



ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର



Shree Jagannatha Puri Heritage Corridor

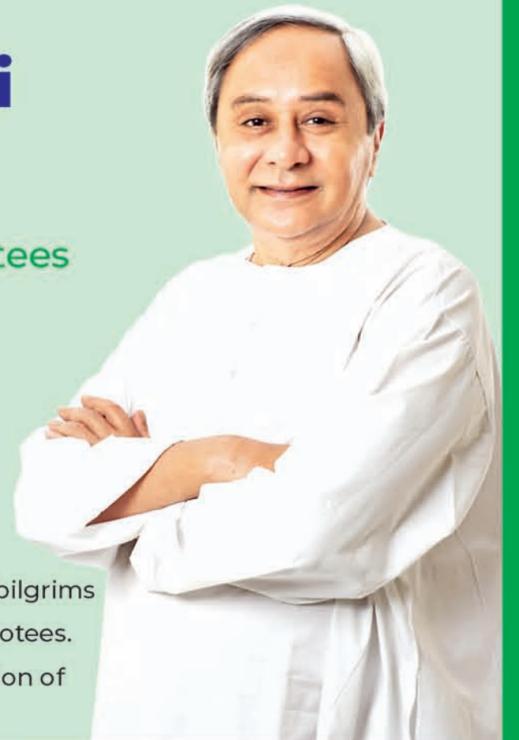
Redefining the Spiritual Experience for Devotees



The world is witnessing the grandeur of Lord Jagannatha.



- 8-meter Bahya (Outer) Pradakshina: A serene pathway for visitors/pilgrims
- 75-meter-wide heritage corridor containing all amenities for devotees.
- 10-meter Antar (Inner) Pradakshina: For the ceremonial procession of deities year-round and use by the general public for parikrama.



Information & Public Relations Department



LOHAN WANTS ANOTHER BABY

American actress and singer Lindsay Lohan already has Luai, seven months, with her husband Bader Shammas. However, the 37-year-old said on *The Drew Barrymore Show* said: "I was lucky enough to have a sibling. So I want Luai to have that."

OLIVIA RODRIGO DISTRIBUTES CONTRACEPTION AT CONCERT

American singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo gave out emergency contraception and condoms at her concert in St. Louis, Missouri, where abortion was almost completely banned after the landmark Roe v. Wade ruling was overturned in 2022.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You are very apprehensive about your possessions today, and will not like to share them. This mood may be because of someone particular. Affairs regarding love, Ganesh says, are progressing fine, and your married life will bloom.

TAURUS
This day you will have an urge to take a trip, be it a small one. Ganesh sees you enthusiastically making detailed plans and arrangements, arranging for funds and getting in touch with all those you desire to take along. It is possible that you may ultimately scrap your plans and choose to stay at home.

GEMINI
You will make a reputation for yourself as a leader in your social circle. You yearn for something in your heart, and need to concentrate your energies upon attaining it. Your creative mind will come up with solutions today, to certain questions that have been perplexing you for quite some, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will get a surprise gift or god news from your friends or relatives. You will enjoy with your family. You will get the affection and co-operation of family members. Happiness and rapport in domestic life is indicated. Ganesh's grace is upon you.

LEO
You will pay more attention to matters at home. You may take up home renovation projects. You may end up replacing the entire furniture at your place even. You will spend the day enjoying with your family members and friends, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Emotions that have been locked in the inner recesses of your heart might just surface today. You may develop an emotional attachment with your material possessions. However, Ganesh says, if you don't find your surroundings conducive, you will feel extremely restless.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today will be an auspicious day for starting any new work. In the office you will be assigned new positions and you shall excel in the same. Whatever work is undertaken by you will see you attain success in it. Today is a lucky day for you Ganesh says.

SCORPIO
Today, there may come up situations which may test your patience, predicts Ganesh. However, it would be wise to sit and sort out all the differences with your colleagues or family members or your partner.

SAGITTARIUS
You need to increase your tolerance power as you may have to face criticism from close ones. However, it is not feasible to please everyone around. You may just be happy doing basic favours for your loved ones. Ganesh asks you to be patient.

CAPRICORN
You'll kick start the day in high spirit which will take everyone by surprise. You will shift gears at work so that you can perform more efficiently and productively. Such a change will boost your confidence as you will see the positive results for yourself. Most of the day, you will work like a busy bee, but at the end you will listen to music or be with your friends to relax your mind, foretells Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Today is a day of communication and associations. While at a family gathering, you will enjoy chatting nineteen to the dozen! But at work, you may be left teaching, explaining, negotiating, co-ordinating and arranging meetings. A productive but draining day, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Compromise is the name of the game when it comes to relationships, and you are adept at it. You realise the importance of losing an argument to win over a heart, and do so with panache. Indeed, this is an area where others emulate you, says Ganesh.

Mrunal to speak at UN event

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur, who played a human trafficking victim in her debut film, *Love Sonia*, is set to participate in an upcoming panel discussion titled *Human Cost of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence* at the UN Headquarters in New York.

While speaking about her excitement for the event, the *Sita Ramam* actress expressed, "Being a part of this panel discussion is a profound honour for me. *Love Sonia* was not just a film; it was a journey into the darkest corners of humanity, shedding light on the unimaginable suffering endured by victims of human trafficking. Through my role, I had the opportunity to delve deep into the complexities of this issue, and it has since become a cause that is incredibly close to my heart. Participating in this panel allows me to lend my voice to the collective effort of raising awareness and advocating for change."

She added, "It's an opportunity to amplify the voices of those who have been silenced and to stand in solidarity with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. I am deeply grateful for this platform and eager to contribute to the important conversations that lie ahead."

Accompanying her on the panel will be esteemed speakers such as Masha Efrosinina, Fawzia Koofi, Cohav Elkayam Levy, Meaza Gebremedhin, and Areig Elhagwill.

AGENCIES



Big screen debut for Uorfi

Mumbai: Social media sensation Uorfi Javed, who is known for her unique fashion sense, will be seen in the upcoming film *Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2* which will mark her big screen debut.

Aligned with the theme of the film, the makers seem to have made the perfect choice by casting Uorfi as she commands a large following on social media. Earlier, it was revealed that Tushar Kapoor and Mouni Roy will be seen making cameo appearances in *LSD 2*.

Building upon the legacy of the first instalment, *Love, Sex Aur Dhokha (2010)*, *LSD 2* pushes the boundaries and promises to be even more explicit, ensuring an edgier and deeply immersive experience for the audience.

Presented by Balaji Motion Pictures, a division of Balaji Telefilms and Cult Movies, *LSD 2* is produced by Ektaa R Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor. The film will be released April 19.

IAN S



Katrina on pressure to look perfect

Mumbai: Despite the fact that she is considered to be one of the most stunning actresses in the film industry, Katrina Kaif too feels the pressure to look perfect all the time. In a recent interview, the *Tiger 3* actress opened up on the same and said that societal expectations from female stars are huge.

Katrina talked about how her idea of beauty has changed over the years. She shared moments when she gets a bit worried before going out for events, focusing on things like her outfit, hair, and others.

The *Welcome* actress also admitted, "We all struggle with self-image and confidence issues."

She highlighted how societal expectations and the influence of social media can put pressure on women to meet specific beauty ideals. She stressed that, even though it might not always be obvious, this pressure can affect one's self-perception over time.

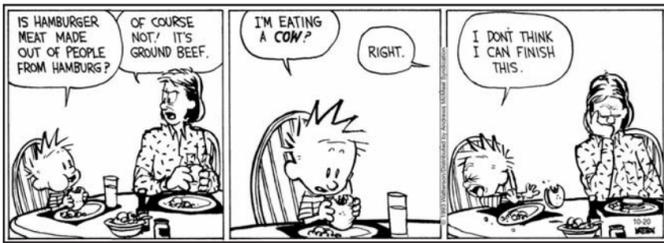
Even though she didn't see herself as an expert on telling people to love themselves, she understood how important it is to appreciate what makes each person special. She said, "It's also a reminder for me to celebrate myself, right? To celebrate what is unique about us, because that's what makes us, us."

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

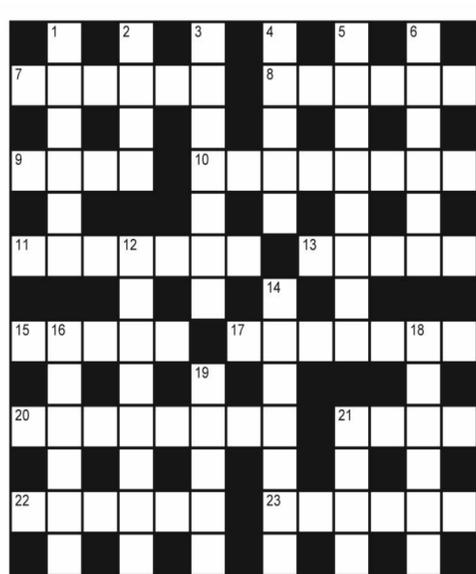


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Copyright ©2024 PuzzleJunction.com

- Across**
- 7 Settlement
 - 8 Toiletry article
 - 9 Tough spot
 - 10 Ale holders
 - 11 Grandstander (4-3)
 - 13 Suffering
 - 15 Large edible ray
 - 17 Whiskey
 - 20 Sniffles and such (4,4)
 - 21 Burden
 - 22 Argue
 - 23 Clasp
- Down**
- 1 Brush up
 - 2 Phone button
 - 3 Bewilder
 - 4 Oxlike antelope
 - 5 Unknown person
 - 6 Zarqa locale
 - 12 Back out
 - 14 Yucatan discoverer
 - 16 Custodian of the gate?
 - 18 Prophet
 - 19 Elector
 - 21 Deficiency

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

C	C	S	E	U	S
D	E	C	A	M	I
R	E	V	E	L	L
R	L	L	E	O	K
C	H	A	T	E	A
A	R	C	A	N	O
C	R	A	F	T	V
D	I	A	R	A	P
A	C	H	E	S	O
O	S	T	A	A	L
S	P	I	T	T	I
Y	A	R	E	A	A

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

18 OTT platforms banned
Centre bans 18 OTT platforms, websites and apps for posting vulgar and obscene content despite multiple warnings
NATIONAL | P7

Tourism hit
Indian tourists are shunning Maldives and its tourism industry is feeling the pinch of declined revenue
INTERNATIONAL | P8

Fuel prices slashed
Ending a nearly two-year-long hiatus, state-owned oil companies Thursday cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹2 per litre each
BUSINESS | P9

Mumbai reign supreme
Mumbai end their eight-year wait to lift a record-extending 42nd Ranji Trophy title, beating Vidarbha by 169 runs in the final
SPORTS | BACK PAGE



AIRING GRIEVANCES: Farmers raise slogans during a 'Maha Panchayat' as part of a protest to press for better crop prices promised to them in 2021, New Delhi, Thursday

ELECTORAL BOND DATA OUT

NO INFO ON WHO DONATED TO WHICH PARTY

AGENCIES
New Delhi, March 14: From the who's who of the corporate world to low-profile businesses - the Election Commission (EC) Thursday put out the entire list of entities that have purchased electoral bonds for making political donations.
The names include steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal, Sunil Bharti Mittal's Airtel, Anil Agarwal's Vedanta, ITC, Mahindra and Mahindra, a lesser-known Future Gaming and Hotel Services, and Megha Engineering.
While it is already known that the ruling BJP received the highest amount



of donation of over ₹6,000 crore followed by Congress, the data dump only disclosed the amount donated by each entity or individual. It does not say who donated to which party.
Following a Supreme Court directive, the State Bank of India (SBI) had shared the data with the poll panel March 12. The SC had given the EC time till 5pm of March 15 to upload

the data on its website.
The EC has put the details on 'Disclosure of Electoral Bonds submitted by SBI' in two parts. One set contains the purchase details - date of purchase of the electoral bond, the name of the purchaser and the denomination. The second set contains political parties' details - date of encashment, the name of political party and denomination. However, no link between the purchaser and the party is discernible from the files.
In a landmark verdict delivered February 15, the SC had scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme that allowed anonymous political funding, calling it 'unconstitutional' and ordered disclosure by the EC of donors, the amount donated by them and the recipients.
MORE P2

SHORT TAKES

DA hike for state govt employees

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced 4 per cent hike in the dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief (DR) for state government employees and pensioners respectively, Thursday. With the latest hike, the DA and DR rose to 50 per cent from 46 per cent. The enhanced amount will be paid from January 1, 2024. It will benefit over 4.5 lakh state government employees and 3.5 lakh pensioners.

Minimum wages up

BHUBANESWAR: The state government announced a hike of minimum daily wages of unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly-skilled workers, Thursday. While the minimum daily wage for unskilled workers has been increased to ₹450, semi-skilled workers will now get ₹500 a day. Skilled workers will get ₹550 a day and highly-skilled workers ₹600 per day.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



So sorry, sir! I had no idea that you donated through electoral bonds

SUSPENSE CONTINUES

Almost 10 days after talks about cozying up of the BJP and BJD started doing the rounds following Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's sweet exchanges during a public function at Chandikhole in Jajpur March 5, the suspense over an alliance between the electorally rival parties continued till late Thursday night, with neither of them ready to lift the veil of secrecy, or speak in clear terms about such an eventuality.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Confusion and uncertainty continued to prevail over a possible BJP-BJD alliance ahead of the elections, Thursday.

On his arrival from the national capital Thursday morning after meeting Union Minister Amit Shah, BJP state president Manmohan Samal said the party would go solo in the elections and form government in Odisha, without mincing a word about the speculated alliance with BJD.

However, around two hours later, Samal said, "Whatever our national president or parliamentary board says is the final decision. Media shouldn't make narrative based on my statement."

Later in the day, Samal was asked to rush back to Delhi and attend a meeting of the party's top brass in evening, BJP sources said.

The BJD, on the other hand, stayed away from reacting to the Samal's statements, and, rather its top brass gathered for a meeting at Naveen Niwas in the

evening.
Emerging out of the meeting, BJD vice-president and MLA Debi Prasad Mishra told reporters that the party discussed poll preparations, strategies and the situation in each constituency.

"In the meeting, BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik gave certain suggestions to party observers in various districts, who presented reports of the ground situation," Mishra said, evading questions over alliance.

Earlier in the day, BJD national spokesperson Sanjiv Misra said that the party leadership would inform media about the issue at the appropriate time.

This was the second meeting of top BJD leaders after the talks on the possible alliance started doing the rounds over a week ago.

BJP-BJD TIE-UP BUZZ



They had met earlier March 6, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Odisha.

The BJD vice-president had March 6 said that the regional party will do 'everything' for the larger

interest of the state while replying to a question on the possible pre-poll alliance with the BJP.

Later, the possibility of alliance between the BJD and the BJP was brightened after state's saffron party leaders were summoned to the national capital March 10 evening.

They had several rounds of discussions over three days with BJP top brass, including Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan who was tasked to take opinion of the party's state leaders.

Water crisis drives Bangaloreans to edge

AGENCIES

Bangalore, March 14: From exploring work from home (WFH) option and shifting to a place with better water facilities, to taking bath on alternate days - citizens of India's tech capital (Bangalore) are trying almost everything to deal with an unprecedented water crisis that has hit the city like never before.

The woes have become a serious issue of concern for Bangaloreans, especially in Whitefield, KR Puram, Electronic City, RR Nagar, Kengeri and CV Raman Nagar.

Those staying in high rise apartments with water harvesting facilities are also now dependent on tankers for drinking water and many restrictions have been imposed.

Eateries in Bangalore are mulling over use of disposable cups, glasses and plates to avoid excess use of water.

Educational institutions are also feeling the pinch.

Recently, a coaching centre in the city asked its students to attend classes online due to an 'emergency' for a



week. Similarly, a school on Bannerghatta Road was also closed, asking students to attend classes online just like they did during the Covid pandemic.

Meanwhile, some residents of a layout in KR Puram have come up with plans to take bath on alternate days, order food twice a week instead of cooking at home, and restricting water supply to their tenants.

People say they are forced to pay more for the tanker water, although the rates have been capped by the government.

With temperature rising, it is difficult to avoid a daily shower but they are left with no option but to take bath on alternative days, said Sujatha, also a resident of KR Puram.

"What to do? I have two school going children, plus we have to manage household chores. Clean vessels, cook food, wash clothes...So, we have started using paper plates, that way we have cut down on our water usage. And we order food twice a week. Since we can afford to do that, we are doing it and we are using the washing machine only once in a week now," she said.

Deficit rains last year is being blamed for people's plight. Lakshmi V, an IT professional living in Singasandra, has been requesting her firm to allow WFH option so that she and her family can temporarily shift to her native place in Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu until the situation becomes better.

"If the situation persists, we are thinking of seeking a work from home option. We are planning to move to our native place in Tamil Nadu temporarily till rain arrives here," she said.

KiiT International School

"Selfless Service Endless Learning"

IB WORLD SCHOOL

Cambridge Assessment International Education | Cambridge International School | International Baccalaureate

KAST KiiTIS ADMISSION CUM SCHOLARSHIP TEST

For ADMISSIONS in CLASS XI - 2024-25

Science, Commerce, Humanities (CBSE), International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)

APPLY NOW! through www.kiitis.ac.in

AVAIL SCHOLARSHIP UP TO 100% ON TUITION FEE
(*NO SCHOLARSHIP FOR IBDP)

Test Date: 24th March 2024
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Mode of Test: OFFLINE

SALIENT FEATURES

- ▶ School Timings: (7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.).
- ▶ For Day Boarders supervised remedial session on every working day (3:30 p.m to 5:00 p.m.).
- ▶ For Full Boarders supervised self-study & doubt clearing session from Monday-Friday (6:00 p.m to 8:00 p.m.).
- ▶ Integrated Program for JEE (Main & Advance) / NEET (UG) by our own skilled faculty team of national repute for competitive exams.
- ▶ Tie up with ALLEN for Study material and All India Test Series.
- ▶ Special SPARK batch (Based on excellent performance) with VSTs on Saturdays.

- ▶ Coaching for Commerce & Humanities: CIVIL SERVICE by VAJRAO • CUET by Grad Express
- ▶ CLAT by CAREER LAUNCHER • CA Foundation by ARIFIN
- ▶ IMBA by IDENTITY
- ▶ Ideal Student -Teacher ratio is 10:1
- ▶ Leadership development program (MUN, Bizclave)
- ▶ Indian and Foreign university career counselling support programme.
- ▶ Transportation (Covering Bhubaneswar & Cuttack)
• AC vehicle with a female attendant
- ▶ Breakfast, Lunch, 2 snacks
- ▶ AC boarding facilities with Two/Four bed sharing.
- ▶ Indoor & Outdoor sports activities.

OUR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

99%

Sneha Nayak
REGIONAL TOPPER
AMBIK DIBRANGTI 2023

AIR 621

Priyanka Sar
JEE ADVANCED 2023

AIR 256

Sangeeta Sarangi
NEET SCORE - 700
AIMS, BHUBANESWAR

AIR 188

Arun Kumar Das
S.C. BHARATI COLLEGE
CUTTACK

SR 12

Shikha Parikshya
CLAT 2024

Chandana Khandari
CUET QUALIFIED
2024

JEE MAIN 2024 (SESSION -1)

Anish Dharuka
99.97 %ile

Amitesh Maharana
99.91 %ile

Satish Kumar Mishra
99.84 %ile

Shankhshara Dash
99.84 %ile

Aditya Prudhan
99.78 %ile

Aditya Prudhan
99.66 %ile

Surya Prasad Maharana
94.67 %ile

Overall 100% Passmarks

92.36 %ile **90.49 %ile**

&
many more's

Test Centre: KiiT International School Bhubaneswar, Odisha

9777061572, 7205761572, 7205843572 | www.kiitis.ac.in | admission@kiitis.ac.in | Campus- 9, KiiT, Patia, Bhubaneswar- 751024

ELECTORAL BONDS

Biz tycoons among top buyers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: From steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal to billionaire Sunil Bharti Mittal's Airtel, Anil Agarwal's Vedanta, ITC, Mahindra and Mahindra, and a lesser-known Future Gaming and Hotel Services were among the prominent buyers of the now-scraped electoral bonds for making political donations.

The Election Commission put up on its website the data on electoral bonds Thursday, a day ahead of the Supreme Court-fined deadline.

Future Gaming, which was probed by the Enforcement Directorate in March 2022, bought electoral bonds worth over ₹1,350 crore under two different sets of companies.

Among the known corporates, Agarwal's Vedanta Ltd bought ₹398 crore worth of bonds, while Sunil Mittal's three companies together purchased a total of ₹246 crore worth of bonds.

Steel magnate Lakshmi Niwas Mittal bought ₹35 crore worth of bonds in his individual capacity. Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering, which has bagged contracts of several large infrastructure projects, bought bonds worth ₹966 crore.



While most of the bonds have been issued in the name of political parties, the donations made to the Congress and the Samajwadi Party were made in the name of 'President, All India Congress Committee' and 'Adyaksha Samajwadi Party'.

Following a Supreme Court directive, the State Bank of India, which was the authorised seller of electoral bonds, had shared the data with the poll panel March 12. The top court had given the Election Commission time till 5pm of March 15 to upload the data on its website.

The EC has put the details on 'Disclosure of Electoral Bonds Submitted by SBI' in two parts - one listing the buyers and the other listing the beneficiary parties.

In an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the State Bank of India (SBI) said a total of 22,217 electoral bonds of varying denominations were purchased by donors between April 1, 2019 and February 15 this year, out of which 22,030 were redeemed by political parties.

According to the data uploaded

BOND FACTS

- Future Gaming and Hotel Services - ₹1,368 crore
- Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd - ₹966 crore
- Qwik Supply Chain Private Ltd - ₹410 crore
- Vedanta Ltd - ₹400 crore
- Haldia Energy Ltd - ₹377 crore
- Bharati Group - ₹247 crore
- Essel Mining and Industries Ltd - ₹224 crore
- Western UP Power Transmission - ₹220 crore
- Keventer Foodpark Infra Ltd - ₹194 crore
- Madanlal Ltd - ₹185 crore
- DLF Group - ₹170 crore
- Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital - ₹162 crore
- Utikal Alumina International - ₹145.3 crore
- Jindal Steel and Power Ltd - ₹123 crore
- Birla Carbon India - ₹105 crore
- Rungta Sons - ₹100 crore
- Dr Reddy's - ₹80 crore
- Piramal Enterprises Group - ₹60 crore
- Navyuga Engineering - ₹55 crore
- Shirdi Sai Electricals - ₹40 crore
- Edelweiss Group - ₹40 crore
- Cipla Ltd - ₹39.2 crore
- Lakshmi Niwas Mittal - ₹35 crore
- Grasim Industries - ₹33 crore
- Jindal Stainless - ₹30 crore
- Bajaj Auto - ₹25 crore
- Sun Pharma Laboratories - ₹25 crore
- Mankind Pharma - ₹24 crore
- Bajaj Finance - ₹20 crore
- Maruti Suzuki India - ₹20 crore
- Ultratech - ₹15 crore
- TVS Motors - ₹10 crore

by the poll panel, the buyers of electoral bonds included Spicejet, IndiGo, Grasim Industries, Megha Engineering, Piramal Enterprises, Torrent Power, Bharti Airtel, DLF Commercial Developers, Vedanta Ltd., Apollo Tyres, Edelweiss, PVR, Keventer, Sula Wines, Welspun, Sun Pharma, Vardhman Textiles, Jindal Group, Phillips Carbon Black Limited, CEAT tyres, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, ITC, Kaypee Enterprises, Cipla, and Ultratech

Cement. The parties that redeemed electoral bonds include the BJP, Congress, AIADMK, BRS, Shiv Sena, TDP, YSR Congress, DMK, JD-S, NCP, Trinamool Congress, JDU, RJD, AAP, the Samajwadi Party, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, BJD, Goa Forward Party, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, JMM, Sikkim Democratic Front, and the Jana Sena Party.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Man kills wife, hides body at home for 3 days

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 14: The Maitri Vihar Police Thursday arrested a man who allegedly killed his wife with a wooden plank and hid the corpse for three days at his residence to evade police action.

The accused was identified as Gourab Jena, a native of Ganjam district. He lived with wife and three children - two sons (aged 22 years old and 6

years) and a 4-year-old daughter in a hutment at Tarini slums, here. He has been booked under IPC Section 302.

The crime was discovered when neighbours complained of foul smell emanating from the hutment and informed the police who recovered the body. IIC Maitri Vihar Police Station Mrutyunjay Swain said Gourab had shifted both of his minor children to his neighbour's house to hide the crime, while the eld-

est son was away in their native village.

Swain said Gourab and his wife worked as construction labors and were addicted to alcohol. Three days back, Gourab returned home in a drunken state for which his wife picked up a fight with him. Later, in a fit of rage, Gourab took a wooden plank and hit her on her head, causing her death on the spot.

Gourab was produced before a court for remand.

Agniveers' passing out parade at INS Chilka

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 14: The passing out parade of the third batch of Agniveers will be held at INS Chilka in Odisha Friday, an official statement said.

The passing out parade will mark the completion of training of around 2,600 Agniveers, including women cadets, who have undergone rigorous training at Chilka, it said.

Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff, will be the chief guest of the programme. Vice Admiral V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, besides family

members of the Agniveers, veterans and sports personalities, will attend the ceremony.

The Ministry of Defence said that this momentous event will be witnessed by the proud family members of the passing out Agniveers. Besides this, various high achiever veterans and sports personalities will also be present during the ceremony inspiring the Agniveers with their remarkable achievements.

The Chief of Naval Staff will also attend the valedictory function and present awards and trophies to various divisions and unveil the bilingual trainees' magazine 'Ankur'.

CM launches OIMS in state

Chief Minister also inaugurates new district websites developed under the 'Standardized Website Framework' (SWF), aligned with the state's 5T (transformation) initiative

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday inaugurated the Online Incentive Management System (OIMS) developed by Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC), marking the beginning of a new era of e-governance in the state.

This system allows entrepreneurs to submit applications for incentives under various policies related to IT, electronics, data centre, BPO, semiconductor manufacturing, and fabless policies, an official said.

The system offers several advantages over traditional physical application submission methods, including easy document upload, single-window portal, error-checking features, and message alerts. Moreover, it employs robust security measures to prevent unauthorised access, he said.

Through this online portal, companies can submit applications anytime, any day, allowing for greater flexibility. It also en-



ables real-time tracking of application status and provides notifications via email or SMS at different processing stages.

Patnaik expressed his satisfaction with the new online system, noting that it's likely the first time any state has implemented a faceless incentive management platform for IT/Electronics Industries through an online platform.

He emphasised that these initiatives aim to make governance more accessible, transparent, and user-friendly.

Additionally, the electronics and information technology department, in collaboration with NASSCOM and other industry bodies, plans to conduct hands-on training programmes for IT/ITES/Electronics establishments on using the online portal effectively.

In conjunction with the launch, Patnaik also inaugurated new district websites de-

veloped under the 'Standardized Website Framework' (SWF), aligned with the state's 5T (transformation) initiative.

All 30 district portals have been developed within this framework to offer a unified experience for citizens across government websites, the official added.

Patnaik highlighted that these initiatives reinforce the state's commitment to technological transformation, enhancing transparency and efficiency. He emphasised that they represent models of 5T governance, setting new benchmarks in the nation.

5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian praised the impact of the 5T initiative, crediting it with bringing transformation across various sectors of the state. He noted that the principles of 5T have helped navigate through times of uncertainty successfully.

₹19 crore edu complex in Malkangiri unveiled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated a modern educational complex at Badapada in the 'Swabhiman' area of the tribal-dominated Malkangiri district, Thursday.

Swabhiman Anchal, previously known as the cut-off area in Malkangiri district, was once a stronghold of Maoist insurgents until the state government constructed the Gurupriya bridge, connecting the region.

The educational complex, spanning seven acres and costing approximately ₹19 crore, was inaugurated by the CM via video conferencing.

Designed to cater to over 1,000 students from classes 1 to 12, the complex boasts state-of-the-art facilities aimed at preparing students for their future endeavours.

Facilities within the complex include classrooms, a specialised

e-library housing 3,000 books, a tribal corner, activity rooms, an NCC room, a computer lab, an ICT Smart Learning Centre, a science lab, and a hostel accommodating 200 boys. Additionally, there is a separate hostel for girls accommodating 500 students.

The complex also features an amphitheatre, garden, sports courts, open gym, solar lighting, solar water supply, water harvesting systems, and various other amenities.

Expressing his special connection to Malkangiri, Patnaik recalled launching major welfare schemes such as the subsidised rice scheme, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), and LAccMI bus in the district.

He emphasised that the educational complex in the tribal hinterland would significantly contribute to the holistic development of students in the region.

AIIMS Bhub bags top WHO honour

Bhubaneswar: AIIMS Bhubaneswar has been conferred with the prestigious Asia Safe Surgical Implant Consortium QIP Award 2023 by the World Health Organisation (WHO). AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, in a press release, Thursday said the Institute has received this award of distinction for its noteworthy work on the quality of instrument and implant reprocessing in the hospital. Twenty-eight reputed hospitals from all over Asia participated in this programme and AIIMS Bhubaneswar emerged as the best hospital. For the first time since the inception of this programme, AIIMS Bhubaneswar from India bagged the first position. The whole programme was partnered by 3M India which played a pivotal role in its execution in different countries along with India.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	73097.28 ↑ 335.39
NIFTY	22146.65 ↑ 148.95
DOLLAR	82.92 ↑ ₹0.07
EURO	90.68 ↑ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹65,491 ↓ ₹406
SILVER	₹75,130 ↓ ₹40

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	35.2°C	35.4°C
Min Temp	26.5°C	25.2°C
Humidity	85%	83%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST		
LIGHT TO MODERATE RAIN		

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Subhrajeev Mohanty, Son of Sukanta Chandra Mohanty, year of ICSE Examination appeared and passed in 2021, my Unique ID No.-7464427. The date of birth was wrongly mentioned as 22.02.2006 instead of 21.02.2006. I was studied in Venkateswar English Medium School, Unit-IV, Bhubaneswar.

I, DIWAN ASLAM KHAN, S/o- Late Shamsuddin Khan, resident of Plot No.-414/4104, Bajrang Vihar, Patia, P.S.- Infocity, Dist.- Khordha, PIN- 751024, Odisha declare by this affidavit No.-CC-84 dt. 14.03.2024 that now onwards I shall be known ASLAM KHAN for all future purposes.

LOST

Sale Deed Lost: ଡେକାମାଲ ଗାଉଁର ବହୁଷାଠିଏ ବାଡ଼ିଆ ଗୋବାର Kabala Regd. No.-10501205303, dt. 13.08.2012 କୋଣାର୍କ ଜାଗାରେ ହଜିଯାଇଛି। କୌଣସି ସବୁବନ୍ଧ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ସହାର ସହାନ ପାଆନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ନିମ୍ନ ଠିକଣାରେ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ। Contact- Sushree Punam Bhanja, Mob- 9556644554, 8260522056.

Pet-friendly Nature Park opens in City

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Bhubaneswar North MLA Susant Kumar Rout inaugurated a pet-friendly Nature Park at Bharatpur in Odisha Thursday.



The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) has developed the park at a cost of ₹2 crore. The Bhubaneswar Urban Knowledge Centre (BUKC) of BDA has planned and designed the park keeping ecology and convenience of visitors in mind.

The park has a designated area for pet animals, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the city. The pet-friendly space will cater to dogs of all breeds with a dedicated paw zone and eco-friendly seating arrangements for caregivers.

Spread across five acre of land, the park has a garden library, cafeteria, an open gym, a children's play area, a yoga mandap, a meditation podium, an amphitheater and other amenities like toilets, pathways and special tracks.

The park also has dedicated parking spaces for both two-wheelers and four-wheelers. BMC Mayor Sulochana Das and Deputy Mayor Manjulata Kanhar were also present at the inaugural function.

55 entities among top holding tax defaulters

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 14: As the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) grapples to meet its annual holding tax target, an audit by the civic body has revealed that educational and commercial establishments constitute a big chunk of violators in the Capital City.

According to the defaulters' list released by the BMC Thursday, 55 properties owned by well known establishments flouted holding tax amounting to ₹29 crore. The list takes into account the current and pending tax arrears of these properties. With ₹22 crore, offices located in the south-west zone of the municipal area -- comprising

Baramunda, OUAT Square, CRP Square, Unit-8 and Nayapalli -- has reported the maximum violation among the City's four zones. Till February 15, the civic body had managed to collect only 40 per cent of the targeted holding tax for the current financial year.

Deputy Commissioner, BMC, Priyabrata Padhi said the tax violators finding mention in the list have not paid holding taxes for at least 2 years. Zonal offices had also sent repeated notices to these offices, reminding them of pending holding taxes, but to no avail, he added. On the issue of government institutions not clearing holding taxes, Padhi said their higher authorities must take cognizance and release funds to resolve the matter.

AADHAAR MUST FOR PWD SCHOLARSHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: The government has mandated the use of Aadhaar as identity document for availing six scholarships and benefit of as many schemes and initiatives meant for people with disabilities.

Those without Aadhaar numbers have to submit Aadhaar enrolment slips along with other documents to avail these benefits.

In a notification, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) has mandated Aadhaar use to avail six scholarships -- pre-matric, post-matric, top class education, national overseas scholarship, national fel-

lowship, and free coaching -- by persons with disabilities.

Also, availing services under the Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme for adults and children, Niramaya, Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances, District Disability Rehabilitation Centre, residential care for adults, and National Institutes for Children and Adults would need Aadhaar card. The notification said any individual desirous of availing benefits under the schemes but does not possess Aadhaar number or has not yet enrolled for Aadhaar shall be required to make application for Aadhaar enrolment before registering for the schemes.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9760056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupalaj Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-977682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.



Education Empowerment

Paving the Way for All,
Delivering Excellence



More than 1.92 Crore Students Enrolled in the School Chalo Campaign

- Enhancing infrastructure facilities in more than 1.40 lakh primary/upper primary schools under Operation Kayakalp
- Establishment of state universities in Azamgarh, Aligarh and Saharanpur
- Construction of the Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Science in Lucknow
- Establishment of 15 incubation centers under Startup Policy
- Construction in full swing of Rajendra Prasad Law University in Prayagraj
- Construction of Major Dhyanchand Sports University is underway in Meerut
- Laid the Foundation Stone of Mahatma Buddha University of Agriculture and Technology in Kushinagar
- Decision to establish state universities in Vindhyachal, Devipatan and Moradabad divisions
- Construction of 280 New Government Inter Colleges/High Schools and 65 girls' hostels
- Construction of 41 New Inter Colleges, 215 Government High Schools and 77 girls' hostels
- Expansion of government ITIs from 260 to 305 with seats increased from 1.25 lakh to 1.72 lakh
- 75 Government Polytechnic under construction



Education for All

Double Engine Ki Sarkar



Information and Public Relations Department, U.P.

Our life should be governed by the love for the Truth and the thirst for Light.

THE MOTHER



Hanging By Thread

Ukraine has about a month before it runs out of artillery shells, and the US Congress cannot agree to ship more. Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny is dead. The slaughter in Gaza continues with no end in sight. The Yemeni Houthis are attacking ships in the Red Sea. The North Koreans are testing intercontinental ballistic missiles. In normal times, pessimism can look like an intellectual fad. In times like these, it becomes a starker form of realism.

The post-1945 world order – written into international law, ratified by the United Nations, and kept in place by the balance of nuclear terror among major powers – is hanging by a thread. The United States is divided against itself and stretched to the limits of its capabilities. Europe is waking up to the possibility that, come November, America may no longer fulfill its collective-defense obligations under Article 5 of the NATO treaty. Faced with this new uncertainty, Europe is cranking up its defense production, and European politicians are screwing up the courage to persuade their electorates that they will need to ante up 2% of their GDP to guarantee their own safety.

The Western alliance doesn't just face the challenge of doubling down on defense while maintaining unity across the Atlantic. It also now faces an "axis of resistance" that might be tempted to threaten Western hegemony with a simultaneous, coordinated challenge. The lynchpin of this axis is the Russia-China "no-limits" partnership. While the Chinese supply the Russians with advanced circuitry for their weapons systems, Russian President Vladimir Putin ships them cheap oil. Together they have imposed autocratic rule over most of Eurasia.

If Ukraine's exhausted defenders are forced to concede Russian sovereignty over Crimea and the Donbas region, the Eurasian axis of dictators will have succeeded in changing a European land frontier by force. Achieving this will threaten every state on the edge of Eurasia: Taiwan, the Baltic countries, and even Poland. Both dictatorial regimes will use their vetoes on the UN Security Council to ratify conquest, effectively consigning the UN Charter to history's dustbin.

This partnership of dictators works in tandem with a cluster of rights-abusing renegades, led by Iran and North Korea. The North Koreans provide Putin with artillery shells while plotting to invade the rest of their peninsula. The Iranians manufacture the drones that terrorise Ukrainians in their trenches. Meanwhile, Iran's proxies – Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis – are helping Russia and China by tying down America and Israel.

Unless the US can force Israel into a long-term ceasefire, it will find itself struggling to control conflicts on three fronts (Asia, Europe, and the Middle East). Not even a country that outspends its rivals on defense by two to one can maintain a war footing simultaneously across so many theaters.

The idea that democracies around the world will join up with America and Europe against the authoritarian threat seems like an illusion. Instead of joining with the embattled democracies of the Global North, the rising democracies of the Global South – Brazil, India, and South Africa – seem unembarrassed to be aligning with regimes that rely on mass repression, the cantonment of entire populations (the Uighurs in China), and shameless murder (Navalny being only the most recent example).

To be sure, the authoritarian axis currently is united only by what it opposes: American power. It is otherwise divided by its ultimate interests. The Chinese, for example, cannot be overjoyed that the Houthis are blocking freight traffic through the Red Sea. The world's second most powerful economy doesn't have all that much in common with an impoverished Muslim resistance army or with theocratic Iran.

Moreover, both Russia and China remain parasitic beneficiaries of a global economy that is sustained by US alliances and deterrence. That is why they still hesitate to challenge the hegemon too directly. However, like sharks, they smell blood in the water. They have not only survived US sanctions but continued to prosper, replacing their dependence on embargoed markets with new markets in Latin America, Asia, and India. Both Russia and China have discovered that American control of the global economy is not what it once was.

This discovery of American weakness might tempt them to risk a joint military challenge. As matters stand, US diplomacy and deterrence have successfully kept the axis divided. CIA Director William Burns and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan are keeping the channels open to China. Blowback American strikes against Iran have apparently convinced the theocrats to rein in Hezbollah and the militias in Iraq – though not the Houthis, whom nobody seems able to control.

It doesn't take strategic genius to see the opportunity China and Russia might be contemplating. If they decided to mount an overt challenge to the American order – for example, with a coordinated, simultaneous offensive against Ukraine and Taiwan – the US would struggle to rush weapons and technology into the breach.

Nuclear weapons would not necessarily deter China and Russia from risking a coordinated attempt to take Taiwan and the rest of Ukraine. All parties would pay a horrendous price, but Russia has shown what it is willing to expend in Ukraine, and both China and Russia may believe that there will never be a more opportune moment to overthrow American hegemony. If they were to combine forces, we would face the most serious challenge to the global economic and strategic order since 1945.

Nobody has any idea what the world would be like on the other side of such a confrontation. We cannot even assume, as we have always done, that America would prevail if faced with a simultaneous challenge from two formidable powers. If a pessimist is someone who imagines the worst in order to forestall it, we should all be pessimists. Keeping the authoritarian axis from becoming a full-fledged alliance should be America's first-order priority.

The writer is Professor of History and Rector Emeritus of Central European University in Vienna.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

You are only afraid if you are not in harmony with yourself. People are afraid because they have never owned up to themselves.

HERMANN HESSE

All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

LEO TOLSTOY

All human evil comes from a single cause, man's inability to sit still in a room.

BLAISE PASCAL



Satya Narayan Misra

BE IT DPSUs OR DRDO, INDIA'S BIGGEST LAMENT IS THAT INSTEAD OF IMPROVING VALUE ADDITION OR INDIGENOUS DESIGN CAPABILITY, THEY HAVE BECOME INTEGRATORS OF SUBSYSTEMS



Michael Ignatieff

The idea that democracies around the world will join up with America and Europe against the authoritarian threat seems like an illusion

FOCUS DEFENCE RESEARCH

CASE FOR REFORMS

The DRDO was created in 1958 to pursue R&D in defence to reduce dependence on imports.

From a fledgling setup in the 80s under the stewardship of Dr Kalam it has witnessed the IGMDP programme for building a comprehensive range of missiles like Agni, Prithvi, Akash, and Naag. As many as 52 DRDO labs are engaged in the design development of small arms, EW systems, tanks, armed vehicles, missiles, and command & control systems with a team of 5,000 scientists engaged in 900 projects with 25000 support staff with a budget of Rs 23264 crore. The prototypes developed by DRDO are produced by defence PSUs and the private sector. DRDO is the flag bearer of Make in India. But time and cost overruns of many of these programmes and the low level of self-reliance achieved have been a recurring concern bedeviling DRDO. Several committees have been engaged to bring out the in-nards of the problems that ail the DRDO in the past like the Kalam Committee in 1992. The latest committee is of Vijay Raghavan in response to the report of a parliamentary committee that 23 out of 55 high mission projects are running behind schedule.

The Kalam committee set a target to improve the self-reliance quotient to 70% in a decade. It identified critical sub-systems where India has a deficiency of design and development capability, suggested building national facilities and strongly batted for joint ventures with original equipment manufacturers and joint design and development with global design houses. The critical sub-systems where the committee found India to be critically deficient were in the area of readers (AES), seekers (passive and active), unmanned aerial vehicles, smart munitions, and aero-engines. The deficient areas were propulsion, detectors, and weapons.

The Make in India campaign by Modi government has defence manufacturing as a major subset where the government



The suggestion to involve the private sector and academia in a bigger way is most welcome, as the present DRDO structure is highly bureaucratic and tries to protect its inherent inefficiencies

wants to improve its indigenisation footprint, given the fact that India is the largest importer of conventional arms (SIPRI 2023). As a policy, the government has foreclosed imports up to Rs 500 crore which is now being offloaded to indigenous players. It also introduced a major reform in the major ordnance factory setup by converting them to the public sector so they have greater autonomy and adhere to the quality, time, and cost requirements of the services. The SMEs are being encouraged as also the startups.

The Vijay Raghavan Committee has suggested that the focus of DRDO should be on high-end futuristic technology by associating academic institutions and startups and greater private sector participation. It suggests a major structural change where the DRDO will come under the PMO, as is the case with atomic energy and space. The PMO would be supported by a defence technology council (DTC) where the RM, and NSA, two from the field of academics and two from the industry will be members. This committee will decide on suitable players for specific defence technology. The DTC will be assisted by an empowered committee with the chief of defence staff (CDS) and principal scientific advisor (PSA). The committee has also recommended the creation

of a new Department of Defence Science Technology and Innovation to promote defence R&D in academia and bolster the startup ecosystem.

The major resistance to the proposed reforms in DRDO is the suggestion to place the DRDO under the PMO as in the case of atomic energy and space. The insiders feel that unlike the closed system in ISRO and DAE where both design development and production are taken up by them, in the case of DRDO the prototypes are built by the DRDO but produced either by the defence PSUs or ordnance factories. Besides the suggestion that DRDO should disentangle from the development of prototypes and technology and concentrate on basic R&D goes against the general drift of the DRDO for applied technology. Nearly 80% of the DRDO budget is spent on prototype development, with the balance spent on basic research.

Many observers believe that the Vijay Raghavan committee is heavily influenced by the DARPA model of the USA which was set up in 1958. This organisation is responsible for the development of emerging technology for use by the military. To its credit, it has developed the PC, the internet, stealth technology, GPS, drones, and weather satellites and lately, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. DARPA func-

tions with a very small component of scientists and contracts out core functions to universities, industries, and government R&D institutions.

Any attempt to replicate the DARPA model would be far-fetched and illusionary. The suggestion to involve the private sector and academia in a bigger way is most welcome, as the present DRDO structure is highly bureaucratic and tries to protect its inherent inefficiencies. The suggestions to put DRDO under the PMO should be seriously considered as it will provide the PM with a closer look at the emerging defence technologies, the capability of adversaries, and the need to improve our indigenous military industry capability. In any case, our missile programme is very closely linked to the Department of Space and the Department of Atomic Energy and they should form the trinity under the PMO. The Vijay Raghavan Committee must be complimented for suggesting this fundamental change in the organisational structure.

Sadly, the Make in India campaign is not fostering that process but trying to protect indigenous manufacturers from potential competition from superior foreign suppliers by building a tariff wall. Be it DPSUs or DRDO, India's biggest lament is that instead of improving value addition or indigenous design capability, they have become integrators of subsystems. This is where China has stolen a march over us in terms of its global value chain addition. This lack of design and development capability in critical technology can be surmounted by establishing appropriate design institutes and investing in IITs and important academic institutions. The earlier we realise this and put in place Kalam's vision of self-reliance, the DRDO will never spring on its heels and pave the way for higher self-reliance and a credible Make in India.

The writer is former Director (Finance), DRDO. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM HUMAN RESOURCES

Inclusive workplace for business growth

Creating an inclusive workplace involves various factors that contribute to fostering a sense of belonging, respect and equity among all employees. Strong leadership commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) sets the tone for the organisation. When leaders prioritise and actively champion DEI initiatives, it signals to employees that inclusivity is valued and supported at all levels.

Policies and practices that promote fairness, equity, and accessibility are crucial for creating an inclusive environment. Some examples of policies and practices related to building an inclusive workplace include diversity hiring, equal employment opportunity policy, diversity training and education, flexible work arrangements, zero tolerance policy for discrimination, employee inclusion survey and inclusive leadership development.

Employee resource groups (ERGs) or affinity groups provide a platform for employees to connect, support one another, and advocate inclusivity within the organisation. ERGs help foster a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for networking, mentorship, and professional

development. Recognising and celebrating diversity and inclusion initiatives, as well as the contributions of employees from all backgrounds, helps reinforce the importance of inclusivity within the organisation.

Achieving business growth through diversity and inclusion involves leveraging the unique perspectives, talents, and experiences of a diverse workforce to drive innovation, enhance decision-making, and better serve customers. Though building an inclusive workplace is crucial, there are several common challenges as mentioned below.

Unconscious biases are deeply ingrained attitudes or stereotypes that influence our understanding, actions, and decisions without our awareness. These biases can manifest in hiring, promotions, assignments, and everyday interactions, leading to unintentional discrimination and exclusion.

When leadership teams lack diversity, it can be challenging to prioritise and implement inclusive policies and practices effectively. Without diverse perspectives at the decision-making level, organisations may struggle to understand and address the

needs of all employees.

Organisations may lack comprehensive policies and practices designed to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Without clear guidelines and support mechanisms in place, employees may not feel comfortable speaking up about issues of discrimination or bias.

Micro-aggressions which are subtle, often unintentional forms of discrimination or bias can occur in everyday interactions. These can include comments, behaviours or actions that demean or marginalise individuals based on their race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other characteristics.

Employees from underrepresented groups may experience feelings of isolation or exclusion in the workplace, particularly if they do not see others who share their backgrounds or identities in leadership positions or within their teams.

Tokenism may occur when individuals from underrepresented groups are included in the workplace solely to give the appearance of diversity, rather than being valued for their contributions and perspectives. This can lead to feelings of resent-

ment, disengagement, and distrust among employees.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including leadership commitment, ongoing education and training, transparent communication, inclusive policies and practices, and a willingness to listen to and learn from diverse perspectives. By actively addressing these challenges, organisations can create a more inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued, respected and empowered to succeed.

An inclusive workplace is not only the right thing to do ethically and morally, but it also drives tangible business benefits. By fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion, organisations can attract and retain top talent, fuel innovation and creativity, make better decisions, increase employee engagement and productivity, expand market opportunities, enhance their reputation and mitigate legal and reputational risks. Ultimately, these factors contribute to sustained business growth and long-term success.

The writer is a senior human resource professional.

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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Protecting rivers

Sir, Though rivers are national assets, there is little awareness among the people about the ways to preserve their purity and utility. Biodiversity would have been a thing of the past but for the rivers. The river system, of course, is the earth's highest biological diversity zone. International Day of Action for Rivers aims at spreading awareness through campaigns on the importance of rivers and their protection. Only about ten per cent of the river basins in the world are protected. Dams, encroachments and deforestation have threatened their very existence. That said, it is every citizen's responsibility to keep the nation's rivers clean and pollution-free devoid of dump and industrial wastage. A country's rivers cannot be allowed to become sites for garbage and sewage disposal. More than thirty countries come together on the International Day of Action for Rivers to take stock of the international rivers, and ways to upkeep them. **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

AI mission

Sir, The India AI Mission, led by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), stands as a pivotal initiative by the government of India, aimed at catalysing artificial intelligence (AI) innovation and integration across various sectors. Orchestrated under the auspices of MeitY, this mission serves as a comprehensive programme designed to harness the potential of transformative technologies for impactful societal change. By fostering collaboration among academia, industry, and international partners, the mission seeks to propel AI research forward, nurturing core capabilities at a national level and paving the way for groundbreaking advancements in the field. Central to the mission's objectives is the strategic deployment of intelligent systems in decision-making processes, with a specific focus on addressing pressing societal needs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, smart cities, infrastructure, and mobility. Through a substantial investment of Rs 10,371.92 crore, the mission aims to establish a vibrant ecosystem for AI innovation while simultaneously fostering the widespread adoption of AI applications across diverse sectors, thereby driving productivity enhancements and bolstering societal connectivity. The India AI Mission seeks to position the country as a global leader in AI-driven economic growth and social development. **Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH**



BASUDEVPUR ASSEMBLY SEGMENT

A problem of plenty for BJP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, March 14: Amidst ongoing deliberations between BJD and BJP top leadership over a possible alliance for the upcoming polls, the number of aspirants in the saffron party for Basudevpur Assembly segment under Bhadrak Lok Sabha segment is growing by leaps and bounds, even though the constituency has been a citadel of BJD since 2000.

According to sources, more than six hopefuls are vying for a ticket from the BJP and doing necessary groundwork to contest the election.

Basudevpur Assembly constituency comprises 36 panchayats of Basudevpur block, 23 wards of Basudevpur Municipality and nine panchayats of Tihidi block in Bhadrak district.

The ruling BJD has been winning this seat since 2000. Bishnubrata Routray, son of former minister late Bijayshree Routray, is the sitting MLA from this constituency. Yet to open its account from this seat, opposition BJP is leaving no stone unturned to perform better and win the upcoming election.

Sources said all the aspirants from BJP accompanied by their supporters are doing the rounds in the villages and trying to attract the voters on the basis of welfare schemes and developmental programmes floated by the Union government.

One of them is senior BJP leader Udaya Narayan Mallick,



son of Madhabananda Mallick who was the party candidate in 2019 election. Udaya is currently the Bhadrak district vice-president of the BJP. He has carved a niche for himself as a good organiser of the party in the constituency. Udaya had campaigned for his father Madhabananda in 2019 election helping him garner 35,000 votes. This time, Udaya is putting the house in order to contest the upcoming 2024 election.

Another aspirant is BJP's frontline senior leader, organiser, and former district president Dinabandhu Pati. He had contested from this Assembly seat on a BJP ticket in 2014. Pati is credited with building a strong party base for BJP in Basudevpur Assembly constituency. He has strong links with Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent organisation of BJP.

He also wields enormous clout in Tihidi and Basudevpur blocks and hopes to contest the upcoming 2024 elections on the basis of his political experience, acumen and strong organisational skill.

Similarly, another hopeful for a ticket from the saffron party is Ashok Kumar Sahu. He had contested from this seat in 2009 election and helped strengthen the party base in the constituency. A known face in the constituency, he is a regular in all the party programmes, and has links with the party and RSS for long. He hopes to get the party ticket and contest from this constituency in 2024 election.

Furthermore, the name of a

new face is also doing the rounds. He is retired principal Pratap Kumar Nayak, a known face in the constituency as an educationist. Nayak works as the coordinator of BJP's state intellectual cell. After his retirement, Nayak has been engaged in organisational activities.

Another aspirant is entrepreneur Manoj Kumar Nayak who joined the BJP a few months back. He is touring the villages and attending all the party events with a hope to get the party ticket and contest the upcoming election.

Sabyasachi Mahalla, a resident of Mukundpur panchayat under Tihidi block is another new face. He is the special invitee member of the OBC cell of BJP. Hailing from OBC category, he hopes to get the party ticket and contest this election hoping that OBC and Yadav votes under Tihidi block will swing in his favour.

Aspirants are making a beeline to get the party ticket as there is a possibility that the BJP's vote share in the constituency might increase compared to previous elections. This has concerned the state and district level party leaders as they face difficulties to select the best among them. However, it remains to be seen whom the party will select as its candidate to contest the upcoming election.

Chatters are abuzz that the saffron party might go for Udaya Mallick, son of senior party leader Madhabananda Mallick, who has withdrawn from politics due to his growing age.

If voted to power, INDIA will be voice of farmers: Rahul

AGENCIES

Nashik, March 14: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday said the Opposition INDIA alliance, if voted to power, will be the voice of farmers and frame policies to protect them.

He was addressing a farmers' rally at Chandwad in Maharashtra's Nashik district along with NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, as part of the Congress' ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra'.

The INDIA alliance government will be the voice of farmers and work to protect their interests, Gandhi said.

He promised loan waiver for farmers, restructuring of crop insurance scheme to benefit cultivators, to protect crop prices in formulation of export import policies and to make efforts to exclude agriculture from GST and work on only one tax.

The Lok Sabha member from Wayanad also reiterated the Congress' promise of a legal guarantee to minimum support price (MSP) as per the Swaminathan committee report.

The former Congress presidential claimed 20 to 25 people in the country have wealth equivalent to 70 crore of the country's population.

The Narendra Modi government waived off ₹16 lakh crore debt of industrialists, he further claimed. This amount is equivalent to 24 years of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) under which ₹35,000 crore is spent every year to give employment to the poor people, Gandhi said.

BJP EYES PATKURA



TEJESWAR PARIDA



MANISHA PANDA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Derabish, March 14: With elections round the corner, all the three major political parties – BJD, BJP and Congress – have intensified their political activities to garner public support in Patkura Assembly seat of Kendrapara Lok Sabha segment. However, the saffron party is eyeing this Assembly seat.

According to sources, BJP's Kendrapara district unit secretary Manisha Panda is aspiring for a ticket from Patkura Assembly segment and has kept the momentum of party activities unhindered. Manisha, a social activist since her student days, claims herself to be the daughter of the soil and a woman who can deliver as per the expectations of the voters of the constituency.

At party programmes, Manisha has been vociferous about misappropriation of funds under Central schemes meant for the people of Odisha. According to her, a developed Patkura is her dream.

Manisha is reported to have been helping the people affected due to natural calamities. She is also organising free health check-up camps in the area, benefiting the poor.

On the other hand, state BJP

spokesperson Tejeswar Parida is another ticket aspirant from the saffron camp for the seat. Parida has been highlighting the alleged irregularities under the state government since 2019 elections. He has been alleging that eligible beneficiaries are out of the ambit of PM-Awas Yojana.

Parida has been leading the protests over several issues plaguing the area and has maintained his clout in the constituency. Agitations demanding proper irrigation facilities in the constituency, establishment of a police station at Chandol and filling up of vacancies in doctors' and health officials' posts at two community health centres (CHCs) were held under the leadership of Parida at the concerned department head offices. Grapevines have it that the BJP will pick Parida as its MLA candidate for Patkura seat.

The constituency comprises 26 panchayats of Derabish block, 18 panchayats of Garadpur block and seven panchayats of Marshaghai block. While late Bed Prakash Agarwalla won the election on BJD ticket in 2009, BJP secured the second position. His wife Sabitri Agarwalla was elected from the seat in 2019 while BJP continued to occupy the second position. All eyes are now on this crucial seat.



CONNECTING VILLAGES TO CITIES

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION FOR JUST ₹5



HIGHLIGHTS

AFFORDABLE
BUS TRAVEL TO ALL

1,745 'LACCMi' BUSES SERVING
6,031 PANCHAYATS

OVER 36.4 MILLION PEOPLE
BENEFITING

Information & Public Relations Department

DSPL-855

OIPR-15001/130825/2324

KIRTI
KHELO INDIA RISING
TALENT IDENTIFICATION

Sh. Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

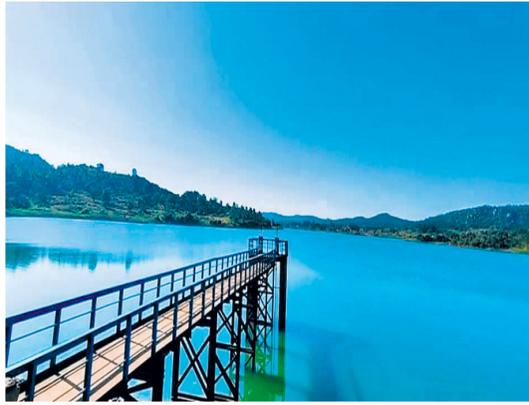
Scan QR Code for details
Register at
www.mybharat.gov.in

Keonjhar may face acute water scarcity

Rapid decrease in water level in Sana Machhakandana dam sparks concern among officials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 14: The residents of this town and areas close to its vicinity are bracing for acute water crisis with the water level in the Sana Machhakandana dam decreasing. It is bad news for the residents as the hot summer has already set in, officials of the district administration stated here Thursday. Water to the dam comes from the Sana Machhakandana river. Inadequate rainfall during the monsoons last year led to the decrease in water level of the river and the supply of water to the dam also suffered.



The maximum and minimum water level for the dam is 1,960 feet and 1,926 feet respectively. When the water level in the dam hovers around 1,936 feet it is considered safe. Anything below it is considered alarming. Currently the level of water in the dam stands at 1,926 feet, enough for the alarm bells to start ringing. Officials said that the crisis will worsen if there is lack of rainfall in the near future. The water level in the dam is giving sleep-

less nights to officials of the Public Health Engineering department (PHED) entrusted with the responsibility of supplying water seamlessly to this town. The Sana Machhakandana dam located near Medinipur under Banspal block of this district is the main source of drinking water for this town. The water from the dam is supplied through pipes and conserved at Judia ghati before it reaches

the residents. Initially, the Sana Machhakandana dam used to provide the entire drinking water for this town. With the increase in population, authorities made alternate arrangement of supplying water from the Kanjhari dam. However, the Sana Machhakandana dam continues to provide drinking water to Ward Nos 1-8 and 11-18. Over, 50,000 families depend on this

dam for drinking water supply, PHED engineer Ghashiram Majhi said.

Water from the dam is also used for irrigation. Hence the decrease in water level is creating apprehensions among the minds of the farmers. Harvesting of crops is suffering due to lack of water, locals pointed out. They added that despite spending large amounts for dredging and repairing, the dam is failing to retain water. They also said that as the dam water is not distributed in a regulated manner, the recent crisis has cropped up and it may escalate in the near future.

When contacted, PHED general manager Narad Rath informed that if the crisis persists, pumps will be used to lift water from the dam and supply it to residents of the town.

It should also be stated here that the Badaghara and Sanaghagara waterfalls are on the downstream of the dam. Lakhs of tourists visit these scenic waterfalls every year and contribute to the economic development of the locality. If the waterfalls dry up, the economy will also suffer without tourists, locals said.

Canopy bridge in Keonjhar's Nature Camp main attraction



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 14: The hanging canopy bridge and a tree house constructed at the Nature Camp near the famous Sanaghagara waterfall in this district will be a huge attraction for tourists as it will help them bond with nature and wildlife, officials said Thursday here.

The newly-constructed canopy bridge was inaugurated by Keonjhar MP Chandrani Murmu, in presence of other officials and dignitaries, Wednesday evening. There are five cottages in the Nature Camp maintained by the Forest department. However, the major attraction is the hanging canopy bridge and a tree house built 20 feet above the ground. The 270 feet bridge has been

constructed by connecting the trees. Tourists can walk and enjoy the beauty of nature, said Ashok Das, Additional Conservator of Forests.

Similarly, a resting place (tree house) has been constructed in the middle of the hanging bridge. Tourists can sit there and enjoy the scenic beauty. The tree house and the bridge have been built at a cost of ₹20 lakh, officials said. They added that dormitories and rest rooms for drivers have been built to attract more tourists to the camp.

Some locals however, pointed out that the bridge has been built without keeping in mind the safety of birds and animals like monkeys. They also added that the bridge has to be maintained in a proper manner for the safety of visitors.

MAN GETS 20 YEARS IN PRISON FOR RAPE

AGENCIES

Baripada, March 14: A court in Mayurbhanj district sentenced Thursday a man to 20 years in prison jail for raping a seven-year-old girl. The court also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on the 30-year-old man, and in case of default, he has to remain in jail for three more months.

The convict was identified as Dhumaketu Singh, 30, a native of Denfauda village under Baisinga police limits in Mayurbhanj district.

The incident happened November 3, 2021 in a locality under Baisinga police limits. Dhumaketu raped the girl when she went to work as a domestic help in his house, police said. The girl's father lodged a police complaint, and after registering a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the police arrested the accused.

POCSO court Judge Santosh Kumar Nayak gave the verdict after examining the statements of the survivor and 16 witnesses, besides the medical report. The court also directed the Mayurbhanj District Legal Services Authority to pay ₹4 lakh as compensation to the girl, Special Public Prosecutor Monoranjan Pattnaik informed.

RSP introduces EVs for clean environment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 14: With the objective of keeping the environment clean and green in future, authorities of SAIL have decided to introduce 30 electric vehicles (EVs) for the chief general managers of various departments of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). At a function held March 13 at the Indo-German Club here, Atanu Bhowmik, director in-charge (DIC), RSP with additional charge of Bokaro Steel Plant handed over the keys of Tata Nexon EVs to the CGMs.



Many senior officers of RSP were also present on the occasion.

During the function Bhowmik conducted a puja for the new EVs and also drove one of those around the club. "De-carbonisation is the need of the hour and we are committed to do what-ever possible to reduce emissions. Let us join hands and make this step towards decarbonisation a successful one. The electric vehicles will certainly reduce pollution," Bhowmik said. Rajashree Banerjee, CGM (HRD) and N Rajendran, CGM (Mechanical) thanked the management and shared their experience of driving the EVs.

JAIL TERM FOR 3 IN PONZI SCAM

THE COMPANY HAD DUPED OVER 500 PERSONS AND COLLECTED ₹10 CRORE FROM THEM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, March 14: The OPID Court here convicted director-cum-promoter of M/s Auroxa Deal Multitrade (OPC) Pvt Ltd and two others for duping 500 persons and collecting ₹10 crore from them. The court delivered the judgment Wednesday holding accused Babu Singh Kushwaha, the director of the company guilty and sentenced him to seven years rigorous imprisonment (RI). It also imposed a fine of ₹3.45 lakhs on Kushwaha.

Two other senior employees of the company Sarat Kumar Nayak and Pravat Ranjan Das were also convicted and sentenced to five years RI and fines of ₹1.25 lakhs each were slapped on them. If the three fail to pay the fine amounts, they will have to undergo an additional prison term of one year,



the court ordered. A case was registered pursuant to an enquiry conducted by the officials of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) on a petition filed by one Chandra Kanta Dash and others against M/s Auroxa Deal Multitrade (OPC) Pvt Ltd and its director and promoter on the allegation of duping as many as 500

gullible depositors under false promise of high returns on their deposits/investments in various schemes launched by the company.

Kushwaha, who is the lone director of the company which under various lucrative schemes/packages promoted direct selling of various household/electronic goods with high returns having

cash back offers. The collection of deposits by the company under the cover/mask of direct selling was nothing but the running of ponzi schemes, the court observed.

The company also offered various rewards like 'Star Achiever' and 'Emerald Star Achiever' and promised incentives like ₹5,000 in cash, mobile phones and furniture. However, nothing materialised even after deposits were collected. Officials said that the company had its activities mainly in Balasure and Bhadrak districts.

During investigation Kushwaha was arrested from Gwalior whereas Nayak and Das were held from this town, informed Special Public Prosecutor, OPID Court, Pranab Kumar Panda. He also praised the EOW officials for carrying out the probe in a thorough manner.

Vedantu to open offline learning centre in City

BHUBANESWAR:

Vedantu, a trailblazer in the ed-tech industry, is set to revolutionise offline coaching with the launch of the Vedantu learning centre in Bhubaneswar, March 17. The centre in Bhubaneswar marks



Vedantu's strategic move towards extending access to quality education through offline channels, especially for students preparing for JEE/NEET exams. The announcement was done by Sachin Agrawal, vice-president (business), Vedantu; Jyoti Ranjan Tripathy, partner, Vedantu learning centre and Vikas Bahinipati, partner, Vedantu learning centre. A formal event is scheduled to commemorate the launch March 17 at the Railway Auditorium, Chandrasekharpur, featuring an in-depth career guidance seminar that will showcase the advantages of the centre. As per a company release, Vedantu Learning Centres will introduce an innovative approach to personalised learning, meticulously designed for JEE, NEET, and foundation courses. Leveraging a decade of technological innovation, Vedantu ensures tailored learning experiences, both in physical classrooms and through its advanced online platforms. In the words of Vedantu's founders, "We're not just coaching students for exams; we're preparing them for life. Expanding our services to offline centres across India is the natural progression in our journey to make quality education accessible for all. Throughout this journey, we promise to stand by their side, offering unwavering support, and inspiring them to unlock their true potential. Our vision extends beyond current horizons, aiming to support students even in the remotest parts of our nation."

Three train services extended to Sonepur

PNN & AGENCIES

Sonepur, March 14: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to extend services of three pairs of trains to this town keeping in mind the aspirations of local people. Recently train tracks from Bolangir were extended till this town. ECoR sources said the Bhubaneswar-Bolangir-Bhubaneswar Express and two pairs of passenger trains will be extended up to Sonepur. The 12893 Bhubaneswar-Bolangir-Sonepur Superfast Express will leave

Bolangir at 13.45 hours and will reach Sonepur at 15.15 hours. Similarly the 12894 Sonepur-Bhubaneswar Superfast Express will leave Sonepur at 13.00 hours and reach Bolangir at 14.25 hours. It will then leave Bolangir at 14.45 hours and reach Bhubaneswar at 21.45 hours.

The regular services of this train commenced from March 14 from the railway station here. Officials said that the timings and stoppages of the 12893/12894 Bhubaneswar-Sonepur-Bhubaneswar Express will remain

unchanged from both directions. Between Bolangir and Sonepur, the train will stop at Bichhupali, Jhartarba and Narsingh Garh railway stations. The Bolangir-Bichhupali passenger will be extended up to Sonepur March 15 onwards. The 08305/08306 Bolangir-Bichhupali-Bolangir passenger will leave Bolangir at 08.15 hours and reach Sonepur at 09.45 hours. In the return direction, it will leave Sonepur at 10.45 hours and reach Bolangir at 12.00 hours.

20K kids given pulse polio vax

Rourkela:

Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) is playing an important role in the eradication of polio in the country by vaccinating kids. The vaccination drive was launched at the Ispat General Hospital (IGH) here March 3 and ended March 5. On the inaugural day of the vaccination programme, Dr BK Hota, ED (M&HS), Dr Jayanta Kumar Acharya, CMO, other senior doctors, volunteers and parents of children were present. Other than the IGH, pulse polio vaccine was administered at different booths set up in the steel township. On the second and third days door-to-door campaign was held to ensure 100 per cent vaccination of children in the age group 0-5 years living in the township. In all 20,100 children were vaccinated during the three-day programme, officials informed.

Black panther spotted again in Hemgir range

THE RARE ANIMAL WAS LAST SEEN SIX YEARS BACK IN THE SAME FOREST AREA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 14: A rare black panther which was spotted in Sundargarh district six years ago has once more appeared, officials of the Forest department informed Thursday. DFO Pradeep Mirase of Sundargarh Forest division confirmed that pictures of the big cat have been captured by the trap cameras installed in the forest.

"Last week, we found evidence of the presence of the black panther again in Garjanpahad reserve forest area under Hemgir range. It is a very good sign. It is a pointer to the fact that there is thriving biodiversity in the forest despite mining in nearby areas," Mirase stated. "This sighting is indeed an encouraging development for all," he added. It should be stated here that six



years back trap cameras had captured images of the black panther in Hemgir range. However, after that the animal had disappeared from sight. Wildlife enthusiasts

had been left wondering about its whereabouts and they expressed concern over its safety. Sharing an image of the panther, PCCF (Wildlife) Susanta Nanda

said on 'X', "This ghost of the forest was first captured in 2018 in Sundargarh. Heartening to inform that it was again recaptured in a trap camera recently, putting rest to all speculations that was raised by a few in the public domain."

Mirase also provided the details of the various animals found in this range. "Pictures of many other animals like honey badger, civet cat, rusty spotted cat, peacock, mongoose, bear, porcupine, barking deer, hare, wild boar, jungle hen, black cat and fox along with the black panther were captured through trap cameras," informed the forest officer.

Hemgir forest range is known for its natural flora and fauna. The black panther has been spotted near the Dungakhol stream in the Garjanpahad reserve forest area spread over 5,947.47 hectares.

REGIONAL OFFICE: 108 - B, Unit-VII, Surya Nagar, Gopabandhu Square, Bhubaneswar-751003, Ph.: 0674-2397551, 2397199

TENDER NOTICE

Central Bank of India invites online tenders from eligible bidders for Furnishing (Furniture, Electrical, Data cabling & Air-conditioning) work at premises of Bhadrak Branch under Regional Office Bhubaneswar. For detailed Notice Inviting Tenders visit the webpage: <http://www.centralbankofindia.co.in/en/active-tender> and/or <https://centralbank.abcpocure.com/EPROC/>

The deadline for submission of tenders is 05.04.2024 up to 3.00 PM Bank reserves its right to accept/reject all or any tender(s), without assigning any reason thereof.

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 14.03.2024 Sd/- Chief Manager

MCL MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
Jagruti Vihar, Burla - 768020, Dist. - Sambalpur, Odisha
Tel. (EPABX) : 0663-2542461 to 469 Website : www.mahanadicoal.in

NOTICE

All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd www.coalindia.in, respective subsidiary Company, (MCL, www.mahanadicoal.in), CIL e-Procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>

R-5198

GOVT. OF ODISHA e-mail id - ecrrcd6jagatpur@gmail.com
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RENGALI RIGHT CANAL DIVISION NO. - VI, JAGATPUR, CUTTACK

'e' Procurement Notice

No. A-1729: The Superintending Engineer, Rengali Right Canal Division No. VI, Jagatpur Cuttack on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online percentage basis bids in Single Cover System for construction of the work as detailed below.

- Name of the Work : Construction of PCC Link Drain on left side of canal from RD 18.846 Km to 18.846 Km of DBC of RBC of RIP
- Tender Cost : Rs. 41.67 lakh
- Bid Document Cost : Rs. 6,000.00 (Online)
- Bid Security : Rs. 41,700.00
- Class of Contractor : 'B' Class
- Period of Completion : 03 Calendar Months (90 days)
- Other details are as follows

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	Date of Opening of Bid
Superintending Engineer, Rengali Right Canal Division No.-VI, Jagatpur, Cuttack	SERRCDVI-03/2023-24	From 18.03.2024 10.00 A.M. To 28.03.2024 5.30 P.M.	30.03.2024 11.00 A.M.

8. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation to the above notice will be published in the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
OIPR-32527/11/0001/2324 Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Rengali Right Canal Division No.VI, Jagatpur, Cuttack

national

of the day quote

The delay in completing projects adversely impacted the country's image, giving the impression that India does not finish its projects

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | UNION MINISTER

There is no doubt at all that our government will be formed at the Centre. I believe the NDA will win more than 400 seats

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

CAA is completely insignificant in Assam; the state will have the least number of applications on the portal

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

SHORT TAKES

SC seeks reply from Ajit Pawar faction

New Delhi: Observing that the name and photographs of Sharad Pawar cannot be used by the Ajit Pawar faction for political gains, the Supreme Court Thursday sought a response from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) faction led by the Maharashtra deputy chief minister on a plea of the veteran Maratha leader alleging misuse of his popularity by the rival camp. The top court took note of the submissions of senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Sharad Pawar, that the faction-led by his nephew Ajit Pawar was "riding piggyback on his good will" and the Maratha stalwart did not need "left handed compliments" from rivals.

Class X girls asked to remove hijab

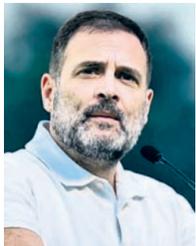
Bharuch: The principal of a private school was removed as an exam administrator by the Gujarat Education Department Thursday after an outrage erupted among parents who alleged that she had compelled Muslim girl students to remove their hijabs before a Class X examination. The incident took place at Lions School in Ankleshwar town, Bharuch district, just before the mathematics paper Wednesday of the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB).

Modi holds talks with Bhutanese PM

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday held "productive" talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay focusing on various aspects of "unique and special partnership" between India and Bhutan. After his talks with Tobgay, Modi said he conveyed "heartfelt thanks" to the Bhutanese King and the prime minister for inviting him to visit Bhutan next week.

4 killed in residential building fire

New Delhi: Two children and a couple died due to suffocation after a massive fire ripped through a residential building in the Shastri Nagar area of Shahdara in the early hours Thursday, police said. The victims have been identified as Manoj (30), his wife Suman (25), and their two nieces aged 10 and seven years. Eleven others suffered burns. "We got information from the hospital that four people -- two children and a couple -- died due to suffocation and burn injuries. As per preliminary on-spot observation by the FSL team, spark in the electric wire could be the reason for the fire. Further investigation is on," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Surendra Choudhary said.



The INDIA alliance government will be the voice of farmers and work to protect their interests. Mine and our (INDIA bloc) government's doors would always be open for farmers

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

INDIA, US AND S KOREA EXPLORE COOPERATION

Ways to bolster cooperation in areas of semiconductor supply chains, digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, critical minerals and production of military hardware figured prominently at a trilateral dialogue among India, the US and South Korea



Kovind panel for 2-phase simultaneous polls

Simultaneous polls will help save resources, spur development and social cohesion, deepen "foundations of democratic rubric" and help realise the aspirations of "India, that is Bharat", the panel headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind said in its report that runs into more than 18,000 pages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: A high-level panel Thursday recommended simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and state Assemblies as the first step followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days in its report on 'one nation, one election' submitted to President Droupadi Murmu.



to be responsible for conducting elections in India.

Separately, the Law Commission is also likely to come up soon with its own report on simultaneous polls, of which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been a strong votary. Sources said that the Law Commission is likely to recommend holding simultaneous polls for all three tiers of government -- Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies like municipalities and panchayats -- starting with 2029 and a provision for unity government in cases like hung

house or no-confidence motion. The 2024 general elections for Lok Sabha, along with four state assemblies, are expected in April-May amid indications that the Election Commission may announce these polls as early as this Friday.

The Kovind panel, which has not specified any period for rolling out simultaneous polls, said that in the first stage, elections for the Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies can be held together.

In the second step, the elections to municipalities and panchayats will be synchronised with the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in such a way that elections to municipalities and panchayats are held within 100 days of the holding of parliamentary and Assembly polls.

For the purpose of synchronising Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, the committee recom-

mended that the President notifies the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a general election as the "appointed date".

The tenure of all state assemblies formed after polls after the "appointed date" and before the expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha, will be only for the period ending up to the subsequent parliamentary polls.

After this one-time transitory measure, all Lok Sabha and Assembly polls will be held simultaneously.

The committee recommended that fresh elections could be held to constitute a new Lok Sabha in the event of a hung House or a no-confidence motion, or any such event. Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People (Lok Sabha), the tenure of the House will be "only for the unexpired (remaining) term of the immediately preceding full term of the House", it said.

Centre bans 18 OTT platforms



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 14: The government Thursday confirmed that it has blocked 18 over-the-top (OTT) platforms for obscene and vulgar content and, in some instances, pornographic content, after multiple warnings by Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Anurag Thakur.

One of the OTT apps amassed more than 1 crore downloads, while two others had over 50 lakh downloads on Google Play Store. The Ministry took action in coordination with various intermediaries, to block 18 OTT platforms. Nineteen websites, 10 apps (7 on Google Play Store, 3 on Apple App Store), and 57 social media accounts associated with these platforms

have also been disabled for public access in the country.

The decision was made under the provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000, in consultation with other Ministries/Departments of the government, and domain experts specialising in media and entertainment, women's rights and child rights. The I&B Minister has repeatedly emphasised the responsibility of the platforms to not propagate obscenity, vulgarity and abuse under the guise of "creative expression."

The OTT Platforms blocked are Dreams Films, Voovi, Yessma, Uncut Adda, Tri Flicks, X Prime, Neon X VIP, Besharams, Hunters, Rabbit, Xtramood, Nuefliks, MoodX, Mojflix, Hot Shots VIP, Fugi, Chikooflix and

Prime Play. "A significant portion of the content hosted on these platforms was found to be obscene, vulgar, and portrayed women in a demeaning manner. It depicted nudity and sexual acts in various inappropriate contexts such as relationships between teachers and students, incestuous relationships, etc.," the Minister said. The content included sexual innuendos and, in some instances, prolonged segments of pornographic and sexually explicit scenes devoid of any thematic or societal relevance.

The content was determined to be prima facie in violation of Section 67 and 67A of the IT Act, Section 292 of the IPC, and Section 4 of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.

"Additionally, these OTT platforms extensively utilised social media to disseminate trailers, specific scenes, and external links aimed at attracting audiences to their websites and apps. The social media accounts of the concerned OTT platforms had a cumulative followership of over 32 lakh users," the Minister informed.

The government said that it remains committed to fostering the growth and development of the OTT industry.

India ranks 134 out of 193 countries in '22 HDI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: India's was ranked 134 out of 193 countries in the 2022 United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), a notch higher than 135 out of 191 countries in 2021.

On the Gender Inequality Index (GI) 2022, India has been ranked at 108 out of 193 countries with a score of 0.437. Its rank was 122 out of 191 countries with a score of 0.490 in the GI-2021.

This shows a significant jump of 14 ranks on the GI-2022 vis-a-vis the GI-2021, the women and child development ministry said. However, the country also has one of the largest gender gaps in its labour force participation rate -- a 47.8 per cent difference between women (28.3 per cent) and men (76.1 per cent).

After a drop in its HDI value in 2021 and following a flat trend over the past few years, India's HDI value has increased to 0.644 in 2022, placing the country at 134 out of 193 countries and territories in the just released 2023/24 Human Development Report (HDR). India ranked 135 out of 191 countries in 2021 on the back of a marginal increase in its HDI value to 0.644 compared to 0.633 in 2021.

The data was published in the United Nations Development Programme's report titled "Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining Cooperation in a Polarized World". It builds on the 2021-2022 Human Development Report findings that saw the global HDI value fall for the first time -- two years in a row. The report revealed that while rich

countries attained record human development, half of the poorest remain below their pre-crisis level of progress.

In 2022, India saw improvements across all HDI indicators -- life expectancy, education, and gross national income (GNI) per capita and life expectancy rose from 67.2 to 67.7 years, expected years of schooling reached 12.6, mean years of schooling increased to 6.57 and GNI per capita saw an increase from \$6,542 to \$6,951.

Moreover, India demonstrated progress in reducing gender inequality. The country's GI value of 0.437 is better than the global and South Asian averages, according to the report.

"India has shown remarkable progress in human development over the years. Since 1990, life expectancy at birth has risen by 9.1 years, expected years of schooling have increased by 4.6 years and mean years of schooling have grown by 3.8 years. India's GNI per capita has grown by approximately 287 per cent," it said.

With an HDI value of 0.644, the latest HDR places India in the medium human development category. Between 1990 and 2022, the country saw its HDI value increase by 48.4 per cent, from 0.434 in 1990 to 0.644 in 2022. India has also shown progress in reducing gender inequality and ranks 108 out of 166 countries in the GI-2022.

The ministry said that over the last 10 years, India's rank in the GI has become consistently better, indicating progressive improvement in achieving gender equality in the country. In 2014, this rank was 127, which has now become 108.



OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BELPAHAR
Ph:06645-356292, Fax:06645-250236, Email:municipalitybelpahar@gmail.com

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
BID REFERENCE NO.EO/BPHM/11/2023-2024
BID IDENTIFICATION NO.2024_ORULB_102524
TENDER CALL NOTICE NO.841, DT.13.03.2024

No.C-3316

Bid documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Name of the Work	Individual Civil Construction Works
No. of Works	06 Nos.
Bid Value	As per DTCN
Period of Completion	As per DTCN
Date & Time of availability of the bid documents in the portal	From Dt. 14.03.2024 at 10.00 AM to Dt.23.03.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.
Bids received online shall be opened on	11.00 A.M. onwards on dt.27.03.2024
Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Executive Officer, Belpahar Municipality

Further the details can be seen from the procurement portal: www.tendersorissa.gov.in. If any addendum/ corrigendum/cancellation of tender shall be published in the above website only.

OIPR-13024/11/0024/2324 **Sd./- Executive Officer, Belpahar Municipality**

GOVT. OF ODISHA No.i-671:
DEPARTMENT OF PANCHAYATI RAJ & DRINKING WATER
OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, SADAR, SUNDARGARH
Email ID:ori-bsundargarh@nic.in

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Tender Cost	Class of Contractor
1	Construction of Model AWC Building at Badbahal Gandapadas in Kundukela G.P.	2119274/-	B and C Class
	Const. of Model AWC Building at Birbra Goudpada	2176373/-	B and C Class
	Construction of Model AWC at Gireldungr-2	2151869/-	B and C Class
2	Period of Completion	6 Months	
3	Date and Time of availability of bid documents in the portal	16.03.2024 at 11.00 AM	
4	Last date/time for receipt of bids at the block office	27.03.2024 Upto 05.00 P.M.	
5	Date and Time of Opening of Bid	28.03.2024 At 11.00 A.M.	
6	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Block Development Officer, Sadar, Sundargarh, PIN 770001	

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.Sundargarh.nic.in

OIPR-19345/11/0008/2324 **Sd./- Block Development Officer, Sadar, Sundargarh**

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL
PADAMPUR
At-Padampur, Po-Rajborasambar, Dist-Bargarh, Pin-768036
Ph.No.06683-223436, E-mail: nac.padampur@gmail.com
No.551/NAC Dt.13.3.24

National Competitive Bidding through e-Procurement
Bid Identification No.NAC-PDP-14/2023-24

No.C-3314:The Executive Officer, N.A.C., Padampur on behalf of NAC invites Percentage bid through e-Procurement in single cover system according to norm of e-Procurement system in on-line mode.

1. Nature of Work	: Civil Work
2. No. of Works	: 01 (One No.)
3. Estimate Cost	: Rs. 15,25,614/-
4. Class of Contractor	: "C" or "D" Class
5. Date & Time of availability of Bid Documents in the Portal	: 1.00 PM on dt.15.03.2024 upto 5.00 PM on dt.21.03.2024
6. Last date & time for receipt of bids in the Portal	: 21.03.2024 at 05.00 PM
7. Original Bids document received :	: Before 05.00 PM on dt.22.03.2024.
8. Bid Opening Date	: Dt.27.03.2024 at 11.00 AM

The Bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

Sd./- Executive Officer, N.A.C., Padampur
OIPR-13118/11/0047/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
ST & SC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR
ITDA, KAPTIPADA, UDALA

e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No.ITDAKPD-05/2023-24
No.628/ITDA, Dt.12.03.2024

No.CAD-4639:The Project Administrator, ITDA, Kaptipada on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bids in online mode for Construction of the work detailed below.

1. Nature of the Work	: Const. of Hostel Building
2. Total No. of Work	: 10 (Ten)
3. Class of Contractor	: 'B' & 'A' Class
4. Period of Completion	: 09 to 11 Calendar Months
5. Cost of the Project	: From 101.10 Lakhs to 250.88 Lakh
6. Availability of Bid	: 11.00 AM of 20.03.2024 to 5.00 PM of 09.04.24
7. Date of Opening of the Tender :	: 11.00 AM on 10.04.24

The Bidders have to participate in online bidding only. The details will be available in the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in from 11.00 AM of 20.03.2024 to 05.00 PM of 09.04.24.

Sd./- Project Administrator
ITDA, Kaptipada, Udala
OIPR-19010/11/0008/2324

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BIJEPUR
At/PO/IPS-Bijepur, Dist: Bargarh (Odisha), PIN-768032
Phone No.06685-274153, E-Mail Id: bijepurnac2018@gmail.com
No.314, Dt.14.3.2024

"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.EO/Bijepur/05/2023-24

No.C-3313: Bid documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

1. Nature of Work	: Civil Works
2. No. of Works	: 02 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost	: As per NIT
4. Period of Completion	: As per NIT
5. Date and time of availability of the Documents in the Portal	: From 11 hours of 16.03.2024 to 17 hours of 30.03.2024
6. Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	: Dt.30.03.2024 upto 17 hours.
7. Bids received online shall be opened on	: Dt.02.04.2024 at 11 hours
8. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Officer Bijepur NAC

Further the details can be seen from the procurement Portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

Sd./- Executive Officer, Bijepur NAC
OIPR-13123/11/0031/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
ST & SC DEVELOPMENT, MINORITIES & BACKWARD CLASSES WELFARE DEPARTMENT, ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR,
INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY,
RAIRANGPUR

e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.06/ITDA (RRP) 2023-24
No.1167/2023-ITDA, RRP, Dated 13.03.2024

No.CAD-4637: Bid documents consisting of works, Tender value, Cost of Tender Paper, Bid Security, 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.

01. Name of the Work	: Civil Works as mentioned in DTCN
02. No. of Works	: 3 (Three) Numbers only
03. Estimated Cost	: Rs.240.00 Lakhs to Rs.243.00 Lakhs
04. Period of Completion	: 9 (Nine) Calendar Months as per work category
05. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: 15.03.2024 at 10.00 A.M. to 06.04.2024 05.30 hours
06. Last date for receipt of bids in the portal	: 06.04.2024 till 5.30 hours
07. Bid received Online shall be opened on	: 09.04.2024 at 11.00 hours onwards
08. Name and address of the officer inviting bid	: Project Administrator, I.T.D.A. Rairangpur

Further details can be seen from the www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

Sd./- Project Administrator
I.T.D.A., Rairangpur
OIPR-19080/11/0003/2324

international



The US sanctions against the country have caused losses of nearly \$700 billion in GDP
DELCEY RODRIGUEZ | VENEZUELAN VICE PRESIDENT

PIA BARS PILOTS FROM FASTING

Pakistan's national flag carrier, PIA has barred its pilots and flight attendants from fasting during the ongoing holy month of Ramadan on their on-flight duty days, citing a medical recommendation which says a person faces dehydration and issues of laziness and sleep while observing a fast



SpaceX Starship lost on return to Earth

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Mexico, March 14: SpaceX's mega rocket blasted off on another test flight Thursday and made it farther than two previous attempts, but the spacecraft was lost as it descended back to Earth.

The company said it lost contact with the spacecraft as it neared its goal, a splashdown in the Indian Ocean, about an hour after liftoff from the southern tip of Texas near the Mexican border. Two test flights last year both ended in explosions minutes after liftoff.



Starship, the biggest and most powerful rocket ever built, headed out over the Gulf of Mexico after launch Thursday.

Minutes later, the booster separated seamlessly from the spacecraft and splashed down into the gulf and the spacecraft continued eastward. No people or satellites were on board.

An hour later, SpaceX commentators said contact had been lost with the spacecraft.

"The ship has been lost. So no splashdown today," said SpaceX's Dan Huot. "But again, it's incredible to see how much further we got this time around." Earlier during the flight, SpaceX's Elon Musk had congratulated his team. "SpaceX has come a long way," Musk said via X.

Maldives tourism takes a hit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Male, March 14: Indian tourists, who used to flock to the Maldives, are now shunning the island nation and its tourism industry is already feeling the pinch of declined revenue, prompting calls for mending the fence with New Delhi.

India has slipped to sixth position in 2024 compared to being a topper in visitor numbers in 2023, prompting voices from the local tourism industry to flag the danger for the tourism-dependent economy of the archipelagic country in the Indian Ocean.

A full-blown backlash was directed at the Maldives following derogatory remarks against India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on social media by three Maldivian officials after Modi posted photos and video of the pristine Lakshadweep Islands on India's west coast on January 6 on his X handle.

According to the Maldives Tourism Ministry statistics, over 17 lakh tourists visited the island nation in 2023, out of which more than 2,09,198 visitors were Indians followed by Russians (2,09,146) and China (1,87,118).

The number of Indian visitors was more than 2.4 lakh in 2022 while over 2.11 lakh Indians flew to the Maldives in 2021. The Maldives was also one of the few countries open for international tourists during the pandemic and nearly 63,000 Indians visited that country during that period.

India occupied the sixth spot in tourist arrivals in 2024, the Ministry's statistics showed, compared to the consistent first



- The number of Indian visitors was more than 2.4 lakh in 2022 while over 2.11 lakh Indians flew to the Maldives in 2021
- The Maldives was also one of the few countries open for international tourists during the pandemic and nearly 63,000 Indians visited that country during that period

spot since 2020 with Indian tourists visiting the island nation even during the pandemic time.

Till about 10 days ago, the Ministry data showed that tourist arrivals from India as of March 2 was 27,224, which is a 33 per cent decline compared to last year when the corresponding number stood at 41,224. The local tourism industry is worried about the development and already flagged caution. Explaining how India plays a vital role in sustaining tourism-related receipts to the state during off-peak season, a

news portal Sun.Mv said: "Indian travellers have a counter-travel pattern to European travellers; meaning Indian visitors frequent to the Maldives during hot seasons, which coincides with a drop in European market arrivals. In other words, India is the most significant 'filler' for the Maldives tourism off-peak season."

It further reported Tuesday, how, tourism industry experts and analysts have highlighted the adverse impacts of dwindling Indian arrivals to the Maldives, while some have forecast estimated losses north of USD 1.8 billion to USD 2 billion. "Travel agencies and operators relying on Indian arrivals report a revenue decline of 80 per cent - a dangerous prospect," the report said. Quoting an official from 'Let's

Go Maldives', a prominent travel agency, the portal said, the Indian traveller market consists of multiple demographics and segments from affluent to budget travellers and India is a large summer market.

"Without India, the occupancy rate is impacted negatively. This makes it a crucial market for us," the official added. It is not just the Indian passport holders that have boycotted the Maldives but "the arrival of affluent and wealthy Indian-origin travellers from other nations as well has declined, which too indicated the contribution of the Indian market in Maldives tourism, the news report said quoting a prominent travel agency, Travel Connection Maldives' CEO Mohamed Mirshad.

HUGE BLOW TO IMRAN'S PARTY

The petition sought the directives of the court to the Election Commission of Pakistan to allocate reserved seats to the council based on their strength in the national and provincial assemblies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Peshawar, March 14: In a huge blow to jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's beleaguered party, a top Pakistani court on Thursday unanimously rejected the Sunni Ittehad Council's petition challenging the election commission's decision to allocate reserved seats for women and minorities in the national and provincial legislatures meant for it to other parties.

The Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), a political alliance of Islamic political and Bareilvi religious parties in Pakistan, joined by Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party-backed independents who won the elections had filed the petition.

The petition sought the directives of the court to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to allocate reserved seats to the council based on their strength in the national and provincial assemblies.

A five-member Peshawar High Court, which heard the SIC's petition unanimously rejected it, Geo News reported.

The ECP last week said the SIC, is not entitled to claim quota for reserved seats due to having "non-curable legal defects and violation of a mandatory provision of submission of party list for reserved seats which is the



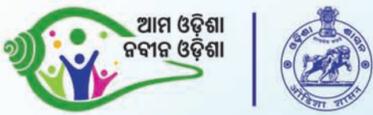
requirement of law".

There are 70 reserved seats in the National Assembly and 156 in the provincial assemblies that are allotted proportionally to the winning parties in the general elections.

The reserved seats were allocated to all political parties according to their strength in the assemblies except the PTI-backed SIC.

Wednesday, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan and the counsels for the Pakistan Peoples Party and the ECP had completed their arguments. Awan had argued that a political party could get reserved seats only if it won a general one. ECP lawyer Sikander Basheer Momand supported his arguments, stating that the SIC was a political party but not a parliamentary one.

DSPL-854



ODISHA: Home to 50+ IT Companies Since 2019

Cognizant, Accenture, IBM, Deloitte, Synopsys, EY, Concentrix, PwC, and 50+ other IT companies have made Odisha a preferred IT hub in India.



Bhubaneswar: The Country's New IT Hub, Boosting Job Creation

Over 30,000 job opportunities created in the last three years.

Strengthening Technology-Driven Economy.

Major IT Players like Accenture, Cognizant, PwC, Concentrix, Infosys, TCS have entered Odisha

OIPR-150011/0824/2324



Indian startup movement must be driven by Indian financing and cannot depend on foreign funding
AMITABH KANT | G20 SHERPA

ADIDAS POSTS FIRST LOSS IN 30 YEARS

German sportswear giant Adidas posted its first annual loss in more than 30 years Wednesday and warned sales in North America would fall again as sportswear retailers in the US struggle with high inventories



Petrol, diesel prices cut by ₹2 per litre



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: Petrol and diesel prices were cut by Rs 2 per litre each as state-owned oil companies ended a nearly two-year-long hiatus in rate revision, just hours before the general election schedule is announced.

The revised price will be applicable from 6 am Friday, March 15, the oil ministry said Thursday evening.

Petrol in the national capital will now cost Rs 94.72 a litre compared to Rs 96.72 per litre currently while diesel prices will be Rs 87.62 against Rs 89.62 at present.

The government had nearly a decade back freed petrol and diesel prices from its control and the rates till now were fixed and announced by oil companies.

But Thursday, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas took to X to announce the rate revision that came just hours before the schedule for the general elections was due to be announced that would set in mo-

tion a poll code, which bars making announcements that could lure voters.

The price cut came a week after a Rs 100 per cylinder reduction in cooking gas LPG price was announced. That reduction brought down the rates of LPG for common users to Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder and that for the poor, who got free connections under the Ujjwala scheme, to Rs 503 after accounting for Rs 300 per bottle subsidy that the government gives.

“Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have informed that they have revised Petrol and Diesel Prices across the country. New prices would be effective from 15th March 2024, 06:00 AM,” the ministry said.

Petrol in Mumbai will cost Rs 104.21 a litre from Friday, Rs 103.94 in Kolkata and Rs 100.75 in Chennai. A litre of diesel will be priced at Rs 92.15 in Mumbai, Rs 90.76 in Kolkata and Rs 92.34 in Chennai.

Rates differ from state to state, depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Local sales tax or VAT is the highest among metros in BJP-ruled Maharashtra and lowest in Delhi.

“Reduction in petrol and diesel prices will boost consumer spending and reduce operating costs for over 58 lakh heavy goods vehicles running on diesel, 6 crore cars and 27 crore two-wheelers,” the ministry said.

Follow your passion, not the crowd: Mohapatra

Established in 1996, National Institute of Science & Technology (NIST), Berhampur is one of the premier engineering institutes of India. NIST was started with an objective to have a centre of academic and research excellence in higher education in Odisha at par with international universities and has been living up to its commitment. Under the able guidance of **Dr Sukant K Mohapatra**, founder chairman of the SM Charitable Educational Trust promoting NIST University at Institute Park, the institution has brought many laurels to the state and country. Dr Mohapatra has over 30 years of professional experience in leadership position abroad in telecommunication industry. In a conversation with **Orissa POST**, Mohapatra shares his experience. Excerpts...



■ **Being a major player in the education industry, what do you think are the challenges that the sector is facing?**

■ The development and success of a country is dependent on education and our country is third largest in terms of number of students after China and the US. In India, “Right to Education Act” and opening of private sector in higher education have made positive impact on education. One of the many challenges that Indian higher education faces is the inflexibility of course programmes being offered to students. I hope with implementation

of NEP 2020, there will be much flexibility for students to follow different options. Similarly, ensuring quality in higher education is amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today. There is a different perception and view by different authorities and people about government and private institutions. All institutions must be considered based on merit and contribution to academics and research. Many of the top universities in the world today are private ones.

■ **The digital revolution is here. What implications will AI have in the education sector?**

■ Digital revolution is changing the way we live and work today. Use of technology in education will certainly help circumvent resource constraints in many areas and improve quality of education. AI will have major impacts on many domains starting from healthcare, finance, manufacturing, to warfare, and academics is no exception. Education sector can benefit from AI. For example an AI-based virtual professor can replace human being thus circumventing shortage of faculty. AI is currently used to monitor examination centres to ensure due process, safety and security. AI will certainly make education more fun, interesting and

help alleviate some of the resource challenges that we face today.

■ **The Indian education system has often been criticised for its emphasis on rote memorisation and test scores, rather than fostering a culture of critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills. What measures should be taken to prepare students accordingly?**

■ It is true that the education system in India post Independence has been primarily based on memorisation rather than creativity and encouragement to students’ inert merit and passion. To overcome this challenge course structure must be revised to infuse more practical aspects and understanding various things rather than encouraging memorisation. Admissions to higher education must be based on multiple parameter of students’ achievement like belief in value systems – based on teacher recommendation, performance in sports and excellence in public service, public speaking etc rather than single test score in an entrance examination or grade in a school. Students cannot excel unless they are allowed to follow their passion. We need a fundamental paradigm shift and strong collaboration of policymakers, parents, society and students.

■ **How has your journey been so far?**

■ **What makes NIST University a preferable place for students?**

■ My life journey so far has been very exciting and fulfilling, though there have been challenges on the way. During my academics and professional career I felt very proud for coming across many exemplary people from whom I have learnt a lot. As far as NIST University is concerned, we always emphasised on four core and foundational values: Student First, Research and Innovation, Contribution to the Society and NIST Family. NIST has always attracted the brightest students around the country and internationally due to its core foundational values and strong focus on academic and research excellence. We expect it to grow further.

■ **What advice will you give to newcomers in this industry?**

■ My suggestion to people to start off their journey in any industry, not just specific to the field of education, is to follow your passion, not follow the crowd and let the crowd follow you. Never be disappointed and give up during challenging and difficult times, learn from mistakes, change your strategy (if needed) and follow your objective with laser-like focus. Life is short, happiness is the key – make others happy through your karma, you will certainly be happy.



DSPL-853

FROM HOCKEY AND FOOTBALL TO ATHLETICS

Odisha is Transforming India's Sports Infrastructure

INDIA'S SPORTS CAPITAL WITH WORLD-CLASS FACILITIES

- ▶ Home to the World's Largest Stadium, the Birsu Munda Hockey Stadium
- ▶ Odisha has gained global recognition by hosting two Hockey World Cups
- ▶ A prominent organizer of International Football Matches
- ▶ The inauguration of the AIFF-FIFA Academy by FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development, Arsène Wenger, marks a significant development in football in Odisha

Information & Public Relations Department

OIPR-15001/13/0820/2324

Strengthen Your Skills
Access Online Classes, Skill Development Courses & Career Counseling with the 'Nabin Odisha Magic Card'

Register Now & Unlock Your Future
visit www.magiccard.odisha.gov.in

Icons: Travel with Ease, Skill Development, Digital Connectivity, Exclusive Access

OIPR-15001/13/0828/2324

MUMBAI BEAT VIDARBHA IN FINAL TO CLINCH RANJI TROPHY TITLE FOR 42ND TIME

No. 42 for Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 14: Domestic heavyweights Mumbai ended their eight-year barren run to lift a record-extending 42nd Ranji Trophy title here Thursday, beating a resolute Vidarbha by 169 runs on the fifth and final day of a thoroughly engrossing summit clash.

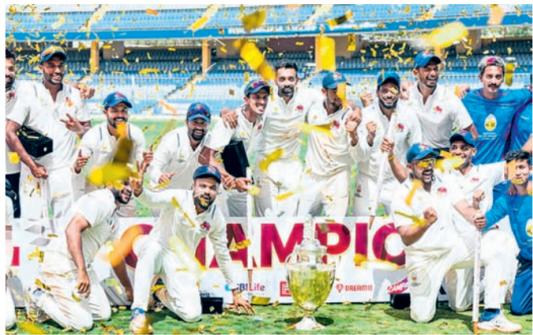
The fate of the final – Mumbai's 48th in the 90 years of the tournament's history – here at the iconic Wankhede Stadium was sealed when the hosts set a 538-run target for the visiting team.

Vidarbha captain Akshay Wadkar (102, 199b, 9x4, 1x6) and the unheralded Harsh Dubey (65, 128b, 5x4, 2x6) kept Mumbai at bay for the entire first session on the last day after Vidarbha resumed on 248/5, needing another 290 runs to win.

The team was eventually bowled out for 368 in a contest that ebbed and flowed with Vidarbha frustrating the hosts for long periods of play on the last two days.

Wadkar led the fight for his side with his first century of the year which also helped him cross the 600-run mark this season. Dubey brought up only the second fifty of his first-class career.

Together, they forged the longest stand of the innings,



consuming 255 balls in 194 minutes from day four until a little after the resumption of the second session on the final day.

Wadkar fell shortly after play resumed – leg before off Tanush Kotian (4/95) – and once the pair was broken, it all ended in a jiffy for the visitors who have now lost the Ranji Trophy final for a third time after winning two titles.

Tushar Deshpande continued to employ the short ball to dismiss Dubey and Aditya Sarwate, who missed the majority of the game owing to a back spasm.

While Kotian cleaned up Yash Thakur (6) for his fourth wicket, Dhawal Kulkarni signed off from all forms of cricket with the final wicket of the game in the form of Umesh Yadav for a fairytale ending.

Mumbai skipper Ajinkya

Rahane praised Vidarbha for their gritty display before lifting the trophy and rightly so. For a team which paid a heavy price for a poor first-innings score – 105 to concede a 119-run lead in response to Mumbai's 224 – Vidarbha showed resilience to give a fine account of themselves in the second innings.

Mumbai began the final day hoping to break the sixth-wicket stand between Wadkar and Dubey early but their wait only extended since the batters overcame all challenges that the hosts threw at them.

With the pace bowlers not being able to trouble the batters, Mumbai hopes were pinned on their spinners but their own error cost Rahane's side early on. Kotian appealed for a bat-pad catch at silly point against Dubey

in the 101st over of the innings but the appeal was turned down.

In a show of desperation, Mumbai went for the DRS intervention which confirmed the ball had not grazed the bat and was also going to miss the leg stump. Kotian then found an outside edge off Wadkar's bat which fell close to Rahane.

Mumbai's frustration was evident when Kulkarni held his ground at the end of his follow through after being declined a leg-before appeal against Dubey. Kulkarni made some gestures and even exchanged a few words with the umpire but replays confirmed that the ball had pitched outside the leg-stump.

Dubey was also lucky when Kotian pinned him in front of the wickets but Mumbai could not get it overturned since they had no reviews left. The Vidarbha batter continued to ride his luck, getting another decision in his favour when replays showed the ball had missed his bat and gloves off Shaam Mulani. Wadkar completed his century shortly after lunch but once he was dismissed, the rest of the batting collapsed soon after.

BRIEF SCORES
Mumbai: 224 & 418 beat **Vidarbha105 & 368** (Akshay Wadkar 102, Harsh Dubey 65; Tanush Kotian 4/95) by 169 runs.

ALL ENGLAND BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS

Lakshya in quarters, Sindhu loses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, March 14: India's Lakshya Sen recorded a stunning three-game win over World No.3 Anders Antonsen to progress to the quarterfinals but an error-prone PV Sindhu lost in the women's singles second round of the All England Championships here Thursday.

The World No.18 Sen, who had finished runner-up at the 2022 edition, fought his way back from a 2-8 deficit in the decider after losing the second game to prevail 24-22, 11-21, 21-14 over Antonsen, a three-time medalist at the World Championships, in a controversial second round match.

Earlier Sindhu, a double Olympic medalist, seemed to be in good touch as she fought hard against the World No.1 An Se Young of Korea but failed to curb her mistakes to slip to a 19-21, 11-21 loss.

It was the Indian's seventh successive loss to the indomitable An Se Young, who had become the first Korean woman singles player to win the World Championships last year.

Sen came into the match with a 1-3 record against Antonsen, who had defeated the Indian in all the last three meetings. But the Indian produced a good show and was leading 17-15 in the first game after some close battles initially. With two winners, Antonsen made it 17-17 but Sen was the first to gain two game points with a precise backhand



flick at the corner.

The Indian squandered five game points as Antonsen stayed alive. Eventually at 22-22, two power-packed smashes gave Sen his fifth game point and he sealed it this time when the Dane sprayed wide.

After the change of ends, Antonsen was on top of things, leading 11-7 at the break. The Dane kept a firm hold on the rallies as Sen committed too many errors and the second game slipped away quickly.

In the decider, Antonsen was up 2-8 before grabbing a 11-6 lead at the interval. But soon the momentum shifted as the Indian

won seven of the next nine points to draw parity at 13-13.

At 14-16, Antonsen was called for a fault for touching the net, which rattled the Dane. "Fault? Why? Touched the net? My racket or body?", an animated Antonsen could be heard saying to the chair umpire.

Sen soon unleashed a forehand winner to move to 16-14, which he swelled to 18-14 when a defensive shot went wide from Antonsen. Another long rally ended up long as Lakshya stood two points away from a win. A smash gave him six match points and he converted when the Dane went wide.

Central Coast Mariners dash Odisha FC's hopes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Indian Super League side Odisha FC failed to progress to the Inter-Zone final of the AFC Cup after being held to a goalless draw in the home leg to Australia's Central Coast Mariners (CCM) here Thursday.

Having lost the first leg to the A-League side, Odisha FC could not capitalise on the home advantage to concede the tie 0-4 on aggregate.

Mikael Doka missed a first half penalty for the Mariners but it mattered little as the Australians had gone into the second leg with a comfortable 4-0 cushion from the first leg in Gosford last week.

Central Coast travelled to India in confident mood after their comprehensive win in the first meeting between the teams, and Jackson's side made a bright start.

Ronald Barcellos sought to capitalise on an early mistake by the Odisha defence but his shot from 20 yards out thumped back off the chest of goalkeeper Amrinder Singh, who blocked Angel Torres' close range effort moments later.

The visitors were soon given the opportunity to open the scoring when Ryan Edmondson was brought down by Carlos Delgado as he burst between the Spaniard and Mourtaada Fall, prompting referee Majed Al Shamrani to point to the spot.

But Doka, who converted a penalty in the first leg, failed to take advantage, thumping his shot off the goalkeeper's left post having sent Amrinder the wrong way.

Mariners controlled possession but lacked the domination they showed one week earlier, but it was still the Australian side that looked more likely to score.

Odisha defender Fall had to take evasive action to head Max Ballard's free-kick wide under pressure from Edmondson while the Englishman mishit his 61st minute volley into the side-netting when in a position to score.

With the game in the final quarter, Christian Theoharous had his low shot turned around the post by Amrinder having been fed in the penalty area by Doka while substitute Miguel Di Pizio's late effort was deflected wide as Mariners eased through.

Atletico pip Inter to reach CL quarters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, March 14: With tears in his eyes, Diego Simeone stared at the Atletico Madrid fans celebrating in the Metropolitan Stadium stands.

Minutes earlier, the coach was pacing back and forth by the sideline, unable to watch the tense penalty shootout that ended with Atletico triumphing over Inter Milan and advancing to the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

Jan Oblak made two saves and Lautaro Martinez sent his shot over the crossbar as Atletico defeated Inter 3-2 on penalties after scoring a late winner in regulation Wednesday.

Oblak saved the penalties by Alexis Sanchez and Davy Klaassen before Martinez missed the final kick for last year's runner-up in the European competition.

Memphis Depay, Rodrigo Riquelme and Angel Correa converted their penalties for Atletico, with Saul Niguez having his shot saved by Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer. Hakan Calhanoglu and Francesco Acerbi scored for the



A STRETCHING WALL: Jan Oblak dives to his right to deny Inter a goal in the penalty shootout, Wednesday

visitors in the shootout. Atletico reversed the 0-1 first-leg loss after Depay scored an 87th-minute goal that gave Simeone's team a 2-1 win in regulation.

Atletico didn't make it past the group stage last season and was eliminated by Manchester City in the last eight in 2021-22. Inter, which lost last year's final to Man City, had arrived at the Metropolitan Stadium enjoying a 13-game winning streak. It had

n't lost in 15 consecutive games in all competitions and had won all of its matches in 2024.

Inter opened the scoring in regulation with Federico Dimarco in the 33rd, but Atletico equalised two minutes later with Antoine Griezmann in his return from injury.

Dortmund sail through
Jadon Sancho scored early and Marco Reus netted late to send

Borussia Dortmund into the quarterfinals with a 2-0 win over PSV Eindhoven in the second leg of their last 16 tie Wednesday.

Sancho scored in the third minute and Reus sealed the win in the fifth minute of stoppage time to complete Dortmund's 3-1 win on aggregate after the teams drew the first leg 1-1 in Eindhoven. Dortmund, who reached the final in 2013, is into the last eight for the first time in three years.

Ian Maatsen tested PSV goalkeeper Walter Benitez in the second minute before Sancho scored the next. Julian Brandt sent the England forward through to score his second goal in as many games for Dortmund with a precise shot inside the bottom left corner. Sancho scored his first goal since returning from Manchester United for Dortmund to beat Werder Bremen Saturday.

Dortmund should have scored more Wednesday as the home team's intensity overwhelmed PSV. The Dutch visitors only started threatening after 25 minutes. Gregor Kobel saved an effort from Johan Bakayoko, then another from Guus Til.

Navarro overcomes Sabalenka challenge at Indian Wells meet

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indian Wells (California), March 14: Emma Navarro beat second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 in the fourth round of the BNP Paribas Open Wednesday for the biggest win of the young American's career.

Navarro improved to 18-5 this year, with her victories leading the WTA Tour. She is 11-2 in three-set matches. The 2021 NCAA singles champion from Virginia reached her fourth quarterfinal of the year and first at the 1000 level.

Coco Gauff celebrated her 20th birthday with a 6-0, 6-2 win in just over an hour against Elise Mertens to reach the quarters for the second consecutive year.

On the men's side, fourth-seeded Daniil Medvedev had just eight winners in a 6-4, 6-4 win over 13th-seeded Grigor Dimitrov. No.9 seed Casper Ruud rallied to beat Gael Monfils 3-6, 7-6(7-3), 6-4. Luca Nardi of Italy wasn't able to follow up his huge win over top-ranked Novak Djokovic, losing to 17th-seeded Tommy Paul, 6-4, 6-3.

Flash targets at Para Shooting WC create controversy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: India faced a huge embarrassment in front of the international shooting community when the 'flash targets' for the finals of the prestigious WSPS Para World Cup trap events had to be discarded by the foreign jury as they were not fit for competition.

The WSPS Para Shooting World Cup is the first-ever event of its kind taking place in India and offers 20 Paris Paralympic berths. More than 250 shooters from 50 countries participated in the event, which concluded Thursday, at the Karni Singh Ranges.

While 'flash targets' are not

mandatory in the finals of the shotgun events, they are used in almost every international competition finals, including the Olympics, ISSF World Cup, World Championships, continental championships and even in India's national championships and trials, as they reduce judgement errors to a bare minimum.

The 'flash target', when hit by lead splinters of a 12 bore cartridge fired by the competitor, explodes on impact, spewing a thick plume of pink colour in the atmosphere. It becomes easy for the juries to judge whether the shooter has hit the target (made a kill) or not just by seeing the plume of pink in the



atmosphere.

While ordinary targets with ordinary colours are used in qualification rounds, the finals are, as a matter of principle, held with 'flash targets' in almost every

international competition.

A range official at the Karni Singh Ranges told PTI on condition of anonymity that the juries were furious and asked all the "target throwing machines to be emptied immediately of flash targets and replaced with ordinary target clay pigeons".

"The juries asked us to remove all the stacked flash targets from the machines and replace them with ordinary targets which are used in the qualification round. It created a lot of commotion.

"A total of 25-30 range officials and anybody who knew something about trap shooting immediately sprung into action and we completed the job in 10

minutes. The competition began on time," said the range official.

Another source said that the international jury was "furious" but since India was hosting the "prestigious Para World Cup for the first time, they did not file a complaint".

The World Shooting Para Sports (WSPS) senior manager Tyler Anderson is also in New Delhi for the competition. National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) secretary Rajiv Bhatia told PTI that the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) had bought 15 cartons of flash targets from the federation but said they had not provided them poor quality or expired targets.