

Let us imbibe the values of Lord Shri Ram and pledge to build a nation where, in line with the concept of Ram Rajya, every person lives with dignity and the stream of development continues to flow in everyone's life”.

A large group photograph of the 2019-2020 Executive Board members and their advisors. The group is posed in a grand hall with ornate arches and chandeliers. The members are arranged in several rows, with some standing and some seated. They are dressed in formal attire, including suits and traditional Indian clothing like sarees. The background features large arches with decorative elements and chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

policies and schemes effective and useful. She told officers that as India is moving towards becoming the third largest economy in the world, they will get countless opportunities in the times to come to enhance their capabilities and utilize them to the fullest. She expressed confidence that they will make a significant contribution to the development of the country by taking proper advantage of these opportunities. The President said that Economic Service

Officers are expected to provide appropriate advice for economic analysis and design of development programmes, as well as for strengthening the resource distribution system and evaluating schemes. This is a very important responsibility as policies will be decided on the basis of suggestions given by them. The President said that analysis of data and implementations of evidence-based development programs have helped the

government to accelerate the economic upliftment of the people. She stated that it is the duty of the young IES officers to enhance their work efficiency through new ideas, methods and techniques. Their creativity will help in opening new doors of progress for the country in this rapidly changing era, she added.

The President was happy to note that more than 60 percent of IES officers of 2022 and 2023 batches were women officers. She said that increasing participation of women will help in fulfilling the resolve of inclusive development of India. She urged women officers to work for the all-round development of women.

The President urged young officers to keep in mind the interest of the poor and backward sections of the country while giving policy related suggestions or taking any decision in their workplace.

Bhubaneswar(KCN): The BJP Tuesday released the names of 21 candidates for the Odisha Assembly elections, including that of former Union Coal Minister Dilip Ray. While releasing the second list of candidates for the Odisha Assembly elections, the party nominated Ray from the Rourkela assembly seat. At least five turncoats who recently joined the BJP after quitting the BJD also got BJP tickets. They are Amarandra Dash (Jagatsinghpur), Dambaru Sisa (Chittrakonda), Kalilash Kulesika (Laxmipur), Bhadav Hansdah (Saraskana) and Jagannath Nudruka (Bissam Cuttack). Ray will fight against Odisha's Labour Minister and BJD candidate Sarada Nayak from the Rourkela seat. The party also changed

two candidates who were named in the previous list. Surama Padhi was replaced by Tapas Ranjan Martha in the Ranpur assembly segment while the party nominated Chaitanya Nandibali in place of Chaitanya Hantal in the Pottangi assembly segment.

Two women candidates – Surama Padhi and Sanjali Murmu (Bangirposi) – also figure in the list of 21 candidates released by the BJP.

With this, the BJP has so far announced the names of 131 candidates out of 147 assembly segments in Odisha. The party had earlier released the names of candidates for all the 21 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Odisha Assembly and Lok Sabha polls in the state will be held simultaneously in four

phases May 13, 20, 25 and June 1.

Here is the second list of Assembly candidates announced by the BJP: Rourkela: Dilip Ray, Patna (ST): Akhil C h a n d r a Naik, Saraskana (ST): Bhadav Hansdah, Rairangpur (ST): Jolen Barda, Bangriposi (ST): S a n j a l i Murmu, Karanjia (ST): P a d m a c h a r a n Haibru, Jharigram (ST): N a r s i n g h Bhatra, Dabugam (ST): S o m n a t h Pujari, Rajanagar: Lalit Behera, Balikuda: Ersama: Satya Sarathi Mohanty, Jagatsinghpur: A m a r e n d r a Dash, Kakatpur (SC): Baidhar Mallick, Ranpur: Surama Padhi, Sanakhemundi: Uttam Kumar Panigrahi, Mohana (ST): Prasanta Mallik, Bissamcuttack (ST): Jagannath N u n d r u k a , Rayagada (ST): Basanta Kumar Ullaka, Laxmipur (ST): Kailash Kulesika, Kotpad (ST): Rupu Bhatra, Pottangi (ST): Chaitanya Nandibali, Chitrakonda (ST): Dambaru Sisa.

K a n k e r
(Chhattisgarh)(KCN) :
At least 29 Naxalites
were killed in an
encounter with security
personnel in
Chhattisgarh's Kanker
district Tuesday, police
officials said. Three
security personnel suffered
injuries in the fierce gun-
battle and a large quantity
of weapons was also
recovered from the spot,
they said. The gunfight
took place at around 2 pm

in Hapatola forest between Binagunda and Koronar villages under Chhotabethiya police station limits, when a joint team of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundaraj P said. The operation was launched based on inputs about the presence of senior cadres of north Bastar division of

the outlawed CPI (Maoist) Shankar, Lalita, Raju and others, he said. During patrolling in the area, a fierce gun-battle broke out between the two sides, the senior IPS officer said. "Bodies of 29 Maoists along with a huge cache of weapons, including AK-47, SLR, Insas and .303 rifles, were recovered from the spot," the IG said. Polling in the Naxalite-hit Bastar Lok Sabha seat will take

place April 19 in the first phase, while the Kanker constituency, part of the Bastar region, will vote in the second round of general elections April 26. The search operation was still underway in the area amid intermittent firing between security personnel and Naxalites, said Sundarraj. "Three security personnel sustained injuries in the gunfight and their condition was stated

to be out of danger," he said, adding they were referred to hospital for treatment. After the latest encounter, 79 Naxalites have been killed in separate gun-battles with security forces in the Bastar region, comprising seven districts, including Kanker, so far this year. On April 2, as many as 13 Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Bijapur district.

New Delhi(KCN): Aditya Srivastava has topped the prestigious civil services examination 2023, with Animesh Pradhan and Donuru Ananya Reddy getting the second and third ranks respectively, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) announced Tuesday. He has done his graduation (Bachelor of Technology) in electrical engineering from Indian

Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, according to the results of the civil services examination 2023 announced by the UPSC on Tuesday. Animesh Pradhan, a graduate (BTech) in computer science from National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela, secured the second rank with sociology as his optional subject, it said. Donuru

Ananya Reddy, who possesses Bachelor of Arts (Hons) geography, from Miranda House, Delhi University, stood third in the rank with anthropology as her optional subject. A total of 1,016 candidates (664 men and 352 women) have qualified the examination and have been recommended by the Commission for appointment to various services.

New Delhi(KCN): Hearing petitions seeking cross-verification of votes cast on Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) with paper slips generated through the VVPAT system, the Supreme Court today pointed to problems with the secret ballot voting method.

"We are in our 60s. We all know what happened when there were ballot papers, you may have, but we have not forgotten," Justice Sanjiv Khanna told Prashant Bhushan, counsel for one of the petitioners, Association for Democratic Reforms.

Mr Bhushan was arguing how most European countries that had opted for voting through EVMs have returned to the paper ballots.

"We can go back to paper ballots. Another option is to give VVPAT slip to the voters in hand. Otherwise, the slips fall into the machine and the

slip can be then given to the voter and it can be put into the ballot box. Then the VVPAT design was changed, it had to be transparent glass, but it was changed to dark opaque mirror glass where it is only visible when the light is on for second seconds," he said.

When Mr Bhushan cited Germany's example, Justice Dipankar Datta asked what's Germany's population. Mr Bhushan replied that it is around 6 crore, while India has 50-60 crore voters.

"Ninety-seven crore is the total number of registered voters. We all know what happened when there were ballot papers, Justice Khanna said.

When Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde, counsel for one of the petitioners, said votes cast on EVMs should be tallied with VVPAT slips, Justice Khanna replied, "Yes, 60 crore VVPAT slips should be counted. Right?"

The judge said human

interventions "lead to problems and human weakness can be there, which includes biases as well". "Machine normally without human intervention will give you accurate results. Yes, the problem arises when there is human intervention or (a human) makes unauthorised changes when they are around the software or machine, if you have any suggestion to avert this, then you can give us that," he said.

Mr Bhushan then read out a research paper on the possibility of EVMs being tampered. "They are only counting 5 VVPAT machines per assembly when there are 200 such machines, this is five per cent only and there can be no justification in this. The seven-second light can also lead to manipulation. The voter can be allowed to take the VVPAT slip and put



it into the ballot box," he said.

Senior Advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said, "I adopt everything that Mr. Bhushan says. We are not saying that there is any malice. Only issue is that of the confidence of the voter in the vote he has cast."

The court then asked the Election Commission of India about the process of voting, the storage of EVMs and counting of votes. Justice Khanna noted that there is no provision for strict punishment for tampering

with EVMs. "This is serious. There should be fear of punishment," he said.

Mr Sankaranarayanan said voters need physical interface and verification. "Allow me to pick up the slip and put it in the box," he said. The court responded that even if 10 per cent of voters raise objections, the whole process will stop. "Is this rational?" it asked.

Mr Sankaranarayanan replied, "Yes it must, I am entitled to ask. I am a voter, what do I gain by deliberately stopping

the process?" Justice Dipankar Datta asked the petitioners' counsel not to compare the Indian election with voting in foreign countries. "My home state West Bengal's population is more than that of Germany. We need to trust someone. Don't try to bring down the system like this. Don't cite such examples. European examples don't work here," he said.

Justice Datta asked Mr Bhushan if there is data backing his contention that people don't trust EVMs. When Mr Bhushan cited a survey, the court said, "Let us not believe in private polls. Let us go by data. The problem with data is that it must be authentic, not based on opinion but actual performance. We will get the data from the Election Commission." When a counsel for the petitioners said public

sector companies are making EVMs, the court asked if he will be happy if the private sector does it. The matter will be heard next on Thursday. The VVPAT -- Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail -- enables a voter to see if the vote was cast properly and went to the candidate he/she supports. The VVPAT generates a paper slip that is kept in a sealed cover and can be opened if there is a dispute. Amid the Opposition's questions and apprehensions regarding the EVM system of voting, the petitions call for cross-verification of every vote. The petitions have been filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and activist Arun Kumar Agarwal. Mr Agarwal has sought the counting of all VVPAT slips. The ADR's petition seeks the court's

direction to the Election Commission and the Centre to ensure that voters are able to verify through VVPATs that their vote has been "counted as recorded". The petition says that the requirement of voters verifying that their votes have been "recorded as cast" is somewhat met when the VVPAT slip is displayed for about seven seconds after pressing the button on the EVM through a transparent window.

"However, there is a complete vacuum in law as the ECI has provided no procedure for the voter to verify that her vote has been 'counted as recorded' which is an indispensable part of voter verifiability. The failure of the ECI to provide for the same is in the teeth of purport and object of the directions issued by this Court in... Subramanian Swamy versus Election Commission of India (2013 verdict)," the plea said.

Central University of Odisha organises a Special Lecture on “Life and Contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar”

Koraput, (KCN): On 15 April 2024, in a tribute to the 134th Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Central University of Odisha hosted a special lecture on “life and contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar” at its Sunabeda campus. The event featured distinguished speakers, including renowned academics Prof. Balu Ananda Chopade, former Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad, and Dr. Prashant Meshram, Joint Registrar of Visva Bharati.

Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of CUO, Prof. Chakradhar Tripathi, presided over the program and delivered the presidential address. Other dignitaries on the dais were Prof. N. C. Panda, In charge Registrar & Finance Officer and Prof. V. C. Jha, Advisor, Academic and Administration. Prof. Hemraj Meena, In charge Director of Rajbhasha Cell delivered the welcome address. Prof. Tripathi emphasized Dr. Ambedkar's profound teachings, hailing him as a visionary global icon and a true architect of the nation. He urged the university community to



delve into Dr. Ambedkar's life, teachings, and contributions, drawing inspiration to actively contribute to societal and

national progress. Highlighting Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's unique stature, Prof. Chopade underscored his significance as a symbol

of knowledge, particularly noting his distinguished academic journey at Columbia University. He emphasized Dr.

Ambedkar's multifaceted brilliance as a scholar, social reformer, jurist, economist, and advocate for various causes,

including women empowerment. Dr. Meshram shed light on Dr. Ambedkar's global recognition, being celebrated worldwide on his birth anniversary. He emphasized Dr. Ambedkar's multifaceted contributions, from his pivotal role in drafting the Indian Constitution to his efforts in establishing key institutions and policies that shaped modern India. Prof. Jha emphasized Dr. Ambedkar's pivotal role in shaping modern India through his legislative acumen and policy interventions. He stressed that Dr.

Ambedkar's vision continues to guide the nation towards progress and excellence. Prof. Panda likened Dr. Ambedkar to a revered sage of India, highlighting his unwavering dedication to societal upliftment and progress, drawing parallels with the teachings of ancient scriptures. The event was coordinated by Prof. Meena, who extended gratitude to all participants. Faculty members, officers, students, and research scholars attended the lecture, marking a momentous tribute to the enduring legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Bhakta Das confident of Congress coming to power in Odisha & Center



Bhubaneswar: (KCN): Chairing the first Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee's Campaign Committee meeting at Congress Bhawan here on Tuesday, its Chairman and former Minister Bhakta Charan Das said that the people of Odisha shall bless Congress to power at the state and the Center in the forthcoming election if the Congress cadres are able to reach out the message of 9 Nyayas, 25 Gurantees

and 9 PCC Guarantees to every household in every booth of the state as this is the best poll manifesto for the welfare of the people of the state and the country. The first meeting chalked out the micro and macro- level campaign strategy for all the Assembly and Lok Sabha Constituencies of Odisha. Soon the campaign shall start from Srikhetra with the blessings of Lord Jagannath. Former

Congress President Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to address a public meeting to be held at the birth place of Utkal Gaurab Late Madhu Babu on Madhu Jayanti. Along with Das, the Vice President of Campaign Committee Navajyoti Patnaik and Co-ordinator Sudhansu Sekhar Deo shared their plans to grass root the PCC campaign in the state. Others present

were Amiya Pandab, Ziaul Haque, Panchanan Kanungo, Bankanidhi Behera, Arya Gyanendra, Bijayalaxmi Sahoo, Nakul Naik, Manas Choudhury, Biswajit Das, Rasik Pattanayak, Dasarathi Gamango, Abdul Kalam, Harshabardhan, Hamid Hussien, Jacob Pradhan, Sasmita Behera, Pruthvi Ballabh Patnaik, Padmakar Guru, Ranjita Rout, Bandita Parida, Bishnu Charan Barik, Jitendra Biswal.

Kartik Care For Injured



Cuttack(KCN): 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian visited SCB Medical College to talk to injured. Shri Pandian assured all necessary support and medical care. At least five passengers were killed and 30 others seriously injured after a passenger bus fell from an over bridge on NH-16 near Barabati in Jajpur this night. Carrying nearly 50 passengers, the bus was

on its way from Puri to Kolkata. Following the mishap, Fire Services personnel and locals rushed to the spot and carried out rescue operations. The injured were first admitted to Dharmasala CHC. The seriously injured passengers have been shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack. As many as 16 ambulances and five

cranes were pressed into service. Immediately, SP Jajpur, RTO, NHAI, CDMO rushed to the spot within 15 min of the accident. Out of 16 ambulances with two advanced life saving ambulances, 8 ambulances are shifting severely injured to SCB Cuttack. People with minor injuries are being shifted to Badchana CHC. More ambulances are

kept in readiness. So far, five people have expired. Five cranes are available on the spot lifting the bus and managing the traffic. Expressing grief over the death of five passengers, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of Rs 3 lakh for next to the kin of deceased persons. He also directed health officials to provide free and quality treatment to the injured passengers.

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Janhvi Kapoor, Rajkummar Rao's 'Mr And Mrs Mahi' gets a new release date

Rajkummar Rao and Janhvi Kapoor's film 'Mr And Mrs Mahi' got a new release date. The movie was initially set to release on April 19, 2024.

Rajkummar Rao and Janhvi Kapoor's 'Mr And Mrs Mahi', finally got a new release date. The film, earlier slated to hit the theatres on April 19, 2024, will now release on May 31, 2024. The lead star cast, along with producer Karan Johar, announced the same on social media.

"Love scores a century on May 31st, 2024! (sic)", was what Janhvi Kapoor wrote while sharing the new release date of her film, 'Mr And Mrs Mahi'. The actor will share the screen with

Rajkummar Rao in the project.

Producer Karan Johar, while announcing the film's release date, wrote, "Some films are more than just stories they are so much more than celluloid love they talk to the viewer about dreams and how many a time people closest to us can come in the way of our dreams MR AND MRS MAHI is exceptionally close to our hearts.. and we can't wait to share our campaign designs with you on Monday but for now we have a release date!!! 31st MAY 2024!!! At a cinema near you!!! (sic)." In November 2023, Karan Johar announced



the release date of Janhvi Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao's 'Mr And Mrs Mahi'. He mentioned that the film would hit the screens on April 19, 2024.

KJo wrote, "It's all heart and more, that makes a magical story 'pitch-perfect'! #MrAndMrsMahi in cinemas on 19th April, 2024 (sic)."

In May 2023, Janhvi Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao wrapped 'Mr And Mrs Mahi' shoot. A post from Dharma Productions social media handle read, "And it's a wrap for Mr. & Mrs. Mahi! Ready for the final innings, we'll see you soon in cinemas near you! (sic)."

'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' box office Day 4: Akshay-Tiger film touches Rs 40 crore



Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff's 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' collected Rs 40 crore in 4 days in India. The action film has been maintaining a steady run in theatres.

Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff's recently released film, 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', has touched the Rs 40 crore mark in India in just four days. Now, the film is marching towards Rs 50

crore at the domestic box office. On Sunday, April 14, 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' earned around Rs 10 crore net in India. Now, all eyes are on the film's theatrical run during the weekdays and how it is going to hold its ground. 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' released in theatres on April 11 on the occasion of Eid. The film clashed with Ajay Devgn's 'Maidaan' in theatres.

On Sunday, April 14, the film saw a slight growth in collection compared to Day 3 numbers. Going by the initial trade reports, 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' earned approximately Rs 9 crore net in India on April 14. The movie has been holding steady in theatres ever since its release.

The four-day total collection of 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' now stands at Rs 40.75 crore net at

the domestic box office. The film had an overall occupancy of 20.63 per cent on April 14. 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' has been receiving mixed reviews from critics and audiences alike. IndiaToday.in reviewer rated the film 1.5 out of 5 stars and wrote, "There are some good parts in the film too. In the first half, which mostly looks like a series of poor WhatsApp jokes and social media memes knit together, Akshay Kumar recreates his signature 'Phir Hera Pheri' pose." Written and directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' is a high-octane action thriller. Prithviraj Sukumaran plays the antagonist. The film also features Manushi Chhillar, Alaya F, Ronit Roy Bose and several others in pivotal roles. Sonakshi Sinha appears in a cameo.

'Have waited for years...': Parineeti Chopra expresses gratitude for 'Chamkila'



Parineeti Chopra is elated over the positive response to her performance in 'Chamkila'. The film stars Diljit Dosanjh as the titular character, directed by Imtiaz Ali.

Parineeti Chopra expressed her gratitude over positive response to her performance in 'Chamkila'. In an Instagram post, the actor mentioned that she had been waiting for such a role for years. Both Chopra and Diljit Dosanjh are co-stars in the film.

Parineeti Chopra, who plays Amarjot (Amar Singh Chamkila's wife) alongside Diljit Dosanjh, is receiving rave reviews for her performance in Imtiaz Ali's 'Chamkila'. The actor expressed her gratitude in a crisp note on her Instagram story. Parineeti also mentioned that she had waited for a film like this for years.

Parineeti Chopra expressed her gratitude for playing Amarjot, Diljit Dosanjh's on-screen wife in 'Chamkila'. She wrote a note on Instagram, which can be read, "I am glad that I was able to make an impact with my work in Chamkila. This is something I've waited for years (sic)."

She continued, "Thank you @imtiazaofficial for believing in my talent and giving me this opportunity (sic)."

A few days back, Parineeti Chopra shared a glimpse of how they tried to recreate real-life instances from Chamkila and Amarjot's life on-screen. Posting a video, she wrote, "Diljit and I had the privilege of playing the role of two legends who changed the music landscape in India. Recreating their famous images in the film and seeing them again today gives me goosebumps. Cannot wait to share the world of Chamkila with everyone. Wouldn't have been the same without my jodidaar @diljiddosanjh! (sic)."

For the unaware, both Diljit and Parineeti have lent their voices to some of the original 'Chamkila' songs in Punjabi. The film also showcased live music recordings done on location, capturing the rawness and exuberance of each moment as Diljit and Parineeti sang live in multiple instances.

'Chandu Champion Is One Of The Toughest Films,' Says Kartik Aaryan As He Talks About His Transformation

Jointly produced by Sajid Nadiadwala and Kabir Khan, Chandu Champion is one of the biggest releases of the year that everyone is eagerly looking forward to. While the film is going to be a one-of-a-kind grand canvas spectacle, the lead Kartik Aaryan has indeed put his heart and soul into transforming himself for the film. Recently, Kartik Aaryan graced Neha Dhupia's 'No Filter Neha Season Six'. On the show, he talked about the challenges he faced during the making of his next release, Chandu Champion, and called it one of the toughest films.

Elaborating on the same, he said, "Chandu Champion is one of the toughest films that I have done because it has so many elements. Murlikant Petkar Ji's journey is unlike any



other. When I first heard the film, I couldn't believe it was a true story. He was not associated with one sport alone; there were

different sports and different phases in his life. Also, he was an army officer. So, the logline of the film is a man who refuses to

surrender."

Completing the same, he said, "We are showing him at 17 years old, 24 years old, and later. So, you'll see a complete transformation in me throughout the film. My [fitness] routine was based on how the character had to look—he had to look childlike at one stage and mature in another. The shoot lasted a year, and I didn't do anything else during that time."

The film marks Kartik and Kabir's first association and the second one with Sajid Nadiadwala after the super hit Satyaprem Ki Katha. The trio is coming together with an interesting true story of a man who refused to surrender. Jointly produced by Sajid Nadiadwala and Kabir Khan, Chandu Champion is all set for its grand release on June 14, 2024.

Independents are not hot favourites any more



The country is witnessing a new trend-- gradual decline of number of Independents seeking election and the victory achieved by them. Whether it is good or not is another matter and needs a separate debate. Two reasons immediately come to mind for it: one, rising cost of campaigning and two, voters' preference to candidates attached to one political party or the other.

Whatever may be the reason, we are certainly into a different time. The first Look Sabha results will tell you the difference. It will offer a study in contrasts. Against three in the outgoing, as many as 36 Independents had won the first Lok Sabha election. Some

of them had earned name and fame before in different fields. The list is long. It includes veterans like V. K Krishna Menon, Acharya Kripalani, S M Banerjee, Meenu Masani, L M Singhvi, Inderjit Singh Namdhari and Karni Singh.

In addition to other things, their credentials might be playing in the minds of voters. There was a time, of course, in the past, when mafia dons who were seeking elections as Independents were reaching state Assemblies and parliament with ease. Uttar Pradesh is notable in this connection. What is more surprising, they were later backed by political parties. Two parties, SP and BSP, have done most of the favours for them. However, both the dons are dead. However, there are yet to keep totally away from such elements. Bihar has not acted differently. There too RJD had backed at least one

noted criminal. P a k i s t a n , unbelievably, has rejected son of Hafiz Sayeed, mastermind of Mumbai terror attack. But that might be an exception.

The story in early years was completely different. Youngsters might be unaware but in the first Lok Sabha, Independents were the second largest group after the Congress. No non-Congress party had matched their performance. Cut to 2019 and the change becomes crystal clear. In the outgoing Lok Sabha the number had dropped to three. A total of 202 i n d e p e n d e n t candidates have so far reached the Lok Sabh.

Cost escalation is not something new. Prices of materials have gone up everywhere. Labour and other costs have also shot up. Contesting Lok Sabha elections on one's own strength has become far too difficult now.

Keeping all this in

mind, it appears that if any one wins a Lok Sabha seat as an independent now he is different. He must be popular for some reason or the other and must have done something different from rivals.

To keep the record straight, after the first Lok Sabha elections, the number of Independent winners in the second, came down to 34. Elections were held in 1977 after emergency was imposed in the country. Then only seven independent candidates were successful. The number was reduced further to four in 1980. In 1984 and 1989 for different reasons nine and eight independent candidates were successful in the Lok Sabha elections.

Besides muscle, money power plays a role in elections not only in Assembly but in Lok Sabha polls. But not in every case. Personal influence and perception also matters. Kripalani, for

example, was the President of the Indian National Congress in 1947 . He was one of the most enthusiastic and faithful disciples of Gandhi. He also served as the General Secretary of the Congress for almost a decade. Men like Laxmi Mall Singhvi are also born in centuries. He was a renowned jurist, constitutional expert, poet, linguist and writer. He used to write a lot on legal matters in a popular Hindi w e e k l y , “Dharmyug”, when I used to write other stories, lead stories. He was born in Jodhpur. He was a member of the third Lok Sabha from 1952 to 1967. Whether he was an MP or not, he had never taken more than one rupee as salary.

S.M. Banerjee was another such person in Kanpur. People will tell you all about him there. He was a famous labor leader. He had

come to Kanpur from West Bengal to work. He had made Kanpur his workplace. Banerjee won the election by contesting as an i n d e p e n d e n t candidate in 1957 and repeated the feat in 1962, 1967 and 1971 . Kanpur may be the only city which has elected an independent as an MP four times.

He was not alone. You will find several others in the past who did not hail from the place but was successful and had reached the lower House. It was made possible by connecting with the people there and becoming a part of their joys and sorrows. Kripalani came from Sindh (now Pakistan). He became MP from Bihar. Inderjit Singh Namdhari's family had come to Bihar from Pakistan during the partition of the country. He was also the Transport Minister of Bihar for many years. After the division of

Bihar, he became active in Jharkhand. Namdhari became the first Speaker of Jharkhand Assembly.

Karni Singh also deserves mention in this connection though the present generation may have little knowledge about him and some others. He was the top shooter of the country. A stadium was named after him in the capital which may be the first of its kind. Usually this does not happen. Dr. Karni Singh Range was constructed in 1982 for the shooting events of the 9th Asian Games. Singh belonged to the royal family of Bikaner. He was the first shooter in the country to be honored with the 'Arjuna Award' in 1961. It is said that although he came from a royal family, he easily mixed with common people and shared their joys and sorrow. He was MP for five consecutive terms from 1952 to 1977. With 70 to 71

percent votes in two elections he was matchless. No other party candidate has bagged such a high percentage of votes. Singh holds another record as well -- of being MP from Bikaner for five consecutive terms.

Campaigning has been intensified and the first phase of polling will be completed next week. Votes will be cast on six more days. There will be gainers and losers. The expenses made will be counted. Losers will analyse the reasons behind defeats. In June only it will be known how many Independents will be sworn - in in the new House. One only hopes that more and more deserving Independents and others join the fray and make a mark in temple of democracy.

(The writer is a senior editor, columnist and former MP)

UPHOLD VALUES OF INCLUSIVITY AND VOTE FOR DEVELOPMENT



Democracy's success partially lies in the success of its electoral processes and electioneering. India is all set to set an example once again in its journey as a democracy. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has already invited representatives of parties from different countries to witness the momentous exercise of electoral democracy in India. Many parties have accepted the invitation and the world is going to witness this humongous veritable celebration of the world's largest democracy. Having witnessed elections and electoral politics from close corners, my experience as a polling officer in one of the remotest areas of the country did not give me an ideal sensation of satisfaction, which I think, had been there in my memory giving me painful prickles.

Whenever I found a reason for me to rejoice at the festivities of elections and being witness to the jubilation of political parties dominating the social ambiance completely, there has always been a sense of remorse originating in my memory from the uproar of animosity between two groups who fought and wounded each other in the name of their candidates and in another instance, to my horror, I still remember having been approached by a candidate offering a handsome amount for my vote, which he said, if I was ready to cast in favor of him. Again, in another situation I realized how challenging it could be when you find a particular section of the society is shooed away from casting its votes and some people by exercising their muscular dominance forcefully cast the votes of those who they managed to drive and keep away from reaching the polling booths. This i n d i s c r i m i n a t e monopoly by parties and groups that belong

to prominent caste fractions and disruptive elements is still active in areas where even the media fail to expose them and the officials are forced to derail the procedure.

This year, from April 19 to June 1, we will participate under the scorching sun of the Indian peninsula, the exercise I mentioned in the beginning and its festivities. There is everywhere an enthusiasm for change or there is of course a demand emanating from the desperation of unfulfilled desire of people that asks the government to go through a profound polishing impact. Always seeking something better from the government is the usual norm. Those who failed to improve their position were discarded and this was the principal reason that forced us to test new parties and their new governance methods. Post independence India had a particular regime under Nehru that went for more than a decade. But there was this incense of dissatisfaction seeking change and people

were soon to look for alternatives and new political parties were formed to topple the hegemony of the ruling class. Every election brings this opportunity or gives liberty to people to decide as to what their requirements are. It is a period that forces the warhorses on the fray to stop and listen to the people. You will find politicians walking the extra mile in implementing tactics to convince and console voters and fling offers of prospects in case of their being voted to power. From framing impactful narratives to field popular candidates with winning strike rate to the preparations to attract votes into their kitty, all parties are busy in defining democracy in their own way. Election season holds the voters responsible for their decisions. They can decide as to what should be the deciding factors that they would elect a particular candidate for. National Elections 2024 decisively is a straight fight between the most prominent Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and the rest of his opposition which has directly or indirectly chosen to stand under the I.N.D.I.A umbrella. This time, the government under Modi is well aware of the fact that the main plank it can fight the elections is its performance. Its usual anti-Congress stance may not fructify in winning elections. Congress has been out of power for a decade and the corruption scenario that it was held responsible for before 2014 is slowly fading. The new voters and the first timers need new narratives and new hopes. While jubilation on the winning side is always justified, there is an important aspect that frequently goes sidelined. In the case of the 2019 National Elections, almost 33 percent of the genuine voters preferred not to vote. Which means, despite being jubilant about India's success as a democracy, there is a chunk of population that identifies the emerging scenario as meaningless and decides to stay away from it. Every election

brings with it social, economic, political and religious consequences. Interestingly, India's electoral democracy is not a holistic exercise for development alone. It is bound to bend its head to family, society, caste, religion, region, language and many more factors. An ideal study truly reveals the fact that development has never been the main reason that we chose a particular candidate for. A candidate is chosen to jump into the fray for various reasons. This could be his family prominence in that locality or the caste dynamics that would go in his favor or it can also be due to his radical ideological stance that shoots him to popularity. There is again a factor that counts important these days, a person's social media reach. The subjects he handles in the social media and the acceptance and sometimes the quantum of opposition he receives makes him a favorite pick for candidature. In such cases development

always takes a back seat. But naturally the candidate chosen by a particular party fits in the narrative it sets and he is mounted on shoulders with fictitious and spontaneous glory he is deliberately adorned with. In order to make fortunes from the Sandeshkhali horror, the BJP decided to field Rekha Patra, a survivor of the violence, someone who dared to question the TMC hooligans. She was one among those the Prime Minister called over the phone. Describing her “Shakti Swaroopa” the Prime Minister was setting a distinctive trend helping her shoot to popularity and giving a big blow to his opponent the TMC. Every vote really is a communication that a voter makes to his country. He communicates his aspirations and conveys his concerns. Irrespective of the electoral hysteria and pomp on the streets, in the polling booths a voter is silent. He needs to make a decision not for him but for his country. He understands the intensity of

convulsion he is passing through as his dreams fall apart. He is worried about the future of his children who he knows should find a place in a country that houses the world's largest population. He is expected to realize his responsibility while pressing the button on the EVM. There is the realization of India's growth as a significant global power. There is again a pinch of reality painfully passing through his veins for his not being able to catch up with the wind of progress. Every election is a new stepping stone wherein we give wings to our dreams. Standing before the EVM there should be a dream flashing the sphere of our mind dictating where we would like to see our country when it completes a century of its independence. Vote for the status quo or vote for the change, the decision is ours and that is the beauty of democracy.

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The Vice President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar at the Valedictory Ceremony of the 76th Batch of the Indian Revenue Service at the National Academy of Direct Taxes (NADT) in Nagpur, Maharashtra

250 Candidates In Second Phase Of Lok Sabha Polls Face Criminal Cases: Report

New Delhi(KCN): A total of 250 candidates in the fray for the second phase of the Lok Sabha election have criminal cases against them, with three facing murder charges, according to an analysis of self-sworn affidavits of the contestants by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and the National Election Watch. The analysis was carried out on 1,192 of the 1,198

scheduled to go to polls in the second of the seven-phase elections are 'red alert' constituencies. 'Red alert' constituencies are those where three or more candidates have declared criminal cases in their affidavits. The analysis showed that among major parties, there are criminal cases against 31 out of the 69 candidates from the BJP, 35 out of the 68 candidates from the

"Among major parties, the average assets per candidate for 68 INC candidates is ₹ 39.70 crores, 69 BJP candidates is ₹ 24.68 crores, four SP candidates have average assets of ₹ 17.34 crores, four Shivsena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) candidates have average assets worth ₹ 12.81 crores, three Shiv Sena candidates have average assets worth ₹ 7.54 crores," the analysis said.



candidates contesting in the second phase of the election. Of these 1,192 candidates, 21 per cent or 250 candidates are named in criminal cases, with 14 per cent or 167 candidates facing serious criminal charges, according to the analysis. Three candidates have murder cases lodged against them, while 24 are implicated in attempt to murder cases, it showed. Twenty-five candidates have declared cases related to crimes against women and one of them faces rape charges under section 376 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Twenty-one candidates are linked to cases of hate speech, the analysis showed. It also showed that 52 per cent of the 87 seats

Congress, all five candidates from the CPI, all four candidates from the SP, two out of three candidates from the Shiv Sena, two out of four candidates from the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and two out of five candidates from the JD(U). In tandem with the revelations on criminal backgrounds, the ADR said the analysis also highlights wealth disparities among candidates. According to the affidavits, it said, around 33 per cent of candidates in the second phase of the polls are "crorepatis". The average assets per candidate stands at ₹ 5.17 crores, with notable discrepancies observed across party lines, the ADR found.

"Four AITC candidates have average assets worth ₹ 4.16 crores, five JD(U) candidates have average assets worth ₹ 3.31 crores, 18 CPI(M) candidates have average assets worth ₹ 2.29 crores and five CPI candidates have average assets of ₹ 78.44 lakhs," it added. While six candidates have declared zero assets, 47 have not declared their PAN details. The Lok Sabha polls will be held in seven phases beginning on April 19 and the counting of votes will take place on June 4 for the world's biggest election exercise in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bid for a third consecutive term. Voting in the other phases will be held on April 26, May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1.

"Underscores Congress' Penchant For Deceit": Smriti Irani On Ex RBI Governor's Book

New Delhi(KCN): Union Minister Smriti Irani on Tuesday attacked the Congress over former RBI Governor Duvvuri Subbarao's claim that the finance ministry under Pranab Mukherjee and P Chidambaram used to pressure the RBI, saying it underscored the grand-old party's "penchant for deceit" over national interest. In his recent book 'Just A Mercenary? Notes from My Life and Career', Mr Subbarao has said that the finance ministry under Mukherjee and Mr Chidambaram used to pressure the RBI to soften interest rates and present a rosier picture of growth to shore up sentiments. The former RBI governor in his memoir also wrote that there was 'little understanding and sensitivity' in the erstwhile government of the Congress-led United



Progressive Alliance (UPA) on the importance of the central bank's autonomy. "When the grand-old Congress party wanted Reserve Bank as the government's cheerleader to hoodwink people of India," Ms Irani said in a post on X, sharing a media report published on Subbarao's claim in his memoir. "The revelations from former RBI Governor Subbarao's memoir provide a glaring instance of the institutional abuse perpetrated by the Congress. The misconduct

not only endangered our institutions but also underscores Congress's penchant for deceit over national interest," she said. "Instead of fostering a robust Indian economy, they chose to mislead our citizens, betraying their aspirations for a prosperous country. No wonder India plummeted into the fragile five economies during the UPA's decade-long misrule and mismanagement," she added. Mr Subbarao was the finance secretary (2007-08) before taking over as the governor of the RBI for

five years on September 5, 2008, a few days before the breakout of the Lehman Brothers crisis. Lehman Brothers crashed into bankruptcy on September 16, making it the biggest corporate failure in history. In a chapter in his book titled 'Reserve Bank as the Government's Cheerleader?', Mr Subbarao recalled that pressure by the erstwhile UPA government was not confined to the Reserve Bank's interest rate stance. On occasion, it extended to pressuring the RBI to present rosier estimates of growth and inflation at variance with the bank's objective assessment. "I remember one such occasion when Pranab Mukherjee was the finance minister. Arvind Mayaram, the finance secretary, and Kaushik Basu, the chief economic adviser, contested our estimates with their assumptions and

estimates, which I thought was par for the course," he wrote. What upset him, Mr Subbarao said, was that, almost seamlessly, the discussion moved from objective arguments to subjective considerations, with suggestions that the Reserve Bank must project a higher growth rate and a lower inflation rate in order to share responsibility with the government for 'shoring up sentiment'. "Mr Mayaram went to the extent of saying in one meeting that 'whereas everywhere else in the world, governments and central banks are cooperating, here in India, the Reserve Bank is being very recalcitrant'," he recalled. Mr Subbarao said that he was invariably discomfited and annoyed by this demand that the RBI should be a cheerleader for the government.

I Am "Indebted To BR Ambedkar's Constitution": PM Modi In Bihar

Gaya, Bihar(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi today asserted that he felt "indebted to Baba Saheb Ambedkar's samvidhan" which enabled him to rise from humble origins. PM Modi, who addressed back-to-back election rallies in Bihar's Gaya and Purnea districts, spoke extensively of the high esteem in which he held the Constitution, mentioning his government's measures like "celebrating Samvidhan Diwas, from schools to the Supreme Court and Parliament". "This year is special. We are going to celebrate 75 years of the Constitution on a scale similar to the Amrit Kaal celebrations which marked 75 years of Independence", said PM Modi, adding "Our intent is to reach out to every nook and corner of the country where youngsters will be told how our glorious Constitution was drafted and what is its significance".

"People ask me why do I care so much for the poor, the Dalits. I do so because I have risen from among them. I therefore, feel, indebted to the social class. I also feel indebted towards the Constitution framed by Babasaheb Ambedkar which helped me reach where I am," said the Prime Minister. PM Modi's refrain came a day after RJD president Lalu Prasad Yadav, the BJP's principal opponent in Bihar, raked up utterances made by a number of leaders of the saffron party who have said the "Constitution will be changed if we get two-thirds majority in Parliament". References are also being made to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's call for "review" of the Constitution in 2015, when Prasad used the statement to allege that the provision of reservations for deprived castes was under attack, and the BJP-led NDA was trounced in the

assembly polls held that year. PM Modi, who has been equating the Constitution with sacred books like the Ramayana, Bible and Quran, pointed out that it was under the rule of the Congress, the RJD's ally, that the Emergency was imposed and several constitutional provisions were suspended. "Our opponents are those who had held the Constitution hostage and tried to tamper with it during the Emergency. Those who want power to remain confined within the hands of a family always treat the Constitution as an eyesore. A reason why they have even begun to threaten that they will not accept outcomes of polls held under the provisions of the Constitution. We must remain united to foil their attempts," said the Prime Minister. Holding out abrogation of Article 370 as a "big achievement" of the NDA government, PM Modi said, "Those who cry hoarse about the



Constitution never had the courage to implement it in Jammu and Kashmir. When we bit the bullet, they threatened that the entire region will be on fire". The prime minister also pulled no punches in attacking the RJD, which he mentioned by name, and accused of having ushered in "jungle raj and corruption" while in power in Bihar and "claiming credit for all the good work done by the NDA government headed by Nitish Kumar".

Nitish Kumar, who heads the JD(U), was conspicuous by his absence at both rallies, though the one at Purnea was held for party MP and candidates Santosh Kushwaha and Dulal Chandra Goswami. The PM stressed that "NDA brought Bihar out of the era of jungle raj" and warned that crackdown on corruption will continue in the next five years, apparently referring to the name of Prasad and his family members, including son and heir apparent

Tejashwi Yadav, figuring in scams being investigated by central agencies. In Purnea, PM Modi spoke of "ambitious schemes" launched by his government for development of the district, in particular, and the Seemanchal region in general, drawing a contrast with governments of the past which washed their hands off by seeing the backwardness of the area as irreversible. PM Modi also came down heavily on "vote bank politics which has allowed infiltration to

flourish in Seemanchal", claiming "this has been to the detriment of the poor, the Dalits of the region, many of whom have suffered attacks and even their houses have been set on fire". "The fate of this region hinges on the poll outcome of June 4", said the PM, adding, "Those who oppose the CAA should know Modi is not someone who can be stopped or cowed down". "Today everybody is saying that it is only the NDA government at the Centre which is capable of big achievements", said PM Modi, holding out the examples of Ram temple at Ayodhya, abrogation of Article 370 and military operations in response to cross-border terrorism. In his speech at Gaya, PM Modi also spoke of the pilgrim town's fame and underscored his government's efforts to preserve the country's cultural heritage, adding, "Our fight is against those who have no respect for our culture". The rally at Gaya also

served as an occasion to soothe ruffled feathers as those invited to share the stage with the Prime Minister included Pashupati Kumar Paras, who recently resigned from the Union cabinet in protest against the NDA giving weightage to his estranged nephew Chirag Paswan, and Ashwini Kumar Choubey, who has been denied the BJP ticket from Buxar, which he has represented two times on the trot. At the Gaya rally, the PM also took the mic while names of others present on the occasion were being announced. He said "I may please be excused for breaking the protocol. It is going to be a hectic day when I am scheduled to address five rallies and have to visit up to Assam". The PM had to repeatedly ask euphoric crowds at both Gaya and Purnea to give up chants of "Modi! Modi!" while he was holding forth. He said, "Save this enthusiasm for the polling date. It will be needed a lot".

Odisha records highest tree cover loss due to fires from 2001 to 2022

Bhubaneswar/ New Delhi(KCN): From 2001 to 2022, Odisha had the highest rate of tree cover loss due to fires with an average of 238 hectares lost per year, according to the latest data from the Global Forest Watch monitoring project. Other states that follow Odisha are Arunachal Pradesh (198 hectares), Nagaland (195 hectares), Assam (116 hectares), and Meghalaya (97 hectares). The data showed India lost 35,900 hectares of tree cover due to fires from

2002 to 2022, with 2008 recording the maximum tree cover loss due to fires (3,000 hectares). The findings acquire importance at a time when forest fires have been raging in the state's forests owing to the rising mercury and dry weather conditions. Odisha has been experiencing the country's worst forest fires for many years. The data further suggested that India has lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000, equivalent to a six per cent decrease in tree cover during this period.

The Global Forest Watch, which tracks forest changes in near real-time using satellite data and other sources, said the country lost 4,14,000 hectares of humid primary forest (4.1 per cent) from 2002 to 2023, making up 18 per cent of its total tree cover loss in the same period. Between 2001 and 2022, it said, forests in India emitted 51 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year and removed 141 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year. This represents a net carbon sink of 89.9 million



tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year. An average of 51.0 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year was released into

the atmosphere as a result of tree cover loss in India. In total, 1.12 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent was emitted during this

period. Forests are both a sink and a source for carbon, removing carbon dioxide from the air when standing or

regrowing and emitting it when cleared or degraded. The loss of forests, thus, accelerates climate change. Tree cover loss is not always deforestation, which typically refers to human-caused, permanent removal of natural forest cover. It includes both human-caused loss and natural disturbances, and loss that is permanent or temporary. Examples of tree cover loss that may not meet the definition of deforestation include loss from logging, fire,

disease or storm damage. The data showed that 95 per cent of the tree cover loss in India from 2013 to 2023 occurred within natural forests. The maximum tree cover loss of 1,89,000 hectares occurred in 2017. The country lost 1,75,000 hectares of tree cover in 2016 and 1,44,000 hectares in 2023, the highest in the last six years. The GFW data showed that five states accounted for 60 per cent of all tree cover loss between 2001 and 2023.

2-month marine fishing ban comes into force

Paradip(KCN): As many as 12 lakh fishermen will be affected as a 61-day fishing ban announced by the state government owing to the fish breeding season in the sea came into force, Monday. No fishermen will be allowed to venture into the sea for fishing during these two months from April 15 to June 14. This was stated in a circular (Letter No3987) issued by the Directorate of Fisheries at Cuttack. With the restrictions coming into force, over 12 lakh fishermen will be affected as all the fishing harbours will remain closed for two months. Reports said such restrictions have been implemented since 2007. Earlier, the curbs were imposed only for a period of 45 days it has been increased to 61 days from 2017. The restrictions are being imposed to facilitate the smooth breeding of fish in the sea. Meanwhile, all the fishing boats as well as fishermen



returned to the fishing harbours Sunday evening before the restrictions came into force. Sources said that over 600 big boats and 200 small boats regularly venture into the sea for fishing from the Paradip fishing harbour. Around 50,000 people are dependent on the marine fishing industry, Srikant Parida, president of Odisha Marine Fish Producers Association (OMFPA) said. The Paradip fishing harbour always witnesses the gathering of thousands of fishermen but will remain deserted for two months during the ban period. In absence of any work

after the imposition of the fishing ban, the fishermen will stop their mainstay for two months and return to the sea only after the lifting of the restrictions, he said. Earlier, fishermen used to visit the sea 20 to 22 times a year to catch fish in 2005. However, things have changed and fishermen now venture into the sea 10 to 12 times a year, a boat owner Narendra Biswal said. The drop in sea visits by the fishermen is attributed to a decline in the fish population in the sea, irregular weather conditions, a sharp increase in the cost of fuel, a six-month

fishing ban for mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles and turbulent conditions at the river mouth, he said. When contacted, Marine Fishery Officer Bijay Kumar Kar said the restrictions have been welcomed by the fishermen as this is the season for fish breeding. The female fish come near the shore for breeding and laying eggs. The mother fish and fingerlings will be destroyed if fishermen catch fish during this. All fishermen will be highly benefitted if the fish population increases in the sea, he said.

Odisha fishermen demand compensation of Rs 15K per month during fishing ban period




Berhampur(KCN): Fishermen under the banner of Odisha Traditional Fish Workers Union (OTFWU) demanded compensation of Rs 15,000 per month during the two-month marine fishing ban, imposed from Monday. The fishing ban in the sea will be in force from April 15 to June 14 in the entire coastline of Odisha by the government for conservation and effective management of fishery resources. The fishing ban spans 61

days and fishing by mechanised boats, big vessels and trawlers will not be allowed in the sea during the period. The traditional fishing crafts (up to 8.5 metres length) will be allowed for fishing in the sea, officials said. Awareness was conducted by engaging 'Samudra Mitra' in the coastal fishermen-dominated villages in Ganjam district for effective implementation of the ban order, a marine fishery officer said.

General secretary of OTFWU K Alleya said around 1.50 lakh traditional fishermen in the state, who were depending on fishery activities for their livelihood, would be affected due to the prohibition on fishing activities in the sea. "We demand the government should provide at least Rs 15,000 per family per month during the ban period", said Alleya. They also demanded to include the fisherwomen in the beneficiary list as

they were involved in the fishing activities like selling and transporting of fish. Their livelihood was severely hit due to the prohibition on fishing in the sea, he said. The union leader further said the Andhra Pradesh government has announced to provide Rs 10,000 to each eligible fishermen's family under the YSR Matsya Bharosa scheme during the fishing ban period. A fishery officer said the government would provide Rs 4,500 per active family as livelihood support during the ban period under the "livelihood nutritional support for socio-economical background of active traditional fisheries families for conservation of fisheries resources during the ban period". As many as 3,638 fishermen would benefit under the scheme in Ganjam district, he said.



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Kamdhenu Paints Takes its Channel Partners on Dream Trip to Thailand

Bhubaneswar(KCN) :Kamdhenu Paints, a brand of Kamdhenu Group and leading manufacturer of high-quality paints and emulsions,concluded an unforgettable incentive family trip for its valued channel partners to the exotic beach city of Hua Hin, Thailand. This e x t r a v a g a n z a promised a whirlwind of excitement, luxury, and cultural immersion, making it a trip of a lifetime.The event was organized to honour high performing channel partners and celebrate with their families. Former Miss Universe, Sushmita Sen, Bollywood singing sensation Sona Mahapatra, and renowned standup comedian Akash Gupta brought their charisma to the stage, delivering power-packed performances. Ms. Sen awarded Gold Chains and other accolades to the deserving winners, channel partner / staff while Mahapatra ignited the stage with her electrifying live performance. The witty humor of stand up comedian Akash Gupta added an extra dose of joy, making it a memorable trip for everyone in attendance. Speaking at the event, Mr. Saurabh Agarwal, Managing Director, Kamdhenu Colour and Coatings Limited said,"At Kamdhenu Paints, we believe in rewarding our channel partners/ staff for their unwavering dedication and commitment. This trip to Thailand was our way of expressing our heartfelt gratitude and creating memories



that will last a lifetime. We're confident that this experience will not only strengthen our relationships but also inspire and motivate our channel partners/ staff to achieve even greater heights in the future.In synergy with our channel partners, we aim to achieve Rs. 1000 Crore in revenue by FY28."

Sachin Agarwal Non Executive Director of the Company along with other senior officials attended the event to congratulate and interact with the channel partners and their families. Channel partners and their families also participated in a friendly cricket tournament – Kamdhenu Cricket League – where regional teams faced off on the field. Ladies participated at the special Ramp Walk Competition held in the ballroom, while kids enjoyed a range of fun activities designed just for them.During the trip, Kamdhenu Paints also unveiled its next dream destination—a trip to the paradisiacal island of Bali, scheduled during the month June/July 2024. Mr. Raj Kumar Srivastava, National Marketing Head, headed the 1st International Annual Sales Meet held at Bangkok on 21st January in which all Marketing Headsfrom all the branches participated and reviewed the sales plans and discuss for new products and future plans to achieve the goal of Rs. 1000 Crore.

Tata Steel reports highest ever consolidated EBITDA at Rs 63,830 crores

Mumbai, : Tata Steel today announced its Financial Results for the quarter and financial year ended March 31, 2022. The Company's consolidated reported profit after tax (PAT) for the March 2022 quarter rose to Rs 9,835 cr as compared to Rs 7,162 cr of the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal. For the full year ended March 31, 2022, the Company's PAT rose to Rs 41,749 cr,significantly higher than Rs 8,190 cr reported in the last financial year. The consolidated Turnover for FY22 stood at Rs 243,959 cr as compared to Rs 156,477 cr of the previous fiscal.

Consolidated turnover for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2022stood at Rs 69,324 cr as compared to Rs 50,028 cr in the corresponding quarter of the last financial year. The Board of Directors recommends a dividend of Rs. 51 per fully paid equity share and Rs 12.75 per partly paid equity shares. A 10:1 stock split is also recommended. T. V. Narendran, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, said: "Tata Steel has again demonstrated its ability to deliver stellar results despite heightened complexity in the face of COVID as well as geopolitical tensions. Our Indian business showed broad based growth across our chosen segments due to our sustained focus on customer relationships, our distribution network and our portfolio of brands supported by our agile business model. Our European operations delivered robust performance as the transformation programme undertaken helped to leverage the strong business environment. We have pursued several initiatives to de-risk the business particularly across procurement and supply chain and continue to invest in

technology and digitisation to drive productivity and improve our resilience." "K a l i n g a n a g a r expansion is progressing well and will drive cost savings as well as product mix enrichment. The acquisition of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited will be closed in 1QFY23 and we will scale it up rapidly to drive expansion of our high value retail business. I am happy to share that Tata Steel has been recognised as Steel sustainability champion for the fifth year in a row by the WorldSteel," he added. The 6 MnTPA Pellet plant at Kalinganagar will be commissioned in 3QFY23 followed by the Cold Roll Mill complex and the 5 MnTPA expansion.Tata Steel India achieved highest ever annual crude steel production of 19.06 million tons, with a growth of 13% YoY. Highest ever deliveries of 18.27 mn tons despite COVID 2nd wave related disruption early in financial year. Broad based improvement in sales volume was witnessed across segments. Automotive was up 27% YoY, Branded Products and Retail was up 11% YoY while Industrial products & projects was up 11% YoY.

MADAME TUSSAUDS IS BACK IN A NEW LOCATION

Noida: Madame Tussauds – the greatest wax attraction in the world – isbackto serve its fans in an all-new avatar at an exciting new venue at DLF Mall of India, Noida. The attraction at its new location will be known as Madame Tussauds India andis set to provide the opportunity forfansto get up close to their favourite celebrities and experience their most iconic moments of fame through 360 sets and cutting-edge technology. The new location at DLF Mall of India, Noidawill exhibit close to50figures of leading Indian and I n t e r n a t i o n a l personalities from the fields of sports, entertainment, history, and music.

To create a single life like figure it takes an artist minimum of 12 weeks, and during that time they document 500 precise body measurements, insert real hair strand by strand, apply countless layers of paints to build up the skin tones, and more. This entire process helps to achieve the incredible likeness that has made Madame Tussauds world renowned for over two centuries. The world-famous wax attraction first opened in Delhi at Connaught Place in 2017. The earlier edition of Madame Tussauds in Delhi successfully celebrated several years of curating a spectacular fame experience through its star-studded gallery. At its new location at DLF Mall of India, Noida, Madame Tussauds India will offer a safe, star-studded experience for guests, with extensive covid protocols in place. Rob Smith, Divisional Director, Midway Asia Pacific, Merlin Entertainments Group shared his optimism around the reopening of Madame Tussauds in India saying, "we are thrilled about the comeback and really excited to bring back the legend of Madame Tussauds to the culturally rich land of India. Our Wax Attraction will open a new chapter of entertainment to the population of Indiaat large and serve them with the ultimate fame experience and transport them onto the red carpet. India is a significant market for us, and the re-opening will help pave the way to entertain guests in our fantastic new location and shall expose our guests to the most ultimate celebrity experience of visiting a World-famous wax attraction. As Indian travellers are returning to overseas destinations, we are hopeful that Madame Tussauds India will serve as their gateway to Madame Tussauds counterparts in other cities around the world".

WardWizardplans to set up Li-ion advance cells manufacturing unit at its electric vehicle ancillary cluster in Vadodara

Singapore-based renewable energy management consulting firm Sunkconnect. The association is aimed at facilitating a feasibility study and identification of potential partner for the manufacturing of Li-ion advance cells in India. Under the MoU, Sunkconnect will set up a committee of experienced scientists, engineers and analysts to evaluate and identify the professional partner, as well as to develop the roadmapto set up the 1GWh cell production plant at WardWizard'selectric vehicle ancillary cluster in Vadodara. Commenting on the MoU with SunKconnect, Mr YatinGupte, Chairman & Managing Director, Wardwizard Innovations & Mobility Ltd., said, "We are excited to work with SunKconnect, one of the leading global renewable energy management consulting firms. Their expertise will help us identify the right partner and establish a roadmap to set up the manufacturing unit of Li-ion advance cells at our EV ancillary cluster between 15-18 months. As the safety and security of our customers are paramount for us, we are integrating cutting-edge technologies to enhance the quality and promote the adoption of green mobility in the entire country." Further elaborating, Dr.Avishek Kumar, Founder, SunKconnect, said, "We are grateful to WardWizard for giving us the opportunity to become the part of this

EV transition and support the brand in development of battery infrastructure in India. Electric Vehicules are the future, and their success depends on the high grade material and advanced battery management system. Under the MoU, we will work with WardWizard to identify the partner equipped with the latest technology and high standards to manufacture Li-ion advanced cells. Our team will be developing a feasible plan and drafting standard norms for the manufacture of quality batteries for Joy e-bike's products." Sunkconnect will also identify leading testing and certification agencies to set up a center of excellence for battery testing at WardWizard premises which will draft a standard quality specification for batteries. It will further draft standard norms for batteries to ensure quality and reliability for Joy e-bike's range of models.

Narayana Nethralaya and Acer India Team up to build India's first PC & tablet-based software therapy for children

Bengaluru Narayana Nethralaya in collaboration with Acer India today launched the PC + tablet based software, "VisioNova" designed for children suffering from Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI). This initiative by Narayana Nethralaya and Acer India aims at breaking down barriers and providing the patients with better access to treatment. Acer VisioNova, a path-breaking innovation was conceptualized as a mobile alternative to on-site therapy for CVI children that will offer them the standard of care. Narayana Nethralaya as a part of its 'Buds to Blossoms' initiative provides dedicated therapy programs to help children develop and improve motor, cognitive and visual abilities that significantly improve their quality of life. Cortical Visual Impairment is a condition of bilateral visual loss caused due to injury of visual areas in the brain without significant eye or anterior visual pathway impairment. CVI is currently an emerging cause amongst children across India. With 161 children in every 100,000 born with CVI, India has declared it to be a high priority issue and classified it as one of 30 conditions that all babies must receive

mandatory screenings. These children with CVI have great difficulty in performing visually guided activities and these therapies rely on machines that are bulky, expensive and require the child to be in the hospital for the entire duration of six-to-nine-month therapeutic process. In order to address this, Acer provided PC and 100+ tablets under CSR to kick-off this noble cause. Acer has also further intent to supply around 2000 tablets for patients where patients can pay the hospital a small, refundable deposit and receive the tablet for use from the comforts of their home and still continue treatments even with COVID disruptions. The tablet will offer CVI patients exercises that can benefit and help them develop and improve their deficient skills and visual abilities that significantly improve the quality of life. Also, since a number of specialised therapies that are deployed require expensive equipments that need the child to be present at the center for the entire duration of the treatment, this tablet will allow remote therapy under the mentorship of Narayana Nethralaya' CVI experts, making this treatment accessible to the outreach. On the occasion of this

EKA partners with NuPort Robotics to introduce smart Electric Buses

Mumbai: EKA, an electric vehicles & technology company, and a subsidiary of Pinnacle Industries Limited, is once again leading the way as they enter a partnership with NuPort Robotics to introduce Level 2 autonomy, advanced driver assistance systems, to their electric bus models. This is a first-of-its-kind-in-the-country initiative towards the utilization and incorporation of progressive Level 2 autonomy and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Electric buses on Indian roads. EKA begins testing on a range of autonomous features developed by NuPort, an advanced technology that promises to contribute to notable improvements in safety, reducing environmental footprint, and increasing operational

efficiency. Following a period of rigorous testing, the technology will be deployed with over 5000 buses, representing a minimum investment of nearly INR 150 Crores in innovation and contributing to the future of transportation and sustainability. More importantly, when such technologies are deployed in commercial vehicles, they have been associated with reducing crash rates by nearly 50%. NuPort Robotics, a Canadian company announced its plans earlier this month to set up operations in India and fully develop and deploy its technology in India for commercial vehicle manufacturers, beginning with electric vehicle manufacturers. NuPort will be following a "Made in India" approach thereby contributing to the advancement of economic development and innovation ecosystem within the country. NuPort's technology provides level 2 autonomy features specifically targeted for Indian roads, considering the complex nature of Indian traffic, and understanding the Indian driving mindset. NuPort's partnership with EKA is strategic, as it allows both NuPort and EKA to offer Indian customers cutting-edge innovative vehicles that can be continuously updated to retain that innovative advantage. NuPort is using proprietary AI technology which will progressively enable autonomous features thereby increasing safety, operational efficiency, and reduced carbon footprint.

