

RASHTRIYA PATRAKAAR MAHASANGH (RPM) Discusses Rising Attacks on Journalists, Calls for Immediate Action

Virender Prasad Saini Appointed Delhi-NCR President; Smt Keshari Devi Mishra Named General Secretary of RASHTRIYA PATRAKAAR MAHASANGH (RPM)



New Delhi, December 27 (KCN): RASHTRIYA PATRAKAAR MAHASANGH (RPM) convened an urgent meeting at the INS Conference Hall, Delhi, to address the escalating attacks on journalists and the pressing need to ensure their safety. Themed "Protecting Journalists and Safeguarding Democracy," the event united distinguished media professionals and thought leaders who called for immediate measures to uphold journalists' rights and freedoms.

The program began with a warm welcome to the chief guests, who were honored with mementos and shawls. Notable attendees included Naresh Bansal, Member



of Parliament and Deputy National Election In-Charge of the BJP, as the chief guest. Other eminent personalities were RSS thinker Sri Suryakanta Kelkar, Dr. Mallika Gautam, Supreme Court Advocate, Advocate Khitiz Gautam, Arun Goyal, Chairman of IFSMN; Surinder Verma, Deputy President, National Media Confederation, Vivek Sukla, Senior Journalist & Writer, Jawahar Jayrath, Senior Journalist and Film Producer; Sanjay Rai, President of IMA; Dhreej Kumar, RPM National Treasurer and Dr. Pabitra Mohan Samantaray, National President of the RASHTRIYA PATRAKAAR MAHASANGH. Dr. Samantaray, in his keynote address, highlighted the



indispensable role of journalists in upholding democracy. "The safety of journalists isn't just about their personal rights; it's about defending the core of our democratic values. If journalists aren't safe, the voice of the people is silenced. We stand united on this issue and will raise it at every opportunity," he asserted. Speakers at the event expressed grave concern over the increasing threats faced by journalists, emphasizing that these assaults jeopardize not only their personal safety but also freedom of speech and expression. They unanimously advocated for a dedicated journalist

safety law, urging the government to act decisively and take tangible steps to address the issue. The gathering concluded with a strong call for unity, urging journalists and citizens alike to defend press freedom. RASHTRIYA PATRAKAAR MAHASANGH emphasized that the protection of journalists is essential for safeguarding democracy itself.

Prominent journalists, including Brajendra Goel, Jyoti Jaiswal, ISHTIYAK Ahamed, Ajit Dalei, Tabjeel Ahmed, Mohammad Abid, Mohammad Nauseeb, Amit Kumar, Rakesh Kumar, Ajesh Kumar, SK Dikshit, Sibani Jalota, Ahsan Ansari, Anuodh Mishra, Hemant Sharma, Bishal Bhardwaj, Biswajeet, Vijay Verma, Banshilal, Sahashranshu Mahapatra, Tirath Raj, Triveni, Om Thakur, Sushil Singh, Harishankar Parvinde, Acharya, Vinayak das, Suresh Kumar, Praveen Kumar, Deepak, Mr. M. A. Burney, Mr. Nirdesh Bhardwaj, Chandrasekhar Runku attended the event. They voiced their collective support for stronger protections and pledged to stand united against injustice.

At the Installation ceremony, Sri Virender Prasad Saini & Smt Keshari Devi Mishra were appointed as President & General Secretary of Delhi, NCR Unit of Rashtriya Patraakar Mahasangh. As the event wrapped up, the RASHTRIYA PATRAKAAR MAHASANGH resolution to advocate for the implementation of a journalist safety law. The Rashtriya Patraakar Mahasangh reaffirmed its commitment to raising this issue at the national level and ensuring its resonance across all segments of society.

Ex-PM Manmohan Singh's funeral at Delhi's Nigambodh Ghat Saturday: MHA

New Delhi (KCN): The last rites of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will be conducted at 11:45 AM Saturday at the Nigambodh Ghat crematorium in New Delhi with State honours, the Union Home Ministry said.

Singh died Thursday night at the AIIMS here at the age of 92.

"It has been decided by the Government that State funeral will be accorded to Dr. Manmohan Singh. The funeral will take place at 11:45 AM on 28 December, 2024 at Nigambodh Ghat, New Delhi," the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a communication Friday.

It said the Ministry of Defence has been requested to make arrangements for according Singh State funeral with full military honours.



PM pays last respects to former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at his residence, in New Delhi

Odisha Police arrests two in Rajasthan for alleged cyber fraud

Rourkela (KCN): Odisha Police has arrested two persons from Jaipur and Jodhpur in Rajasthan for allegedly duping a resident of Rourkela city, a police officer said Friday.

The complainant, Arun Kumar Mandal, had alleged that the duo cheated him of Rs 23 lakh through online transactions, they said.

A special team of the Rourkela Police visited Rajasthan and arrested the two residents of Jaipur and Jodhpur, a police officer said.

"After initial investigation, we found that this is the handiwork of an organised gang, which is operating all over India and internationally. In the first phase, we have apprehended two persons and the probe is underway," SP Nitesh Wadhwan said.

Farmer dies of electrocution in Odisha's Bhadrak district



Bhadrak (KCN): A farmer was electrocuted to death after coming in contact with a live electric wire in Odisha's Bhadrak district Friday, police said.

The deceased farmer was identified as Pramod Das, a resident of Baligaon Narasinghpur village under the jurisdiction of the Chandbali police station. A fire broke out after a spark as soon as Das came in contact with the live wire, which snapped and fell on a piece of

farmland, resulting in the death of the farmer and damage to crops spread over nearly two acres of land, a source said.

Fire department personnel went to the spot and extinguished the flames, a police officer said.

Angry farmers, mostly residents of the village, expressed their outrage against the "negligence" of the electricity department, blaming it for the farmer's death. They also placed the body in front of the

Chandbali grid station demanding justice, he said. Some farmers also blocked the Chandbali road, leading to disruption in traffic movement.

The family of the deceased sought adequate compensation both for the loss of life and the damage to the crop.

Adequate police personnel were deployed to maintain law and order there, the Inspector-in-Charge of Chandbali police station, Panchanan Mohanty, said.

Odisha CM pays tribute to Manmohan Singh

Bhubaneswar (KCN): Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday paid tributes to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Singh, the architect of India's economic reforms, died in Delhi Thursday night at the age of 92. He was the Prime Minister from 2004 to 2014.

Majhi, along with Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia and senior officials offered floral tributes to a photograph of Singh at state secretariat Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar.

Later speaking to reporters, the Chief Minister said Singh was a "great son of the country" and was respected all over the world for his knowledge and skills in the field of economics.

"Due to his liberal



economic policies, India started its journey as a major economy of the world. As the Prime Minister, he accelerated the development of the country in various fields. His wisdom, politeness and honesty have created a unique identity for him in the field of politics," Majhi said.

He expressed his condolences to the bereaved family of Singh. Congress leaders and workers paid tributes to Singh at Congress Bhawan. State Congress leaders expressed deep grief over the demise of the former Prime Minister and have prayed to God for peace to the departed soul.

"He has always thought about the upliftment of poor and middle-class people. He had a vision to strengthen the Indian economy and executed it. The MGNREGA scheme has proved to be

a major milestone to eradicate unemployment," senior Congress leader Nirjan Patnaik said.

"India has lost a great economist and leader. When India's economy was in a sorry state, he took charge of the Finance Ministry and brought our country out of that situation," another Congress leader, Panchanan Kanungo, said.

The BJD leaders also paid tribute to the departed leader.

"In his passing away, India has lost an illustrious leader whose humility, wisdom and compassion for the nation and its people will always be remembered. My deepest condolences to his family and loved ones. A glorious era of Indian leadership has ended with his passing away," BJD MP Sasmit Patra said on X.

KIMS Installs Eastern India's First Cardiac Laser Machine to Treat Complex Heart Diseases

Bhubaneswar, Dec 27(KCN): Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) has installed a state-of-the-art Xenon Chloride Fusion Cardiac Laser Machine – a first in eastern India — to treat complex heart diseases and reduce the use of stents.

The advanced laser system, inaugurated by KIIT and KISS Founder Dr. Achyuta Samanta, will aid in performing coronary and peripheral atherectomy, lead management, and the removal of blockages that are otherwise untreatable by conventional angioplasty.

Dr. Anupam Jena, Associate Professor in the Department of Cardiology said that through this laser machine, "we can perform ultra-modern treatments that were previously unavailable in this region. This system allows us to offer international-standard cardiac care at KIMS. Patients with complex heart diseases, whether they have arterial blockages or require pacemaker lead removal, will greatly benefit from this technology," he said. Highlighting the benefits of the machine, Dr. Jena added, "This laser system is particularly beneficial for



Sorrow Fuels the Poet's Inspiration: A Gathering to Unveil "Chitrangan" by Poet Dr. Bansidhar Choudhury



Balasore, 27/12 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty): A literary event was organized at the Odesa Hall in Balasore to mark the unveiling and release of renowned poet Dr. Bansidhar Choudhury's ninth poetry collection, 'Chitrangan'. The event was presided by eminent scholar and essayist Dr. Radharanjan Pattnayak. The chief guest for the occasion was retired professor Dr. Rakhal Chandra Ghadei, while the keynote address was delivered by Kulamani Barik, editor of the 'Samaja' newspaper's North Odisha edition and a noted columnist. Other prominent guests included Dr. Santosh Kumar Nayak, Head of the Odia Language and Literature Department at Fakir Mohan Autonomous College, and agricultural scientist Dr. Keshab Chandra

Panda. Publisher Dr. Kalipada Panda and poet Dr. Bansidhar Choudhury were also present on the dais. The event began with dramatist Ashis Kumar Chakraborty inviting the guests to the stage and delivering an introductory address. The program commenced with a ceremonial offering of devotion before a portrait of Lord Jagannath. This was followed by Vedic chanting by Dr. Keshab Chandra Panda. The unveiling of the poetry collection 'Chitrangan' was conducted by the assembled dignitaries. In his speech, author of the book poet Dr. Bansidhar Choudhury shared his creative experiences and emotions behind the collection. Publisher and poet Dr. Kalipada Panda also shared his reflections on the publication. Chief guest Dr. Rakhal Chandra Ghadei

Patriotic Poetry Recitation Festival Organized by Balasore District Administration on the Occasion of Good Governance Day

Balasore, 26/12 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty): Today, the Balasore District Administration, in collaboration with the Information and Public Relations Department, organized a patriotic poetry recitation festival as part of the centenary celebrations of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, ahead of his 100th birth anniversary.

The event was held this afternoon at 2 PM in the Gandhi Smruti Bhawan Auditorium in Balasore. Invited poets from the region recited their self-composed patriotic poems. The event was presided over by Sahitya Akademi Award-winning poet Bimal Jena. Former

professor and poet Dr. Harishchandra Behera attended the program as the chief guest. The poetry recitation session was conducted by Professor Dillip Rath. Additional District Magistrate Sudhakar Nayak and District

Information and Public Relations Officer Aishwarya Samanta delivered speeches on the significance of Good Governance Day and extended a warm welcome to the invited poets. The invited poets who

remarked in his address that "deep sorrow often becomes the fuel for a poet's writing." He further stated that Chitrangan is not just a title but a reflection of emotions and sentiments. Highlighting Dr. Choudhury's work, he mentioned that the poet has beautifully conveyed universal truths through narratives of his childhood and adolescence. Critic Dr. Santosh Kumar Nayak presented an in-depth analysis of each poem in Chitrangan, elaborating on their inner essence and underlying messages.

Keynote speaker Kulamani Barik appreciated Dr. Choudhury's ability to express unrestrained thoughts, providing a realistic perspective amidst current literary debates about themes and subjects for poetry.

Eminent speaker Dr. Keshab Chandra Panda discussed the beauty and philosophical depth of Dr. Choudhury's poetry while drawing connections to human values and the essence of the soul.

Dr. Rakhal Chandra Ghadei further elaborated on how modern individuals are lost in a web of self-discovery, while Dr. Choudhury's poetry resonates with themes of humanity and connection to the earth.

Concluding the event, Dr. Pattnayak, the president of the program, remarked that Dr. Choudhury's poetry is rich in emotional depth and heartfelt expression rather than intellectual abstraction.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by numerous writers, literature enthusiasts, and intellectuals from Balasore.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by poet Dr. Abhimanyu Kanungo.



younger patients in their 20s and 30s. It can dissolve clogs and calcium deposits without the need for stents, which often carry their own set of complications. In some cases, stent placement can be avoided altogether, preserving the heart's natural anatomy and ensuring better long-term outcomes."

Prof. Subasish Mishra, Head of the Department of Cardiology at KIMS, elaborated on the advantages of the technology. "This machine allows us to dissolve blood clots and blockages that are resistant to standard procedures. It significantly improves the



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The Right Institute, The Right Path



As the academic year begins to wind down, a crucial crossroads lies ahead for parents of students in grades 8, 9, and 10: the decision of choosing the right coaching institute for their child's foundation exams. This decision is more than just academic—it holds the power to shape not only students' academic performance but also their future aspirations and overall personality. In a competitive world flooded with options, it's essential to choose a coaching institute that nurtures knowledge, builds character, and equips students with life skills that last a lifetime.

Why Foundation Exams Matter: Foundation exams serve as stepping stones for a student's future academic and professional success. These crucial years not only set the tone for higher education but also refine a student's ability to handle competitive exams. Choosing the right coaching institute, therefore, becomes a decision that should be approached with diligence, care, and insight.

Factors to Consider While Choosing the Right Institute

Track Record and Reputation: An institute's credibility begins with its track record and

reputation. Parents must conduct thorough research to understand the institute's success rate, focusing on the percentage of students who excelled in foundation exams or secured placements in reputable educational institutions.

Institutes with proven success often have a systematic approach to teaching and a commitment to excellence that sets them apart.

Qualified and Experienced Faculty: Teachers are the backbone of any coaching institute. The quality of faculty members determines how effectively students can grasp complex concepts. Experienced faculty members who excel at simplifying difficult topics, combined with interactive teaching methods, play a significant role in enhancing learning outcomes. Faculty with strong academic qualifications. A student-centric teaching approach. Teachers who emphasize doubt-clearing and personalized attention.

Comprehensive Course Content and Study Materials: The best coaching institutes offer structured and updated study materials that align with the latest syllabus. Comprehensive course content must focus on conceptual clarity while encouraging critical thinking and analytical skills. Detailed notes and topic-wise breakdowns. Regular practice exercises and mock tests.

Materials that emphasize

application-based learning. Well-structured resources ensure that students not only memorize concepts but understand their practical applications, which is essential for long-term academic success.

Innovative Teaching Approaches and Personalized Mentoring: Modern teaching methods such as interactive classes, digital tools, and gamified learning platforms have revolutionized education. Institutes that adopt these approaches, along with one-on-one mentoring and personalized doubt-clearing sessions, ensure students receive the attention they deserve.

Technology-enabled classrooms. Customized learning plans tailored to each student's pace. Regular assessments with constructive feedback. Personalized mentoring allows educators to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses, providing targeted support to help them excel.

Seminars on Moral and Social Responsibilities: Education is not limited to textbooks and exams; it also involves nurturing values and ethics.

Coaching institutes that organize seminars on moral and social responsibilities stand out as holistic learning environments. These sessions teach empathy, integrity, and teamwork. Encourage critical social awareness. Prepare students to become responsible and ethical citizens.

An institute that integrates moral

education into its curriculum empowers students to balance academic excellence with personal development.

Inclusivity: No Discrimination Based on Status or Background: Education should be an equal opportunity for all. Unfortunately, some institutes prioritize status symbols like luxurious infrastructure over actual learning.

Parents must steer clear of such institutes and instead choose ones that prioritize equality and inclusivity.

Institutes that promote equality for urban, rural, and economically weaker students. Scholarships for underprivileged yet deserving candidates. A culture of respect and inclusiveness.

True education uplifts all,

regardless of socioeconomic or regional backgrounds, and fosters an environment where every student can thrive.

Location and Accessibility: Choosing an institute close to home ensures that students minimize their travel time and remain focused. Accessibility, safety, and a conducive learning environment play a major role in reducing stress and fatigue.

Affordability and Scholarship Programs: Quality education doesn't have to come at an unbearable financial cost. Reputed coaching institutes often offer Merit-based

scholarships for high achievers. Financial aid for students from underprivileged backgrounds. Transparent fee structures without hidden costs.

These opportunities reflect an institute's commitment to making education accessible to all.

Extracurricular Activities and Stress Management: Academic pressure can be overwhelming, especially during foundation years.

Institutes that promote extracurricular activities such as yoga, sports, and art programs create a balanced learning environment. Stress management workshops help students cope with academic pressure. Activities like group discussions foster collaboration and teamwork.

This holistic approach ensures that students remain mentally and emotionally resilient while focusing on their goals.

Parental Involvement and Regular Progress Tracking: Parental involvement in a child's education strengthens their support system. Coaching institutes that encourage regular parent-teacher meetings, timely progress updates and feedback.

These initiatives allow parents to stay informed about their child's academic journey and provide timely guidance.

Character Development: Respect

and Self-Awareness: While academic achievements open doors to success, true education lies in developing character. Institutes that emphasize respect (adab) and self-awareness create individuals who are humble, disciplined, and aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

Respect teaches kindness and humility, essential traits for personal and professional life. Self-awareness helps students identify their purpose and set meaningful goals.

There is a well-known Urdu saying: "Ba Adab, Ba Naseeb; Be Adab, Be Naseeb," which translates to "Respectful is fortunate; disrespectful is unfortunate."

This proverb underscores the vital role of respect and good manners in shaping one's life. It suggests that individuals who demonstrate respect, humility, and proper conduct are more likely to attract success, blessings, and opportunities.

In contrast, those who lack respect and behave rudely often face setbacks, misfortunes, and missed chances. This saying serves as a timeless reminder that respect and etiquette are not only the foundation of personal growth and social harmony but also the key to earning admiration, trust, and lasting success in life.

A respectful person ultimately recognizes their Creator. True

success lies not just in achieving grades but in developing a balanced, purposeful, and morally upright personality.

Choosing the right coaching institute for foundation exams is a pivotal decision that requires careful thought and consideration.

Beyond academic rigor, parents and students must prioritize institutes that emphasize inclusivity, moral education, and holistic development.

Flashy advertisements and superficial infrastructure may attract attention, but true value lies in institutes that nurture character, knowledge, and life skills.

The right coaching institute ensures students not only excel academically but also grow into responsible citizens who contribute positively to society.

Quality Education and Supportive Environment: Reputable coaching centers prioritize their students' success by investing in well-trained teachers and comprehensive study materials.

They create a supportive learning environment that nurtures students' intellectual growth and instills a passion for knowledge.

As someone who has dedicated several years to the coaching industry, I have consistently strived to provide quality education and create a supportive atmosphere for students.

About the Author is a renowned Motivational Speaker and an Associate Editor of the weekly publication 'Education Quill.' With a Master's degree in Urdu and Education, and expertise in computer technology, he has been working in the coaching industry for the past eight years. Follow the author on Instagram at @UBI9305.

No confidence in parliamentary dignity.

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

Priyanka 'Saurabh'



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.

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 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 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, 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 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 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, 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 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 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.

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Death of Zakir: We have lost a gem



In death of Zakir Hussain we have not only lost an individual but a tabla musician. Not only in this country but also in his fans across the world are saddened by his demise. It was not long ago only yesterday when his body was buried in a cemetery in San Francisco (USA).

Hundreds of fans from across the world had reached the place with heavy hearts to say final goodbye. The tabla maestro has created a void which is difficult to fill. He is no more but he will live in memory for long. He will be especially remembered for jugalbandis (duets) with Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia.

I am fortunate to

be one of the organisers of concerts of these great artists on the occasion of Durga Puja every year for decades at the Gardani Bagh ground in Patna and watch him closely during struggle days.

Will there never be a tabla player like him again? It would not be right to say that there will never be anyone like him because music is such a field which keeps evolving. Maybe in future, there will be another tabla player who will keep reminding us of Zakir Hussain with his talent and hard work. But, for now, it would be right to say that it will be difficult for a tabla player like Zakir Hussain to be born again. He was really unique.

For the present, the jugalbandi of Zakir Hussain and Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia will be certainly missed. They were amazing. The coming together of these legends on stage was a wonderful experience.

Ustad Zakir Hussain was a master of tabla. His performance was unmatched. Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma played santoor, which is a string instrument. Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia is a flute magician. When they came on stage, there was always laud applaud. They had a wonderful combination. They respected each other and created magic while communicating with each other. Their jugalbandi was always a talk of the town.

They could easily connect with the large crowd present the venue. Music lovers would applaud every raag produced by a flute and reproduced by a tabla or vice-versa. There would always be at the meeting of the three a perfect match between the sur and taal and a connect with listeners. Emotions like happiness and sorrow will be at play.

The concert of these three are unforgettable. They will

be remembered for ever. They have left behind a legacy and enriched the Indian classical music. They played an important role in

R.K. Sinha

on stage, a magical atmosphere was created which mesmerized the audience. The thaap of Zakir Hussain's tabla and the melodious sounds of



popularizing Indian music in different parts of the world.

I am personally of the view that the jugalbandi of Ustad Zakir Hussain and Pandit Shivkumar Sharma was wonderful and unique event in the history of Indian classical music. Both were masters in their respective fields. When these two came together

Shivkumar Sharma's santoor created something extremely pleasant to listeners. Both the artists understood each other well, taking the music to a new height. Their jugalbandi was not just music, but a soulful dialogue. It seemed as if both the artists were talking to each other through their respective instruments.

Sometimes the fast pace of the tabla talked with the melodious tune of the santoor, and sometimes the slow tune of the santoor communicated with the strong beats of the tabla. There was a depth of emotions in their jugalbandi. Through music they took the listeners to a different emotional or say spiritual world.

Both the artists were masters of their respective instruments and their artistry was unmatched. While Zakir Hussain's fingers danced on the tabla, Shivkumar Sharma produced such sweet notes from his santoor that they touched the heart directly. Zakir Hussain had a great grip and beat. He could play even the most difficult taal with ease. He used to experiment while playing the tabla which made him different. He was always innovative. Zakir Hussain gave international recognition to tabla playing. He

worked with many artists from all over the world and made the tabla a global musical instrument.

Zakir Hussain belonged to Punjab Gharana. He was known for his intricate laay and taal. He would play even the most difficult rhythms with ease. There was a wonderful flow which was immensely pleasing. He would move his fingers on the tabla in a way that looked magical

Zakir Hussain always used to experiment with laay and taal. I have closely watched Zakir Hussain's programs many times in Delhi and Patna. He used to dominate every time. Every sound coming from his tabla was clear. He was an expert in producing different types of sounds from different parts of the tabla. His fingers used to move so fast on tabla that the onlookers used to be amazed. He used to play different types of rhythms with his fingers.

He seemed to be communicating with the Tabla. It seemed as if his fingers were telling a story.

Zakir Hussain reached the pinnacle of glory through his hard work. He practiced every day till the end so that could do better. His life was music. His passion was clearly visible in his performance. Zakir Hussain was always ready to learn and experiment.

Zakir Hussain worked with many famous musicians from all over the world. He gave a new form to the music by mixing the music of different cultures. He was an ambassador of Indian music. He played an important role in popularizing Indian music all over the world.

Despite being such a great artist, Zakir Hussain was always humble and down to earth. He always respected others. Undoubtedly, he is an inspiration for young musicians, particularly, young tabla players. The maestro is great source of learning.

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

Tale of Boxing Day Tests

Dr. Ravi Chaturvedi


Boxing Day is a holiday celebrated after Christmas Day, occurring on the second day of Christmastide (26 December). It originated in the United Kingdom and is celebrated in several Commonwealth nations since then. Boxing Day is also concurrent with the Christian festival Saint Stephen's Day when churches open alms boxes and servants receive gifts on December 26 for working on Christmas Day.

However, Boxing Day has its own significance in cricket as Boxing Day Test match is played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), involving the Australian cricket team and the team touring Down Under. This cricket ritual begins annually on Boxing Day (26 December) at the same venue.

Going back in cricket history reveals that a Sheffield Shield match between Victoria and New South Wales had been played at the MCG over the Christmas period in 1865, much to the chagrin of the players who missed Christmas celebrations with their families. The Melbourne Test was usually held over the New Year period, often starting on 1 January. Nevertheless, with changing times Boxing Day Test has been played on December 26. The Boxing Day Test match at the MCG has

seen several memorable moments over the years. It was in 1985 when Aussie prodigy Steve Waugh made his Test debut and in 1988, West Indies speedster Malcolm Marshall claimed his 300th Test wicket. In 1994, spin wizard Shane Warne recorded a hat-trick against England while in 2006 picked up his 700th Test wicket vs. the Blighties.

The Boxing Day Test has cultural significance and often draws large crowds. The MCG



hosted its one of the largest Boxing Day crowd (91092) in the fourth Test of the 2013-14 Ashes series. On another occasion, in the 1960-61 tied Test series on the Boxing Day of Test match, 90,800 spectators watched the match at the MCG. After all, the highest footfall was recorded during the 2013 Boxing Day Test between Australia and England saw 91,112 cricket-loving visitors. Anyway, the highest in recent years at the MCG has been 89,155.

Another innovation introduced in 1975 has been Player of the Match award in each Boxing Day Test. However, since 2020, the man of the match has received the Mullagh Medal, named in honour of aboriginal Australian cricketer Johnny Mullagh. The four Indian centurions in Melbourne are Sachin Tendulkar (1),

Ajinkya Rahane (2), Virat Kohli (1), and Virender Sehwag (1). These contributions have played pivotal role in India's success at this challenging venue.

As for the bowling, Jasprit Bumrah is the pick of the pack with his memorable 6 for 33 in 2018 helped India record a famed victory at MCG. Bumrah has taken 15 wickets in just four innings at this iconic venue, matching the feat of the celebrity leg-spinner Anil Kumble. Going by yester years impressive performances, the Indian team is going out at the MCG with a fair degree of confidence in this crucial Test.

While India's recent record at the MCG is impressive, Australia will not go down without a fight. The hosts have a formidable record at home, winning six of their last ten Tests at the MCG, though they have lost twice to India. However, their dominance on home soil has been clear, with Australia winning the 2023 WTC final against India and tasting success in their last four Tests at the MCG.

For both teams, the outcome of the Boxing Day Test will be crucial for a place in the WTC final. A victory for India in this Test would keep their hopes alive, and with two more Tests remaining, the visitors will be looking to push for a series win in Australia. Which way the wind will blow at the MCG, only time will tell!

Pama Shri Dr. Ravi Chaturvedi at A-31/ F, Munirka Flats, New Delhi-110067.
Email- ravi31f@hotmail.com

Skill India Mission: Paving the Way for Youths' Future

Dr. Manmohan Prakash

been skilled through 720 modern and technologically advanced Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras.

2) National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC): This facilitates the establishment of skill development and training centers by collaborating with private and government institutions.

3) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKK): These centers offer high-quality training facilities across the country.

4) Pradhan Mantri YUVA Yojana (PM-YUVA): This initiative educates and equips aspiring and budding entrepreneurs while encouraging cultural shifts towards entrepreneurship.

5) Start-Up India (launched on January 16, 2016): It aims to foster a start-up culture in India and build a robust ecosystem for entrepreneurship.

6) Stand-Up India



(launched on April 5, 2016): This initiative prepares women and people from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for entrepreneurship.

7) National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS): Launched in 2016, it promotes a culture of apprenticeship in industries and provides youth with hands-on vocational experience.

India Mission is aligning with the country's present and future needs and employment opportunities, offering training in several

generating employment, and preparing a competitive workforce for the global market.

However, the mission is not without its challenges. These include:

a) A mismatch between the number of skilled youth and available job opportunities.

b) Lack of alignment between skills and industry demand.

c) Limited awareness and resources in rural areas.

d) The need to improve the quality of skill training.

e) Promotion of green and sustainable development-based skills.

f) The need to expand skill training in digital education and fields like artificial intelligence.

g) Conducting awareness campaigns to engage more youth.

Despite these challenges, the Skill India Mission remains a significant initiative for India's youth. It has the potential to transform the future of the country and its workforce, making it self-reliant and economically strong. This mission will undoubtedly serve as a milestone in creating a skilled nation and play a crucial role in achieving India's vision of becoming a "Skill-Rich Nation."

In recent years, the Skill India Mission has provided employment opportunities or facilitated self-employment for millions of youth (both rural and urban) across various sectors through skill training. This mission has played a significant role in reducing unemployment, fostering entrepreneurship,

Currently, the Skill

Independent Journalist

Empowering Women Fishers: Mahila Matsyajibi Diwas at Kultali, Sundarbans

KOLKATA, (KCN): The Indian Sundarbans is combating tropical cyclones along with massive tidal surges. A large section of the Sundarbans population is engaged in fisheries and allied activities. Over the last decade, ICAR-CIFRI has been tirelessly supporting the rural populace of the Sundarbans by providing various technological inputs to rejuvenate their livelihoods through fish farming under the SCSP/TSP development programs. Since 2013, ICAR-CIFRI has



Society. The event aimed to honor the vital contributions of women in fisheries and aquaculture, particularly in the Sundarbans. It

emphasized their resilience and essential roles in sustaining families and communities while aiming to increase their participation in

fisheries and address social and economic challenges.

Dr. Pradip Dey, Director, ATARI, Chief Guest of the function

elaborated on the crucial role of women in small-scale aquaculture, emphasizing its contribution to enhancing livelihood opportunities and nutritional security. Dr. B.K. Das, Director, ICAR-CIFRI, highlighted the organization's interventions through SCSP projects, from input distribution to launching of CIFRI-SBZI collaborative Model Village Development Project in Sundarbans. He announced that Mahila Matsyajibi Diwas

would be celebrated annually in Sundarbans area to recognize and promote the critical contributions of women in fisheries, ensuring continued support for their empowerment and resilience. Sri Alok Jain, Deputy General Manager, SBI and Sri Subrata Hazra, AGM, SBI addressed the audience and also announced the launching of CIFRI-SBZI collaborative Model Village Development Project in Sundarbans. A demonstration of

drone applications in the fisheries sector showcased among the women beneficiaries. Fisheries inputs were distributed to 500 women beneficiaries of Scheduled Caste community to improve their livelihoods. Around 5000 women participated in that event. The event not only provided essential resources but also fostered a sense of community and solidarity among women fishers, emphasizing their vital role in sustainability.

ICC mourns the loss of Dr. Manmohan Singh: A Visionary Economist and Statesman

Kolkata (PARTHA ROY): ICC mourns the passing away of Dr. Manmohan Singh on 26th December 2024 in New Delhi.

Dr. Manmohan Singh was a visionary leader who played a critical role in India's transformative journey for over three decades.

"Dr. Manmohan Singh was the Chief Architect of India's landmark Economic Reforms in 1991, which took our economy out of a low-level equilibrium trap and onto a firm growth path that continues to this day. Very few leaders could



successfully implement World Bank-IMF-backed economic reforms and transform their nations into economic powerhouses but Dr. Singh—whether as an Economist, Finance Minister or Prime Minister—was among those rare

individuals. His comprehensive reform policies earned him worldwide recognition and are forever linked to his remarkable vision and statesmanship. Beyond his illustrious political and economic career, Dr. Singh exemplified integrity, humility and wisdom, earning him respect not only in India but across the globe. His legacy will continue to inspire generations of leaders, policymakers and citizens. May his soul rest in peace," said

-Dr. Rajeev Singh, Director General, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

the book *How to Handle Income Tax Problems* written by Adv Narayan Jain and CA Dilip Loyalka in 1992 when he was the Finance Minister of India. Jain said that Dr Singh was architect of reforms and his farsightedness made the economy of our country much better. He will always be remembered for his great contribution despite many odds during those years.

Singh was born in Gah in Punjab

province's western region, which now falls in Pakistan.

Daman Singh recalled that when once her sister Kiki asked Singh if he wishes to go back to Gah, he replied mildly, "No, not really. That is where my grandfather was killed."

Writing about her father's days at Cambridge, Daman said money was the only real problem that bothered him as his tuition and living expenses came to about 600 pounds a year while the Punjab University scholarship gave him about 160 pounds.

"For the rest he had to depend on his father. Manmohan was careful to live very stingily.

Subsidized meals in the dining hall were relatively cheap at two shillings sixpence. He never ate out, and seldom indulged in beer or wine," she wrote. Yet he would be in crisis if money from home fell short or did not arrive in time. "When this happened, he skipped meals or got by on a sixpence bar of

Cadbury's chocolate. He would never borrow money his entire life, but this was when he came closest to doing so. The only person he could think of turning to was Madan (close friend Madan Lal Sudan)," the book said.

After the results of the first-year Tripos examination were declared and Singh came first, he wrote to Madan Lal asking not to send him any money from then on.

"I think I will get some prize worth about 20 pounds and if I press I might get an Exhibition (an allowance or scholarship), but I am

not so greedy. I prefer to wait till next year," Daman Singh wrote. Daman also mentioned how her father used to sing at family get-togethers and picnics. "Whenever we went on a picnic, people used to sing. He knew a couple of songs. He sang 'Lagta nahin hai ji mera' and Amrita Pritam's poem 'Aakhan Waris Shah noon, kitey kabran vichon bol,'" she wrote.

"Aakhan Waris Shah noon..." is about Partition and Amrita Pritam invokes Waris Shah to come and write about what happened to Punjab.

"Lagta nahin" is the

poem penned by last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar when he was in exile in Rangoon, where he later died.

According to Daman Singh, her father had a good sense of humour. "This was evident when he was with friends, even if they were economists. It was comforting to know that he could laugh and crack jokes as well. With us, he rarely did either." He also liked to give nicknames to people.

"Unknown to them, one of our uncles was 'John Babu', another was 'Jewel Babu', and a third - to commemorate his pointed turban - was 'Chunj Waley'. My mother was 'Gurudev', and the three of us were 'Kick', 'Little Noan' and 'Little Ram'. Some of the other names he coined were less charitable," Daman Singh wrote.

Daman Singh gave their pet dog Penu a string of affectionate names such as 'Nut Babu', 'Nutter' and 'Douse Fellow' and even composed little jingles around them.

Homage to Dr Manmohan Singh



Kolkata (KCN): Advocate Narayan Jain National President of All India Federation of Tax Practitioners expresses

deep condolences on passing away of Hon'ble Dr Manmohan Singh former Prime Minister. Dr Singh had inaugurated

New Delhi: "The people of India deeply love you." This was how visiting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh spoke of US President George W Bush while praising him effusively after their 40-minute meeting at the Oval Office in the White House on September 25, 2008. He was flagging Bush's 'important and historic' role in forging several bilateral initiatives including the landmark Indo-US civil nuclear deal.

While the weather was cloudy and rainy in Washington, it was all warmth inside the White House during the eight-minute press interaction by the two leaders who had a word of praise for each other on a few occasions, showing a spirit of bonhomie. But Singh's gushing praise of Bush in what was seen as a sweeping declaration created a flutter.

Singh died on Thursday night at the age of 92.

The landmark civil nuclear agreement had led to the end of 34-year isolation of India in nuclear commerce.

Both the Left, which withdrew support to the UPA-1 government over the nuclear deal, and the BJP had slammed Singh's effusive praise of Bush even as the Congress, which hailed the Indo-US nuclear deal as the "greatest" event for India in the 21st century, found itself on the back foot.

The people of India deeply love you, and all that you have done to bring our two countries closer to each other is something history will...." Singh, who left a lasting imprint on India's external relations, told the news conference where this correspondent was also present.

Bush, who shared an excellent rapport with Singh, told the Prime Minister that he appreciated his

friendship and his leadership.

"I appreciate your friendship and I appreciate your leadership," Bush said.

The president then went on to say, "You and I have worked hard to change the relationship between our countries. India is a great country with an incredibly bright future, and it's in the US interests to have a good, strong strategic relationship with India. And we've worked hard to achieve that."

Touching upon the civil nuclear deal initiated in July 2005, Bush told Singh, "It has taken a lot of work on both our parts, a lot of courage on your part." "All in all, ours is a very strong relationship at a state level and at a personal level, and I appreciate you coming."

The prime minister in his response said, "When history is written, I think it will be recorded that President George W

Bush played a historic role in bringing our two democracy closer to each other."

Singh, who will be remembered for his uncompromising commitment to secure the Indo-US nuclear deal, told Bush that the president had played the "most important role in the massive transformation of India-United States relations". In the context of the tortuous journey of the Indo-US nuclear deal, the Prime Minister told the president these are

difficult issues and at each stage it was "your leadership, your personal intervention, which resolved all the difficulties that were affecting the progress of these negotiations".

At another point, while referring to how the nuclear restrictive regime will end after the Nuclear Suppliers Group waiver, Singh said, "For 34 years India has suffered from a nuclear apartheid. We have not been able to trade in nuclear material,

Delhi on October 31, 2009. Bush, who was at his humorous best, complimented Singh a day after the Indian leader described him as a "great friend of India". Bush, who showered praise on Singh, described the economic liberalisation process initiated by India in 1991 when Singh was the Finance Minister as one of the two important events of that year that led to the transformation of Indo-US ties.

On his second visit to India since March 2006 when he came here as President, Bush said he was "honoured" to be back here.

Reacting to Singh's "People of India deeply love you" remark, CPI-M general secretary Prakash Karat had said, "We always knew that PM Manmohan Singh is in love with president Bush. Why is he getting people of India in between (the relationship)?" CPI

national secretary D Raja said, "At a time when Bush's rating is so low in his own country, it does not augur well for the Indian PM to say such a thing." The BJP also appeared to be on the same page as the Left parties. "All I can say is that the personal adulation of PM Manmohan Singh cannot become India's adulation," BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad said.

Congress media cell chairperson Veerappa Moily was hard put to defend the Prime Minister's remark to Bush.

Asked how Singh could speak on behalf of the entire people about their liking for Bush, Moily said the statement in general was an expression of India's "tolerant and accommodating" attitude. "India has never practised a hate culture - there's nothing wrong with the PM saying that," he said.



Credit: pragnya@timesofindia.com

Dismal cotton procurement in mandis as rain plays spoilsport

Bhawani patna(KCN): Inclement weather along with bouts of untimely rainfall has put the cotton farmers in Kalahandi district on their toes, leaving them sceptical about getting the right price for their produce in mandis. Known for its long fibre and durable quality, cotton is a hallmark crop of Kalahandi district. However, this year's erratic rainfall combined with unfavourable weather conditions has cast doubts on farmers' prospect of receiving fair prices for their cotton in the mandis. Reports indicate that over 50,000 farmers have registered for cotton cultivation this season. The Agriculture department estimates that cotton has been planted on 71,000

hectares in Kalahandi, with production projected to exceed 1.071 million quintals.

Despite the optimistic projection, concerns persist about the government's effort to ensure successful implementation of cotton farming initiatives. According to data available from the Cotton Scheme Officer, only 2,121 farmers have sold around 63,000 quintals of cotton so far this year, reflecting significant underperformance. In previous years, cotton cultivation in the region matched the record-breaking scale of paddy farming. This year, however, farmers are anxious about sale of their produce. While the

Minimum Support Price (MSP) for cotton is set at Rs 7,521 per quintal, many farmers have been forced to sell their produce to middlemen at lower prices, avoiding reliance on the mandi system. This has given rise to distress sale of the fibre in the district. The Rayagada branch of Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. has reported that Gopal Organic and Dadaguru Agro India Pvt. Ltd. procured cotton from the Karlapada centre. On the other hand, companies like Natural Organic, Savitri Cotton India, and Bansal Agrotech have made purchases from the Kisinga centre. However, the farmers are hesitant to sell their produce in mandis this



year despite the facilities being operational since November 29. It is crucial for the administration to understand this hesitation. Reports said

middlemen intercept farmers at their doorsteps and offer to buy cotton for ₹6,500 per quintal even before it reaches the mandi. Additionally, there is no measure in place to stop the illegal transportation of cotton from the district, as government gate systems are no longer operational. Cotton cultivated on Kalahandi's black soil has high demand not only in

international markets but also in states like Maharashtra and Gujarat. In fact, Kalahandi farmers have successfully exported cotton to countries like Thailand and Bangladesh earlier. Chatters are abuzz that the District Collector is directly monitoring the opening of mandis this year but the volume of cotton arriving at the mandi remains unsatisfactory.

This year, mandis have been opened in areas like Karlapada under Bhawani patna block, Utkela under Kisinga block, and Uchala under Golamunda block. Depending on the quality, cotton with 8-11 per cent impurity levels is eligible to be sold at the MSP fixed by

Odisha CM unveils Lord Jagannath Calendars ahead of New Year 2025

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26(KCN): Ahead of the New Year 2025, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday unveiled both desktop and wall-hanging calendars published by the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA). The calendars, adorned with stunning photographs of Lord Jagannath, were released in the presence of Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, Chief Secretary Manoj Aguja, and SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee.

The desktop calendar highlights captivating artwork and sand art created by talented artists from across the



state of Odisha. The first copy of the calendar was ceremonially offered to Lord Jagannath at the iconic 12th-century Shri Jagannath Temple in Puri. The calendar features a blend of creative works, including sand art and visual art by renowned Odia artists. Meanwhile, the seven-

page wall calendar showcases striking images of Lord Jagannath on His chariot, a central figure in the grand Rath Yatra festival. Both calendars aim to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Odisha while promoting the artistic achievements of local creators. These calendars



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Villagers tie up 3 to trees over 'conversion' bid

Nilgiri(KCN): Tension prevailed after villagers caught three persons and tied them to trees over an alleged bid to proselytise the local tribals at Gobardhanpur village in Kepilakharaj panchayat of this block in Balasore district, Thursday. Accusing the three individuals of attempting to convert tribal families, villagers and members of a local outfit, Debasena, assaulted and tied them to trees before handing them over to Nilgiri police. Sources said Gobind Singh of Chhanakanapur village, Subasini Singh of



Mitrapur Makhapada village, and Sukanti Singh of Remuna Mukhura in Mukhura panchayat and Remuna police limits reportedly approached three tribal families in Gobardhanpur village, and allegedly persuaded them to adopt Christianity.

On being informed, villagers and Badal Kumar Panda, the president of the Nilgiri branch of Debasena,

rushed to the spot. They discovered arrangements for a meal at Gobind Singh's residence, which included meat and rice. A cake decorated with the phrase "Merry Christmas" was also found, raising suspicion that a conversion ceremony was underway. Suspecting that the accused were attempting to convert the families, the villagers tied them to trees and assaulted them. On being informed, police arrived at the scene and took the three individuals into custody for questioning. Further investigation is underway.

Elephant tramples 55-year-old woman to death in Sambalpur

Sambalpur(KCN): In another tragic case of man-animal conflict, an elderly woman was killed by an elephant in Jamuguri area of Sambalpur district Thursday evening. Reports said that 55-year-old Pari Lugun, a resident of Jamuguri in Godloisingh panchayat, Jujomura block, had gone to a nearby forest to gather dry leaves for fuel. During this, she encountered an elephant and attempted to flee. Unfortunately, she was



unable to escape in time, and the elephant trampled her to death. Locals later discovered her body and alerted the Forest Department and police. The authorities

seized the body and sent it for post-mortem examination. The incident has left residents of Jamuguri shaken. This attack comes close on the heels of two similar

incidents last month in the same area, and this month alone, five people have already lost their lives due to elephant attacks.

Isuzu Motors India launches ISUZU D-MAX Ambulance

Bhubaneswar (KCN): Isuzu Motors India is proud to announce the launch of ISUZU D-MAX Ambulance, that is fully-built to AIS-125 Type C ambulance specifications. This pioneering ambulance is engineered to empower a faster response while providing unparalleled reliability, safety and comfort in patient transportation, setting a new standard in emergency medical care services. Designed for India, with ISUZU's proven technology and a deep understanding of the needs of healthcare providers, the new ISUZU D-MAX Ambulance comes with 14 'Best-in-Class' features ushering in a



new era in 'Basic Life Support' ambulances in the country.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Toru Kishimoto, Deputy Managing Director of

Isuzu Motors India, said, "We are excited to present the ISUZU D-MAX Ambulance, our unique product designed for the Indian market, with 14 'Best-in-Class'

features. Isuzu has always been synonymous with trust and reliability. The new ISUZU D-MAX Ambulance carries

forward these values, offering high-quality build and unmatched robustness, while conforming to the specifications defined under AIS-125 Type C ambulance. With this launch, Isuzu Motors India continues to strengthen its position as a game changer in the automotive industry, delivering quality products that are both innovative and tailored to the unique demands of the Indian market. We are confident that our 'ISUZU D-MAX Ambulance' will set a new benchmark in the 'Basic Life Support' ambulance category".

RELIANCE BRANDS LIMITED INKS A JV WITH PLASTIC LEGNO SPA

Mumbai: RELIANCE BRANDS LIMITED (RBL) and Plastic Legno SPA have signed a joint venture arrangement through which RBL will acquire a 40% stake in Plastic Legno SPA's toy manufacturing business in India. This investment by RBL serves a dual purpose, bringing in vertical integration for RBL's toy business and helping diversify the supply chain with a long-term strategic interest in building toy manufacturing in India.

Plastic Legno SPA is owned by the Sunino group that boasts of more than 25 years of toy production experience in Europe. The group started its India business in 2009 out of a need to develop a strong production hub that would cater to global markets, but more importantly to the fast evolving and growing Indian market.

"Keeping with our

honourable Prime Minister's vision of Atmanirbhar India, this collaboration with Plastic Legno's deep experience in world-class toy manufacturing coupled with our strong footing in the global toy retail industry would open new doors and unparalleled opportunities for toys manufactured in India. It is imperative for RBL to build design to shelf capability for a strategic advantage over the competition and to be an accelerator in building a robust toy manufacturing ecosystem in India not only for domestic consumption but also for global markets," said the spokesperson of Reliance Brands Limited.

RBL has a strong play in the Toy industry with its portfolio of Hamleys, the British toy retailer and homegrown toy brand – Rowan, making RBL one of the leading toy distributors. Hamleys currently has a global

footprint across 15 countries with 213 doors and is India's largest chain of toy stores.

"We are very privileged to have RBL as a partner in this Joint Venture. We are confident that Plastic Legno's experience in Toys production and Hamley's commercial outreach, will complement one another to enable the JV Company to achieve greater heights and successes. We have important development plans to implement, always in the spirit of creating a cultural background in this specific sector in India. We are ready for the challenges of the future, but when there is a group like RBL alongside, we are sure that together we can do a great development," said Paolo Sunino, Co-owner, Sunino Group.

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India registers 3,53,188 unit sales

Gurugram: Noting a positive upward movement during the month, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India today announced its sales numbers for May 2022.

The company's total sales for the month stood at 3,53,188 with 3,20,844 domestic sales and 32,344 exports compared to the subdued market performance for same period last year amidst multiple lockdowns owing to impact from second wave of pandemic.

Commenting on the sales performance in May'22, Mr. Atsushi Ogata, Managing Director, President & CEO, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India said, "The market is gaining back strength as disturbances in terms of supply side are subsidingcoupled with rise in physical presence at office and educational institutions. The sales figures this month remain incomparable from May'21 as frequent lockdowns in wake of second wave marred the performance during this period last year. Growth in domestic as well as international trade continues to complement each other as we approach an early monsoon."

TVS Motor Company registers sales of 302,982 units

Hosur: TVS Motor Company sales was at 302,982 units in May 2022. The year-on-year growth is not comparable due to the low base of sales in May 2021 because of the localised lockdown imposed by the Government of India during that period.

Two-Wheeler

Total two-wheeler sales grew from 154,416 units in May 2021 to 287,058 units in May 2022. Domestic two-wheeler sales grew from 52,084 units in May 2021 to 191,482 units in May 2022.

Motorcycle sales grew from 125,188 units in May 2021 to 148,560 units in May 2022. Scooter sales of the Company grew from 19,627 units in May 2021 to 100,665 units in May 2022.

The shortage in the supply of semiconductors has impacted the production and sales of

premium two-wheeler. We are working aggressively with alternate sources and taking every effort to improve supplies at the earliest. Some improvement has been seen this month. We are optimistic that volumes will revive to normal levels once the semiconductor supplies improve.

The Company's total exports registered sales of 110,245 units in May 2022 as against 114,674 units in May 2021. Two-wheeler exports recorded sales of 95,576 units in May 2022 as against 102,332 units in May 2021.

Three-wheeler of the Company grew by 28% from 12,473 units in May 2021 to 15,924 units in May 2022.

The domestic two-wheeler sales include TVS iQube Electric sales of 2,637 units in May 2022.

Spice Money to enable farmers to withdraw PM-KISAN subsidy through its 1 million Adhikari Network

New Delhi: The Government of India has disbursed PM KISAN subsidy, directly to the farmers' bank accounts benefiting over 10 crore farmers and families who have received a grant of Rs 2,000 each. Spice Money, India's leading rural fintech with 1 million strong Adhikari network covering 18,500 plus pincodes, is assisting the farmers and farmer families residing in the heartlands of the country, to withdraw this subsidy through AEPs at their doorstep Adhikari

ITC's Sunfeast Dark Fantasy Launches "Big Fantasies" to ignite children's Imagination

Bhubaneswar (KCN): ITC Sunfeast Dark Fantasy, one of India's most beloved cookie brands known for turning everyday moments into extraordinary experiences, proudly announces its latest innovation-driven initiative, "Big Fantasies: Give Wings to Your Imagination." With this initiative, the brand aims to ignite creativity and imagination in children by blending art with technology.

This unique and forward-thinking initiative was launched at St. Joseph's School, Bengaluru in the presence of children, their parents and esteemed guests. The event also

witnessed a detailed panel discussion on the "Importance of Igniting a Child's Imagination" featuring prominent figures from the fields of space exploration, academia, psychology, and creative arts. Guest speakers for panel discussion included notable personalities like Ms. Mandira Bedi, Mr. Prakash Rao (ex-ISRO director), Dr. Megha Mahajan (DM-NIMHANS) and Rev. Fr. Rohan D'Almeida (Principal, St. Joseph's school). The Panel highlighted how imagination is a fundamental aspect of a child's holistic

development and how it fosters creativity & problem-solving skills, helping them ignite new ideas and overcome challenges. Mr. Prakash Rao, ex-ISRO director talked about the synergy between creativity & technology and the role of imagination in shaping future generations.

Commenting on the launch of the new initiative, Ali Harris Shere, COO, Biscuits and Cakes Cluster, Foods Division, ITC Limited shared "At ITC Sunfeast Dark Fantasy, we believe that the power of fantasy and imagination is critical for transforming kids' life from the ordinary to something truly extra-ordinary.

Union Bank of India signs MoU with SIDBI for Co-Financing arrangement of MSMEs

Mumbai: Union Bank of India today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for a Co-Financing arrangement for MSMEs. The MoU was signed by Shri Lal Singh, Chief General Manager, Union Bank of India and Shri Vivek Kumar Malhotra, Chief General Manager, SIDBI. SIDBI is country's principal financial institution engaged in the Promotion, Financing and Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

Under the MoU, Union Bank of India would consider Joint financing/Co-Financing with SIDBI to Projects/Units in the MSME sector. MSME is one of the key sectors of our Indian Economy contributing to GDP, Exports, Manufacturing Output, Employment, Women Empowerment etc. MSME is one of the focused areas of the Banks to increase their

customer base, while helping the MSMEs to meet their funding requirements. The key highlights of the arrangement include joint identification of viable projects and term loan and working capital financing to MSMEs. Initially the arrangement would be at specific centers and once the arrangement stabilizes at these centers, more locations would be covered.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Lal Singh, CGM (MSME), Union Bank of India, said "MSME is one of the key sectors of our Indian Economy contributing to

GDP, Exports, Manufacturing Output, Employment, Women Empowerment etc. MSME is one of the focused areas of the Banks to increase their

Ola Electric Accelerates EV Revolution with Record Expansion to 4,000 Stores Nationwide

Bhubaneswar : Ola Electric, India's largest pure-play EV company, today expanded its network to 4,000 stores nationwide, registering a four-fold increase from the existing network. One of the world's most significant expansions of the EV footprint, bolstering access, growth, and adoption in the country, Ola Electric cements its leadership in the space. With the launch of 3,200+ new stores co-located with service facilities, the company is committed to driving large-scale EV adoption enabling deeper penetration beyond tier-1 and tier-2 cities to almost every town and tehsil across India. With this expansion, Ola Electric has fulfilled its promise under its #SavingsWalaScooter campaign. Under this expansion plan, Ola has launched its new store at plot no-2188 Kesora, Cuttack - Puri bypass road, Jharapada, Bhubaneswar . Mr. Nabin Nayak, Regional Sales Manager was also present on the occasion.

Bhavish Aggarwal, Chairman & Managing Director, Ola Electric, said, "We promised, and now we have delivered! Today marks a significant milestone in India's EV

journey as we expand our network to every city, town, and taluk. With our newly opened stores co-located with service centres, we have completely redefined EV purchase & ownership experience, setting new benchmarks with our #SavingsWalaScooter campaign. As we continue to scale, we are committed to pushing the boundaries of innovation and accelerating the country's journey towards #EndICEAge." Marking the massive expansion of the network, Ola Electric has rolled out attractive offers with benefits ranging up to ₹25,000 on the S1 portfolio, exclusively available on December 25, 2024. Customers can visit their nearest newly launched Ola Store and get a flat discount of up to ₹7,000 on S1 X portfolio. Besides, customers can avail additional benefits up to ₹18,000, including ₹5,000 on select credit card EMIs and MoveOS benefits worth ₹6,000.

Ola S1 Pro Sona, launched to mark the massive network expansion with real 24-karat gold plated elements, has attracted a large number of footfalls across Ola Stores, with customers actively participating in #OlaSonaContest to take home the premium limited-edition scooter. Representing the pinnacle of Ola Electric's innovation - combining luxury with functionality, Ola Sona comes with the immersive "Sona Mood," which offers a premium riding experience, a gold-themed interface for the Ola app and a customised MoveOS dashboard. The dashboard allows users to personalise ride modes and settings, enhancing their journeys. Making the S1 portfolio the smartest ever, the company has opened priority registrations for MoveOS 5 beta with features designed to enhance the overall riding experience. With the rollout, Ola riders can now gain access to features such as Group Navigation, Live Location Sharing, Road Trip Mode powered by la Maps, Smart Charging, Smart Park, TPMS alerts, among others. The company recently announced the launch of its Gig and S1 Z scooter range, comprising Ola Gig, Ola Gig+, Ola S1 Z, and Ola S1 Z+, available at an introductory price of ₹39,999 (ex-showroom), ₹49,999 (ex-showroom), ₹59,999 (ex-showroom), and ₹64,999 (ex-showroom), respectively.



Kohli fined 20% of his match-fee, handed 1 demerit point for Konstas incident



New Delhi: Virat Kohli has been fined 20 percent of his match fee and awarded one demerit point for shoulder bumping Sam Konstas at the MCG on Thursday morning. The decision was arrived at by the International Cricket Council (ICC) after a hearing conducted by match referee Andy Pycroft after Stumps. Kohli admitted to inappropriate conduct.

"Kohli was found to have breached Article 2.12 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to 'inappropriate physical contact with a Player, Player Support Personnel, Umpire, Match Referee or any other person (including a spectator during an International Match)'," the ICC stated in a media release. On-field umpires Joel Wilson and Michael Gough, third umpire Sharuddoula Ibne Shahid and fourth umpire Shawn Craig levelled the charge against Kohli.

Cricket is not a contact sport and there are rules for body nudging in the game. Article 2.12, as stated in the ICC release, reads, "Any form of inappropriate physical contact is prohibited in cricket. Without limitation, players will breach this regulation if they deliberately, recklessly and/or negligently walk or run into or shoulder another player or umpire. "When assessing the

seriousness of the breach, the following factors (without limitation) shall be taken into account: (i) the context of the particular situation, including, without limitation, whether the contact was deliberate (i.e. intentional), reckless, negligent, and/or avoidable; (ii) the force of the contact; (iii) any resulting injury to the person with whom contact was made; and (iv) the person with whom contact was made." The incident occurred after the end of the 10th over of the Day One of the Test when Kohli was seen shoulder-nudging the debutant Australian opener in front of a 90,000-strong MCG crowd. It led to an exchange between the players with the other opener, Usman Khawaja, trying to cool things down. Kohli's act drew instant outrage with Ricky Ponting calling for sanctions against the Indian batter. "Virat walked one whole pitch over to his right and instigated that confrontation. No doubt in my mind whatsoever. I have no doubt that the umpires and the referee will have a good look at that. Fielders should be nowhere near the batsman at that stage. "Every fieldsman on the ground knows where the batsmen will congregate and get together. It looked to me that

missing BPL,"

Salahuddin told Cricbuzz on Thursday.

"Whatever I do, I try to be happy with it and in life, I don't regret that much. I want to see a good BPL where our boys perform well because that is important for me as well as for the team because if the standard of BPL is good it will benefit us. But I am not missing that too much and not for a second did I feel that way (BPL team have started their training)," he said.

"I am focused on the work that I am doing and I don't look elsewhere like who is doing what because I have very limited expectations and want to give my hundred percent to the job I am doing. I won't dwell too much on what I am

getting and what I am not. I follow this philosophy that suggests a man is unhappy the most by seeing why others are doing well but I don't have that in me because I feel if someone is doing good, let him do it."

Salahuddin added that he is not sure whether he will make it to the ground for all the games of BPL, but he promised he will keep an eye just to make sure he is well aware of his resources for the national team.

"I think if I see it on TV, it is better because I can see the replay as well. But I will try to see all the games from the field in Dhaka, and if I can go out, I will do that as well. I feel it is important for me to see the whole tournament. We have a lot of areas to improve and a lot of players are

Deepti's all-round show helps India complete 3-0 sweep

New Delhi: Deepti Sharma's all-round show (6 for 31 and 39), aided by Renuka Thakur's 4 for 29, scripted India's series sweep over West Indies in Vadodara with a five-wicket win in the third and final ODI on Friday (December 27). Thakur provided the early breakthroughs before Chinelle Henry's fifty, and Deepti then ran through the middle and lower order to claim her second career six-fer. Chasing West Indies' 162, India lost a few wickets upfront but significant contributions from the middle order pulled the hosts to safety comfortably.

In the first day game of the three-match series, West Indies skipper Hayley Matthews surprised with the choice to bat first. Thakur got the ball rolling with twin strikes in her opening over to send back both the West Indies openers without scoring. Qiana Joseph gloved the very first ball of the game while Matthews was cleaned up at the end of that over. Deandra Dottin then stumbled against another in-swinging delivery from Thakur -

third time in a row in this series - to depart for 5, reducing the visitors to 9 for 3 in five overs. Henry got a life even before she could open her account, and went on to forge a 91-run stand with Shemaine Campbell to resurrect West Indies' chances. The pair batted cautiously at the start but slowly began to free their arms against India's two inexperienced spinners, Priya Mishra and debutant Tanuja Kanwar. Deepti too came in the firing line briefly, but she ultimately provided the much-needed breakthrough her team sought as Campbell tried to slog a slower one down the ground and was caught at long-on.

Zaida James was in and out in a jiffy, but Aaliyah Alleyne offered some resistance. Henry reached a 62-ball fifty by the end of the 28th over but was cleaned up by Deepti soon after as another mini collapse ensued. From 141/5, the visitors lost their remaining five wickets for the addition of just 21 runs. Deepti claimed four of those - reaching her career's third fifer with Afy Fletcher's dismissal in a wicket-maiden 36th over. Her sixth came in the following over before Thakur had Mandy Mangru caught at cover to bundle out West Indies for 162 in just 38.5 overs.

West Indies also caused



punishing towards Dottin, hitting three more boundaries off her to take India past the 50-run mark in the ninth over itself. The skipper made a brisk 22-ball 32 but wickets in quick succession left India needing to rebuild once again.

Joining hands at 73/4, Deepti and Jemimah Rodrigues forged a 56-run partnership for the fifth wicket that put India's chase back on track. The pair respected the good balls, and did the bulk of their scoring in ones and twos to keep the scoreboard ticking. Against the run of play, Rodrigues departed on 29, sweeping a Karishma Ramharack delivery to square leg. That brought Richa Ghosh to the crease, and in her true style the Indian wicketkeeper got going with a slog sweep off Matthews over midwicket for a maximum. From there on, the duo dealt mostly in boundaries, notably the two consecutive sixes off Fletcher as Ghosh took India past the finish line in just 28.2 overs with her brisk 11-ball 23 not out.

middle order and failed with the bat in Adelaide and Brisbane. Rohit had opted not to open the innings to allow KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal to play at the top of the order. However, in Melbourne, the batting order was reshuffled after India dropped Shubman Gill, and Rohit returned to the top of the order, only to fail to make an impact.

Rohit Sharma, please retire: Fans hurt after India captain fails in MCG Test

New Delhi: Border-Gavaskar Trophy: Rohit Sharma continued to fail with the bat in the Test series in Australia. The India captain has managed just 22 runs across five innings in the series.

The India captain was dismissed as early as the 2nd over of the innings. Rohit has struggled for form, scoring just 22 runs across 5 innings in the

series

A section of fans vented their frustration after India captain Rohit Sharma was dismissed for another low score, this time in the first innings of the much-anticipated Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. Rohit was dismissed for 3 as early as the second over of the Indian innings. He did not appear fully focused, falling to a loose

shot on Day 2 of the Test match.

The poor run of form with the bat continued as the Indian captain's return to the top of the order ended in disappointment. Rohit played a tentative half-pull to a delivery from Pat Cummins that pitched short and held up slightly on the surface.

The India captain has

managed only 22 runs in four innings so far in the series, with scores of 3, 6, 10, and 3. Rohit appeared low on intensity, and his shot lacked conviction, ending his five-ball stay at the crease.

Questions have been raised about Rohit Sharma's contributions to the Test team, particularly after he moved down to the

responsibility of guiding the batting unit, added that he certainly enjoyed some kind of comfort with the players.

"Certainly knowing the boys helped me a lot because I have seen them from a very early stage, and as a result I had a comfort zone while communicating with them," he said.

Salahuddin added that he is impressed with the way head coach Phil Simmons handled everything both on and off the field. "I think he is a positive coach and had his own plan as far as improving the team is concerned and looked focused on seeing how the team can move forward," he said. "The best thing is that he does not impose anything on the players. I think the communication between him and the players was quite good."

If someone is lacking the hunger, I must help them develop that - Salahuddin



player wants to practice with me individually, I will try to help him and I am not worried about it. If they want, I am available for them but I don't think that will be the case."

While Salahuddin was explaining his immediate future course of action, he looked pretty happy about the way things turned out in his first assignment during the recently-concluded tour of West Indies, where Bangladesh had drawn the two-match Test series with had mixed results in the white-ball format.

Bangladesh T20I skipper Litton Das insisted that the presence of Salahuddin in the dressing room helped them in more than many ways. Salahuddin, who was entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the batting unit, added that he certainly enjoyed some kind of comfort with the players.

"Certainly knowing the boys helped me a lot because I have seen them from a very early stage, and as a result I had a comfort zone while communicating with them," he said.

Salahuddin added that he is not losing his sleep over the expectations from him. He is focusing on developing the team and more importantly, making them hungry for success, a trait he ingrained in cricketers like Shakib al Hasan to Mominul Haque being their mentor.

"Look I am not worried about all those expectations, rather I always think about their development," he said.

"The main job for me in this BPL would be seeing how players respond in different situations. At certain points, if any