

## "Will Benefit 23 Lakh Employees": Centre Launches Unified Pension Scheme

leading to a loss of about 255 MBBS seats. Similarly, OBCs are not granted any reservation, which results in a potential loss of 36 seats. Consequently, there is a call to cancel the enrollment process starting from the 29th, demanding that SC, ST, and OBC reservations be implemented as per constitutional provisions. The Congress MLAs' leader has demanded the issuance of a new notification regarding this matter. Following this, Congress members gathered at the centre of the house, displaying placards, chanting slogans, and initiating a protest.

BJD MLA Arun Sahu stated, "While reservation poses a problem nationwide, it's particularly acute in Odisha." SC-ST

receive a 38.75 per cent reservation in employment but only 20 per cent in medical and engineering education. OBC and SEBC children receive no reservations. They should be granted the protections intended for them, including a state-wide caste-based census. Of the 2200 medical admission seats in Odisha, 20 per cent are allocated to SC-STs and 10 per cent to economically weaker sections of the upper class. This allocation translates to 168 seats for SC-STs, despite their 38.75 per cent reservation share. OBCs and SEBCs, however, receive no reservations. Consequently, the BJP demands that OBC students receive at least a 27 per cent reservation. While an 11.25%

reservation is applied in the employment sector, it should be implemented in the education sector too to prevent student deprivation. The 2011 census indicates that OBCs comprise 54% of the population. Without an 11.25% reservation, OBC students may protest, especially with medical enrollments underway. Consequently, BJD members have protested in the assembly, demanding 38.75% reservation for SC/ST students and 11.75% for OBC students. BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy criticized the former BJD government, questioning, "What has BJD done for OBCs in 24 years?" He accused BJD of deceiving the OBC category in education, employment, and politics. He highlighted the absence of reservations for OBCs in Odisha, contrasting it with other Indian states. He also alleged recent attempts by BJD to seize tribal lands. The opposition's uproar led to the Speaker adjourning the assembly twice, first from 10:57 to 11:57, and then from 12:04 to 4:00, while ministers continued to present papers and reports.



**New Delhi(KCN):** In a big announcement ahead of assembly elections in one state and a Union Territory this year, the government has launched the Union Pension Scheme (UPS) amid protests by several non-BJP-ruled states over the New Pension Scheme (NPS). "This scheme will benefit 23 lakh central government employees (under the National Pension Scheme)," announced Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The new scheme will be implemented from April 1, 2025 and employees will have the option to choose between the NPS or UPS. The UPS, approved by the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to give assured pension, family pension and assured minimum pension to government employees:

1. Assured Pension: The scheme assures 50 percent of the average basic salary for the last 12 months before retirement as the pension for government employees who complete a minimum of 25 years in service. It will be proportionate for a shorter service period up to a minimum of 10 years of service.
2. Assured Family Pension: In case of death, the family will get 60 percent of the last-drawn amount by the pensioner.
3. Assured Minimum Pension: The scheme also assures ₹ 10,000 per month after retirement for government employees after minimum 10 years of service.

As per the current pension scheme, employees contribute 10 per cent while the central government contributes 14 percent, which would be increased to 18

percent with the UPS. "Some central employees met with the Prime Minister today. They were with the UPS in the meeting," said M. Vaishnav. Last year, a committee under Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan was set up to review the pension scheme for government employees and suggest changes in the light of the existing framework and structure of the National Pension System. The finance ministry formed the committee after several non-BJP-ruled states decided to revert to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and call by employee organisation for the same. Under the OPS, retired government employees received 50 per cent of their last-drawn salary as monthly pensions. The amount keeps increasing with the hike in the Dearness Allowance (DA) rates.

**Sambalpur(KCN):** Three labourers tragically lost their lives to asphyxiation while performing centring work on a septic tank in Pukuda village within the Jamankira police jurisdiction in Sambalpur district, on Saturday. Sources indicate that the accident happened as the labourers were engaged in centring for a toilet tank still under construction. The deceased have been identified as Srikant Munda (35), Bharat Rana (28), and Basant Dehuri (37). Another labourer, Siddharth Munda (40), is critically ill and receiving care at Burla. Reports suggest that the toilet tank was built about four months prior, yet its centring remained unfinished and was due to be completed today. It is reported that the four labourers entered the tank but quickly lost consciousness due to lack of air. Two of them died on the spot while the other two were taken to the Fashimal Community Health Centre, where one of them was pronounced dead.

**Boudh(KCN):** A 17-year-old girl was killed while three others sustained critical injuries after a truck hit a bike and then overturned near Raithani bypass chhak in Boudh district on Saturday. The deceased girl has been identified as Payal Hansraj. The injured are Sritam Behera, Aarti Jha and the truck driver. According to reports, Payal, Sritam, and Aarti joined a computer institute in Boudh after completing their matriculation. However, they were later assigned to market products for an ayurvedic company and, lured by the



prospect of higher earnings, travelled to remote locations on a motorcycle. On Saturday morning, they departed from their residence. During their ride, a truck coming from the opposite side collided with their motorcycle. Consequently, Payal died on the spot, while the other two were transported to Burla for medical treatment. The truck driver, who was critically injured, was

also rescued by locals and taken to Burla. The frequent accidents and fatalities on the Raithani bypass have led the local community to demand speed bumps and traffic police presence, as well as compensation for the bereaved families. Upon arrival at the scene, the police engaged with the distressed individuals and commenced their investigation into the accident.

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted that several parts of Odisha would continue to experience thunderstorms and heavy rainfall activities till August 27, 2024. The Monsoon trough at mean sea level continues to pass through Bikaner, Sikar, Orai, Churk, Dehri, centre of low-pressure area over northern parts of West Bengal and adjoining areas of northeast Jharkhand. Orange Warning: Heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20cm) and thunderstorm with lightning very likely to occur at one or two



places over the districts of Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Keonjhar. Yellow Warning: Heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) and

thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Keonjhar. Yellow

Warning: Heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) and thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj.

**New Delhi(KCN):** The CBI Saturday registered a case of alleged financial irregularities at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College where a trainee doctor was found dead in a bloodied state August 9, officials said.

The agency took over the investigation from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the West Bengal government on the directions of Calcutta High Court.

The high court which had already handed over the probe into the rape and murder of the medico also transferred the probe of financial irregularities to the CBI “in the interest of ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased inquiry”. “...this Court directs that the investigation be transferred to the CBI, given that the case involved serious allegations and multiple agencies handling different aspects of the case could lead to



inefficiencies or  
inconsistency for  
comprehensive justice,  
unnecessary delays in  
the judicial process and  
p o t e n t i a l  
misinterpretation of  
information thereby

undermining effective  
and credible  
enforcement. Therefore,  
the investigation should  
not be fragmented  
between different  
agencies. Handing over  
the investigation to the

CBI ensures consistency,” Justice Rajarshi Bharadwaj said. The high court directed the CBI to submit a progress report on the investigation within three weeks. The court had earlier told the state police to hand over the case diary and necessary paperwork by Saturday at 10 AM. The central probe agency collected all the documents from the police and re-registered the FIR. According to the procedure, the CBI takes over the investigation

from state police and registers its FIR as its own, keeping the details unchanged. The central agency gives its findings in the final report and submits it before a special court. The High Court had given the directives for a CBI probe on the plea of former Deputy Superintendent of the hospital Akhtar Ali who had alleged financial irregularities in the hospital during the tenure of its former principal Sandip Ghosh and sought a probe by the

central agencies. Ali had already filed a complaint with the state police in July 2023. He had given documentary evidence to corroborate the claims of massive corruption, improper utilization of government funds, selling of used hazardous bio-medical waste and transfer of officers for monetary benefit, citing serious ramifications of such illegal activities upon public health and safety as well as misappropriation of public funds.



DAV KALINGA NAGAR LITERATURE CONCLAVE ON WORLD

“Literature is the best manifestation of creativity in human.”



**Bhubaneswar, (KCN):** DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar organised the DAV Literature Conclave under the aegis of DAV CAE and DAV United Foundation. Joining as the guest, eminent writer, essayist and columnist, author and Former Principal of SCS College Dash Benhur and Prof. Dr. Sachidananda Panda, Associate Professor, XIM University, Bhubaneswar inaugurated the

conclave. Chairman Sj Madan Mohan Panda delivered the welcome address. In his address to the gathering the chief guest said, “Literature is the best manifestation of creativity hidden in man”. Further, he motivated the students to transcend beyond the boundaries of subjects and to give wings to their thoughts to accomplish something innovative in their life. While deliberating on the importance of literature in life Prof. Panda mentioned about the career opportunity that literature offers. The

students presented a wide range of literary activities like panel discussion, on spot debate, self-composed poem recitation, skit on partition to mark the occasion. It was followed by a workshop on creative writing conducted by Xenesis group headed by the guest Prof. Sachidananda Panda. The programme was smoothly conducted by the whole-hearted cooperation of all the members of staff under the co-ordination of English department and Library Committee of the school of the

Lady JE Found Hanging Inside Rented House in Balasore

**Balasore(KCN):** The dead body of a female Junior Engineer was found hanging inside her rented house in Balasore district on Saturday. The deceased has been identified as Monalisa Hembram, JE, Bhograi Block, Balasore.

According to reports, Monalisa hailed from Baripada and had moved into a rented house for her new job in Bhograi block. On Saturday, her room remained locked until 10 am. Despite prolonged knocking by neighbours, there was



no response. Consequently, the neighbours alerted the police. Upon arrival, the police forced entry and discovered Monalisa’s body hanging. They promptly notified her family

and commenced an investigation into the incident. However, the cause of her death remains undetermined. The question of whether it was a suicide or a murder, and the motive behind it, is still under police investigation.

Tackling Major Challenges of Tunnel Construction on the Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line Project

**Bhubaneswar, (KCN):**• 07 Tunnels being constructed within 75 KMs of the total project. • All Tunnels falling between Daspalla and Purunakatak. • 03 Tunnels between Adhenigarh & Charichhak out of 04 in Boudh District. • Longest Tunnel length is 4.885 KMs near Adhenigarh including 700 meter escape Tunnel ensuring Safety. • 03 Tunnels in Nayagarh District between Daspalla and Banigochha including 02 between Daspalla and Buguda. • Tunnel Breakthrough work successfully completed at 04 Tunnels.



Purunakatak, the construction of seven tunnels (a total of 12.76KMs) within 75-kilometer stretch has emerged as the most complex and technically demanding aspect of this entire endeavor. These tunnels are not just about creating passages through mountains; they represent the overcoming of extraordinary obstacles posed by nature and geography. Breakthrough of 1.795KMs long Tunnel (Number 7) was done on 20th August 2024. On very next day, i.e. on 21st August 2024, another breakthrough of tunnel (Tunnel Number-1) was conducted successfully. Key Tunnel Sections: v Seven Tunnels are under construction, all located between Daspalla and Purunakatak. v Four Major Tunnels in the Boudh District between Adhenigarh and Purunakatak, including the project’s longest tunnel, which spans 4.185 kilometers and features a 700-meter escape tunnel for safety. v Three Tunnels in Nayagarh District, with two located between Daspalla and Buguda. v Tunnel Breakthrough Work has been successfully completed in 04 tunnels, marking a major progress milestone. The Major Challenges in Tunnel Construction and Overcoming Technical and Environmental Challenges are ... 1. Complex Geological Conditions The geological

complexity of the region, with varying soil densities and rock formations, has posed significant difficulties in ensuring tunnel stability and safety. Advanced tunneling techniques have been employed to manage these diverse conditions, requiring meticulous planning and execution. 2. Environmental Sensitivity and Conservation Efforts The tunnels pass through environmentally sensitive areas, including wildlife sanctuaries. The project team has had to balance engineering needs with ecological conservation, constructing viaducts and adopting measures to minimize the impact on local wildlife and their habitats. 3. Engineering Precision in Curved Tunnels Of the seven tunnels, five tunnels are with curves, ranging from 2.5 to 3 degrees. This demands an exceptional level of precision in engineering, as curved tunnels present unique challenges in terms of alignment and structural integrity. 4. Simultaneous Construction from Both Ends To expedite the project, tunnel construction is being conducted simultaneously from both ends. This approach is crucial for adhering to the tight timelines but requires meticulous coordination and resource management. Despite these challenges, the project has achieved significant milestones, with tunnel breakthroughs completed in four of the seven tunnels. These

achievements are a testament to the dedication and expertise of the engineering teams working on the project. Strategic Construction Approach for Timely Completion To accelerate progress, the construction of the tunnels is being carried out simultaneously from both ends. This dual-front approach is crucial for meeting the ambitious timelines set for the project. The Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line, stretching 301 kilometers, is crucial for improving connectivity in remote regions. Of the total length, 199 kilometers have been completed, including 105.8 kilometers from Khurda Road to Daspalla and 93 kilometers from Balangir to Boudh. The remaining segment from Boudh to Purunakatak is on track for completion within the next few months The successful construction of these tunnels will not only mark a major milestone for the Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line Project but also underscore Indian Railways' capability to overcome unprecedented engineering challenges and delivering critical infrastructure to remote areas. The completion of the tunnel works will mark a significant achievement in the project, paving the way for enhanced connectivity and economic development in the region.

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## Cardi B is suffering from anemia

Grammy winner Cardi B, who is currently pregnant with her third child, revealed that her skin is more pale than usual because of her health troubles and not because she's been bleaching her skin.

Responding to a user on X, formerly called Twitter, Cardi wrote: "Bleaching while pregnant (sad faces)? Why must y'all be so dumb? Actually, NO! I'm pregnant, I'm slightly anemic, this baby sucking all the energy off my body to the point I'm pale, eyes sunken, veins green ASF, can't tan under the sun cause I get hot super fast and dizzy ....! (sic)"

Cardi already has son Wave and daughter Kulture with her estranged husband Offset had announced her latest pregnancy via a post on social media earlier this month, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The award-winning rap star also shared that she's been inspired by her children.

Cardi said on Instagram: "With every ending comes a new beginning! I am so grateful to have shared this season with you, you have brought me more love, more life and most of all renewed my power!"

"Reminded me that I can have it all! You've



reminded me that I never have to choose between life, love, and my passion! I love you so much and can not wait for you to

witness what you helped me accomplish, what you pushed me to do! It's so much easier taking life's twists, turns and test

laying down, but you, your brother and your sister have shown me why it's worth it to push through!"

Earlier this month, she had shared new videos of her kids on her Instagram Stories in which she showed off their unique style.

In the first clip, daughter Kulture smiled and laughed while wearing a Hello Kitty-themed shirt and matching black shorts, reports People magazine.

The video's audio was muted and it was set to Latto's song 'Big Mama'. Cardi praised her son Wave Set and his fresh cornrows in the second video. "You look like mommy," the performer told the 2-year-old, who agreed. "And I like your hair."

## Ira Khan showers love on husband Nupur with this cute video

Hindi film industry's 'perfectionist' Aamir Khan's daughter Ira Khan Thursday re-shared a goofy and loveable video of her husband Nupur Shikhare, calling him a 'cutie'.

Nupur, who is the official fitness trainer of Ira and Aamir, took to his Instagram account and shared a Reel video, which has unseen footage of the lovebirds.

In the video we can see Nupur doing aarti of Ira, painting her nails, playing with cards, and hugging her adorably during their wedding.

He has given the music of the song 'Emotional Fool' by Sohail Sen and

Akshayraje Shinde to his post.

Nupur has captioned the clip as: "I am me when I am with you... Love this song 'Emotional Fool' by Sohail... Such a cute vibe... It's so nostalgic".

Ira re-shared the video on her Instagram Stories, and wrote: "What a cutie".

The video has received much love from the netizens, and the comment section is filled with adorable messages for the couple.

Fans posted comments like 'You both make each other so COMPLETE', 'So cute guys', 'You are a rocking husband', 'so sweet couple', 'lovely



bonding', 'soo real'.

The couple made their wedding official January 3, 2024, by signing the marriage registration document in the presence of friends and family at the Taj Lands End in the Bandra area of Mumbai.

They had tied the knot in Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

On the personal front, Ira is the daughter of Aamir and Reena Dutta.

She has a brother named Junaid. In December 2002, Aamir had officially separated from Reena. Aamir married Kiran Rao, who had been an assistant director on the set of Lagaan. They tied the knot December 28, 2005, and they have a son, Azad Rao Khan. In July 2021, the couple announced their separation.

On the work front, Aamir was the producer of recently released comedy-drama Laapataa Ladies directed by Kiran Rao. It stars Nitanshi Goel, Pratibha Ranta, Sparsh Shrivastava, Chhaya Kadam and Ravi Kishan.

He next has Sitaare Zameen Par in the pipeline.

## Jackie Shroff, Neena Gupta Win Hearts In 'Mast Mein Rehne Ka', Fan Urges Everyone To 'Forget The Archies'

Veteran actor Jackie Shroff has struck another chord with the audience with his family entertainer 'Mast Mein Rehne Ka'. Critics and fans alike are showering love on Jackie for his heartfelt portrayal in this film that explores the highs and lows of life.

Sharing the screen with the talented Neena Gupta, reviews highlight the delightful on-screen chemistry between the two seasoned actors. Critics expressed, "Jackie Shroff and Neena Gupta shine as individual performers but

also have great onscreen chemistry. Their random conversations, such as about body hair, are as hilarious as deep ones are heart-touching - Kamath compares his lonely existence to the sea waves crashing against rocks. Jackie is outstanding in a scene towards the end when he has a monologue where he compares human life to a video game."

Another fan added, "A sweet little gem called Mast Mein Rehne Ka released along with Archies. Jackie Shroff and Neena Gupta.



Jackie's best performance since Gardish days.." A fan compared it to 'The Archies' and wrote, "Everyone needs to forget about archies and focus on Neena Gupta Jackie Shroff Rakhi Sawant in mast mein

rehne ka." Fans have taken to social media to express their admiration for the legendary actor. It is evident that Jackie Shroff's magnetic presence and nuanced performance have made 'Mast Mein Rehne Ka' a

must-watch for those seeking a heartwarming cinematic experience. The legendary actor continues to captivate audiences with his timeless charm and unmatched acting prowess.

In the film, the two will be seen overcoming loneliness in Mumbai city. "I agree today our life has become difficult. Youngsters are facing a lot of problems...there's so much competition out there but we should not take too much stress in our life. Thoda mast mein bhi hona chahiye (There

should be some fun too)," Neena Gupta told ANI. Echoing the same sentiments, Jackie Shroff said, "One should maintain a perfect balance in life... be healthy... do yoga, love nature... use technology but use it for good... Everyone is dealing with some kind of problem in their life... it all depends on how one reacts to it... Take care of health."

'Mast Mein Rehne Ka' is now streaming on Prime Video.

## Animal: Sara Ali Khan Never Auditioned For Triptii Dimri's Role In Ranbir Kapoor-Bobby Deol's Starrer

Actress Triptii Dimri might have a brief appearance in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's latest blockbuster 'Animal', but the actress has managed to become the talk of the town for her performance. Her intimate scenes with Ranbir Kapoor in the film have been a topic of debate on the internet with a section of people criticizing the makers for promoting toxic masculinity.

While Triptii Dimri has been garnering acclaim for her portrayal in the film, several reports

claimed that Sara Ali Khan had auditioned for the role of 'Zoya' but could not crack it.

Putting all the rumors to rest, an industry insider revealed that "Sara Ali Khan never auditioned for Sandeep Reddy Vanga's latest released 'Animal'."

For the unversed, rumours of Sara Ali Khan auditioning for the role played by Triptii Dimri in the film made headlines recently. The report claimed that Sandeep wasn't convinced that Sara would be able to pull off



the bold scene in the film. He, however, was impressed by Triptii when she auditioned for the role and cast her in the film, claimed the report.

Sara Ali Khan is among the prominent Bollywood actresses of this

generation. She made headlines with her debut in 'Kedarnath' and has been a part of films like 'Atrangi Re', 'Love Aaj Kal', 'Simmba', 'Coolie No 1', 'Luka', 'Gaslight' among others. She was recently seen in 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke'

opposite Vicky Kaushal. She will be next seen in 'Ae Watan Mere Watan', which will premiere on Amazon Prime Video. Triptii Dimri played the role of 'Zoya' in Animal. Though she had a small screen time, her role is one of the most talked-about elements of the film. Triptii Dimri spoke about her intimate scenes with Ranbir Kapoor in 'Animal'. She said that Ranbir and Sandeep made sure that she was comfortable doing the scenes. She also mentioned Ranbir coming and checking up on her

every 5 minutes to ensure that she is not feeling awkward.

Triptii made her acting debut in the comedy film 'Poster Boys' (2017) and had her first lead role in the romantic drama 'Laila Majnu' (2018). She gained acclaim for her performances in Anvita Dutt's films 'Bulbbul' (2020) and 'Qala' (2022), before bagging 'Animal'. She has a film with Vicky Kaushal among her upcoming projects.

Released on December 1, 'Animal' is getting an overwhelming response from the audience.





On July 25, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented the BJP government's first Annual Budget 2024-25 in the Odisha Assembly with budgetary outlay of Rs2.65 crore as against Rs2.55 lakh crore in Interim Budget. He said that his maiden budget focuses on transformation, development, governance and Odia Asmita to realise the dream of a developed Odisha by its centenary year in 2036. Launching a fiery attack on the BJP government terming it a 'name changer government' Leader of Opposition and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik criticised the budget by stating that it was the double engine, double disappointment. He alleged that the budget saw 80 percent of his government's schemes being repeated and names have been changed in many schemes.

Normally, the budgetary outlay is

decided in tandem with an expected rise in nominal Gross State Domestic product (GSDP) rise. For working out all fiscal indicators, the nominal Gross State Domestic product (GSDP) is estimated to grow by 11.2 percent from Rs8.61 lakh crore in 2023-24 to Rs9.26 lakh crore in 2024-25. Similarly, real GSDP is expected to grow by 8 percent in 2024-25. Nominal GSDP has grown by 10.57 percent and real GSDP by 8.46 percent in 2023-24 compared to previous fiscal. The budget is estimated to grow by 15 percent from Rs2.30 lakh crore in 2023-24 to Rs2.65 crore in 2024-25. The rise is 15 percent from Rs2 crore in 2022-23 to Rs2.30 crore in 2023-24. It means in the last two years' budgetary outlay has increased by 15 percent and more than nominal GDP too. Further overall budgetary outlay as percentage of GSDP is likely to be 28.61 percent in current fiscal, nearly the same as (i.e., 27.64 percent) in previous fiscal. Hence there are no changes between BJD government and BJP government as far as growth of budgetary outlay is concerned.

Of the total budget estimates, programme expenditure is estimated to increase to Rs 1.55 lakh crore in 2024-25 from Rs 1.25 lakh crore from previous fiscal. Similarly, administrative expenditure is estimated to rise to Rs97,725 crore, from Rs 94,000 crore; transfer to Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies estimated to rise to Rs8,375 crore from Rs7,600 crore; the Disaster Risk Management Funds to Rs3,900 crore from Rs 3,700 crore in same period. However, administrative expenditure that comprises salary, pension, interest payment will decline by Rs 9500 crore from Rs1,03,500 crore in interim budget of 2024-25. Decline in administrative

expenditure means there will be no new employment in state government jobs which will dampen the spirit of youths.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said his government's top priority is 'Annadata'. Agriculture is the single largest employment sector and holds the key to socio-economic development of the state. This sector employs 45.8 per cent of the total workforce and contributes 22.5 per cent to the Gross State Value Added (GSVA). "I propose to increase the allocation under agriculture and allied sectors by more than 36 per cent from Rs 24,829 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 33,919 crore in 2024-25," This is a welcome step. But

allocation in various schemes is meagre compared to requirements.

BJP has promised Rs 50,000 to every woman of the state under the Subhadra Yojana. There are more than two crore women in the state. The government will need Rs 1 lakh crore to fulfil this promise in two years, but only Rs 10,000 crores has been allotted. The budget promises to enhance the support price on paddy to Rs 3,100 per quintal. But the budget allocation is only Rs 3,500 crore. While there is a need of Rs10,000 crore. This will cover only 30 per cent farmers. The Budget promises 25 lakh Lakhpati Didis by 2027. For this Rs 20,000 crore will be required to implement the

programme, while only Rs 1,000 crore is provisioned. Rs 1000 crore have been allocated for metro rail, but experts say that it will cost Rs 6,000 crores.

Addressing a large election rally at Angul Stadium on May 20, 2024, Prime Minister Modi had promised to supply free electricity to the people if the BJP is voted to power in the Odisha Assembly." He elaborated that under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana, the BJP government would provide a Rs 75,000 subsidy to consumers for installing rooftop solar panels, eliminating the need to pay electricity bills for up to 300 units. There is no sign of fulfilling this promise.

By contrast, expenditure has been cut in certain departments in absolute terms too compared to previous fiscal. For example, outlay has declined from Rs 1336.16 crore to Rs 731.5 crore in case of General Administration Department; from Rs 61,852.83 crore to Rs 59,311.57 crore in case of Finance department; from Rs191.94 crore to Rs85.98 crore for Odisha legislative Assembly. For higher education, it has increased marginally by 9 percent, only less than the nominal GSDP growth. Except for two or three departments, there has been a slight increase in all the other departments.

The budget does not make an attempt to raise resources and resorts to more borrowing. State's own tax as percentage of GSDP is estimated to be 6.47 percent, same as in previous fiscal. It should be more than 6.75 percent as per the 13th Finance commission. State's non-tax revenue as percentage of GSDP is estimated to decline from 6.3 percent in 2023-24 to 6 percent in the current fiscal. Budget continues to have a revenue surplus

of 2.9 percent of GSDP in 2024-25 as against 2.7 percent in previous fiscal, though many expenditures are cut or don't have adequate allocation. But the fiscal deficit is estimated to rise as a percentage of GSDP to 3.5 percent from 3 percent while debt as a percentage of GSDP will rise to 13.1 percent from 12.4 percent in the same period. Total debt estimated to increase to Rs 1.25 lakh crore by the end of March 2025 from Rs 1.12 lakh crore with per capita debt revolving around Rs 20,736 crores.

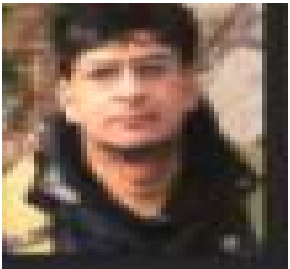
Actually, there really is nothing new in the budget. The major problem today is unemployment, price rise with concomitant health and education becoming costlier and unaffordable. Hence, huge expenditure is needed on above. Money should have been spent more on creating jobs, making health and education affordable and providing financial assistance to vulnerable sections of society. The inhibition may be a resource crunch. Effort should be taken to raise resources.

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# Approval for Eight New Railway Lines for Odisha

Saikat Kumar Basu



The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), Government of India, recently approved eight new line projects across Indian Railways to provide connectivity, facilitate ease of travelling, minimize logistics cost, reduce oil imports and lower CO2 emissions. The proposed projects will improve logistical efficiency by connecting the unconnected areas and enhancing transportation networks, resulting in streamlined supply chains and accelerated economic growth. The total estimated cost of the projects is Rs 24,657 crore (approx.) and will be completed upto 2030-31. The projects will also generate direct employment for about three crore man-days during construction. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved eight projects of



Ministry of Railways. The new line proposals will provide direct connectivity and improve mobility, providing enhanced efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. The projects are in line with the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Vision of a New India which will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities. The projects are result of

PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity which have been possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services. The eight projects covering 14 Districts in Seven States i.e., Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana and West Bengal will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by 900 Kms. With these projects 64 New Stations will be

constructed, providing enhancing connectivity to six Aspirational Districts (East Singhbhum, Bhadrak, Kothagudem, Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Rayagada), approx. 510 villages and about 40 lakh population. Ajanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage site will be connected to Indian Railway Network facilitating large number of tourists. These are essential routes for transportation

of commodities such as agriculture products, fertilizer, coal, iron ore, steel, cement, bauxite, limestone, aluminium powder, granite, ballast, containers etc. The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 143 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum). The Railways being environment friendly and energy efficient mode of transportation, will help both in achieving climate goals and minimizing logistics cost of the country, reduce oil import (32.20

Crore Litres) and lower CO2 emissions (0.87 Million Tonnes) which is equivalent to plantation of 3.5 crore trees.

S.No.--New Railway Line route--Length of Line(km)--Districts covered--States

1-Gunupur-Therubali (New Line)-73.62-Rayagada-Odisha

2 - J u n a g a r h - Nabrangpur-116.21--K a l a h a n d i & Nabrangpur--Odisha

3--Badampahar - Kandujhargarh-82.06--Keonjhar & Mayurbhanj--Odisha

4--Bangripasi - Gorumahisani--85.60--Mayurbhanj--Odisha

5--Malkangiri - Pandurangapuram (via Bhadrachalam)--173.61--Malkangiri, East Godavari & Bhadrak Kothagudem--Odisha, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana

6--Buramara - Chakulia--59.96--East Singhbhum, Jhargram & Mayurbhanj--Jharkhand, West Bengal & Odisha

7--Jalna - Jalgaon--174--Aurangabad--Maharashtra

8--Bikramshila - Kataraeh--26.23--Bhagalpur--Bihar

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## Letter to Editor

Sir,

The much awaited report of the Justice Hema Committee, the Kerala government appointed panel that studied issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry is really shocking as it reveals explosive accounts of sexual exploitation, harassment and ill-treatment being faced by women in the film industry. A copy of the report was given to the media under the RTI Act after five years of its submission to the government. The report exposes the darker side of the film industry and it is definitely apt to the adage 'all that glitters is not gold'. The hitherto matters like casting couch, 'adjustments and compromises' which seemed just like rumours and exaggerations now comes as confirmed realities that stinks and stuns everyone. The more shocking it is to know that even 'popular' and 'reputed' actors are involved in these matters and the coming days are sure to witness the shake and shatter of idols and icons hitherto considered to be stars on the silver screen but real villains in the background. The report also sheds light on the inhuman and pathetic conditions of junior artistes and other workers in the industry.

The report is an eye opener and an alarm call alerting those in the film industry and the concerned ministry and the stakeholders of the various film industries of the country to intervene and take this matter seriously and to redress the safety and well-being of female professionals in the film industry as a whole.

**M Pradyu Kannur**  
**Geeth Thalikavu Kannur 670001.**



## End Of The Line For Maoism By March 2026? Amit Shah Sets Big Target



**New Delhi, (KCN):** Union Home Minister Amit Shah has set March 2026 as the target to finish Maoist activities in India and said "A strong and ruthless strategy is required for launching the last assault against such groups." The Home Minister is in Chhattisgarh and addressed a press briefing in Raipur. Mr Shah said he reviewed the situation of Left Wing Extremism in the state along with Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and senior central and state police officers. He urged the Maoists to surrender and announced that the Centre would start a "new look" surrender policy in the next two months. "A strong and ruthless strategy is required for launching the last assault against Maoists," he said. The home minister said Maoist violence is a challenge to democracy and the menace has claimed about 17,000 lives in the country. In December last year, the Home Minister

asserted that we are almost on the verge of wiping out Maoist extremism from the country. At the 59th Raising Day of Border Security Force, Mr Shah said, "In the last 10 years, incidents of Maoist violence have gone down by 52 per cent, deaths in these incidents declined by 70 per cent and the number of affected districts have come down from 96 to 45." The number of "LWE-hit police stations has come down from 495 to 176", he added. In the press briefing today, the Home Minister reiterated the facts and said, there was a 53 per cent drop in Naxal incidents during 2014-24 as compared to 2004-14. It is time to deal the final blow to the problem of Left Wing Extremism with a strong strategy. "We believe we will be able to free the country from Left Wing Extremism by March

2026," Mr Shah said. The minister added that the government has been working to fill the security vacuum in LWE-hit areas and the security personnel have undertaken operations along with development works.

Mr Shah said apart from state and Central Armed Police Forces, the National Investigation Agency, the country's premier anti-terror probe agency and the Enforcement Directorate have been working together to wipe out Maoist extremism. The Home Ministry's Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Division, which was established in 2006, addresses the issue holistically. It monitors the LWE situation and countermeasures being taken by the affected states. The Division is responsible for capacity building of states to combat LWE through schemes of the Home Ministry like the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme, Special Infrastructure Scheme, and Special Central Assistance. Deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in the affected States, assisting State Governments with initiatives to combat extremism, etc

## SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT OF PT 5150 AND PT 5130 BY JIM & WS



**SRINAGAR (KCN):** Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering And Wintet Sports (JIM&WS) successfully summited Mt 5150 and Mt 5130 in a single Expedition on 21 Aug 24 in Machoi Ranges

of Himalyan. The magnificent peaks are located in the reason of Zozila Pass. The expedition was led by Colonel Hemchandra Singh Principal, JIM and WS. The team consist

of seven climbers who summited both the peaks and 34 climbers, who scaled Pt 5130. In this current climbing season, JIM and WS has successfully scaled 09 peaks.

## How A Madhya Pradesh Dam Destroyed Fertile Land It Was Meant To Irrigate

**Dhar(KCN):** A dam in Madhya Pradesh captured nationwide attention two years ago when it was breached even before it was completed. Today, Karam Dam - in Dharampuri tehsil of Dhar district - remains under construction, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Despite the suspension of eight officials, two of whom have since retired and the others reinstated, and the blacklisting of the construction company, no accountability has been established for the massive failure that endangered over 18 villages and devastated the livelihoods of farmers in 42 villages. On August 11, 2022, the first signs of trouble were detected with a leak in the Karam Dam. The government and local administration had no choice but to breach the incomplete wall to prevent a larger catastrophe. For three nights, they worked tirelessly to release the water safely. Yet, after the initial crisis was averted, attention waned, leaving the Karam Dam abandoned and the affected villagers in a state of despair. The dam was originally intended to irrigate the agricultural lands of 42 villages in Dharampuri tehsil. However, since the breach, the flood-



affected tribal farmers have been struggling to survive. Their fertile lands were destroyed, replaced by fields filled with stones from the floodwaters. The result is that many farmers, like Shivam Kahir, have been forced into labor work to make ends meet.

"Due to the Karam Dam bursting two years ago, our land and crops were destroyed. The fertile soil was washed away, and now our fields are filled with stones. We have repeatedly asked the government for compensation and to restore our land, but nothing has been done," says Shivam, expressing the frustration felt by many in his village. The situation is so dire that some villagers have taken refuge in the nearby forests, leaving their homes behind. They face daily hardships, including a lack of food and basic necessities. Many

villagers, like Jaisingh, have issued a stern warning to the government: if problems are not addressed, they will obstruct any further work on the dam.

"The agency responsible for the dam's construction made us sign consent forms, but now they've been given the contract again. If they don't remove the debris from our fields before resuming work, we will not allow them to start," Jaisingh warns. Farmers are also demanding compensation akin to what was provided to those affected by the Narmada floods. "We have been without electricity, water, and roads for two years. We should be compensated just like the Narmada flood-affected people," says Kamal, a resident of Utavali village. He highlights the severe neglect from the government, stating that

despite the compensation for land, no reparations have been made for the loss of trees, wells, or other essential resources. Living conditions for the displaced farmers are deplorable. They reside in makeshift shelters in the forests, facing threats from wild animals and lacking basic amenities such as electricity and roads. Education for children has been reduced to makeshift classes held in huts, and the community remains in a constant state of fear and insecurity.

"The affected tribal farmers were given ? 2 lakh per bigha as compensation, which was insufficient. They were promised homes and land in return, but two years later, they are still waiting," says Panchilal Meda, a former MLA from Congress. He further accuses the government of gross corruption, claiming that

the dam, which cost ? 305 crore, was built using substandard materials.

Despite these allegations, government officials maintain that most of the compensation has been distributed. "Only a few people are left to receive compensation. We are working on completing this process and will continue to investigate and compensate those eligible," states MS Chauhan, executive engineer. He adds that due to the complexity of the project, the construction work will take another two years. In 2018, ANS Construction from Delhi was awarded the contract to build the Karam Dam. ANS subcontracted the work to Gwalior's Sarathi Construction. Following the dam's failure, both companies were blacklisted on August 16, 2022. However, Sarathi Construction contested the decision in the High Court, while the government remained largely inactive, allowing the company to clear its name.

As the people of Dharampuri continue to suffer from the aftermath of the dam's failure, the unresolved issues of accountability, corruption, and neglect cast a long shadow over the future of Karam Dam and the farmers it was meant to serve.

## Rare Akhilesh Yadav-Mayawati Bonhomie Over Defamation Case Demand

**New Delhi(KCN):** Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday demanded a defamation case be filed against Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Rajesh Chaudhary for making 'derisive and derogatory' remarks against Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati.

The Samajwadi Party leader shared a video from a news channel in which the BJP MLA could be heard saying, "While there is no doubt that Mayawati has been the Chief Minister of UP



for four times, it was the BJP which made her the Chief Minister for the first time. We made that mistake." Mr Chaudhary also called Mayawati "the most corrupt Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh".

Taking strong objection to the BJP MLA's remarks against the BSP supremo, Akhilesh Yadav said, "Political differences have their place, but no one has the right to tarnish her dignity as a woman."

Terming Mr Chaudhary's comments baseless and highly objectionable, Akhilesh Yadav demanded to initiate legal action against the BJP legislator from Mant Assembly constituency. "The BJP is saying that they made a mistake by making her the Chief Minister... This is also an insult to the public opinion in a democratic country. To baselessly accuse her of being the most corrupt Chief Minister is extremely objectionable," the SP chief said. "A defamation case should be filed against the

BJP MLA for his statement made publicly. By giving shelter to such MLAs, the BJP is hurting the dignity of women. If the BJP does not take immediate disciplinary action against such leaders, it should be understood that this was not the personal opinion of any MLA, but that of the entire BJP," Akhilesh Yadav claimed. Meanwhile, the 'unexpected' support from the SP chief invited words of praise and admiration from Mayawati, giving rise to speculation of a thaw in the 'Bua-Bhatija' ties.

## Investment in quality Driver Training Program & Road infrastructure key to Sustainable Road Safety

**Kolkata( PARTHA ROY):** Road accidents are one of major cause of irreversible health damage and fatalities across India. To minimise irreversible damage and fatalities, there are need for quality investment in Driver Training program as well as development of quality road infrastructure and maintenance of the same. Investment in the training and development program for the driver is the key to a sustainable road safety ecosystem in the country, said Mr Ankur Desai of Linde South Asia, while addressing 18th CII Eastern Region Safety

Symposium and Exposition on 23rd August 2024 in Kolkata. He further advocated that the prevention of road accidents can happen through the intervention of artificial intelligence. The session deliberated on man, machine, and the environment interactions. Mr Ankur Desai also discussed the necessity of a driver app and a 24/7 driver helpline and introduced the concept of recognizing fatigue levels using artificial intelligence. He emphasized importance of the 4 As in driving—Awareness, Attitude, Attentiveness, and Anticipation—to



enhance road safety. Mr Pankaj Singh of Adani Cement

highlighted social context and dignity concerns associated

with the driving profession, while also advocating for drivers to have better

access to digital technology and appropriate counselling.

"The average budget allocated by state governments in India for road accidents has been a staggering INR 20 crore," stated Mr Shiv Kumar Balasubramanian of Netradyne Technology. He mentioned various health hazards faced by drivers, particularly muscle memory issues and highway hypnosis, emphasizing the importance of monitoring driver behaviour and educating them about relevant technology. Road conditions and road infrastructure also play important role in promoting safety of Driver. and others The symposium also had session on "Leveraging

Digitization for EHS Excellence". Ms Nandini Chakravarty, pioneer in indigenous safety equipment development for mining industry suggested increasing the production of flame-proof equipment to reduce the country's reliance on imports. She also highlighted the importance of capturing real-time data from the top of the mine to minimize human intervention. Digitalization is the need of the time in achieving sustainability in the mining industry, minimizing human intervention and enhancing worker safety and reducing carbon emissions.



# Sundargarh towns face drinking water shortage

**Rourkela (KCN):** Residents of Bonai, Lahunipara and other localities in the Sundargarh district have always suffered due to a lack of supply of drinking water. Currently, they are very peeved at the tardy manner in which work is going on for the construction of various drinking water projects by the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) department. The RWSS department had earlier stated that a water supply system would be built which will ease the crisis in the entire Bonai

Assembly constituency. However, it has yet to materialise. Bonai suffers from a perennial crisis as the groundwater level is shrinking rapidly. However, residents of the constituency have no idea when the project will be completed. This is because of the absence of information regarding the project. There is no timeline providing information regarding the beginning and end of the project, the cost involved and when water supply will start. The RWSS department also began construction



of projects at various places including Jhumkiband, Lahunipara, Lathikata, Bonaigarh and Kuanmunda under Biramitrapur municipality. However, no one knows when they will be operational. A drinking water project is being constructed at Jhumkiband just adjacent to the Brahmani River. Huge water tanks are visible at the site, but those have remained dry since 'time immemorial', some residents said sarcastically. It should also be pointed here that all the projects are being handled by a single company. This has raised

doubts as to whether it can handle so many projects simultaneously. "May be, this is the main reason for the delay in completion," opined some residents. They added that despite seeking information from officials of the RWSS department regarding the projects they have not got any satisfactory answers. Even though top officials of the RWSS were unavailable, a junior engineer pointed out that the projects were delayed due to some 'internal issues'. "Those have been sorted and work on projects will pick up pace soon," he said.

## NGT forms panel for Bargarh sand mining



**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the state government to constitute a committee that would look into the allegations of illegal sand mining at Chikhili under Ambabhona tehsil of Bargarh district and submit a report within four weeks. With a senior scientist of Odisha State Pollution Control Board, Bargarh mining officer and district Collector as its members, the

committee would inspect the site and submit a fact-finding report within four weeks regarding the allegations, the Eastern Zone Bench of NGT said Tuesday. "The district Collector shall be the Nodal Office for all logistic purposes and for filing counter affidavit bringing on record the committee report," the bench said while posting the next hearing for August 30, 2024. The NGT move came while hearing a plea

filed by senior advocate Sankar Prasad Pani on behalf of Fakir Mohan Patel of Prakashpur under Ambabhona tehsil of Bargarh. The petitioner has informed the environment watchdog that illegal sand mining was being carried out at Chikhili. "Following allegations, the mining officer of Bargarh, along with police officials, raided the sand stock and penalised him for 1,000cm of sand June 6.

The miner, accordingly, paid Rs 2,10,000 as a fine June 11 this year," Pani said. He said following further complaints, the mining officer June 22 found a huge sand stock. "Though the officer was urged to check more sites, he declined to claim jurisdiction issues," the petitioner said. He said that the bridge near which the illegal sand mining was taking place connects Bargarh and Jharsuguda districts. The miner also transports sand to Jharsuguda. Besides, on the day of raid, the officer found use of machine for sand quarrying and loading in trucks. But he did not initiate any action in this regard," the petitioner said. "The illegal mining has caused a loss of at least Rs 10 crore to the state exchequer," Pani said.

## Call For Sustainable Agriculture



**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** Faced with the challenge of climate change and its impact on the planet, small efforts to counter the fallout can lead to a transformation, a three-day international conference on sustainable agricultural development in the backdrop of climate change, was told on Thursday.

The transformation witnessed in the Hiware Bazar panchayat of Maharashtra's drought prone Ahmednagar district which triggered a reverse transformation of migrant workers from cities to their once dismal landscape has been an eye opener, Mr. Popatrao Baguji Pawar, Sarpanch of the panchayat, said. Experts from across the world are participating in the conference on 'Sustainable Agricultural

Development with Climate Smart Systems' being held on hybrid mode at the Siksha 'O' Anusandhan Deemed to be University (SOA) here. "Agriculture alone can provide engagement to the people and make reverse migration possible," Odisha's Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, who was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the conference, said. The conference has been organised by SOA's Centre for Climate Smart Agriculture (CCSA) and faculty of Agricultural Sciences in collaboration with the local chapter of Indian Meteorological Society. Shri Singh Deo, who holds the Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment portfolio besides Energy,

said water was becoming scarce and it was time to think about alternative agriculture. Shri Pawar, a social activist of repute who was decorated with the Padma Shri, said he motivated the inhabitants of a cluster of villages in his own Hiware Bazar panchayat to take up water and soil conservation projects in the area in a big way and farmers were earning Rs. 9 lakh per acre today which was more than twenty times of their earning earlier. "Though global warming is impacting different regions with phenomena like cloud burst and drought, my panchayat has been insulated because there is no dearth of water due to proper ground water management," he said adding ten lakh trees had

been planted in the area over the last few years. Shri Pawar said there had been no reports of any farmer suicide in the area after the transformation took place. Prof. Chittaranjan Ray, Director of the Nebraska Water Centre, Nebraska, USA and Prof. Pravat Kumar Roul, Vice-Chancellor of OUAT, also addressed the inaugural session which was presided over by SOA's Vice-Chancellor Prof. Pradipta Kumar Nanda. Shri Singh Deo said though technology was needed to ensure more agricultural production, there was need to look at the use of chemical fertilizer as it was reducing the productivity of the soil.



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## ‘UnserHaus’ by BSH Home Appliances - Kolkata’s new luxury address

**Bhubaneswar:** BSH Home Appliances Group, one of the world’s leading home appliances companies today launched its first ‘UnserHaus’ in Kolkata. This is BSH’s only experience center in India to house all its three brands – Bosch, Siemens and Gaggenau under one roof. Located at Salt Lake city’s Adventz Infinity @ 5, this new experience center is all set to welcome customers as well as Kolkata’s strong architecture & design community. The company already has two other stores in Kolkata—a multi-channel Bosch & Siemens Brand Store in Dhakuria and a Bosch Studio in Shakespeare Sarani. UnserHaus is the German name for “Our House”. It is a place where comfort,

convenience, inspiration, and memories reside in every corner. The philosophy and core ethos of BSH’s UnserHaus are focused on building long-lasting trust with all customers & business partners. Keeping this in mind, the space is designed to ensure that all visitors feel at home when they visit, helping them experience the products as if they were in their own house.

Commenting on the launch of UnserHaus, Kolkata, Neeraj Bahl, MD & CEO, BSH Home Appliances (India & SAARC) said, “Kolkata is one of our high performing markets and we’re thrilled to further expand our presence here by opening doors to our 101st retail space\*. The new-age Indian consumer continues to look for offline

experiences especially in the home and cooking category and we’re glad to offer this state-of-the-art, practical space where buyers can get a first-hand experience of our innovation-fueled appliances across all three brands Bosch, Siemens and Gaggenau. This is our sixth experience center in India and the only one to house all our three brands. We look forward to continued growth momentum in the city and we’re confident that this space will also boost our presence in key neighboring cities as well.”

\*The company now has six experience centers across Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata, and an India-wide retail network of 95 brand shops (80 brand stores for Bosch and 15 brand stores for Siemens).

## Mahagram offers door to door banking services through Kirana stores

**Bhubaneswar:** Mahagram is a social enterprise focusing on Financial Inclusion that has enabled banking from the mom-and-pop store around the corner through fintech solutions. The company’s mission is to enable rural women to save money at the local Kirana (or grocery) stores, instead of traveling miles to the nearest bank branch.

Recently, Mahagram has tied up with a public sector bank – the Bank of Maharashtra to roll out the ‘Bank Sakhi’ project in Odisha. The fintech would provide financial technology

and infrastructure support to augment rural financial inclusion. As part of the tie-up, the company has onboarded more than 11,000 bank sakhis (women) on the BharatATM platform to help the rural citizens avail themselves of basic banking services at their doorstep or the next door Kirana stores.

Mahagram aims to increase the ratio and habit of household savings in rural India. “At Mahagram, we are indulged in offering basic banking services

like deposit and withdrawal transactions to consumers but it is now high time for rural people to save money. We are focusing on Financial Inclusion the flagship project of Modi government, by helping lot of beneficiaries to open bank accounts under the ‘Jan DhanYojana’. We are also emphasizing on rural women because they are the ones who run households. Our vision for 2022 is to offer women the service of recurring deposit.” says Mr. Ram Shriram, CEO, Mahagram.

## Amazon.in launches ‘Back to School’ store

**Bhubaneswar:** With the opening of schools and resuming of offline classes, Amazon.in announced the launch of ‘Back to school’ store – a one stop destination to simplify the shopping needs of children. The specially curated store offers deals on a wide range of products across study essentials like stationery, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, PCs, headsets & speakers, printers, Amazon devices, home furnishing among others

to help parents, teachers and students with school supplies and to create an effective learning and productive environment. The offers and deals will be available till 12th June 2022.

Here are some popular products customers can choose from the ‘Back to school’ store on Amazon.in. All offers & deals are from participating sellers. HONOR MagicBook X 15, Intel Core i3 Anti-Glare Thin and Light Laptop – It has stylish

appearance with premium aluminum metal body with 16.9MM thickness, 5.3 MM narrow bezels and the weight of the laptop is only 1.56kg, which allows you to carry it easily, making it very convenient for school, travel, and work. It is available for starting INR 37,990 on Amazon.in. Lenovo Tab M10 FHD Plus Tablet, Platinum Grey - Make way for the stylish 8.1 mm Tab M10 FHD Plus.

## OSL Group founder bags ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’ for reshaping Shipping & Logistics scenario in Eastern India



**Bhubaneswar(KCN) :** On the august occasion of the 4th Edition of prestigious Times Business Awards Odisha 2023, Orissa Stevedores Limited (OSL) founder Sri Mahimananda

(Mahima) Mishra was conferred with the coveted ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’ for reshaping the shipping and logistics scenario in eastern India.

The OSL Group founder received the honour at a glittering event organized by the TIMES Group at the Central Hall, Mayfair Convention here in the state capital city. Notably, the TIMES Group organizes such a glorious event in a bid to celebrate and honour outstanding business houses and business leaders who have made significant contributions to their respective fields and communities as decided by a renowned research agency.

# NTPC Bongaigaon’s GEM Initiative Inspires Through Fire Safety and Security Demonstration



**Kolkata, (KCN):** NTPC Bongaigaon’s Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM) initiative continues to inspire and educate, with a recent visit to the CISF Fire Wing offering the young participants a profound learning experience in fire safety, security measures, and the responsible handling of arms and ammunition. The event was spearheaded by Shri M.S. Kandari, Assistant Commandant of CISF Fire Wing, who provided the GEM girls with a comprehensive demonstration on fire precautions, safety protocols, and the use of various safety equipment. This

interactive session was designed to equip the girls with vital knowledge that could be crucial in both domestic and industrial settings. Joining the session were Smt. Sangeeta Singh, President of Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club, NTPC Bongaigaon, and other office bearers of the club. Their presence underscored the community’s commitment to supporting the holistic development of the GEM girls.

Shri M.S. Kandari, Asst. Commandant, CISF Fire Wing, stated, “Empowering these young girls with knowledge about fire

safety and security measures is essential. It not only equips them with practical skills but also instills a sense of confidence and preparedness.”

The CISF team walked the GEM girls through various scenarios involving fire incidents, demonstrating how to effectively use a fire extinguisher and other safety tools. The session was designed to be interactive, with the girls actively participating and practicing the safety measures demonstrated. Smt. Sangeeta Singh, President of Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club, NTPC Bongaigaon,

expressed her enthusiasm, “This initiative is about more than just safety; it’s about empowering these girls to take charge of their own security and well-being.”

The session also included an introduction to arms and ammunition, highlighting the importance of handling these tools with care and responsibility. The GEM girls were given an overview of various firearms used by the CISF for security purposes, with a focus on safety protocols and the significance of these weapons in

maintaining public safety.

Smt. Vani Reddy, Senior Member of Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club, added, “Understanding safety measures, whether for fire incidents or security, is crucial for these girls. It’s about building a foundation of knowledge that will serve them throughout their lives, she added.”

The day concluded with a group photo and heartfelt expressions of gratitude from the GEM girls to the CISF Fire Wing team and the Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club, marking the event as a memorable and impactful experience in their journey of empowerment.

## Annual General Meeting of Vitesco Technologies

**Regensburg:** Vitesco Technologies, a leading international developer and manufacturer of cutting-edge drive systems for sustainable mobility, held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) today. The AGM was held virtually due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

In separate votes, the shareholders formally approved the actions of all the Executive Board members during their term of office in the 2021 financial year. The actions of all members of the Supervisory Board in office in 2021 were also approved for their respective terms. “We are delighted to have received this vote of confidence from the Annual General Meeting.

We regard this outcome as a clear mandate to continue the successful collaboration and positioning of Vitesco Technologies as a supplier of sustainable drive solutions with a clear goal,” said CEO Andreas Wolf.

All current members of the Supervisory Board representing the shareholders who were up for election were re-elected to office. The members of the Supervisory Board who represent the employees will be elected separately. A complete list of all Supervisory Board members and the results of the voting at the AGM are available on the Vitesco Technologies website under ‘Annual General Meeting’.

## LV Prasad Eye Institute Organizes a Retinoblastoma Awareness Walk

**Bhubaneswar:** L V Prasad Eye Institute’s MithuTulsiChanrai Campus in Bhubaneswar organized a Retinoblastoma Awareness Walk on 8th May 2022. This walk is part of the ‘Whitathon’ event organized by LV Prasad Eye Institute across its campuses in Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam and

Vijayawada. Celebrity actor, Mr Sabyasachi Mishra, will be flagging off the walk.

Whitathon is L V Prasad Eye Institute’s annual cause-related event focusing on raising awareness and funds for early diagnosis and treatment of Retinoblastoma – a Life and Vision-threatening Eye Cancer in Children. One of the most common

symptoms of Retinoblastoma is White Reflex (white glow) in a child’s eye. Through this walk, LVPEI aims to raise awareness among the public that if they spot a ‘White Reflex’ in a child’s eye, it could be a sign of eye cancer that needs immediate medical intervention. Hence, the event is named ‘Whitathon’.

Dr Devjyoti Tripathy,

Ocular Oncologist, MithuTulsiChanrai Campus, Bhubaneswar, L V Prasad Eye Institute said, “Our aim is to raise awareness about early detection and treatment of retinoblastoma eye cancer in children. No child should die of eye cancer because of lack of awareness and treatment. We extend our sincere thanks to Mr Sabyasachi Mishra for joining us for

the Retinoblastoma Awareness Walk and spreading awareness about Retinoblastoma. We also acknowledge the support received from Aroh – Giving Hope, an NGO working for children with Cancer and their families.”

Dr Tripathy further added that it is time to make detailed eye check-ups a part of mandatory paediatric examinations.



# Shikhar Dhawan announces retirement from international and domestic cricket

**New Delhi(KCN):** After an illustrious cricket career spanning over a decade, Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan has officially announced his retirement from all formats of international cricket and IPL. Also known as Gabbar on and off the field, Dhawan is one of the most entertaining cricketers on the ground and thus his journey has been nothing short of remarkable. Dhawan made his international debut in 2010 and quickly became a mainstay in the Indian cricketing setup, known for his explosive batting and charismatic presence on and off the field. Over the years, he has been an integral part of numerous victories for India across

all formats. In his retirement announcement, Dhawan expressed gratitude and excitement about the future and said, “Representing my country on the international stage has been an incredible honour for me in my cricket journey, and wearing the Indian jersey will always hold a special place in my heart. I am deeply grateful & thankful to everyone who has been my backbone in this beautiful experience—my family, my relatives & friends, teammates, coaches, and, most importantly, a very big thanks to the loving fans who have been an incredible part of my journey and my life.”



Known for his successful cricket career, especially in limited-overs formats, Shikhar has been a key player for India and various IPL teams. Dhawan's illustrious career reached its peak in the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy, where his exceptional performance earned him

the esteemed "Mr ICC" tag as the tournament's best player. His dynamic innings and crucial contributions were instrumental in India's victories. He has been the first batsman to hit back-to-back centuries in IPL and holds record for hitting the most fours in IPL. He has also

captained both Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad simultaneously which no other player has got an opportunity to lead so far. Dhawan is all set to focus on his business ventures with the "DaOne Group, and his ownership of the Delhi Premier League team, South Delhi

Superstars.” He is looking forward to starting his new Innings in his life and career while continuing to make significant strides in fitness and lifestyle industries. His past ventures include a chain of fitness centers, a sports equipment line, and a wellness brand that promotes healthy living. As he bids adieu to International cricket, Dhawan’s legacy will continue to inspire future generations of cricketers. His contributions to the game will be remembered fondly by fans, teammates, and cricketing experts alike. Dhawan’s announcement of his retirement marks the end of an era for the entire cricketing world.

## 'Congratulations on a fantastic career': Gambhir, Sehwag, BCCI lead retirement wishes for Shikhar Dhawan

New Delhi: As India opener Shikhar Dhawan announced his retirement from international and domestic cricket on Saturday morning, former players showered tributes to the decorated cricketer on his illustrious cricketing career.

Taking to social media, the left-handed batter put an end to his glittery cricket career that saw him scoring 24 hundreds (17 in ODIs and seven in Tests) across 269 international matches. His last competitive game was in April this year in the Indian Premier League for Punjab Kings.

India all-rounder Hardik Pandya congratulated him on his Instagram story, wishing him the best for the future. “Only the best for you Shiki paa. Congratulations on a wonderful career.”

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) congratulated the southpaw for his charismatic contribution over the years.

“As Shikhar Dhawan retires from International and Domestic cricket, we wish him all the very best for the road ahead,” BCCI posted on X.

India head coach Gautam Gambhir expressed his confidence that Dhawan would continue spreading joy in his future endeavours. Former India opener Virender Sehwag lauded Dhawan’s “top performances” over the years ever since he replaced the veteran cricketer as India opener.

## After Modric, Real Madrid extend contract with Lucas Vazquez till 2025



**New Delhi:** Real Madrid have extended the contract of Lucas Vazquez till 2025, only a day after they had sealed the same for club legend Luka Modric. Vazquez will now be one of the senior players in Los Blancos squad and might be one of the candidates for the captaincy. Real Madrid winger Lucas Vázquez has signed a three-year contract extension, ensuring his continued presence with the La Liga giants until 2025. The announcement of this extension came only days after Real Madrid unveiled Kylian Mbappe on July 17, followed by Luka Modric's similar

contract extension on July 18. This renewal signifies another chapter in Vázquez's long-standing relationship with the club, where he has become a key player known for his versatility and reliability. Vázquez has been a consistent key figure in the side during Los Blancos's famous UEFA Champions League 3-peat, and then went on to be a dependable option off the bench for manager Carlo Ancelotti in the last few years. Last season, he frequently filled in for the injured Dani Carvajal, showcasing his defensive and offensive skills. "Real Madrid C. F. and Lucas Vázquez have

agreed an extension to the player's contract, tying him to the club until 30 June 2025," a statement from the club read.

In the 2023-2024 season, Vázquez continued to be an important player for Real Madrid. He made 32 appearances across all competitions, playing a significant role in the team's La Liga and UCL triumphs. Vázquez was offered a similar fresh contract like that of Modric, which will now see him boast a certain level of seniority in the side after the retirement of Toni Kroos and departure of Nacho.

From his debut in 2015 to his recent contract extension, he has proven to be a dependable and versatile player, essential in multiple positions. As Real Madrid prepares for a fresh era with the likes of Mbappe in their arsenal, Vázquez's presence will undoubtedly be crucial in both defence and attack.

## FIFA Rankings: India ranked 22nd Asia, 124th in the world



top 15 Asian side under the reign of Igor Stimac. Since December last year, India have been sliding down. They had broken into the top 100 last year, with a best ranking of 99, but since then it has been a downward spiral. In Asia,

India remained on the 22nd position, behind the likes of Lebanon, Palestine, and Vietnam. Multiple controversies of late have rocked the Indian team. The All India Football Federation was recently banned by FIFA in 2022 for not meeting

required regulations. Despite the change in administration, the Indian team was synonymous with controversies. Recently India parted ways with their head coach Igor Stimac. Stimac on his exit interview with the Indian media blasted the AIFF for being selfish. Speaking to a host of reporters from across India, Stimac alleged that Indian football was imprisoned in the hands of power-hungry people and was unlikely to reach a good level in the next 20 years. Stimac took sharp digs at the AIFF stating

alleging that he was incorrectly sacked. "I came with an open heart to Indian football. But your football is imprisoned. It will take a couple of decades for things to improve which I don't see happening," Stimac said in his virtual press conference. "Not surprised about parting ways. Most of my senior players knew I had decided to leave even after had qualified for the third round. It was impossible for me to go on without proper support, full of lies and people who had only private interests," he further added.

## Suryakumar to lead T20I side in Sri Lanka; Rohit continues as ODI captain

New Delhi: Suryakumar Yadav has been named India's T20I skipper for the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka, the BCCI confirmed on Thursday (July 18) while announcing the squads. While Jasprit Bumrah has been rested for the entire tour, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have been included in the ODI

The selectors have also named Shubman Gill the vice captain of both the squads after he recently led India in the Zimbabwe tour. That is a significant development considering Hardik Pandya was India's designated deputy in the ODI World Cup in 2023 and the recently-concluded T20 World Cup.

It was reported recently that Hardik's fitness issues could prompt the selectors to not elevate him to captaincy and the 30-year-old has skipped the ODI leg of the tour.

**T20I Squad:** Suryakumar Yadav (C), Shubman Gill (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh, RYK, Sanju Rishabh Pant (WI), Parag Samson (WK), Hardik

Pandya, Shivam Dube,  
Axar Patel, Washington  
Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi,  
Arshdeep Singh, Khaleel  
Ahmed, Mohd. Siraj.  
ODI Squad: Rohit Sharma  
(C), Shubman Gill  
Virat Kohli, KL Rahul  
(WK), Rishabh Pant  
(WK), Shreyas Iyer,  
Shivam Dube, Kuldeep  
Yadav, Mohd. Siraj,  
Washington Sundar,

Arshdeep Singh, Riyan Parag, Axar Patel, Khaleel Ahmed, Harshit Rana. There were also doubts surrounding the availability of senior pros Rohit and Kohli for the ODIs. However, Gautam Gambhir will have both the stalwarts bolstering the batting lineup in his first assignment as India's new coach.

# ICC to discuss CT 25 budget amid talk of overspend for NY games of T20 WC

**New Delhi:** Amid allegations of budget overshoots and overspending for the recent Twenty20 World Cup in the US and the West Indies - particularly concerning the preparation of a modular stadium in New York, which allegedly led to the resignation of two top ICC officials - the International Cricket Council (ICC) is preparing to approve the budget for another ICC event -- Champions Trophy 2025. At the ICC's annual conference starting in Colombo on Friday, the budget papers for the 2025 Champions Trophy will be presented to the ICC Board for approval. Ankur Khanna, the Chief

Financial Officer (CFO) of the ICC, spent three days in Lahore in June working on the budget with Javed Murtuza, the CFO of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), to finalize the financial outlay for the eight-team Champions Trophy. Before the Board approves the financial plan, it is expected to go through the Finance and Commercial Affairs Committee (F & CA), chaired by Jay Shah, the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). The F & CA is scheduled to meet on July 21, a day before the Board meeting, and PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi is expected to be present. The budget papers

mention Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi as the venues for the February 19-March 9 championship. However, there is a looming question regarding India's participation which will depend on the approval of the Government of India. However, with the recent escalation of terror-related incidents in Jammu & Kashmir, there is always uncertainty regarding the approval by the Government of India. Recent history shows that the government has been against the Indian team visiting the neighbouring country. For instance, it did not allow the team to play in the Asia Cup in Pakistan last year, leading to the creation of a hybrid



model. Whether such an arrangement for the 15-match Champions Trophy will be created with UAE or Sri Lanka as second venue will be known during the meeting. For the record, the ICC has scheduled an inspection of the three identified venues in September. The budget papers for

the Champions Trophy will be tabled at the ICC meets amid alleged outrage among some members regarding expenses incurred for preparing and holding eight league matches in New York. Pankaj Khimji, one of the directors, has sent a letter requesting a forensic audit of the expenses associated

with the construction of the pop-up stadium in New York, which was dismantled after the completion of the games in the city. The five-day annual conference, running from July 19 to 22, kicks off with a meeting of the Associate Members of the world body. An election will be held for the Associate Member Director positions, with 11 candidates in contention. The contestants are Sam Arthur (Costa Rica), Dr Rudie Van Vuuren (Namibia), Sankar Rengananathan (Sierra Leone), Mubashshir Usmani (UAE), Gurumurthy Palani (France), Mahinda Vallipuram (Malaysia),

Stephen Musale (Rwanda), and Mahmood Gaznavi (Singapore), alongside sitting members Imran Khwaja (Singapore), Neil Speight (Bermuda), and Pankaj Khimji (Oman), who are in fray for three positions. The results of the election will be announced on Friday afternoon.

UAE has won the Associate Member Women's Performance of the Year award after an impressive unbeaten spell which saw them triumph at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 Asia Qualifier in Malaysia. Led by Mumbai born Esha Oza, UAE women beat strong Thailand to advance to

the global qualifier after wins over Qatar, Bahrain and Hong Kong (in the semifinal). "Winning the ICC Associate Member Women's Performance of the Year award is a proud moment for UAE cricket. Over the last few years, we have laid special emphasis on promoting and developing women's cricket and it is heartening to see those efforts have now started to bear fruit," Mubashshir Usmani, the general secretary of Emirates Cricket Board, said. "The Emirates Cricket Board will continue to invest further in the development of women's cricket across the country."