a retired civil servant, was appointed as the head of the Election Commission of Pakistan in January 2020 by the government of then Prime Minister Khan.

Wikileaks founder in last-ditch bid to avoid US extradition

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Feb 20: Julian Assange's lawyers began their final UK legal challenge Tuesday to stop the WikiLeaks founder from being sent to the United States to face spying charges, arguing that his actions had exposed serious criminal actions by US authorities that were "of obvious and important public interest"

Assange himself was not in court. Judge Victoria Sharp said he was granted permission to come from Belmarsh Prison but had chosen not to attend. Assange's lawyer, Edward Fitzgerald, said he was unwell.

The 52-year-old has been fighting extradition for more than a decade, including seven vears in self-exile in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London and the last five years in a high-security prison.

Dozens of supporters holding "Free Julian Assange" signs and chanting "there is only one decision - no extradition' held a noisy protest outside the High Court in London, where Assange's attorneys will ask two High Court judges to grant a new appeal hearing, his last legal roll of the dice in Britain.



Navalny's mother appeals Putin to release son's body

Moscow, Feb 20: The mother of Russian Opposition leader Alexei Navalny appealed Tuesday to President Vladimir Putin to intervene and turn her son's body over to her so she can bury him with dignity.

Lyudmila Navalnaya, who has been trying to get his body since Saturday, appeared in a video outside the Arctic penal colony where Navalny died Friday.

"For the fifth day, I have been unable to see him. They wouldn't release his body to me. And they're not even telling me where he is." a black-clad Navalnava said in the video, with the barbed wire of Penal Colony No. 3 in Kharp, about 1,900 kilometres northeast of Moscow.

"I'm reaching out to you, Vladimir Putin. The resolution of this matter depends solely on you. Let me finally see my son. I demand that Alexei's body is released immediately, so that I can bury him like a human being," she said in the video, which was posted to social media by Navalny's team.

Russian authorities have said the cause of Navalny's death is still unknown and refused to release his body for the next two weeks as the preliminary inquest continues, members of his team said.

They accused the government of stalling to try to hide evidence. On Monday, Navalny's widow, Yulia, released a video accusing Putin of killing her husband and alleged the refusal to release his body was part of a



Navalny's death has deprived the Russian Opposition of its best-known and inspiring politician less than a month before an election that is all but certain to give Putin another six years in power

Many Russians had seen Navalny as a rare hope for political change amid Putin's unrelenting crackdown on the

cover-up. "They are cowardly and meanly hiding his body, refusing to give it to his mother and lying miserably," she said.

Lyudmila Navalnaya and her son's lawyers went to law enforcement agencies and the morgue where the body is believed to be held in the Arctic region, but were unable to get them to turn it over or say where it is.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov rejected the allegations of a cover-up, telling reporters that "these are absolutely unfounded, insolent accusations about the head of the Russian

Navalny, 47, was imprisoned since January 2021, when he returned to Moscow after recuperating in Germany from a nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin.

Lockbit cybercrime gang faces global takedown

REUTERS

London/Washington, Feb 20: An international law enforcement operation led by Britain's National Crime Agency and the FBI has arrested and indicted members of the Lockbit ransomware gang, in an unprecedented police operation that has struck one of the world's most notorious cybercrime gangs.

The United States unsealed an indictment Tuesday charging two Russian nationals with deploying Lockbit ransomware against companies and groups around the world, the Department of Justice

The indictment was made public as the NCA, US Department of Justice, FBI and Europol gathered in London to announce the disruption of the gang, which has targeted over 2,000 victims worldwide, received more than \$120 million in ransom payments and demanded hundreds of mil-

lions of dollars, the DOJ said. Britain's National Crime Agency Cyber Division, with the US Department of Justice, the FBI and other law enforcement seized control of websites used by Lockbit in a rare international operation, the gang and US and UK authorities said



announced.



Members of Alpha Company, 3d US Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), give a firing demonstration on the Bowling Green of George Washington's Mount Vernon Monday, in Mount Vernon, Va. The ceremonies at Mount Vernon were held to honor George Washington's birthday February 22, and President's Day

SNIPPETS

Putin gives Kim luxury limousine

Seoul: Russian President Vladimir Putin has gifted North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a Russian-made luxury limousine for his personal use, both countries announced Tuesday, in another sign of their expanding cooperation. Observers said the shipment violates a UN resolution that bans supplying luxury items to North Korea, in an attempt to pressure the country to abandon its nuclear weapons. Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, and another senior North Korean official accepted the gift on Sunday and she conveyed her brother's thanks to Putin, the Korean Central News Agency said. Kim Yo Jong said the gift showed the special personal relationship between the leaders, the report said.

Doctors in South Korea are on strike

Seoul: South Korean trainee doctors collectively walked off their jobs Tuesday to protest a government push to recruit more medical students, triggering cancellations of surgeries and other medical treatments at hospitals. The Health Ministry urged them to return to work immediately, saying they must not endanger the lives of patients to fight the government. As of Monday night, more than half of the 13,000 medical interns and residents in South Korea had submitted resignations, according to the Health Ministry, and 1,630 left their work sites. None of the resignations have been accepted so far. More junior doctors are expected to follow suit.

Iran, SL to boost ties

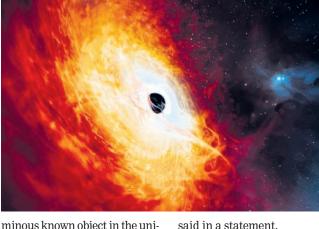
Colombo: Iran and Sri Lanka Tuesday decided to strengthen their cooperation in multiple areas, including the energy sector, as the foreign ministers of the two countries met here and held "extensive discussions" on issues of bilateral and mutual interests. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who arrived here Tuesday on a two-day official visit, met Sri Lankan counterpart Ali Sabry at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here, amidst talks of Colombo preparing to join the international coalition against the attacks by Iranian-backed Yemen's Houthis on merchant ships in the Red Sea. "We had extensive discussions on further strengthening our cooperation in multiple areas, including the energy sector. We agreed to work closely and enhance our partnership

Black hole devouring 1 Sun a day discovered

New Delhi, Feb 20: Astronomers have discovered the fastest-growing black hole ever recorded -- the most luminous known object in the universe that is devouring the equivalent of one Sun every day. The researchers at The Australian National University (ANU) noted that the black hole with a mass roughly 17 billion times that of the Sun has set a record that may not ever be beaten.

"The incredible rate of growth also means a huge release of light and heat," said study lead author Christian Wolf, Associate Professor at ANU.

"So, this is also the most lu-



minous known object in the universe. It is 500 trillion times brighter than our sun," Wolf

A black hole is a region of spacetime where gravity is so A black hole is a region of spacetime where gravity is so strong that nothing, including light, can escape it

strong that nothing, including light, can escape it.

Christopher Onken, co-author of the study published in the journal Nature Astronomy, noted that it was a surprise that the black hole remained undetected until now, given what we know about many other, less impressive ones.

The black hole was first detected using a 2.3 metre telescope at ANU Siding Spring

Observatory Coonabarabran in New South Wales (NSW).

The research team then turned to one of the largest telescopes in the world - the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile - to confirm the full nature of the black hole and measure its mass.

"The light from this black hole has travelled over 12 billion years to reach us," said Professor Rachel Webster from the University of Melbourne said.

"In the adolescent universe, matter was moving chaotically and feeding hungry black holes. Today, stars are moving orderly at safe distances and only rarely plunge into black holes,'

Webster said.

further," Sabry said in a post on X.

The intense radiation comes from the accretion disc -- made of rapidly rotating gas -- around the black hole, which is the holding pattern for all the material waiting to be devoured, the re-

searchers said "It looks like a gigantic and magnetic storm cell with temperatures of 10,000 degrees Celsius, lightning everywhere and winds blowing so fast they would go around Earth in a sec-

ond," Wolf said. "This storm cell is seven light years across, which is 50 per cent more than the distance from our solar system to the next starin the Galaxy, alpha Centauri,' he added.

business



We will fully exploit the potential of AI but set up the guardrails as well to prevent misuse

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND

EPFO ADDS NET 15.62 LAKH MEMBERS IN DEC

Retirement fund body EPFO recorded a net addition of 15.62 lakh members in December 2023, according to payroll data released Tuesday. An increase of 11.97 per cent has been registered in net member addition during December 2023 compared to the previous month, a labour ministry statement said.





companies, of Generative AI, are portfolios beyond

business process management to include AI-driven analytics. intelligent automation, and personalised customer interactions

DEBJANI GHOSH PRESIDENT AT NASSCOM

Rural India holds great potential for us. and through our collaboration with BLS E-Services, we aspire to deepen our

presence in these markets by introducing our made-in-India, made for the world cars that are designed to cater the unique preferences of

SUDHIR MALHOTRA RENAULT INDIA VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AND MARKETING



augmenting AI and Generative AIenabled transformation across

NAGENDRA BANDARU | MANAGING PARTNER AND PRESIDENT, WIPRO ENTERPRISE FUTURING

SHORT TAKES

Whirlpool sells 24% stake in Indian arm

New Delhi: American home appliances major Whirlpool Corporation Tuesday offloaded 24 per cent of its stake in its Indian arm. Whirlpool of India Ltd, in a block deal, raising approximately USD 468 million, which will be used to reduce its debt. Whirlpool Mauritius Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Whirlpool Corporation, executed the sale of 30.4 million equity shares of Whirlpool India via an onmarket trade, according to an exchange filing. After the sale of 30.4 million equity shares, Whirlpool Mauritius' holding in the Indian entity has reduced to 51 per cent from the previous 75 per cent, said Whirlpool Corporation in a US SEC filing, a copy of which was shared by Whirlpool of India on BSE here.

Air India-Vistara merger in progress

New Delhi: Singapore Airlines Tuesday said the proposed merger of Air India and Vistara is in progress, and is awaiting foreign direct investment and other regulatory approvals. Vistara is a joint venture between Singapore Airlines and Tata Group. The merger of Vistara with Air India under a deal, wherein Singapore Airlines will acquire a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India, was announced in November 2022. While announcing its December quarter results, Singapore Airlines said the merger will bolster its presence in India, strengthen its multi-hub strategy, and allow it to continue participating directly in this large and fast-growing aviation market. "The proposed merger of Air India and Vistara is in progress, pending foreign direct investment and other regulatory approvals.

Union Bank plans to raise ₹3,000cr

New Delhi: State-owned Union Bank of India Tuesday approved a Rs 3,000 crore share sale proposal to fund its business growth. The Committee of Directors for Raising Capital Funds, in its meeting held Tuesday, cleared the proposal for raising of funds for an amount not exceeding Rs 3,000 crore through the issue of equity shares via Qualified Institutions Placement (QIP), the bank said in a regulatory filing. This is subject to the requisite regulatory or statutory approvals, it said.

Fresh round of pvt capex to fuel growth: RBI Bulletin

The article stresses that stable and low inflation at 4 per cent provides the bedrock for sustaining GDP expansion



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 20: Fresh round of capital expenditure by the corporate sector is likely to fuel the next leg of growth, said RBI's latest Bulletin, stressing that stable and low inflation at 4 per cent provides the bedrock for sustaining GDP expansion.

The likelihood of the global economy exhibiting strongerthan-expected growth in 2024 has brightened in recent months, with risks broadly balanced, said the article on 'State of the Economy' published in the Reserve Bank's February Bulletin.

The Indian economy continues to sustain the momentum achieved in the first half of 2023-24, going by high frequency indicators, it said.

Expectations of a fresh round of capex by the corporate sector

is likely to fuel the next leg of growth," said the article authored by a team led by RBI

Deputy Governor Michael

Debabrata Patra Overall, investment intentions of the private corporate sector have been positive this year so

Total cost of projects, for which loans were sanctioned by major banks/all-India financial institutions (FIs) stood at Rs 2.4 lakh crore during April-December 2023, which was 23 per cent higher than that in the corresponding period last year.

Funds raised through external commercial borrowings (ECBs) for capex and initial public offerings (IPOs) remained robust during the second and third quarters of the current financial year, though their levels were lower than such resources raised

The Reserve Bank has projected the GDP growth for the next fiscal at 7 per cent.

Referring to inflation, the article said consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation came off its November-December spikes in its January 2024 reading, while core inflation is at its lowest since October 2019.

"Stable and low inflation at 4 per cent provides the bedrock for sustaining economic growth," the authors said.

CPI inflation has been projected at 4.5 per cent for the year 2024-25 by the RBI.

The RBI's rate setting panel, MPC, has noted with concern that large and repetitive food price shocks are impeding the disinflation engendered by the steady easing of core inflation, with geopolitical events and their impact on supply chains, and volatility in international financial markets and commodity prices posing upside risks.

Earlier this month, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided that monetary policy must remain disinflationary to ensure anchoring of inflation expectations and the progressive alignment of inflation outcomes with the target, while supporting growth.

The central bank said the views expressed in the Bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of

7% growth expected in FY25: FinMin report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: The outlook for the Indian economy appears 'bright' with GDP likely to clock 7 per cent growth rate next fiscal although the nation needs to keep a watch on global headwinds emanating from geopolitical tensions and volatility in international financial markets, a finance ministry report said

During the current financial year, the Indian economy is estimated to grow at 7.3 per cent. This would be the third year in the row when the GDP would grow in excess of 7 per cent.

Driven by a better-than-expected performance in Q2 and above 7 per cent growth projection for FY24 (by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in its first advance estimates), many global agencies have revised India's growth projection in the upward direction, the Monthly Economic Review released by the finance ministry said.

This reflects the resilience of the Indian economy to sustain its growth path amidst ongoing geopolitical headwinds, it said, adding, the measures announced in the Interim Union Budget FY25 are expected to play a pivotal role in supporting India's growth journey ahead.

Talking about tailwinds for the next financial year, the report said prospects of healthy Rabi harvesting, sustained manufacturing profitability and underlying service resilience are expected to support economic activity in FY25.

On the demand side, household consumption is expected to

Change (+349.24

73.057.40

improve, while prospects of fixed investment remain bright owing to an upturn in the private capex cycle, improved business sentiments, healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates, and the government's continued thrust on capital expenditure, it said.

Improvement in the outlook for global trade and rising integration in the global supply chain will support net external demand, it said.

However, headwinds from geopolitical tensions, volatility in international financial markets, and geoeconomic fragmentation need watching, it

Global slowdown, it said, especially in India's major trading partners, has led to a slowdown in demand for India's merchandise exports.

At the same time, it said, there has been a decline in the overall value of imports due to a fall in international commodity prices, which spiked after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine This has led to a narrowing

of India's merchandise trade deficit in the first ten months of FY24, it said, adding, a narrowing merchandise trade deficit, coupled with rising net services receipts, is expected to result in an improvement in India's current account deficit. As far as capital account is

concerned, India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals, high growth and stable business environment have boosted Foreign Portfolio Inflows (FPIs). On the inflation, it said, pres-

sure has moderated in January

GAINERS

4.16 Power Grid

2.59 HDFC Bank

2.32 Axis Bank

-1.03 Bajaj Finserv

-0.96 JSW Steel

2.01 NTPC

New Delhi, Feb 20: Amidst financial turbulence at Byju's, a group of key investors at the edtech have called for an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) Friday to oust its founder CEO Byju Raveendran and his

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Byju's investors call for EGM to ouster

founder, his family

what was once India's hottest tech startups, sources said. The shareholders, who have called the EGM, collectively hold more than 30 per cent stake in

family members over "mis-

management and failures" at

Raveendran and family own about 26 per cent in the com-

The sources in the know said the EGM notice calls for ouster of the current board of Think & Learn, the firm that operates Byju's, composed of Raveendran, his wife and cofounder Divya Gokulnath and his brother Riju Ravindran. Detailing the reasons for seeking the ouster, the notice listed alleged financial mismanagement, erosion of value due to management's failure to enforce the company's legal rights and concealment of material information.

Earlier this month, South Africa's Prosus, Peak XV Partners (formerly Sequoia Capital), General Atlantic, Sofina, The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Owl Ventures, and Sand Capital issued a joint statement seeking change of guard at the company.

According to sources, the EGM notice detailing alleged financial mismanagement stated that the company management failed to explain about the show cause notice by ED on alleged

Mutual funds see uptick in folios Stock markets rally for 6th straight day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Mutual fund industry has seen an uptick in folios, with the addition of 46.7 lakh investors' accounts in January, fuelled by increasing awareness about the financial instrument and ease of transactions through digitisation. Over the past year, average

folio additions were 22.3 lakh per month and the latest figure was more than double this level.

With this addition, mutual fund folios of the industry stood a shade away of 17 crore at 16.96 crore currently, a surge of 19 per cent from 14.28 crore registered a vear earlier, latest data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed. On a month-on-month basis,

the industry has seen a growth close to 3 per cent in folio numbers from 16.49 crore recorded in December 2023.

Folios are numbers designated to individual investor accounts. An investor can have multiple fo-

WhiteOak Mutual Fund Chief Business Officer Prateek Pant said that factors such as high levels of digital literacy, rising disposable incomes, and increased financial literacy have



encouraged Indians to look beyond traditional financial instruments like fixed deposits and post office saving schemes, etc, and venture into mutual

Over the last few years, the surge in mutual fund folios has been led by Gen-Y and Gen-Z investors. Millennials, also known as Gen Y, are typically defined as those born between 1981 and 1996. Generation Z, or GenZ, are those born between 1997 and

Interestingly, the majority of the new investors are taking the route of digital channels for entering into the mutual fund space,

Of the total 46.7 lakh folios, equity-oriented mutual fund schemes experienced an addition of 34.7 lakh folios during the month under review.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai. Feb 20: Benchmark Sensex spurted by 349 points while Nifty scaled a fresh lifetime high on the sixth straight day of gains Tuesday, driven by buying in banking and select FMCG The 30-share BSE Sensex re-

versed its early losses and closed

higher by 349.24 points or 0.48 per cent at 73,057.40 in a volatile trade. As many as 18 Sensex shares closed in the green while 12 settled in the red The broader Nifty of the NSE rose further by 74.70 points or 0.34

per cent to close at a new record level of 22,196.95. Intra-day, the 50-share index touched lifetime high of 22,215.60. The key indices opened lower but renewed buying in private

lenders helped the barometers reverse losses and closed in the green for the sixth consecutive session. In six days, Nifty jumped 580 points while Sensex rallied 1,984 points.

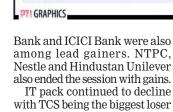
Among Sensex gainers, Power Grid jumped the most by 4.16 per cent after its board approved an investment of Rs 656 crore in transmission projects.

Private lenders HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Bank, IndusInd

BSE Sensex

Previous day close:

72,708.16



among Sensex shares, dropping by 1.75 per cent. HCLTech, Infosys and Wipro also declined. Kotak Mahindra Bank shares rose by 1.83 per cent after the newly-appointed managing di-

rector Ashok Vaswani announced major leadership changes at the bank. Tech Mahindra defied a neg-

ative trend in IT shares and



Services for USD 3.27 million. In the broader market, Zee shares closed higher by 8 per cent after market reports suggested efforts were being made

by Zee and Sony to salvage their failed merger deal. Meanwhile, Vibhor Steel Tubes had a bumper listing on stock exchanges as shares made their debut at a premium of 181 per cent over the IPO price. The

stock closed at Rs 442, up 192 per

cent from the issue price.

index dropped by 0.17 per cent and Smallcap by 0.18 per cent. Analysts said that the decline in midcap and smallcap indices

However, the BSE Midcap

suggests that investors are continuing to exercise caution due to higher valuations. Among sectoral indices, BSE

Bankex rose the most by 1.23 per cent, followed by BSE Realty at 1.13 per cent and Financial S at 0.87 per cent. BSE Utilities, Oil & Gas, and Capital Goods also rose up to 0.66 per cent. BSE IT fell the most by 0.92 per

cent, followed by BSE Auto (0.82 per cent) and BSE Metal (0.74 per cent).

Market breadth was positive with 1,949 shares closing in the green, 1,887 in the red and 95 settling unchanged.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies was at Rs 391.50 lakh crore (USD 4.72 tril-

Asian shares traded mixed Tuesday. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.2 per cent while the Shanghai Composite rose 0.4 per cent. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 closed 0.1 per cent lower.

Foreign Portfolio Investors were net sellers as they offloaded shares worth Rs 754.59 crore, according to exchange data.

India seeks \$26bn of private nuclear power investments

The funding would help India to achieve its target of having 50% of its installed electric generation capacity using non-fossil fuels by 2030

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 20: India will invite private firms to invest about \$26 billion in its nuclear energy sector to increase the amount of electricity from sources that don't produce carbon dioxide emissions, two government sources told Reuters.

This is the first time New Delhi is pursuing private investment in nuclear power, a non-carbon-emitting energy source that contributes less than 2% of India's total electricity generation. The funding would help India to achieve its target of having 50% of its installed electric generation capacity using non-fossil fuels by 2030, up from 42% now.

The government is in talks with at least five private firms in-

cluding Reliance Industries, Tata Power, Adani Power and Vedanta Ltd to invest around Rs 440 billion (\$5.30 billion) each, the two sources, who are directly involved in the matter, said last

The federal Department of Atomic Energy and state-run Nuclear Power Corp of India Ltd (NPCIL) have held multiple rounds of discussions with the private companies in the past year on the investment plan, the sources said.

The Department of Atomic Energy, NPCIL, Tata Power, Reliance Industries, Adani Power and Vedanta did not respond to queries sent by Reuters. With the investment, the gov-

ernment hopes to build 11,000

megawatts (MW) of new nuclear

power generation capacity by

2040, said the sources, who did not want to be identified as the plan is still being finalised.

NPCIL owns and operates India's current fleet of nuclear power plants, with a capacity of 7,500 MW, and has committed investments for another 1,300



The sources said under the funding plan the private companies will make the investments in the nuclear plants, acquire land, water and undertake construction in areas outside the reactor complex of the plants.

But, the rights to build and run the stations and their fuel management will rest with NPCIL, as allowed under the law, they said.

The private companies are expected to earn revenue from the power plant's electricity sales and NPCIL would operate the projects for a fee, the sources

"This hybrid model of nuclear power project development is an innovative solution to accelerate the nuclear capacity," said Charudatta Palekar, an independent power sector consultant who formerly worked for

The plan will not require any amendment to the India's Atomic Energy Act of 1962 but will need a final go-ahead from the Department of Atomic Energy,

said one of the two sources. Indian law bars private companies from setting up nuclear power plants but allows them to supply components, equip-

ment and sign construction contracts for work outside of the reactors New Delhi has not met its nuclear power capacity addition targets for years mainly because it could not procure nuclear fuel supplies. However in 2010, India struck a deal with the United

States for supplies of reprocessed nuclear fuel. India's stringent nuclear compensation laws have hampered talks with foreign power plant builders such as General Electric and Westinghouse. The country has deferred a target to add 2,000-MW of nuclear power from 2020

to 2030.



HOSTS HAVE BEATEN THE NETHERLANDS IN THE LAST 2 ENCOUNTERS AND INTEND TO MAINTAIN DOMINANCE

India eye encore against Dutch

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, Feb 20: The Indian men's hockey team will look to continue their recent domination over the Netherlands with an outright win when the two sides meet in the return leg match of the FIH Pro League here Wednesday. India have so far had a good run in the tournament. They have won four out the five matches they have played in. their only loss coming against Australia in Bhubaneswar. Two of the wins have come in regulation time and the side showed enough resilience to defeat the Dutch and Spain in shootouts, games that earned them valuable bonus points

India are currently placed fourth in the Pro League standings with 10 points from five matches. The Netherlands are leading the chart with 18 points from nine games ahead of Argentina (13 from eight) and Australia (12 from four). However, the Dutch are not

to be taken lightly. India will certainly have to up the ante if they want to finish the game in regulation time.

Even though India had to fight hard in the last three matches, vice-captain Hardik Singh said the confidence in the camp is high on the eve of the meeting against the World No.1 side.

Hardik said India's show could have been better against the Netherlands in the encounter played February 11. He pointed Hardik Singh in action during the game against Spain played Monday at the Birsa Munda International hockey stadium in Rourkela ор рното

The confidence is high in the camp at the moment and going into the game, we would look to continue our momentum

HARDIK SINGH

out that in that game, India were below par. The match ended 2-2 in regulation time, before India won the shootout 4-2.

"Our performance in the first half fell short of expectations, but we made a strong comeback in the second half, pushing the game to a shootout. We were confident about our chances from that point onwards, especially given that we have really good goalkeepers in our ranks,' Hardik stated.

"The confidence in the camp is quite high at present with the way we have been performing in back-to-back events and I am sure we will carry this momentum forward in the tournament.' Hardik added.

The good sign is that India have in the past showed consistency against the Dutch. They have beaten the Netherlands in the last two meetings. Hardik informed that the team would like to finish on a high against the Dutch in the tournament.

"We know that if we play to our full potential, we can challenge any team in the world. At this moment, our aim is achieve consistency and maintain it throughout the game," Hardik

8-yr-old creates chess history

YOUNGEST-EVER PLAYER TO DEFEAT A GRANDMASTER IN CL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, Feb 20: An eightyear-old Indian-origin boy has defeated Polish chess grandmaster Jacek Stopa at the Burgdorfer Stadthaus Open tournament in Switzerland. The feat achieved Sunday enabled Ashwath Kaushik to become the youngest player ever to defeat a grandmaster in classical chess, according to a Channel News Asia report Tuesday. Ashwath overcame Stopa, who at 37, is nearly five times older than him.

The previous record was set only a few weeks earlier when Serbia's Leonid Ivanovic, who is several months older than Ashwath, beat 60-year-old Bulgarian grandmaster Milko Popchev at the Belgrade Open.

Ashwath is currently ranked World No. 37,338 on FIDE charts, the international chess federation. Since 2017 he has been residing in Singapore, but is still an Indian citizen.

"I felt proud of my game and how I played, especially since I was worse at one point but managed to come back from that, Ashwath said, "It was no doubt a very tough match for me, but I never gave up," he added.

Singaporean grandmaster and CEO of the Singapore Chess Federation Kevin Goh lauded Ashwath's feat on 'X'. "Dad is super supportive, boy is dedicated, school allows flexibility and of course he (Ashwath) has natural talent," Goh said.

"Remains to be seen how far he can go as interests can change

jump), Arpita Archana Sahoo (javelin and shot put), Maitreyi

Parulekar (discuss), Jamuna

Tudu (long jump), 4x100 me-

tres relay (women) and 4x100m

The silver medals were won by

Lalu Prasad Bhoi (men's 100m

and long jump), Panchu Majhi

(men's high jump) and Mahendra

Sulochana Das, Mayor,

Bhubaneswar Municipal

Corporation, Arvind Agarwal,

Commissioner-cum Secrtary,

Department of Higher

Education, Professor Sabita

Acharya (Vice-Chancellor, Utkal

University) and Olympian

Dutee Chand graced the prize

distribution ceremony. A num-

ber of young talents managed

to showcase their potential

Santa (men's 200m).

relay (men).

Ashwath Kaushik is creating waves as the new chess prodigy

as the boy gets older. Still, we are hopeful," Goh added. Goh also joked that as he is only eight years old, Ashwath still 'needs a booster cushion to reach

Goh also hoped Ashwath's success can inspire more children to pursue chess at a competitive level. "I think his achievement shows that with the right amount of talent and support, a young player has every chance of achieving success in chess at the highest level," Goh said.

the other side of the board'.

Ashwath made waves in 2022 after emerging as a triple champion in the chess variations – classic, rapid and blitz – at the under-8 Eastern Asia Youth Championships.

Sriram Kaushik said in a post on 'X' that his son's upset win over Stopa is 'one of the proudest moments of my life'.

"Special thanks to Ashwath's true pillars and his long-term, and often long-suffering coaches who have put up with him for many years through thick and thin," Sriram was quoted as saying. "Puzzle solving certainly (is) at the core of his board success as well," he added.

Ashwath meanwhile said that his main aim is to do well in FIDE's World Cup for youngsters later in the year.

SHORT TAKES

Kohli becomes dad for second time

New Delhi: Star India batter Virat Kohli announced Tuesday that he and his actor wife Anushka Sharma were blessed with a baby boy February 15. Kohli and Anushka are already parents of a three-year-old daughter Vamika. "With abundant happiness and our hearts full of love, we are pleased to inform everyone that on 15th February, we welcomed our baby boy Akaay & Vamika's little brother into this world!." Kohli informed in an Instagram post, "We seek your blessings and good wishes in this beautiful time in our lives. We request you to kindly respect our privacy at this time." he added. Kohli has given the ongoing Test series against England a miss to be with his family

Lane infringement costs Gulveer gold

Tehran: India's Gulveer Singh lost his men's 3000m gold medal in the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships here after he was disqualified for 'lane infringement'. Gulveer had clocked 8 minutes 07.48 seconds to finish on top of the podium in the 3000m final, late Monday night. He was later disqualified for lane infringement and a late night 'appeal' by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) was also rejected, an official said. "The jury said they have enough evidence to conclude that Gulveer made lane infringement," the AFI official added.

Norrie advances

Rio de Janeiro: Cameron Norrie started his defense of the Rio Open tennis tournament title beating Bolivia's Hugo Dellien 6-3, 6-2 here Monday. "This is a special place for me, I won my biggest title last year here," Norrie said. "I have another chance to work on my game and maybe enjoy the beach a little." Norrie stunned Carlos Alcaraz in the 2023 final and both are seeded to make the final again. He will next face Chile's Tomás Barrios Vera. Alcaraz meanwhile will open his campaign against local favourite Thiago Monteiro.

TT teams qualify

Busan: The Indian men's and women's sides registered contrasting wins in their final group games to progress to the knockout phase of the Word Table Tennis Team Championships here Tuesday, While the Indian women's team pulled off a thrilling come-from-behind 3-2 victory over Spain, the men's side brushed aside New Zealand 3-0. Ayhika Mukherjee Manika Batra and Sreeia Akula won a match each in the women's tie.

KIIT University emerge champions



Bhubaneswar, Feb 20: KIIT University emerged as overall champions in the Odisha State Level Inter-University Athletics Meet-2023-24 which concluded Monday at the Utkal University. A total of 37 universities participated in the competition organised by the Higher Education department,

Athletes from KIIT University finished with an impressive tally of nine gold, five silver and two bronze medals to emerge as overall champions of the meet.

The atheletes who won gold are Sabita Toppo (100m), Prangya Prasanti Sahoo (100m hurdles and 200m), Susmita Tigga (800m and 1,500m), Dipa Kisan (high

Bhubaneswar: Sneha Soren representing Odisha and KIIT University bagged the weightlifting gold Tuesday at the Khelo India University Games-2023 which is being conducted in different states of the northeast. Soren finished on top in the 55kg category. She lifted a total of 172 Kg (Snatch 75kg and Clean & Jerk 97kg) to clinch the gold and open the medal tally for KIIT. The weightlifting competitions are being held at Arunachal Pradesh.



Cash awards for hockey players



Amit Rohidas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar. Feb 20: The Odisha government announced Tuesday cash awards to honour the outstanding achievements of hockey players from the state. The awards have been given to recognise their stellar performances while representing India at the international level, highlighting Odisha's rich legacy in the sport, officials informed here.

Amit Rohidas, who has been the captain of the Indian team on a number of occasions, and Deep Grace Ekka have been awarded ₹3,75,000 each. This is for their their performances while representing India at the 2023 Men's Asian Championship Trophy played in Chennai and the 2023 Women's Asian



Championship Trophy held in Jharkhand respectively. The Asian Champions Trophy is a continental tournament that is held every two years.

In the men's Championship Trophy, the Indians bagged the title defeating Malaysia in the final 4-3. In the women's edition of the same tournament, the eves blanked Japan 4-0 to emerge champions.

Mariana Kujur, Jvoti Chhatri and Ajmina Kujur were awarded ₹12,50,000 each for their performances while representing the Indian women's hockey team. The team won the silver medal in the first edition of the FIH Hockey 5s Women's World Cup, 2024 played in Muscat, Oman. The FIH Hockey 5s World Cup event is held every four years.

IPL starts March 22

New Delhi: The much-anticipated Indian Premier League (IPL) is

set to begin on March 22 and will

despite it coinciding with general

be held entirely in the country

elections, chairman of the

AIFF to investigate PANT ALL SET FOR IPL RETURN fixing allegations

New Delhi, Feb 20: After betting and match-fixing allegations emerged in the Delhi Premier League, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) launched Tuesday an investigation across various cities of the country to get to the root of this menace with the help of government agencies.

Suspicions of betting and match-fixing came to light Monday in a Delhi League match when Ahbab FC, who were winning 4-0, conceded two dubiouslooking own goals late in the match against Rangers FC. Ahbab FC won the match 4-2.

The video footage of the two own goals went viral after which AIFF summoned Football Delhi chief Anuj Gupta on Tuesday to seek details of the suspicious match and served him notice.

AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey said he would approach Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to undertake investigation and get to the root of the betting syndicate.

"Our investigation will not be limited to Delhi. We have reasons to believe through evidences, such practice are in other cities too, and will form a wider network

Our investigation will not be limited to Delhi over matchfixing as we believe such incidents are happening in other parts of the country KALYAN CHAUBEY | AIFF PRESIDENT

for our investigations," Chaubey

said in a release from the AIFF. "The AIFF today (Tuesday) served an email notice to Delhi Soccer Association demanding clarification on the incident involving 19 February 2024

match under Delhi Premier League. AIFF officials held an emergency meeting today, in which DSA president Anuj Gupta was summoned," the release added. Chaubey said the AIFF would

not limit its investigation to just one match. "Several incremental evidences have been found which cast serious doubts on the entire league," he said.

"I will be meeting Joint Commissioner of Police, Anti-Corruption Bureau to help us investigate the matter thoroughly and to get to the root of this syndicate. DSA has been advised to file FIR immediately," Chaubey added.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: Rishabh Pant remains on course for a much-anticipated comeback in the IPL after taking part in a practice game organised by his franchise Delhi Capitals in Alur,

Karnataka. Pant, who met with a horrific car accident in December 2022, has been undergoing rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) and is working hard to regain match fitness before the start of the IPL in the second half of March

'The match was part of assessing his mobility basically. He has been batting at nets for a while and playing in a practice game was more like an extension of it," said a NCA source here.

Earlier this month, Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting had given a major update on Pant. He had stated that the game-changing cricketer was confident about his return to the IPL. However, he had also

added that Pant may not be ready for wicket-keeping duties in the competition.

"Rishabh is very confident that he's going to be right to play in the IPL. In what capacity we're not quite sure yet," Ponting had said.

"You would have seen all the social-media stuff, he's up and about and running well. However, we're only six weeks away from the first match. So we're not sure if we'll get wicket-keeping out of him this year," Ponting added.

tournament, Arun Dhumal said Tuesday. The elections are expected in April and May and that is the main reason why the schedule for the IPL's 17th edition has not been unveiled yet. Dhumal said that to begin with, only the schedule of the first 15 days will be announced and the roster for the remaining games will be decided after the announcement of the general

election dates. "We are looking

at a March 22 start for the

tournament. We are working

closely with the government

the initial schedule. The entire

tournament will be held in

India," said Dhumal.

agencies and we will first release

Pant is also expected to lead Delhi Capitals. David Warner had captained in his absence last year. "He's such a dynamic player. He's obviously our captain. We missed him incredibly last year," Ponting said. The 26-year-old Pant has played 33 Tests, 30 ODIs and 66 T20s for India so far. In many of those games, he has single-hand-

edly turned the complexion of the game in India's favour.

