

## SC accepts Azam Khan's 'unconditional apology' for Bulandshahr gangrape case remark

**NEW DELHI (KCN):** Controversial Uttar Pradesh Minister Azam Khan, who had earlier alleged that the Bulandshahr gang-rape case was a "political conspiracy," expressed his unconditional apology for the remark and the "sincere and heartfelt remorse."

"Respondent No 2 [Azam Khan] has given an unconditional apology and has expressed his sincere and heartfelt remorse," the Bench comprising Justices Dipak Misra and Amitava Roy said after the senior Samajwadi Party leader filed a fresh affidavit tendering an

apology following objections raised by the Attorney General to his earlier one.

The Bench, which accepted Mr. Khan's new affidavit, made it clear that no further arguments on behalf of the Minister would be entertained further in the matter.

**Hearing put off to February 8**

However, it said that the questions framed by it earlier regarding the Freedom of Speech and Expression and probable impact of statements of those holding high offices on free and fair probe in heinous cases, including

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the Supreme Court on Thursday

Photo Credit: Subir Roy

Bench says the U.P. Minister has expressed "sincere and heartfelt remorse."

The Supreme Court on Thursday

accepted an "unconditional apology" tendered by controversial Uttar Pradesh Minister Azam Khan for his remark in the sensational Bulandshahr gang rape case, saying he has expressed "sincere and heartfelt remorse."

apology following objections raised by the Attorney General to his earlier one.



Dr. Pabitra Mohan Samantray, Editor, Paryabekhyak and The Kalinga Chronicle, with Nageswar Pattnaik, Chief of Kamiyab TV and ET, Dilip Mohanty, International Tennis player and coach, Odishi dancer Kaveri Madam, Durga Samantray, editor Duradarsi, entrepreneur Ms Mishra, CA Sudhri Das and friends in a get together hoisted by Kishore Dwivedi, president, Delhi Odisha journalists association and chief of bureau, the Samaja at special circuit house, Bhubaneswar.

## Relief for Coop Banks

**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today decided to supply around Rs. 65 to 70 crore of currency notes to the District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) in the State on daily basis to meet the requirement of farmers with regard to crop loan, paddy procurement proceeds and crop insurance claim.

Taking stock of the situation Development Commissioner R Balakrishnan advised the Reserve Bank of India officers to supply more currency to the District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs).

Director Institutional Finance Tapan Kumar Pradhan, General Manager RBI SP Mohanty, Managing Director State Central Cooperative Bank Tusar Kanta Panda along with senior officers from State Level Bank Coordination Committee and Cooperation department were among others who participated in the deliberations.

Mr. Balakrishnan underscored the urgency of constituting a WhatsApp Group among

the senior officers from RBI, SBI, State Cooperative Bank, Principal Secretary Cooperation and



Director, Institutional Finance.

"This forum would provide for real time monitoring of the ground level situation about availability of currency in the banks", said Balakrishnan adding that he would review the situation on day to day basis.

DCCBs in Odisha advance nearly 65 Percent of the crop loans against the national average of 16 Percent. This year target has been fixed to advance Rs.5000 crore of crop loan to the farmers during the current Rabi season.

In addition to

that Rs.1776 crore have been disbursed through cooperative banks to the farmers towards insurance

compliant for which more than Rs.50,000 could not be deposited in these accounts.

The farmers due to get more than Rs.50,000 towards the cost of their paddy encountered this problem. The bank representatives agreed to Balakrishnan's suggestion for using Aadhaar cards issued to the farmers as the KYC.

The farmers having their Aadhaar cards would produce it in the banks and the banks would make the accounts KYC compliant, said he.

Notably, as of now around 93 Percent of the adult population of the State have been supplied with Aadhaar numbers. Permanent Aadhaar registration centers have been functionalized at the Tahasil levels.

Presently Aadhaar registration campaign is also going on in all districts. The farmers not having Aadhaar number can get themselves registered in the nearest camp or Aadhaar registration center. It is expected that this measure would resolve the problem at ground level, he pointed out

claim of Kharif crop.

Apart from that around Rs.100 crore daily are being disbursed to the farmers' accounts towards paddy procurement proceeds. It was expected that supply of Rs.65 to 70 crore per day to the DCCBs would cater to the immediate needs of the famers, said the Development Commissioner.

The issues relating to deposit of money in Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts also figured in the meeting. Some of the accounts opened under PMJDY were found not fully KYC

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## First respond to chopper scam charges: BJP hits out at Cong amid note ban stir

**New Delhi (KCN):** Facing relentless opposition fire over demonetisation, top guns of the Modi government on Thursday latched on to news reports about alleged kickbacks in the AgustaWestland chopper deal under the erstwhile UPA rule, demanding that a debate on it should take precedence over

all other discussions.

The main opposition party, Congress, termed the demand as a "diversionary" tactic to avoid a Parliamentary debate on the note ban.

As Parliament headed for a near-complete washout of the Winter Session over demonetisation logjam, with just a day left for it to con-

clude, senior Ministers in the Modi government pounced on media reports to target Congress president Sonia Gandhi over the alleged kickbacks in the VVIP chopper deal, insisting that she respond to the charges.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar demanded that Sonia

speak on the issue, while Information and Broadcasting Minister M Venkaiah Naidu said the Congress should face the AgustaWestland heat "first" before Parliament discussed any other issue.

Naidu demanded that Parliament discuss the chopper scam as many names had See Page - 7

## Odisha lags percapita income

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** State of Odisha is lagging behind other states in terms of average per capita income with average annual per capita income at Rs 66,890 as against national average of Rs 93,293 during last fiscal.

Sources said that State's average annual per capita income was Rs 63,108 in 2014-15 against the national average of Rs 86,897 in 2014-15.

The per capita income of other states including Goa, Sikkim, Chandigarh and Delhi was registered at around Rs 2.75 lakh during the year.

According to official stats, income upto Rs 2 lakh was registered in some states, including Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab,

Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand,

Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh,



Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry.

Official sources said, in 2015-16 State's average annual per capita income was recorded Rs 66,890, while it was Rs 2,80,142 in Delhi, over Rs 2 lakh in Chandigarh and Sikkim.

It was between Rs 1 and Rs 2 lakh in

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand and Puducherry during the year, official data showed.

The annual per capita income in Bihar stood at Rs 34,168 during 2015-16, while it was Rs 32,816 in Jharkhand, Rs 65,388 in Madhya Pradesh and Rs 48,520 in Uttar

Pradesh. This was revealed from the statistics placed by Planning & Coordination Minister Usha Devi while replying to BJP MLA Dilip Ray in Odisha legislative Assembly.

While 26,97,83,000 lakh population is living below the poverty line across the country, the number is 1,38,53,000 in Odisha, 5,98,19,000 in Uttar Pradesh, 3,58,15,000 in Bihar, 2,34,06,000 in Madhya Pradesh, 1,84,98,000 in West Bengal and 1,97,92,000 in Maharashtra.

According to the data furnished by the Minister, the percentage of BPL population in Odisha is 32.59 against the national average of 21.92. The percentage of BPL people is higher in the states including Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Manipur

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# Sruthi gets her wish, to work with Rajiv Menon

Sruthi Hariharan has a varied repertoire. The actress has worked with different directors and on diverse subjects.

While she stays rooted in Sandalwood, Sruthi does not miss any opportunity to work in other languages, especially if it gives her a chance to work with a good director.

The actress, who recently completed shoot for Uppi Matte Hutti Ba-Inti Prema, had a wonderful 2016 with plenty of projects. Her 2017 looks equally exciting.

While she is to play opposite Darshan in Prakash Jayaram's directorial, set to go on floors from Febuary, Sruthi



is upbeat about her Tamil film with Rajiv Menon. In it, she will be playing the lead opposite GV Prakash. This yet-to-be titled

film, she says, will go on floors from January.

"My last film in Tamil was with Arjun Sarja," she says, "It was a bilingual in Kannada and Tamil and was shot in the beginning of last year."

The actor admits that the Tamil film industry was hard to get a break into, despite her fluency in the language.

"I have been busy with projects in Kannada, but it's not been as easy in Kollywood," she says.

"I have been part of a Balaji Sakthivel film, which is taking its own time, and we have to go with the flow.

Meanwhile Rajiv

Menon's project is something I am looking forward to. He was one director in my wish list. I am a huge fan of his films, Kandukondain and Minsara Kanavu, which I have grown up watching. Forget working with him, I would be excited even if I am with him on the sets."

Sruthi is also excited about working with GV Prakash.

"We know the kind of stories GV Prakash gravitates to, the combination of the director and actor will be riveting. It is a commercial film and will be made in sync sound, another interesting challenge for me," she says.

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ATK will now take on either Kerala Blasters or Delhi Dynamos who play in the second leg of the other semi-final on Wednesday.

In the contest at the Mumbai Football Arena, it took seven minutes for the hosts to get a look in but India captain Sunil Chhetri was guilty of spurning a one-on-one chance with an onrushing goalkeeper Debjit Mazumder keeping the Bengaluru FC forward at bay.

ATK's first real opportunity came near the half-hour mark when Javi Lara found Abhinash Ruidas with acres of space with the winger's cross finding Belencoso inside the area. Mumbai goalkeeper Amrinder Singh sneaked in to punch the ball away but not out of danger as a lurking Lalrindika Ralte -- who replaced Bidyananda Singh in the 14th minute -- took a swipe at goal only for Lalhmangaihnsanga Ralte to effect an important block.

The match was characterised by frayed tempers which was not unexpected with so much at stake in the second leg. But things reached boiling point when

## Christmas cheer in sandalwood

While Sandalwood is riding through the demonetisation storm, a few filmmakers are sure of

According to Ramesh Aravind, the film was initially slated for a December 9 release but that was

Shanvi Srivatsava and will be released in a good number of theatres across Karnataka. It is a re-

Nirrutara has Kiran, who was launched through my directorial. It is not at all about competition



cashing in on the Christmas holidays.

Three Kannada films - Ramesh Aravind's Sundaranga Jaana, Preetham Gubbi's Naanu Mattu Varalakshmi and Apoorva Kasaravaralli's Nirrutara will be competing with Aamir Khan's Dangal from B-town. All to be out in theatres on December 23.

Prithvi and Malavika Mohanan in Naanu

Mattu Varalakshmi

when the industry hit the demonetisation nadir. "People were struggling to get money, waiting in long queues at banks, so we thought it's best to wait till they are free. Holidays would be leisurely.

That why we shifted the release to Christmas," he says. "We are hoping the cloud has finally passed and the queues will shift to the theatres."

The film, from Rockline Venkatesh and Allu Aravind, features Ganesh and

make of the 2015 Telugu film Bhale Bhale Mogadivoy.

"The original film's makers, who watched the final copy, are extremely happy," says Ramesh Aravind. "As mentioned by City Express, I remake a story and not a film, which has become a code now. I have kept to my style."

Preetham is happy with Naanu...s release date and says, "It will be out with my best friend Ganesh's film and

because each film is diffent. Naanu Mattu Varalakshmi is about race for love and our Christmas gift to the viewers." The film sees the launch of GK Venkatesh's grandson, Prithvi, and is produced by the actor's father K Manjunath. Naanu Mathu Varalakshmi also marks the debut of Malavika Mohanan. The film distributed under Jayanna Combines will be released in 150 theatres.

**Rachita Ram set for varsity course**

Rachita Ram seems destined to work with the top actors of Sandalwood, if the list of her films are anything to go by. The actress who made a transition from TV serials to the silver screen has worked with stars including Darshan, Sudeep, Puneeth Rajkumar, Ramesh Aravind, Ganesh and Dhruva Sarja. Now, she has just bagged an Upendra movie.



Rachita tells City Express that working with each star has been a learning experience, but when it comes to Upendra, it is like entering a "Film University". "When I worked with Darshan, Sudeep, Puneeth and Ganesh, they gave me acting tips and technical gyan time and again. With Uppi, I am sure to learn more about filmmaking. For me, he is a university."

The film produced by Vijayalakshmi Urs will go on the floors from December end.

Lalthlamuana picked up his second yellow card near half-time to trudge down the tunnel and leave the visitors to fend with ten men.

He was guilty of fouling Matias Defederico for the red before picking up his first booking in the 34th minute.

Molina ringed in a tactical change in a bid to bottle up their rivals who needed to score in order to harbour any hopes of turning the tables on ATK. Full-back Keegan Pereira came in place of winger Ruidas.

ATK had a chance to strengthen their hold on the game when Belencoso had a chance of converting a good-looking Lara cross across the face of goal but failed to get anything on it.

Stephen Pearson also skewed a gilt-edged chance over the bar on the volley.

With two minutes remaining to the final whistle, Lucian Goian failed to connect from close first followed by a swinging volley which was saved by Debjit.

Chhetri also had a chance to put the ball behind the net from a header but failed in his attempt as the hosts walked away frustrated.



## Odisha eyes Olympics 2020

**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today said that his Government assigns high importance for promotion of sports activities and development of sports infrastructure in the State.

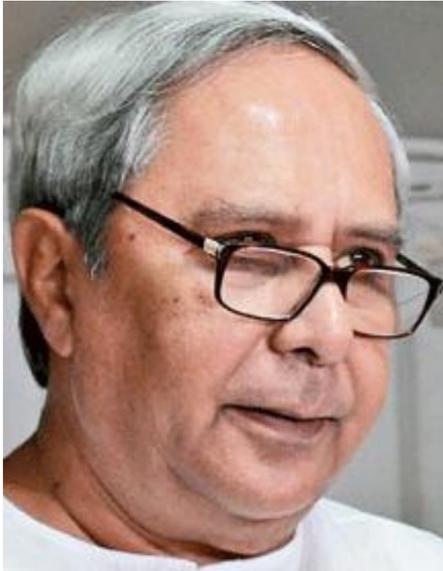
Laying the foundation stone of a Rs 3.7 crore Sports Climbing Complex at the Kalinga Stadium here, Mr. Patnaik said the State is already in the international sporting map.

This complex will be the first of its kind in India conforming to the norms of International Federation of Sports Climbing, he said adding the discipline will be included in 2020 Olympics at Tokyo.

"Hence this will be of immense help for our sports talents," the Chief Minister added.

ister added.

It will also help in



He said the plan and design of the entire structure has been vetted by IIT Bhubaneswar while will have Lead, Speed and Bouldering facilities to give impetus to this new sport in our state.

providing proper training facility to our players for participating in national and international events, Mr. Patnaik added.

The facility will be constructed Outdoor Schools, New Delhi representing

Entre-prises, France which has been selected as the executants through a bidding process and will be completed by May next year.

The height of Speed and Lead Climbing Wall is 15 Meters while the Bouldering wall is 12M wide X 4 M high.

The Sports Climbing facility is first of its kind in India confirming to the IFSC Climbing & Safety norms, said Vishal Dev, Secretary Sports & Youth Affairs.

The facility will provide opportunity for Sports Climbing players from the State to train and practice for different National & International events in Sports Climbing, Mr. Dev said.

## Atletico Kolkata reach ISL final with win over Mumbai City

**MUMBAI(KCN):** Ten-man Atletico de Kolkata (ATK) showed grit of the highest order to see off Mumbai City FC in a 0-0 draw in the semi-final second leg and sail into the Indian Super League (ISL) final with a 3-2 aggregate victory in the tie here on Tuesday.

ATK led Mumbai 3-2 from the first offing in Kolkata and needed just a

draw to edge out their rivals, who despite topping the league table, bowed out of the competition after reaching the knock-out stages for the first time.

This is the second time the inaugural champions ATK reached the final of the tournament, a first under coach Jose Molina who took over the reins from Antonio Habas this season. Habas led

ATK to their first title in 2014.

ATK played more than 45 minutes without full-back Robert Lalthlamuana who was sent off for a second booking near the end of the first half.

A brawl broke out after the match when ATK's Juan Beloncoso was tripped by Mumbai's Leo Costa. Several players got involved in separate alterca-

tions when Beloncoso reacted in an ugly manner prompting Thiago Cunha from the Mumbai bench to attempt a kung-fu kick at the Spaniard.

Kolkata players and backroom staff members chased Cunha after that, capping off an unprecedented incident which saw Cunha and Beloncoso handed red cards.

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## 'Great players should play together,' Ronaldo talks of partnering Messi

**MADRID(KCN):** After lifting his

Griezmann to win the coveted prize.

quoted Ronaldo as saying.

pressive catalogue "My objective



fourth Ballon d'Or award, Real Madrid star striker Cristiano Ronaldo has insisted that the competition for the trophy would have been fiercer if he and Lionel Messi were in the same team.

Ronaldo, who inspired Zinedine Zidane's side to the Champions League glory and Portugal to the European Championship 2016 trophy, defeated Messi and Atletico Madrid forward Antoine

The Portuguese star, who previously lifted the prestigious prize in 2008, 2013 and 2014, is now one behind Messi, who took the honour for a fifth time last year.

Asserting that 'great players should play together', Ronaldo believes he would have performed out of the top had Messi been his team-mate.

"It would be interesting to see both of us in the same team," goal.com

"I think great players should play together. So if we were in the same team, I think I would have more than him, but he wouldn't be far off. Everyone knows Messi is a great player. He's won five Ballons d'Or," he added.

The 31-year-old asserted he now hopes to help Real Madrid to the Club World Cup in Japan as he aims to add more achievements to his already im-

now is to win the Club World Cup, an important trophy. After that, to win La Liga. It's a title that Real wants to win. And if possible, the Champions League again and the Copa del Rey. I always want to win everything," Ronaldo said.

Ronaldo has scored 19 goals in 20 games for club and country this term, to add to the 54 goals he got last season.

## Inzamam criticises Anderson over comments on Kohli

**KARACHI(KCN):** Pakistan chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq has criticised James Anderson for his uncharitable comments about Virat Kohli's technique, saying that the England pacer should first take wickets in India before questioning the Indian skipper's capabilities.

Anderson had recently said Kohli's technical deficiencies were not at display during the ongoing Test series between India and England because the pitches in India are devoid of bounce and there is lack of movement.

"It is surprising to me that Anderson should question Kohli's runs and ability because I haven't seen him take too many wickets in India," Inzamam said on the Geo Super

sports channel here last night.

batsman. Don't the English and Australia

not matter where you get runs because in

dian batsmen, rated Kohli highly.

ion if a batsman scores 80 and it helps his team win, it matters more to me than someone scoring 150 and his team still losing.

"He is a quality player and when he is getting runs his team does well. That is important to judge or classify a batsman's value. There is hunger in him for runs," he said.

The veteran of 120 Tests lamented that the Asians have a habit of questioning their own teams and players while England and Australia always back their cricketers.

"If they don't do well there we start questioning the ability of our teams and players ourselves. We must not forget Australia lost 3-0 in Sri Lanka, we beat England 3-0 in the past

in the UAE."

Meanwhile, Inzamam revealed that during his captaincy he feared Virender Sehwag the most among the Indian batsmen.

"Sehwag was a dangerous player because if he scored 80 odd runs it meant his team would end up scoring 300 or more in a Test or ODI. The more time he spent time at the crease the more he dented the morale of the bowlers, which was worrying for me as captain," said Inzamam.

On the suspension of bilateral cricket between Pakistan and India, Inzamam said it has hurt Pakistan cricket a lot.

"Overall it is not good for cricket and for both countries not

to play bilateral series. But from a Pakistani perspective it has done us more damage as already foreign teams are also not touring Pakistan and our young players are not getting chances to play matches against international sides before playing for the senior team.

"People want to see Indo-Pak matches but there is nothing one can do about it until things are normal at the government level. Personally, I always enjoyed the challenge of playing against India and it made a better player. To me an Indo-Pak series has always been even bigger than the Ashes," concluded Inzamam.



"Does Anderson mean to say that if you get runs in England you get some sort of certificate that makes you a quality

lian players struggle when they play in the sub-continent? Does that mean they are bad players or weak teams. To me it does

Test matches runs are runs," the former Pakistan skipper added.

Inzamam, who played against the golden breed of In-

"I always judge a batsman by seeing how many times the runs he scores leads to his team winning matches. In my opin-