



DSPL-689

Now **accenture** In Odisha

ଆକ୍ସେଣ୍ଟୁର **accenture**



Accenture marks its presence in Odisha: A Major Boost for Odisha's IT Landscape

- After IT majors like Deloitte, IBM, EY, PWC, Concentrix & Cognizant, Accenture enters in Odisha.
- This move solidifies Bhubaneswar's status as 'Premier IT hub in Eastern India'.
- Odisha Government's policies are strengthening the technology-driven economy.

Bhubaneswar, emerging as the most preferred IT hub, promises a brighter future for youth by strengthening the economy.

Date of Inauguration: 22nd February, 2024

Odisha Technology Center,
Acharya Vihar, Bhubaneshwar

leisure



MENDES TO HELM FILMS ON BEATLES LEGENDS

The Beatles legends John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr will be the subject of different upcoming feature films. The movies will be directed by the Oscar nominated filmmaker Sam Mendes.

BYOFF KICKS OFF IN PURI

The 21st edition of Bring Your Own film festival (BYOFF) was inaugurated at Puri, Wednesday. The five day event will showcase more than 60 Indian and international films for the audience.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Today you will have to give in to your spouse's demands for improving the environment at home. In your own interest it will be advisable, says Ganesh. To hasten the measures needed to be taken and stay focussed on them as you are the one who is guilty of neglect.

TAURUS
You will be fondly thinking about your close friends, particularly about the ones of the opposite sex. It may suddenly dawn upon you that you are in love, says Ganesh. If per chance, there is a romantic encounter, go ahead and dive fearlessly in the pool of love. It is near certain that the wedding bells will be ringing for you sooner than you think.

GEMINI
Your family members and your friends will have much higher expectations from you today, and trying to fulfill the same will make you irritable. However, you will figure out creative ways to juggle the many demands made upon you and come out on top at the end of it all, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will tackle with ease, even the most confounding challenges today. You may be the scapegoat, though, fears Ganesh. Beware, or this may shake you and lower your self-confidence. Try to shake off your weaknesses, and you should see yourself obtaining energy and positivity.

LEO
People involved in Sales and Marketing related jobs will attend productive meetings and will make effective presentations. However, delays in journeying are a possibility. It is a good time to recognise your inherent capabilities. You will be able to prove your worth in the next 2-3 days, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
In all likelihood you will indulge in some writing or artistic work, which will bring about wonderful results. As you are passionate about these things, you may convert them into your hobbies, if you are not involved in them as a professional. Ganesh gives you the green signal to enjoy the clout that you wield over others with your sweet words.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will spend time with your family members by putting them above other commitments. There may be plans made to go out for dinner or for a short excursion with them. Ganesh says that the health of a close relative may be a cause of concern for you today.

SCORPIO
The one thing that we neglect the most about ourselves is health. But today you are unable to do that. Your health needs to be paid enough attention as you may be suffering from ailment/s. Try to regularise your routine along with healthy food and regular exercise, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You are all set to groom your skills as a professional. Talking about work, determination and dedication are likely to rule you today. Putting your heart and soul, your work speaks volumes about your efforts. Appreciation, though slow in pace, is on its way to encourage you.

CAPRICORN
You'll be popular today at your workplace. Your honesty and efforts will be recognised, which will be fulfilling for you. But, tomorrow will be a different day and times may not be favourable for you. It is, therefore, necessary for you to understand the importance of today and utilise it to the maximum, advises Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You will go through some heavy mood swings today. And the people who know you well will get shocked and find it difficult to deal with you. Keep your guards on, and don't take uncalculated decisions, advises Ganesh, rather get your current assignments cross the finishing line.

PISCES
Today will be a hectic day for you. Most of your time will be spent in making your relationships on the business as well as the personal front more meaningful. You will likely find yourself attending social events. There is also the possibility that you will attend some religious ritual today. Apart from this, nothing substantial is likely to occur today, says Ganesh.

BEST DRESSED PEOPLE

Sonam makes it to UK's Top 40

Mumbai: Actress Sonam Kapoor has made it to the UK's Top 40 Best Dressed people list joining names such as Harry Styles, Kate Middleton, Rosamund Pike and Kate Moss, among many others.

Last night, UK's prestigious media house *The Standard*, hailed Sonam as one of UK's Top 40 Best Dressed people.

Others who are in the list include names such as Sienna Miller, Bianca Jagger, Alexa Chung,

Stormzy, Naomi Campbell, Edward Enninful, Stella McCartney, Phoebe Philo, Akshata Murty (businessperson and wife of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak).

In Sonam's citation *The Standard* wrote, "The Bollywood sensation is a Notting Hill girl and international fixture of the couture circuit -- not to mention one of Dior and Valentino's top clients."

Recently, according to a global fashion report, she featured in the list of celebrities like Zendaya, Kylie Jenner, Kendall Jenner, Blackpink and BTS who had the highest impact for luxury fashion brands in 2023.

On the work front, Sonam is gearing up for *Battle For Bittora*. WNS



Goa: Actress Rakul Preet Singh and actor-producer Jacky Bhagnani exchanged wedding vows in an Anand Karaj ceremony Wednesday afternoon, in the presence of close family and friends.

Ahead of their wedding, Rakul and Jacky hosted a mehendi and sangeet ceremony in Goa. Shilpa Shetty, Raj Kundra, Bhumi Pednekar, Riteish Deshmukh, Varun Dhawan, and others performed at the celebrations. According to reports, the couple's Anand Karaj ceremony took place at around 3 p.m. and was followed by a grand Sindhi shaadi. The newlyweds will also throw an after party for their near and dear ones.

Shahid Kapoor, Mira Rajput, Aditya Roy Kapur, Ananya Panday, Esha Deol, Ayushmann Khurrana, Tahira Kashyap,

Rakul, Jacky tie knot in Goa

and many others were in attendance at this grand wedding. Natasha Dalal, who is expecting her first baby with Varun Dhawan, also attended the wedding festivities with her husband.

Back in 2021, the *Doctor G* actress and the *Youngistaan* actor made their relationship official. On Rakul's 31st birthday in October 2021, Jacky wished his lady love on Instagram, announcing their romance to the world. AGENCIES



Mumbai: Actress Priyanka Chopra took to her Instagram stories to offer a glimpse into her current living situation, following reports of her and Nick Jonas leaving their Los Angeles home due to livability issues. The video showcased a room with a large window, capturing Priyanka enjoying a rainy day from her temporary abode.

However adapting to the new surroundings may not be as anticipated for Priyanka, as she shared a cryptic post featuring a dimly lit photo of a fireplace, a swimming pool, and chairs. The caption read, "The world is not what I expect," accompanied by a red heart emoji. The cryptic message hints at the unforeseen challenges or differences in her current living situation.

PC's cryptic post

Reports suggest that Priyanka and Nick Jonas had to vacate their Los Angeles residence and even filed a legal case against the property's seller. The decision to leave reportedly stemmed from the home becoming unlivable with mold infestations due to water damage, causing significant concerns.

On the work front, Priyanka has the most awaited project *Jee Le Zaraa* in the pipeline. AGENCIES

The man is gone, the voice stays on

Mumbai: His was the voice that ruled the airwaves for decades and will forever echo through the winding roads of nostalgia. Ameen Sayani, who invited millions each week to tune into *Binaca Geetmala*, was India's radio man for the ages - and will continue to be.

Sayani, who died in Mumbai at the 91 following a heart attack Tuesday, was not a singer or an orator. He was the presenter of a programme on Hindi film songs but one so compelling and so hugely popular that no history of Indian radio can ever be written without his contribution.

That voice, the deep timbre radiating cheer and warmth, has fallen silent but the refrain of that unforgettable

"*Namaste behno aur bhaiyo, main aapka dost Ameen Sayani bol raha hoon*" will long ring loud and clear.

Sayani's inimitable greeting reached countless homes as Hindi film song aficionados tuned in week after week to *Binaca Geetmala* on Radio Ceylon from 1952 to 1988.

The programme moved to All India Radio's Vividh Bharti in 1989 but its popularity did not wane thanks to the connect that Sayani had established with his listeners. There were several name changes as the toothpaste manufacturer went from Binaca to Cibaca and the show was also rechristened to *Colgate Cibaca Geetmala*. The listeners though kept listening in right till 1994

when it ended.

The Turning Point

Sometime in the late 60s, Sayani recalled in an interview with *PTI*, he encountered a lanky, tall man but he busy running 20 shows a week and just did not have time to meet the stranger.

"I had not a second to spare for this thin man. He waited and left and came back a few more times. But I could not see him and kept telling him through my receptionist to take an appointment and come," Sayani said.

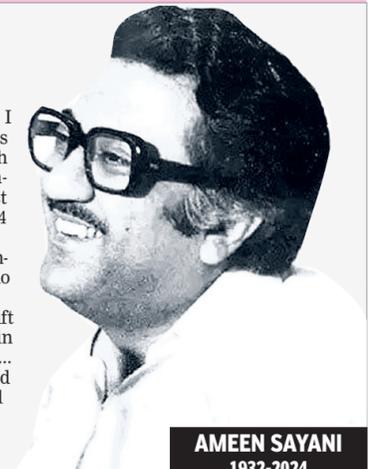
And yes, the young man was Amitabh Bachchan, the superstar with the deep baritone.

"Today, though I regret denying him an audition, I realise that what happened

was for the best for both of us. I would have been on the streets and he would have got so much work on radio that Indian cinema would have lost its biggest star," Sayani told *PTI* in the 2014 interview.

Sayani, despite his massive contributions in revolutionising radio in India, remained humble.

"You say that this voice is a gift from god, but I will let you on in a secret my voice was not good... I try to speak from my heart and the attempt is that 'dil ki baat, dil se dil tak pahunchne'," he famously said in a media interview. PTI

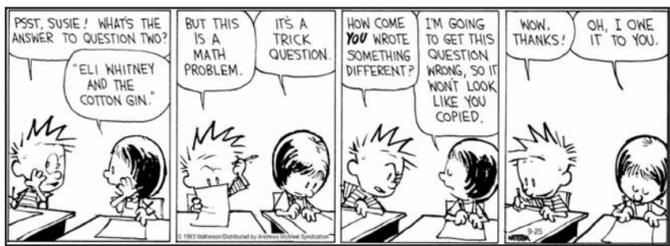


AMEEN SAYANI
1932-2024

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

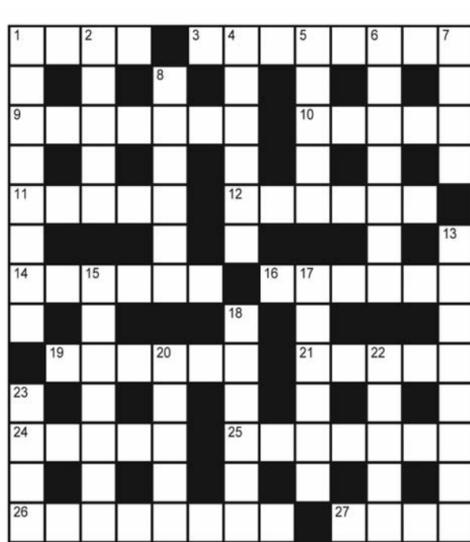


BREVITY



FUN post

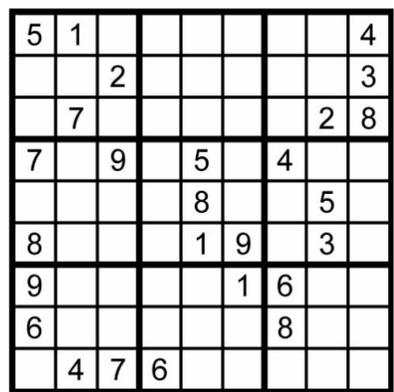
CROSSWORD



- Copyright © 2024 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Library item
 - 3 Sensational
 - 9 Sea nymph
 - 10 Perfect
 - 11 Broaden
 - 12 Braids
 - 14 Small fry
 - 16 Narcotic
 - 19 Lean
 - 21 Bridle parts
 - 24 Cougars
 - 25 Shamefaced
 - 26 Shaking
 - 27 Bridge call
 - Down**
 - 1 Slipstream
 - 2 Anointed
 - 4 Military personnel
 - 5 Nigerian monetary unit
 - 6 Inactivity
 - 7 Big party
 - 8 First act
 - 13 Communications
 - 15 Disheveled
 - 17 Father
 - 18 Dash
 - 20 Iraq city
 - 22 Neighbor of Pakistan
 - 23 Railroad branch line

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

TEMPTED CUTUP
A O A R L I E
P A R S L E Y I N T E R
I A L L R N A H
R A L L Y O R G A N Z A
H T I P
B A M B O O D I S C U S
E I D S
A U R E O L A O D D L Y
T A B N L W O
L U C R E C H A T E A U
E L S E T A L T
S T E R E S T E L T H

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



ଯୁବଶକ୍ତିକୁ ସ୍ୱାବଲମ୍ବୀ କରିବ 'ସ୍ୱୟମ୍ ଯୋଜନା' ଓ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଟଙ୍କା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରକ୍ଷା ବିନା ସୁଧରେ

OIPR-15001/13/0383/2324

State to withdraw over 48K cases against tribals

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday ordered the withdrawal of 48,018 trivial cases against people belonging to Scheduled Tribes (STs). Most of the cases are related to Home, Excise, and Forest and Environment departments, an official said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Before learning about seeds, soil and fertilisers, I want you to have army training to survive as a farmer

New Barabati proposed

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, Feb 21: The iconic Barabati Stadium in the Silver City here will be transformed into a world-class sporting facility under the state government's 5T initiative, official sources said, Wednesday.

After supporting hockey and football, Odisha government has now decided to focus on cricket in the state, they said, adding that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is likely to lay the foundation stone for the makeover February 27.

5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian visited the stadium Wednesday and discussed the development of the sport with Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) president Pranab Prakash Das (Bobby) and other officials. While reviewing the plans for the transformation of the stadium into a mega facility with a seating ca-



capacity of 60,000, Pandian said. "The area near Barabati Stadium will be developed into a world-class sports campus with the best of facilities for cricketers and other sports disciplines."

The transformation will ensure international standards for spectators, including access to the stadium, comfortable viewing areas, and amenities such as food courts and washrooms. Additionally, facilities for other sports disciplines will be included on the campus, according to the Chief Minister's Office.

A mall, a five-star hotel and office spaces will be created in the

area adjacent to the stadium. The space in front of the stadium will be developed as a public plaza, it said. Pandian also interacted with coaches and players. He assured that cricket development will be a priority under the 5T transformation and cricket training centres with quality coaching will be developed across the state. The aim will be to make Odisha a major emerging state in the field of cricket, Pandian said.

To improve the competitiveness among Odisha cricket players, Pandian suggested starting a high-standard state-level cricket league this year with proper broadcast facilities. He said the state has women cricketers who have been displaying exceptional talent at the national level. To further encourage and promote the development of women's cricket, Odisha Women Cricket Academy will be started in Puri shortly, he said.

Farmer killed; 'Delhi Chalo' on hold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 21: Farmer leaders Wednesday put the 'Delhi Chalo' march on hold for two days after a protester was killed and about 12 police personnel injured in clashes at Khanauri, one of the two protest sites on the Punjab-Haryana border.

Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said that they will decide the next course of action Friday evening. Punjab farmers at Khanauri and Shambhu had resumed their agitation early in the morning after a two-day lull following the fourth round of talks Sunday night with a panel of three Union ministers in an attempt to break the deadlock.

Police fired tear gas shells at the two border points multiple times to disperse groups of protesters when they attempted to move towards the layers of barricades stalling their march to the national capital.

Earlier in the day, Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda, who is



among the Union ministers engaging with the farmer leaders, called for further talks and appealed to the protesters to maintain peace. Thousands of farmers remain camped at Khanauri and Shambhu with their tractor-trolleys and trucks agitating for their demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) for crops and farm debt waiver.

Farmer leader Baldev Singh Sirsa identified the dead farmer as Subhkar Singh (21), a resident of Baloke village in Punjab's Bathinda district. A Haryana Police officer said around 12 police personnel were injured when they were attacked with lathis and stones thrown at them in Khanauri, located in Punjab's Sangrur district, close to the border with Haryana's Jind. P7

Ameen Sayani no more

Mumbai: Ameen Sayani, radio's most recognised voice for millions of Indians who tuned into Binaca Geetmala every week, died at a south Mumbai hospital following a heart attack Tuesday, his son said Wednesday. He was 91. The last rites will be held Thursday. Sayani, who was born in Mumbai in a multilingual family December 21, 1932, compered, presented and voiced over 50,000 shows in 42 years. **More: leisure page**



Fali S Nariman dies

New Delhi: Legal doyen and veteran advocate Fali S Nariman died here Wednesday at the age of 95. He was suffering from multiple ailments, including cardiac issues. Born January 10, 1929, Nariman, who was often referred to as the 'Bhishma Pitamah' of the Indian judiciary, was awarded the Padma Vibhushan. He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha in November 1999. **P2**



ଲାଭ ଦେବ 'ଲାଭ' ଯୋଜନା ଉପକୃତ ହେବେ ଜନଜାତି ୧୪ଟି ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ୧୧୯ଟି ବ୍ଲକ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ



ଲାଭ ଯୋଜନାର ବିଶେଷତା

- ନବୀନ ସରକାର ଆଣିଛନ୍ତି ବନଜାତ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ସହାୟକ ମୂଲ୍ୟ
- ଶତ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଲଘୁ ବନଜାତ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ସହାୟକ ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ କ୍ରୟ
- ବିନା ଅସୁବିଧାରେ ବନଜାତ ସାମଗ୍ରୀ ମିଳିବ ସଠିକ ମୂଲ୍ୟ
- ଉପକୃତ ହେବେ ହଜାର ହଜାର ଜନଜାତି ପରିବାର



LaccMI covers entire state

A fleet of 305 luxury buses will improve connectivity across 1,057 gram panchayats of five districts – Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Ganjam, Nuapada and Boudh –benefitting over 73 lakh people of the region



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Odisha government's Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LaccMI) covered the entire state, with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launching the affordable bus service in Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Ganjam, Nuapada and Boudh districts, Wednesday.

will benefit over four lakh people of Boudh, with a fleet of 12 buses (10 non-AC and two AC) improving connectivity across 55 GPs of the district.

In Balasore, as many as 59 buses (48 non-AC and 11 AC) will operate across 315 GPs of the district and benefit more than 20 lakh people.

A fleet of 31 buses (26 non-AC and five AC) will enhance road communication across 123 GPs of Nuapada district, benefitting over six lakh citizens.

The affordable bus service

service will enhance road connectivity, benefitting over eight lakh people.

LaccMI bus service will connect people and strengthen social as well as economic life. It will take children to schools and colleges and connect farmers to markets. Women and students can travel in LaccMI buses for Rs 5 only, the CM said.

The ambitious initiative was first launched in tribal-dominated Malkangiri October 12, 2023. It was later extended to Gajapati (October 20), Kalahandi (November 1), Rayagada (November 25), Nabarangpur (November 30) and Koraput (December 14). Deogarh, Angul and Dhenkanal districts got the affordable bus service January 31.

Women Cong activists scuffle with police



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Mahila Congress workers were engaged in a scuffle with police personnel here Wednesday when they were stopped during their march to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's residence to protest 'rising cases of violence' against women in the state.

Led by All India Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba and Odisha unit chief Minakshi Bahinipati, the party supporters advanced towards Naveen Niwas and attempted to remove police barricades leading to the scuffle with the force.

The police took the agitators in vans from Pallaspali locality and released them in another place, Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police Prateek

Singh said. "Lamba and other activists were stopped and removed from the public road. No one was arrested," Singh said.

Before getting into the police van, Lamba said, "We wanted to meet the CM but we were stopped. It is murder of democracy."

Lamba claimed that Patnaik's Mission Shakti scheme has failed in the state.

Mission Shakti is an Odisha government programme for empowerment of women through self-help groups (SHGs).

The Odisha Mahila Congress earlier in the day organised a convention in which speakers demanded reservation of 50 per cent of seats for women in the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

RAJNATH TO VISIT ODISHA TODAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Senior BJP leader and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to undertake a one-day visit to Odisha Thursday during which he will address two public meetings and a workers' meet, official sources said.

Singh's trip is part of senior BJP leaders' visit to various Lok Sabha constituencies ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha and Odisha Assembly polls.

"The defence minister will meet party functionaries in Nabarangpur Lok Sabha segment and address two meetings in Berhampur and Baripada," Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal said.

According to sources, the defence minister is scheduled to arrive at Nabarangpur from neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

Servitor held for harassing woman

Bhubaneswar: A servitor of Lingaraj Temple was arrested by Commissionerate Police Wednesday on charges of misbehaving with a woman tourist from Sweden. The accused, Kundu Mohapatra, had allegedly committed the shameful act near the temple's northern gate recently, Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said. Inspector-in-charge (IC) of Lingaraj police station Purna Chandra Pradhan said Mohapatra has been booked under Sections 354 and 354 (A) of IPC. The DCP said that the woman filed a case at Lingaraj police station February 19 alleging that the servitor touched her inappropriately.

Rajagada Patia Park to be ready in 6 months

Bhubaneswar: If things go as per plan, the Rajagada Patia Park will be completed within six months as Bhubaneswar-North MLA Susant Kumar Rout Wednesday performed groundbreaking for the recreation facility that would be maintained by the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA). Rout also inaugurated the designated parking plaza and 900-metre long nature trail of Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Park at Gadakana. The park is being developed and maintained by BDA. The Rajagada Patia Park, which is coming up in 11 acres, is envisioned to be a lush green space with dense forest cover.

Take measures to tackle heat: SRC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu Wednesday directed all the district Collectors to take precautionary measures to tackle heatwave conditions.

The SRC said that water scarcity is often associated with heatwave situation which needs special attention. The district administration is required to take advance steps to identify the water scarcity pockets and prepare action plan for ensuring supply of water for drinking and other purposes through tankers. Reports of water scarcity are to be responded to immediately.

Preventive maintenance of tube-wells and piped water supply systems should start immediately, if not already taken up. In schools, colleges and other academic/technical institutions, extra care has to be taken to ensure availability of drinking water. Parents should be sensitised to ensure that their children carry a water bottle while going to school/college. This should be adequately published to create awareness among parents.



Anganwadi centres may remain open in morning hours only.

Sufficient lifesaving medicines, saline, ORS may be stored in dispensaries, PHCs, CHCs and subdivision/district headquarters hospitals to meet the requirement. Special arrangement may be made and separate wards/beds be earmarked for treatment of heat stroke patients in different hospitals. All public transport vehicles must carry sufficient portable water and ORS packets to be provided to passengers/staff requiring the same.

The timing for engagement of labourers at worksites may be rescheduled. No work should be executed in peak hours during heat wave period. Energy department will issue instructions to the Distribution Companies to maintain uninterrupted power supply.

Cell to review water quality monitoring

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: A state-level Water Quality Assurance Cell (WQAC) was inaugurated by Housing & Urban Development (H&UD) Additional Chief Secretary G Mathi Vathanan near Satya Nagar here, Wednesday.

The cell will facilitate improved water quality monitoring and surveillance with strong vigil and ensure zero failure in water quality parameters in the water supply system, starting from intakes to consumer taps in all cities across the state, said sources.

Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Sisir Kumar Ratho has been appointed to lead the cell as the Principal Advisor (Water) in the department.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed with IIT-Madras Tuesday to provide technical advisory services to the cell as required.

Mathi Vathanan said Odisha became a live example of demonstrating the 24x7 urban drinking water supply with its transformative Drink from Tap Mission globally.

Ankura Hosp launches 120-bed facility in Capital



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Ankura Hospital, a Hyderabad-based leading chain of women and children's hospitals, opened its 120-bed facility here, Wednesday.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by chief science & Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, Central Bhubaneswar MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik, North Bhubaneswar MLA Susant Kumar Rout, BMC Ward No 41 Corporator Kabita Swain, Rural Development director Nikhil Pavan Kalyan, MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu and

Ankura Hospital founder and managing director Krishna Prasad Vunnam.

Speaking on this occasion, Minister Panda hailed Ankura Hospital for setting up the hospital in the Capital. He said that the specialised facility will address the need of people representing more than just a physical building.

Vunnam said, "Ankura Hospital's emphasis on individualised attention, access to advanced medical technology, and a team of experienced professionals sets it apart as a one-stop centre catering specifically to the diverse healthcare needs of women and children."

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	72623.09 ↓ 344.31
NIFTY	22055.00 ↓ 142.00
DOLLAR	82.90 ↓ ₹.018
EURO	89.65 ↑ ₹0.06
GOLD	₹62,171 ↑ ₹4
SILVER	₹70,941 ↓ ₹314

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.4°C	35.0°C
Min Temp	21.5°C	21.0°C
Humidity	79%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST	☀️	
DRY WEATHER	VERY LIKELY	

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, dated 15.02.2024. I, Arundhati Sundaray, D/o- Ashok Kumar Sundaray & W/o- Ayashkant Swain At- Jagasara, P.O.- Kaimatia, P.S.- Infovally, Dist.- Khordha, Odisha declare that I have changed my name from Arundhati Sundaray to Arundhati Swain. Henceforth, I shall be known as Arundhati Swain for all purposes.

LOST

I, Richpal Meher, S/o Shiba Meher of Vill.- Sagarpari, P.O.- Mallikmunda, P.S.- Sonepur, Dist.- Subarnapur (Odisha), that I was in possession of original Regd. Sale Deed No.11662000269 of 2020 and 11662000270 of 2020 executed by Hiramani Sahu & others in favour of Smt. Swagatika Meher, W/o- Buddhadeb Meher and Smt. Getanjali Meher, W/o Dolagovinda Meher on dt.22.01.2020 (previous deed). The said original sale deed No. 11662000269 and 11662000270 of 2020 is lost on dt.25.01.2024 between my home & Punjab National Bank, Sonepur Branch and out of my best effort the same couldn't trace out yet. If any one find it kindly contact 9798494077.

Judiciary's 'Bhishma Pitamah' who minced no words

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: The name of constitutional jurist Pali Sam Nariman, who died at the age of 95 Wednesday, will go down in legal history for his pivotal contribution to cases that have shaped India – the basic structure doctrine judgement in Kesavananda Bharati being just one of them.

Nariman, variously termed Bhishma Pitamah, conscience keeper and the man with a giant intellect, was a recipient of Padma Vibhushan in 2007 and Padma Bhushan in 1991. He was a renowned votary of civil liberties and secularism. He was famously outspoken, a bold voice unhesitatingly taking on the State on a range of issues and articulating his views on ills plaguing the society at large.

For Nariman, a guiding light for lawyers down the decades, it didn't matter who was in power.

Appointed additional solicitor general of India in May 1972, he resigned from the post just a day after Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency June 26, 1975. Rare those days, and even now, this possibly deprived him of opportunities in the latter half of the career to

serve the nation as the solicitor general or attorney general for India.

That forthrightness stayed his calling card right till the end.

On February 9, just 12 days before he breathed his last, Nariman spoke at an IPI-India function. A "dissent press" is a "free press" and it is essential for democracy, the nonagenarian jurist said in what was possibly his last public speech. He described India slipping ranks in the press freedom index as a "matter of grave concern for democracy".

A week later, February 16, Nariman wrote to lawyer Prashant Bhushan to congratulate him for his victory in the electoral bond scheme case.

"His passing away at this critical juncture is an enormous loss for our country," Bhushan said in a post on X.

As rich tributes poured in from across the nation, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud termed him a "great giant of an intellectual".

Former CJINV Ramana said he was a "conscience keeper for judicial institutions".

"Through his arguments in court rooms, widely read newspaper columns, public lectures, parliamentary interventions and



Pali S Nariman
Jan 10, 1929 - Feb 21, 2024

televised interviews he has educated generations of legal professionals and general public alike," Ramana said in a statement.

Nariman also served as a director on the PTI Board.

Born in Rangoon (now Yangon) to a well-off business executive, he joined the Bar as a lawyer in 1950 in Bombay, now Mumbai, and remained active for over seven decades.

He initially practiced in Bombay and remained there till 1972 and then shifted to Delhi to practice law in the Supreme Court. It was a long and illustrious legal career.

Nariman assisted Nanabhoy Palkhivala in the Kesavananda Bharati case, the most significant case in independent India. The 1973

verdict laid down "basic structure doctrine" of the Constitution, clipping the Parliament's power to amend the Constitution and simultaneously giving the judiciary the authority to review any amendment on grounds of its violation.

After the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, Nariman argued in favour of the Union Carbide Corporation but was candid enough to admit later that it was a mistake. Later, he was also instrumental in getting a deal between victims and the company outside court.

He represented the Gujarat government in the Narmada Rehabilitation case, but went on to resign following news reports of attacks on Christian community and the burning of copies of the Bible.

Nariman appeared and argued in the famous TMA Pai case, Jayalalitha disproportionate assets case and the matter of the National Judicial Appointments Commission, which was struck down by the Supreme Court.

The top court in the TMA Pai Foundation case recognised the autonomy of private educational institutions under Article 19(1)(g) of the

Constitution, and allowed them to operate without excessive governmental interference.

Nariman also argued for the Supreme Court Advocates-on-record Association in its challenge to the National Judicial Appointment Commission, which was tasked with the responsibility of making judicial appointments. The top court quashed the NJAC on grounds that it violated the freedom of judiciary, one of the basic structures of the Constitution.

He was a lead counsel in the SP Gupta case, also known as the first judges cases, which finally led to the collegium system of appointment of judges in higher judiciary.

Former Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalitha had hired him to represent her in the disproportionate assets case. Nariman secured her bail from the top court.

Nariman was also a prolific author. His 'Before the Memory Fades' is a professional guide for new lawyers across the nation. He has also written 'The State of the Nation', 'India's Legal System: Can it be Saved?' and 'God Save the Hon'ble Supreme Court'. Nariman was nominated as a member of the Rajya Sabha in November 1999.

OSBC BATS FOR LAWYERS' WELFARE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: The Odisha State Bar Council (OSBC) has decided to take a host of initiatives for the welfare of numerous advocates in the state.

During its meeting February 18, the OSBC decided to approach the state government for allocation of funds and land towards establishment of much-awaited Advocate Academy. The council will also urge the state government to provide Madhu Babu health insurance to advocates and enactment of State Advocates Protection Act.

Council members Dinesh Chandra Ray and Akhaya Kumar Pati also urged the members to 'halt' the Advocate Welfare Corpus Fund and funding to all Bar Associations for elections.

The council unanimously decided to stop Rs 100 stamps of Advocate Welfare Corpus Fund and funding to all Bar Associations for elections.

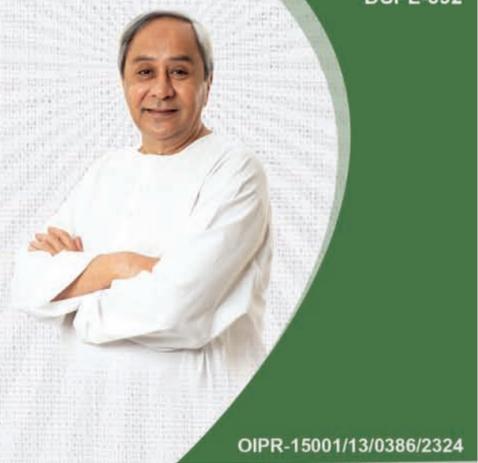
OSBC chairman Sitanshu Mohan Dwibedy expressed gratitude to the council members for these 'milestone initiatives' and called upon all the members for taking more such initiatives in future.

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Old guards remain in fray in Balasore

Ousted BJD leader Panigrahi joins BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 21: Four years after he was expelled from the BJD, Gopalpur MLA and former minister Pradeep Kumar Panigrahi Wednesday joined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha and state Assembly polls.

Immediately after joining the saffron party in the presence of its state chief Manmohan Samal, Panigrahi vowed to oust the BJD from power.

He also termed the government headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik as arrogant and autocratic, an allegation the ruling party denied.

Panigrahi, a critic of bureaucrat-turned-BJD leader VK



Pandian, was expelled from the ruling party in 2020 for being involved in anti-people activities.

The three-time lawmaker from Gopalpur in Ganjam district had earlier served as a higher education minister in the state gov-

ernment.

Samal welcomed Panigrahi to the BJP and said the former state minister would strengthen the party in Ganjam.

"The BJP will emerge stronger in Ganjam and neighbouring districts with his entry to the party," he said.

Senior BJD leader Ramesh Chandra Chayapatnaik claimed that Panigrahi joining the saffron camp will have no impact on the Ganjam district politics.

Panigrahi also said, "Development work across various sectors taken up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has infused faith in people and time is ripe for a change of government in Odisha to save democracy."

The Gopalpur MLA said that the chief minister had earlier got the support of the BJP and later snapped ties with the party in 2020.

Later in the day, BJD spokesperson Ipsita Sahoo claimed that the real face of the BJP has come to the fore with Panigrahi's induction to the party.

"He was expelled from the BJD for anti-people activities. He was involved in cheating job aspirants and was sent to jail," Sahoo said.

Panigrahi, however, rejected all the allegations made by the BJD spokesperson and said the charges were politically motivated.



party fails to find the right candidate.

In 2014, Rabindra Kumar Jena, an engineer by profession, was elected as MP from Balasore on a BJD ticket. However, in 2019 he lost to Sarangi by a margin of 13,000 votes. Despite the BJD emerging victorious in four of the seven Assembly segments, Jena could not capitalise on the situation. However, despite the setback, there is indication that the BJD may field him again, sources said.

Rumours are also flying that Jena may withdraw from the fray as his wife is expected to contest from the Basta Assembly constituency as a BJD candidate. Usually, the BJD does not nominate two members from the same family to contest elections. Hence, if Jena's wife contests, there is a possibility that the BJD will look for someone else to contest from Balasore.

There is also no clear picture on nomination of candidate by the Congress. In 2009, Srikanth Jena had won as a Congress candidate from this constituency and was appointed as a Union minister. However, he received only 2.78 lakh votes in 2014 elections and was pushed to third position. The situation worsened in 2019 when Congress candidate Nabajyoti Patnaik got only 1.80 lakh votes. In such circumstances, with the vote bank rapidly dwindling, the Congress is at a loss to find a good candidate.

coming polls.

In 2019, BJP's Pratap Sarangi was elected as the MP from this north Odisha constituency. Fondly addressed as 'Nana', he went on to become a minister in the Narendra Modi-led government. Sarangi is popular among the masses for his austerity and simple lifestyle. However, his absence in the constituency during the Covid-19 pandemic and inability to carry out development works led to a decline in his popularity, according to political analysts.

Earlier, there was speculation that the BJP might nominate Union Railways and Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw from Balasore. Now, however, it will not happen as Vaishnaw has filed his nomination for the Rajya Sabha.

In 2019, Sarangi got around 4,83,858 votes to emerge winner. Keeping in mind his popularity, it is expected that the BJP may field him again if the saffron

With no new faces emerging, the BJP, BJD and the Congress may nominate the same candidates for the Balasore Lok Sabha seat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Feb 21: With no new face in the race, candidates who have already contested from Balasore Lok Sabha constituency in 2019 are hopeful of getting tickets as 2024 elections draw near. The Balasore Lok Sabha segment comprises Balasore, Jaleswar, Bhograi, Basta, Remuna and Nilgiri Assembly segments. The neighbouring Badasahi Assembly segment in Mayurbhanj district also comes under the Balasore Lok Sabha seat. Rumours are rife as to who the BJD, the BJP and the Congress will field for the up-

4 UP men held for faking disability to beg

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, Feb 21: The Odisha Police Wednesday arrested four people, who are from Uttar Pradesh, on the charge of faking disability to beg on the streets of Berhampur town in Ganjam district, an officer said.

They impersonated themselves as hearing impaired and orthopedically handicapped to attract sympathy of the passers-by.

"All the accused persons deceived people and collected money by showing themselves with abnormal physical condition, though they are physically fit," Superintendent of Police Saravana Vivek M said.

Police seized ₹660 in cash, a notebook containing details of money collected and crutches seized from their possession.

The four people, who are in the



age group of 20-32, were in this profession for the last six months after they came from Uttar Pradesh, Saravana said.

Each of them earns around ₹1,000 per day by begging, said a police official after interrogating them. During patrolling at Kamapalli locality in Baidyanathpur area, the police found two of the four "disabled beggars" who did not seem so on a closer look.

Out of suspicion, the police de-

tained the two persons and on questioning, they found that the two were physically fit. The two others were then arrested from Tata Benz area.

They used to beg on the busy roads in the city in the daytime while spending the night on the roadside of National Highway-16 here. "Further investigation is going on regarding their past and whether they were involved in any robbery or burglary cases," said the SP.

ESMA invoked to ban stir by Fire personnel

Bhubaneswar: The state government Wednesday invoked the ESMA to ban the strike by Fire personnel in Odisha. The Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) is an Act of Parliament of India which was established to ensure the delivery of certain services, which if obstructed would affect the normal life of the people. The notification by the state government said, "Whereas the state government is satisfied that in the interest of the public, it is necessary to prohibit strikes of the firemen and their supervisory ranks as the Fire services is vitally necessary for the life of the community." The state government further said that, the order shall remain in force for a period of six months with effect from the date of issue. Earlier, the Fire service personnel of Odisha had threatened to go on mass leave to press their demands from February 21. Their two major demands included salaries, allowances and cadres at par with the Odisha Police and registration of their association which was formed in 1980.

VIMSAR super-specialty block to open by April

PNN & AGENCIES

Sambalpur, Feb 21: The new six-storey super-specialty block of Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla, being built with a cost of ₹150 crore, is slated to be operational by April, officials said.

According to VIMSAR director Bhabagrahi Rath, construction is nearing completion, with ongoing efforts focused on patient care-related infrastructure and furnishings.

He expressed hope that the work would be completed by



March, facilitating the opening of the building by April.

Originally scheduled for completion in August last year, the project faced delays due to the nationwide lockdown imposed in response to the Covid-19 pan-

demic.

Upon completion, the building will house five new departments -- gastroenterology, endocrinology, clinical hematology, plastic surgery, and pediatric surgery -- in addition to four

existing departments -- nephrology, urology, neurology, and neurosurgery.

The facility will feature 60 ICU beds and 180 general beds, with funding provided under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

While the Union government is contributing 70 per cent of the project's cost, the remaining 30 per cent will be covered by the state government.

Furthermore, ₹70 crore will be allocated for medical equipment. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Bhubaneswar will serve as the project's nodal centre.

World's biggest snake species found in Amazon rainforest

THE NEW SPECIES OF GREEN ANACONDA WAS FOUND DURING FILMING FOR NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S DISNEY+ SERIES POLE TO POLE WITH WILL SMITH



AGENCIES

Dublin, Feb 21: Scientists have discovered a previously undocumented species of giant anaconda in the Amazon which they say can grow up to 7.5m and weighing close to 500kg, making it the largest and heaviest snake yet known in the world, the Independent reported.

Until now, four species of anacondas were known, with the largest one -- the green anaconda -- inhabiting tropical parts of South America such as the basins of the Amazon, Orinoco, and Esequibo rivers, as well as some smaller watersheds.

These anacondas, found in the rivers and wetlands of South America, are well known for their lightning speed and ability to squeeze the life out of prey by coiling around, asphyxiating them, and swallowing them whole.

A newly published decades-long study has now found that the green anaconda is genetically two different species.

Researchers working with the indigenous Waorani people captured and studied several specimens of the newly named north-

ern green anaconda (*Eunectes akayima*) in the Bamen region of Baihuari Waorani Territory in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

The species was found during filming for National Geographic's Disney+ series Pole to Pole with Will Smith.

Scientists documented several anacondas belonging to the new species 'lurking in the shallows, lying in wait for prey' as they paddled canoes down the Amazonian river system.

"The size of these magnificent creatures was incredible -- one female anaconda we encountered measured an astounding 6.3 metres long," study co-author Bryan Fry from the University of Queensland said in a statement. "There are anecdotal reports from the Waorani people of other anacondas in the area measuring more than 7.5 metres long and weighing around 500 kilograms," Fry said.

The new species, described in the journal 'Diversity', diverged from the previously known southern green anaconda about 10 million years ago, differing genetically from it by 5.5 per cent. To put this in perspective, hu-

mans differ from chimpanzees by only about 2 per cent.

The finding, according to researchers, is pivotal for the conservation of anacondas, which are apex predators and vital to maintaining balance in their ecosystems.

A healthy anaconda population means their ecosystems are vibrant with ample food resources and clean water, while declining numbers of the snake may indicate environmental distress, scientists say.

"So knowing which anaconda species exist, and monitoring their numbers is crucial," researchers write in The Conversation.

The anacondas and their habitats are under increasing threat from land fragmentation caused by industrialised agriculture, forest fire, drought, climate change, as well as heavy metal pollution linked to spills from oil extraction activities.

"Of particular urgency is research into how petrochemicals from oil spills are affecting the fertility and reproductive biology of these rare snakes," Fry said.



THEATRE FEST: Artists of Alternative Rhythm Theatre staging a play 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' during 'Jan Bharat Rang Mahotsav' on the premises of Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in Dhenkanal, Wednesday, organised to mark the 25th anniversary of Bharat Rang Mahotsav, the international theatre festival of National School of Drama (NSD) OP PHOTO

FOCUS NATION

STRAINED FEDERAL TIES



Centre-state relations and the complex issue of tax devolution have been turned into an ugly tug-of-war rather than a give-and-take that pushes the agenda for the betterment of states and the nation

A series of strains test the nation today. Some strains bring protests on the streets, like the farmers' agitations earlier and underway now. But never before have elected Chief Ministers of states taken the route of street protests to make their point. The extreme actions point to a weakening of the internal fibre that makes the country, and is at odds with the narrative of a resurgent India playing out on the world stage. How can internal imbalance lead to external resilience? In this frame, of particular significance are the strains between the Central government and the Opposition-ruled state governments.

crore due to GST implementation and a little less than Rs. 63,000 crore on tax devolution. Karnataka and Kerala, supported by Tamil Nadu, have said that their protest is also to safeguard the constitutional rights of all states and secure their dues.

Centre-state relations and the complex issue of tax devolution have thus been turned into an ugly tug-of-war rather than a give-and-take that pushes the agenda for the betterment of the states and the nation. But for the present, whatever the state of the discourse, the states cannot be allowed to flounder to the extent that their elected heads have to stage protest marches in Delhi. This is a situation that is close to breakdown and serves no good.

A study of fiscal parameters of states by the RBI identified Bihar, Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab and Rajasthan as highly stressed due to their high debt levels and levels of fiscal deficit. High debt implies that the state spends a significant share of its revenues servicing debt. For instance, many states spend about 10% or more of revenue receipts on interest payments. Bengal and Punjab spend more than 20% on interest payments. Why is this so and how can this be addressed in the medium and long term is a matter of debate and dialogue and should not

be reduced to a slanging match. Kerala, for example, has run up a mountain of IOUs. The LDF government has blamed the Centre for the situation and alleges that it is being pushed into the worst financial crisis in the state's history. Flagging steps like the Central government reduction of Kerala's borrowing limit with retrospective effect from 2021-22, the LDF government has said the state suffered a cumulative loss of Rs 107513.09 cr for the period between 2016 and 2023. Comparing allocations, for example, it has been pointed out that Kerala was getting 3.8% of the divisible pool at the time of the 10th Finance Commission which has now been reduced to 1.9%. Some revenue deficit grants have also been stopped.

India works with the principles of cooperative federalism under which expenditure made and taxes raised are both responsibilities shared between states and the Centre. Ideally, these responsibilities are supposed to be shared in a fine balance between the Centre and states. However, in reality, while the Centre has a larger share of revenue, states have a bigger share of responsibility, which includes social service, economic and welfare schemes and projects. In India, states incur over 60% of total general govern-

ment expenditure. This 'Vertical Imbalance,' as it is termed, is corrected through the transfer of funds from the Centre to states. It is this that the states, especially Opposition ruled Southern states, are irate about – the transfer and distribution of funds which they see as skewed.

At the time of the pandemic, former Kerala Finance Minister Dr. Thomas Isaac had said that the synchronisation of the responses of the Centre, states and local governments was necessary and inevitable if the pandemic was to be contained. "However, never have the fiscal relations between the Centre and States been so strained as is the case today. The rhetoric of co-operative federalism is being transformed into coercive federalism hampering the national response to COVID-19...." he had said then. He also warned that any squeeze on states' development expenditure, which accounts for 60% of the combined government expenditure, in a period of slump, would have a disastrous socio-economic impact.

Important issues of budgetary allocations, fiscal prudence, debt management and revenue expenditure must be discussed and debated, and guided by pre-agreed frameworks. This is how India has worked. A non-hostile and accommodative approach can help nudge the Centre and states to a more balanced and sustainable way of running their finances. There is a lot that the nation can learn from Kerala and its superior development indicators, and indeed from all the Southern states. Similarly, there is a lot that the states need to help fix in terms of reducing deficits. In the end, balancing budgets is important but a precondition to overall national development is managing federal relations.

The writer is the Managing Editor of The Billion Press.

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Lekha Rattanani

BALANCING BUDGETS IS IMPORTANT BUT A PRECONDITION TO OVERALL NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS MANAGING FEDERAL RELATIONS

In February, apart from the farmers, two CMs with their Cabinets and MPs have staged demonstrations in Delhi to protest what they see as discrimination in the distribution of federal funds. Kerala has taken its demand for funds to the Supreme Court and to New Delhi's doorstep for a protest. Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan, who says he has been forced to take this unprecedented step, led Cabinet ministers, legislators and MPs from his LDF government to protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi against "financial injustice by the Centre and a breakdown in the federal structure of the country." He called 8 February, the day of the LDF protest, a "red letter" day in the history of India. On the same day, the SC asked the Central government to file its response to Kerala's interim application seeking an urgent release of funds. The Centre has argued that it cannot be blamed for Kerala's "financial mismanagement."

A day before the Kerala CM's protest, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah staged a protest surrounded by his Cabinet and MLAs to draw attention to an unfair allocation of funds and injustice in tax devolution. Karnataka has argued that while it ranks second in GST collections, it has lost nearly Rs 60,000

The Plastic Crisis

As the United Nations enters the final stretch of negotiations for a new treaty to end plastic pollution, governments must work to ensure that the agreement not only reduces plastic production, but also strengthens local initiatives to remove and recycle existing plastic waste.

Consider the Juan Diaz River, which runs through my hometown of Panama City. Tons of plastic – bottles and other detritus – bob in the river's currents, owing to poor waste management. Faced with this problem, Marea Verde ("Green Tide"), a non-profit organization that I co-founded, has installed a trash-trapping water wheel – dubbed the "Wanda" device – that now collects much of this waste before it reaches the ocean.

Local initiatives like ours are necessary to achieve global climate goals. This is especially true for eliminating plastic pollution, which is largely driven by local consumption decisions. The new UN treaty, in my view, should thus balance top-down efforts to reduce plastic production and ban the use of toxic chemicals in these products with support for on-the-ground efforts to recycle, reuse, or transform in a sustainable way the billions of tons of plastic already clogging the world's waterways and harming the environment. Otherwise, the ocean will contain more plastics than fish by 2050, and new diseases caused by microplastics – which have already been detected in human blood – could become commonplace.

So far, stakeholders are split on how best to proceed. During the latest round of treaty negotiations, held in Nairobi last November, the plastics industry and some oil- and petrochemical-exporting countries called for more emphasis on recycling and reuse, while environmental campaigners and other governments advocated curbs on production. To reach a consensus by late 2024, the two sides must be brought into alignment and agree on an integrated approach that links global goals to local action.

Working in government and nonprofits, I have experienced first-hand how a disconnect between international plans and on-the-ground realities can thwart progress and breed cynicism. That is why we at Marea Verde adapt ideas that have been successfully implemented elsewhere – from the United States to Nigeria and Australia – to our context and culture.

For example, our Wanda device is based on Clearwater Mills' trash wheels, a clean-energy technology that debuted in the US but is customised for a tropical ecosystem. Over the past year, Wanda has collected more than 130 tons of trash from the Juan Diaz River – a more effective intervention than fishing plastics from the sea or beach cleanups. Replicating this model worldwide could dramatically reduce land-sourced debris, which accounts for 80% of ocean plastic pollution.

Fortunately, many other organisations are focusing on river cleanup to prevent new plastic waste from entering the ocean. Eight of these groups – including Marea Verde – are participating in the Clean Currents Coalition, a network of projects that are piloting innovative waste-removal technologies in river communities around the world. Coalition members can share knowledge and work collaboratively while also encouraging and facilitating effective on-the-ground action.

The plastic crisis is a result of human activities, and solving it calls for behavioural change, which can be accomplished only through initiatives that engage local communities. For example, Marea Verde organises and empowers residents in areas without recycling facilities by going door to door to collect plastic waste. As a result, many people have become aware of their ability to improve their surroundings, leading them to participate in neighbourhood cleanups, reclaim green spaces, and lobby for better waste management.

Efforts to counter plastic pollution must be equal to the size of the problem. To that end, the new UN treaty should include severe curbs on plastic production to choke off output and give clean-up efforts a fighting chance. But it must also support the local groups at the forefront of tackling the plastic problem. These groups' innovative strategies, tools, and data-gathering practices can serve as a model for the global community. This is not an either/or decision: both international regulations and local action are needed. The latter is already underway and is making a difference, one community and one river at a time.

The writer, a former environment minister of Panama, is Co-Founder and Chairwoman of the Board of Marea Verde, a Panama-based nonprofit addressing global plastic pollution through local action.

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Mirei Endara de Heras

Efforts to counter plastic pollution must be equal to the size of the problem. To that end, the new UN treaty should include severe curbs on plastic production to choke off output and give clean-up efforts a fighting chance

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Skill ecosystem & GDP growth

The skill ecosystem plays a crucial role in contributing to GDP growth by enhancing the productivity and efficiency of the workforce, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship and enabling the development of key sectors of the economy. Data from employment surveys and reports provide insights into the employment status of skilled workers in India. While the exact number of skilled workers employed in various sectors may vary, these reports highlight the demand for skilled manpower across industries and the need for continued skill development efforts.

Skill development initiatives equip individuals with knowledge, technical expertise, and soft skills needed to perform their jobs effectively. A skilled workforce is more productive, efficient, and adaptable to changing market demands, leading to increased output. A well-trained and skilled workforce enhances the competitiveness of industries by enabling them to adopt advanced technologies, improve processes and deliver superior products and services. This, in turn, boosts the performance of industries and contributes to overall economic growth. Skill development fosters innovation

and entrepreneurship by empowering individuals to identify opportunities, develop new ideas, and create value. Skilled entrepreneurs drive the growth of startups and small businesses, leading to job creation and increased investment.

Targeted skill development programmes tailored to the needs of specific sectors contribute to their growth. By developing skills relevant to key industries such as manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, agriculture, and tourism, the skill ecosystem facilitates the development of these sectors, driving GDP growth. The benefits of skill development programmes extend beyond individual workers and industries, creating a multiplier effect. A skilled workforce stimulates demand for goods and services, attracts investment, and drives economic diversification, leading to broader-based and inclusive growth.

Here are some examples illustrating how the skill ecosystem has contributed to GDP growth in India:

India's IT and ITES sectors have experienced rapid growth due to a skilled workforce trained in software development, data analytics, cybersecurity, and digital marketing. Skilled professionals in these sectors have en-

abled India to become a global hub for IT outsourcing, software development, and business process outsourcing (BPO), contributing significantly to GDP growth. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and industry bodies like NASSCOM have played a crucial role in providing training and certification programmes to develop a skilled IT workforce.

Skill development initiatives focused on manufacturing have helped improve the productivity and competitiveness of India's manufacturing sector. Programmes such as the 'Skill India Mission' have trained millions of individuals in areas like industrial automation, machining, welding, and quality control, leading to higher output and export growth in manufacturing. Initiatives like the 'Make in India' campaign aim to leverage the skilled workforce to attract investment, promote domestic manufacturing, and boost GDP growth.

Skilled healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, technicians, and paramedics, play a crucial role in delivering quality healthcare services and improving health outcomes. The healthcare sector's contribution to GDP growth has been significant, with increased invest-

ment in hospitals, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare technology.

Likewise, India's tourism and hospitality sector have benefited from a skilled workforce trained in hospitality management, culinary arts, tour guiding, and customer service. The skilled workforce has contributed to the growth of tourism receipts, foreign exchange earnings, and employment generation. Skill development programmes focused on entrepreneurship have empowered aspiring entrepreneurs with knowledge, skills, and resources to start and grow their businesses. The growth of startups and small businesses has contributed to GDP growth by generating employment, promoting innovation-driven economic activity and attracting investment.

These examples demonstrate how the skill ecosystem in India has positively influenced GDP growth by developing skilled workforce, fostering innovation, and driving economic activity across various sectors. Continued investment in skill development is essential to sustain economic growth and enhance India's global competitiveness.

The writer is a senior human resource professional.



Debabrata Dash

CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SUSTAIN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENHANCE INDIA'S GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Landmark decision

Sir, In a landmark decision that reverberates through the corridors of power, the Supreme Court of India has dismantled the electoral bonds scheme, branding it "unconstitutional," "arbitrary," and violative of Article 14. With an eloquence rooted in democratic principles, the court articulated that the scheme's secretive nature undermines the essence of transparency essential for informed voter participation. While the government championed electoral bonds as a bulwark against black money, the court resolutely rebuffed this narrative, asserting that the scheme fails to pass the litmus test of curbing corruption. However, as the gavel falls on electoral bonds, the path forward beckons with possibilities. Embracing transparency as the cornerstone of electoral integrity, policymakers must heed the clarion call for reform. Electronic transfers for modest contributions and stringent disclosure mechanisms emerge as salient alternatives, heralding a future where political financing aligns with democratic ideals. Reforms should include stringent disclosure requirements for all political contributions, regardless of size, ensuring that citizens have access to information about the sources of campaign funding. Additionally, measures should be implemented to regulate corporate donations and prevent undue influence in politics. By enacting reforms, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable democracy, where the voices of all citizens are heard and respected.

Sagar Gambhir, LUDHIANA

Trade talks

Sir, India faces substantial challenges as it approaches the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi, set for 26 to 29 February. The country's priorities encompass securing a permanent solution for public stockholding in food security, resisting e-commerce rule negotiations, and opposing the linkage of trade with non-trade issues like labour and environment. Emphasising multilateralism, inclusiveness, and development principles, India aims to strike a balance between defensive and offensive interests at the WTO. To tackle these challenges strategically, India can forge alliances with key groups such as the G33, African Group, and BRICS. By fostering a unified voice, India can bolster its bargaining power and facilitate compromise. Offering concessions, such as flexibility in agriculture policies or limited engagement in e-commerce discussions may prove instrumental in reaching agreements.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Letters

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
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

WISDOM CORNER

Every moment there is creation, every moment destruction. There is no absolute creation, no absolute destruction. Both are movement, and that is eternal.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

We fear to know the fearsome and unsavory aspects of ourselves, but we fear even more to know the godlike in ourselves.

ABRAHAM MASLOW

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.

PABLO PICASSO

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1932: The Purple Heart, a U.S. military decoration originally instituted by George Washington in 1782 to honour bravery in battle, was revived as an award for those wounded or killed in action against an enemy.
- 1942: Three members of the White Rose, an anti-Nazi group that advocated nonviolent resistance, were beheaded in Munich.
- 1948: Czechoslovakia becomes a communist state following a coup d'etat. The country became a parliamentary republic following the non-violent "Velvet Revolution" in 1989 and was split into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in 1993.
- 1980: During the 1980 Winter Olympics, against the backdrop of the Cold War, the U.S. ice hockey team defeated the favoured Soviet team in one of the greatest upsets in the history of the Olympic Games.
- 1986: The People Power Revolution begins in the Philippines. The non-violent campaign resulted in the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos and the restoration of the country's democracy.



17 SEATS FOR CONGRESS

LS polls: SP, Cong announce tie-up



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 21: INDIA bloc partners SP and Congress Wednesday announced a tie-up for the Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, with UP's main opposition party leaving 17 out of the 80 seats in the state for the ally.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party will contest on a single seat, Khajuraho, and support the Congress in the remaining constituencies in the state.

Among the 17 seats on which the Congress will contest in UP included Raebareilly and Amethi, once considered pocket boroughs of the party, and Varanasi which is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency.

The seat-sharing announcement was made at a joint press conference here by SP state chief Naresh Uttam Patel, SP national general secretary Rajendra Chaudhary, Congress state president Ajay Rai and AICC in-charge of UP Avinash Pande.

Pande said the Congress will contest on 17 seats, while on the

rest of the 63 seats in the state, the SP and other alliance partners will contest.

SP state president Patel said, "The Congress will contest on 17 seats in UP and on the rest of the 63 seats, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav will decide candidates."

Apart from Raebareilly, Amethi and Varanasi, the other seats on which the Congress will be contesting included Kanpur City, Fatehpur Sekri, Basgaon, Saharanpur, Prayagraj, Maharajganj, Amroha, Jhansi, Bulandshahr, Ghaziabad, Mathura, Sitapur, Barabanki and Deoria, Patel said.

Sonia Gandhi is presently MP of Raebareilly while Rahul Gandhi lost his Amethi seat to BJP leader Smriti Irani in 2019 polls.

The SP will contest on Khajuraho seat in Madhya Pradesh, which has 29 Lok Sabha seats, and support the Congress on the rest of the seats, Patel said.

He said senior leaders of both the parties will chalk out future programmes of the alliance.

Month after consecration, all roads still lead to Ayodhya

MORE THAN 25 LAKH DEVOTEES VISITED THE TEMPLE IN THE FIRST 10 DAYS AFTER THE CONSECRATION CEREMONY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya (UP), Feb 21: 12 kilometres from Ayodhya's Ram temple, sleeper buses that have ferried people from far-off places are lined up along the road to enter the huge parking lots. A month after the consecration at the new temple, the enthusiasm for a 'darshan' remains unabated.

In their unique traditional outfits, devotees from all parts of the country gather at holding areas from where they move towards the temple either in electric buses or e-rickshaws.

These devotees along with those coming from nearby places confluence on Ram Path that leads towards the grand temple. Barred from any traffic, one can only see devotees walking towards the temple on the left side of the road and those returning on the other side.

Festivities in Ayodhya are taking place with full vigour a month after the mega consecration ceremony, with lakhs of devotees

reaching the holy city to have darshan of Lord Ram's idol in the newly constructed temple.

One gets a sense of bustle of faith at Ram temple, the heart of Ayodhya, from more than 10 km away where buses ferrying devotees from far off places line up along the roads.

According to the officials of Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, more than 25 lakh devotees visited the temple in the first 10 days after the consecration ceremony.

"We receive anywhere between one to two lakh devotees every day in February. Going by the estimated number of devotees who have visited the temple till date is around 50-60 lakh," said Prakash Gupta, office in-charge of the temple trust.

On the way towards the temple, some devotees hail 'Jai Sri Ram' while others chant couplets from the Ramayan as they walk towards the temple. Most walk bare feet with their group. Along the road are small shops selling sweet



meats and other items to be offered inside the temple.

Locals, especially teenagers, stand along the road carrying small tumblers filled with colour. On getting a nod from the devotees they dip three fingers in a yellow coloured liquid before applying it on the foreheads of the pilgrims.

They then dip an inch-long stencil with 'Ram' written in Hindi in a red coloured liquid before placing the stencil in the

middle of the marking made by the fingers before charging for it.

With the name of Lord Ram marked on their forehead, devotees continue the walk towards the temple. On looking from above, the rampart appears to be a confluence of India with people in different traditional clothes that give away the state or region they belong to.

On Tuesday, a group from Maharashtra, with women in sarees tied in unique Nauvaree

style walking with men donning a white shirt over a white lungi paired with a white Gandhi cap, walked behind a group from Rajasthan. The large bright coloured turbans donned by the men and the bright coloured sarees of the women from the desert state contrasted with a group from Uttarakhand in which the men wore a pahadi topi and women walked in their long skirts.

Apart from local politicians from across party lines, Bollywood stars have also reached the temple for darshan. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal accompanied with his counterpart in Punjab Bhagwat Mann visited the temple with their families.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath along with the members of UP Vidhan Sabha visited the temple February 11. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami also visited the temple with his cabinet Tuesday.

Will ban politicians' entry in villages: Tikait

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Meerut Baghat (UP), Feb 21: Bhartiya Kisan Union National Spokesperson Rakesh Tikait Wednesday said that if the government does not allow farmers to go to Delhi, the farmers also will not let them enter their villages during elections.

Farmers in Meerut Wednesday took out a tractor march to reach the collectorate to press for their demand for minimum support price for crops and withdrawal of criminal cases against some

farmers who took part in the 2020-21 farmers' protest at Delhi borders.

Authorities set up barriers at several places to prevent farmers from reaching the collector's office, but they were removed by the agitators.

"Putting nails on the road is not justified. If they put nails on our way, we will also do the same in our villages. We also have to do barricading of our villages. If they are not allowing us to reach Delhi, we will not let them enter our villages," Tikait

told reporters when asked about obstacles, such as iron nails, being put on roads to prevent farmers from reaching Delhi.

Tikait attacked the Centre saying the BJP-led government is only for industrialists. "If it were a farmers' government, a law guaranteeing MSP would have come into force," he said.

He said Thursday that a meeting of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) would be held to deliberate on the future course of the farmers' agitation.

Mysore Paints to provide indelible ink for LS polls

One of the earliest achievements of CSIR, the ink was designed to counter the challenge of fraudulent voting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: The Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd has been tasked with providing over 26 lakh vials of indelible ink, which leaves a deep purple mark on a voter's left forefinger, to various states for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The Karnataka government undertaking has been manufacturing the ink since 1962, solely for the Election Commission.

The ink is applied on the left forefinger of a person as proof that she or she has cast the vote.

"Our total order is around 26.5 lakh vials of ink. As of date, around 60 per cent of the total material has been dispatched to the states," the

managing director of Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd, K Mohammed Irfan told PTI.

He said around 24 states have been provided with their share of the ink. The remaining order, he said, would be completed around March 20. A 10 ml vial of ink can be used to mark the fingers of around 700 people. A polling station has around 1,200 voters. Over 12 lakh polling stations would be set up for the polls expected to be held in April-May.

The ink was developed by the Council of Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory based in Delhi. Indelible ink mark is normally expected to last for three days when applied on the skin but lasts for a few weeks on the fin-

ger nail till the nail grows out.

The Covid-19 outbreak was perhaps the only time the Election Commission had allowed the use of the ink for non-electoral purposes. Some states had used it to identify people under home quarantine during the pandemic.

Earlier, the ink was supplied in glass vials but now plastic is used, Irfan said.

According to the Election Commission, as in January India has a voter base of nearly 97 crore out of which a maximum of over 15.30 crore are in Uttar Pradesh and a minimum of 57,500 are in Lakshadweep. The highest order was from UP and the lowest from Lakshadweep, Irfan informed.

According to the Conduct of

Election Rules, in the case where the elector has his left forefinger missing, the ink will be applied on any other finger on his left hand.

If all the fingers of his left hand are missing, then the ink will be applied on a voter's forefinger or any other finger of his right hand.

In the case where all his fingers of both the hands are missing be construed as a reference to such extremity of his left or right arm as he possesses, the rule states.

The research work on formulating indelible ink was initiated in the 1950s by scientists in the erstwhile Chemical Division and later patented by the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), New Delhi.

First-of-its-kind board game features Vijayanagara Empire

In little over two weeks, the game has already sold 1,020 copies and has piqued the curiosity of India's popular historians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 21: It is that time of the year when Karnataka goes all out to celebrate Vijayanagara Empire (Hampi Utsav 2024 was held between February 2 and 5). But this year's biggest tribute to the medieval Hindu empire, which at its peak ruled most of the south, stretching its boundaries to Odisha and Maharashtra even, comes from the far-off America.

A mathematics professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison, Saverio E Spagnolie, has designed a board game based on the early strategic growth of the empire, along with three other designers - Mathieu Johnson, Cory Graham and Aman Mathews - and developer Joe Dewhurst.

"Vijayanagara: The Deccan Empires of Medieval India, 1290-1398," published by GMT Games, is the first game in its new Irregular Conflicts Series, which explore complex interactions than counter insurgencies or COIN games.

Spagnolie said the team got together to participate in the first Consim Game Jam, a contest for designers to produce a game prototype in three days.

"I began to sift through periods with the potential for being modelled.



When I hit upon the political developments in the 14th century, it jumped off the page with its epic, sweeping scope - the rise and fall of powerful kingdoms, their beneficial and detrimental interactions, large personalities," said Spagnolie in an email interaction with the PTI.

When they won the contest, they were approached by GMT to publish a refined version of the game, he said.

"Little did we know at the time that the polishing would take about three years of hard work," added Spagnolie.

Previously, GMT has published two games inspired by the history of India. In 2008, it released 'Chandragupta', designed by Stephen R Welch, as part of their Great Battles of History series of games on ancient warfare. And in 2017, it released 'Gandhi The Decolonisation of British India', designed by Bruce Mansfield, considered non-conventional among the gamers

because COIN games rely on violent war unleashed in the annals of the history while Gandhi employed a non-violent method to win his war.

In fact, Spagnolie said his curiosity about India was sparked by Mansfield's 'Gandhi'.

"Historical board games transport players to distant places and times. In 2020, I wanted to spend more time outside of my apartment and a different time sounded pretty good too," added Spagnolie.

Vijayanagara, states the publisher note, lets players take on the roles of Delhi Sultanate, the Bahmani Kingdom and the Vijayanagara Empire - and rally local amirs and rajahs to their cause, construct temples, forts and qasbahs - as they battle for supremacy over the Deccan Plateau.

In little over two weeks, the game has already sold 1,020 copies and has piqued the curiosity of India's popular historians.

On February 6, the very next day after Spagnolie announced the launch of the game on X (formerly Twitter), Anirudh Kaniseti, the author of 'Lords of the Deccan New History of Medieval South India', posted on X "How delightful to see boardgame about my beloved medieval India - love that cheeky reference to 'Lords of the Deccan' and to @UnamPillai's (Manu S Pillai) 'Rebel Sultans' in the game cards. Many congrats to @SaverioIV and team, and I can't wait to play this!" Spagnolie acknowledged that the research done by historians played an important role in the design of the game, considering he and his team had never been to India.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS AT CENTRAL HOSPITAL

Notice No. ECoR/BBS/MD/CH/BBS/Case To Case Consultants Engagement-2024-25/121, Dt. 14.02.2024

ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS AT CENTRAL HOSPITAL PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ON CASE TO CASE BASIS. IN THIS CONTEXT CONSULTANTS WILL BE ENGAGED IN THE FOLLOWING DISCIPLINES.

- 01) MD (Pediatric) with exposure to new born care (Specialist), Qualification: MD (Pediatric) or equivalent with exposure to new born care,
- 02) Orthopaedic Surgery (Specialist), Qualification: MS Orthopaedic,
- 03) Onco Surgery (Super Specialist), Qualification: MCh or equivalent in surgical Oncology, 04) Plastic Surgery (Super Specialist), Qualification: MCh plastic surgery, 05) GI Surgery (Super Specialist), Qualification: MCh or Equivalent in surgical Gastroenterology, 06) Urology (Super Specialist), Qualification: MCh Urology, 07) Neurology (Super Specialist), Qualification: DM Neurology, 08) Cardiology (Super Specialist), Qualification: DM Cardiology, 09) Gastroenterology (Super Specialist), Qualification: DM Gastroenterology, 10) Nephrology (Super Specialist), Qualification: DM Nephrology, 11) MD (Obst & Gynec) with Surgical Endoscopic experience (Specialist), Qualification: MD (Obst & Gynec) with Surgical Endoscopic experience, 12) Ophthalmology (Specialist), Qualification: MS Ophthalmology, 13) Anesthesiology (Specialist), Qualification: MD Anesthesiology, 14) Chest and TB Physician (Specialist), Qualification: MD Chest and TB, 15) Psychiatrist (Specialist), Qualification: MD Psychiatry, 16) Dermatologist (Specialist), Qualification: MD Dermatologist, 17) Medical Oncologist (Specialist), Qualification: MD Oncology/DNB.

For Educational Qualification/Eligibility, Age, Remuneration, Application format & other terms and conditions, please visit website: www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in. The interested Doctors can submit their BIODATA along with their professional work experience and contact details addressed to Medical Director, Central Hospital, East Coast Railway, Macheswar, Bhubaneswar-751017 within 15 days of the publication of the advertisement.

PR-1103/O/23-24 Medical Director Central Hospital, Macheswar

EAST COAST RAILWAY

'E' PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS

Tender Notice No. PCMM/EP/2023-24/105 Dated: 15.02.2024

SL NO. 01: TENDER NO. 03242002, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: BRAKE BEAM COMPLETE. QUANTITY: 494 Nos.

SL NO. 02: TENDER NO. 03243919, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: PRESSURE GAUGES 80X10MM. QUANTITY: 105 Set.

SL NO. 03: TENDER NO. 06235405, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: SPECIAL PSC SLEEPERS. QUANTITY: As per TS.

SL NO. 04: TENDER NO. 06235221, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: SPECIAL PSC SLEEPERS. QUANTITY: As per TS.

SL NO. 05: TENDER NO. 02241658, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: SUSPENSION TUBE WITH SET OF COMPONENTS. QUANTITY: As per TS.

SL NO. 06: TENDER NO. 04231098, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: SELF PRIMING MONOBLOCK PUMP ASSEMBLY. QUANTITY: 411 Nos.

SL NO. 07: TENDER NO. 04235148, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: TRACTION POWER TRANSFORMER. QUANTITY: 03 Nos.

SL NO. 08: TENDER NO. 04235141, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: 130 SQMM STRANDED CADMIUM COPPER WIRE. QUANTITY: As per TS.

SL NO. 09: TENDER NO. 07241106, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: BED SHEET MILL-MADE WHITE BLEACHED. QUANTITY: As per TS.

SL NO. 10: TENDER NO. 02241332, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: SET OF O/H RUBBER KIT. QUANTITY: As per TS.

SL NO. 11: TENDER NO. 06235581, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: WIDER PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS. QUANTITY: As per TS.

SL NO. 12: TENDER NO. 03243867, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: POLY CARBONATE GLASS UNO. QUANTITY: 1399 Nos.

Tender Opening Date: 14.03.2024 (for SL No. 1), 21.03.2024 (for SL No. 2), 26.02.2024 (for SL No. 3), 29.02.2024 (for SL No. 4), 18.03.2024 (for SL No. 5, 6, 7 & 10), 11.03.2024 (for SL No. 8 & 11), 04.03.2024 (for SL No. 9) and 02.04.2024 (for SL No. 12).

Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and related tender conditions, please visit website: www.ireps.gov.in and www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in.

Principal Chief Materials Manager/ PR-1108/O/23-24 Bhubaneswar

UCO BANK ZONAL OFFICE: C-2, Ashok Nagar, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar, PIN-751009, Ph.: 0674-2620423

POSSESSION NOTICE

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the UCO Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the borrowers, co-borrowers & guarantors to repay the amount as mentioned below within 60 days from the date of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, co-borrowers & guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property/ies described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned below. The borrowers, co-borrowers & guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the UCO Bank for the amount plus interest plus expenses- thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.

BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Demand / Possession Notice Date	Description of the Immovable Property/ies
PAIKTIGIRIA BRANCH / Borrower: Mrs. Saudamini Devi, W/o- Kusuma Prasad Mishra, At: Qtr. No.: M-II-15, Housing Board Colony, Gurujanga, PO: Gurujanga, Dist.: Khurda, PIN-752057.	₹ 5,66,214.00 as on 12.10.2023 (inclusive interest up to 31.03.2016) + further interest & other charges thereon	13.10.2023 / 16.02.2024	The immovable property which is mortgaged to the UCO Bank, Paiktigiria Branch belong to owner Smt. Saudamini Devi, W/o- Kusuma Prasad Mishra, bearing Khata No.: 645, Plot No.: 894, Area: 1925 sqft., House No.: M-II-15, Deed No. 537, Housing Board Colony, Gurujanga, Bounded by- North: Govt. Road, East: Road, South: Road, West: House No. M-II-16.
PAIKTIGIRIA BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Sanjay Kumar Dora, S/o- Praphulla Kumar Dora, At: Sriramnagar, Mukundaprasad, PO: PN College, Dist.: Khurda, PIN-752057.	₹ 30,30,845.05 as on 31.08.2023 (inclusive interest up to 31.08.2023) + further interest & other charges thereon	13.10.2023 / 16.02.2024	The Immovable property which is mortgaged to the UCO Bank, Paiktigiria Branch belong to owner Shri Sanjay Kumar Dora, S/o- Praphulla Kumar Dora, bearing Khata No.: 526/2387, Plot No.: 178/3412/4684, Area: Ac. 0.054dec., Mouza: Mukundaprasad, PS: Khurda, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha-752057, Bounded by- North: Ashok Kumar Dora, East: Plot No. 180, South: Plot No. 179, West: Road.
CHAMPESWAR BRANCH / Borrower: Late Arabinda Nayak/ Legal Heir & Guarantor of deceased Borrower Arabinda Nayak: Smt. Sarojini Nayak, W/o- Late Arabinda Nayak, At: Hatiapalli, PO: Paikabarabati, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754032	₹ 5,38,823.45 as on 30.09.2023 (inclusive interest up to 31.12.2012) + further interest & other charges thereon	05.10.2023 / 20.02.2024	All that residential Land with Building thereon situated at Khata No.: 77, Plot No.: 294 and 295, admeasuring Area: Ac. 0.110dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Hatiapalli, Tahasil/PS: Narasinghpur, Dist.: Cuttack, Bounded by- North: Property of Ananda Padhi, South: Property of Prasan Nayak, East: Property of Pabitra Bhuyan, West: Road.
CHAMPESWAR BRANCH / Borrower: Shri Bulu Samal, S/o- Indramani Samal / Guarantor: Shri Chitrasen Samal, S/o- Indramani Samal, Both are At: Muraripur, PO: Ekadal, PS: Kanpur, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754037	₹ 17,49,049.82 as on 05.09.2023 (inclusive interest up to 31.08.2023) + further interest & other charges thereon	27.09.2023 / 20.02.2024	All that residential Land with Building thereon situated at Plot No.: 843/1010, Khata No.: 164/107, Mouza: Kamaladeipur, P.S.: Narasinghpur, Tahasil: Narasinghpur, Dist.: Cuttack, admeasuring Area: Ac. 0.230dec., in the name of Bulu Samal and Chitrasen Samal, Bounded by- North: Road and Vacant Plot, South: Govt. Land, East: Govt. Land, West: Property of Manguli Behera.
DAMPARA BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Gangadhar Sahoo, S/o- Mr. Ganeswar Sahoo / Guarantor: Mr. Manguli Sahoo, Both are At: Tulisipur, Banki, Cuttack.	₹ 18,13,548.45 as on 31.03.2016 (inclusive interest up to 31.03.2016) + further interest & other charges thereon	13.06.2016 / 20.02.2024	Property in the name of Mr. Ganeswar Sahoo & Mr. Banamali Sahoo, S/o- Mr. Basu Sahoo and Mr. Bidyadhar Sahoo, S/o- Mr. Khali Sahoo situated at Khata No.: 80, Plot No.: 376, Area: Ac. 0.02dec., Mouza: Tulisipur, Tahasil & No. Banki, No. 57, Taluka: Tulisipur, Dist.: Cuttack.
MAITREY VIHAR BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. L. Gayatri Devi, Prop.: Mrs. L. Gayatri Devi, Block-4, Core C, Flat No.: 6, LIC Colony, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar-751023 / Guarantor: Mr. L. Kishore Kumar, S/o- L.V. Sharma, Block-4, Core C, Flat No.: 6, LIC Colony, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar-751023	₹ 20,67,134.35 + further interest & other charges thereon	22.08.2023 / 20.02.2024	All the part and parcel of the property (Land & Building) situated at Khurda, SRO: Khandagiri, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, PS: Chandaka, PS No. 32 under Mouza: Tulisidepur, Khata No.: 26, Plot No.: 133 for an Area: Ac. 0.054dec. (out of Ac. 0.420dec.), corresponding to conversion Khata No.: 105/267, Plot No.: 133/ 801, Area: Ac. 0.055dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of Mr. L. Kishore Kumar, S/o- Mr. L.V. Sharma.

Date: 21.02.2024, Place: Bhubaneswar Sd/- Authorised Officer, UCO Bank



A protester stands outside the Royal Courts of Justice in London, as Julian Assange's lawyers are on their final UK legal challenge to stop the WikiLeaks founder from being sent to the United States to face spying charges



Activists wear masks depicting Israelis who are being held hostage in the Gaza Strip by the Hamas militant group, during a protest demanding the release of the hostage from Hamas captivity in Tel Aviv, Israel



A boy looks on as he swims in an area affected by floods due to the overflowing of the Batanghari River at Sungai Bungur village in Muaro Jambi, Jambi province, Indonesia



Icicles hang from a hotel roof at Gulmarg Ski Resort after fresh snowfall in Baramulla, Kashmir



Peoples from the Sikh community stage a protest against BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari after he allegedly called a Sikh IPS officer 'Khalistani', outside BJP office in Kolkata, West Bengal



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis and his wife Marena Grabowski-Mitsotaki during the latter's ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi



Candidates arrive to appear for the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Board examination hold placards as part of a voting awareness drive in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh



Students write a Maharashtra Board's HSC exam at Nagpada in Mumbai, Maharashtra

Farmer sets self on fire India, China hold military talks

9 killed in Bihar mishap Lakhisarai: At least nine people, who were returning from a wedding ceremony, were killed and five others injured after a truck and a tempo collided head-on at Biharaura village along Lakhisarai-Sikandra main road in the wee hours, police said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the death of nine persons.



Hundreds of farmers from across districts staged a dharna at the collectorate in Muzaffarnagar. In Ghaziabad, farmers staged a sit-in at the call of BKU leader Rakesh Tikait under the leadership of district president Bijendra Singh. Addressing the gathering, Bijendra Singh said that the farmers were forced to

demonstrate by the government which is not paying heed to their demand of MSP.

Farmers there handed over a 15-point memorandum to the administration, addressed to President Droupadi Murmu. The memorandum carried 15 demands of farmers, including a check on inflation, relaxation in railway fare for senior citizens, and free education.

BKU National Spokesperson Rakesh Tikait in Meerut said that if the government does not allow farmers to go to Delhi, the farmers also will not let them enter their villages during elections.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: India and China held a fresh round of high-level military talks to resolve the over three-and-half-year-old border row in eastern Ladakh that saw both sides agreeing to maintain "peace and tranquillity" on the ground but there was no indication of any breakthrough.

"The discussions built on the previous rounds, seeking complete disengagement

ment in the remaining areas along the LAC (Line of Actual Control) in eastern Ladakh as an essential basis for restoration of peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas," it said in a statement. The MEA said the two sides shared their perspectives on this in the talks held in a "friendly and cordial" atmosphere. In Beijing, China's

ministry of national defence said the two militaries have agreed to maintain communication on current border issues.

AGENCIES

Muzaffarnagar/Meerut/Noida (UP), Feb 21: Farmers across the western Uttar Pradesh districts staged demonstrations and carried out marches to press for their demand of MSP.

Protests were held in Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, and Greater Noida. In Muzaffarnagar, a farmer tried to kill himself by setting himself on fire. The fire was doused in time by the fellow agitators and he was rushed to a local hospital.

City Magistrate Vikash Kashyap, who visited the hospital, said the farmer, Brijpal, received minor burn injuries on face and was tended to immediately.

He said he was told that the farmer had a loan-related issue which would be addressed soon. Bhartiya Kisan Union district president Yogesh Sharma said Brijpal tried to commit suicide because he was not getting any solution to his problem and was worried about getting a notice from the Punjab National Bank despite never getting a loan from that bank. Brijpal is a native of Jitpur Ghari village of Muzaffarnagar district.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER DHENKANAL (R&B) DIVISION, DHENKANAL. INVITATION FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement Bid Identification No. SEDKL (R&B) 60/2023-24. Invitation for Bids. The Superintending Engineer, Dhenkanal (R&B) Division, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in single cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for Construction of Building work & Electrical Work as detailed below.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE Bid Identification No. E.E., GTN (R&B)-39/2023-24. E-mail address: eeghatagaon2015@gmail.com Letter No. 2028, Dt. 15.02.2024. No. B-1798: The Executive Engineer, Ghatagaon (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate Bids in Single Cover System in online mode from the eligible contractor for road works as mentioned below.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, NABARANGPUR (R&B) DIVISION, NABARANGPUR. E-mail ID: eernbngpur@yahoo.com, Tel & Fax -06858-222833 (O) e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. S.E (R&B)-46/2023-24/NGP No.1337, Date: 17.02.2024. No. B-1779: Bid Documents consisting of work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender paper, EMD, Time of completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. Website i.e www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

GOVT. OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF PANCHAYATI RAJ & DRINKING WATER OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, SADAR, SUNDARGARH. Email ID - ori-bundargarh@nic.in. No. I-626. Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.sundargarh.nic.in

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA e-Procurement Notice, ANGUL (R&B) DIVISION Bid Identification No. 39 of 2023-24. e-mail ID- angulrbdivision@yahoo.co.in. 1. Number of Works : 03 (Three) number of Road works 2. Approximate estimated cost : Varies from Rs. 18.00 Lakh to Rs. 80.00 Lakh.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, DEOGARH DIVISION No. L-233-. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST, (EOI) No. 247. Office of the Assistant Director of Horticulture, Deogarh is inviting applications from interested NGOs/TRUSTS towards expression of Interest (EOI) to involve in the "Strengthening of livelihoods of mission shakti WSHG members through 'promotion of agriculture production cluster in Odisha' project in selective 2 Nos. of blocks in Deogarh district i.e. Tilebani & Reamal from the year 2023-24 to 2027-28 (5 years) under State scheme.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KHARIAR (R&B) DIVISION, KHARIAR. E-mail: eeroads.khr@rediffmail.com No. 801/ Dtr 17.02.24 Invitation For Bids No. B-1793. Bid Identification No. S.E. (R&B) KHARIAR-26/2023-24. 1. The Executive Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE only.

Table with 4 columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Tender Cost, Class of Contractor. It lists various construction projects like 'Construction of model AWC at Bhabanipur, Kundrupada' and 'Construction of model AWC at Bhabanipur, Schoolpada'.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. A-1575: DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BURLA IRRIGATION DIVISION, BURLA. Phone No. 0663-2430445, E-mail Id: sambalpurirrigation@rediffmail.com 'e' Tender Call Notice No. BID-08/2023-24 (Online). 1. Nature of Works : Improvement to Canal Structure 2. Nos. of Works : 25 (Twenty-five) Nos.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. I-624: OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI BARCHANA, JAJPUR 'E' PROCUREMENT NOTICE No. Tender Online 03 BAD/2023-24. 1. Name of Work : Building Works 2. Total No. of Work : 4 Nos. of Work 3. Estimated Cost (Approx) : Rs. 11,72,918/- to Rs. 22,52,353/-

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KESINGA. E-mail: eerwkesinga@yahoo.com e-Procurement Notice BID IDENTIFICATION NO. SERWKSNG-online-11/2023-24. No. O-2550: 1. Name of Works: Building Works (As per annexure). 2. Total No. of Work: 6 Nos. 3. Estimated Cost: As per Annexure (Approximately). 4. E.M.D.: Please refer DTCN. 5. Cost of Tender document: As per Annexure. 6. Class of Contractor: 'D & C' Class. 7. Period of Completion: As per Annexure. 8. Other details: As per DTCN.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, DEOGARH DIVISION Phone No. 06641-226403/226503 (OFFICE/FA), Cell No. 9437055978, Email- dfo.deogarh@odisha.gov.in SHORT TENDER NOTICE Tender No. 09/2023-24 Dated: - 15.02.2024. No. MM-457: Divisional Forest Officer, Deogarh Forest Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites sealed tenders from reputed intending Manufacturing Firms/Dealers/ Suppliers having valid GSTIN and PAN Registration No. for supply of 40 (Forty) nos of Walkie-Talkie sets and 15 (Fifteen) nos of vehicle Mounted VHF sets for use in Deogarh Forest Division for communication and monitoring of forestry & wildlife activities.

ବିଜ୍ଞାପିତ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ପରିଷଦ, ବାଲିମେଳା OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BALIMELA Odisha, Pin -764051, e-Mail: -eonacbalimela@gmail.com Letter No. 287/2024 Dated: 19.02.2024 Quotation Call Notice Notice Inviting Tender for Website Design & Development No. C-: Sealed Tender offers are invited in sealed cover under two bid systems from the eligible vender/firm/agency for providing the following services. Website Design & Development for Balimela NAC (Housing and Urban Development Department, Govt. of Odisha)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, SUNDARGARH E Mail ID: rw_rourkela@yahoo.co.in TENDER CALL NOTICE BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ONLINE-SERKL-32 OF 2023-24 No. O-2582: Name of the Work: Road Works, 2. Total No. of Works: 03 (Three) Nos., 3. Estimated Cost: Rs. 18.48 to 20.33 Lakhs. 4. Class of Contractor: "C" & "B" Class. 5. Period of Completion: 01 (One) Calendar Months. 6. Type of Tender: Single Cover. 7. Other details:

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KESINGA. E-mail: eerwkesinga@yahoo.com e-Procurement Notice BID IDENTIFICATION NO. SERWKSNG-online-11/2023-24. No. O-2550: 1. Name of Works: Building Works (As per annexure). 2. Total No. of Work: 6 Nos. 3. Estimated Cost: As per Annexure (Approximately). 4. E.M.D.: Please refer DTCN. 5. Cost of Tender document: As per Annexure. 6. Class of Contractor: 'D & C' Class. 7. Period of Completion: As per Annexure. 8. Other details: As per DTCN.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KESINGA. E-mail: eerwkesinga@yahoo.com e-Procurement Notice BID IDENTIFICATION NO. SERWKSNG-online-11/2023-24. No. O-2550: 1. Name of Works: Building Works (As per annexure). 2. Total No. of Work: 6 Nos. 3. Estimated Cost: As per Annexure (Approximately). 4. E.M.D.: Please refer DTCN. 5. Cost of Tender document: As per Annexure. 6. Class of Contractor: 'D & C' Class. 7. Period of Completion: As per Annexure. 8. Other details: As per DTCN.

Government of Odisha 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 No. O-2584:- 1. Name of the work : Road Works 2. Total No. of Works : 5 (Five) Nos. 3. Tender Cost : Rs. 8.47 to 42.37 lakhs (approx.)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-2577 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA e-mail: eerwsskld@gmail.com, eerwss_kld@nic.in, Phone No. 06670-230784 INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e-TENDERING Bid Identification No. 90/SE/RWSS/2023-24/Bpt Dated: 19.02.2024 01. Name of the Work : As per ANNEXURE - A

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, ROURKELA E Mail: rw_rourkela@yahoo.co.in TENDER CALL NOTICE BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ONLINE-SERKL-34 OF 2023-24 No. O-2605: Name of the Work: Building Works, 2. Total No. of Works: 12 (Twelve) Nos., 3. Estimated Cost: Rs. 37.75 Lakhs. 4. Class of Contractor: "C" & "B" Class. 5. Period of Completion: 08 (Eight) Months. 6. Type of Tender: Single Cover. 7. Other details:

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KESINGA. E-mail: eerwkesinga@yahoo.com e-Procurement Notice BID IDENTIFICATION NO. SERWKSNG-online-11/2023-24. No. O-2550: 1. Name of Works: Building Works (As per annexure). 2. Total No. of Work: 6 Nos. 3. Estimated Cost: As per Annexure (Approximately). 4. E.M.D.: Please refer DTCN. 5. Cost of Tender document: As per Annexure. 6. Class of Contractor: 'D & C' Class. 7. Period of Completion: As per Annexure. 8. Other details: As per DTCN.

international



Our position is quite clear and transparent: we have always been and remain categorically opposed to the deployment of nuclear weapons in space

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

BRITAIN'S NEW BANKNOTES

Banknotes in the UK carrying a portrait of King Charles III will be issued for the first time from June 5, the Bank of England announced here Wednesday. Polymer banknotes that feature the portrait of his late mother, Queen Elizabeth II, will remain legal tender and co-circulate alongside the new King Charles III notes



of the day quote

I'm not afraid to say the hard truths out loud. I feel no need to kiss the ring. And I have no fear of Trump's retribution. I'm not looking for anything from him. My own political future is of zero concern

NIKKI HALEY | REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, US

I warn the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the KGB, the special services, everyone, the prosecutor's office - anyone: we need to take control of this. Our patrol guys must be on the streets. Patrols must be armed with small arms, at least pistol

ALEXANDER LUKASHENKO | PRESIDENT, BELARUS

Apples are the pride of the Washington agricultural economy. They are known worldwide. Today is a celebration because, for five years now, we have not seen the volume of apples leaving these docks and travelling to India

MARIA CANTWELL | SENATOR, US

PAKISTAN ELECTIONS

Political impasse ends

ALMOST TWO WEEKS AFTER THE FEBRUARY 8 GENERAL ELECTIONS THAT DELIVERED A FRACTURED MANDATE, PPP, PML-N STRIKE A POWER-SHARING DEAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 21: In a breakthrough that could end the political uncertainty in Pakistan, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan Peoples Party have agreed on a power-sharing deal to form a new coalition government after intense negotiations following a fractured poll verdict.

In a joint news conference late Tuesday night at Zardari House here, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari announced that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif, 72, will assume the role of the prime minister once again.

Similarly, PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, 68, will be the joint candidate for the presidential office.

"The PPP and PML-N have achieved the required number, and (now) we are in a position to form the government," Bilawal told reporters without revealing the number of lawmakers they have in the National Assembly after the February 8 elections.

To form a government, a party must win 133 out of 265 contested seats in the 266-member National Assembly or the lower



SHEHBAZ SHARIF, PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE-NAWAZ (PML-N) TO BE PM

ASIF ALI ZARDARI, CO-CHAIRMAN OF PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY SET TO BE PRESIDENT

house of Parliament.

He said former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party-backed independent candidates and Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) failed to achieve a simple majority in Parliament to form a government in the Centre.

Bilawal hoped that the news of the political alliance with the PML-N to form a coalition government would lead to a positive market response as the cash-strapped country faced a hung Parliament after the elections.

Last week, the PML-N in a

surprise move announced that the party supreme and three-time former premier Nawaz Sharif nominated his younger brother Shehbaz as a candidate for the slot of prime minister. Nawaz, 74, was earlier confident to secure a record fourth term. However, his party failed to win enough seats to form a government on its own.

Independent candidates - a majority backed by 71-year-old Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party - won 93 National Assembly seats.

The PML-N won 75 seats while

SC dismisses plea over allegations of rigging

Islamabad: Pakistan's Supreme Court Wednesday dismissed as a "publicity stunt" a petition seeking new elections over alleged irregularities in the February 8 polls, clearing the way for the formation of a coalition government to end the political uncertainty in the country. The apex court also imposed a fine on the petitioner, a former army officer, over his failure to appear before the court. Retired Brigadier Ali Khan last week urged the apex court to order new elections within 30 days to be held under the direct supervision and oversight of the judiciary "to ensure fairness, transparency and accountability".

Khan's party to hold organisational polls in 15 days

Islamabad: Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's beleaguered party will conduct fresh organisational elections in 15 days, following the intra-party polls' postponement earlier this month, a media report said Wednesday. The 71-year-old former-cricketer-turned-politician's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party postponed the scheduled intra-party polls earlier this month, asserting that it could "divert" attention from the February 8 general elections. Quoting sources, The Express Tribune newspaper reported that Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has been nominated as the chairman while Raouf Hassan will be the Chief Election Commissioner for PTI's intra-party polls, which will be conducted in 15 days.

the PPP came third with 54 seats. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has 17 seats.

Speaking at the press conference, Shehbaz asserted that his party now has the "required numbers" with the PPP to be in a position to form the next government as he thanked the leadership of the two parties for the positive conclusion to the talks.

The former prime minister emphasised the unity between the two parties, noting that they were well-positioned to form the

government at the Centre.

Shehbaz, who led a coalition government for 16 months before the elections, also said that he had asked the PTI-backed winning candidates to prove their majority and form the government, but they didn't have sufficient numbers.

The PML-N stalwart also thanked Bilawal and Zardari for their cooperation. Shehbaz said that both parties decided that Zardari would be fielded as the joint candidate for the post of president.

Canadian cops arrest 2 minors for shooting outside Nijjar's home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ottawa, Feb 21: Canadian police have arrested two teenagers for a shooting incident outside the home of a close aide of slain Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, an incident for which the separatist groups had blamed Indian agencies.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Tuesday confirmed that two teenagers had been arrested in connection with the February 1 shooting incident outside the house of Simranjit Singh Jammu, a close aide of Nijjar, in South Surrey.

In the statement, the RCMP also made it clear that investigators have not established any links to foreign interference in this case.

"At the time of this incident, there was speculation circulating that this was connected to foreign interference. Investigators have not established any links to foreign interference in relation to this matter," the statement said.

It said that February 6, the Surrey RCMP Serious Crime Unit executed a search warrant on a residence and seized three firearms and multiple electronic devices during the search.

On February 12, two 16-year-old youths were arrested and the British Columbia Prosecution Service approved charges of discharging a firearm into a place and possessing a loaded prohibited firearm.

SHORT TAKES

Navalny's body: Mother files suit

MOSCOW: The mother of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has filed a lawsuit at a court in the Arctic city of Salekhard contesting officials' refusal to release her son's body, Russia's state news agency Tass reported Wednesday. A closed-door hearing has been scheduled for March 4, the report said, quoting court officials. Lyudmila Navalnaya has been trying to retrieve her son's body since Saturday, following his death in a penal colony in Russia's far north a day earlier. She has been unable to find out where his body is being held, Navalny's team reported. Navalnaya appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin Tuesday to release her son's remains so that she could bury him with dignity.

UK missile misfire

LONDON: Britain's Trident nuclear-deterrent system misfired during a test last month, sending a missile crashing into the ocean off the Florida coast near the submarine that launched it, The Sun newspaper reported Wednesday. The Ministry of Defence confirmed an "anomaly" had occurred during the test but said the country's "nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure and effective." With defence secretary Grant Shapps on board the HMS Vanguard to witness the test, The Sun said the first-stage boosters on the missile - equipped with dummy warheads - had failed to ignite.

Snow covers China

BEIJING: Heavy snow has blanketed northern and central China, disrupting travel and forcing schools to cancel classes. One person was killed Wednesday in a roof collapse at a supermarket in Hebei province, state broadcaster CCTV said. Flights and intercity trains on which many of China's commuters rely were delayed or cancelled. Authorities in several provinces issued severe weather warnings. Tens of thousands of workers with brooms and shovels were deployed, assisted by snowplows in the hardest-hit regions.

Bridge falls, 2 die

THE HAGUE: Two people died and two others were injured Wednesday when part of a bridge being built over a canal in the eastern Netherlands collapsed, emergency services said.

PROTESTS GALORE

Farmers drive hundreds of tractors to Madrid

MADRID: Convoys of tractors disrupted traffic around the Spanish capital Wednesday as farmers protesting against what they see as excessive red tape and insufficient state aid converged in downtown Madrid to march towards the Agriculture Ministry. Farmers have been protesting for weeks across European countries, most recently including Poland, Greece and the Czech Republic. They all call for a reduction of bureaucracy linked to the European Union's Common Agriculture Policy and a loosening of the bloc's environmental rules.



Agitating workers again close down Eiffel Tower



PARIS: Striking workers again closed down the Eiffel Tower Wednesday, the third day running that the landmark expected to be at the heart of celebrations for the Paris Olympics has been off-limits to visitors. A message on the tower's website also warned of more possible disruptions Thursday, if strikers continue their push for salary hikes and other concessions. "We apologize for the inconvenience," the message said. Striking employees are demanding a salary increase proportionate to revenue from ticket sales. They also want to improve maintenance of the 135-year-old tower, which is showing traces of rust on some of its ironwork.

Return to work or face legal action: SK govt warns doctors

SEOUL: The South Korean government Wednesday warned thousands of striking doctors to return to work immediately or face legal action after their collective walkouts caused cancellations of surgeries and disrupted other hospital operations. About 7,800 medical interns and residents in South Korea have walked off their jobs this week to protest the government's push to recruit more medical students. Officials say they want to increase the nationwide medical school admissions cap by 2,000 from next year to brace for South Korea's rapidly aging population. But doctors' groups have refuted the plan, saying universities aren't ready to offer quality education to that many students.



China's childcare costs among highest globally

IN 2023, CHINA'S TOTAL FERTILITY RATE WILL ONLY BE ABOUT 1.0, ONE OF THE LOWEST IN THE WORLD

REUTERS

Hong Kong, Feb 21: China is one of the world's most expensive places to raise a child, relative to its GDP per capita, a prominent Chinese think tank said Wednesday as it detailed the time and opportunity costs for women who opt to have children in the country.

The cost of raising a child until they are 18 relative to per capita GDP is around 6.3 times in China versus 2.08 times in Australia, 2.24 times in France, 4.11 times in the U.S. and 4.26 times in Japan, said a report by the Beijing-based YuWa Population Research Institute.

Raising children also leads to a reduction in women's paid work hours and wage rates, while men's livelihoods remain largely



unchanged.

"Because the current social environment in China is not friendly to women's fertility, the time cost and opportunity cost for women to have children are too high," said the report, co-authored by Liang Jianzhang, founder of online travelling site Ctrip and also a founder of the YuWa institute.

The report comes after China's population fell for a second consecutive year in 2023 with the number of new births dropping to around half of that in 2016.

An increasing number of women are opting not to have

children due high childcare costs, and an unwillingness to marry or put their careers on hold, while gender discrimination remains rife.

Women generally see a reduction of 2,106 working hours when looking after children aged 0-4 and face an estimated wage loss of 63,000 yuan (\$8,700) in the period, the report said, using an hourly wage gauge of 30 yuan per hour.

Having a child will also lead to a 12-17% drop in women's wages, the report said. Leisure time will be reduced by 12.6 hours for mothers with one child

Due to reasons such as the high cost of childbearing and the difficulty for women to balance family and work, the Chinese people's average fertility willingness is almost the lowest in the world

LIANG JIANZHANG | FOUNDER, YUWA POPULATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE

aged 0-6 and 14 hours for two children. There is an "urgent need" at the national level to introduce policies to reduce the cost of childbearing as soon as possible, YuWa said, such as cash and tax subsidies, improved childcare services, equal maternity and paternity leave, access to foreign nannies, allowing flexible working and giving single women the same reproductive rights as married women.

The measures together could increase new births to around 3 million, the report said. "If the current ultra-low fertility rate cannot be improved, China's population will rapidly decline and age, which will have a serious negative impact on innovation and overall national strength," it said.

aged 0-6 and 14 hours for two children. There is an "urgent need" at the national level to introduce policies to reduce the cost of childbearing as soon as possible, YuWa said, such as cash and tax subsidies, improved childcare services, equal maternity and paternity leave, access to foreign nannies, allowing flexible working and giving single women the same reproductive rights as married women.

The measures together could increase new births to around 3 million, the report said. "If the current ultra-low fertility rate cannot be improved, China's population will rapidly decline and age, which will have a serious negative impact on innovation and overall national strength," it said.

US blocks ceasefire call again

IT IS THE THIRD US VETO OF A DRAFT RESOLUTION SINCE THE START OF THE ISRAEL-HAMAS FIGHTING OCTOBER 7

REUTERS

United Nations, Feb 21: The United States Tuesday again vetoed a draft United Nations Security Council resolution on the Israel-Hamas war, blocking a demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire as it instead pushes the 15-member body to call for a temporary ceasefire linked to the release of hostages held by Hamas.

Thirteen council members voted in favor of the Algerian-drafted text, while Britain abstained. It was the third US veto of a draft resolution since the start of the current fighting October 7. Washington has also used its veto to block an amendment to draft resolution in December.

"A vote in favor of this draft resolution is support to the Palestinians right to life. Conversely, voting against it implies an endorsement of the bru-

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR



The message given today to Israel with this veto is that it can continue to get away with murder

RIYAD MANSOUR | UN ENVOY, PALESTINE

tal violence and collective punishment inflicted upon them," Algeria's UN Ambassador Amar Bendjama told the council before the vote.

US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield signaled Saturday that the US would veto the draft resolution over concerns it could jeopardize talks between the US, Egypt, Israel and Qatar that seek to broker a pause in the war and the release of hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

"Demanding an immediate, unconditional ceasefire without an agreement requiring Hamas to release the hostages will not bring about a durable peace. Instead, it could extend the fighting between Hamas and Israel," Thomas-Greenfield told the council ahead of the vote.

The Algerian-drafted resolution vetoed by the US did not link a ceasefire to the release of hostages. It separately demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

Israel's UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan said the word ceasefire was being mentioned "as if it is a silver bullet, a magical solution to all of the region's problems."

"A ceasefire achieves one thing and one thing only - the survival of Hamas," Erdan told the council. "A ceasefire is a death sentence for many more Israelis and Gazans."

TEMPORARY CEASEFIRE

The US has now proposed a rival draft resolution calling for a temporary ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war and opposing a major ground offensive by its ally Israel in Rafah, according to the text seen by Reuters Monday. It said it plans to allow time for negotiations and will not rush to a vote.

Israeli airstrikes across Gaza kill 67 Palestinians overnight

Gaza's Health Ministry estimates more than 29K Palestinians have been killed so far in the brutal war

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Jerusalem, Feb 21: Israeli strikes across Gaza killed at least 67 Palestinians overnight and into Wednesday, including in areas where civilians have been told to seek refuge.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir al-Balah says it received 44 bodies after multiple strikes in central Gaza. Associated Press reporters saw the bodies arriving in ambulances and private vehicles.

Also Wednesday, the aid group Doctors Without Borders said that two people were killed when a shelter housing staff in the Gaza Strip was struck during an Israeli operation in an area where Palestinians have been told to seek shelter.

"While details are still emerging, ambulance crews have now reached the site, where at least

two family members of our colleagues have been killed and six people wounded. We are horrified by what has taken place," the group said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The attack took place in Muwasi, a sandy, mostly undeveloped strip of land along the coast that has been transformed into a sprawling tent camp with little in the way of basic services.

The war began when Hamas-led militants rampaged into southern Israel on Oct 7, killing some 1,200 people and taking around 250 hostage. About a fourth of some 130 captives still being held are believed to be dead. Israel has laid waste to much of the Palestinian territory in response. Gaza's Health Ministry estimates more than 29,000 Palestinians have been killed.

of the day quote

India will be the third largest economy by 2027. And now that Japan, the United Kingdom and Germany are all in the recession phase, we should be able to do it much quicker and much faster

AMITABH KANT | G20 SHERPA

The UK and India continue to work towards an ambitious trade deal. While we do not comment on the details of live negotiations, we continue to actively engage with India and are clear that we will only sign a deal that is fair, balanced and ultimately in the best interests of the British people and the economy

TARIQ AHMAD | MINISTER FOR SOUTH ASIA IN THE FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, UK

Travellers will look for lower cost options and this will help Low Cost Carriers grow much faster than the more premium Full-Service Carriers in India

JOSHUA NG | DIRECTOR, ALTON AVIATION CONSULTANCY

SHORT TAKES

CIL may exceed capex target

New Delhi: The government Wednesday said the state-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) is likely to exceed its capex target of ₹16,500 crore for the current financial year. Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output. "As we navigate through the current fiscal year of 2023-24, both CIL and NLCIL are on track to exceed their capex targets yet again... Both CIL and NLCIL will exceed their annual capex targets, further bolstering India's economic growth trajectory," the coal ministry said in a statement. The capex target of NLC India Ltd (NLCIL) for the ongoing financial year is ₹2,880 crore.

New plant: Ambuja to invest ₹1K-cr

New Delhi: Ambuja Cements, now a part of Adani Group, Wednesday said it has planned to invest ₹1,000 crore to set up a cement grinding unit in Godda district of Jharkhand. The new 4 Million Tonne Per Annum (MTPA) cement grinding unit would be set up after requisite approvals, Ambuja Cements Ltd (ACL) said. This project is "planned in the close proximity to Adani Power (Jharkhand) Ltd, as part of a comprehensive approach to disposing of fly ash in an environmentally safe manner and contributing to the circular economy," it said. The unit will generate direct and indirect employment for over 2,500 people, it added.

BYJU'S rights issue fully subscribed

New Delhi: Edtech major BYJU'S top official Wednesday said the company's \$200 million rights issue has been fully subscribed and asked all shareholders to participate in the "renewed mission". Think and Learn Private Limited, which operates under BYJU'S brand name, has floated \$200 million rights issue at less than 99 per cent enterprise valuation compared to its peak valuation of \$22 billion.

AI, SIAEC ink pact

New Delhi: Air India has entered into a 12-year agreement with SIA Engineering Company Ltd for extensive component support coverage for the airline's A320 family planes.

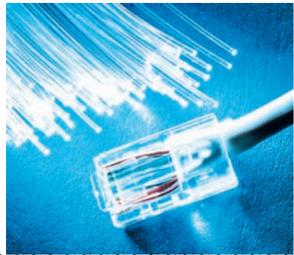


Zero accident policy is also dangerous. If you are wanting to grow fast, there will be need for good regulations. We may have some accidents but it is also how fast we respond and correct the accident

UDAY KOTAK | FOUNDER DIRECTOR, KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK

HFCL EXPANDS TO EUROPE

Indian telecom gear maker HFCL has announced a strategic expansion into Europe with the setting up of an optical fibre cable manufacturing plant in Poland. In a release, HFCL said the move marks a milestone in the company's global expansion strategy, aimed at addressing the increasing demand for OFC in European markets such as the UK, Germany, Belgium, France, Poland, among others



India's Russian oil game

The country exported \$6.65bn oil products derived from Russian oil to sanctioning nations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: Over one-third of India's export of oil products to the G7-led coalition countries was derived from Russian crude, a European think-tank said, highlighting how the partners shunned buying Russian crude and imposed price caps but a loose policy on refined product allowed third countries to use Russian oil and legally export products to them.

While there are no restriction or sanctions on buying/using Russian crude oil and exporting fuels such as diesel derived from it, the Group of Seven (G7) rich nations, the European Union and Australia - called the price cap coalition countries - first set a crude price cap of \$60 per barrel starting December 5, 2022 and later on products like diesel to keep market supplied while limiting Moscow's revenue.

This was aimed at punishing Russia for its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine by depriving it of oil revenues while averting a surge in prices that could occur if Russian oil stopped flowing to global markets.

"In the 13 months since the oil price cap took effect (in December 2022), over one third of India's exports of oil products to sanctioning countries was derived from Russian crude



(EUR 6.16 billion or \$6.65 billion)," the Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) said in a report.

"A huge proportion of these exports came from the Jamnagar refinery," it said, alluding to the refinery operated by Reliance Industries Ltd in Gujarat. Jamnagar alone exported EUR 5.2 billion of oil products produced from Russian crude to the price cap coalition, it added.

An email sent to Reliance for comments remained unanswered.

"India imported Russian crude worth EUR 3.04 billion to create these products for sanctioning countries," CREA said.

The USA imported EUR 1.2 billion of oil products from India, which were estimated as being refined from Russian crude. "India imported EUR 733 million of Russian crude to create these products for the USA."

In the 13 months since the oil price cap took effect, over one third of India's exports of oil products to sanctioning countries was derived from Russian crude

The price cap coalition countries imported a further EUR 469 million worth of oil products from the Vadinar refinery, it said, alluding to the refinery operated by Nayara Energy in Gujarat. "Russian energy giant Rosneft - who are on OFAC's list of sanctioned entities - is its single largest shareholder with a 49.1 per cent share in the company." The USA imported EUR 59 million of oil products from Vadinar starting from the in-

roduction of the crude oil price cap until the end of December 2023.

According to CREA's estimate, 42 per cent of the refinery's feedstock is Russian crude. While some western nations have since February 2022 shunned buying Russian oil directly, they however import petroleum products from China, India and Turkey that have emerged as major buyers of Russian crude oil.

In 2023, there was a 44 per cent year-on-year increase in sanctioning countries' imports of oil products, by volume, produced from Russian crude, it said, adding the price cap coalition's (PCC) imports of oil products made from Russian crude oil generated EUR 1.7 billion of tax revenues for the Kremlin from December 2022 to December 2023.

Since the introduction of the price cap till December 2023, the USA imported EUR 1.6 billion worth of oil products derived from Russian crude. EUR 807 million of Russian crude was used to make these products for the USA, it said, adding price cap coalition countries imported EUR 2.4 billion of diesel derived from Russian crude.

The EU bars EU vessels as well as insurers from handling Russian-origin oil unless it is priced at or below the price cap.

Growth to moderate to 6%: ICRA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: Rating agency ICRA Wednesday projected GDP growth to moderate sequentially to 6 per cent in the third quarter of FY24 from 7.6 per cent in the preceding three months mainly due to subdued performance of agriculture and industrial sectors.

Further, it said the GVA (Gross Value Added) growth is estimated to ease to 6 per cent in the October-December quarter FY24 from 7.4 per cent in the second quarter of the last fiscal.

The anticipated deterioration in the industrial sector growth in the third quarter is partly attributable to an adverse base effect and a deceleration in volume expansion, even as the continued deflation in commodity prices kept the profitability of some sectors favourable.



Lower volume growth for the industrial sector, flagging momentum in certain indicators of investment activity, a slowdown in government expenditure, and an uneven monsoon are expected to dampen the GDP growth to 6 per cent in Q3 FY24 from 7.6 per cent in Q2 FY24

ADITI NAYAR | CHIEF ECONOMIST, ICRA

Additionally, a mild 0.2 per cent contraction in the total spending of the government of

India and the 25 state governments (all states except Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, and Manipur) in the October-December period is expected to have dulled the GVA growth in the quarter.

In contrast to industry and agriculture, ICRA estimates the services sectors' GVA growth year-on-year to rise to 6.5 per cent in the third quarter of the current fiscal from 5.8 per cent in the July-September period of 2023-24, led by trade, hotels, transport, communication, and services related to broadcasting.

It also said that the centre's non-interest revenue expenditure contracted by a significant 19.1 per cent in the third quarter of the current fiscal, after having expanded by 23.2 per cent in the preceding three months, which would dampen the performance of public administration, defence, and other services.

₹20bn diverted out of Zee's books, finds SEBI

REUTERS

Mumbai, Feb 21: India's market regulator has made a preliminary finding that ₹20 billion (\$240 million) has been diverted out of Zee Entertainment Enterprises', and Zee Group founders have been called in for questioning, two sources said.

The amount was 10 times higher than investigators had initially estimated, said one of the sources. Zee's shares tumbled 11% in Wednesday morning trade, adding to a steep share decline since its \$10 billion merger with Sony Group was scrapped by the Japanese firm last month.

Zee said in a statement that "reports and rumours pertaining to accounting issues in the Company are incorrect and false," adding that is in the process of providing all the information that has been requested by SEBI.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

SC blow to Vedanta's Sterlite Copper plant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: The Supreme Court Wednesday told Sterlite Copper, a Vedanta group firm, that it cannot be oblivious to the wider concerns of the local community in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi and will have to implement the environmental safeguards suggested by the proposed expert panel before its plant can be reopened.

The court had said February 14 that a panel of domain experts may be set up to inspect the closed plant, suggest further compliance of green norms, and the way forward.

The plant has been closed since May 2018 after 13 people were killed as police opened fire to quell a protest over alleged pollution caused by it.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said keeping the plant shut would not serve any purpose but at the same time the court has to be mindful of public health and welfare.

"They are voiceless people. They all cannot come here. We cannot be oblivious to the wider concerns of the community," CJ Chandrachud said, adding, "We may not be able to direct that you start operating today but we can ensure that terms



are put to you by an expert panel so that a red category industry can start on deposit of a certain amount and on satisfying environmental safeguards."

Industrial units with a pollution index score of 60 or above are categorised as red.

The bench told senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for the company, that it cannot fault the high court verdict which upheld the closure and said if there is a gas leak in future the moral responsibility would lie with this court.

Divan, while suggesting the way forward, said the court may appoint a committee of experts comprising representatives of the ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MoEF&CC), National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), IIT, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), Vedanta and three independent experts.

DPIs contribution to GDP to triple by 2030: Nasscom

DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRA ADDED 0.9% TO INDIA'S GDP IN 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: (Digital public infrastructure like Aadhaar, UPI and FASTag generated a value of \$31.8 billion in 2022, adding 0.9 per cent to India's GDP and the contribution of this segment is likely to triple by 2030, says a report.

Industry body Nasscom in a report said digital public infrastructure (DPIs) such as Aadhaar, UPI (Unified Payments Interface), and FASTag have witnessed exponential adoption. Going ahead there is an opportunity for further scalability, reaching even the most remote segments of the population by 2030.

"By 2030, adoption across matured and budding DPIs has the potential to scale up. The economic value addition of these DPIs by 2030 has the potential to increase to 2.9-4 per cent of GDP, from 0.9 per cent in 2022," the report said.

The Nasscom-Arthur D Little report titled 'Digital Public Infrastructure of India - Accelerating India's Digital Inclusion' said Indian DPIs' founda-



India's digital transformation, propelled by Digital Public Infrastructure, marks a leap towards a digitally empowered economy

DEBIANI GHOSH | PRESIDENT, NASSCOM

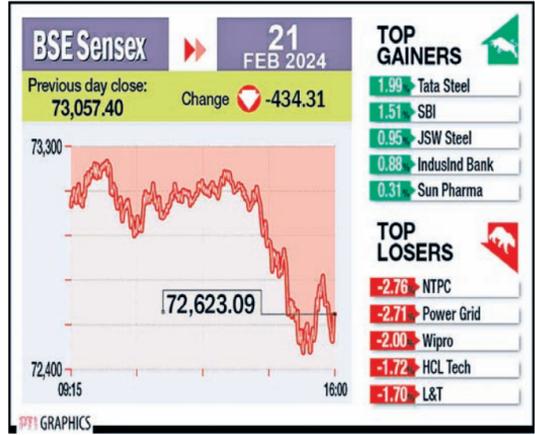
tional layers are based on transparency and trust, which promotes paperless transactions, reduces bureaucracy, and advances the concept of digital identity and document management.

"India leads globally in developing DPIs, driving societal transformation through inclusive digital adoption and substantial contributions to the Indian economy," Brajesh Singh, President, Arthur D Little India, said.

"... DPIs hold vast potential in revolutionising the entire Indian economy and the world and paints a hopeful picture of an interconnected, open, inclusive world with infinite possibilities, empowering each and every one across the globe," Singh added.

PROFIT BOOKING

MARKETS SNAP 6-DAY WIN RUN



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 21: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty broke their six-day winning run Wednesday and settled with a steep fall amid fag-end selling triggered by a rush for profit booking and mixed global cues.

The 30-share benchmark Sensex stayed mostly firm during intra-day but settled 434.31 points or 0.59 per cent lower at 72,623.09 points. It touched the intra-day low of 72,450.56, down 0.83 per cent from the previous closing level of 73,057.40 points.

Similarly, the broader Nifty also paired all its intraday gains before closing 141.90 points or 0.64 per cent down at 22,055.05 points.

The 50-share barometer had hit a lifetime peak of 22,196.95 points Tuesday and remained mostly in the upward trajectory on Wednesday.

In the Sensex pack, 20 stocks ended in the red while 37 of the Nifty constituents closed the session with losses.

NTPC was the biggest loser among the Sensex constituents, ending with a loss of 2.71 per cent. It was followed by PowerGrid, Wipro, HCLTech, L&T and Tech Mahindra.

In contrast, Tata Steel, SBI, JSW Steel and IndusInd Bank closed in the positive territory. Tata Steel gained 1.99 per cent and SBI ended 1.51 per cent higher.

The BSE Midcap index declined sharply by 1.27 per cent and Smallcap by 0.84 per cent. The fall in the large cap index was contained at 0.59 per cent.

The Indian market is facing stiff resistance at higher levels and the valuation of a broader index is at a significant premium, leading to an unfavourable risk reward, which influences investors to book profits

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

Analysts attributed the steep decline in midcap and smallcap indices to investors' concern about volatility ahead of the release of US Fed minutes.

Among sectoral indices, BSE Utilities fell the maximum by 2.10 per cent, followed by Oil & Gas at a loss of 1.78 per cent and Power which went down by 1.66 per cent.

Teck, services and capital goods were the other losers.

BSE Realty was the only defiant among all sectoral indices, closing with a gain of 1.96 per cent.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.68 per cent to \$81.78 per barrel.

On Tuesday, Sensex continued its upward movement for the sixth straight session and jumped 349.24 points to close at 73,057.40 points while Nifty went up 74.70 points to end the day at 22,196.95 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers Tuesday as they offloaded securities worth ₹1,335.51 crore, according to exchange data.

India to standardise 'know your customer' banking checks

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 21: India's financial stability panel plans to roll out a uniform approach to verifying customers across the financial sector and prevent illegal lending based on online applications, it said Wednesday.

It is unclear when the plans will be enforced. Their announcement follows a meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), which brings together all the country's financial regulators.

India's fintech sector has been thrown into crisis after India's banking regulator January 31 directed Paytm Payments Bank to stop accepting fresh deposits in its accounts or popular wallets from March. The regulator cited "persistent non-compliance and continued material supervisory concerns in the bank".

Wednesday's statement made no direct reference to Paytm Payments Bank, saying only the FSDC discussed Know Your Customer (KYC) norms.

Different financial institutions currently follow different ways to verify the account holders and the panel said the process should be standardised to enable "inter-usability of KYC records across the financial sector".

Wednesday's statement said the body also discussed steps to prevent the harmful effects of illegal online lending apps.

Gill recalls tough time



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Feb 21: Shubman Gill had twin challenges to tame when he entered the Test series against England – a barren run that gripped him for nine innings, which was made grimmer when he dropped down to bat at a rather new No.3 slot at this level.

Three Tests into the ongoing five-match rubber, Gill has managed to find some answers scoring 252 runs at 42 with a match-winning 104 at Visakhapatnam and a classy 91 at Rajkot. For Gill, it was all about coping with the expectations he had placed on himself, rather than making any sweeping technical changes to his batting.

“It is a bit tough (living up to

his own expectations). When people from outside talk about all those things, it did not make much difference to me. But the expectations that I kept on myself made me a bit disappointed,” Gill said in a press conference here Wednesday.

However, Gill said he has still placed the same level of expectations on him but has learned to adjust to them. “You will definitely have some expectations on you as to how you want to play for the team, the country. But I don’t think that has changed my mindset. I still have the same set of expectations for myself.

“It is all about how you are able to forget them and move on quickly and be ready for the next challenge. That is the difference between a big player and an av-

erage player,” he added.

The 24-year-old could not score a fifty in 11 continuous innings, including the Hyderabad Test against England last month, once he started batting at No. 3. Gill said in a press conference here Wednesday.

“I have batted at No.3 and No.4 for India A and in some Ranji Trophy matches, and as such, it was not something that I have never done in my life. There are not many technical changes that I had to make to my game.

“But it is different when you open the innings because you don’t get that much time to think as you are going right in after the toss. You are the one who is setting the tone.”

Gill said playing in the middle-order made it mandatory for him to bat as per the situations. “But when you bat at three or four, there is a certain situation that you have to bat at. If a couple of wickets have fallen early, then you are setting the stage. When you are opening then you are dictating the terms, but in the middle-order you will be playing according to the situations.”

Gill offered the examples of Vizag and Rajkot Tests to underline his theory. Gill was joined by Shreyas Iyer when India were 30 for two, and he had to marshal the hosts’ innings for their entire second dig while batting for almost 48 overs.

The right-hander said he had a slightly different role in supporting a marauding Yashasvi Jaiswal (214) in the second innings at Rajkot. “I would not have played any differently even if I was feeling any calm or composed (in Vizag). But definitely, what I was feeling at Vizag was a bit different from what I was feeling in the earlier matches for India (in terms of the match situation).

“But in Rajkot, the situation was different, we were in a very good position, leading by some 300 runs. So, keeping that in mind, it was a much calmer and composed innings.”

Indian batters’ failure to kick on after getting a start was a major reason behind their defeat in the first Test. Gill said there was a talk in the dressing room about converting the starts into big knocks to pile pressure on the opposition.

India go down against Dutch



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 21: India suffered a 2-4 defeat via penalty shootout against the World No.1 Netherlands in their FIH Pro League match at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium here, Wednesday.

Both the teams stepped began the proceeding with 4-3-3 formation. After initial attacks the Dutch team got the early advantage when Floris Middendorp put the visitors ahead through a field goal in the fourth minute.

Hardik Singh showed why he is regarded as one of the brightest stars in the midfield as he not only played the role of a playmaker, but also was wonderful in defence making crucial interceptions.

Despite a goal down, the Indian team did not look under pressure. The Indians and the Dutch adopted man-to-man marking in the Dutch half. The Dutch team got their first PC in the 14th minute. Krishan Bahadur Pathak was absolutely brilliant under the bar and punched it out.

The Netherlands’ Joep de Mol was handed a green card for

pulling down Abhishek and was sent back to the dugout for two minutes. It didn’t make any difference to the scoreline though despite the visitors were reduced to 10 men for the couple of minutes.

The second quarter remained a fast-paced affair but goals eluded both the sides as the score remained 1-0 in favour of the Dutch camp. The Indian defence led by captain Harmanpreet Singh and Amit Rohidas and others did not allow any chance to the Dutch attackers.

India earned their first penalty corner through Hardik’s move on the right much to the delight of record audience 18,469. The ball, however, was ballooned out. The atmosphere broke into a rapturous shout as India got their second PC.

However, the Dutch rushers left their positions before the referee’s signal and the PC had to be retaken. This time India made no mistakes as Hardik, who was mercurial throughout the evening, put it into the net to restore parity. Indian custodian then made a brilliant save in a one-on-one sit-

uation just before breather as the hosts breathed a sigh of relief.

It was PR Sreejesh turn after the change of ends as he made a brilliant save of an absolute sitter. There were two Dutch attackers and none of the Indian backline was there to stop them.

In a very crucial moment, 56th minute to be precise, the Dutch got another PC and it went for a referral which was finally turned down. The Dutch side were reduced to 10 men again – second time in the night – when Jorrit Croon was shown the green card in the final minute of the match. The game gradually inched towards a penalty shootout as the score stood at 1-1.

Lalit Kumar Upadhyay and Arajieet Singh Hundal scored for the home team in the penalty shootout, while Shamsher Singh and Sukhjeet Singh failed to hit the target. The Netherlands, on the other hand converted four of their five chances through De Mol, Duco Telgenkamp, Thierry Brinkman and Croon with only Jonas de Geus spoiling his chance.

SHORT TAKES

Jaiswal moves up

Dubai: Young India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal Wednesday broke into the top-20 of the ICC Test Rankings, rising 14 spots to 15th in the batting charts after scoring back-to-back double centuries in the ongoing series against England.

Ravindra Jadeja, who was the player-of-the-match in Rajkot, also climbed up in the batting rankings from 41st to 34th position, the ICC said in a statement. He also returned with a seven-wicket match haul that lifted him three places to sixth in the bowling rankings.

Veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin climbed a rung to the second position behind pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. Jadeja and Ashwin continued to hold on to the first two spots in the Test all-rounders rankings.

Nagal out of 100

New Delhi: India’s top singles player Sumit Nagal dropped out of top-100 after losing 16 points from his kitty, resulting in him sliding three spots to 101 in the latest ATP rankings. Last year in the same week, Nagal had earned 41 ranking points by reaching the semifinals of the Chennai Challenger as a qualifier. He was defending those points and could earn only 25 in Bengaluru last week. Nagal had become one of the few Indian tennis players to crack the top-100 following his tremendous show in Chennai where he won his fifth Challenger level title.

Alcaraz retires hurt

Rio de Janeiro: Two-time major winner Carlos Alcaraz retired hurt from the Rio Open Tuesday after two games due to a right ankle injury. The retirement at 1-1 meant Brazil’s Thiago Monteiro advanced to the second round. He will face his compatriot Felipe Meligeni Alves for a place in the quarterfinals. Alcaraz twisted his ankle in the first game after only two points. He received medical attention, broke Monteiro’s serve, but after the Brazilian pulled level he shook his rival’s hand and left the court walking as his coach Juan Carlos Ferrero looked concerned. The Spanish player said his doctors said the injury was not serious. Alcaraz said he does feel pain when he walks and that he will have medical scans Wednesday.

India men, eves lose in WTTC pre-quarters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Busan (South Korea), Feb 21: The Indian men’s and women’s teams came up short in the pre-quarterfinals of the World Table Tennis Championships (WTTC) here on Wednesday but their performance, in all likelihood, will be enough to send them to the Paris Olympics.

The Manika Batra-led women’s team lost 1-3 to Chinese Taipei in the round of 16 while the men were blown away by South Korea for the second time in the competition, losing 0-3.

The event offered Olympic quotas to the quarterfinalists but the men and women from India are likely to make the cut through their world rankings. The final announcement will be made March 5 after including the points from the World Championships. The women’s team is currently ranked 17th and the men 15th.

“In all likelihood, the men and women have qualified for the Olympics but we will have to wait till March for official announcement,” said a Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) official.

In the women’s pre-quarterfinal, Manika put India ahead with a tense 11-8, 8-11, 4-11, 11-9, 11-9 win over Taipei’s Chen Szu-Yu. Sreeja Akula was blanked by



World No.10 Cheng I-Ching 11-6, 11-9, 11-5 in the second singles before Ayhika Mukherjee failed to match the power of Li Yu-Jhun, losing 10-12, 13-15, 11-9, 2-11.

In her second singles, the 36th ranked Manika tried her best against Cheng, an opponent she stunned last year, but on this occasion the world number 10 came well prepared to take on the Indian who uses the long pimpled rubber on the backhand. Manika lost 10-12, 11-5, 9-11, 5-11.

The Indian men’s team could not do much against the might

of Koreans. Harmeet Desai and Sharath Kamal managed to take a game off Jang Woojin and Lim Jonghoon respectively before G Sathiyam was blanked by Lee Sang Su.

Earlier Wednesday, Harmeet Desai won the decisive fifth rubber against Kazakhstan to steer the Indian men’s team to pre-quarterfinals while the women’s side strolled into the last-16 stage with an easy 3-0 victory over Italy.

Harmet lost the opening match to Kirill Gerassimenko 9-11, 12-10, 11-8, 7-11, 11-8 before

senior teammate and Commonwealth Games gold medalist Sharath Kamal brought India on level terms with a come-from-behind victory over Alan Kurmangaliyev.

The age-defying 41-year-old Sharath dug deep into his reserves after being two games down to turn the tide against his Kazakh opponent. Sharath finally won 6-11, 7-11, 11-7, 13-11, 11-9.

G Sathiyam then gave India a 2-1 lead after a minor lapse of concentration in the second game, finally notching up an easy 3-1 victory.

The two-time CWG gold medalist in team event, Sathiyam won the opening game 11-6 but lost the next game 5-11. He recovered from the lapse to win the last two games 11-2, 11-7, giving his opponent absolutely no chance, as his top spin earned him the maximum points.

Sharath though lost his second singles match to Gerassimenko 4-11, 9-11, 11-6, 7-11 as Kazakhstan levelled the scores. Harmeet did not show any signs of nerves in the decider and won 11-6, 11-8, 8-11, 11-7.

In the women’s section, Sreeja defeated Nikoleta Stefanova 12-10, 11-6, 11-8, while Manika Batra crushed Georgia Piccolino 12-10, 11-6, 11-5. Ayhika sealed the tie with a 15-13, 11-9, 13-15, 11-8 win over Gaia Monfardini.

HAALAND GOAL HELPS CITY BEAT BRENTFORD

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, Feb 21: Erling Haaland added Brentford to his list of Premier League conquests when he came to Manchester City’s rescue with a 71st-minute goal to clinch a 1-0 win Tuesday.

It looked like City would be dropping points in a tight title race for the second time in four days — after a 1-1 draw with Chelsea — only for Haaland to finally get some space behind Brentford’s defense in a counterattack.

Julian Alvarez played the ball forward, Haaland collected it and raced past center back Kristoffer Ajer, who lost his footing. One on one with Mark Flekken, Haaland took his shot early and placed a low finish to the Dutch goalkeeper’s right for his league-leading 17th goal of the campaign.

Of the 21 teams Haaland has faced since arriving in the Premier League last season, Brentford was the only one he’d failed to score against. Not anymore.

The narrow and nifty win moved the defending champions into second place in the standings, one point above Arsenal and one behind Liverpool. All three title contenders have played 25 of 38 games. Liverpool host Luton Wednesday.

City extended their unbeaten run in all competitions since December 6 to 16 matches, winning 14 and drawing two of them. Pep Guardiola’s team is also into the last 16 in the FA Cup and is

De Jong saves PSV

EINDHOVEN (The Netherlands): Luuk de Jong converted a penalty to cancel out a goal by his former teammate Donyell Malen as PSV Eindhoven and Borussia Dortmund drew 1-1 Tuesday in the first leg of their Champions League round of 16 matchup. Malen scored against his old club in the 24th minute with a shot that appeared to deflect off the outstretched leg of defender Sergino Dest. Malen didn’t wildly celebrate his first Champions League goal since December 2021, instead holding both hands in the air almost apologetically. De Jong equalized when he calmly slotted a low penalty past Alexander Meyer in the 56th minute after Mats Hummels had brought down Malik Tillman.

well-placed to get into the Champions League quarterfinals after taking a 3-1 lead over FC Copenhagen following the first leg of the round of 16. Could another treble of major trophies be on for the European champions?

City found it tough to break down Brentford’s packed defense — just as Pep Guardiola predicted before the game. The hosts had 25 shots in total, with Bobb having one cleared off the line in the first half as frustration among the City fans drew.

The first time Brentford left its defense exposed, Haaland pounced. City playmaker Kevin De Bruyne was an unused substitute and didn’t even come out to warm-up.

Manisha brace lifts Blue Tigresses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Alanya (Turkey), Feb 21: The Indian football team withstood a late charge by Estonia to pick up a hard-fought 4-3 win in the Turkish Women’s Cup Wednesday, the side’s first victory against an European nation.

Striker Manisha Kalyan scored a brace and the Chaoba Devi-coached side created a piece of history as the Indian senior women’s team had never before triumphed over a team from the UEFA confederation in an official outing.

The teams were locked 1-1 at half time. Manisha struck in the 17th and 81st minutes while Indumathi Kathiresan (62nd) and Pyari Xaxa (79th) scored the other goals for India. Lisette Tammik (32nd), Vlada Kubassova (88th) and Mari Liis Lillemae (90th) found the target for Estonia.

Played at the picturesque Gold City Sports Complex, the Blue Tigresses made a perfect start when they shot into the lead through a Manisha goal. After Estonia drew level off a strike by



Tammik, a rampaging India struck thrice through Indumathi, Xaxa and Manisha to take a commanding 4-1 lead.

Just as it appeared that the Indian women were on their way to a resounding victory,

Estonia made a last-ditch effort to equalise, scoring twice through Kubassova and Lillemae. However, the Indian defence did a fine job to see out the rest of the time and secure a memorable win.

India bag a gold, 2 silver, a bronze in ATCC on day 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 21: Indian cyclists made a bright beginning to the Asian Track Cycling Championships as the women’s junior team clinched gold in the sprint event here Wednesday.

The Indian side comprising Sarita Kumari, Niya Sebastian and Zaina Mohammed Ali Pirkhan outclassed the Korean team and secured gold in 53.383s.

The first silver came in the Para-Team Sprint event as the team of Arshad Shaikh, Jalaluddin Ansari and Basavaraj Horaddi finished second with a timing of 1:02.661s. Another silver came through the trio of Narayan Mahto, Syed Khalid Baghi, and Mayanglambam Wattaba Meitei in the Junior Team Sprint event with a timing of 47.93s.

The Women’s Junior side consisting of Harshita Jakhar, Suhani Kumari, Dhanyadha JP, and Bhumika secured a bronze in the Team Pursuit event, outpacing Chinese Taipei.



JUST THE USUAL: Erling Haaland celebrates with Phil Foden and Julian Alvarez after scoring against Brentford, Tuesday