

Odisha govt forms task force to set up steel plant in CM's home district Keonjhar

Bhubaneswar / Keonjhar(KCN): The Odisha government Saturday decided to form a task force, headed by the Chief Secretary, for setting up a mega steel plant in Keonjhar, the home district of the Chief Minister, officials said. The decision was taken during a meeting where Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi reviewed the industrial scenario in the state.

Though the Keonjhar district is abundant with raw materials like iron ore, power and water, the area does not have a

steel plant. Notably, Majhi hails from Keonjhar district and it is his priority to set up a major steel facility in the area, an official said. The task force will be headed by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, which will expedite the process of holding talks with investors for the proposed steel plant in Keonjhar district.

ArcelorMittal had planned to set up a 12-mtpa steel plant in Keonjhar but the project was later abandoned due to local protests. The proposed steel plant



will have an advantage in terms of supplies of

raw materials as several iron ore mines are

located across Keonjhar district, another official

said. During the meeting, Industries Department Secretary Hemant Sharma apprised the chief minister of the industrial situation in the state and said around 989 proposals have been received by the government for setting up industries. Of them, 674 projects have got the nod of the state government through single window clearance authority.

As many as 352 industries have been provided with land for the establishment of their plants, Sharma said.

While work for 183 projects was in progress, 74 industries are in operation in the state, he said. During the meeting, it was also informed that there were 12 proposals for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the state. Sharma said the industries department has been putting all-out efforts to implement 41 important investment proposals.

Majhi directed the officials concerned to provide support to industries to set up their units in the state as

Odisha has a vast potential to grow as an industrially developed state in the country. He also asked the officials to stress on the implementation of projects in the labour-incentive sectors like textiles and food processing. The state government aims at creating 3.5 lakh employment opportunities in Odisha in the next five years. State Industries Minister Sampad Swain and other senior officers were present in the review meeting.

6584.63 Cr Spent Under BSKY



During the year 2022-23 while the spending increased to all time high to Rs 3,204.45 crore during the last financial year (2023-24)

Moreover, an expenditure of Rs 971.80 crore has been made under the BSKY scheme during the first three months (April to June) of the current financial year, the official data said.

The State has spent Rs 41.12 crore during the two months of 2019-20 financial year while it goes up to Rs 79.42 crore during 2020-21 and to Rs 380.57 crore in the 2021-22 fiscal.

Similarly, the spending under the ambitious health assurance scheme again increased to Rs 1,907.02 crore

special emphasis on the health protection of economically vulnerable families.

Under the BSKY, annual health coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family and Rs 10 lakh for the women members of the family, is provided for over 3.56 crore people of 99 lakh economically vulnerable families in the state.

A total of 9,509 hospitals including 8,530 government and 979 private hospitals have been included under the scheme where the beneficiaries can avail free treatment.

BSKY is one of the major popular schemes of the previous BJD Government.

After BJP got majority in the last Assembly election, there was a hue and cry among the people as a senior BJP leader had announced that the BSKY will be closed down and Ayushman Bharat scheme will be replaced by the scheme.

After such a chaos, some private hospitals have also started denying admission of the BSKY beneficiaries and the former Chief Secretary P K Jena has been forced to come with a clarification and strict instructions to the hospitals.

The BJP government has just renamed the BSKY as Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana and made provision of funds for the scheme.

During the Budget discussion, senior BJD lawmaker Arun Sahoo dared the BJP government to close down the scheme, if they have the courage to face the people.

Brave Kerala forest officials rescue tribal family stranded in Wayanad landslides

Wayanad(KCN): In a remarkable display of courage and compassion, officials from the Kerala forest department successfully rescued four toddlers and their parents, who belong to a tribal community, after they were stranded in a cave atop a hill following the devastating Wayanad landslides.

The four-member rescue team, led by Kalpetta range forest officer K Hashis, braved incessant rain and treacherous terrain to save the Paniya community family, which included children aged between one and four. The daring rescue mission involved an arduous eight-hour trek. Reports indicate that the family had been trapped in a cave atop a hill, which overlooked a deep gorge and was surrounded by dense forest, for five days.



The forest officials discovered the mother wandering in search of food for her starving children and their father. She subsequently guided them to the cave where the entire family had taken shelter, having gone without food for the last five days. The path to rescuing the family was fraught with challenges, including a steep slope and heavy rainfall. The rescuers had to tie ropes to trees and rocks to navigate the hazardous climb. The children, exhausted and hungry, were provided with food and clothing upon their return to the Attamala anti-poaching camp. Images and videos of the heroic rescue operation have gone viral on social media, garnering widespread praise for the forest officials' bravery and dedication in risking their own lives to save the tribal family.

Elephants Pull Down House in Mayurbhanj, Toddler Dies Under Debris



Mayurbhanj(KCN): A two-year-old boy lost his life after being buried under rubble when a herd of elephants destroyed the house he was in at Saitapur village within the Betanati Range of Mayurbhanj district late on Friday night.

The child has been identified as Dibyaprakash, the son of Yudhistir Kisku and Rina Kisku.

As per reports, a group of seven elephants wandered into the village looking for food on Friday night. Two elephants targeted the residence of Yudhistir Kisku, inflicting considerable damage. Dibyaprakash, who was asleep alongside his grandmother Salega Kisku and his mother Rina, became trapped under the debris as the house's wall gave way.

Somalia: 32 killed, 63 wounded in terrorist attack in capital

Mogadishu(KCN): At least 32 people were killed, and 63 others injured, in a suicide bombing and gunfire attack conducted by al-Shabab militants at a beachside hotel in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, the local authorities confirmed Saturday. Addressing the media persons, Somali Police Spokesperson Abdifatah Adan said that five terrorists and a suicide bomber were killed by the security forces.

Additionally, the security forces have evacuated the civilians trapped in the hotel and defused an explosive-laden car parked in the area.



The investigations and monitoring continue, the police added. Condemning the attack in a post on X, Somali Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire said, "I send

my deepest condolences to the families, relatives and friends of those who were martyred in these blasts." "The fact that the terrorist attack coincides with this night when the beach is the most congested shows the hostility of the terrorists to the Somali people," he added. Additionally, the Somali PM urged

the national forces and the public to increase vigilance, cooperation, and effort to prevent the recurrence of such "barbaric attacks."

According to the police, the insurgent group 'al-Shabab', formed in the early 2000s, is responsible for the attack.

Later, this claim was confirmed by the group through their official radio channel.

The militant group has repeatedly targeted this area since October 2022, when twin vehicle bombs killed over 100 near the busy area.

Odisha Misses Speed Corridor

NEW DELHI (KCN): While the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs cleared 8 important National High Speed Corridors, Odisha missed the chance. With 'Double Engine Sarkar' it was expected that Odisha will get its genuine share for Infrastructure Development, the State missed the opportunity. CCEA chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the development of 8 important National High Speed Corridor projects with a Length of 936 km at a cost of Rs. 50,655 crore across the country. Implementation of these 8 projects will generate an estimated 4.42 crore mandays of direct and indirect employment. Six Lane Agra – Gwalior

National High-Speed Corridor: The 88-km high-speed corridor will be developed on Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) mode as a fully access-controlled 6-lane corridor at a total capital cost of Rs. 4,613 Crore. The project will supplement the existing 4-lane National Highway to increase the traffic capacity by more than 2 times in the Agra – Gwalior section of the North South Corridor (Srinagar – Kanyakumari). The corridor will enhance connectivity to key tourist destinations in Uttar Pradesh (e.g., Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, etc) and Madhya Pradesh (e.g., Gwalior Fort, etc). It will reduce the distance between Agra and Gwalior by 7% and

the travel time by 50%, thereby bringing in a substantial reduction in logistics cost. The 6 lane access-controlled Agra – Gwalior greenfield highway will be starting from design km 0.000 (near village Deori in district Agra) to design km 88-400 (near village Susera in district Gwalior) in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh including the overlay/strengthening and other road safety and improvement works on existing Agra-Gwalior section of NH-44. Four Lane Kharagpur – Moregram National High-Speed Corridor: The 231-km 4-lane access-controlled high-speed corridor between Kharagpur and Moregram. It will provide efficient connectivity for traffic between states such as West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh etc. on one end and North-Eastern part of the

country on the other. The corridor will enable reduction in travel time from existing 9 to 10 hours to 3 to 5 hours for freight vehicles between Kharagpur and Moregram, thereby reducing logistics cost. Six Lane Tharad – Deesa – Mehsana – Ahmedabad National High-Speed Corridor: The 214-km 6-Lane High-Speed Corridor will be developed in Build – Operate – Transfer (BOT) mode at a total

capital cost of Rs. 10,534 Crore. The Tharad – Ahmedabad corridor will provide connectivity between two key National Corridors in the state of Gujarat, viz., Amritsar – Jamnagar Corridor and Delhi – Mumbai Expressway, thereby providing seamless connectivity for the freight vehicles originating from industrial regions of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan to the major ports in Maharashtra (JNPT),

Mumbai and newly-sanctioned Vadhvan port). The corridor will also provide connectivity to key tourist destinations in Rajasthan (e.g., Mehrangarh Fort, Dilwara Temple, etc.) and Gujarat (e.g., Rani ka Vav, Ambaji Temple, etc.). It will further reduce the distance between Tharad and Ahmedabad by 20% and the travel time by 60%, thereby improving logistics efficiency. Four Lane Section between Pathalgao and Gumla of Raipur-Ranchi National High-speed Corridor: The 137-km 4-lane access-controlled Pathalgao – Gumla section of Raipur – Ranchi Corridor will be developed in Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) at a total capital cost of Rs. 3,935 Crore. The Ring Road will reduce congestion on National Highways passing through the city, viz., NH 27 (East West Corridor), NH 227 A, NH 227B, NH 330, NH 330A, and NH 135A, thereby enabling fast movement of pilgrims visiting the Rama Mandir. The Ring Road will also provide seamless connectivity to national and international tourists arriving from Lucknow International Airport, Ayodhya Airport and major railway stations in the city. Four Lane Section between Pathalgao and Gumla of Raipur-Ranchi National High-speed Corridor: The 137-km 4-lane access-controlled Pathalgao – Gumla section of Raipur – Ranchi Corridor will be developed in Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) at a total capital cost of Rs. 4,473 Crore to complete the whole corridor.

SIU Connects SOA



Bhubaneswar (KCN): An eight-member delegation from the Saigon International University (SIU) of Vietnam, which arrived here on July 31 on a 4-day tour of the Siksha 'O' Anusandhan Deemed to be University (SOA), concluded its visit on Saturday. Dr. Phuoc Minh Hiep, Deputy Director of the Ho Chi Minh City-based university, called on SOA Founder President, Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Ranjan Nayak for an interaction before winding up the visit. Dr. Dao Van Tuyet,

Head of the Department of Data Science at the university, was also present. Dr. Hiep expressed satisfaction over the opportunity to visit the different institutions of SOA which had greatly impressed the delegation. He also thanked the university for the hospitality extended to the delegation. He mentioned about the facilities available in SOA in its medical college as also in research centres focused on genomics, bio-informatics, pharmaceuticals, data

science and Artificial Intelligence. SIU would be interested to enter into collaboration with SOA for academic exchange and research in these areas, he said. The Vietnamese delegation had engagements with faculties of the relevant departments and also went round the training facilities to see the infrastructure and understand methodologies. Prof. (Dr.) Nayak said SIU should prepare a road map in this regard and take the matter

forward. Prof. Nachiketa K. Sharma, Director, University Outreach Program and International Relations, was present during the discussion. Dr. Hiep and other members of the delegation had an interaction with SOA Vice-Chancellor Prof. Pradipta Kumar Nanda, Deans, departmental heads and faculty members on arrival in Bhubaneswar. The Vietnamese delegation also visited cultural and historical sites in Bhubaneswar.

Minister Sampad Chandra Swain Visits Industrial Estate In Khurda

Bhubaneswar (KCN): Minister of State (Ind. Charge), Industries, Skill Development and Technical Education, Sampad Chandra Swain visited the Industrial Estate in Khurda. The Minister was accompanied by Khurda MLA, Principal Secretary to Government, Industries Department, Managing Director (MD), IDCO, other IDCO officials and senior officers of District Administration.

MD, IDCO apprised the Minister regarding various industrial parks in Khurda District along with access to common infrastructure for the units in the industrial parks.

During his visit, the Minister interacted with various units inside the Industrial Park such as SMS Group, Indo NISSIN, and Coca-Cola Group. He advised the industries to ensure local

employment and increase the uptake of skilled workforce from ITIs and Polytechnic institutions in the Khurda District. Further, Minister Swain conducted a detailed review meeting in the Collectorate Office at Khurda. Khurda MLA Prashant Kumar Jagdev, Begunia MLA Pradeep Kumar Sahu, Jayadev MLA Naba Kishore Mallik along with senior officers of the Industries Department, IDCO and District Administration were present. In the review, the Principal Secretary of Industries apprised about upcoming industries in the Khurda District and informed the Minister that there is a growing demand for industrial development in and around the district. Looking into the burgeoning demand, IDCO is working on the development of new industrial parks in the

vicinity i.e. in Kalibeti, Mundamba, Haldiapada, Begunia etc. He also briefed that 15 units have been allotted in the Industrial Park at Mundamba, specifically for food processing industries, and Varun Beverages has already started its operation. Similarly, the industrial park at Kalibeti is specific for the textile and garment sector and EPIC has initiated its construction for garment manufacturing unit. MD, IDCO explained details of the land in various tehsils such as Khurda, Bhubaneswar, Jatani, Begunia, Bolagarh, Tangi etc. and apprised details of industries allotted land in the industrial areas. Hon'ble MLAs of the respective constituencies appreciated the efforts taken by the Govt for infrastructure development and assured providing all local support



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'Sharmajee Ki Beti' director Tahira Kashyap: Very difficult to make female-led film

Director Tahira Kashyap recently spoke about her latest directorial venture, 'Sharmajee Ki Beti', the process of getting it greenlit and more in this exclusive interaction with IndiaToday.in.

Even though filmmaker Tahira Kashyap shot her first movie as a director a few years ago, audiences will finally get to see it on Friday. The slice-of-life movie, 'Sharmajee Ki Beti', will release on Prime Video on June 28. Speaking exclusively to IndiaToday.in about it, Tahira shared that the story came from the corner of her heart and had a 'bit of her'. She also revealed how she had a tough time getting the film rolling because it was shouldered by female characters.

We also asked her about the challenges of getting the film on floor. Tahir said, "I did go to a couple of producers with the film. I am so glad I found such great cheerleaders in Tanuj Garg and Atul Kasbekar. They have been on this project through all the hindrances and challenges. I had my own



personal journey, and then the pandemic struck and we saw two lockdowns. It's a small film and such hurdles make things more difficult. However, we had relentless belief and once it was made, we went to Applause with it."

"There were definitely a few pushbacks from various quarters of the world of cinema. Things were limited because women were leading the film. There have been a few pushbacks and cutbacks and, I won't deny, that it's very difficult to make a female-led film. I think it will probably take 10 more 'Crew' before it's normalised," Tahira Kashyap added.

Explaining why she chose such characters to feature in her film, Tahira stated, "It came from a very pure place and is part of my world. This is why I had five characters, in different phases in life, as I wanted to cover all these places. From the age of 13 to 35, they all have different experiences in life. Usually, in Indian cinema, there's nothing for women before and after their 20s. Even if there are, they are either crying mothers, heartbroken divorcees, or very stereotypical characters. I wanted to show real stories of real women."

Every new filmmaker hopes to have their film

on the big screen. However, Tahira Kashyap said that 'Sharmajee Ki Beti' is beyond algorithms: "There is a lot of innocence in it. If it was a theatrical, I would have cast an A-lister hero and a young pretty girl, and added a love story, while these stories would have been left as sub-plots. But I wanted to stick to my vision."

"Also, I feel every medium has its own strength. With OTT, the audiences have been offered a variety of content, which has had a juggernaut effect on how theatrical releases are made. Today, we have a Munjiya doing so well or even a Crew. Even then, I feel we can have about a specific number of films in theatres but one has to keep going. Yes, there's always a desire to be in cinemas as I want to explore every possible medium," Tahira concluded.

'Sharmajee Ki Beti' stars Sakshi Tanwar, Saiyami Kher, Divya Dutta, and Arista Mehta among others.

Sunny Deol, Ayushmann Khurrana's 'Border 2' shoot to begin in October

Sunny Deol and Ayushmann Khurrana's 'Border 2' shoot will begin in October 2024. The film's production comes after the success of 'Gadar 2'.

After the success of 'Gadar 2', Sunny Deol will start shooting for the sequel of his 1997 blockbuster, 'Border' in October 2024. The film also stars Ayushmann Khurrana. Directed by Anurag Singh, the film is produced by JP Dutta, Nidhi Dutta and Bhushan Kumar. A source close to the 'Border 2' team shared, "The team behind 'Border 2' has been working tirelessly to prepare everything and it's been



a long time in the making as they wanted to do justice to the magnitude of the first film. Now, as the preparations are almost done, the team will begin shooting. As it stands now, the team will begin shooting in October."

For the unaware, 'Border 2' starring Sunny Deol was shelved in 2015. On The Ranveer Show podcast, the actor said, "Sunne toh mujhe bhi aaya hai (I've also heard that they're making Border 2) (laughs). Ye hum bahut pehle karne wale the, 2015 mein. Par phir meri picture nahi chali, toh log ghabra ke nahi banana chah rahe. Ab sab bol rahe hain humein karni hai. (We were meant to start it a lot earlier, in 2015. But then my films flopped, so people were scared to make it then. Now, everyone wants to make it.)"

Sunny Deol added, "Wo characters bade hi pyaare the. Aaj main koi film dekhta hu toh mujhe lagta hai mujhe unn characters ka extension mile. Wo karne ka dil toh bahut karta hai. Lekin kahaani bhi waisi hi honi chahiye, jisse wo character ko ek justification de. Jissey log jo ummeed le ke ja rahe hain ki humey mazza mile, wo mazza unhne mile jaise unko meri film 'Gadar 2' mein mil raha hai. (Those characters were really lovely. When I watch a film today, I want to see an extension of those characters. I feel like doing it, but the story should lend a justification to that character. So that those who come to watch the film and hope it'll be fun, they're not disappointed, like they're getting that fun in my film Gadar 2.)"

Reportedly, 'Border 2' will hit the screens on the Republic Day weekend in 2026.

Dhak Dhak: Fatima Sana Shaikh Takes A Road Trip Of Self-Discovery



Having always impressed the audience with her impeccable performances in her films, Fatima Sana Shaikh is on her way to delivering yet another one. The trailer of her upcoming film 'Dhak Dhak' has been released and nothing to doubt Fatima is leading her way ahead with an immensely intriguing story and an interesting character.

Bringing a never seen

before avatar, the actress is seen riding on the bike on the road of self-discovery with a bunch of other talented actors. 'Dhak Dhak' trailer showcases Fatima as a travel blogger, Sky. Carrying a bold, fierce, and modern personality, the actress seems to have stepped into this new character effortlessly piquing the excitement to watch her in the film. The trailer of 'Dhak Dhak' has

indeed come as an absolute treat for Fatima's fans. It would be exciting to see the actress in this new coming-of-age drama along with a bunch of talented actresses like Ratna Pathak Shah, Dia Mirza, and Sanjana Sanghi featuring with her. It is to be noted that that 'Dhak Dhak' is the maiden production of actress Taapsee Pannu. The film will bring a never-seen-before story of four

women, all different from each other, and daring to ride bikes to world's highest motorable road, the Khardungla Pass. The film stars Fatima Sana Shaikh, Ratna Pathak, Dia Mirza and Sanjana Sanghi in lead roles. Apart from 'Dhak Dhak', Fatima has interesting films in her future line. She will be next seen in Sam Bahadur and 'Metro.. In Dino'.

Ritesh Sidhwani, Farhan Akhtar Organise Grand Success Party For Bambai Meri Jaan



Excel Entertainment is one of the leading production houses in Indian cinema and has always hit a chord with its content on every platform. While they have proved their mettle in the theatrical medium, their hands on the digital platform also have no match. Recently, the production house boomed the digital entertainment sector with their widely acclaimed show 'Bambai Meri Jaan'. The much-acclaimed show, released on Amazon Prime Video, served audiences with top-notch content, taking them into a completely new world led by exceptional talents Avinash Tiwary and Kay Kay Menon. The show met with widespread acclaim from every corner, with fans and audiences praising the content and the performances of the cast. Following the massive success of the show, Excel Entertainment reported organizing a grand success party to celebrate the success of the show. The success party was attended by the producers of the show, Farhan Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani, cast Avinash Tiwary, Kritika Kamra, Vivan Bhatena, director Shujaat Saudagar, and Rensil D'Silva, amongst others. Excel Entertainment, which was co-founded by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar, has time and again served the audience with several blockbuster films such as 'Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara', 'Dil Chahta Hai', and many more.

Increasing Population and Decreasing Resources



Wildly increasing population is one of the biggest problems in the world today. In many countries of the world, the resources available there are now decreasing in proportion to the increasing population. Obviously, if the population of any country continues to grow at a rapid pace, the pressure on the natural resources available there will also increase in the same proportion. If we look at it in the context of India, on July 7, 2024, India's population was 1 billion 44 crore 19 lakh 10,332. It covers approximately 18.02 percent of the world's total population (8.119 billion). But who is forced to live on only two and a half percent of the world's land. According to the United Nations' global report on food crisis released at the end of April this year, today about 282 million people in 59 countries around the world are forced to

remain hungry. According to the report, due to deteriorating food security in the war-torn Gaza Strip and Sudan, more than 24 million people had to go hungry due to lack of food by 2022. If seen, the report of the United Nations clearly indicates that as the world's population increased, so did the number of people. The number also continued to increase. The first report of the United Nations on food shortage came in 2016, compared to which in the latest report the number of hungry people around the world has increased by four times. It is worth noting that the increasing population is not a simple task of providing basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, drinking water, medical care, medicines etc. to all the citizens in proportion to the population. To supply increasing population to any government is due to various sources of energy, oil and natural coal, oil natural gases etc. are also highly dependent on The pressure has increased, to reduce which it is necessary

to find and use alternative sources of energy. Economist Thomas Robert Malthus, after mathematically considering the relationship between food and human population in 1798, showed that increasing food supply leads to rapid population increases and depletes the available resources. Resulting in continued human suffering. Unless the population is controlled. In 1888, the then Viceroy Lord Dufferin had expressed the apprehension that agriculture in India would

percent. However, since the 1970s, there has been a continuous decline in the country's population growth rate. This is probably the result of improvements made

population and decrease in resources, countries are in debt. The burden also starts increasing. According to a report by Business Standard, by September 2023, the total debt burden on

has been no census in India since. However, unemployment, hunger, malnutrition, disease, poverty, helplessness etc. arising due to uncontrolled population growth have

social order. More or less, our country is passing through similar circumstances today. By the way, if we talk about India's experiences regarding population, it is surprising for any Prime Minister of the country except Gandhi that during the tenure of Prime Minister Indira, no drastic steps were taken by the government, which could curb the uncontrolled population growth. Can be installed. Perhaps the governments may have been avoiding angering the public, because before independence, there was a perception in the Indian society that high population was the measure of development. Actually, in those days the decrease in population was considered to be the result of negative circumstances, which was a bad situation, but with time our thinking changed and we started considering whether India is capable of handling such a large population. The tragedy of severe drought and famine occurring from time to time also

**Retired Principal
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Vijay Garg



in the level of education and health in the last few decades, because till now the rate of population growth has been found highest in those areas where people are not educated and healthy. Although this decline has been relatively slow, if we look at the Economic Survey data, the annual population growth rate in India which was 2.5 percent between 1971-81, came down to 1.3 percent by the middle of 2011-16. The other side of this is that due to increase

India had reached Rs 205 lakh crore. At the same time, according to a report released in 2021 by the World Economic Forum, India's rank in education quality is 90th. According to a UN report on population released on November 15, 2022, India will overtake China by 2027, whereas in April 2023 itself, defying the UN's assessment, India became the most populous country in the world by overtaking China. United in February 2024 The nation itself had released another report. Although in 2011 There

such problems which can destroy the moral, ideological, cultural, traditional and moral fabric of any society. Are. Due to this, the social development, cultural upliftment, mental and spiritual upliftment of the individuals may get hampered if this happens. So violence all around in the society There will be a huge increase in crimes like rape, corruption, looting, baiting, theft, snatching, murder, suicide, extremism and terrorism. People will only pursue their own interests without caring about law and

Breaking Barriers: Women Shaping a New Society for the Dignity of Life



With the aim of breaking gender barriers and moving towards a more peaceful society, Bharat Soka Gakkai, an organization promoting peace, culture, education and sustainability, organized a women's symposium at Delhi on June 26. The symposium titled, "Breaking Barriers: Women Shaping a New Society for the Dignity of Life"

held at the BSG headquarters, threw light on how women are contributing towards changing the narratives in society, thereby creating and influencing a new, and progressive society. It also explored how women with resilience, courage and conviction are breaking down barriers and shaping a more just and equitable world. The speakers included Prof. Bijayalaxmi Nanda (Principal – Miranda House College, University of Delhi); Dr. Rita Jairath (Director – Ritambe

Nutrition Pvt Ltd (Proksham), Chief Safeguarding & Child Safety Officer, AIFF IFBB PRO Athlete & International Judge); Ms. Archana Dutta (Social Entrepreneur, Co-Founder & CEO – Pedal On, Founder; CEO – Second Act); and Ms. Namrta Bangia (Senior Director, Global Mass Transit, AV America and Southeast Asia Infrastructure). Ms. Rashi Ahuja, Director, BSG welcomed the speakers and attendees at the symposium. She said

Saikat Kumar Basu

"Our gathering today celebrates the profound impact of women in transforming societal norms and structures to uphold human dignity. We, as women, have shattered countless glass ceilings, defied limitations, and carved our own paths. The esteemed guests and speakers today are a testament of this ongoing journey."

In her keynote address, Prof. Bijayalaxmi Nanda shared that "Breaking barriers and supporting women to develop

to their fullest potential requires us to focus on creating an enabling community network dedicated to the values of equity, empowerment and empathy."

Dr. Rita Jairath said, "Each life lived with conscious awareness to bring about a paradigm shift in areas such humanity may evolve and that the quality of life for the more vulnerable people can be enhanced, adds to the collective consciousness of the universe. What we do to achieve that vision is secondary and just an instrument."

Ms. Archana Dutta spoke about the need for women to lead and inspire others. She said, "I am proud to be a woman breaking barriers and shaping a society built on dignity and respect. I encourage all women to embrace their strength and courage, to rise and lead, and to inspire others. Together, we can create a future where every woman thrives."

Ms. Namrta Bangia said "What's in the psyche of successful women that allows them to break through their self-doubt? I

believe it is their focus on building courage. High-achieving women take firm steps to move forward, even while struggling with fears, self-esteem and self-confidence."

Chairperson of Bharat Soka Gakkai, Mr. Vishesh Gupta, delivered the closing remarks. He spoke

about the need to

continue incorporating the unique voices of women. By doing so, we can build societies with resilience, strength and flexibility to overcome any challenge." Pedal On also presented a display showcasing the work of empowered women.

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The Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at the inauguration of the 7th Edition of the International Hospitality Expo. 2024 at Greater Noida, in Uttar Pradesh

114 Roads Closed In Himachal, Heavy Rain Predicted Till August 7

Shimla(KCN): Flash floods and landslides due to cloudbursts and heavy rains have led to the closure of 114 roads in Himachal Pradesh, while the weather department on Saturday warned that heavy showers would continue in the state till August 7.

Of the roads closed for vehicular traffic, 36 are in Mandi, 34 in Kullu, 27 in Shimla, eight in Lahaul and Spiti, seven in Kangra, and two in Kinnaur district, according to the state emergency operation centre.

The Himachal Roads Transport Corporation has suspended its bus services on 82 routes, an official



said.

Moderate to heavy showers continued to lash parts of the state, with Jogindernagar receiving the highest rainfall of 85 mm since Friday evening, followed by Gohar 80 mm, Shilaroo 76.4 mm, Poanta Sahib 67.2 mm, Palampur 57.2 mm, Dharamshala 56.2

mm and Chopal 52 mm. The local weather office has issued a "yellow" alert for heavy rains till August 7.

Rain-related incidents

have claimed 77 lives between June 27 and August 1 and caused losses amounting to ₹ 655 crore, officials said.

Flash floods triggered by a series of cloudbursts in Kullu's Nirmand, Sainj and Malana; Mandi's Padhar and Shimla's Rampur subdivision on the night of July 31 killed at least eight people.

The hunt for 45 people, who went missing after the cloudbursts, resumed on Saturday morning with 410 rescuers from teams of the Army, NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, CISF, Himachal Pradesh Police and home guards involved in the hunt with the help of drones.

Bharatanatyam Veteran Yamini Krishnamurthy Dies At 84

New Delhi(KCN): Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi veteran Yamini Krishnamurthy died at the Apollo hospital here on Saturday. She was 84. "She was suffering from age-related issues and was in the ICU for the last seven months," Yamini Krishnamurthy's manager and secretary Ganesh told PTI.

Yamini Krishnamurthy's body will be brought to her institute -- Yamini School of Dance at Hauz Khas -- at 9 am on Sunday. The details of her last rites are yet to be finalised.



Mohapatra. Besides learning the various dance forms, Yamini Krishnamurthy was trained in Carnatic vocals and the veena. Yamini Krishnamurthy received Padma Shri at

the young age of 28 in 1968, Padma Bhushan in 2001 and Padma Vibhushan in 2016. She was also conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1977.

Speaking about her

contribution to Bharatanatyam, veteran dancer and one of her first students, Rama Vaidyanathan, said she brought "power, beauty and glamour" to the dance form.

"Bharatanatyam is not going to be the same without her.... She was so focused and dedicated to classical dance. I am so fortunate to have been her first student almost 40 years ago. She added the star quality to the dance form," Vaidyanathan told PTI.

Speaking about her

Next round of India-Asean trade agreement review talks in Nov



New Delhi(KCN): The next round of talks for the ongoing review meeting of the India-Asean free trade agreement in goods will be held in November, an official statement said Saturday.

The third round of the negotiations was concluded August 1 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Eight sub-committees have been constituted under the India-Asean Free Trade Agreement Joint Committee for undertaking negotiations on different areas related to the review of the pact. "The next meeting of the AITIGA (Asean-India Trade in Goods Agreement) Joint Committee will be held in India from 19-22 November 2024," the ministry said.

Commerce Ministry said. In September 2022, both sides tasked the AITIGA Joint Committee to undertake the review to make the agreement more trade-facilitative and mutually beneficial.

During the third round of negotiations in Jakarta, Indonesia, all eight Sub-Sub-Committees dealing with national treatment and market access, rules of origin, standards, technical regulations, customs procedures and trade facilitation held substantive discussions.

"The review of AITIGA, signed in 2009, will help create further opportunities for businesses on both sides to enhance the level of India-ASEAN trade," the ministry said.

ASEAN is an important trade partner of India with about 11 per cent share in India's global trade. India's exports to the 10-nation bloc ASEAN were \$41.2 billion in 2023-24, while imports aggregated at \$80 billion in the last fiscal. Both sides are aiming to conclude the review in 2025.

The review of the AITIGA was a long-standing demand of Indian businesses.

India is asking for a review of the agreement to eliminate barriers and misuse of the trade pact. Asean members include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Gangster Amarjeet Bishnoi, Part Of Rohit Godara Gang, Arrested In Italy



Jaipur (KCN): Amarjeet Bishnoi, a key member of the gang of Canada-based Rohit Godara, has been caught in Italy after he was detected there by the Special Task Force of Rajasthan Police. The man was hiding in Trapani -- a small fishing village in Sicily, known to be the home of the mafia in the 1950s and 60s.

There are eight cases against Amarjeet Bishnoi, including ones involving murder and dacoity. He was carrying a bounty of ₹ 50,000 on his head.

He is wanted for the murders of Raju Theth and bookie Sachin Goda in Haryana -- which the police said were triggered by gang wars playing out across Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, by orders from their leaders living in foreign shores.

The police said Amarjeet Bishnoi was the logistics operator for the Godara gang. The other key member is Virendra Charan.

The police was after Godara gang members when during interrogation

it came out that Amarjeet Bishnoi was in Italy. The Rajasthan Police immediately got in touch with the Interpol through the Central Bureau of Investigation.

A Red Corner notice was issued and the Italian authorities arrested him on July 8. The Rajasthan Police is now working on getting him back. The process is expected to be long and would require the intervention of the foreign ministry.

Amarjeet Singh, a 30-year-old from Rajasthan's Bikaner, had entered the world of crime at the age of 22. He was out on bail when he skipped the country via Cypress and Dubai.

His girlfriend Sudha Kanwar also was out on bail and she too has escaped the country.

The police said the Rohit Godara gang is hand-in-glove with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. The police

believe the muscle power and logistics for the Lawrence Bishnoi gang is provided by Godara.

Rohit Godara and Goldy Brar -- wanted for the murder of singer-politician Siddhu Moose Wala -- are co-conspirators in multiple cases. Amarjeet Bishnoi is wanted for the murder of gangster Raju Theth in 2022 -- for which his brother Sarabjeet is already in jail. He is suspected to have provided the logistics, including the gun used in the murder.

The police don't rule out the possibility that they were also involved in the murder of social activist Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi, who was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Jaipur on 5 December 2023. The Lawrence Bishnoi gang had claimed responsibility for the murder.

SMP, Kolkata Welcomes Inaugural Vessel of CCS Route by Pacific International Lines

Kolkata (KCN): Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP, Kolkata) proudly announces the inauguration of the China Calcutta Service (CCS) at Kolkata Dock System (KDS) in alliance with Pacific International Lines (PIL), a stalwart in feeder and container service, for over three decades. This pioneering direct weekly service from China to Kolkata addresses the increasing demand for reduced transit times from the Far East Ports to Kolkata.

The CCS will feature three dedicated vessels -- Kota Ria, Kota Rukun, and Kota Rakyat -- each with an average parcel load of 622 TEUs, specially tailored to navigate lower draft conditions. This service



promises a transit period of just 10 to 12 days, significantly enhancing logistical efficiency and meeting the needs of customers in India and Nepal. The port rotation for the route includes: XIAMEN -- SHEKOU -- SINGAPORE -- KOLKATA -- SINGAPORE -- XIAMEN, providing robust connectivity and fostering trade growth in the region. The inaugural vessel of this service route, M/V Kota Rakyat, was welcomed by Deputy Chairman, SMP, Kolkata, Shri Samrat Rahi at Kolkata Dock System today. The Traffic Manager, Shri R. S. Rajhans and other Sr. Officers of KDS were also present. The maiden voyage will be followed by Kota Rukun on July 25, 2024. This weekly

service is set to bolster the shipping efficiency for the burgeoning EXIM trade across West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, the Northeast states of India, as well as Nepal and Bhutan.

Congratulating the team KDS behind the achievement, the Chairperson, SMP, Kolkata, Shri Rathendra Raman said, "In line with this development, we have planned for a concession Scheme to stimulate vessel calls and container operations, effective for FY 24-25."

Shri Raman added, "With the introduction of the CCS, it is anticipated that the volume of container traffic handled at KDS will witness a substantial increase, driving a higher growth rate."

Mangrove plantation in Ganjam to tackle coastal erosion, storms

Berhampur (KCN): With coastal erosion and natural calamities such as cyclones taking alarming proportions due to climate change, the Ganjam district administration has planned to take up mangrove plantations along the coast to combat this situation. The southern district has faced several natural calamities in the past. The Super Cyclone of 1999 was the worst of them which brought severe devastation to the coastal districts of the state, especially Ganjam. While the wind speed was over 200 km per hour, the district received heavy rainfall of 194.72 mm for two days, October 16 and 17, before the cyclone made landfall October 29. The district further received

heavy rainfall of 145.84 mm October 29 and 30 which destroyed the crops, houses and properties of the residents. As many as 176 people died and 402 persons were injured in this calamity. The district had pegged the loss at Rs 1,066.59 crore and presented it before the state government which provided compensation for the loss. Later, the cyclonic storm Phailin in 2013 also proved disastrous for Ganjam district as over, 90,000 houses and 50 per cent of the farmlands were destroyed. The state government took a series of steps to compensate the district. However, the worst affected were the people living near the coastline. The scar left behind by Phailin is yet to



be erased from the minds of the residents. The cyclonic storms Titli, Hudhud and Fani, which occurred later, did not have any serious impact on the district.

The district administration promptly evacuated the residents living near the sea and shifted them to safety as per the order of the state government. However,

climate change has brought in a new threat for the district in the form of coastal erosion. Erosion of the coast at Podampeta in Ganjam block and at Sunapur in Chikiti block has posed a serious challenge for the district administration. The coastal erosion has wreaked havoc at the seaside

Podampeta under Odisha Disaster

village where rising tidal waves have washed away several houses of the fishing community. The district administration has rehabilitated the residents of Podampeta

Recovery Project (ODRP) but is yet to find any solution to protect the coast from erosion. As the threat of coastal erosion looms large on the district, the Berhampur Forest Department has come up with the idea of planting mangroves to combat coastal erosion under the Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) project.

Observers claimed that if the project becomes successful, then it will prove to be a boon for the district. Meanwhile, the Forest Department has planted 15,000 mangrove saplings on six hectares of land at the

Purunabandha and Gokharkuda area under Khallikote forest range. The district will take up further plantation if this project becomes successful. Here, the canal embankment is being made in fishbone style, work on which has started from this month. The single bonny saplings are growing well among the six varieties of mangrove saplings which can grow well in clay and sand mixed soil. The single-bonny saplings can resist up to 40 PP, said Ranjan Kumar Bhoi, the district coordinator of ECRICC. He said the saline water ingress to the area is more while fresh water is

available during the rainy season. As a result, mangrove forests can grow well in this area, he said. The saplings will be brought from Balasore and Kendrapara. A 10-member team has undergone training on mangrove plantations in Kendrapara. A technical team from Rajnagar in Kendrapara also visited the area and took stock of the coastline and the mangrove plantation. The climate of the district is conducive for mangroves and further plantation will be taken up at Sunapur and Bahuda seashore if the project at Podampeta and Gokharkuda proves successful, they said.

Bisra's lifeline wallows in neglect



Rourkela (KCN): The Barsuan Bisra stream that was once a scenic spot and lifeline for over five-gram panchayats (GPs) under Bisra block may get consigned to history, thanks to administrative negligence and pollution. Originating from Saranda jungle, this stream, barely a 30-metre wide during monsoon now, has remained a lifeline for five GPs – Dareikela, Maneka, Udushu, Bisra and Santoshpur. After passing through these GPs, it flows into River Koel. Apart from irrigating the hundreds of hectares of agricultural lands of these panchayats, this narrow stream meets the needs of drinking water and

other daily chores, according to sources. However, continuous neglect and ill-treatment have narrowed it down. Domestic and other wastes are being dumped in it while many drains carrying household sewage also merge into it. "It has become the dustbin for the five GPs at this moment," said a resident of the area. Besides, accumulation of silt on the banks of the stream has encouraged growth of shrubs, leading to further shrinking of the nullah. "The water is gradually becoming unfit for use," rued a villager of Santoshpur GP. Meanwhile, many residents have recalled their memories

associated with the natural stream. "I have many fond memories associated with the stream because I grew up on its scenic bank. The stream has served many families of our locality including ours all throughout the years, including the era of my ancestors," said Peter Xess. Similar sentiments were echoed by a few people who have grown up near its bank. A doctor working at Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) who began his career at Bisra PHC, said, "The entire stretch was a real scenic picnic spot just 10 years back and we had visited the place on several occasions. But today,

when I hear about it, I really feel sorry for its neglected state. The decay has set in during the last 10 years," Bisra Sarpanch Suraj Nayak said, "No fund is available at the GP level for cleaning the water and restoring the stream. However, I have drawn the attention of the district administration for construction of a treatment plant and revival of the stream." When this was brought to the notice of the regional officer of State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) Anup Mallick, said, "This stream does not come under my purview but I will look into it.

Boudh cop arrested while smuggling ganja in Chh'garh



Boudh (KCN): A police officer from this district along with a driver was arrested by Chhattisgarh police while smuggling cannabis, sources said Wednesday. The accused were identified

as Gagan Meher, a traffic ASI currently posted at Purunakata under Harabhanga block in this district, and the car driver Rabindra Bhukta, a resident of Salakata village under Harabhanga

block. According to sources, Meher was caught by Chhattisgarh police with 70 kg of cannabis in the car. The car and the contraband were seized and both Meher and the

driver were arrested. A case was filed and the duo was presented in court Wednesday. Meher, who was recently promoted and transferred to Angul district, was still involved in the cannabis trade which he was doing while serving as a traffic ASI in Boudh. This is the second case against him related to cannabis smuggling in Boudh. Intellectuals in the district said if law enforcers themselves are involved in the trade, the problem of cannabis smuggling will only worsen instead of being eradicated.

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CK Birla Hospitals announces the launch of Osteopathy Clinic at CMRI, Kolkata

Kolkata(KCN) : CK Birla Hospitals announced the launch of its state-of-the-art Osteopathy Clinic, which will provide non-invasive treatments to patients to enhance their overall health and well-being. The clinic, located at CMRI, will offer patients with comprehensive osteopathic care, stimulating the body's innate ability to heal itself.

Osteopathy is a drug-free, holistic, non-invasive manual therapy that aims to improve overall health by strengthening and engineering the musculoskeletal framework. Osteopathic treatments aim to

positively affect the body's nervous, circulatory, and lymphatic systems by emphasizing the body's structure and functional relationship. It treats numerous chronic and acute conditions and can also prevent chronic disorders by boosting the body's natural healing processes. Techniques include applying gentle pressure, stretching, and resistance.

Juan Guillen, an internationally acclaimed osteopath and a consultant at CMRI, said, "The launch of the Osteopathy clinic is a testament to the legacy of CK Birla Hospitals in pioneering integrative health



care. Osteopathic treatment can help support and enhance nervous system function, balance the musculoskeletal system, promote optimal circulation, and improve

coordination among the different bodily systems. Osteopathy can effectively complement conventional treatments and amplify

outcomes." Aligning with the growing trend of individuals seeking an integrative and holistic approach to

diagnosis and treatment, CMRI provides an environment that promotes seamless collaboration between its

various specialties. This allows patients to benefit from a comprehensive approach to their treatment. The aim is to not only to address biomechanical, postural, and musculoskeletal issues but also to help identify other factors that can be addressed to reduce chronic pain and increase function. Osteopathy treatments are supported by a growing body of research demonstrating their effectiveness in addressing various musculoskeletal conditions and promoting overall well-being. The facility is also available in Rukmani Birla Hospital, Jaipur.

Echoing his views, Sombrata Roy, Unit Head, CMRI, said, "Our new Osteopathy clinic will further strengthen our capability to offer integrated and exceptional healthcare to patients. We are recognized for dynamic integration across various specialties, ensuring a well-rounded approach towards treatment."

The Osteopathy Clinic at CMRI is poised to deliver a highly effective treatment option, offering personalized treatment plans that utilize a range of techniques to address the underlying causes of pain and discomfort.

Celebrating Multilingual Excellence: NIF Translation Fellowship Winners 2024-25 Announced

Wednesday: The New India Foundation (NIF) is pleased to announce the winners of Round 2 of the NIF Translation Fellowships in the 2024-25 cycle. Aimed at encouraging translations from important non-fiction works across 10 Indian languages (Assamese, Bangla, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Odia, Tamil, Urdu) to English, the NIF Translation Fellowships showcase the country's rich history of knowledge texts across diverse literary traditions.

Awarded for a period of 6 months with a stipend of 6 lakhs to each recipient, the Translation Fellowships bring historical Indian-language texts published after 1850 towards English publication. Editorial and financial support are also offered alongside the opportunity to work with the NIF's Trustees, and the Language Expert Committee consisting of distinguished bilingual scholars and writers. The NIF aims to expand upon its mission of supporting knowledge

about the history of contemporary India through the books resulting from the Translations, which supplement the 33 titles published over the past two decades in the NIF Book Fellowship programme. NIF Book and NIF Translation Fellowships alternate each year, with applications invited annually between August to December.

Speaking on Round 2 of the NIF Translation Fellowships, Srinath Raghavan, Chair of the NIF Fellowships, said:

Recently the company had announced that it received a Letter of Acceptance from the Firozpur Division of the Northern Railway Zone for the provision of coach guidance display boards at major and important stations in the Firozpur (FZR) Division. The aggregate value of the said work order is Rs. 3,04,95,149.54/-.

Recently the company had announced that it received a Letter of Acceptance from the Firozpur Division of the Northern Railway Zone for the provision of coach guidance display boards at major and important stations in the Firozpur (FZR) Division. The aggregate value of the said work order is Rs. 3,04,95,149.54/-.

Further, the company has received a Letter of Completion/ Installation Certificate from Rajkot Division of Western Railway Zone for the completion of DWK PF-1 CGDB and IPIS System work at Hapa station

Dalmia Bharat Celebrates Empowerment of 18000 women on International Day of Rural Women

Bhubaneswar,(KCN): Dalmia Bharat Group, India's leading conglomerate with businesses in cement and sugar, announces the successful empowerment of 18000 women on International Day of Rural Women. Through the establishment of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), these women are provided essential skill training and access to vital resources for sustainable livelihood development. In collaboration with various organisations like NRLM, NABARD, etc. Dalmia Bharat organizes various training initiatives like micro-enterprise development, handicraft production and others in both farming and non-farming sectors. All these activities are conducted in communities settled around their regions of operation across 12 states in India. These initiatives aim to upskill rural women to empower them, diversify their income sources and provide access to formal credit systems. Two notable initiatives in Odisha include Project Hastakala – upskilling women artisans and enterprise development via mushroom cultivation in communities surrounding its facilities in

Cuttack, Rajgpur, and Lanjiberna Mines. Dalmia Bharat has enabled over 10,000 women in Odisha to become financially independent earning a monthly income ranging from Rs.4000 to Rs8000, significantly improving their individual well-being and the ability to support their families. Commenting on the company's initiatives on International Day of Rural Women Mr. Ashok K. Gupta, CEO, Dalmia Bharat Foundation said, "Rural women in developing countries play a vital role in food security and economic development but face severe marginalization, including limited land ownership, higher illiteracy rates and unequal earnings compared to men. Dalmia Bharat is dedicated to uplifting marginalized rural women through holistic programs that bolster their income while managing household responsibilities. Our commitment aligns with UN Sustainable Goals, promoting self-reliance and gender equality for an inclusive and sustainable India, where empowered women drive community and national development."

Project Hastakala is an 'earning with joy' skill

development programme where women are trained in the unique tie & dye batik products. This project is conducted in tribal areas of Jhagarpur & Katang panchayat in Odisha. After witnessing immense success at national exhibitions, Dalmia Bharat introduced the SADRIe brand for promoting the handmade batik products like bedsheets, handkerchiefs, scarves etc. through multiple marketing platforms. Another successful initiative includes enterprise development through mushroom cultivation. Dalmia Bharat actively facilitates training programs and market linkage support for SHG women, equipping them to earn an additional monthly income of Rs. 5000 by establishing their own cultivation units.

International Day of Rural Women, observed annually on 15th October, celebrates the vital role of rural women in agriculture, food security, and rural development. It highlights the need to empower them, address inequalities, and aligns with global goals for gender equality and sustainable development.

Bhubaneswar: To serve the needs of premium households who want the next generational connectivity and entertainment experience, Bharti Airtel ("Airtel"), India's premier communications solutions provider, has once again raised the bar in the home broadband segment with the launch of three new all-in-one plans built for the evolving entertainment needs of today's connected homes.

Vir Inder Nath, CEO – Homes, Bharti Airtel had

this to say: "Our new plans are built for India's emerging entertainment needs. Through these bundle

offers we plan to offer our discerning customers great

value, convenience and unlock a multi-faceted digital

experience."

Increased broadband consumption in Indian homes has given rise to the phenomena of hybrid viewing, where families are looking to consume OTT content on the TV screen along with linear TV without the hassle of managing multiple subscriptions and devices. Airtel's plans are the first of their kind in terms of catering to the evolving entertainment needs of the whole family and come with: Subscription to 17 premium OTTs to go with unlimited data. This includes Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+ Hotstar and Airtel Xstream Premium ((SonyLiv, Lionsgate, Hoichoi and 11 more OTTs). 350+ TV channels covering the best of linear TV. Airtel 4K Xstream TV Box* that allows you to enjoy OTT and linear TV content with a single device and single remote.

Singapore: Airlines (SIA) today unveiled its all-new flagship SilverKris and KrisFlyer Gold lounges at Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 3, following a \$50 million re-design, upgrade, and expansion project. This will further enhance the on-ground customer experience at the airline's main hub, and comes as the demand for international air travel from and through Singapore takes off once again.

The Private Room, the First Class section of the SilverKris Lounge, the Business Class section of the SilverKris Lounge, and the KrisFlyer Gold Lounge can collectively accommodate around 1,150 customers within

their 6,100 square-metres, translating to 30% more seats and space. This also doubles the capacity that was available during the pandemic while the upgrading works were going on. The airline has created a sanctuary that has been thoughtfully designed to enhance the comfort and convenience of diverse groups of travellers, and meet their evolving needs in the coming years. Customers will be able to enjoy world-class products and services, as well as enticing food and beverage options, around the clock at the lounges before their flight.

Mr Goh Choon Phong, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Airlines, said: "Extensive customer engagement and research have gone into the design of the new SilverKris and KrisFlyer Gold lounges. Customers will enjoy the thoughtful and curated product offerings and experience the signature Singapore Airlines hospitality, all within a comfortable and restful environment, ensuring that they are refreshed and ready for their journey."

"Opening these lounges at this time signals our commitment to SIA's premium brand and growth strategy. It reinforces our position as Changi Airport's anchor airline, and reflects our confidence in Singapore's future as a pre-eminent global air hub."

WHEC recognizes Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham as excellence worldwide in Gender Equality

Barcelona: Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham was invited to the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC), which recently took place in Barcelona, Spain. UNESCO recognized Amrita as one of five universities of excellence worldwide for its performance in gender equality.

The WHEC aims to reshape ideas and practices in higher

education to ensure sustainable development for the planet and humanity, as well as to define and prepare a roadmap for a new era of higher education. As the world comes out of COVID-19, the WHEC's goals and strategic scope remain, and the new timeframe represents an opportunity to deepen and expand common efforts of knowledge production, policy dialogue, exchange, and networking.

Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri, President of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, participated in a round table

called "Universities' Contribution to Gender Equality: A global perspective". Adding to his views, Swami Amritaswarupananda expressed how Amrita is making a difference in terms of gender equality and which policies have been put into place at the university level. Gender equality is number five in the United Nations' list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He explained how the culture of gender equality is not implemented only in terms of policies within Amrita, but also practiced in spirit.

The round table included Dr. Gloria Bonder, UNESCO Chair on Women, Science and Technology; Dr. Ricardo Vilanueva Lomeli, Rector General, University of Guadalajara; Ms. Elizabeth Shepherd, Leader of the Consultancy team, Times Higher Education; and Dr. Victoria Galan-Muros, Chief of Research and Analysis,



ICC sets USD 65M budget for CT, includes costs for partial relocation

NEW DELHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has not made an official statement yet, but it is preparing for all possibilities in case the Indian team declines to travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy next year. Cricbuzz has reliably learned that the ICC recently approved a budget of approximately \$65 million at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Colombo. This budget includes the costs associated with staging a few games outside of Pakistan.

The Champions Trophy, as first reported by Cricbuzz on July 10, is scheduled to be between February 19 and March 9. Cricbuzz understands

that the million dollar issue of India's participation or otherwise was not discussed at different forums of the ICC AGM but a contingency has been made, just in case. The Chief Executives Committee (CEC) approval note states that "PCB has signed Host Agreement and has worked with management to draft an event budget which is submitted F&CA for approval. Management has also approved an estimate of the increase in the cost of staging the event if it is necessary to play some matches outside Pakistan." The ICC, however, did not discuss what will be the venue/venues 'outside' Pakistan.'

The CEC note further says, "A planning meeting and inspection of proposed match venues took place in Pakistan in March 2024. A significant amount of renovation work is underway in all three venues to upgrade facilities." Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi are the earmarked venues and it is learnt that the PCB has undertaken work on refurbishing those three centres. Regarding the budget, it is understood that approximately \$35 million has been allocated for the competition itself, with an additional \$20 million set aside for participation and prize money. Another \$10 million has been approved for the production costs

associated with televising the 15-match, 20-day tournament.

As earlier reported by Cricbuzz, the budget estimate was arrived at after Ankur Khanna, the

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the ICC, spent three days in Lahore in June to work on the issue with Javed Murtaza, the CFO of the PCB. Meanwhile, the ICC is understood to have shared a draft schedule with stakeholders, including broadcasters and all participating teams. The draft schedule largely aligns with expectations. All of India's matches are set to be held in Lahore, with the highly anticipated India-Pakistan match scheduled for Saturday, March 1. In addition to India and Pakistan, Bangladesh and New Zealand are in Group A. Group B consists of Australia, England, Afghanistan, and South Africa. India's other games are scheduled for February 20 against Bangladesh and February 23 against New Zealand. The competition will open with hosts Pakistan facing New Zealand on February 19 in Karachi. The two semifinals are set to be held in Karachi on March 5 and Pindi on March 6, with the final taking place in Lahore on March 9. However, the venues, understandably, are subject to change depending on the Indian team and Government of India's decision. An ICC team will visit Pakistan next month for an inspection of the three venues. A seven-day window, from February 12 to 18, has been designated as a 'support period.' During this time, participating teams will play warm-up matches and engage in media and promotional activities as per the established protocols. March 10 is the reserve day for the final. The Champions Trophy was last played in 2017 and it was won by Pakistan.

Counselled by selectors, Ishan Kishan set for domestic comeback

NEW DELHI: Wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan, who was previously sidelined by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for opting out of the Ranji Trophy last year, is set to return for the upcoming domestic season. He has been included in the list of 25 pre-season probables by the Jharkhand State Cricket Association (JSCA).

Cricbuzz understands Kishan, 26, has agreed to play for the state in the upcoming season and may even be considered for a leadership role. While the specifics are not yet clear, it is confirmed that Kishan has notified the JSCA of his availability for the state team in the coming



season. It is understood that Kishan's decision was influenced by some well-wishers and national selectors who are believed to have advised him on the matter. They emphasized that he might miss out on international opportunities during the prime of his career. In the

period between July 2021 to November 2023, Ishan played in two Tests, 27 ODIs, and 32 T20Is. He has achieved a rare double century in the ODIs and was also a member of India's 50-overs World Cup squad last year.

Kishan defiantly refused to play for the state last

season despite express instructions from the national selectors and the BCCI. He opted to participate solely in the IPL and prepared for it at an academy in Baroda. His last appearance for India was in November 2023, and he has since been excluded from the national team after departing from the Indian side in South Africa last December out of frustration. It was speculated that the frustration stemmed from being overlooked for international matches in which KL Rahul, a part-time wicketkeeper, was preferred by the team management. Subsequently, Kishan was left out of the central contracts by the BCCI.

The domestic season begins with the Duleep Trophy first-class red ball competition on September 5 in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. However, selectors are unlikely to consider the left-hander for this four-team tournament for the same reason he was overlooked for international assignments: his refusal to play for his state.

Kishan may re-enter the national reckoning once he starts representing his state. He was a glaring absentee from the ongoing Sri Lanka tour, where Shreyas Iyer, who was also sidelined from central contracts, was included after playing a few games for Mumbai.

Taskin can play Tests if he manages his workload - BCB physio



Ireland announce central contracts for 2024-25

NEW DELHI: Cricket Ireland has included Ross Adair, Matt Foster, Fionn Hand, PJ Moor and Ben White in the 21 men's player list of central contracts for the year 2024-25, going up from 14 offered last season. Simi Singh, the 37-year old spinner, who played his last international match in October 2022 has been left out of the contract list.

Meanwhile, for the first time, Cricket Ireland has offered 12 full-time contracts to its women cricketers. Christina Coulter Reilly, Abbi Harrison, Kia McCartney and Alice Tector have been handed Casual Contracts while Una Raymond-Hoey has been given a retainer contract.

In the Men's category, Gavin Hoey, Matthew Humphreys, Tom Mayes and Liam McCarthy have been handed Retainer Contracts.

Casual Contracts offer players a retainer throughout the summer holidays, loss of earnings for the remainder of the



year, match fees, 12-month medical and healthcare insurance, sports science support (physiotherapy, strength and conditioning, psychology, performance analysis, nutrition and lifestyle management), specialist coaching support, and for ROI-based players, full access to the Sport Ireland Institute. On the other hand, Retainer Contracts engage players for a specific number of days or specific series, with entitlements similar to casual contracts.

Additionally, six women players - Ava Canning, Georgina Dempsey, Sarah Forbes, Amy Hunter, Joanna Loughran and Aimee Maguire - have been handed Educational Contracts. These are designed to work around players who are at school full-time or studying at a tertiary level. Players on these contracts gain a significant living allowance to ensure they do not need to find a job during their education years, and can instead concentrate on their cricket. All these players will be available full-time in the summer holidays.

Speaking on the latest contract list, Ciara O'Brien, Women's

National Selector, said: "Women's cricket continues to progress, and I am delighted that we have been able to increase the number of full-time contracts offered to a record 12 this year. "We have a young but exceptionally talented cohort of players - although their average age is just over 21, it is a group of players who have built up a great deal of experience in the last few years.

"This year we are also welcoming the return of Una Raymond-Hoey to the Irish set-up on a retainer basis. Una, who has 15 caps for Ireland, has spent the last five years in Australia - playing cricket and rising through the ranks of representing Victoria, and being part of the Melbourne Stars squad in the Women's Big Bash."

Meanwhile, Andrew White, Men's National Selector, added, "As our talent pool grows, so too does the challenge of selecting central contracts. With an increasing volume of cricket to play both home

and away, our need to nurture and develop the talent to compete at the highest level becomes more acute and selecting the right mix of players to receive central contracts is one of the most consequential decisions we can make as an organisation. Our players are our assets, and we are constantly monitoring, reviewing and discussing the progress and performances of our players to ensure we have the best talent available to the head coach and captain.

"We welcome the recent news about Heinrich Malan's contract extension and I look forward to continuing to work with him in shaping the direction and succession planning of the squad over the coming years.

"I congratulate the players receiving contracts in 2024 and look forward to seeing that steady progress and development of the last few years turn into regular success on the field of play."

NEW DELHI: Taskin Ahmed, the Bangladesh pace bowler who has taken a break from Test cricket, can play the five-day version if he manages his workload, insists Bangladesh Cricket Board physio Bayyedul Islam.

After a shoulder injury, Taskin had sent a letter to the BCB asking the board not to consider him for Test selection as he wanted to concentrate on white-ball cricket.

However, having played the T20 World Cup and the Lanka Premier League recently, the 29-year old pacer is eyeing a Test return.

Taskin, who last played a Test match against Afghanistan in June 2022, was involved in the national preparatory camp along with the Test probables ahead of their series against Pakistan that starts from August 21.

"Taskin has played in the T20 format of late. So, he did not bowl for long spells during this period. He had a shoulder issue, which he even got

rechecked during the T20 World Cup," Bayyedul Islam said after the session. "The thing is, the damage he had at that time, is exactly the same now as it has not aggravated. A player can play by managing these [types of injuries]. If he continues his rehabilitation and the workouts, Taskin is definitely available (for Tests).

"But as for bowling workload in Tests where you need to bowl longer spells, a player needs to get up to that speed. So, he will try to do that and if he feels better then he can definitely play in Tests," he added.

The opening day's preparation was disrupted due to rain on Saturday (August 3). Initially, the team management planned to complete a physical assessment test starting with a 1.6km time trial at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from 6:30 AM under the strength and conditioning coach Nathan Kiely and later moved to the Sher-

e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur. But they could not complete their session at the BNS and all the players began their strength preparation at SBNS.

"Due to extreme weather conditions, the National team has cancelled the running test at the BNS due to bad weather and political unrest," the BCB said in a statement.

Following the practice, Bayyedul added that the overall fitness of the players improved while they will do their running test in the coming days depending on weather along with other things.

"Everyone tried to touch the benchmark of the strength test and they have improved," said Bayyedul. "The camp started today while they will work with their skills from tomorrow and the running test is depending on weather and availability of the players. A lot of players will go with the A team and later join the national team programme. We will make a plan accordingly."