

## PRESIDENT OF INDIA PRESENTS COLOURS TO THE COLLEGE OF DEFENCE MANAGEMENT, SECUNDERABAD



**New Delhi (KCN):** The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu presented Colours to the College of Defence Management, Secunderabad today (December 20, 2024). Speaking on the occasion, the President said that India's enhanced defence management capability would help strengthen diplomatic and military partnerships and

increase defence exports. It would also help India in maintaining a proactive stance in global security forums. The President said that the advancements in technology have a deep influence on national security. The traditional definitions and methods of warfare are being challenged by the emerging technologies and new strategic

partnerships. India is giving high priority to the emerging technologies and artificial intelligence, and utilizing them in Indian defence systems, for enhanced efficiency and global competitiveness. We are focusing on a holistic approach that includes upgrading its conventional forces and embracing cutting-edge technologies including artificial intelligence,

drones, cyber warfare capabilities, and space defence technologies. The President said that our Armed Forces personnel need to keep themselves updated with the latest technological developments as well as changing operational dynamics. In this era of grey zone warfare and hybrid warfare, institutions such as the College of Defence Management have an important role to play. She urged all to constantly evolve with time and strive for excellence in the rapidly changing security landscape.

The President said that through multilateral economic and military frameworks and engagements, India's influence in regional and global defence discussions has grown significantly. India's defence capabilities at the global level reflect both its strength and forward-looking vision. By focusing on self-reliance, technological advancement, and strategic collaborations, India is not only securing its borders but also contributing to global peace and stability.



**Parliament's Winter Session ends amid deepening political animosity, records low productivity**

**New Delhi (KCN):** Parliament was adjourned sine die Friday, capping off a tumultuous session that saw a robust debate on the country's constitutional journey and the introduction of two landmark bills on simultaneous elections before plunging to a new low of political animosity over alleged insult of B R Ambedkar. As Parliament met on the last day of Winter Session, the overhang of mutual bitterness involving the ruling National Democratic Alliance and opposition parties following Thursday's spat persisted, forcing Speaker Om Birla in Lok Sabha to adjourn the House within three minutes without even the customary summing up of the Session's highlights.

It was only a little better in Rajya Sabha as opposition parties, which have been protesting against Home Minister Amit Shah's alleged insulting comments for Ambedkar, agreed to let Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar read out his valedictory remarks before adjourning the House sine die. He said all parties must reflect on what is a matter of great concern, adding that as the minister in-charge of parliamentary affairs he will continue to reach out to opposition leaders. During the Session, five bills were introduced in Lok Sabha, which passed four of them. The Rajya Sabha passed three bills. A special session was also held in the 'Samvidhan Sadan' to commemorate the sanctity of

November 26. If Thursday's pushing and shoving involving MPs of rival parties, which left two BJP members hospitalised and led to a police case against Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, was the low point of the Session, a spirited discussion on the "Glorious journey of 75 years of the Constitution of India" for two days in each House reflected the best of parliamentary debate.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sharp denunciation of the Congress, especially the Nehru-Gandhi family, for its "mutilation" of constitutional values was heard by opposition benches in the Lok Sabha without any serious disruption, and so was Home Minister Amit Shah's reply to the debate in Rajya Sabha. However, opposition parties seized on a couple of sentences of Shah's reply to accuse him of insulting B R Ambedkar, the architect of India's Constitution, and launch protests inside and outside Parliament.

**Odisha: Court sentences former panchayat secy to 3 yrs imprisonment for misappropriation of rice, cement**



## Parts of Odisha receive light rain



**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** Parts of Odisha received light rain Friday due to a well-marked low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal, which is likely to intensify into a depression within the next 12 hours, the IMD said in the evening. A Yellow Warning for heavy rainfall was issued for parts of Ganjam, Gajapati, Kendrapada and Jagatsinghpur till Saturday, it said.

The IMD also forecast a dip in the night temperature by 2-4 degrees Celsius at 2pm, officials said.

Meanwhile, Special Relief Commissioner

and light rain since Thursday, which brought down the day temperature by 9 degrees Celsius at 2pm, officials said.

Meanwhile, Special Relief Commissioner

(SRC) Deoranjan Kumar Singh wrote to the district collectors, stating fishermen should be advised not to venture into the sea along the coast at the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha border

Saturday.

He also asked the district collectors of Ganjam, Gajapati, Kendrapada and Jagatsinghpur to keep administrative machinery ready to deal with any eventuality.

government protest in August.

Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus came to power days after Hasina took shelter in India.

He heads Bangladesh's interim government as its Chief Advisor.

Relations between the two nations deteriorated further in recent weeks over attacks on the Hindus and the arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das.

"Several incidents of desecration and damage to Hindu temples and deities in Bangladesh have been reported in the past few months," Singh said.

"The primary responsibility for the protection of life and liberty of all citizens, including minorities, rests with the government of the country concerned," he said.

Ties between India and Bangladesh came under severe strain after deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to leave the country in the face of a massive anti-

## 2,200 cases of violence against Hindus, other minorities in Bangladesh: Govt



**New Delhi (KCN):** A total of 2,200 cases of violence against Hindus and other minorities have been reported in Bangladesh this year till December 8, and India's expectation is Dhaka will take necessary measures to ensure their safety, the government said Friday.

Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh gave the information in a written response to a query in Lok Sabha, citing data from minority and human rights organisations.

In Pakistan, the number of cases of violence against Hindus and other minorities in Pakistan this year stood at "112 till October 2024," the MoS said.

The corresponding figures for 2022 were 47 in Bangladesh and 241 in Pakistan, while in

2023 the figures were 302 in Bangladesh and 103 in Pakistan, according to the data he shared.

The minister said the

Singh was asked about the total number of cases of violence against Hindus and other minorities reported in neighbouring countries during the last three years, country-wise and year-wise; and the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the ministry to protect minorities, including diplomatic interventions and relief measures.

The Union minister in his

response also said the "government has taken serious note of these incidents and shared its concerns with the government of the country concerned," he added.

Ties between India and Bangladesh came under severe strain after deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to leave the country in the face of a massive anti-

**Berhampur (KCN):** A special vigilance court in Berhampur Friday sentenced a former gram panchayat secretary in Odisha's Ganjam district to three years imprisonment for misappropriation of rice and cement.

Rice was supplied to the panchayat under Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana and National Food for Work Programme.

Special Judge of the vigilance court Arun Kumar Sahoo also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on Bijay Pradhan (62) former secretary of Chandanpur gram panchayat, said Surendra Nath Panda special public prosecutor of the court.

The court convicted Pradhan after examining 16 witnesses and verifying the documents, he said. After getting the allegations of misappropriation of the rice and cements, received by the panchayat in different schemes, a vigilance team had conducted a surprise check of the stock October 16, 2007. During their verification, they found the misappropriation of around 198 quintals of rice. They had also detected the misappropriation of 64 bags of cement.

The vigilance team had registered a case against Pradhan December 26, 2007 and started an investigation.

## Himanshu elected as district president of Odisha Journalists' Association, Sukant as working president and Saroj as general secretary



**Sambalpur (KCN) 20/12:** The annual general council meeting and office bearer election of Odisha Journalists' Association (OJA) Sambalpur district branch was held on Friday at Mishra Enterprises Farm House in New Rampela, Rengali. Hundreds of journalists from 9 block branches of the Sambalpur district branch of the association were

present in it. On this occasion, Himanshu Shekhar Mishra has been elected as the president of Odisha Journalists' Association Sambalpur district branch again. Similarly, Sukant Kar has been elected as the working president and Naresh Mahan I, Shishir Sahu, Pradeep Nayak, and Santosh Sahu have been elected as vice presidents, while

Ashok Patel, Ankit Sahu, Sachindendu Nayak and Badshah Jusman Rana I have been elected as joint editors and Biraj Mishra has been elected as treasurer. Sudhanshu Shekhar Maharana, Sanjay Pagoda, Mahabir Singh Deo, Rabindra Nath Pradhan, Naveen Dash, Gunamani Biswal, Satyajit Mohapatra and Hari Shankar

Mishra have been elected as members of the working committee. There was a contest between Saroj Sahu and Satyajit Mohapatra for the post of General Secretary. Out of a total of 54 votes, Saroj Sahu got 46 votes while Satyajit got 8 votes. With this, Saroj Sahu has been re-elected as General Secretary. Senior lawyer Lalit Kumar

Jena from Rengali joined as an election observer and managed the election work. He was advised by the party's Western Odisha regional editor Ramakant Biswal, state vice-president Susanta Mohapatra, senior journalist Sadhav Pradhan, Sudhanshu Shekhar Maharana, Ashok Guru provided major support. In this context, the

## The resignation of Amit Saha Home Minister demanded



organization will continue to make unremitting efforts to present demands to the government for various welfare social programs and development work for the collective development of journalists in the coming days, said the newly elected President Himanshu Shekhar Mishra in his speech. At the beginning of the General Council meeting, a lamp was lit to Maa Samaleswari and a photo of the founder President of the Odisha Journalists Association, Late Parvathi Dash, was paid homage. After this, General Secretary Saroj Sahu read out the annual report of the organization. The general council meeting discussed the future course of action for the benefit of journalists.

**BBSR. (KCN):** Dr. R.C. Khuntia, Ex-MP and Ex-CWC Member demanded the resignation of Sri Amit Saha Home Minister of India for meeting a derogative remark about Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar who has drafting Committee Chairman of Indian constitution and command the respect from 80% population in the Country which includes SC, ST, OBC and Minority further Dr. Khuntia also strongly condemned the attack of BJP MP on Sri Mallikarjun Kharge President of AICC who himself of Dalit Leader. BJP being in the Govt. should restrained themselves for giving such derogative remark and attack on Dalit Leader Sri Mallikarjun Kharge LOP and AICC President and also obstructing leader of Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi to enter into Lok Sabha.

## Jindal Stainless Limited Empowers 20 Students with Stainless Steel Fabrication Skills



**Kalinganagar, (KCN) :-** Jindal Stainless Limited (JSL), Kalinganagar, and the Government Polytechnic Institute, Ragdi, Jajpur, celebrated the successful completion of a stainless-steel fabrication training project, awarding certificates to 20 students. The ceremony, held at the Government Polytechnic Institute, Ragdi, marked a significant milestone in

JSL's ongoing commitment to skill development and community empowerment. Shri Ramakrishna Mohanty, Deputy General Manager, Ferro Alloys Department, JSL Kalinganagar, served as the chief guest, presenting certificates to the graduating students and emphasizing the diverse applications of stainless steel. He encouraged the students

to embrace hard work and positive thinking to adapt to the evolving job market. Dr. Subhang Kishore Das, Chairman of the Government polytechnic Institute, Ragdi, Jajpur, lauded the project's impact on student knowledge and skills. He highlighted the project's crucial role in enhancing students' understanding of stainless steel and urged JSL to expand the program further. Tapan Kumar

## YARD RESTRUCTURING WORK AT BHADRAK RAILWAY STATION COMPLETED IN SCHEDULED TIMEFRAME



**Bhubaneswar, (KCN):** East Coast Railway has successfully completed the major yard restructuring work at Bhadrak Railway Station within the scheduled timeframe, marking a significant milestone in the station's modernization efforts. The work, which aimed at improving operational efficiency and streamlining train management, was completed as per the schedule. Importantly, no additional train cancellations occurred during the project and services were maintained as per the planned

schedule. The restructuring of Bhadrak Railway Station involved various key upgrades, including the addition of new platforms, extra lines for enhanced train operations and the commissioning of the third line between Bhadrak and Ranital Railway Stations. These improvements are designed to handle increased traffic, reduce train delays, and improve overall station functionality. Key Features of the Completed Work:

New Platform Construction: A new platform has been added

to accommodate more trains and ease passenger flow at the station. Extra Lines for Smooth Operations: Additional lines have been laid to ensure efficient train movement and better control of train scheduling. Third Line Between Bhadrak and Ranital: The commissioning of the third line has significantly boosted the station's capacity to manage incoming trains, minimizing detentions and delays at surrounding stations.

The successful completion of this project reflects Indian Railways' continued commitment to enhancing the infrastructure and quality of services for its passengers. By optimizing resources and ensuring effective coordination, the project was completed smoothly within the planned timeline, with no additional cancellations or disruptions to train services.

East Coast Railway would like to extend its gratitude to passengers for their support during the restructuring process and assures that these improvements will contribute to faster, more efficient train services in the future.



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# Validation of Ancient Meditation by Modern Science



Scientific Benefits of Meditation

Recent research on meditation tells us that the mental and physical health benefits of meditation are being verified and presenting new dimensions. Lower Blood Pressure Meditation lowers blood pressure, reduces inflammation, regulates circadian rhythms and stabilizes glucose metabolism. One study of two groups found that meditating for eight weeks increased levels of nitric oxide – the molecule that helps keep blood pressure under control – while the levels remained the same in the group that did not meditate.

This benefit of meditation is potentially life-saving, as high blood pressure is a leading cause of death in the world. By lowering your blood pressure you can significantly reduce your risk of death from heart attack or stroke.

Improves Happiness

Scientific studies have established that the biggest reason for happiness is meditation. Meditation brings us into the present and makes us aware of our every activity, meditation trains our mind. Mind-wandering, on the other hand, is linked to

decreased levels of happiness. A study was conducted to test whether meditation actually reduces mind-wandering and therefore increases overall happiness. The results showed that activity within the part of the brain responsible for mind-wandering was significantly reduced, while it remained unchanged in those who did not meditate. Meditation not only reduces mind wandering during meditation, but these effects can be maintained and strengthened if one practices meditation regularly.

Reduces Symptoms of Depression, Stress and Anxiety

Studies show how meditation can reduce stress and anxiety, thereby reducing depression. The two primary brain areas that neuroscientists link to depression are the medial prefrontal cortex (Me-center) and the amygdala (fear center). The medial prefrontal cortex responds to stress and anxiety, which consequently signals the amygdala to release the stress hormone cortisol. Meditation breaks this connection by reducing your response to stress and anxiety, which then

signals the amygdala to release less cortisol, keeping stress levels under control. The practice of meditation was thought to reduce stress systematically, but it has later been proven to fight many chronic diseases including depression, anxiety, chronic pain, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and immune disorders. It also has a positive impact on.

Improves Attention and Memory

Another study found that after 2 weeks of meditation there was a reduction in distracting thoughts, as well as activity in areas associated with mind wandering. Improving attention and memory from meditation practice is not limited to the moments during or immediately after meditation. With regular meditation practice, one can maintain these benefits throughout the day or even throughout the week.

Improves Self-control and Addictive Habits

Through investigating how meditation can reduce smoking cravings, psychologists discovered that meditation can improve self-control ability and therefore reduce addiction. After meditation, activity in

brain areas related to addiction decreased. Many addictions are related to negative emotions and stress, so meditation is a useful tool as it can help regulate these two experiences as well. One interesting aspect of this study was that the participants were not interested in quitting smoking, nor were they asked to do so. With meditation their smoking habits and cravings naturally reduced.

Improves Sleep

People have trouble sleeping for many reasons, but two common ones are mental health and chronic pain. Meditation helps mental health – increases happiness and reduces stress and anxiety.

Increases Gray Matter

Several studies have found that regular meditation practice creates more gray matter in the frontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for memory and executive decision making.

Reduces Symptoms of Chronic Pain

Practicing meditation may expand brain areas related to reducing chronic pain.

Interestingly, reducing sensitivity through meditation does not ask participants to ignore pain, but rather by developing conscious awareness and openness to pain. It works because avoidance increases anxiety, which increases sensitivity to pain and other negative health and mental conditions. So conscious openness to pain can actually reduce pain.

Regular Meditation Practice Impacts the Brain

One of the biggest effects on the brain from regular meditation practice is increased neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the ability to change the structure and organization of our brain through the formation of new neural pathways. This can be achieved through exercise, habituation, and meditation, with scientists such as Harvard alumnus

painkillers it is a long-term solution to addressing the root neurological causes of pain.

Protects the Brain

The growth of gray matter mentioned earlier also improves the preservation

of brain tissue. A recent study found that the brains of those who meditated for long periods of time were “better preserved” than those who did not meditate. People who have an ‘age-defying’ brain enjoy long-term benefits such as better memory, mental health, happiness levels, and better control over emotions, social skills, impulses, and motor functions.

Activity is Reduced in the Default Mode Network (DMN)

This network – called the “monkey brain” – is activated when our minds wander. This state of separation from the present moment leads to suffering. The changes that occur in your brain through the effects of meditation on neuroplasticity can reduce mind-wandering and improve attention, which can improve overall happiness and satisfaction.

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# No confidence in parliamentary dignity.

(No-confidence motion notice against the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.)

-Priyanka 'Saurabh'



The role of presiding officers in Parliament is crucial to maintaining neutrality and ensuring that parliamentary proceedings are conducted in a fair and impartial manner. Recently, the opposition raised a no-confidence motion against the Rajya Sabha Chairman, accusing him of being partisan. This situation highlights the importance of maintaining impartiality in key leadership roles for the integrity of democratic processes. The role of presiding officers of Parliament in maintaining the neutrality of parliamentary proceedings is to ensure impartiality in

debates. Presiding officers are expected to ensure that all MPs, regardless of party affiliation, are given equal opportunity to participate in debates. Impartiality in decisions: Decisions made by the Speaker should be based on parliamentary procedures rather than partisan inclinations. The Speaker should mediate conflicts between the government and the opposition, creating space for constructive dialogue while maintaining decorum. A neutral presiding officer ensures the integrity and credibility of Parliament, fostering a conducive environment for democratic debate. If the Speaker is perceived to be neutral, confidence in the parliamentary system is strengthened, thereby promoting healthy democratic debates, as seen in mature democracies such as the UK. The presiding officer must always

demonstrate impartiality to safeguard the legitimacy of the parliamentary institution. If the Speaker is perceived to be biased, this may undermine confidence in parliamentary proceedings and

political divisions within Parliament, leading to increased conflict between the government and the opposition. In such a scenario, the government and the opposition may resort to extreme tactics to challenge the Speaker's decisions,

democratic values. If the Speaker is biased, mechanisms of accountability within Parliament may fail, allowing unchecked executive power. If the Speaker is seen to be aligned with one political party, this may lead to public disillusionment with

the Speaker follows a formal code of conduct that ensures neutrality, helps to address concerns over bias, and promotes transparency in parliamentary proceedings. Ensuring long tenures for presiding officers

during political upheaval. Introducing independent oversight mechanisms to review the president's decisions can ensure greater accountability and prevent partisan actions. Regular training programs for presiding officers can equip them with the skills needed to handle the complexities of parliamentary proceedings impartially. Leadership training focused on impartial decision-making and conflict resolution can help the president better navigate political pressures while maintaining neutrality. Promoting bipartisan cooperation in parliamentary committees and discussions can promote a more balanced approach to decision-making. Encouraging inter-party dialogue and cooperation within parliamentary committees can help bridge differences and ensure that the president remains neutral in mediating between the government and the

opposition. The role of the presiding officers of Parliament is important in ensuring the neutrality of parliamentary proceedings. To maintain the credibility of democratic institutions, it is necessary to address the challenges faced by the Speaker, promote bipartisan cooperation, and ensure impartial leadership through clear guidelines and long tenure. In fact, through this, the opposition is trying to send a message to the Chair in both Houses of Parliament that if the Chair does not appear impartial, then the opposition will not hesitate to use its constitutional rights. In the last session, there was such a discussion in the political corridors regarding the Lok Sabha Speaker.

***The opposition camp has given a notice of bringing a no-confidence motion against the Chairman in the Rajya Sabha. This will be the first time in the history of the Indian Parliament that a notice of no confidence has been brought against a chairman in the Rajya Sabha. Actually, this opportunity came up because all the opposition parties were unhappy with the chairman's stance in the House. The opposition alleges that the chairman always takes the side of the ruling camp and suppresses the voice of the opposition. The opposition wants to see the chair impartial, but after the last Lok Sabha, when things did not change in the Rajya Sabha even in the 18th Lok Sabha, the opposition tried to give a message of taking some strict action by raising the discussion of bringing a motion in the last session.***

public trust in the legislative process. Perceptions of bias in the Speaker's actions may result in the public perception that Parliament is being manipulated to serve the interests of one party. A biased speaker may exacerbate

leading to a more hostile and less productive environment in Parliament. Perceived bias in the Speaker undermines the institution of Parliament itself, which plays a central role in upholding

the democratic process and political institutions. Establishing clear guidelines for the role of the presiding officer will help maintain consistency and impartiality in decision-making. In the UK Parliament,

can allow them to build trust, stability, and neutrality in their leadership roles. The fixed tenure of the German Bundestag president ensures long-term leadership stability, reducing the perception of partisan decision-making even

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# Why Delhi is awaiting the book launch of Sriram Sir's book?

Vivek Shukla



of his disciples is very vast. Actually, Sriram Sir has come to the capital to attend a book launch program. The name of the book is 'The Sacred Book of Divine Guidance'. In this, the author Narendra Ditya Komaragiri discusses as to how Sriram Sir is changing the lives of people all over the world, inspiring people, motivating inactive people, and healing broken hearts. The book launch is taking place on coming 21 December.

Thousands of people gather during his workshops "I on I," "Celebration of Life" or "Journey into Joy." Now the question is who is Sriram Sir? Some people also call him Bhagwan Sriram Sir. According to Narendra Ditya Komaragiri, the

author of his biography "God Incognito: The Beginning", "In his human form, Lord Sriram Sir has a doctorate in English and retired as a lecturer in English from the Institute of Electronics in Hyderabad in 2015. He is living a simple life with his family in Hyderabad."

Sriram Sir's 'I on I' workshop held at the prestigious Harvard University in Boston in September 2016 mesmerized the American participants. Millions of copies of many motivational books by Sriram Sir have been sold. Venkat Sundaram, former captain of the Delhi Ranji Trophy team and chairman of the pitch committee of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, is also among Sriram



Sriram's disciples. He is one of the hosts of the book launch program. He claims that Sriram Sir has cured incurable cases of cancer and paralysis and has also given vision to an engineer who lost it in a cylinder blast at ECIL, Hyderabad. The engineer's cornea and retina in both eyes were completely damaged, but after

that he became completely normal. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee met Sriram Sir in 1997. After that meeting, Atal Ji became his devotee. At a symposium held at Penn State University in the USA, 36 Nobel laureates in chemistry could not answer his questions on chemistry. Later he gave answers to

those questions. Narendra Ditya Komaragiri says that people are influenced by Sriram Sir because these stories seem real and believable. Listeners are also going through similar situations in their lives and these stories give them hope and courage. Thousands of IT professionals

working in America and Europe are readers of Sriram Sir's books. They are influenced by them because they show them a clear path to achieve their goals. They are motivated to recognize their potential and achieve it.

Sriram Sir says that in his motivational speeches he emphasizes positive thinking, gratitude, and optimism. He inspires his listeners to face their challenges with positivity. Of course, there is a time of great frustration in everyone's life. At that time, he needs the support of a motivational speaker who can give a clear and powerful message.

**The Author is a**  
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## IIT has a digital human brain atlas ready

Vijay Garg



By creating the world's most detailed digital human brain atlas, the researchers at IIT Madras are embarking on a journey that could fundamentally change how we approach both medicine and AI. The complexity of the human brain has always presented one of the greatest challenges in science. Neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and epilepsy affect millions of people worldwide, yet we still know relatively little about their underlying causes. Existing treatments are often expensive, difficult to access, and only modestly effective. This leaves millions of patients and families facing daunting uncertainty, as well

as health care systems strained by the burden of care. At the same time, the rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are transforming industries and creating new opportunities, yet AI still pales in comparison to the efficiency, adaptability, and learning capacity of the human brain. Despite its ability to process massive datasets and perform specific tasks at superhuman speeds, AI systems remain energy-intensive and lack the flexibility that comes naturally to human cognition. If we could better understand how the brain works — its adaptability, efficiency, and ability to process information — we could revolutionise not only the treatment of neurological diseases but also the future of AI. This is where the work being done at IIT Madras comes in. By creating the world's most

detailed digital human brain atlas, the researchers at IIT Madras are embarking on a journey that could fundamentally change how we approach both medicine and AI. This digital brain atlas will map the human brain at an unprecedented level of detail, providing insights into its structure, connectivity, and the underlying mechanisms that make human cognition so unique. The brain is estimated to be made up of approximately 80 billion neurons, with trillions of connections forming a network of incomprehensible complexity. Mapping this network has long been a dream of neuroscientists, but existing tools have been limited in their ability to provide a clear, detailed picture of how the brain is structured and how its different regions communicate with

one another. The team at IIT Madras, however, is changing that. Their project involves slicing human brains into ultra-thin sections — 10,000 slices per brain — each captured at tens of gigapixels resolution, resulting in a 3D, fully digital model of the whole brain. This process generates three petabytes of data per brain, creating a dataset that offers unprecedented insights into the inner workings of this most complex organ.

In an exciting new development, the Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre at IIT Madras has released DHARANI, the first-ever 3D high-resolution imaging dataset of the human foetal brain. Featuring over 5,000 sections at cellular resolution, this groundbreaking dataset offers researchers a detailed view of early brain development. Remarkably, the team achieved this at

less than one-tenth the cost of similar projects in the West. This achievement, led by Sivaprakasam, professor in department of electrical engineering at IIT Madras and head of the Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre (HTIC), a joint initiative of IIT Madras and department of biotechnology (DBT), ministry of science and technology, sets the stage for major advancements in neuroscience and foetal medicine, with potential applications ranging from early diagnosis of developmental disorders to understanding the origins of neurological diseases. The potential applications of this research are vast. By studying the brain at this level of detail, scientists will gain new insights into how neurological diseases develop, what biomarkers signal their onset, and how various

treatments affect brain function over time. The digital brain atlas could help researchers identify early indicators of diseases like Alzheimer's, enabling earlier diagnosis and more effective interventions before symptoms become severe. This is particularly important in countries like India, where access to expensive diagnostic tools is limited and millions of people go undiagnosed until it is too late for treatment to make a meaningful difference. The affordability aspect is central to the project's mission, with the team focused on making their tools and insights available at a fraction of the cost, democratising access to this critical information and ensuring it benefits patients everywhere.

The brain atlas also represents a new model for innovation in India, where affordability and scalability are essential. For years, much of the cutting-edge research in fields like neuroscience and AI has been concentrated in the West. IIT Madras is proving that India has the talent and creativity to not only participate in but lead the next wave of breakthroughs. International collaborations with institutions like the University of California underscore the global significance of this work. India's ability to innovate at lower costs gives it a unique advantage in addressing global problems. If solutions can work in India, where resources are often stretched thin, they will be effective everywhere. This democratisation of science and technology is central to the mission of the brain atlas project. Transformative work like this is made possible by visionary donors like Kris Gopalakrishnan, co-founder of Infosys, who has dedicated his

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# Punjab Parties Condemn Amit Shah's Remarks on BR Ambedkar, Demand Apology

**Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN):** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab, Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal parties have strongly criticized Amit Shah's remarks on B R Ambedkar and demanded apology.

AAP in a press conference held in Jalandhar, slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his objectionable remarks about Dr. BR Ambedkar. Terming the remarks as an insult to the architect of the Indian Constitution, AAP leaders accused the BJP and RSS of pursuing an anti-Dalit and anti-Constitution agenda. Addressing the media, AAP leader Pawan Kumar Tinu criticized the BJP and RSS, highlighting their consistent attempts to undermine the secular and inclusive values of the Constitution. He said, "Dr. BR Ambedkar spent his entire life building the Constitution, uniting a diverse nation, and ensuring equal rights for all. The BJP and RSS have repeatedly tried to demean his legacy and create apprehensions about changing the Constitution. Amit Shah's

remarks reflect their anti-Dalit and anti-reservation mindset."

Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO also condemned the remarks, stating, "Amit Shah's statements in Parliament were cruel and deeply hurtful to millions of Indians who revere Dr. Ambedkar as a guiding light. Baba Sahib crafted the constitution that unified a fragmented nation and protected the rights of the downtrodden."

He said that the BJP's hidden agenda of weakening the Constitution and its values stands exposed once again. AAP will not allow such attempts to succeed." He demanded an immediate and unconditional apology from both Amit Shah and PM Narendra Modi for the hurt caused to followers of Dr. Ambedkar.

ETO stated that only the Aam Aadmi Party gives due respect to our freedom fighters and the architect of the Constitution. He highlighted this by citing the example of installing portraits of Dr. BR Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh in government offices, emphasizing the party's

commitment to preserving and honouring the values these icons represented. He assured the people that the AAP would continue to resist any move aimed at tampering with the Constitution or the rights of marginalized communities.

AAP called upon the BJP and RSS to clarify their stance on the Constitution and warned them against any further attempts to harm the foundational principles of democracy and equality.

The AAP leader said that, "India belongs to every citizen, and no one will be allowed to trample upon the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar." Congress party held protest processions across the state and condemned Shah's words. Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, Partap Singh Bajwa, in a statement issued to media said that the recent comments made by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, are both disrespectful and unacceptable. These remarks not only insult the unparalleled legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar



but also reflect the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) persistent disregard for the foundational principles of equality, justice, and inclusivity that he envisioned for this nation. "What makes these comments even more reprehensible is the fact that they were made while speaking on the Constitution in Parliament. Parliament is no less than a place of worship for the 1 billion people of India who cherish democracy. It embodies the hopes and aspirations of every citizen, and its sanctity must never be tarnished by statements that undermine the

contributions of a visionary like Dr. Ambedkar", added Bajwa. Reminding the value of the constitution, Bajwa said, "The BJP leadership must remember that they owe their very positions in Parliament and the Union Cabinet to the Constitution that Babasaheb meticulously crafted. Dr. Ambedkar's vision ensured the democratic principles that empower every citizen, irrespective of caste, creed, or class, to aspire to the highest offices in the land." Bajwa further said that it is particularly ironic that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who often highlights his OBC background, owes his ability to lead this nation to the tireless efforts of Dr. Ambedkar and the founding fathers of our democracy. Their work ensured that every Indian has the right to vote and the opportunity to rise to positions of power, free from discrimination. The BJP's failure to acknowledge this while making derogatory comments about Dr. Ambedkar exposes their deep contradictions and disrespect for India's pluralistic heritage. He added that Dr. Ambedkar's lifelong commitment to social justice, equality, and the empowerment of

marginalized communities is a cornerstone of India's democratic ethos. Any insult to his legacy is an insult to the aspirations of millions of Indians. I, therefore, call upon Amit Shah to issue an immediate and unconditional public apology for his remarks. Attacking the mentality of BJP, Bajwa said, "Baba Saheb Ambedkar's contributions to the nation cannot and must not be undermined. The BJP must shed its Manuvadi mentality and commit itself to respecting the ideals enshrined in the Constitution. Anything less would be a grave disservice to the people of India and the democracy they hold dear."

Senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal today said union home minister Amit Shah should tender an apology for referring to Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar disparagingly in a debate on the constitution in parliament. Talking to newsmen outside parliament, Mrs Harsimrat Badal said, "One only becomes taller

## Huge Job and Business opportunities in Railway Manufacturing Industry



**Kolkata (PAPTA ROY):** The railway manufacturing sector holds significant promise for job creation and business opportunities for MSMEs in eastern India. West Bengal, being the hub of railway manufacturing, currently requires a substantial number of skilled workers for both direct and indirect roles within this industry. It is essential for numerous MSMEs to engage actively in the railway manufacturing landscape, said Mr Prithish Chowdhury, Co-Chairman, CII ER Manufacturing Subcommittee & Deputy Managing Director, Titagarh Rail System, at the Rail Connect East

2024, organised by CII Eastern Region, in Kolkata, on 19th December 2024. Mr Chowdhury asserted that the future of Indian Railway looks bright. Government's focus on ongoing and future railway projects—such as infrastructure development, digitalization, metro rail network expansion, and enhancements in both freight and passenger capacity—will significantly strengthen the railway system. To stimulate the railway manufacturing sector in India, Indian Railways has committed to an investment of Rs. 7 lakh crores over the next decade, which will facilitate the modernization of the network. The railway system is currently undergoing a significant transformation, and the substantial capital expenditure announced in the Union Budget is expected to yield impressive outcomes.

Indian Railways has set an ambitious target to transport 3,000 million metric tons of freight by 2027, increasing this goal to 3,600 million metric tons by the fiscal year 2030-31. Indian Railways aims to capture 45 percent of the freight market share by that time. With most wagon manufacturers situated in and around Kolkata, there is a substantial

opportunity for these manufacturers to play a crucial role in achieving this objective.

Majority of railway industry originates from the eastern part of India, that these companies have reached a global status. Indian railway sector manufacturers well recognized in international market. To ensure the continued success of this industry, it is critical to integrate MSME in the railway ecosystem. This creates a significant opportunity for young entrepreneurs to emerge as important contributors to the economy.

By 2030, reaching the milestone of building 2200 Kms of dedicated freight corridors will be an impressive accomplishment. The eastern dedicated and western dedicated freight corridors are vital for enhancing the effectiveness of transporting goods and optimizing logistic activities.

## Drone technology for application of potassium permanganate (KMNO4) and salt over Akaipur wetland, West Bengal to heal fish infections Akaipur wetland, West Bengal dated 18th December, 2024



health status, spraying of insecticides, disinfectants, medicine and feed distributions over large water areas with less time, input material and human resources. A total number of 52 farmers participated in the programme.

like fish transport drone, broadcaster drone, sprayer drone, mapping drone for fisheries and ecosystem management. The technology could be effectively used to map different wetlands of the regions and apply medicine, disinfects, feed when necessary, in a very short span of time.

Mr. Kausik Mondal, Senior Technical Assistant demonstrated the drone technology for spraying medicine and broadcasting feed material over the wetland of about 27 ha. Drone based mapping of the total wetland was performed by Research Scholar Mr. Souvik Nayak and Mr. Nirjoy Dutta. The program was coordinated by Research Scholar Mrs. Bandana Das Ghosh, Mr. Swarup Dasgupta and Mr. Afzal Khan.

## Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport Celebrates its 100 Glorious Years

**Kolkata (KCN):** In the vibrant heart of Kolkata, where tradition meets innovation, stands the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport (NSCBI Airport)—a gateway that has shaped India's aviation journey for 100 years and is also an enduring symbol of resilience, progress, and connectivity.

Established in 1924 as Dum Dum Airport, Kolkata Airport pioneered Indian aviation by hosting the Bengal Flying Club (1929), becoming one of the first jet service hubs (1964) and opening its first dedicated airline cargo terminal in 1975. It was renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

## Union Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi Urges People to Take Advantage of PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana More to Get Benefit of 300 Free Units of Electricity



**Kolkata (KCN):** Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Shri Pralhad Joshi today urged people for taking the advantage of the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana more to avail the benefit from 300 free units of electricity with an allocation of Rs 75,021 crore. The Minister was addressing a review meeting with the officials of various organisations engaged in promotion of renewable energy in West Bengal, Odisha,

in the state. The Minister also said that he has requested concerned Ministers of West Bengal for providing more support to the scheme which aims to light up 1 crore households by providing up to 300 units of free electricity with central Government support up to Rs 78,000.

Union Minister Joshi said that the registration for the scheme has touched 1.5 crore in the entire country and the number of households benefited has reached 7.06 lakh so far. Shri Joshi said, the scheme should be implemented in good spirit without meddling into politics for the benefit of the people of a State. The Union Minister also urged the State to come forward with an offer of subsidy along with the Central subsidy to make the scheme more profitable for the citizens of the state.

The Union Minister also

held a meeting with the solar panel installation vendors and service providers from West Bengal. He took stock of their challenges and discussed potential solutions to improve the rooftop solar installations under PM Surya Ghar scheme.

The review meeting today was attended by Shri Sudeep Jain, Additional Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and senior officers of participating states, REC, DISCOM, and agencies of renewable energy of States. The review meeting to be inaugurated by Shri Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation in the august presence of Shri Murlidhar Mohol, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation and Cooperation; Prof. Shri Saugata Roy, MP (Lok Sabha); Shri Vumlungmang Vualnam, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation; Shri Vipin Kumar, Chairman, Airports Authority of India and other respected dignitaries. The celebration will reflect on the rich legacy of the airport while showcasing its pivotal role in shaping the future of Indian aviation.

Marking the occasion, a budget-friendly café named "UDAN Yatri Café" will also be launched at the NSCBI Airport, Kolkata as a pilot project supporting the transformative initiatives by MoCA and AAI. The café will offer a curated menu with affordable pricing, ensuring that passengers have access to quality food at a cost-effective rate, enhancing their travel experience.

# Chorus grows for tourism tag to Panchubarahi Temple

**Kendrapara(KCN):** The demand for declaring the 500-year-old Maa Panchubarahi Temple at Rehabilitation Colony in Bagapatia under Rajnagar block in Kendrapara district as a tourist spot has gathered steam as locals believe that the Mother Goddess is a living deity and is the saviour for people during natural disasters.

Rarely anywhere in the state are women appointed as trustees of a temple. Similarly, it is uncommon to find women priestesses performing rituals in temples. However, at this famous Shakti Pitha, only women from Dalit communities are engaged as priestesses, while men are forbidden from touching the deities. The tradition has



been followed for nearly 500 years which is not to be found anywhere. The five deities in this temple, built from black stone, are served by women priestesses without any formal government support. Locally cultivated grains, fruits, and, in some cases, financial contributions from devotees are accepted as offerings at this shrine.

Rashmita Sahoo, a local, said that the Mother Goddess is perceived as a living deity. "During natural disasters, or in times of happiness and sorrow, she is believed to fulfill the wishes of devotees," she said. At some point, a male priest was given the responsibility of performing the rituals, but after he was

besotted by the beauty of the sculpture, the priestly duties were returned to women.

Currently, the four Dalit women entrusted with priestly responsibilities are Sujata Dalei, Banalata Dalei, Rani Dalei and Sabitri Dalei. Only married women are

allowed to serve as priestesses," said Rashmita.

Nigamananda Rout, another local, said the Dalit women priestesses are highly respected in the village, with a tradition of villagers bowing at their feet. However, men are not

permitted to enter the temple or touch the Panchubarahi deity. Priestess Sabita Dalei shared that her mother-in-law, Sita Dalei, was a priest at the temple, and after her demise, she took on the mantle. No male devotees are allowed to participate in the rituals held Tuesdays, and they must view the deity from the temple's walls through a narrow passage. Sabita Dalei feels content that no devotee has ever shown disrespect to her as a Dalit woman priestess.

Dr Sarbeswar Sen, a researcher, stated that the temple is unique in the state as Dalit women serve as priestesses here. "Only a few places in the country have female priestesses. Recently, Krishna Veni, S Ramya, and N Ranjitha were appointed as priestesses in the Sri Vaishnava Temple in Tamil Nadu. Additionally, temples like the Attukal Temple and Chakkulathukavu Temple in Kerala, Maa Bhagabati Temple in Tamil Nadu, and Mata Temple in Bihar also prohibit the entry of men.

Local resident Sudarshan Rout explains that the temple of the Mother Goddess was originally located near Barahipur in the Satabhaya Panchayat. "However, due to coastal erosion, the deity had to be relocated. In 2020, the Mother Goddess was temporarily moved to Bagapatia, about 12 km from the original site where men were allowed to touch and transport the deity during the relocation," he said. Now, with the establishment of a new temple at Bagapatia, 571 families have been provided land and homes by the state government. Efforts are underway to recognise this temple as a religious tourism destination, with local political leaders and administration continuing their work on development plans.

## Paradip stares at water crisis



**Paradip(KCN):** Port town Paradip stares at a water shortage ahead of summer season as authorities Wednesday clamped an odd-even water supply scheme to combat the impending water supply crisis in the town. The new scheme does away with the usual twice-a-day water supply to the households in the port town. Reports said this has been done due to ongoing renovation works of Taladanda canal by the state Water Resources Department.

As a result, people in the port town are getting water supplied to their households for half an hour once a day, and twice on the next day, for half an hour each in the morning and evening. Ahead of the

implementation of the proposed odd-even water supply scheme, the port authorities have informed the denizens through public address system. People were asked to cooperate with the administration and make judicious use of water. However, the odd-even scheme is not new to the port town, and has been in practice since 2013. Locals said the scheme was being implemented every year from January. However, this year authorities decided to implement it from December 18, Wednesday. Restricted water supply has hit the denizens as many families alleged they were not getting enough water for daily consumption. Sources

said the renovation of 90-km long Taladanda canal, which stretches from Jobra area in Cuttack city till Atharbanki in Paradip, is yet to be completed as work is taken up for only six months in a year.

On the other hand, the water retaining capacity of Mahanadi has been declining causing water scarcity. The previous BJD government had announced the construction of an anicut at Bhhotmundai near Paradip last year. However, with the change in state government, talks on the construction of the anicut have disappeared. Paradip Port draws water from Mahanadi in Cuttack through the Taladanda canal and

stores it in a large pond spread over 175 acre at Atharbanki. The pond was initially 13 feet in depth, which helped the port town manage its water needs for a period of six months.

However, with passage of time, the water body has been buried and is only four feet in depth at present. All attempts by port authorities to excavate it further and make it deeper have failed. An engineer of the Paradip Port's public health department said that the excavation work was aborted as it was found during a review that further digging of the pond will result in accumulation of saline water. As an alternative, planning is on to bring water to the town through pipelines, he said.

## NHRC seeks ATR on rape of minor girl in Kandhamal

**Kendrapara(KCN):** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an Action Taken Report (ATR) from the District Magistrate (DM) and the Superintendent of Police (SP), of Kandhamal, on the rape of a minor girl, September 1. The NHRC Wednesday directed the DM and the SP of Kandhamal to submit the health status report of the victim, the status of the police investigation, and compensation, if any, paid to the aggrieved family. The apex rights panel issued directions while acting on the complaint



filed by rights activist Sagar Jena. The petitioner alleged before the commission that a minor girl was subjected to rape September 1 in Kandhamal district when she had gone to the market to purchase some material for her dress. The accused, who is reportedly a distant relative of the victim, had

dragged the victim to nearby bushes where she was subjected to rape. The accused also threatened to kill the victim if she reported the matter to anyone. The complainant has requested the commission to intervene in the matter. Acting on the complaint, the NHRC issued



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# Indian Cement Industry is in positive growth trajectory despite challenges

**Kolkata (PARTHA ROY):** Indian Cement Industry is in positive growth trajectory as overall demand for cement is growing despite seasonal or downturn impact.

Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) hosted the 7th Cementing India on Thursday, 19th December 2024, in Kolkata. Cement India - a platform to discuss advancements in technology and sustainability initiatives within the cement and concrete industry as well as associated industries.

Top cement industry leaders participated including Mr. Yaswant Mishra, President (Corporate) & CFO, Mangalam Cement Limited; Mr. Hemantha

Kumar SS, Vice President, Birla Corporation Limited; Dr. Pietro Recchi, Asian Pacific Regional Head, MAPEI; Mr. Vivek Bhatia, Managing Director & CEO, TKIL Industries Private Limited; and Mr. Siddhant Kaul, Past President, ICC.

Delivering welcome address, Mr. Siddhant Kaul, said, "Cement plays a critical role in shaping India's future and driving forward our growth. It's the foundation on which our nation's economy is being built.... India is in a unique position with government capex and private investment aligning to fuel our growth. However, the cement industry is also one of the most energy-



intensive and significant greenhouse gas emitters....."

Dr. Pietro Recchi, Asian Pacific Regional Head, MAPEI, said, "Global

warming is an undeniable reality with a sharp rise in the planet's average temperature. Cement, as one of the largest contributors to CO2 emissions, must evolve to meet this challenge. As global cement production is projected to increase from 4 billion tons annually to 5 billion tons over the next 30 years, reducing emissions will become the key driver

for the industry's sustainability. Among the four strategies—thermal energy efficiency, fuel replacement, carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), and reducing the clinker-to-cement ratio—clinker replacement emerges as the most effective short-term solution. Replacing clinker offers multiple advantages: it is easy

to implement, doesn't require new equipment or fuel changes and delivers measurable and impactful results. This approach has the potential to significantly lower direct emissions while ensuring the industry's growth and sustainability. The cement industry has a pivotal role in combating climate

change, and clinker replacement stands out as the most practical, cost-effective step we can take today."

On India's Net-Zero Goals and Cement Industry Challenges, Mr. Yaswant Mishra, said, ".... Small recycling units must be established, and individuals, industries and the government

must work together to reduce pollution."

Mr. Hemantha Kumar SS said, "The challenge lies in reducing carbon footprints, which makes digitalisation and technological innovation imperative for organisational growth.... At our organisation, we have introduced the Plants of Tomorrow (POT) initiative—a pioneering digital transformation project aimed at creating smarter, more sustainable cement plants through cutting-edge technologies."

Mr. Vivek Bhatia said, "Cement production accounts for 7-8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, making it a sector under constant scrutiny. Mr. Bhatia suggested use of green hydrogen in cement production can reduce carbon footprint drastically. Mr. Bhatia mentioned his company has developed technology to bring down cost of Green Hydrogen production."

## Stakeholders Meeting on 'Future-Ready Integrated Customs System' with DG Systems and Data Management, CBIC

**Kolkata (KC):** CBIC has undertaken a project to develop a 'Future-Ready Integrated Customs System' to modernise the whole of customs operations, enhance efficiency, seamless data transmission and services to stakeholders.

With an objective to seek inputs and suggestions, a stakeholders meeting was organised by FIEO Eastern region, recently with the trade and other facilitating agencies. The meeting was presided by the Principal Director General, DG Systems and Data Management, CBIC and officers from the department. The Chief Commissioner of Customs, Kolkata also participated in the discussions. Representatives from export houses, Export Promotion Councils, senior officials from Kolkata Customs, DGFT, SEZ, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (Kolkata Port

Trust), Postal department and other EXIM related bodies attended the meeting. The Regional Chairman, FIEO, ER stated that India is at the cusp of a transformative era in international trade. As one of the fastest-growing economies, our role in global supply chains is becoming more prominent. To sustain and amplify this momentum, we must focus on building robust and future-ready customs systems—systems that not only ensure the seamless flow of goods and services but also enhance efficiency, transparency, and compliance to help us to reach US\$ 2 Trillion exports by 2030. The Principal Director General, DG Systems stated that Customs was one of the earliest departments to move towards transition from the manual system to online procedures by adapting to technology. Since then, a lot of measures and transformation has been

adopted over the years to change the user experience and considering better enhancement and future preparedness, the department has taken further efforts to reach out to the stakeholders to get their valuable feedback for implementation. He emphasised on the fact that while dwell time has decreased significantly along with simplification of procedures, online filing of documents, efficiency has gone up through measures like—Faceless Customs, Turant Customs, AEO and various other steps being taken. However, challenges will be there and larger consultation involving stakeholders is thus required towards better integration which will overall work towards India becoming -Vikshit Bharat.

The Principal Additional Director General, CIS gave a presentation on the customs systems and future aims and objectives for better enhancement and integration.

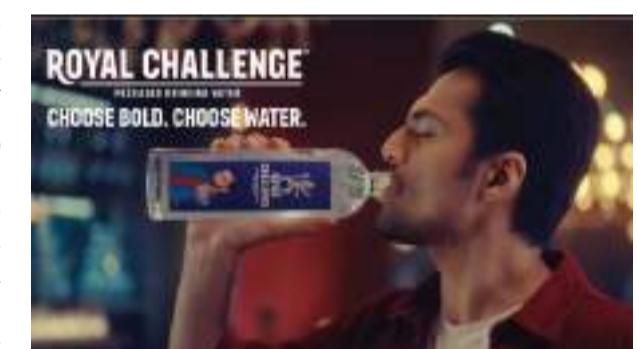
## Blenders Pride Fashion Nights arrives in Bhubaneswar

**Bhubaneswar :** Blenders Pride Fashion Nights, a unique travelling experiential property, arrived in the City of Temples – Bhubaneswar – celebrating the authentic spirit of the city through fashion and style. A spirit that echoes with Pride and inspires the creators of today to become icons of tomorrow. Bhubaneswar's 'Made of Artistic Flair' edition for Blenders Pride Fashion Nights, brought together an eclectic evening that blended fashion, culture and dance, celebrating a symbolic amalgamation of homegrown artistry and the unwavering spirit of local talent.

Exemplifying the region's signature weave through a curated evening at the majestic Vivanta, Bhubaneswar, DC Square was Odia designer Sabyasachi Satpathy, whose intricately crafted ensembles drew inspiration from the multicultural city and its colourful history. In a true celebration of Odisha's distinct and masterful craftsmanship, the show was elevated with a captivating performance by the Prince Dance Group— from the small Odisha town of Berhampur – widely lauded for their artistry. The show drew to a finale with none other than actor Diana Penty, who captivated the audience in a beautiful ensemble by the designer. The "Made of Artistic Flair" edition of Blenders Pride Fashion Nights was a beautiful embodiment of the rich craft and cultural heritage of the city in a modern and contemporary setting.

Taking us on a 'Jatra' – The Journey of a Young Woman – the show encapsulated the journey of a woman from post adolescence to her nuptials, navigating the various challenges, trials and significant moments that come her way. The enigmatic journey was captured through the array of colours and textiles that Odisha Bandha/Ikkat offers.

"Choose Bold. Choose Water." Royal Challenge Packaged Drinking Water promotes hydration for better celebrations.



of alcohol, while also driving awareness on mindful consumption and encouraging individuals to stay hydrated during social occasions. The latest campaign film shares the importance of timely water breaks during moments of alcohol consumption to take care of one's body.

Talking about this campaign, Ruchira Jaitly, Vice-President, Marketing & Portfolio head, Diageo India said,

"At Diageo, we believe in drinking better, not more. A good way to do this is by ensuring hydration during drinking occasions. Royal Challenge Packaged Drinking Water wants to

drive recognition for this important and yet often ignored message with the Choose Bold, Choose Water campaign. By focusing the conversation on hydration and building the recognition for taking a break for the same, we want to foster a culture where our consumers celebrate life responsibly, and we are proud to be able to lead this conversation."

As one of the prominent packaged drinking water brands, Royal Challenge aims to set a positive example for consumers and to shape behaviour by promoting responsible drinking by choosing hydration for moderation.

## NSDL launches "Market ka Eklavya- Express" in 75 cities to mark 75 years of Independence

**Mumbai:** India's largest depository, National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) launched 'Market ka Eklavya- Express', an online investment awareness program for students that will be conducted in 8 different languages including Hindi. The program would serve as a beginner's guide for investing for the youth.

To mark the significance of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, an

initiative of Government of India to celebrate 75 years of independence and the glorious history of our people, culture and achievements, NSDL has launched a new initiative towards investor awareness 'Market Ka Eklavya - Express' across 75 cities, especially aimed at the college students who would very soon be entering the phase where they would start earning and naturally,

look for avenues of investment.

Earlier this month, Market ka Eklavya (5-hours program) was launched by the hon'ble Finance Minister of India, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman at the silver jubilee event of NSDL.

On the launch of the initiative Ms. Padmaja Chunduru, MD & CEO, NSDL said, "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a special initiative launched by our Prime Minister to

celebrate and commemorate 75 years of India's Independence. Our program has been particularly aimed to create awareness about the financial markets to the young minds who will be the future of our country.

In this Amrit Kaal, our digital education initiative focuses on building a path towards Financial Freedom for our youth, symbolizing the spirit of Atmanirbhar

Bharat."

Students across India will benefit from this program as it does not restrict to just an area of the population. The program will be conducted for 1 hour and mainly educate the students on demystifying the jargons, 3I's – types of Income, Inflation and its impact, types of Investment; 3S – Start early- Power of Compounding, Spread wide, Stay long etc.

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha's State Council for Technical Education & Vocational Training (SCTEVT) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Jindal Stainless to promote technical education in the field of stainless steel and its various applications.

Under this MoU, stainless steel courses will be introduced in all the Polytechnic colleges in Odisha from June 2022. The MoU was signed by Vice Chairman, JSL, Mr SS

Upadhyay, and General Manager, Sales & Distribution, Mr Ranit Rana.

Commending the development, Chairman, SCTEVT and Principal Secretary to Government, SDTE and Industries Departments, Shri Hemant Sharma (IAS) said, "This collaboration with Jindal Stainless will enhance the learning experience for students and faculty both, as it will give them insights about and practical exposure to the stainless steel industry."

# Pakistan outplay South Africa in Newlands to secure series win

**New Delhi:** Shaheen Afridi returned four wickets as South Africa folded up for 248 in the second One-Day International at Newlands in Cape Town to hand Pakistan a comfortable series-winning 81-run victory, on Thursday. Heinrich Klaasen's 97 went in vain as South Africa were outplayed to hand Pakistan an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

South Africa made a steady start in the run chase, with Temba Bavuma whipping Shaheen Afridi for a boundary off the first ball. Four overs later Tony de Zorzi whipped an incoming delivery by the pacer over the fence. But the 34-run alliance between the openers

came to an end at the end of the sixth over, with Bavuma getting caught by Haris Rauf in the deep. Zorzi hit three crisp boundaries off Shaheen and Naseem, but was cleaned up by Abrar Ahmad six overs later. The Pakistani spinners, yet again, troubled the hosts. Agha and Abrar choked the run-scoring through the middle overs and built up the pressure. It first led to the dismissal of Rassie van der Dussen, whose attempted big hit off Agha was pouched at deep mid wicket.

Klaasen smashed a couple of boundaries off Agha, but South Africa struggled to gain the momentum. Naseem ut down a catch two overs later, and then Markram

was trapped legbefore by Abrar. Klaasen and David Miller steadied the innings briefly, with frequent rotation of strike and some odd attempts to hit big. Just as they pushed the scoring rate higher with three boundaries in a space of six balls, Shaheen returned to the attack and had Miller caught behind on 29. With a long tail to offer company, Klaasen went on the offensive and smoked two sixes in the next over. Rightly so. There wasn't much support coming his way from the other end as Marco Jansen, Andile Phehlukwayo and Kagiso Rabada departed cheaply to the pace pair of Shaheen and Naseem. Klaasen waged a lone battle, but the victory had gone way out of sight by then. Earlier in the day, a century stand by Babar Azam and

three boundaries in an over of Kwena Maphaka, who eventually had the Pakistan captain dismissed on 80 courtesy a fine low, return catch. A few overs earlier, Babar was caught pulling Andile Phehlukwayo to mid wicket.

Despite both the set batters falling in quick succession, Pakistan didn't let the momentum slip away. They kept the attack going, especially Ghulam, who got going by smacking Phehlukwayo for a boundary and a six. He spared no one in his late assault, taking down Fortuin, Jansen and Shamsi with equal disdain. He was ably supported by the rest of the batters around him. Agha Salman (30-ball 33), Irfan Khan (16-ball 81) and Shaheen Afridi (9-ball 16) all chipped in with useful cameos in the death overs.

There were ample moments of brilliance on the field, including two run outs, by the hosts but there were also three dropped catches to regret. South Africa picked four wickets in six balls to bundle out the visitors but not before they had caused enough damage.

**Brief Scores:** Pakistan 329 in 49.5 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 80, Babar Azam 73, Kamran Ghulam 63; Kwena Maphaka 4-72, Marco Jansen 3-71) beat South Africa 248 in 43.1 overs (Heinrich Klaasen 97, Tony de Zorzi 34; Shaheen Afridi 4-47, Naseem Shah 3-37) by 81 runs



Mohammad Rizwan, followed by a brisk 32-ball 63, paved the way for Pakistan's total of 329. The visitors, put in to bat, lost Abdullah Shafique for a second-ball duck in the opening over, but rebuilt the innings at the back of some useful partnerships.

Saim Ayub and Babar put on a 48-run stand before the former fell just towards the end of the Powerplay. Nonetheless, Babar and Rizwan ensured that Pakistan kept the momentum with them. Initially, they were busy with running singles in the

## McSweeney dropped for last two BGT Tests; Konstas called up

**New Delhi:** Australia have dropped opener Nathan McSweeney for the remainder of the Border-Gavaskar Test series. McSweeney, who debuted in the series opener in Perth, has scores of 10, 0, 39, 10\*, 9 and 4 in the three Tests so far. He makes way for 19-year-old New South Wales opener Sam Konstas. Konstas was in the running to take up the spot left vacant by David Warner ahead of the series, but the management preferred to go with McSweeney at the start.

Konstas will walk into the dressing room on the back of an unbeaten 73 he scored against India A last month, and a 107



in the pink-ball warm-up game for the Prime Minister's XI. He followed this up with a 88 for New South Wales against Western Australia in the Sheffield Shield earlier this month as well as a

27-ball 56 for Sydney Thunder in the Big Bash League just three days ago.

"Sam gets a call up to the Test squad for the first time. His style of batting offers a point of difference and we look

forward to watching his game develop further," Chair of Selectors George Bailey said. "We remain confident Nathan has the ability and temperament to succeed at Test level in the future. It was a difficult decision to leave him out. It has clearly been a challenge at the top of the order for batters throughout the series and we want to provide the option of a different line up for the next two matches," Bailey added. With Josh Hazlewood ruled out, Australia have also brought back fast bowler Sean Abbott along with Beau Webster. They have also added Jhye Richardson to the squad. "In the absence of Josh Hazlewood, Jhye provides further options in the fast bowling space. It has been pleasing to see his successful return throughout the early part of the domestic summer."

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The Apex Council formally approved the convening of the SGM, leaving it to the BCCI office-bearers to finalize the date and venue. Decisions are expected to be made on Friday, December 20. As per regulations, a minimum notice period of 21 days

## New BCCI secretary and treasurer by second week of January



**New Delhi:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided to convene a Special General Meeting (SGM) to elect two new office-bearers, following the resignations of Jay Shah and Ashish Shelia. The SGM is expected to take place in Mumbai in the second week of January, when the BCCI is likely to have a new secretary and treasurer. The decision to convene the SGM was taken during a meeting of the BCCI Apex Council, held virtually on Thursday evening. Given the enormity of the situation, it was an emergent Apex Council meeting the notices for which were sent out only on Wednesday.

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is required to call the meeting, which effectively means it will likely take place around January 11 or 12. Cricbuzz understands the SGM will be on January 12. Shah resigned as secretary on November 30 to take up the role of Independent Chair of the International Cricket Council (ICC). Treasurer Ashish Shelia stepped down from his position on being inducted into the new Maharashtra government under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on December 15. As per the BCCI constitution, a minister is ineligible to be an office-bearer's position.

As an interim arrangement, BCCI

president Roger Binny exercised his special powers under the constitution to delegate the secretary's responsibilities to joint secretary Devjit Saikia. However, as of Thursday (December 19), no such arrangement has been announced for handling the treasurer's duties.

According to the BCCI constitution, new office-bearers must be elected within 45 days of a vacancy arising. This means the BCCI is

required to fill the secretary's position by January 15. The date being considered for the SGM is well within the time limit to address this constitutional requirement.

## Rampant Afghanistan crush Zimbabwe by 232 runs

**New Delhi:** A thorough all-round performance from Afghanistan helped them crush Zimbabwe in the second ODI in Harare to pick up a massive 232-run victory. Afghanistan first rode on a 191-run opening-wicket stand and then had their bowlers dismantle the hosts in just the 18th over to take an unassailable 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Afghanistan's 23-year-old opener Sediqullah Atal starred with his maiden ODI century - 104 off 128 with eight fours and four sixes, while his opening partner Abdul Malik made 84. Together they batted as far as 35 overs after Craig Ervine put the visitors in. For the majority of the innings, the

## Mandhana, Ghosh power India to series win



**New Delhi:** Smriti Mandhana stroked her third half-century in the series with a typical classy innings (77 off 47) while Richa Ghosh went bonkers at the end with a 21-ball 54 as India beat West Indies by 60 runs in the third T20I in Navi Mumbai, thereby sealing the series 2-1. Put into bat on the same pitch that had been used in the previous two games, India raced away to a massive total of 217 thanks to Mandhana's foundation at the top and Ghosh's fierce finish. Despite heavy dew for a major part of the game, the target of 218 proved too many for the tourists as they sunk without much of a fight.

The start for India, however, was similar to the previous game as Uma Chetry once again fell cheaply, this time in the first over of the innings. Mandhana, though, was in an ultra-aggressive mood from the get-go and counterpunched to give India a rollicking powerplay that yielded

61 runs. Jemimah Rodrigues (39 off 28) also looked in good rhythm as the pair added 98 for the second wicket off just 55 deliveries. It was quickly evident the surface was getting very easy to bat on due to the dew and both batters cashed in on some loose bowling, more so Mandhana. Rodrigues fell off the first ball after the drinks break but India's progress continued as

young Raghvi Bist (31\* off 22) gave Mandhana company as another partnership of 44 ensued to give the hosts the perfect launching pad for a big total. Mandhana looked set for a three-figure knock but fell against the run of play against a Deandra Dottin slower ball. That was the only bright moment with the ball for the West Indian who was unusually expensive in her spell. Richa then took over the mounting asking rate and

slog over as she smashed the bowling to all parts of the ground. Pace or spin didn't matter to the wicket-keeper batter who unleashed five sixes and three fours en route to her fifty off just 18 balls, the joint quickest for India in the format. Bist managed to stay till the end and cleverly fed Ghosh the strike as India soared past the 200-run mark. For West Indies to make a game of this, they had to match their batting performance from the previous game or at least get close. Eventually, they did neither as the innings had no impetus from the start.

Qiana Joseph struck a six but fell off the next ball as the plan to bowl the part-time off spin of Sajeevan Sajana with the new ball worked for India. Hayley Matthews (22 off 17) barely got going and her partnership with Dottin (25 off 17) lacked no spark at all, making the chase improbable very quickly. Both batters perished soon after to the mounting asking rate and

then it was only about the margin of victory for India. Chinelle Henry (43 off 16) thrived with a powerful cameo but the Windies needed at least one more batter to replicate her knock to get close. India were once again sloppy on the field but what they did better than the second T20I was to take most of the catches that came their way. The PowerPlay bowling also improved and the sheer weight of scoreboard pressure allowed them the breathing space as well. Radha Yadav (4-29) was the most successful of the bowlers for India and the left-arm spinner used the changes in pace well to fox the batters. All the Indian bowlers put on a better show and ensured that West Indies were never in with a sniff.

**Brief Scores:** India 217-5 in 20 overs (Smriti Mandhana 77, Richa Ghosh 54; Chinelle Henry 1-14) beat West Indies 157-9 in 20 overs (Chinelle Henry 43; Radha Yadav 4-29) by 60 runs.